

TENTH DAY

Thursday 2 December 2021

DRAFT HANSARD

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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

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Corrections should be authorized by signature and contain the name, office and telephone number of the person transmitting/making corrections.

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Corrections should relate only to inaccuracies. New matters may not be introduced,



HARRY MOMOS

Principal Parliamentary Reporter

Thursday 2 December 2021

The Deputy Speaker (**Mr Koni Iguan**) took the Chair at 10 a.m.

There being no quorum present, Mr Deputy Speaker stated that he would resume the Chair after the ringing of the Bells.

Sitting suspended.

The Speaker (**Mr Job Pomat**) took the Chair at 11.05 a.m., and invited the Member for Pomio, **Honourable Elias Kapavore**, to say Prayers;

‘Yumi pray. Papa lo Heven, mipela i tok tenkyu long dispela dei. Mipela i daunim mipela yet nau long dispela moning long kam bek long Haus bilong ol pipol bilong yu na mekim toktok long makim ol long dispela dei. Lord, we humble ourselves under your grace, your Lordship, Kingship and declare that you are the Lord of our nation, Papua New Guinea. Lord, we know that we are nothing without you, through you, we can do the things we plan to do. Long dispela moning, mipela i soim sore long wanpela lida bilong yumi, Late Honourable Jonny Alonk, usait emi lusim. Mipela beten olsem, larem dispela dai bilong em i ken mekim mipla tingim wok bilong mipela osem ol lidas bilong dispela kantri long pasin bilong daunim mipela yet na wokim wok stret long ol pipol bilong yu. This will remind us of our responsibility and do what is right for our nation and our people. Today Lord, we humble ourselves and pay respect to this great man who had a humble and a dedicated life for his people. Mipela beten long femili bilong em, givim bel isi long ol lain bilong em na ol femili bilong em today. Na long pipol bilong em long Middle Ramu, mipela beten olsem bel isi bilong God ba stap wantaim ol long dispela taim tu. Mipela beten tete, as we continue for other sessions in this Parliament, mipela beten long yu stiam Praitim Minista bilong mipela, lida bilong Oposisen na ol Membra bilong Palamen long toktok long ol rot bilong lukautim i important long kantri bilong yumi. Mipela i tok tenkyu long guidance bilong yu tu long Speaker lo dispela day tu. Em prayer mipela askim long nem bilong Jisas, Amen.’

ADMISSION OF PALL-BEARERS CARRYING THE CASKET OF THE LATE HONOURABLE JONNY ALONK INTO THE CHAMBER

Mr SPEAKER – Honourable Members, I wish to inform Parliament that pall-bearers carrying the casket of late Honourable Jonny Alonk, MP, be admitted into the Chamber.

02/10

(With the concurrence of Parliament, the casket of the late Honourable Jonny Alonk, MP, was brought into the Chamber to lie-in-State)

03/10

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

Mr JAMES MARAPE (Tari-Pori – Prime Minister and Minister for Bougainville Affairs) – I move –

That this Parliament expresses its deepest regret at the death of the Member for Middle Ramu, Late Honourable Jonny Ananias Alonk, Member of Parliament on the 28th of November 2021, and place on record our recognition of his devoted service to the people of Middle Ramu and extend its profound sympathy to his family, his wife, his daughter, his sons and the people of Madang in the time of bereavement.

I note that the wife and family are in the gallery with us.

The late member was first elected to the 10th Parliament for the Middle Ramu Open Electorate in the 2017 National Elections and served as member of the Public Works Committee, Chairman and member of the Culture and Tourism Committee, member of the Emergency Committee and recently Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs from the 10th of May 2021 until his untimely passing.

Mr Speaker, may I also say on behalf of my wife Rachael, children, my own people of Tari – Pori, whom I represent in this Parliament, as well as the Pangu Pati support and network right throughout the country and the people of this country, express our profound sadness in the passing.

He was one true gentleman who served his people of Middle Ramu to his fullest ability. I had the privilege of spending a night at Simbai. He said he had a house kunai that I could stay in so he took me to Simbai and we stayed one night there.

May I also pass our sympathies to the extended network of the United Resource Party (URP) of which he was a faithful member until his time of passing.

I know for sure when Jesus comes back the second time he will rise to eternal life. May his soul rest in peace.

Mr BELDEN NAMAH (Vanimu-Green – Leader of Opposition) – I move –

That the Parliament take note of the motion of condolence, and I second the motion.

Mr Speaker, I too stand here to offer my condolences on behalf of my wife and children. I speak on behalf of all the opposition members with their respective families and their people of their respective districts that they represent in the Parliament.

Mr Speaker, we offer our deepest condolence because his death is unexpected.

04/10

I am deeply saddened as I did not expect such a wonderful man as the Member for Middle Ram to have gone ahead of us. I was deeply shocked by the news of his death. I could not believe because just last week he was standing up here on the Floor of this Parliament raising a question in regards to his trip with the Minister for Sports to attend to an occasion in his electorate.

I do not know the Member too well, however, from the statement made by the Prime Minister, I see that he was a very loyal person; someone who would stand by you no matter what.

I would like to send my condolences to the Leader of the United Resources Party. This is the Party that the late Member was affiliated under. I send my sincere condolences to the people of Middle Ramu and Madang for the loss of a great leader. He was a man of small talk but did a lot of work for his people. On behalf of the Opposition and our families, I stand with the people of Madang, especially Middle Ramu to share with you in your time of sorrow.

Mr JELTA WONG (Gazelle - Minister for Health) – Mr Speaker, on behalf of my people of Gazelle and all the people of this country, I send out my condolences to the family and people of Middle Ramu for the death of the late Honourable Johnny Alonk. The late Member was known for speaking in the simplest of parables but the definitions were very powerful. He was a true advocate for rural Papua New Guinea and he will be sadly missed by all. God bless his soul and may he rest in eternal peace.

Mr PILA NININGI (Imbonggu - Minister for Inter-Government Relations) – Mr Speaker, I also would like to send my sincere condolences to the family and people of Middle Ramu for the loss of a great leader. In our Baptist circle, he was a truly independent man whom the Lord called to be with him in heaven. He was a good man who worked hard for his people and family.

As a first-time politician he tried his best for the people of Middle Ramu. I wish whoever is elected to the next Parliament will carry on the good lead that he has left behind.

05/10

Mr WESLEY RAMINAI (Kagua-Erave – Minister for Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology) – On behalf of my family and people of Kagua Erave, I would like to pass my heartfelt condolences to the family of late Jonny Alonk and his people of Middle Ramu.

It was only about two weekends ago that I was able to visit his electorate with him and to go and talk with his wonderful people and stay with them. As we all know, he comes from a very remote area and the only access is by air on smaller planes. It was good to also go and learn about the hardships that the people of Middle Ramu experience.

The late member had some dreams for his people. I was there for the opening of the soccer tournament that involved 38 teams from Middle Ramu. He had a dream to put a team in the National Soccer League (NSL) because they were taking part in national tournaments. I represented our Government and went there to officiate in the soccer tournament. At the same time, I represented the State in two ground breaking ceremonies for a water project he was doing for the Simbai station and construction of five health staff houses as well. I stayed the night with his people in Simbai, the same place where some other ministers and our good Prime Minister also stayed. A very good place indeed.

The late member's biggest dream was to build bridges over the Jimi and Ramu rivers. Therefore, as a government going forward, we must look at that and we must help realize those dreams that this member had for his people.

I was shocked to hear of his passing and now I see his body here lying-in-State, I am deeply saddened and heartbroken that he has left us.

Mr ALLAN BIRD (East Sepik) – Thank you, Mr Speaker. I stand and join other leaders to pay tribute to the late Jonny Alonk and his contributions to Parliament.

On behalf of the people of East Sepik and my family, I would like to pass our condolences to the family.

I acknowledge his humble and respectful ways. Before policy issues were to be debated in Parliament, the late member would express his views to me to help construct my thoughts and ideas. Most times I am first to take my seat in the Chamber, and as soon as he enters, he would come across and say hello and tell stories while having a big smile on his face.

I saw him as a very genuine person and because of his character I feel it's important for me to stand up and say thank you to the family for giving us a humble and strong leader to come and lead the people of Middle Ramu.

06/10

Last week Thursday, the late member was appointed as a member of the Citizenships Advisory Committee. The government had given that honour to Honourable Jonny Alonk and it was my privilege as the chairman of the committee to have appointed him. When I heard the of the Lord's calling for his return, I was so worried and grieved.

Mr Speaker, I want to thank him for the service and charisma that he had shown to many of our members. The Honourable Jonny Alonk, may you rest in peace.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Sir JOHN PUNDARI (Kompam-Ambum – Minister for Finance and Rural Development) – Thank you, Mr Speaker. It is with deepest and sincerest of condolences from the bottom of my heart that I represent my family, the good people of Kompam-Ambum and the Liberal Party and its supporters.

Mr Speaker, my sincerest of condolences to the family and people of Middle Ramu on the passing of this great brother, friend and leader who was full of smiles, a loving face and you could see benevolence all around him. The short space of time interacting with him, I saw the sincerest of certain leadership in him.

Mr Speaker, today as I stand passing condolences, my heart was touched by the fact that he was carried into the Chamber by some of our finest CIS security officers representing all the security officers in Papua New Guinea.

Mr Speaker, we are elected to be the servants of our people and today for a colleague to be carried in by some of our finest men broke my heart. I thank them for their sincerest respect to the leaders of this nation.

Mr Speaker, we go through a lot of stress, pain and in our quietness, we go through some depression as leaders to do our very best to serve the people of this nation. Many of our quiet moments, struggles and pain, none of our people know, sometimes not even our immediate families. We may have blood pressure as a result.

It is not easy to have this calling to be servants of our people. Our people see some of us or if not all of us as walking ATMs. We are the answers to funeral expenses, airline tickets and the list goes, which does not come from public money.

Mr Speaker, I speak as the Minister for Finance. We think leaders in this country earn a lot of money but with the challenges and cultural norms that we all are exposed to it is not easy.

07/10

Mr Speaker, we can have the best of smiles and emulate our brother that has passed on but unbeknownst to others, we go through struggles and pressure. My brother, you were just with us a few days ago, how did you leave us? How did you leave us? Maybe in the quiet moments of our own pressures, challenges and stress, the next could be any of our brothers seated here.

Mr Prime Minister, I heard you loudly and clearly. Here is a brother of yours who spoke from his heart thanking you for the visit you made to his people. I heard him and know that it came from his heart; he was very, very sincere. He appreciated that visit, especially when you stayed a night in his electorate.

Mr Speaker, we need to sometimes sit back, reflect and seriously discuss some challenges that leaders face in our country. How many more leaders are we going to lose? This is the fourth death in this Parliament.

Whether we are corrupt or not, when we enter into Parliament, some people immediately think that we are corrupt. The social media platform doesn't care; they just want to criticise the leaders.

Mr Speaker, I am very sorry that I have taken up a fair bit of time but I think that it is about time that we really consider ways of dealing with stress.

My brother, I still can't believe that you are gone. Your family will surely miss you the most and the people who have mandated you to serve them will be broken. They vote us into Parliament to serve them and they take pride in us. They look up to us and when we go, they are devastated.

Today, as I speak on the Floor of this Parliament his people wait to receive him with brokenness.

I would like to thank the Prime Minister for remaining us to take care of our health. Life is fragile and we only have one life to live.

This leadership role will come and go but families will always remain and they will be one to miss us the most. Our brother has gone and his wife children will miss him the most. Their father will not be there to take care of them. He may have had a health condition but maybe the stress and challenges of leadership in this country may have exacerbated it.

Mr Speaker, whilst I stand here and express my condolences to the family, on behalf of us, I want to thank all our families. We may have been elected into Parliament, but we are like gifts from our wives and children to the sacrificial offices to be servants of our nation in the offices that we occupy. I thank all our families right across this country for continuously supporting us as we perform our duties as leaders.

08/10

Mr Speaker, on this note, in this short space of time, thank you brother for the examples that you have set that I and other leaders can emulate on the floor of Parliament. We thank you.

Brother, rest in peace, Jesus is coming soon. Your smile, your kindness, your loving attitude and how much you have felt for this nation and your people will be rewarded soon.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr PATRICK PRUAITCH (Aitape-Lumi) – Thank you, Mr Speaker. I also rise to pay tribute and recognise the contribution that Late Honourable Jonny Alonk, Member for Middle Ramu, made to the country in his first term as member of Parliament.

It is indeed surprising for all of us. Only last week he was with us and today he's in a different form.

Nonetheless, Mr Speaker, Mr Jonny Alonk, is our most senior member of Parliament from our region. Although he is a first-timer but those of us from Momase call him 'bikpla'. He is always our 'bikpla'. Whenever we are in contact, we always address him as 'bikpla'. And he unfortunately left us too early.

Mr Speaker, on behalf of the people of Aitape-Lumi, people of West Sepik, the followers, and of course the members of the National Alliance Party, I take this opportunity to extend our sincere condolences to his family, his immediate family and the people of Middle Ramu, Madang Province.

We truly miss our champion, who says very little but had a lot of heart and did a lot of work for his people. We will recognise him as a humble servant of his people.

May his soul rest in eternal peace. Thank you.

Mr JOHN ROSSO (Lae – Minister for Lands and Physical Planning) – Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to also take this opportunity to offer my humble condolences to the family of the late Honourable Jonny Alonk.

On behalf of the people of Lae and my family, I offer our sincere condolences to the family of late Jonny Alonk on his untimely death. I was shocked when I heard of the news.

Jonny Alonk possessed very humble qualities; humility, integrity and loyalty, and he stood and represented his people of Middle Ramu.

On behalf of my people of Lae, our sincere condolences to the immediate family and the people of Middle Ramu. Rest in peace, sir.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr SALIO WAIPO (Angoram) – Thank you, Mr Speaker. I stand here to join my colleague members, opposition leader and the Prime Minister, in showing my sympathy to the family of late Jonny Alonk who is laying in front of me.

We come from areas that are remote and because we share borders, we also share the work.

The late member built a new airstrip at Mui recently and witnessed the first MAF flight. It was in my electorate as well, therefore, on behalf of the people of Angoram, especially the people of Keram, I want to offer my condolences to his family and his people of Middle Ramu.

We will miss you, our brother, late Honourable Member Jonny Alonk. We will miss your kindness.

09/10

We acknowledged him as a senior leader from our region. I stand here on behalf of my people of Angoram and my family to send sincere condolences to his family, the people of Middle Ramu and the people of Madang.

My brother, may your soul rest in eternal peace.

Mr SOROI EOE (Kikori – Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Trade) – Mr Speaker, let me also join the Prime Minister, the opposition leader and all the leaders who have spoken before me in paying tribute to this great, very humble and gentle man who lies before us here.

When I first met him in 2017 or 2018, he greeted me in Toaripi language and said 'faita lareva' that was in the afternoon and I asked, how did you come to know this term which is Toaripi language in the Gulf province where my governor comes from. And he said, he picked it up from some of his friends from Gulf.

Thereafter, when I came to know him, he was such a humbled leader in his own rights, particularly in our time together on Loloata Island. Today, I stand before this Parliament to pay tribute to this great man.

He was the Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Trade. He has passed on before serving to the end of his term. It's not our choice but it's a choice that God makes as to when to give life and take life.

I pay tribute to this great man. Thank you for gracing us with your presence, your contributions for your people and on behalf of your people to this great House.

On behalf of my family, people of Kikori district as well as the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and International Trade and all our Foreign Affairs officers, I would like to pay our sincere condolences to the late Jonny Alonk's immediate family and his people of Middle Ramu and the greater Madang province.

May your soul rest in peace, my brother.

Thank you.

Mr TIMOTHY MASIU (South Bougainville - Minister for Information and Communication Technology) – Thank you, Mr Speaker. I also stand to convey my condolence and show sympathy and respect to the late leader who is here before us today. On behalf of my family and the people of South Bougainville, who are so far from Middle Ramu, we pay respect to the late honourable leader. I see him as one of the men that God has mould throughout his time until he got mandated by his people from Middle Ramu to represent them in this honourable House.

I heard of his name before I came to Parliament in 2017 from who knew him in Madang, pastor whom he had a past relation in Madang. He used to call him regularly and in 2017 when he won the election, I looked forward to meeting him. When I met him in person, I told him that I had heard of him long before.

10/10

He was a humble person and forever smiling. He would smile amidst calamity. He would smile at all times.

As we were going through the sitting this week, I was really sad when I looked over to his table with flowers on it. I will surely miss him because he will never be present in our midst.

I would like to thank his family and the people of Middle Ramu for mandating this amazing gentleman whom we came to meet in this Honourable House. He has inspired us by his good qualities, characters and served his purpose with dedication and honesty.

We leaders learn from each other. I know that most of us have learned a lot from our brother and colleague, the late Honourable Jonny Alonk, and here he is, laying before us on this Floor of Parliament for us to farewell him.

On behalf of my people from South Bougainville, I would like to convey our deepest condolences to his family, the people of Middle Ramu, families in Mount Hagen and to the United Resource Party for having this great man in this House.

I farewell you my brother. Thank you and I hope to see you one day in Heaven.

Mr SPEAKER – Honourable Members, I would like to inform you all that I will be timing your speeches in order to give the opportunity to other leaders who wish to pass their condolences.

Mr JOHN SIMON (Maprik – Minister for Agriculture and Livestock) – Thank you. It will be remiss of me if I do not pass my condolences on behalf of my family, my district and the ministry that I represent.

One of my encounters with the late Jonny Alonk was of the two of us travelling down Ramu River for 12 hours. So humble as he is, we went to his electorate where we stayed there for several days.

The second time we went was with the Prime Minister. I remember this man as a very humble man who did not talk much. We will miss you.

I pass my condolences to the people of Middle Ramu. Whatever he has left behind for his electorate, we will continue to show our support.

My big brother, may your soul rest in peace.

Dr FABIAN POK (North Waghi) – Thank you, Mr Speaker. On behalf of my people of North Waghi and my family, I would like to also pass my condolences to the family of late Jonny Alonk and the people of Middle Ramu.

In Jiwaka, we speak three languages. Some part of the language is spoken by the people of Usino-Bundi and Middle Ramu. So, I would always stick around with my late brother.

11/10

I would sit with the late member all the time. Most of the times he talked about his projects. He felt closer to me because we are related; the people of Jiwaka are related to the people of Usino-Bundi and Middle Ramu because our languages are similar.

I am saddened at his passing. On Friday, both of us were travelling on the same flight to Hagen. We sat next to each other on the flight, not knowing that it would be the last time I would see him.

He said he was going to a soccer tournament in his district because they were joining the national leagues. He made sure that the people in his electorate were going to join the Papua New Guinea National Soccer League.

I saw that he was feeling sick so I told him that we are going through a lot of pressure because it's almost the time of the National Elections. I advised him that if he still feels sick, he needs to go back to Port Moresby and get medications. I didn't know that he was going to pass away. That was the last time I talked to him.

Yesterday, I went to the airport to receive his body and I was so saddened because that is how all of us will go. Our lives on this earth is too short. We don't know when we will go but that is what happened to our brother.

It felt so surreal seeing my brother alive on Friday and yesterday I saw him in a casket. I feel so sorry for his family. I saw his wife and children and I was so sad.

On behalf of my family and the people of North Waghi, I want to say, Jonny, we will all come the same way and I wish you to rest in peace.

I also want to say this to my other brothers and reiterate what the Minister for Finance said. We are going through a lot of stress. Please if you are stressed out, go and get medical advice and treatment before you think about your electorates. We live our lives only once.

Our brother was sick but he was thinking of his people. He smiled all the time and constantly talked about his electorate Middle Ramu. He talked about all the things he would do. And unfortunately, he is not going to be here to see the fruits of his work. But I know the people of Middle Ramu are good people and the next person that they will vote for will represent Middle Ramu and do the same job as the late honourable member.

So, on behalf of my family and the people of North Waghi and the greater people of Jiwaka, we send our condolences to the people of Middle Ramu on the passing of our brother the late Jonny Alonk.

Mr KEVIN ISIFU (Wewak) – Thank you, Mr Speaker. On behalf of the people of Wewak, I rise on this occasion to join my governor and the Member for Angoram and other colleagues including the Prime Minister to show my respects to our late colleague in this Tenth Parliament, the late Honourable Jonny Anianas Alonk.

Mr Speaker, I stand on behalf of the people of Wewak as a first-time politician to show my gratitude for the work he has contributed to his people for the past five years for the electorate of Middle Ramu.

Mr Speaker, the first time I met the late brother Jonny Alonk was in 2016 when he was preparing to contest for the National Elections. I was also preparing to contest for the elections. He was very confident on winning the seat for Middle Ramu.

12/10

When I won the Wewak Open seat and came to Parliament, I was seated on the other side and the late member was seated at the back. That's when we met for the first time in Parliament.

Mr Speaker, I call him uncle because my mother is from Rai Coast, Kalipu Village, Hesolobo Local-level Government. My mother's name is Mana Isifu from the Madang electorate. I stand here today to pass my condolences on behalf of the people of Wewak and the people of Madang living in Wewak.

Mr Speaker, the duties and responsibilities carried out by any member are very challenging. As mentioned by the Minister for Finance and the Prime Minister; it's a stressful job to serve the people that you represent. Before I became a member, I worked in the private sector and I didn't experience such stress that I feel today.

But since occupying this public office and me being a first-timer, I noticed that once you become a member, you will be faced with a lot of stress and challenges. You will experience physical changes such as grey hair, losing weight and facing health problems because being a member comes with duties and responsibilities as well. It's a very hard and challenging task.

I feel for brother Jonny Alonk, he may have succumbed to these issues, we really don't know.

Mr Speaker, I thank the people of Middle Ramu for having the trust and confidence in electing a good member to represent them. During his first time as a member, I noticed that he had a genuine heart to serve his people.

Mr Speaker, most of us sitting here today used to face physical confrontation with sticks and stones from the people. Majority of the members come here with good intention to truly serve the people. I believe that late Johnny Alonk falls in that category. In the first five years

as first timers, we can't really do much work in terms of service delivery at one time. But if you are elected the second or third time then yes, you will be able to deliver services and people will appreciate your work.

I appeal to the people of Middle Ramu to genuinely grieve the loss of the late member and not to measure what he has done. As his colleague, I confirm here that he was one of the most humble leaders and had a sincere heart for his people. But unfortunately, he left behind his people in his first term as a member in this Parliament.

I pass my condolences on behalf of my people and family to his wife, and all his children for sharing his time here in Parliament. When we enter Parliament, we don't spend time with our family especially children and relatives because we occupy this public office and it is our duty to put the interests of our people before ourselves.

13/10

I also convey my condolences to the Governor of Madang as well as the Open Members from the Madang electorates. You have truly lost a good leader who had the heart for his people. We as a country have lost a good man and I wish to thank the Prime Minister for recognising his leadership potential in the various positions he held as a Member for this Parliament. May his soul rest in eternal peace forever.

Mr WILLIAM POWI (Southern Highlands) – I wish to join the other honourable leaders in sending out my condolences on behalf of my people of Southern Highlands to the family and the people of Middle Ramu and Madang province for the loss of the late Honourable Member Mr Johnny Alonk.

While interacting with him for a short time, I have come to observe that he always had a clarity of purpose and even when he was under extreme pressure it never showed in his outward appearance, he understood what he was here for. He was a friend to all.

It was one of those times that I sat with him saw something special in him. He had a strong belief in God and that was most important in his life and that made a big difference. In our brief encounter he shared with me some simple but life-changing values. He knew the meaning of life. This was one of his messages that I have held onto: We were raised as children, born as gifts from God to our parents. Whatever we became in our adult lives are for a purpose, either as a teacher, lawyer, mother, father or a politician, different callings but at some stage in our life we will be called to give an account of how we lived the gift of life.

The truth is we will all one day be lying in the coffin. That should not be feared because heaven is the answer. If our heart is in the right direction, we will give an account of our lives to our people and heaven.

Farewell and may his soul rest in peace.

Mr MICHAEL DUA (Chimbu) –Mr Speaker, I would also like to join my colleague members in sending my sincere condolences on behalf of my six other MPs and the people of Simbu. I acknowledge that he was a simple yet a God-fearing leader. In this time of sorrow, I would like to say that the people of Madang and especially Middle Ramu have lost a great leader. We share a common border and also cultural values with the people of Madang, especially middle Ramu.

A week ago on a Friday, we were on our way to Kundiawa to launch the Kundiawa town water project but on our way, he was not feeling well so he told me he won't be joining me in Kundiawa as he was not feeling well. That was the last time I spoke to him in Hagen. And by Sunday, I heard the news of his death. God has a purpose for all of us when he created us. We do not know the time nor the hour that he will call us. It is God's calling that he has to go, and I respect that. I thank God for his life and I thank the people and his family for giving him to the people of Madang and Papua New Guinea to serve as Member for Middle Ramu. We have lost a great man and may his soul find happiness in heaven.

14/10

He used to come and sit here in front but on Tuesday when we came in there was a wreath put in his place.

On behalf of the people of Chauve, I would like to convey our deepest condolences to the family.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr WAKA GOI (Jimi-Minister for Community Development, Youth and Religion) – Thank You, Mr Speaker, I would also want to share a bit on our time together. The honourable member and I are long-time friends. We do not call each other by our names but instead we would call each other, 'Back-to-Back' or 'Wanbus'. We would share many stories about Hagen. I would take him to Jimi and he would take me to Simbai.

Every time when we are here in Parliament, I would look up and see him but sadly, from today onwards he will not be here. I am deeply saddened by his passing. Even though we are from different provinces, we always maintained a good friendship.

The first time he contested the election, he came fifth but he remained determined to try again because he wanted to bring services to the people in remote areas. The second time we both contested, I won my seat and he didn't but he still was determined to get into Parliament. He continued to contest until he won his seat.

I would like to convey my deepest condolence to the family and may you find comfort in God. God can direct you, give you wisdom, understanding and comfort day by day. To the children, find peace in God to help and guide you all.

He always was proud and would speak of the time he sent invitation to the Prime Minister and his delegates to visit his electorate, Middle Ramu. Thank you to the people of Middle Ramu especially in the Simbai area who are going to miss him.

I say thank you my brother, 'Wanbus', 'Back-To-Back'.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr WILLIAM SAMB (Goilala-Minister for Transport and Infrastructure) - Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to join my colleagues in conveying our sympathy to late Jonny Alonk.

Mr Speaker, I firstly came to know him, when he would come and see me to assist him with rural airstrips and thankfully, I directed him to the right place. the other two locations were at Laguna and Loloata camps.

15/10

On record, I want to thank the late Honourable Jonny Alonk and his people for remaining loyal to us at the Loloata camp, with the greatest respect to the opposition team.

But if opposition leader can acknowledge the kind of character that the late member possessed, especially his loyalty to a cause then I challenge colleague members of Parliament to emulate that trait and remain loyal irrespective of what transpires. Some opposition members also remain loyal to a course and that's why you are sitting there.

Mr Speaker, I come from one of the least-developed electorates similar to that of the late colleague member. It's good for us to stand up and express our sympathy and share our experiences but I want to challenge the government. Mr Prime Minister, the late member had remained loyal and supported the government, therefore, we must continue to honour those commitment.

The ministers for Agriculture, High Education and Sports had visited his electorate. I had assisted the late member by directing him to the right people to build a rural airstrip. As a government, we must ensure that the commitments we made are honored. We shouldn't forget about those commitments just because the late member is no longer with us.

Mr Speaker, let me remind the government that when we made a commitment to the late member, we also made that promise to his people. These are the reasons why we change the government. Therefore, let us honour the commitments for late Jonny Alonk and the people of Middle Ramu.

Mr Speaker, I also convey sincere condolences to the United Resource Party Leader, Honourable William Duma, and supporters throughout Papua New Guinea.

Hopefully, once a good man like this has gone, a new one can raise up in the shadow and lead our people in Middle Ramu.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr GARRY JUFFA (Northern) – Thank you, Mr Speaker. On behalf of my people of Oro and my family, I convey our sincere condolences to the family of late Jonny Alonk and the people of Middle Ramu. They can be proud that they voted in a leader into Parliament not just a politician; a man who spoke passionately about his people, country and about doing what is right. I do not know of anyone else in this Parliament who was as positive as the late Jonny Alonk.

In the very brief time that I came to know him, no matter the circumstances, challenges and difficulties that we were faced with whenever you encountered late Jonny Alonk, he was always positive, smiling and always courteous. He spoke to everyone and greeted security guards, cleaners and spoke to the people who sometimes we pass by without seeing, and had time for everyone. He spoke very well and was passionate about his people.

I would like to echo the sentiments expressed by the Minister for Transport that whatever commitments that were in the process of being delivered, let us see this through.

16/10

Mr RICHARD MARU (Yangoru-Saussia) - Mr Speaker, I join the Prime Minister, opposition leader and all our leaders on the floor this morning. On behalf of the people of Yangoru-Saussia, I extend my deepest condolences to the family and the people of Middle Ramu on the loss of their leader; one of the finest leaders on the Floor of Parliament during this term whom we have lost very unexpectedly.

After the 2017 Elections, I got to know this great man. He would come to my office at Planning and tell me, you all have roads, you are connected by sea and by road, I don't have that service in my area. I'm not connected to Madang, please help me to fund my Rural Airstrip Authority and I can start to revive all the airstrips that have shut down.

On reflection, I am thankful that in the 2018-19 Budget we funded the Rural Airstrips Authority and as a result, he opened airstrips in his area.

I had the privilege to go to his district for the opening of the airstrip. I shed tears when I found out that most public servants had deserted the district and went to Madang. The district administrator and the district treasurer also reside in Madang. No one was there, life was so difficult.

A lot of us take services at the district level for granted, but this man had one of the most difficult challenges to bring services and public servants back to the district. There was a lone policeman serving the entire Middle Ramu district. I was very saddened to see this. At the time the government decided to build a road connecting Hagen to Middle Ramu and Madang, through the Papua New Guinea Defense Force (PNGDF). I went on the ground to see their operations, but I don't know what has happened to that program.

On this very sad occasion, I would like to say to all our leaders gathered here this morning, if we really love this member, we have to make a commitment this morning to complete the road from Hagen to Middle Ramu down to Madang. We must make that commitment from our hearts and make it happen in the next term of parliament. To remember the struggles our brother went through, let's see to it that there is a road that will link Hagen to Middle Ramu through to Madang and bring back public service to the district and deliver the services that people have been missing out on for an extremely long time

We are saddened that we have lost him at a time when he started to bring back services to his electorate in Middle Ramu. This is one of the most under-served districts in the entire country that deserves our great support. Therefore, on this occasion, I express my sadness on his passing to his people and family.

I remind Parliament that we have a duty to finally connect Middle Ramu district and bring back services to the people that many of us take for granted in our districts. With that, I pray that God will send his angels to watch over his grave and reward him for the excellent work he has done. May he rest in peace!

Mr WERA MORI (Chuave – Minister for Environment, Conservation and Climate Change) –Mr Speaker, I too on behalf of my family and the people of Chuave take this

opportunity to express our sincere commiserations and condolences to the family of the late Honourable Jonny Alonk and the people of Middle Ramu but more so to the people of Simbai whom he proudly represented.

Let us thank the people of Middle Ramu for sending a true leader to serve Papua New Guinea. It is not just the people of Middle Ramu or his family who have lost a father, son, brother and leader but also the people of Papua New Guinea.

Mr Speaker, I join my colleagues here in passing my sincere condolences to his family. I thank them for the sacrifices they made in allowing him to serve his country.

Thank you.

17/10

I make reference to the statement made by the Minister for Home Affairs, and it is very true that the late leader represented an electorate which is one of the most difficult electorates in the country. I had an opportunity to walk from Jimi right across the Bismarck Range into Simbai and I know what it really means when it comes to the effectiveness of government services. This in particular especially the people around Simbai station itself, Kumbru, Dusim Sangapi, Kombaku. These are people that had high hopes, he was a beam of their hope, but it has been shattered.

And joining my other colleague leaders on this floor of Parliament, I'd like to appeal, on the occasion of his passing, to effectively bring back and support people and organisations that are providing services to very remote provinces, especially to MAF and other agencies and non-government organisations that basically link up with such remote places.

One thing I could sum up about this man who lays here, is that he was a man of integrity and principles of the highest order. He's a rare breed of people who stand by their principles, unwavering but unfortunately, we had to lose him.

On this note, my sincere condolences to his family and his people of Simbai where he hails from. Thank you

Mr JOHN KAUPA (Moresby North-East)- Mr Speaker, on behalf of the people of Moresby North-East and my family, I would like to pass my condolences to the family of the late Jonny Alonk and the people of Middle Ramu.

I'd like to talk about how he carried himself around here at the Parliament and in Port Moresby. We both stood for the elections so many times, but won in the same elections. When we first met here at the Parliament, he asked me if I was John Kaupa. He then introduced

himself. Once we got to know each other, we would tell stories about past elections, where we didn't make it into Parliament. One thing that always stood out with him was his smile. It doesn't cost anything to smile. He was simple and showed integrity and addressed everyone the same. And every time we would tell stories, we would hold hands and walk around the flower gardens or next to the office. One day I asked him how he travelled to Simbai because it is very remote. When I was at Divine Word Institute (now university) in Madang, the students from Simbai would say it takes longer to travel from Madang to Simbai than from Hagen to Simbai.

18/10

I think our security and health issues are our major concern. Whilst the late Jonny Alonk lies before us, I would like to make an appeal to this Parliament and the Prime Minister must take note. When we were mandated to come to this Parliament, God blessed us to represent our people in this Parliament, therefore, our health must be a major concern and priority during our term in Parliament. Health facilities must be available for us to carry out medical checks and know our health status in order to serve our people as elected leader.

Mr Speaker, going back to our late brother, when I asked if he was engaged in some form of business, he said no, I am an agriculturalist and was based in Hagen. When I would further probe and ask if he had any business in Port Moresby, he would say no, he made it to Parliament because the people mandated him. He would say, the only business that you and I have is our people. I was saddened when he left us. When such a leader is lying in front of us, I wonder if the people of Middle Ramu will find a person similar to him because it is very difficult to find one great leader like him.

With that, on behalf of the people of Moresby North-East and my family, I would like to send our condolences. His memory will still remain forever with his family. May his soul rest in peace.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr LEKWA GURE (Rigo) – Thank you, Mr Speaker, for giving me this opportunity to pay my tribute to late Honourable Jonny Ananais Alonk.

Firstly, on behalf of my people of Rigo and the United Labour Party that I currently represent, in the absence of our leader, I extend my sincere and deepest condolence to the family of late Jonny Alonk, people of Middle Ramu and the people of Madang province.

The passing of late Jonny Alonk and other Members of Parliament in recent times just demonstrates the frailty and fragility of life. In recent times, many of us have lost our loved ones not only Members of Parliament but also family members and family we know in our villages, districts and provinces. But, as we pay our tributes, I am always mindful of the fact that no man is an island. We also cross paths in each other's lives somewhere along the line at some place at some point in life.

So, let history correct me if I am wrong, but yesterday afternoon as I was leaving the Parliament precincts, I ran into Grand Chief Sir Peter Ipatas and we got talking about the late Honourable Jonny Alonk. If I am not mistaken, and I am not surprised that one of the leaders from the Momase region mentioned the fact that they refer to late Honourable Jonny Alonk as the senior. He will be about my age and that of Sir Peter Ipatas as we seem to think that we all went to university in 1975 to do our preliminary year. And because no man is an island, let me just mention some of the names who were in my group, late Malipu Balakau, Honourable Wera Mori and Dr Zechariah Gelu.

19/10

Sir Peter Ipatas and I seem to think that he was also in our year as well at the University of Papua New Guinea, doing our preliminary year.

I left in 1976 to go flying and I lost track of all my school mates until 2017, we met in this Parliament precincts. But I was fortunate that in 1980 and 1981, when I was based in Madang with Talair, I would usually fly into Middle Ramu airstrips; the likes of Josephstaal, Aiom and indeed into Simbai, place of avocados.

When we walked through this journey on the phase of this earth, we cross each other's paths. So, let us not burn bridges as we are crossing them but let's build bridges that will bring good relationships between others. Because one day, all of us will meet the same fate of the afterlife.

On behalf of my people from Rigo and the Labour Party, we extend our deepest condolences to the family of late Jonny Alonk and the people of Middle Ramu. We also thank them for sharing this great man to represent them on this Floor of Parliament.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr GINSON SAONU (Morobe) – Thank you, Mr Speaker. I also would like to extend my condolences on behalf of the people from Morobe Province, to the family of late Honourable Jonny Alonk and the people of Middle Ramu.

Many of the leaders have expressed their condolences saying that this gentleman was a good man. I would like to also remind all of us that, we all are good and that is why we are mandated by our people to represent them on this Floor of Parliament.

Our health is very important. We must be very mindful of our health so that we serve our people with the being that is expected of us.

The unity of our country depends on each of us here from various provinces and districts. As we are gathered here to convey our condolences and many have expressed his uniqueness. There won't be another Jonny Alonk that we are farewelling today. He was created by God with his own abilities.

The contributions that he has done is a gift given by our Creator and for that, I thank him, his family and the people of Middle Ramu for producing such a unique quality of a man.

So far, we have lost four members of this Parliament. Out of the four members who passed on, three are from the rural electorates and one from an urban electorate. The dreams that we have to serve our people are different from rural and urban electorates.

20/10

It's proper for us to know ourselves when we are still alive and how we behave, talk and contribute will assist us to realise the importance of each district, province and urban areas that we represent. And we must build our future on reactions, thinking and motives of Members of Parliament.

Now we mentioned a lot on late Member for Middle Ramu, he represents one of the least developed rural area, but his feelings compared to some of us who represent rural areas are totaling different.

We have shared some positive remarks but when we plan our country we must talk about our late leader's ambitions for his district and it must reflect in the future plan for his electorate that he left behind.

When we were born into this world, people are happy but when we die, people feel sad for losing us and mourn. Our God created us in his own wisdom and knowledge. But, we feel sad because this world is filled with lots of burden and it's a long journey. Whether you are a lawyer, politician or ordinary person, this world is filled with bad things that makes us sad and we cry. But when die, we rest and other people cry for us.

Brother, Johnny Alonk, your journey on this earth has ended today and now you are resting. But your memories and legacies left behind will be felt by this country and district, your fatherhood approach and manners will be missed and felt by your immediate family.

With that, I join in with my family in passing our condolences to the families. May they have peace with the grace of the Lord. May you go in peace and may the people of Middle Ramu find a replacement like you, so that they may continue with whatever you left behind for the development of Middle Ramu, Madang, Momase Region and PNG. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr KONI IGUAN (Markham) – Thank you, Mr Speaker, I also stand here today to join in with the rest of the Members of Parliament, on behalf of my family and the people of Markham, we pass our biggest condolences to the family and the people of Middle Ramu for a leader and father who left us.

Mr Speaker, in my term as the Deputy Speaker of this Parliament, I witnessed death of five Members of Parliament for this Tenth Parliament. And brother now laying here, is the fifth one so far and it will go down in record of Parliament in PNG that we lost more than five Members. All sitting in this Parliament will remember this story.

21/10

Papua New Guinea too is going to see this story about the members that passed away. I stood at the airport to welcome many members that have passed away and were flown in.

I stood at the door of the Parliament to welcome the caskets of members into the Parliament. I travelled with the caskets of members to their homes and I witnessed how the fathers and the people back at home mourned for them.

I am saddened by all that. I saw the wives and children and went with them to their villages and I sympathized with them for their loss.

When they mourn, I mourn with them. I put myself in their shoes and I feel their sorrow. One day my wife is going to mourn like that, even my children. And I mourn.

I remember the problems I faced when I became a member. Our people always put pressure on us but they do not know that we go back home and cry to our wives and children.

When people post negatively about us on Facebook, our children are the ones that are affected. Even our wives are affected by that. When people criticize us and talk about us, they do not know how it affects us and our families.

And today, our brother and late member, his wife and children are sitting here watching him. They will take him home and bury him. The pain and sorrow will be with them.

Death is something unexpected but we will all die one day. We will question why it happened, but our thoughts and plans are different from God. It was the God's will to take

away our brother, but he will not fail the people of Middle-Ramu. God will not fail his wife and children. His family will reap the fruits of his labor.

I stand here at the Floor of this Parliament, while his family sit there, his sons and daughters must be ready to harvest what he sows Do not be careless, follow the path of your father and you will receive all your father's blessing.

Mr Speaker, I stand here to express one of my concerns. Just yesterday, we passed the Budget in this Parliament. When we die or when we are elected, we are called members of Parliament. If you are here and you die, Parliament will take care of you, they will meet all your funeral expenses. When you retire, the Parliament will take care of you with your retirement benefits. As a Member of Parliament, you get paid.

As the Deputy Speaker of the Parliament, I see that the people who did the Budget, allocated a lot of money to Parliament.

The Parliament, in the *Constitution* is always the first one and followed by the Judiciary and the Executive. But, when it comes to payment, Parliament always comes last. Parliament is always running to the Government to ask for money.

There is no money to pay the members, there is no money to meet the funeral expenses of members, there is no money to charter planes to fly them home for burial. When we retire, the Parliament is going to pay you.

Now our brother has just passed away, what are the benefits that his family will get? The Parliament must be ready to look after the families of the Members of parliament.

When we allocate money to the budget, we must give more to the Parliament and the Parliament must be paid first.

22/10

So that they will be able to have well qualified doctor to attend to us when we are sick and Parliament must be able to provide us with good nutritious food. We must not be made to eat the same meals over and over again. The Parliament must always have a back up plan to assist when there are emergencies and when your term is up, it must continue to us; we must therefore make sure Parliament is well funded and equipped to assist us.

There must be other means the families receiving the members' benefits. When a member dies, especially the wife and children. The families do share the same burden that their father goes through. Let us try and include this in the Budget an appropriation for such emergencies. On behalf of the Speaker, all staff of the Parliamentary Service, from the cleaner to the Clerk, those who are present here and those who are busy in their work, I take this time to send out

our sincere condolences to the family of the late Honourable Member Johnny Alonk. He was very humble as everyone has already shared, someone who went around meeting people from the gardener right up to the Clerk. He shared mostly his smile to everyone he met. I wish you a safe journey and may you rest in peace.

Mr WILLIAM DUMA (Hagen-Minister for State Enterprise) - Thank you, Mr Speaker. On behalf of the Deputy Leader and the Parliamentary leaders of the United Resources Party (URP) and also the Governor of Western Highlands, and the three MPs from the province and with our immediate families we send our condolences to the family and friends of the late Mr Johnny Alonk. Middle Ramu, Madang and Papua New Guinea has lost a great leader.

We all know that in our lives, we had good and bad times. We indeed shared some good times here in Parliament, but it has come to a sad time and we now are sharing his memories and what he did. I feel privileged to have known this leader as he walked through the bush to get to Hagen where he worked with PTC and there he met his wife, the daughter of a chief from the Moge tribe.

He was a man who believed in national unity, he was not held down by prejudice among most of our people in the country. He believed in national unity and while his career took him around the length and breadth of this country, he realized there was a need for him to return to his people. He wanted to serve his rural people in the remote area of Middle Ramu. The late Member tried numerous times for the Middle Ramu seat, in 2007 he contested under URP and came third, then in 2012 he didn't give up; he was a very determined man so he contested again and came second.

23/10

Again, he did not give up, in 2017, he contested again and the people of Middle-Ramu elected him to serve them here in Parliament.

Mr Speaker, he was a determined man and a fighter. He recognized that his people of Middle-Ramu were very remote and he wanted service to reach them and that is why he never gave up.

I can still remember, in 2017 when I went to endorse him and some other younger contestants who were contesting the election, he told me that he believed that God had chosen him to keep trying and eventually he would end in Parliament. He also told me that he came second in the last elections but this time he would come first and it was true.

Mr Speaker, he was a very special man because he came from a remote area but he had strong beliefs that led him into Parliament. When he came into Parliament, he would always talk about Middle-Ramu. Sometimes, I would jokingly say, 'Is your name Middle-Ramu?' He would just laugh. Many of us here starting with the Prime Minister, ministers and members shared about certain characteristics he possessed, I can confirm that it is true. He was just one of a kind.

In our 'hausman', in the United Resource Party, he was a circuit breaker. Whenever, there was a misunderstanding, the honorable Jonny Alonk will always make us smile, laugh and make peace. He was a peacemaker in the Parliament for our party. He was a strong man; he was a kwila of the United Resource Party and also for Madang. He believed in Madang Province. I have never come across someone like him, he was special.

Mr Speaker, in the Government he truly believed in the leadership of the Prime Minister, James Marape. I can honestly say that he was a kwila because when we were at Loloata, he was one of the special 52, we have lost two of them already so our number dropped down to 50, but he was one of a few members who told the Prime Minister that he did not want to have a portfolio. Being a Minister is something that many members dream of, but he deliberately refused to hold a portfolio. His reason was that his electorate was very remote and he felt it needed more attention so if he was going to accept a portfolio, his attention would be diverted from his electorate. he was a true servant of his people.

Mr Speaker, when I heard the news that he had passed away, I was in shock and I kept thinking if it really was him because we both had travelled to Hagen on Friday.

24/10

Not many people think badly of him. We don't want this kind of leaders to leave us early. But in the case of Honourable Johnny Alonk, when I heard the news, I started asking myself, and I almost questioned God, why? But then this thought came to me, 'I am just a mere human being. I have not right to question God. God gives and God takes.

His presence in the Parliament, the URP Party, the Government camp at Loloata and even here, he was a blessing to us and for that I thank God. I know that when we all go back and prepare to face our people to give us the mandate for another five years to represent our people, we will be missing him. His family, supporters and the people of Middle Ramu will have to go back and start the long process of looking for his successor. A man who must be good enough to fill his shoes. It is a difficult task.

Mr Speaker, I can only imagine the difficulties and loneliness, will face when they go through these long hard days of their lives.

On behalf of all my people, I want to thank God for giving us this strong and unique leader to the people of Middle Ramu, Madang and Papua New Guinea.

Honourable Johnny Ananias Alonk, what can I say? God gave you to all of us and he has recalled you.

May your soul rest in eternal peace until we meet again brother.

Motion – That condolences be noted – agreed to.

Mr SPEAKER – As a mark of respect to the memory of the late honourable gentleman I ask all honourable Members to stand in their places.

(All honourable Members stood in their places)

Mr SPEAKER – I thank the Parliament.

25/10

Pall bearers escort the casket of the Late Honourable Jonny Alonk Member of Middle Ramu out of the Chamber.

26/10

Mr SPEAKER – Honourable Members, I understand we have plenty of business that we have to attend to. To show our sympathy and respect to our colleague and brother, I now suspend Parliament for lunch until 2 p.m.

Sitting suspended from 12 noon to 2 p.m.

27/10

MOTION BY LEAVE

Mr RAINBO PAITA (Finschhafen – Minister for Planning and Monitoring) – I seek leave of Parliament to move a motion without notice.

Leave granted.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS – REARRANGEMENT OF BUSINESS

Motion (by **Mr Rainbo Paita**) agreed to –

That so much of the *Standing Orders* be suspended as would prevent Notice Nos: 290, 291 Government Business and 273 Private Business, being called on forthwith.

CENTRAL BANKING (AMENDMENT) BILL 2020

First Reading

Bill presented by **Mr Ian Ling-Stuckey** and read a first time

Second Reading

Mr IAN LING-STUCKEY (Kavieng – Minister for Treasury) – I move –

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr Speaker, today is an important day in our country's history. One of the key institutions in a well-functioning economy is a modern and strong Central Bank. The Central Bank plays several key roles in making every day things in our economy work well. A modern and strong Central Bank should work hard to ensure that inflation is kept under control. It should work hard to ensure we have an efficient and competitive banking market and ensure our kina can be converted into any currency around the world. It should work hard to ensure that our

payment systems work well so the cheques are honored and electronic transfers are done received smoothly. It should work hard to ensure that it provides good banking services to the government.

28/10

Background

Mr Speaker, I was a Member of this Parliament, when proposed amendments to our *Central Bank Act* were discussed and debated back in 1999 and passed in 2000. Change was needed to stop the constant move of Governors and the blowout in monetary financing of the deficit.

Twenty years on, my strong sense was that it was time to do a review and consider if we should do better. Indeed, we probably should have had such a review many years ago, ten years after that amendment.

I was very pleased to receive the Independent Advisory Group's review of the *Central Banking Act* after it was commissioned on 13 May 2021.

The report was an excellent document and all of its detailed arguments are on the web. I thank the members of the IAG, the Chairman Robert Igara, as well as Sir Wilson Kamit and Professor Stephen Howes, for the long hours they have put into producing such a fine report.

I thank members also of the Secretariat supporting the review, including the detailed comments from the IMF. I also thank all the financial institutions and business organisations that have also participated in the review.

The report has 31 recommendations from its first phase. The Government has accepted 21 recommendations in whole or in part with a further eight recommendations deferred to work in with Phase 2 of the review next year.

Mr Speaker, I agree strongly with the view by the IAG, that reforms are now needed. Let me go through some of these that are included in the legislative changes, before the Parliament today.

Governance Reforms

Mr Speaker, PNG has been left behind by almost all other countries. We are one of only four countries in the world that focuses all power over monetary policy in one person, we need a more collegiate approach. About half the world, gives responsibility for monetary policy to the Central Bank Board, the other half to a more specialised Monetary Policy Committee.

Overall, we consider that the latter option may be the way forward for PNG, but a final decision on this has been deferred until the second phase of the review. This is because we may

want a similar committee covering the important issue of financial regulation. At this stage, the decision has been made to give the responsibility to a reformed Central Bank Board.

Mr Speaker, the Central Bank Board will be strengthened and reformed. Currently, five members are heads of five bodies. There have been some exceptional people that have served and continue to serve, and I thank them for their contributions.

Going forward, we have decided on an appointment process where greater emphasis is given to merit and their ability to contribute to the important work of the Board.

29/10

The consultative processes have been strengthened, including having two members of the Board appointed largely by the Board itself. One of these people must be person with strong international experience with central banks and be a non-resident, we want fresh ideas to be fed into board discussions. We have also decided on an Independent Chair of the Board, once again strengthening the shift to a more collegiate model of decision-making. We have also decided to have a slightly smaller board, down from the previous maximum of 11 down to a more manageable nine, including the governor and a deputy governor. This will be a more powerful, a more qualified, stronger board aligned with its increased responsibilities.

Good reform, good modernisation.

Reforming objectives

The objectives of a central bank are vital for shaping its priorities, its functions and even its culture. We have worked on the existing objectives, and updated them.

Mr Speaker, one of the most important and controversial decisions is to broaden the objectives of monetary policy to include both price stability as well as supporting growth in incomes and jobs. For many, this would seem an obvious truth, of course, we should do both. But, history is littered with experiences of Central Banks printing money to fund unsustainable budget deficits, so we need to be careful, and specific caps have been placed on such funding.

In PNG, we believe the board will have the wisdom to carefully make judgements when there are tradeoffs. Indeed, as a business person, we constantly need to work to get the right balance, between different parts of our business, in usually very uncertain environments.

We have modified the second objective to ensure that financial regulation is designed to promote both stability and also development, to also promote competition and innovation, using the best of modern technology. As a Government, we are concerned about excess market concentration, leading to super-profits, on the back of excess fees, poor services and high

interest rates. This objective change allows for more balance including encouraging more competition.

Mr Speaker, we also want a central bank that also gives greater weight to its role as the banker of Government. We need more modern services, when it comes to auctions for financial assets. We need greater priority given to ensuring that the cheque and payment systems work, let's get rid of bouncing government cheques which are a major problem for businesses, as well as Government itself.

We have listened carefully to the counsel for and against the broadening of the bank's objectives. At this stage in PNG's development, and as an important part of transforming and modernising the Central Bank itself, we consider the

Marape Government as having struck the right balance for future years. In a few more years, it will be timely to look at these objectives again to ensure the right balance has been struck.

30/10

Strengthening and clarifying the independence of the Bank on financing

The report highlighted the need for greater clarity on the role of the bank in financing. There were worrying practices in the past, that seemed to relate to pressure, being applied on the bank by the former government to purchase government securities. These arrangements have been clarified. Clear limits have now been set.

There will be a temporary advance facility that can only act as a cash flow financing tool within any one year. The BPNG Board can determine whether to purchase government securities — not just one person. There is now a strict cap on the size of any such purposes — not an unlimited arrangement previously.

This cap works to ensure that political pressure cannot be applied to finance a budget deficit rather than supporting the banks objectives through monetary policy. This limit can be lifted during emergencies, but only in specific circumstances and once again with a clear cap.

Phase 2 — Financial Sector Regulation

Mr Speaker, the second phase of the review will focus on the financial sector, including the commercial banks and both the superannuation and insurance sectors. Few people realise how important the financial sector is to our economy.

According to the 2022 Budget papers, when we look at the GDP numbers, we see that the financial and insurance sector is estimated to be worth K2,341.7 million in 2022. This is

nearly 50 per cent bigger than the entire manufacturing sector and about the same size as the entire health sector.

Mr Speaker, we need to encourage development of our finance and insurance sectors. The Marape Government wants to harness the extraordinary advances in mobile phones, to modernise our entire financial system so that everyone throughout our country is finally included with access to cash, loans and insurances.

The second phase of the IAG's work will also examine the application of anti-money laundering and counter terrorism financing rules, BPNG's financial management and performance, the shortage of cash in 2021, and improved data communication.

So, in conclusion, Mr Speaker, I would like to thank all those who work in the Bank of Papua New Guinea. So much of the work you do is vital to our country's economy.

I thank the Governor for his near 12 years of services as governor, a long time indeed to lead any organisation, let alone one as important as the Central Bank. I also thank those involved in the financial sector throughout our country.

These changes are important to modernise and strengthen the combined independence, governance, accountability and transparency of our Central Bank. These changes promise a transformative change in our economy. A change that will help lift the prospects for higher incomes, more jobs and a lower cost of living.

31/10

The Marape Government is continuing to deliver on the economic transformation to take back PNG and leave no child behind.

Mr Speaker, this bill proposes amendments to the *Central Bank Act* to;

(1) bring about governance responds to the Central Bank boosting its independence, decision making processes and accountability to the Central Bank.

(2) Provide for reform and objectives to broaden the objectives to monetary policy to include both price stability as well as supporting economic growth for the first time.

(3) Provide for the Central Bank to pursue the development as well as the stability of the financial sector

(4) Strengthen and clarify the independence of the Central Bank in its financing operations.

Mr Speaker, I commend the bill.

Motion – That the question be now put – agreed to.

Motion – That the Bill be now read a second time – agreed to.

Bill read a second time

Third Reading

Leave granted to make the third reading forthwith.

Motion (by **Mr Ian Ling-Stuckey**) proposed –

That the Bill be now read a second time

Mr BELDEN NAMAH (Vanim-Green) – Mr Speaker, I understand why most of the members in the Government are rushing to put questions, they think that I will be negative towards the amendment that is before the Parliament.

Good bills like this must be supported by the Opposition. I believe that the amendment is overdue. The last time it was debated as alluded to and reflected in the Treasurer's speech was in 1999, debated and passed in 2000.

And it is almost 20 years since the *Central Bank Act* has been reviewed and I want to highly commend the Treasurer and the Government for bringing this particular amendment of the *Central Bank Act* to the Parliament at this time. We are already in the 21st century and as such bills like this need to be reviewed to conform with the changing environment. And just by looking at it I believe the Government has made the right decision.

32/10

Whilst we do acknowledge that the Central Bank should be independent, it has to align its policies towards driving the Government's policies in order for us to deliver much needed services to our people. Any institution including the Central Bank that operates within confined jurisdiction must put our people and its interest first. It must be people friendly towards the government's policies. This can only be achieved if we have got institutions in place.

I am very happy with this bill because the Treasurer has gone through the jurisdiction consultation with the respective stakeholders and this is something that I always emphasize on the Floor of Parliament; having to consult with important stakeholders. So, the Treasurer has gone through all these consultations and he has finally come with an outcome which is the bill that is before us.

I fully support this bill because I believe that such amendments like these where we formulate and implement monetary policies with the view of achieving and maintaining price stability. I also want to give credit to the Minister for Agriculture, although he was criticizing me in his speech yesterday, I support him for price stability in the country. This particular act supports that; it promotes growth especially in the non-mineral sector such as the agriculture sector and it also helps formulate the financial regulations with prudent standards so that our financial institutions can operate within those standards.

Mr Speaker, I commend the Treasurer for reducing the number of board members. 11 members is a number too many, because you are looking at paying the board members and by reducing it, you are saving money. Also, smaller boards, makes it more user friendly for our people.

Mr Speaker, we the Opposition would like to support these amendments and we also would like to thank the Government for bringing them to this Floor. I would like to borrow the Treasurer's words in my closing remarks, 'these changes are important to modernize and to strengthen the combined independence, governance and accountability of the Central Bank', which is the key point and you got that right.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr JAMES MARAPE (Tari-Pori –Prime Minister and Minister for Bougainville Affairs) – before, I will put the question, to the Treasurer's Paper, I just want to commend the Opposition Leader for absolute maturity at this instance. He has always been matured about those issues and sometimes when he argues from the other side, we think that he is drawing a personal line,

Mr Speaker, one point he made about the Treasurer bringing in this report at the back of consultations, no ordinary people were consulted on this, we had Sir Wilson Kamit the former Governor of the bank who served for quite a long time and Mr Robert Igara, the former Chief Secretary who worked in Finance and Planning for many years. –

33/10

Then, we have Professor Steven Howes of Australian National University (ANU), who is sometimes a stiff criticizer of government policy, especially in respect to the economy sector.

So, the Treasurer did a round of consultations and it was not as if the industry was not consulted. We also asked the Governor of Bank of Papua New Guinea to contribute to this and he did offer his commentary. Most of his commentary was inviting and never sat with the Treasurer to go through in detail, based on the submission that was put forward.

So, the reform is timely and it doesn't infringe into the independence of the Bank but adds value and gives modern approach to the way the bank should conduct its business in ensuring our economy is kept alive in these times that we are going through.

Mr Speaker, on this side of the House we, recommend the Bill to be supported.

Motion – That the question be now put – agreed to.

Motion – That the Bill be now read a third time – agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

REGULATORY STATUTORY AUTHORITIES (APPOINTMENT TO CERTAIN OFFICES) (AMENDMENT) BILL 2021

First Reading

Bill presented by **Mr Ian Ling-Stuckey** and read a first time.

Second Reading

Leave granted to move the second reading forthwith.

Mr IAN LING-STUCKEY (Kavieng – Minister for Treasury) – I move –

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr Speaker, this Bill proposes amendments to the *Regulatory Statutory Authorities (Appointment to Certain Offices) Act* and is a consequential amendment to the *Central Bank Act* to:

(1) ensure the appointment process for the Governor of the Central Bank and its key position are in line with the requirement of a central bank and not just of a statutory authority and,

(2) the appointment processes are fully contained within the *Central Bank Act*.

Mr Speaker, I commend the Bill.

Motion – That the question be now put – agreed to.

Motion – That the Bill be now read a second time – agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Third Reading

Bill, by leave, read a third time.

34/10

NATIONAL CAPITAL DISTRICT COMMISSION (AMENDMENT) BILL 2021

First Reading

Bill presented by **Mr Robert Agarobe** and read a first time

Second Reading

Leave granted to move the Second Reading forthwith.

Mr ROBERT AGAROBÉ (Central) – I move-

That the Bill be now read a second time

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Prime Minister, Honourable James Marape, Opposition Leader, Honourable Belden Namah, Honourable Ministers and Honourable Members of this honourable House.

I'm honoured and humbled to bring to you this Private Members' Bill on behalf of my people of Central Province.

Mr Speaker, my Private Members Bill is about taking a step to correct a wrong. Port Moresby, the capital city of Papua New Guinea is located in the center of Central Province. It has been a very controversial issue for a very long time, further complicated by the passing of the *National Capital District Commission Act 2001*.

The amendment that I am tabling today, is to correct part of the *National Capital District Commission Act 2001* to safeguard the indigenous people of Central Province which includes the East and West Hiri, the Koitabu and the Koiari people who have lived and owned land in Port Moresby and the National Capital District is located. It is for the benefit of the residents of Port Moresby, the business community, visitors and Papua New Guinea as a whole.

Mr Speaker, I presented a petition on the Floor of the Honorable House on behalf of my people of Central Province on the 1 of June 2018 and that was for Parliament to appoint the Parliamentary Standard Committee to deal with our issues going back 135 years. On 14 of August 2018, I presented the same paper at the Governor's conference in Madang. The Governors unanimously supported the petition for the people of Central Province. Again on the 26 of November 2020, I tabled the same issue again in the Central Provincial Assembly and the Central Province members voted unanimously to petition Parliament to immediately and with utmost urgency address our Central Province issues and that has led to this Private Members Bill. In 2020, I met with the National Capital District Commission and IRC team to discuss this issue, but nothing came out of this meeting.

Mr Speaker, prior to Independence, Port Moresby was a town of the then Central District. As a primary town of Central District it was Central's commercial hub and economic center. It was an asset to the Central district.

35/10

However, following the enacting of Port Moresby city and giving it the National Capital District, no compensation or alternate asset was given to Central Province for its loss.

Mr Speaker, since then Port Moresby has become the crown jewel of Papua New Guinea, not only does it feed the National Government, it also houses most of the commercial activity

that happens in the country. It is now the most significant asset belonging to Papua New Guinea. Central Province gave the greatest gift to the Independent State of Papua New Guinea. It gave a hub of Commerce that would generate cash flow, business and self-starting economic growth for the country.

Mr Speaker, the nation of Papua New Guinea owes a great deal of gratitude to the people of Central Province for the sacrifice and free gift to the nation. It has been given with great cause and sacrifice. Today, we are without our own city, we are forced to coexist and work with fellow Papua New Guineans in the city and we continue to suffer as the land grabbing continues into our customary land. Even beyond the boundaries set by the Organic Law of the Boundaries of the National Capital District.

Mr Speaker, while many of the provinces have major assets such as mines and plantations that contributes to the nation and at the same time bring benefits back to their provinces. Central province gave Papua New Guinea a cash sustaining city but enjoys very little of the benefits of these assets.

Mr Speaker, how much more will my people be forced to give to the nation without getting some return for their contribution. The National Goals and Directives Principle (1) talks about Equality and participation. It demands that every citizen of this country must have equal opportunity to contribute and to participate in the benefits of development in the country. But, for my people, we seem to only contribute but not participate in the benefits of development of this great city.

Mr Speaker, this will change today. As Governor and leader of the people of Central Province, my paramount loyalty is to my people. They mandated me to represent them in this honorable House, to speak for them and to fight if I have to, for their rights to be heard to be treated fairly and equally.

Mr Speaker, my people have been reduced to nothing in terms of human dignity, where we walk around with fear and feeling like strangers. My people are harassed and murdered and raped on our own land and denied our human right as enshrined in our mother law, our *Constitution*.

Mr Speaker, Central province has been fighting for a fair share of the GST revenue collected in the city since Independence and 2004, when the laws were amended. Mr Speaker, in addition to the amendment regarding the GST, the Bill proposes amendments to the governing structure of the National Capital District Commission (NCDC). This puts back the power in the proper governing authority which is the Board of the National Capital District Commission and not in any single member of the board. As a major contributor and stakeholder

in the National Capital District, Central province has the right and standing to produce and introduce this Bill to improve the governance of the city of Port Moresby.

I will now explain the specific outcomes of the Bill. This amended Bill is to provide clear demarcation of powers for the Board, Chairman and Manager of the National Capital District Commission by clarifying, removes doubt, ensuring a secure redistribution of the National Capital District GST revenue to Central Provincial Government, the Gulf Provincial Government and the Motu-Koitabu Council.

(1) The membership of the Commission, Section 5, the Governor of Central to be included as the National Capital District Commission Commissioner and representative members to be ex-officio heads of representative groups, rather than appointment by the Chair. Section 5 (1)(e) is amended by removing the provincial administrator and inserting the Governor as an ex-officio member of the National Capital District Commission. This will add significantly to the voice of the Central province in the affairs of the National Capital District Commission and in the running of the city.

Mr Speaker, Section 5 of the National Capital District Act will be amended to replace the provincial administrator with the provincial governor as member of the NCDC Commission. The reason being that the provincial administrator is only responsible for the provincial administration. The provincial member or the Governor is mandated by the people of Central Province and therefore is more a representative of the people of Central Province. This is vital in regards to the land development and the expansion of city boundaries into Central province land. For example, the Ivaso Physical Planning area which is referred to in the Amazing Port Moresby Urban Development Plan, starting from Gaire and covers all of Koiari, Vanapa Brown and all the way to Manu Manu, which is the Hiri district.

36/10

The Ivaso physical plan is a case of encroachment into Central Province, with the Central Province Governor as the Chair of the Central, Provincial Executive Council and the Central Provincial Assembly, can resolve many of these controversies at the board level with NCDC rather than going through lengthy and expensive court battles.

The amendment also removes the Chair's discretion to appoint the members to represent interest groups under *Section 51 (D)*. The current provision allows for the Chair to appoint member and this increases the risk of cronyism. The amendment will provide for the interest group to be properly represented by recognised leaders from the formal organisation representing this interest. The interest groups are:

- (a) Women Group – To be represented by the President of National Council of Women,
- (b) Youth – To be represented by the Head of the National Youth Development Authority,
- (c) Trade Union – To be represented by the Head of the PNG Trade Union Congress, and
- (d) Business – To be represented by the Head of the Port Moresby Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

All of these will be ex-officio members and maybe represented by a proxy or delegate. The inclusion of the business community in place of the settlement representative is appropriate as the business community is the life blood of the capital city.

(2) Chairman and Deputy Chairman, *Section 6*. The current provision of powers for the chair effectively makes the Chair's position significantly more important and more powerful than the board and the manager and is prone to abuse. There is a high risk of lack of accountability and lack of transparency. Some of the powers listed should be vested in the board and others should be vested in the city manager and some should be in the board as a whole.

The amendments make clear demarcation of powers within the board, the manager and the chair. This will improve transparency and accountability whilst distributing powers appropriately. The chair will have the powers to:

- (A) Conduct meetings of the commission,
- (B) On behalf of the commission and at its discretion or direction, present recommendation to the National Government on measures pertaining to the powers and functions of the commission and other specific powers provided within the *Act*.

(3) Authentication of documents, *Section 13*. This power bestowed on the chairman maybe subject to abuse and therefore the subsection changes should play some guidelines on its use, to ensure it is used responsibly. A document that has been affixed with the seal has not been properly authenticated can be deemed to be invalid.

- (4) Powers of the commission, *Section 16*. The amendments add the powers to:
 - (1) Divide and manage budget of the commission and to change the budget and
 - (2) To investigate any transaction that maybe questionable to existing powers of the commission.

(5) Staff, *Section 20*. There should be clear demarcation as to who is in charge with respect to the staff of the commission. All staff are to be appointed by the manager and not the board. The manager as the CEO has control and direction over the staff. The board will approve an organisational structure, they are to establish the positions and the terms and conditions for

the staff to which the manager will comply when employing staff. Direct influence and control by members of the ward will be forbidden.

(6) Manager, Section 21. The amendment will clarify that the manager is responsible for the staff of the commission. It must also be made clear that the manager is responsible to the commission and comply with lawful directions of the board. The manager will not be subject to the direction of the chair alone as the law currently allows but to the entire board. The manager's functions and powers are also clarified to accompany its independence. Currently, the law provides no powers to the City Manager, except that which is given to him from time to time by the board and more directly by the Chairman of NCD. The amendments will specify a number of administrative functions for the city manager so that he can operate under a legislative framework rather than being at the day to day direction of the chair.

(7) GST revenue redistribution to Central Provincial Government, Gulf Provincial Government and the Motu-Koatabu Council, *Section 33*.

The Section 33 will be repair and replace with a new *Section 33* that is clear and unambiguous to provide for the redistribution of the GST revenue from National Capital District Commission to Central, Gulf and Motu Kortabu.

37/10

The new *section 33* of the *NCDC Act* will reinforce Parliaments original intention in the amendments of 2004 and 2008, when it created a redistribution scheme for the GST revenues due to the National Capital District Commission, under the *Repel Goods & Service Tax Revenue Distribution Act* and the *Inter-Governmental Relations Functions & Funding Act, 2009*.

The amendment is to secure the redistribution of the revenue entitlements to the Central Provincial Government, Gulf Provincial Government and the Motu-Koitabu Council. As the creator of the earlier GST Trust, the Parliament is entitled to redistribute the Trust Property as it sees fit.

Section 33 (2), of the *NCDC Act* has not been applied as intended since its enactment for many reasons, including the positions taken by the past IRC Commissioner General and the National Capital Commission. This has led to the purpose of *section 33* of the *NCDC Act* being completely defeated.

Sub-section 1, will be amended to provide for the correct references to the payments to be made under that provision. The proper reference to the payment of GST is revenue redistribution, rather than financial assistance. The review of *subsection 1*, will make it

mandatory that the GST revenue entitlements due to the National Capital District Commission shall be redistributed according to *section 33*.

Sub-section 2, provides that the Internal Revenue Commission shall pay amount directly to Central Provincial Government, Gulf Provincial Government and the Motu-Koitabu Council in the prescribed portion.

Sub-section 3, removes uncertainty as to the source of money to be utilised to fulfil the redistribution obligation. The source is clearly the inland GST Trust account for the National Capital District. The new *sub-section 3*, is for the avoidance of doubt and this will be administered by the Commissioner General of the Internal Revenue Commission.

Mr Deputy Speaker, with above remarks, I now commend the Bill to this Honourable House. Thank you.

Mr BELDEN NAMAHA (Vanimu-Green) – Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I would like the Parliament to take note on the amendment introduced by the Central Governor.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I have heard what the Governor has said, in regard to making amendments to the *NCDC Act*. I believe that this amendment should be brought forth by the Governor responsible, which is the Governor of NCD.

Port Moresby is the city of Papua New Guinea. Yet, dwelling in Port Moresby, is the entire country. Every Province must have its own provincial capital but, you have built his own city in order to collect tax.

We cannot allow provinces to encroach into other provinces to collect tax. We are setting a bad precedence, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Whilst we acknowledge that the people of Gulf and Central Province travel in and out of Port Moresby, but it is the city of Papua New Guinea. Today, you will find that, there are more Papua New Guineans living in Port Moresby City than the rest of Gulf and Central Province.

Papua New Guineans have moved in to Port Moresby city to generate income and tax for the city. The Governor of NCD should be collecting tax in order to continue to improve the city.

If we support this Bill, we are going to set a precedence for Lae and if the Lae City Council will be collecting tax, Huon-Gulf will come and ask for tax. Nawae will come and ask for tax because their districts encroach into Lae City.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Central Province received more than K50 million when I was then Minister for Forest in Somare Government to build Central City. Where is the city now? You build your own city and collect your own tax and be responsible. This is a lazy men way of doing business by trying to put your hands into somebody else pocket.

It's a lazy men way and this Bill should not be supported Mr Deputy Speaker, it should not be supported at all.

Mr James Marape – Point of Order! With respect to the Honourable Opposition Leader, the use of the word lazy-and I know he is trying to get to a point-but in the presence of the Governor of Central Province, the Bill went before the Private Members Committee before being presented here today. So, I asked the Opposition Leader to use an appropriate word rather than the word lazy because it may make infringe to Governor which may seem as lazy scheme.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER – Honourable Prime Minister, your point of order is in order, Opposition Leader please refrain from using this word.

Mr BELDEN NAMAH – Mr Deputy Speaker, maybe I should put it this way; we should not find it as an easy way because we see money in a certain place to come and try and have access to that money.

Let's try to build and grow our own money, you are Governor of Central Province, so build a city and start putting regulations in place to collect your own tax. The same should apply to Gulf Governor, start building your own cities.

Mr Deputy Speaker, whilst I agree with the Governors comments in relation to land grapping in and around the perimeters of the city is an administrative matter. You shouldn't go and talk to your landowners; they are the ones selling their lands because you can't provide the alternatives. You should allocate funds to them to start incorporate their land and lease their land instead of selling them.

And that's the way to go and I do that in my district by allocating funds to the landowners to incorporate their land groups so that they can lease them. So that whoever wants to use it for whatever business purposes or build residents may do so.

Unfortunately, it's not happening here so you should look at alternatives. But I don't think that's the right way to go. NCDC needs all the money it can to build our city and when the tourist and foreign investors come and land here, they will see our image through the city.

We should give credit to the Governor and all the Members of National Capital District. They have done their best to change the face of Port Moresby. When the Government cannot allocate the money then they use the tax and put it back into the city. And I see the city happenings right in front of me. It has changed a lot in the last 15 years and we have to give credit. And I don't think this Bill is necessary but unnecessary and this applies to all the Governors to build your own provincial cities and collect tax.

Mr Deputy Speaker, its high time we must talk about the autonomy, Government should now look at provinces collecting their own tax by keeping 80 per cent and return 20 per cent back to the National Government. That's the way to go so that's build provincial headquarters and collect our own tax and don't try to collect from other provinces because this province is making a lot of money so I have to get some.

For instances, when you see another person's garden full of banana or taro ready to be harvested and you harvest them without the owner's approval. Its not the right way you cannot do that without the owner's permission.

Let's be competitive and generate our own internal revenue, Mr Speaker. We in the opposition will not support this, Bill. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

39/10

Mr POWES PARKOP (National Capital District) – Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, for allowing me this opportunity to debate on this very important proposed amendment by my colleagues from Central Province.

Mr Deputy Speaker and Members of Parliament, Prime Minister. The Governor and our people of Central Province have a lot of issues. Many are legacies and some of them are legitimate issues.

But the important thing for us to remember is, should this issues be solved by our capital city? This is what we all should remember in debating and maybe voting on this proposed amendment.

As I see it, all the concerns that the Governor has, should have been oversighted by the particular portfolio minister. If it is finance, the treasury, the Finance Minister should have oversight over this. They try to have balance, work it out. What is in the national interest, what is in the interest of the Central Province and how we can manage them together?

If it is about governance, this is something that the Minister for Inter-Government Relations should have oversight. And not the come in this way in which I could say, Mr Deputy

Speaker, is a bit of piecemeal way in, trying to solve a very important issue that has historical, legacies.

The important point I want to emphasise is this, Port Moresby is our Capital City and all of us are stakeholders, the National government, Opposition, all of us MPs of all the provinces have business interest in the city. All Members of Parliament also have your houses and properties in the city. The well-being of the city is important, equally for us individually but also most importantly for us as a nation.

It's our capital so we all have a stake in it. Of course, Central Province has a stake in it too. But the question that we must ask ourselves is that, should the interest of one stake holder, maybe because it is a big major stake holder, override the national interest?

For me, I'm just a steward. The people in the city have given me the mandate and the same goes for with my three open colleagues and they are just stewards. We are just managing it for everyone. We are managing it for the National Government too because we are in the seat of the National Government. We are not managing it for ourselves.

For provinces, you all manage it for our people in the provinces. And we all come to share a bit of time with you all, maybe some people have investment in your province. But in our capital city we manage it for everyone.

And I'd like to think that we have done absolutely well. If some things are working, why do we need to change it?

And so, when it comes to the governance issue, the important thing I want to emphasise is that, I did not set up this governance structure that is in place. My three colleagues here did not set it up. We have been given a governance structure that we have to make it work.

The powers there, I did not ask of it from this Parliament. This Parliament in its wisdom or whatever gave us those power so we have used it as best as we can to deliver your capital city, our capital city.

It's here too for our people of Central Province. There are some concerns, but we have not deprived them of anything. Education facilities are here for everyone. Residence for sending your children to school and colleges its available to the entire country as well as our people in Central Province. The hospitals or health services too is open to our people in Central Province. The markets as well.

Of course, the Governor of Central has some issues with that in terms of security and so on. I too have concern with security.

I wish we do not have harassment and such level of violence in the market. That is something that is collectively our responsibility. If it is about law and order the police are there, I don't control the police and if it is about the PMV, then it is a matter for the Minister for transport, I do not control the PMVs or Taxi services in the city.

It is a National Government responsibility as we have been given a governance structure that we are asked to manage and we are managing it. In terms of the proposal that our good Governor is proposing for Central Province, I will go to a few of them so you all can work it out.

If we are going to have a representative of a council of women on the commission, I would like to have that too, but, in the city. and in the provinces, ask yourself, is the Council of Women functioning or not? There is no council of women that exists in substance. The current President of the Council of Women has been there for donkey's years. I envy her because I would have no need for election and be the Governor for 30 years.

It does not work and I can give you all an example; we had Ms Kila Amini, she was asked to represent women because she was the CEO of the YWCA and when her time lapsed, I had a look around as to who can be a proper representative and of course we appointed the late Janet Sape. She was appointed on merit, she was someone who articulated and advocated for women in the city through financial empowerment. She set up the women's bank. And when she passed away, we asked for expression of interest and had 16 women come forward. They were outstanding women with merits, many had degrees and so forth. I tried to use my discretion diligently. I did not use it for my personal self-interest and we tried to find the right person to represent the women in advocacy, empowering and so forth. We appointed on merit and accordingly, and she is not my relative.

Mr Speaker, let us now look at the youth council; in the city, the youth council does not exist too. Try to imagine if we had a representative of the youth council, there would be mayhem in the city. All the youths will say, they are the head and we do not know the age limit for the youths and this in itself is a problem. Also, with settlements, we have a lot of them but my predecessor Wari Vele appointed someone from Koki-Wanigela and when I came in, I just allowed him to stay on.

The former representative for the youth was from Hula who lived on Fishermen Island appointed by my predecessor and I just let him stay on whether you are youth or not and sadly, he passed away this year. And we have not abused this power it worked and we have used it diligently. And we have used it for the greater good of the city and the country. So, to suggest

by this proposed change that we are abusing our potential in abusing power is not real. My three Open Members can vouch for this. We all do the decisions together in terms of governance.

The other issue that the Honourable Member should draw attention to is that the proposal for the Governor for Central to be on our board and replacing the administrators.

It is alright that he has advocated his case but what he is proposing does not exist in the country or in a government in one province, even a district.

41/10

We say we are a district, but we are a government on our own. There are a few governors in one PEC or one provincial assembly. We don't have this in Papua New Guinea, so if we are going to set a precedent in Papua New Guinea, then we must be very clear that we are setting a precedent now. Today, it is starting in our national capital, tomorrow maybe it will happen in Lae because people from Eastern Highlands come and spend their money in Lae City.

So, the Governor of Eastern Highlands may ask to be made a member of the Morobe Provincial Government or Lae City Authority.

Let's think about the implications. I am just saying this but the main point is that this needs national oversight and not only one stakeholder presenting it because of their own interest. As I said, they may have a big interest but it must be managed by a national oversight because this is the national capital city. It is not my private business.

I am here now. Tomorrow in the next election our people might be fed up with me and vote me out. But it is our capital city. That's the main thing. How it is managed, how it is financed, is a concern for all of us. We must not be personal about it or subjective about it. We must be objective. We have to do this objectively.

In terms of GST, this is the situation. The Governor has reduced it to 10 per cent, that's already in the Act. The reason why we have not implemented this Act is because it is conflicting Act. It is conflicting with the *Inter-government Function and Funding Act*. In that Act, the National Fiscal Commission tried to work out what a fair distribution of GST is and then they came up with a structure for its distribution. So we have the NCDC Act which directs us to distribute it this way and another Act which directs us the other way.

So, what are we going to do.? Do we go by what this Act says or do we just go by what we have been doing before, giving them five per cent and Motu-Koita two per cent? Up to now, we have not given anything to Gulf Province because if we give to Gulf, what's stopping Enga from to.

With due respect to my brother from Gulf, it becomes a bit ridiculous if we go down that way. So, that's why we decided not to give to Gulf. We give them services here. They come to the stores and hospitals here. So, we need to keep the money here to look after everyone.

In terms of the real figure, this is what it will mean. It will come down to about 15 per cent. That's about K75 million. So, if we give Central Province, Motu-Koita and Gulf Province what is being proposed here, we will be cutting our budget by K75 million.

You may think that K75 million is not a substantial amount of money but our highest budget allocation up to now is only K300 million. And if I compare it to my brother here from Southern Highlands, Eastern Highlands, Morobe Province and Hela Province, our budget is less than theirs.

The reason why we are able to do a lot more than the other provinces is this, we have a power under our NCDC Act that the provinces do not have. I would like to suggest that the Minister for Inter-Government Relations and the Prime Minister, through the NEC should give this privilege to all our provinces. This is the power to get loans. In NCDC, we have the power to raise loan financing, so this is how we operate.

We look at our assets, liabilities and cash flow and then go to BSP and ask, can you give us this amount. And when they give it to us, we get work done and when the GST comes in dribs and drabs, we are able to pay it.

You in the provinces all have to go and ask the Minister for Finance or Treasury to go and get loans so you all wait for dribs and drabs and it never happens.

42/10

So, that's the privilege that we have and we need to share it to build our country. If the provinces lift, our country will lift. It is better equation than to cut our funds, powers, and reducing our ability. That's is why I am keep saying that the portfolio Minister or NEC should have oversight of this. With due respect to our good brother from Central Province, we are coming in a piecemeal way that will not create problem.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I want to explain properly and very sharp about the four types of GST;

(1) Inland GST, the law in the *Government Finance and Function Acts* state that, 'all the province receives 60 per cent and 40 per cent goes to the National Government', we all do that.

So, the Inland GST in the city, 60 per cent comes to National Capital District Capital and 40 per cent goes to the National Government.

There is another GST raised in the city and also in the provinces.

(2) Port GST, the sea port and the airport, 100 per cent tax goes to National Government and it doesn't come to National Capital District Capital. So, when we look at the real amount of money raised in the city, 70 per cent goes to the national government. That's why, I have given the proposal to my good brother that we divide it this way; we give you five or six per cent and the balance you get from the Port GST, which is what usually goes to consolidated revenue, because they can afford it.

(3) *Inter-Government Relation and Function Act*, we all know that as a penalty clause, if you raise money by GST or sale tax in the provinces, then grants coming from the National Government is automatically cut.

So, if we give K75 million to Central and Gulf Province, the National Government will benefit. Because the National Government will save K75 million because of the consequential impact of raising themselves by sharing the GST with us.

So, I don't think it will help Central Province because the functional grants coming from the National Government will be automatically cut from the funds they receive from National Capital District Commission. So, this is why, I keep saying that the National Government must solve this. There might be a legitimate issue, we need to help Central Province, I have no issue with that but it should not be at the expense of our Capital City.

Mr Deputy Speaker, through Parliament, we have created another government in the city call Motu-Koita Assembly in 2007. So, it's good that we recognize the legitimate land owners of our Capital City and empower them for the loss and all the problems they have encountered, but the problem is, when Parliament passed this law it did not come out clean with the financial mechanism to support Motu-Koita Assembly. So, the National Capital District Commission is funding the Motu-Koita Assembly.

So, this is what we have to do, we have to look after our city and you all know what we are doing. Collecting rubbish, roads maintenance and cleaning market every day, with all the different challenges that we face.

On top of this, all the provinces received functional grants for health, education, infrastructure, agriculture and National Capital District Commission never receive functional grants. Even in 2020, we received nothing from National Government and I never complained and tried to use whatever money we have to run our Capital City.

So, this is the situation we are in financially, so that's why I am not too keen on this amendment, if the amendment has to be changed then we must have oversight over it, to balance the interest of the Capital City, interest of Central Province and interest of Motu-Koita.

I would like to see Motu Koita Assembly receive more money, they deserve it. Central province deserve money, but if they allow businesses to grow in Central province, they will get GST. Governor Allan Bird has been here only for a term and he has doubled and tripled the GST base for East Sepik by allowing cocoa to flourish including vanilla and other cash crops. In the terms of our Capital City, I don't want to make an issue with our good Governor of Central, I respect him, but going back to history, legally and politically, Port Moresby has always been the capital. When the British came, they declared it as the capital of the territory of Papua, then it became the capital of Papua and New Guinea. Thank you, Deputy Speaker, but with respect to the Bill, I will go against it.

Mr LEKWA GURE (Rigo) – Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker for giving me the opportunity to contribute to this *NCDC Amendment Act* debate. Firstly, I wish to pay homage to the traditional landowners of this very place where this National Parliament stands, which are the Motuans and the Koitabu people. It's really important for us to recognize that. With all due respect to my in law, the Opposition Leader when he was speaking, I would have objected, but it's not my nature to interject when a person is speaking, so I would like to make a point that this amendment to the *NCDC Act* is necessary. It is a necessary *Act* because of some of the incidents which seem to be happening. Past leaders made some decisions which served specific purpose and this is the time to start correcting those mistakes. This amendment is well overdue because *Section 33* of the *NCDC Act*, talks about GST sharing. And we see that GST is not being shared equally, that is the reason why the amendment to *Section 33* of the *NCDC Act* brings more clarity. When this *NCDC Act* was written, they must have recognized something, that is why they inserted *Section 33* of the *NCDC Act*. Unlike the other provinces, you have your cities or towns, in the case of Central province, the city of Port Moresby is surrounded by Central Province.

This used to be the city of Central province. The town of Port Moresby is surrounded by Central province and one of the main reasons why we say that the GST share is not equitable is, our people who live in Central Province commute to the city of Port Moresby every day. Hundreds, if not thousands of people commute every day into the city for work and business. They spend their money here and go back to Central Province. All the Motuans along the Magi Highway, I don't know about Hiri West, but on the eastern side along the Magi Highway, the Barakaus, the Tubusereas, the Gaires and the Gabagabas and even the Sinaugoro villages of Kwalimurubu's, Saroa and Gidobada even as far as Kwikila township commute to Port

Moresby every day, to the markets and to do their work and then go back to Central Province. Even along the road from Gabagaba to Hula, the Tubutola people, they also live in the villages and come to the city of Port Moresby every day.

44/10

What we are saying is that, our people come and spend their money in NCD and therefore, the Central Province is entitled to a fair share of the GST that is generated in here by our Central people and to a lesser extent, our people in Gulf. Our PMVs load up every day to come into the city of Port Moresby to do their business.

Mr Deputy Speaker, it is my opinion that the GST sharing has not been fairly distributed. According to some calculations, the NCDC owes the Central Province some hundreds of millions of kina from unpaid GST. I would like to suggest that this Tenth Parliament be the body that starts correcting this process. I want to thank to the Marape-Basil Government for starting this process through, the launching of the Central Hospital last Monday. It is an example of this correction process.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the Central Province does not have a capital city or a town of its own. We do not have an airport or a seaport or any other facility for that matter. The launching of the hospital was a good start for that process.

Mr Deputy Speaker, let me conclude by talking about my understanding of those corrections to *Section 33* of the *NCDC Act*. The title of the section is, NCDC may offer financial remove assistance to Central Province. For goodness sake, NCDC is surrounded by the Central Province, why should they offer financial assistance to us. It is governed by law and the Central Province is entitled to that. Everything that this city is built upon on is provided by Central Province. For example, the water, the power and the market crops that feed this city comes from the Central Province. The Central Province people are peace-loving and very accommodating but that should not give anybody any reason to take advantage of them. We therefore must be given the due recognition that is due to us.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the clarity that is brought to *Section 33* of the *NCDC Act* is now clearer. Instead of using words like, may, the wording, shall be, must be written in the act thereof.

With all due respect, Governor Parkop made reference to the *Inter-Government Relations Functions and Funding Act*. What is proposed in this *NCDC Act* is mirrored in the *Inter-Government Act* and they are both harmonised. This makes things much easier. I appeal to this Honourable House that this Bill must be supported. In doing so, we are giving due recognition

to the traditional landowners on which the City of Port Moresby and this Parliament sits on.
Thank you.

Mr JOHN SIMON (Maprik- Minister for Agriculture and Livestock) – I also stand to support the Governor of Central. I also stand to be corrected by what the Leader of Opposition mentioned about a K50 million. This money must have been given before the time of our current Governor's term.

45/10

We cannot be blamed for funding that was given when we were not here. The Governor is doing the right thing.

I also come from a rural district and always talk about GST and wanted to have my share of GST.

Mr Belden Namah – Point of Order! What I'm alluding to is that, there was a K50 million allocated. It's either in this Government or in the previous government, there was money given to build Central city. That's all, so stop raising these unnecessary issues.

Mr JOHN SIMON – It was the government you were part of, I think.

My support to the Governor is that, we must recognise the people of Central. It is a must. When you look at the GST, the Governor has brought this Bill because he had not received some GST support. It is only fair to recognise Central and give some portion of the GST. Every province has their GST and are sharing it with their districts.

Mr Powes Parkop – Point of Order! I have to correct the Minister, we do give a portion of the GST to Central province, five (5) per cent goes to them. So, it's not that we don't give them anything. All these years, we have been giving them. We did not stop the GST from going to them. They just want more.

Thank you.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER – Honourable Governor, I would allow the Minister to continue with his debate. If we continue interjecting and correcting the debate, we will drag on so let the Minister complete his debate.

Mr JOHN SIMON – Thank you, Opposition leader. So, I support the Bill because the people of Central province deserve to be supported. When you really look at it, I think, NCDC was established for political convenience. I don't know, I stand to be corrected but what I am saying is, in our provinces, we have LLG Presidents and they become province. And in my district, I have presidents to sit in the district as DDA board members, but we have NCDC and electorates here and they don't have LLG Presidents. They appoint them, I guess. For us, we don't appoint them. They were elected by the people. So as for the provinces, we have presidents who become part of the provincial assembly and they get elected as well. So, when we look at this, it's only fair that you have a legitimate government. The Central Province is elected by the people where there is a provincial assembly and they should be given their share of the GST. The 10 per cent GST will not go to one electorate, Central Province will share with all its electorates. Now, we have four other electorates in Central Province; Abau, Kairuku-Hiri, Rigo and Goilala. So, that 10 per cent will eventually be redistributed among the four districts. And, it is only fair that we support this Bill. So, we should support the governor and this Bill. The governor has done the right thing to bring this Bill to this House and I support it.

Thank you.

Mr JUSTIN TKATCHENKO (Moresby South – Minister for Housing) – Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I appreciate you for recognising the people of Moresby Souths which we would not at all be supporting this Private Members Bill.

Firstly, I'd like to thank the Prime Minister for bringing the Central Governor, Governor of NCD and our members together on a couple of occasions to try and resolve this issue so that we can all come together as one and move on.

46/10

The issue comes down to personalities and political convenience at this time. This Bill is setting a very dangerous precedence especially for all the Governors.

Now let's make it very clear, I represent Moresby South and 40 per cent of those people are from Motu Koitabu. They are the traditional landowners of this city, not the people from Central. That's why the Motu Koita Assembly was established and set up, so they could have a say, and they could make sure that their people get looked after properly. So it's very clear, if the Motu Koita Chairman was sitting there presenting this Bill, then I'll be supporting it because they are the landowners here. I don't deal with the Central people when it comes to land issues or any other issues in my electorate, I deal with Motu Koitabuans. So let's make

that clear, where we live and we stand on right now. Exactly what the Member for Rigo has stated as well.

Now when it comes to sharing the GST, we have over a million people living in this city. We are a mini Papua New Guinea. As members of North East, North West and Moresby South, we have major challenges on our hands to ensure that our people are well looked after, have the right facilities, right utilities for their benefit, their communities and their families. We have three or four generations living in our city, especially in our settlements and also in our villages and our communities.

This is not just now, this is about a long-time development that has come up over a period of time, our Capital City is the beacon of light that shines throughout the country and must be used as an example of what can be achieved for all the other provinces as well. So, every toea that we get through income tax or revenue is needed to ensure our roads are done, our hospitals are there, health clinics, our schools are built and looked after, for the benefit of our ever-growing population.

When you start cutting our GST and our tax income, how are we going to maintain and look after all the facilities that we provide for our people, it's very difficult. We're completely different to the other provinces, we are an urban electorate, just like Lae, that looks after all of you. Who would be the first one to complain if the roads develop potholes and you can't drive on them, or if there's no water, no schools operating, or no health services? All of you! So we need as much revenue as we possibly can get, K300 million is not enough. Our budget in the city should go to at least half a billion to ensure that we can maintain the services that need to be provided to our people.

When it comes to the makeup of the NCDC Board and administration, where have we ever heard, two Governors serving on one provincial board, it's a joke! How can we do that? If we're gonna have the Governor for Central in this amendment to be on the Board with our Governor, I mean, come on! let's look at this seriously. Let's follow the proper process, let's not dodge and go around the current Government system that's in place and deviate from the proper process. The processes are there to get a successful outcome. It's for us to sit down together and work it out in a proper manner.

47/10

The most important thing is that, one person should not make a decision for all of us. The Department of Treasury, Finance and Inter-Government Relations all need to be consulted.

Governor Powes Parkop came with a proposal to the Central Provincial Government and the Governor to help him with raising his tax revenue for the benefit of the people of Central province, he didn't want to deal with that. And now we are in this stalemate, where we are now setting a dangerous precedent where other speakers have already said, other provincial governments might convince other governors to start claiming for tax because their people spend money in another electorate. And this will cause a massive problem to our country, if this Bill is passed. So Governors, you have to think about this carefully.

In addition, we want to ensure that we provide services without any issue. At the moment in Moresby South, our schools are full of Central people, our health clinics serve Central people, our hospitals serve Central people without any issue whatsoever. No one gets rejected, no one gets told to go away, everybody is treated equally as a Papua New Guinean.

So, at the end of the day, this Private Member's Bill is premature. It's there for political convenience by one person and we must come to a proper outcome following due processes.

I support the Opposition's call, the Governor's call and I will not support this Bill and I say to all the governors and all the members here, this Bill needs to go back to the drawing board, go back to the proper process and it needs to be done properly for the benefit of everybody involved. Thank you, Deputy Speaker.

Mr CHRIS HAIVETA (Gulf) – Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, I wish to make comments. Firstly, I would like to make it clear, that I support my colleague Governor and this Bill because the things that the Bill is asking for is already a law. All we are doing is changing the rate for Central Province from five per cent to ten per cent. But, the law is there in the *NCDC Act*. I want to ask my colleague, the Governor, why have you not been implementing the law? NCDC Members on this Floor, why have you not been implementing the law? That is my question to all of you. This Bill is not about changing any big laws, No! The law is already in existence, all that this Bill is doing is to change the rate from five to ten per cent for Central province.

For Gulf and for Motu Koita it remains as they are. That's all. Why the big fuss? Governor, my colleague, be honest with the rest of the country, let's follow the law, apply the law.

48/10

Mr Powes Parkop – Point of Order! I don't want to interfere too much in my brother's speech and his time. But he knows very well that we are all in court. This matter is in court.

There is a stay order or injunctive order, but the reason why we are in court is that, one law says this, that we give them as a donation but another law says that we must give them at this rate. And then there is the *Inter-Government Financing Act*, which says another thing too.

So, there are so many laws that we don't know which one to follow.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER – Honourable governor, I will not allow you to debate this speech. Honourable Governor of Gulf, continue your speech.

Mr CHRIS HAIVETA – Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. While my colleague was speaking, I just sat down quietly and listened to him, so I ask him to do the same.

And its simple, we are just asking for an amendment – that's one. Two, we are also not bringing something new. The Central Province is already on the NCD Board.

All the Governor is asking is that, we make a change from the administrator to the Governor of the province because he will represent his people's views, because of this unique position of Central Province and NCD. That's all, he is not asking for anything else.

Sadly, the other change in the NCD in terms of representation is that, he is proposing that we bring representatives of the Union in Trade Union Congress (TUC). Bring them there, that's what he is saying. If they are, that's fine.

(Mr Justin Tkatchenko interjecting)

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER – Order! Let the Governor continue his speech.

Mr CHRIS HAITEVA – Chamber of commerce, we ask them about raising revenue, governor and minister, just take it and if the Parliament does decide to bring them in, they will find better ways, to contribute to raising revenues to broaden your revenue base.

Maybe you are not doing that with the current representatives that are there. So, if you look at it, the amendments are constructive, there are ways forward and this city belongs to all of us.

It just does not belong and it does not in any way harm or impinge on the rights of the current Members of Parliament, who are also in there. The Governor is not saying that your powers will be curbed, no, he is saying, just make the changes.

And in my view, these are logical amendments that will only go to progress this city, and the governance of this city, to shine the light properly, to allow Central people to have a say, because they have a special place.

And, we have to honour them to do that. But, as I have said, I don't know what the big fuss is all about. It is just one little change, from five to ten per cent, that's all.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Mr JAMES MARAPE (Tari-Pori – Prime Minister and Minister for Bougainville Affairs) – Mr Deputy Speaker, let me join in this debate on the Private Members Bill that the Governor of Central has brought before the House for consideration.

Mr Deputy Speaker, this is a debate that could have been better resolved at another time and space. But the leaders concerned on both sides; the NCD leadership as well as Central leadership decide to go down on the head collision course. That has now come before us, in this House. We spent quite a few times to ensure that both parties see the intent.

But at the second thought, let me say, this is also good for all of us to discuss because it's a far bigger issue than just Central and NCD issue.

Mr Deputy Speaker, it goes to the heart of the GST-sharing, with the National Government and provincial governments.

49/10

I have made a commitment to look into one or two of these issues and from the outset, let me give you all my Government's commitment that the GST issue will be elevated beyond the Central Province and NCD and will be looked into properly.

We have Lae, Hagen and Kokopo, these are municipal cities that have relationships with provincial government and they function with the district authorities. This is the same kind but of a broader and unique relationship because, our Capital City is in the Central Province.

Mr Speaker, I understand where the Governor of Central Province, Robert Agarobe, is coming from, and I note the attempts to build a Central City, but for so long they have been living in co-existence systems since time immemorable. When there was no nation's capital before, there was one Port Moresby city. That one city was a place where the rest of PNG came to, but traditionally, the Central including the Motu-Koita people on whose land we sit and stand, they interfaced, mingled and traded with each other; until we all descended on this place and it was designated as our nation's capital.

Mr Speaker, the Governor comes to the table trying to not just claim Port Moresby or claim NCD as belonging to Central Province, and this amendment does not dispute the fact that this is the nation's capital, it remains so, but I just want to go in line with the reference that some speakers have said before me.

The reference to the distribution is already set in the present law and this amendment just amplifies that and entrenches that to ensure that it is mandatory that the transaction from IRC goes straight to the Central, Gulf and the Motu-Koita people.

Governor Parkop was right in saying that Motu-Koita was a creation of this House, yet the finance for re-current and supporting development wasn't met by governments since the Motu-Koita Assembly was established 15 years ago. I think some of those are inherent deficiencies we have in our system and must be cleaned up as we prepare our nation beyond 50 years, come 2025.

This is something I give commitment to in this House. Before we come back to our next Sitting in January, this issue on GST between Central and NCD will be worked on to make progress. The National Government tried to intervene but Parliament is totally independent and every private member has the right to bring a law into Parliament, which is the principle mandate of why we exist as Members of Parliament.

And to stop that from happening and to debate here in this manner, the two Governors concerned are aware, I asked for this matter to not go before the Courts earlier this year. On one hand, the Central Provincial Government tells me that NCD is not living up to what has been asked of them, that is to give what is owed to the Central Province earlier this year, so now this matter is before the Court. And because of the matter being in Court, I cannot static the mandate of the provincial government to Governor Agarobe, he has the right to secure his mandate and pursue what is right by his provincial assembly's view. But as head of this Government, I am trying to find the balance. I want to place on record my appreciation to Governor Agarobe for the submission he made earlier, where he asked for 20 per cent.

I told him that it was alright for him to ask, but in my humble view, the city belongs to all of us, including his people, that 20 per cent was too high and that he should go by what the law says and just take out what belongs to Central Province.

50/10

So, he made a commitment to have it reduced down to 10 per cent. I have also indicated to both Governors that it can go through if this Parliament moves it beyond first reading and hands it down but there will be further consultation between Central Province, NCD and the

National Government, but also between the National Government and the Provincial Government on the issue of the GST Policy. I think that empowering the Provincial Government is good and GST is a revenue and we could be looking in that space so those conversations are going on as we speak. When it comes to this, I just wished our leaders on both sides should have sat down and discussed before coming to Parliament. But, a private member has brought this Bill, and the process of a Private Member's Bill has been worked. We just have to conclude the process.

I stand behind the caucus, I do not hold your rights to your as a private choice as the elected leader of your people. Debates have been made on both sides of the House, the Central Province people may not line directly on the borders of NCD but, associate and relate to the city, as Governor Agarobe did mention.

I asked him why he was trying to be on the Board when administrator is already on the Board and he said this is not a provincial government perse, but a special district. So, my presence on the Board and if not me, the future Governors on the Board may help the cause of the City and Central Province synchronizing in the expansions moving forward. We are planning together the Central City and the expansion and if the City wants to expand, we are planning together, they come to their border than we take it on from there so there are pros and cons in this debate.

The Private Member Bill has come through this process and I want to put a close to this debate. Members have heard clearly on both sides and they could take a vote in favor of the Government side as we progress it.

The issue on GST sharing will be elevated to the Treasurer and the Minister for Inter-Government Relations so we can have a detailed position on GST, not just for Central Province and NCD, but more importantly the entire country insofar as benefit distribution between the city municipals, the provincial governments and the National Government is concerned.

Thank you, Mr Speaker

Motion – That the question be now put – proposed

There being a division being called and seconded, Mr Deputy Speaker ordered that the Bells be rung.

51/10

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER – Honourable Members, let me explain to the House on the vote that we are taking. The question that has been raised on the Floor is for the ‘question to be put.’ That is to close the debate.

A division has been called and seconded. So, the vote we are taking now is to determine whether to conclude the debate or to continue the debate.

52/10

(Voting in progress)

Mr POWES PARKOP - Point of Order! Mr Deputy Speaker, when we close debate, does that mean we will go ahead and vote on this Bill? It is apparent that some of us object to this Bill, therefore, the question you put to us is not very clear. We are confused.

Are we closing the debate, continuing debate or are we voting on the Bill? This is the point I’m trying to make.

I thought by stopping the debate we stop the Bill from going ahead. If you can clarify this, maybe I can vote better.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Honourable Members, in response to the point of order raised by the Governor, the vote that we took was on the question I raised, ‘that question be now put’ which we voted on to conclude debate. Now I’m going to call for the second reading after the result. That’s when I will ask, ‘that the question be agreed to’

53/10

That is why I will ask the Members to vote either yes or no. To vote in favour or against the Bill will be decided after this.

The vote we are taking now is for the closure of the debate because a division was called on that question. After the debate is closed, we will call for the second reading after the results.

When it comes to the second reading, I will ask whether you are in favour or against and if there is another division, we will vote to see whether we pass the Bill or not. Therefore, the vote that we are taking now is for question be put to conclude the debate.

The Parliament voted (the Deputy Speaker, **Mr Koni Iguan** in the Chair) -

AYES – 61

NOES – 1

Motion so agreed to.

Motion – That the Bill the question be now put – agreed to.

Motion – That the Bill be now read a second time – proposed.

There being a division called and seconded, Mr Deputy Speaker ordered that the Bells be rung and a vote taken.

54/10

(Voting in progress)

55/10

The Parliament voted (the Deputy Speaker, **Mr Koni Iguan**, in the Chair) –

AYES – 54

NOES – 7

Motion so agreed to.

Motion – That the Bill be now read a second time – agreed to

Bill read a second time.

In Committee

Bill, by leave, taken as a whole.

Mr ROBERT AGAROBÉ (Central) – I move –

That the following amendments be made:

Page 4, Item No.7 Financial Assistance to Central Provincial Government.

In section 33, sub-section 2, paragraph (a) after the word ‘government’ omit the number 20 and substitute with the number 10.

Bill, as amended, agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments; report adopted.

56/10

Third Reading

Motion (by **Mr Robert Agarobé**) proposed –

That the Bill be now read a third time.

Motion – That the question be now put – agreed to.

Motion – That the Bill be now read a third time – agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

MOTION BY LEAVE

Mr JAMES MARAPE (Tari-Pori- Prime Minister and Minister for Bougainville Affairs) – I ask leave of Parliament to move a motion without notice.

Leave granted.

ALTERATION OF HOUR OF SITTING

Motion (by **Mr James Marape**) agreed to –

That the Parliament sits beyond 5 p.m. this day.

57/10

MOTION BY LEAVE

Mr RAINBO PAITA (Finschhafen – Minister for National Planning and Monitoring) – Mr Deputy Speaker, I ask leave of Parliament to move a Motion without Notice.

Leave granted.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS – REARRANGEMENT OF BUSINESS

Motion (by **Mr Rainbo Paita**) agreed to –

That so much of the *Standing Orders* be suspended as would prevent the Minister for Petroleum from presenting the *Oil and Gas (P'nyang LNG Project) Bill 2021* forthwith.

OIL AND GAS (P'NYANG LNG PROJECT) (AMENDMENT BILL) 2021

First Reading

Bill presented by **Mr Kerenga Kua** and read a first time.

Second Reading

Leave granted to move the second reading forthwith.

Mr KERENGA KUA (Sinasina-Yonggamugl– Minister for Petroleum) - I move –

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr Speaker, I introduce into this Honourable House, for approval, a bill called the Oil and Gas (P'nyang LNG Project) (Amendment Bill) 2021, which is a bill for an act that is required to be approved by the Parliament, in line with the Heads of Agreement (HOA), for the P'nyang LNG Project which will be developed by the P'nyang Project Development Partners.

Mr Speaker, this proposed amendment to the *Oil and Gas Act 1998* is to ensure that the state and the P'nyang Gas Project participants can execute a gas agreement of the kind contemplated by the Heads of Agreement (HOA), executed between the state and ESSO PNG P'nyang Limited or (ExxonMobil) on 28 September 2021, which amongst other things provides for the processing of the application of a Petroleum Development License for P'nyang Gas Project to be unaffected by the *Oil and Gas (Amendment) Act of 2020* (No. 11 of 2020).

Mr Speaker, the Oil and Gas (P'nyang LNG Project) (Amendment Bill) 2021 clarifies the amendments to the *Oil and Gas Amendment Act 1998* made by the *Oil and Gas Act (Amendment) Act 1920*. I refer to the amendments to the *Oil and Gas Act 1998* made by the *Oil and Gas Act (Amendment) Act 2020*, as the 2020 amendments.

Mr Speaker, the Oil and Gas (P'nyang LNG Project) (Amendment Bill) 2021 only concerns the P'nyang LNG Project alone and any application for a Petroleum Development License for the P'nyang LNG Project. And not any other gas agreement or project or Petroleum Development License in Papua New Guinea, and confirms that, the changes brought about the 2020 amendments do not create any inconsistencies with the application process for the P'nyang

LNG Project for a Petroleum Development License, which the project partners have already applied in 2005.

58/10

Mr Speaker, application for petroleum development license for P'nyang field (APDL 13) was lodged prior to the 2020 amendments and transitional provisions did not take this into consideration making the application for petroleum development license for P'nyang gas project subject to the 2020 amendments. the provision on gas agreements under the oil and gas act requires the application for petroleum development license related to the gas agreements to be subjected to 2020 amendments irrespective of when their application was lodged.

Mr Speaker, the gas agreement for the P'nyang gas project is anticipated to be concluded within December 2021, which will incorporate essentially the broad terms which includes the preservation of the regime in place prior to the 2020 amendments. With all that has already been stated it is important to note the proposed amendment to the Oil and Gas Act will do the following: to assist further negotiations and processing of application for a petroleum development license.

Mr Speaker, this exempts the application of the 2020 amendments from applying to the P'nyang field and the processing of the application for a petroleum development license for the P'nyang field (apdl13); and renders the Oil and Gas Act provisions affected or inserted by the 2020 amendments inapplicable to any gas agreement executed in respect of the P'nyang field and for the processing of the application for a petroleum development license for the p'nyang field (APDL13).

Mr Speaker, the prompt passage of the proposed bill during this parliamentary session, which is expected to come into effect upon date of certification, will demonstrate to sponsors, LNG buyers and financiers the state's continued full commitment to the p'nyang LNG project.

Mr BELDEN NAMA (Vanim-Green) – Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to make some comments and debate on this bill, where the Minister for Petroleum has brought before the Parliament. This is one of our important resource projects in the country. A lot has been said and done about this project. There are other similar projects that are being delayed and waiting to get off the ground, such as the Papua LNG, Pogera mine and Waffi-Golpu. These and other projects continue to be delayed but I support this amendment because discussion on project started Development partners lodged in their application of interest in 2015 and we are still sitting on it.

Mr Speaker, it is about time we try to be investor-friendly and once we talk about such projects they will get off the ground without having 5-10-year delays. This will enable us to generate internal revenue. We cannot continuously borrow as we must be mindful of how we can repay the monies that we borrow.

I want to commend the Minister for presenting this bill, and we need to support this project but with that I wish to caution the government that we must consult with the landowners as they are just as important to us as what we are trying to extract from their land.

59/10

So, now we are trying to bring this amendment forward because the development partners put in applications in 2015 and we want to assist them to obtain their development license quickly but we must not forget about the provincial governments and the landowners. We must have consultations with them.

I am happy that this is happening so that we can fast track this project which has been pending. I want to thank the former Minister for Petroleum who is now the Minister for State Owned Enterprise for many good discussions that he conducted in relation to PNG LNG Project.

Mr Prime Minister, you have put the right person in the right ministry for this important resource but when we start to develop this resource, we must have close consultations with the landowners and even the provincial governments and electorate members; like when I criticized the government about the Purari Hydro Project.

Mr Minister, as the Opposition Leader and Member for Vaimo-Green, I and many of us in the Opposition support this amendment that you have brought in to Parliament.

Mr Prime Minister, through the Speaker, we have to start to operate one project. Let us get the project running otherwise Papua New Guinea will be in debt if we continue to borrow. When we create one project, we will create internal revenue; we create jobs for our people the economy will start to pick up.

Mr Speaker, I fully support this proposed Oil and Gas P'nyang LNG Bill 2021 and I commend this Bill.

Thank you.

Motion – That the question be now put – agreed to

Motion – That the Bill be now read a second time – agreed to

Bill read a second time

Message from the Governor-General

A Message from His Excellency, the Governor General dated 25 November 2021 was announced recommending the imposition of Taxation in accordance with Section 210 of the Constitution insofar as the Bill relates to and provides for such imposition

Third Reading

Leave granted to move the Third Reading forthwith.

Motion (by **Mr Kerenga Kua**) proposed –

That the Bill be now read a third time

Motion – That the question be now put – agreed to

Motion – That the bill be now read a third time –agreed to

Bill read a third time

60/10

MOTION BY LEAVE

Mr RAINBO PAITA (Finschhafen – Minister for Planning and Monitoring) – I ask leave of Parliament to move a motion without notice.

Leave granted.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS – REARRANGEMENT OF BUSINESS

Motion (by **Mr Rainbo Paita**) agreed to –

That so much of the *Standing Orders* be suspended as would prevent Notice Nos. 288 and 289, Government Business, being called on forthwith.

CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE BILL 2021

First Reading

Bill presented by **Mr Bryan Kramer** and read a first time.

Second Reading

Leave granted to move the second reading forthwith

Mr BRYAN KRAMER (Madang – Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) –

I move –

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Thank you, Mr Speaker for giving me this opportunity to present to this Honourable House and the people of Papua New Guinea this important bill of enhancing Papua New Guinea’ legal framework to control the use of illicit drugs and abuse of illicit drugs and precursors entitled the Controlled Substance Bill 2021, hereafter referred to as the CS Bill.

Mr Speaker, the development is this Controlled Substance Bill commenced in 2018 upon instructions from the National Narcotics Control Board through the National Narcotics Bureau to the Department of Justice and Attorney-General.

The National Narcotics Control Board and the National Narcotics Bureau are administratively under the Department of Justice and Attorney-General through the National Gazettal G920 dated 24th of December 2020 through the administration of the *National Narcotics Control Board Act of 1992*.

Mr Speaker, the Controlled Substance Bill was developed in 2019 and finalised in August 2020. Since then the Controlled Substance Bill has gone through numerous reviews for its finalisation.

The Controlled Substance Bill's primary intent is to control the use of illicit drugs or control is to control the use of illicit drugs or controlled substances and the abuse of licit drugs and precursors.

Mr. Speaker, the Controlled Substance Bill has a unique nature as it is both a regulatory and criminal law.

Mr. Speaker the regulatory controls under this Controlled Substances Bill are namely;

The creation of Schedules I to VI. The Controlled Substance Bill creates a classification system for the categories of illicit substances, plants and drugs. The classification is set out from Schedules I to VI. This allows the appropriate administrative, regulatory and criminal measures to be applied to the appropriate classification or scheduling.

The powers of the National Narcotics Control Board to decide on the declaration, transfer and removal of a controlled substance from Schedules one or numerical I to VI. Under the Control Substance Bill, the NNCB is given the power to declare controlled substances, remove controlled substances from Schedules and transfer controlled substances or plants between schedules. This power is exercised upon advice of the Technical Advisory Panel, which is a panel of technical experts established under the Bill to provide technical advice to the Board.

The licenses and permits to regulate the cultivation, transportation, storage and handling of the controlled drugs. The Controlled Substances Bill establishes a comprehensive licensing and permit regime to regulate the cultivation, transportation, storage and handling of the controlled drugs.

61/10

The Control Substance Bill establishes a comprehensive licensing and permit regime to regulate the cultivation, transportation, storage and handling of the controlled drugs.

(b) the license to cultivate a Controlled Plant- the Control Substance Bill also establishes a comprehensive licensing regime to regulate licensing to cultivate a controlled plant under the Control Substance Bill.

Mr Speaker, the licenses provided in the Control Substance Bill are new licenses and do not overlap with existing licenses for regulatory control of illicit or licit drugs and precursors under any Act of Parliament in Papua New Guinea

Mr Speaker, these licenses were created to give National Narcotics Bureau adequate ability to;

- (a) Control the use of illicit and abuse of licit drugs and precursors;
- (b) Generate revenue for the State through the application of administrative fines for non-compliance with the administrative measures that are set under the Control Substance Bill; and
- (c) Monitor and report on the controlled drugs and precursors domestically and internationally as required by the *National Narcotics Control Board Act 1992*.

Mr Speaker the Criminal Control under the Control Substance Bill includes the following;

- (a) Prohibition of substances in Schedule I,
- (b) the creation of offences to criminalise the possession, ii. cultivation and manufacturing, iii. transporting, iv. sale of controlled substances, sale of paraphernalia used to administer a controlled substance or drug, vi. smuggling, vii. inciting, internal concealment and ix. trafficking of illicit drugs, and the creation of defences.

Mr Speaker, these criminal controls will serve as a deterrence and preventative control of controlled substances or illicit drugs and abuse of licit drugs and precursors.

Mr Speaker, this Control Substance Bill is consistent with international standards in criminalizing transnational offences such as drug trafficking. The penalties under this Bill would now qualify the drug related offences as predicate crimes to money laundering hence, allowing law enforcement authorities with the option of pursuing proceeds of crime that are generated from and/or used in these crimes. The highest penalty in the proposed Control Substance Bill is life imprisonment or a fine not exceeding K2 million or both, for dealing with Commercial quantities of Schedule I Controlled Substances. The Bill also allows Papua New Guinea to cooperate with other jurisdictions in facilitating evidence pertaining to drug offences committed in PNG and abroad.

Finally, Mr Speaker, it will be remiss of me not to thank our Government Agencies who participated in developing this Control Substance Bill and to the hard-working legal officers of the Department of Justice and Attorney General who have contributed in providing the technical expertise to develop this Bill.

In conclusion, Mr Speaker, let me thank you for giving me the opportunity to present this important Bill to this Honourable House and I seek the support of all Members for the passing of this important Bill.

With that, I now commend the Controlled Substance Bill 2021 to this Honourable House.

Dr ALLAN MARAT (Rabaul)– Mr Speaker, I rise to represent the Opposition in terms of this particular Bill.

Mr Minister, you have the support of the Opposition, simply on a few general observations. For a long time, Papua New Guinea has been under the pressure of abuse of some of these illicit drugs. Some drugs are prescribed for medical use, some are not. But many of those drugs, illicit drugs that are not prescribed for medicine. Some people tend to abuse them

We have had instances of people abusing some of these drugs and a lot of them have died. Recently in the Highlands, we read in the papers, some of such abuse of drugs that were supplied. Some of them in drums especially and they thought that something they could use for formal gatherings.

The Opposition believe that this kind of legislation is brought to Parliament for approval because a lot of people have been talking about it, about commercializing some these drugs. I would like to thank the officers in the Justice Department for having worked tirelessly on producing this Bill and brought it here to this Parliament.

Certainly we can see that it needs to be properly regulated, the licensing provisions are sufficient for the time being.

62/10

The licensing provisions are sufficient for time being but changes will happen in the future. We believe that this legislation will be continuously amended so that it meets the societies demand for proper control and order within society. I don't think the penalty for life is sufficient. We think that it should be life without parole because that is equivalent to a death penalty.

Mr Speaker, a lot of us think that unlawful cultivation and unlawful possession of these illicit drugs should attract the most severe penalties like the death penalty. However, since the global community has applied a lot of pressure on Papua New Guinea against the death penalty, we should then apply the next most severe which is imprisonment for life without parole. Parole should never be considered and let that person rot in prison. Thank you.

(Yeah! Yeah!)

Mr GARRY JUFFA (Northern) – Mr Deputy Speaker, I stand to make a few comments in support of this Bill. I also want to state that I support the statements made by the Member for Rabaul.

Mr Speaker, we should be very specific in regards to the type of penalty that are applied for these offences. I note in some of the penalty clauses like fines not exceeding. There is a bit of confusion here. I would say, there should be minimum fines imposed for instance, K50 000. If you say not exceeding K50 000 and if you have a judge or magistrate who is very lenient and decides to impose a K50 fine. This is something that I noted and would like to point out. I am not a lawyer so those of us who are lawyers can correct me.

Mr Speaker, I am also curious about the mechanics of how these laws are going to be enforced because it makes great mention of the Narcotics Bureau here which I understand was established for the purposes of awareness of the dangers of illicit substances. But the enforcing mechanisms are held with Customs, the Police and the Defence Force. Perhaps some clarification there would assist me in understanding exactly how these laws are going to be applied and enforced.

Mr Speaker, we have a tendency to bring to this House bills and eventually enact great laws but the enforcement of these laws is always a problem. We have so many laws that have not been enforced or hardly being enforced. What we need to do is look at the enforcement mechanisms. Who is going to enforce these laws? Do they have the capacity? What do they need so that they can enforce these laws adequately to the expectations of our people? These are some of the questions that I feel we need to ask in regards to this Bill.

Mr Speaker, I also feel that some of the penalties here are far too lenient. Can we also look at the *Bail Act* with regard to these laws? Will these persons be allowed bail? They shouldn't be. We should put in place laws that state or stipulate that if a person is an offender in this instance, then he should never be granted bail to show that we are serious about this particular matter.

When drugs hit our economy which they already have crept in decades ago, however, the preliberation of transnational crimes has been going on without much attention from us. Today, we have transnational crime as the law in this country and in our economy. The systems designed to enforce and keep them in-check have been dismantled. We therefore have to take a closer look at that. We have to look at how we can finance these organisations. We need to look at how we can have the capacity so that they can go out there and perform their duties diligently. In order to carry out investigations into these types of activities you will need technical expertise.

You need people with experience and people who are dedicated to this cause and nothing else. Right now, the Police and Customs who are expected to carry out their tasks of enforcing these laws don't have the capacity. So, whilst we pass these laws, we must also look at developing capacity within these organisations so that they can effectively enforce those laws. This will also mean that, we will have to look at the welfare of the officers who are involved in these investigations.

Transnational crime is a high value crime. There is a lot of money involved. The tendency to bribe corrupt compromise is there. There is evidence of it everywhere you look, if you wish to look especially in the forestry industry. But, which by the way, it's a transitional crime but we ignore this. If you were to look at the volumes of revenues generated by the individuals and the entities in these crimes, they have significant money and resources at their disposal. They can easily compromise those who are tasked the responsibility to enforcing these laws.

I speak from experience. Some years ago when I was working for Customs, there was a case involving illicit gambling over horse-race machines case. That case was supposed to have wrapped up in six months, it took four years before we shut down the syndicates that were involved in this because of the volumes of money involved and the compromised levels of government officials at such a manner that we couldn't do anything to counter that within a six-month period. It was good for having some very good portion of people around and I make mention of late Sir Nat Koleale who was the Chairman of the Gaming Board at that time and Metropolitan Superintendent Anthony Wagambe, I must make mention of his name here. These gentlemen were the ones who were consistent in fighting this particular syndicate until it was completely dismantled and the individuals were arrested and deported.

We were fortunate that the government that time supported us with finance and had a capacity to do that. But, when you talk about this type of transnational criminal syndicates, they have vast resources at their disposal. If we are going to fight against and counter them, we must also be willing to commit vast resources to those of our officers in the front line who are going to combat these crimes.

So, I support this Bill and I want to say that I am proud of the fact that, the Marape Government has started to bring in all these outstanding Bills. This is because, Minister for Justice, let me tell you, it's not just the National Narcotics Bureau who were concerned about this. In fact, the transnational crimes laws came into effect around the world in the year 2000, straight after 911 attacks and the Transnational Crime Convention was held in Palermo, Italy, at that time. And all the nations went and started to enact a whole set of laws to address these

22 crimes known as transnational crimes. We did the same with the Police, Customs and Justice departments and many other organisations. They came together and formed committees and submitted proposals that came and collected dust at Waigani-I won't call it by any other name but Waigani.

So, Minister, if you go back to your department, you can collect these documents that are still there. You will find that all these submissions that were made by Customs and Police that are collecting dust there are still very relevant.

So, I'm glad to see that you have brought a Bill here but I think it's been largely influenced by the National Narcotics Bureau so we have to go and look at that. Who's going to enforce these laws, National Aquatic Bureau? They don't have the capacity. So, to bring about the capacity and to enable them to have that capacity, it's going to take some time.

I would suggest that you sit with Customs and Police and have a look at what proposals they have and what suggestion that they will make because they are the ones that are going to be enforcing these laws. They are the ones that can give you instructions and details on what they need so that they can be successful in the enforcement of this law against transnational crimes.

Now, let me make mention here of what transnational crime is because many instances, we talk about them but most people don't even know what it means. Transnational crime is defined as crimes that cross borders across nations.

64/10

So most of those laws are actually enforceable by the Customs Department, Police and Defense. And transnational crimes are the most dangerous forms of crimes. They're more dangerous than the violent crimes that we encounter on our streets, in our suburbs and maybe in our villages. Because those crimes will only affect a small group of people and the only they may affect the nation is in our image is tarnished by the Western media. The transnational crimes are crimes that are stealing from an entire economy, crimes that are stealing from the future of a nation.

Transnational criminals are the most dangerous type of criminals. They are not the usual criminals that you expect to see when you think of a criminal in our minds. They are criminals that come with brief cases and wear suits, they speak fancy English and they come in all colors. They are extremely intelligent and they are always a step ahead. For instance, you look at our IFMS system in Finance that's a transnational crime, committed by sophisticated transnational criminals. You look at the illegal logging that's taking place, the illegal fishing that's taking

place and the cartels that are setup are very clever with tax avoidance schemes. And they are these type of trans-national criminals operating in our economy. They can manipulate and control government, they can even change government when they feel like it. They have the means to do and they often do. And their greatest strength is the fact that we don't even know about it, we don't even realize who they are what they are actually doing. They are very powerful forces

Minister for Justice, I commend you, you have been bringing these Bills here rapidly and it's welcoming to see. But I want to urge you to go back and revisit these departments, Police, Customs and Defense, sit with them and the NIO. Let us not forget and while I have the opportunity let me mention the role of the NIO, which is a very important organisation. They are the eyes and ears of our economy, but are not funded adequately, not supported and have allowed it to deteriorate to a point where they are no longer effective as they ought to be.

Mr Speaker, in 1975 we had a 150 NIO officers, today we have less than 30. When an economy grows, its intelligence, community and functions also grow to be able to accommodate the need to understand threats and opportunities presented to our economy. So I use this opportunity to also just state that our intelligence community is vital in the fight against transnational crimes. They are the ones who are going to look at who's coming into our country and determine whether they are in here to assist us or they are in here as threats to our community and our future.

Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

Motion — That the question be now put — agreed to.

Motion — That the Bill be now read a second time — agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Third Reading

Leave granted to move the third reading forthwith

Motion (by **Mr Bryan Kramer**) proposed –

That the Bill be now read a third time.

Motion – That the question be now put – agreed to.

Motion – That the Bill be now read a third time – put.

65/10

The Bill requiring an absolute majority of 56 Members, Mr Speaker, ordered, that the Bells be rung.

66/10

The Parliament voted (the Speaker, **Mr Job Pomat** in the Chair) –

AYES – 71

NOES – 0

Bill passed with the concurrence of an absolute majority as required by the *Constitution*.

Bill read a third time.

DANGEROUS DRUGS (AMENDMENT) BILL 2021

First Reading

Bill presented by **Mr Bryan Kramer** and read a first time.

Second Reading

Leave granted to move the second reading forthwith.

Mr BRYAN KRAMER (Madang – Minister for Justice) – I move –

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr Speaker, this amendment Bill is a consequential amendment to the *Dangerous Drugs Act of 1952*, as a result of the passage of a *Controlled Substance Act 2021*. Section static of the *Dangerous Drugs Act 1952*, makes it an offence for persons to knowingly cultivate the plant or dangerous drugs, make a dangerous drug, export, a dangerous drug or is in possession or conveys a dangerous drug, plant or parts of a plant which is dangerous.

The penalty for these offences is imprisonment for terms not less than three months and not exceeding two years, which is an offence that is punishable under summary conviction.

Mr Speaker, this provision is obsolete with the passing of the *Control Substance Act of 2021*. The Act comprehensively covers all of these offences including, additional offences consistent with International Drug Convention. As such, Mr Speaker, the Dangerous Drugs (Amendment Bill) 2021 will re-appeal section three of the *Dangerous Drugs Act of 1952*.

Mr Speaker, this will prevent confusion in application of relevant provision pertaining to the drug offences.

In conclusion, Mr Speaker, I thank you again for giving me this opportunity to present this important amendment Bill to this honourable House and I seek the support of all members for the passing of this important Bill as a consequential amendment in relation to the *Control Substance Act of 2021*. With that, I now commend the Dangerous Drugs (Amendment Bill) 2021 to this honourable House.

Mr JAMES MARAPE (Tari-Pori – Prime Minister and Minister for Bougainville Affairs) – I stand here to thank the Minister for his work. I also thank all the Members of Parliament, especially those who are still here.

We are not here to talk about projects only, why should we always talk about projects when the country is not secure and safe?

This is a very important law in ensuring that everyone in this country know what we want to do about the issue of drugs.

Other countries, Mr Speaker, like Singapore, they kill people in possession of drugs or convict them to life imprisonment.

We are slow in acting because different people are handling it. Now, I want to announce to the country, we are serious about these laws. Policing of these laws are another issue but the

fact that we are now increasing the penalty for drugs, trafficking, peddling and any illegal dealings to do with drugs in the country.

67/10

Recently, we had a drug ring busted in a hotel room but the police did not have relevant charge to lay charges on the perpetrator. I want to clarify here that this law has been made not target anyone in particular, it is a law made for all.

This is to ensure that Papua New Guinea becomes free of drugs of any kind. Previously, the Member for Goroka presented here a Private Members' Bill on the same issue of drugs. This shows that we are serious about the issue of illicit drugs being grown and brought into the country. I thank the Minister for Justice for working very quickly in ensuring this Bill is brought before the Parliament.

I wish to also thank the Members of both sides of the House for sitting this late to ensure we are able to end the session well. For almost 15 years that I have been in this Parliament, with due respect to the earlier Parliaments that I was part of, I wish to say that, you would hardly see members on both sides of the House sit this late especially in this term of Parliament. But, the Opposition Leader and members of the Opposition and Government are all still here.

The Opposition do disagree on policy matters but they are Bills that protect the welfare and needs of our people like in the last two Bills. I thank them.

This Bill shows the advancement of our people, we used to have concerns about the overuse and peddling of marijuana only, now we have moved another notch to cocaine and other more dangerous drugs. We want to put a stop to this so that we have a good young generation to advance into the future. If there are children who are watching this broadcast, I wish to tell you that do not get involved in drugs. It is not good and let us not bring in the more dangerous drugs from the international illicit drug trade. Let us deal with whatever is in our country and get rid of it.

This Bill is now a protection for us and let us continue to safeguard our people through it so that those who are caught dealing with dangerous drugs are punished accordingly.

Motion – That the question be now put – agreed to.

Motion – That the Bill be now read a second time – agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Third Reading

Leave granted to move the Third Reading forthwith.

Motion (by **Bryan Kramer**) proposed –

That the Bill be now read a third time.

Motion – That the question be now put – agreed to.

Motion – That the Bill be now read a third time – agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Mr RAINBO PAITA (Finschaffen – Minister for Planning and Monitoring) – I want to thank our leaders as echoed by the Prime Minister and also thank the Opposition Leader and the Deputy Opposition Leader his deputy for being available to sit right through to this day's session.

I also want to thank those in the Government benches for your participation as even if we have differences in views to the discussion, we always come together at the end of the day as leaders to serve our country.

68/10

Before, I move for us to adjourn Parliament, I want to assure all the Members of the House, including the Opposition Members that through the Prime Minister, assured by the Treasurer and the Minister, all the remaining DSIP for this year will be distributed fairly; not only for Members on this side of the House, but to the Opposition as well because of the Covid-19 pandemic. We all will receive a fair distribution of DSIP funds and the Treasurer and the Minister for Finance will take custody over that as we go into a new year for a new beginning for next year.

Mr Speaker, I would like to wish you all a Merry Christmas and Happy 2022, as we go into the New Year, to you and your staff here at the Parliament, I would like to thank you for a job well done. Even though, we are experiencing Covid-19 pandemic, they have all turned up and I would like to place on record our sincere gratitude to you, the Chair, the Clerk and

everyone else in this honourable House. I look forward to a new year where we can conduct Government Business.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Motion (by **Mr Rainbo Paita**) agreed to –

That the Parliament at its rising, adjourn to Tuesday, 18 January 2022, at 2 o'clock p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion (by **Mr Rainbo Paita**) agreed to –

That the Parliament do now adjourn.

The Parliament adjourned at 6.05 p.m.