

THIRD DAY

Thursday 1 September 2022

DRAFT HANSARD

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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

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HARRY MOMOS

Principal Parliamentary Reporter

THIRD DAY

Thursday 1 September 2022

The Speaker (**Mr Job Pomat**) took the Chair at 10 a.m. and invited the Member for Samarai-Murua and Minister for Culture, Arts and Tourism, **Honourable Isi Henry Leonard**, to say Prayers:

‘Let us all pray to our Mighty God, we are mere human beings, and we have fallen short of the glory and we ask for your forgiveness so that this morning we are able to humbly come and face you, and petition you for your love and kindness, for your mercy and also listen to our grievances and every other issue that we will raise in this House. Therefore, this morning we humbly commit the issues of this House before your throne of grace; that you may bless them, empower them, and inspire them. That this morning, mighty God you are able to lead and to guide this House to serve your people. Bless the Prime Minister, bless the Opposition Leader, bless all the elected Members in this House. As we go into the business of this House this morning. Bless the Speaker, to make sure that this House is in order and is balanced. And therefore, this morning mighty God, we all come in union as we will say our Lord’s prayer.’

02/03

DEATH OF FORMER MEMBERS – STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

Mr SPEAKER – Honourable Members I have to inform the Parliament of the deaths of the following Members of the Tenth National Parliament; Late Honourable Sam Basil on 11 May 2022. He was first elected as Member for Bulolo in the Eighth National Parliament from 2007-2012, the Ninth National Parliament from 2012-2017 and the Tenth National Parliament from 2017-2022.

During these terms he served as the Member of the Parliamentary Referral Committee on Lands and Environment, Special Committee on HIV-AIDS Advocacy, Public Accounts Committee, National Parliament Committee, Special Committee on Asian-owned and Operated Businesses in Papua New Guinea and Deputy Chairman of the Special Committee on Gas and Energy.

He also served as the Deputy Leader of the Opposition in May 2011, and August 2012. He was the Minister for National Planning in August 2011 in the O’Neill- Namah Cabinet. He was

a Minister without portfolio in the O'Neill-Abel Cabinet. He was the Minister for National Planning following a reshuffle in May 2019, in the O'Neill- Abel Cabinet. He was the Minister for Treasury in June 2019, following the formation of the Marape-Steven Government.

He was the Minister for National Planning and Monitoring in August 2019, then as Deputy Prime Minister in October 2020. He was dismissed as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for National Planning in November 2020. Then appointed Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Commerce and Industry in December 2020 and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Transport and Infrastructure in January 2020, until his untimely death on 11 May 2022.

He was also a member of the People's Progress Party and resigned in January 2011. Then joined the Papua New Guinea Party and resigned from this party and joined the Pangu Pati where he was elected leader of Pangu Party in August 2014 and resigned in 2019. He joined the Melanesian Alliance Party and exited, then elected as leader of the United Labour Party after its formation in 2019.

The late Honourable Chris Nangoi on 9 June 2022. He was first elected as Member for Sumkar Open in the Tenth National Parliament from 2017-2022. During his term he served as the member of the Permanent Parliamentary Committee on Public Accounts and the Economic Affairs Committee between September 2017 and June 2019. He also served as Minister for Correctional Services from June 7, 2019 to November 16, 2020. He was a Member of the Pangu Pati and resigned, and joined the United Labour Party after the formation of the party in 2019.

Late Honourable William Nakin on July 12,2022. He was first elected as Member for the North- Bougainville Open electorate in the Tenth National Parliament from 2017-2022. During his term he served as a member for the Permanent Parliamentary Committee on Emergency and Assistant Speaker from August 27,2020 until his untimely death. He was a Member of the National Alliance Party.

As a mark of respect to the memory of the late honourable gentlemen, I invite all honourable Members to rise in their places.

03/03

QUESTIONS

Closure of Nadzab Airport

Mr LUTHER WENGE– Thank you, Mr Speaker. My questions are directed to the Minister for Civil Aviation and Transport, and I also want the Prime Minister to take note. If the Minister responsible does not carry out his responsibilities regarding my questions, I want you to make sure that he does.

Mr Speaker, the operations of the Nadzab Airport are too big for an individual or two to handle. It is simply because of the many industries in Lae. These industries contributed a lot to this country, as they pay almost K3 billion in taxes.

The Nadzab Airport is very important because it is in a central location, connecting the people from the highlands, coastal and the islands for their convenience when doing businesses or just travelling.

With due respect to the Minister, the DCA authorities has given instructions for the closure of the airport, thus affecting us all. This affects me as well, because I will need to travel back to Morobe, just as any other members travelling back to their provinces.

Mr Speaker, that is why I am directing my questions to the Minister for Civil Aviation and Transport;

There were rumours that workers failed to comply with the 21 conditions of the Nadzab Airport, thus causing the DCA Authorities to close down the airport.

(1) Can the Minister tell this Parliament, about the 21 regulations that the workers failed to comply to? This was the same case with the Kiunga Airport. What did they not comply to?

(2) What can we do to help with the 21 regulations that were not complied to? What can the Morobe Provincial Government do to help?

If it is with funds, the provincial government is on standby to help prevent the closure of the Nadzab Airport. Nadzab Airport is a very important airport. I know a lot of you will agree with my point.

(3) When will the Nadzab and Kiunga airports be opened so that we can travel again?

When the session ends tomorrow, I want to travel back to my province to do my people's work. These are three short questions that has a very big impact on everyone. Thank you.

04/03

Mr WALTER SCHNAUBELT – Thank you Governor of Morobe for your questions; I agree with your questions. Before I answer the Governor's questions, on behalf of the people of Namatanai District, I want to congratulate the Speaker, Honourable Job Pomat for being re-elected as the Speaker of this House the second time, I also congratulate the Deputy Speaker and our good Prime Minister, Honourable James Marape and his Deputy, Honourable John Rosso. I also extend my congratulations and thank you to all of us who have supported them in one way or another for their win.

Thankyou Governor for Morobe for your questions asked; I will try my best to answer all the questions. Your questions on the 21 defects is a big question.

I want to fix it in here for the benefit of the public also. The first priority set by the Marape-Rosso Government concerns the safety of the public when they travel to their respective destinations. Therefore, if any one of the major infrastructures such as wharfs and airports system is not functioning well, then we can't forcefully open it for public use.

That's why we have in place the compliance authorities such as National Airport Corporation. They are the ones in charge of the safety standards. They have their own Board Members and Management team to take care of such issues, because they have acquired the Aerodrome Certificate to take control of the airports for a certain period. They are fully aware of the requirements of the certificate. The Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) PNG is the authority put in place to regulate by making sure all the compliance issue that arise are complied with.

If we don't carry out this work, in relation to CASA, to make sure that NAC and other Authorities comply with the Regulatory Authority, then definitely it will badly affect our rating internationally. Which means we could actually be banned from travelling overseas. As this will be in breach of the International Aviation Organisation requirements. It is for this reasons that CASA carries out the investigations.

So there are 21 defects right now, through you Speaker to the Governor. Regarding these 21 defects, I can't give you a specific answer because I am not a technical man but I am more than happy to get a report for you.

The 21 defects include both Nadzab and Kiunga Airport. It is the NAC who is responsible to make sure all compliance requirements under the certification of the airports are met.

After knowing fully well all the compliance rules and the expiry date was on 31 July 2022, the CASA had mercy on them and extended for another one month, and it tried its best to communicate and fast track the system to meet the compliance that was outstanding. CASA tried its best to assist but they couldn't meet the requirements and fell short. With that it now forces CASA to issue a NOTAM, which means to close the airport. This notice forced the NAC to go and fix all the outstanding problems as soon as possible, that's very important.

05/03

I want to stress that the NAC Board is also at fault and I want to state here that, as the Minister, I inherited an issue and that is, the last NAC Board took NEC to the court and got a stay order to install a new board. The previous National Airport Cooperation (NAC) Board took the new NAC Board to the court and this effectively restricts the Minister as well. So we have a

court case now and I won't elaborate further on that. My duty now is to look at other alternatives like legal advice to rectify and bring a solution to this problem as soon as possible.

As Minister, I am a stakeholder to NAC and another stakeholder is the Finance Minister. As a stakeholder, we will meet and discuss what to do with the legal advice we have received. We will now act and respond to legal advice accordingly as shareholders to try and rectify this problems as soon as possible.

To answer the question on when Nadzab and Kiunga airports will resume, my honourable members and the general public who are planning to travel through these two airports, I cannot give any date and time, but I will keep the public up-to-date on our progress and on how we will fix this problem.

A lot of business houses have raised complaints about loss of business and I understand, and apologise for that, but we must understand that when you make a loss, you will make a profit again. However, when a plane lands on a faulty runway and crashes, passengers will lose their lives and they are gone for good. So, our safety is paramount and very important.

So, I am trying my best to step in to mitigate and find solutions to go forward without compromising safety of our citizens and the traveling public.

There were 21 defects and they are in technical terms which I cannot spell out in detail because I am not a technical man, but I will bring it to Parliament tomorrow.

The Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) has tried its best to assist by giving the NAC a month of grace period and they haven't done anything.

I want to reassure the citizens that the Marape-Rosso Government is focused and committed to the safety of our traveling public in Papua New Guinea. So, as the Minister responsible, I will try and rectify this problem as soon as I can without compromising any compliance issue.

Thank you.

Governors Conference

Mr GARRY JUFFA – Thank you, Mr Speaker, for giving me this opportunity to ask a question on behalf of my people of Northern and indeed the governors. My question is directed to the Minister for Provincial and Local Level Government. Before I commence, I want to congratulate him on his appointment and I look forward to his active efforts in overhauling that vital ministry.

Mr Speaker, the Ministry or the Department is responsible for convening regular meetings for governors and actually establishing a secretariat to manage such meetings and also progress

the outcomes from such meetings. But in the last how many years, those meetings have not been convened and such a secretariat is yet to be established for whatever reason.

06/03

Can the Minister inform the governors if such a secretariat will be established and when the next meeting will be convened for the Governor's Conference and how regular they will be?
Thank you

Mr SOROI EOE – Thank you Mr Speaker. Before I answer this very important question from the Member for Northern Province, I would like to congratulate you on your election back unopposed to the Chair of the House. Allow me also sir, to thank my people of Kikori for electing me for the second time to serve on the Floor of this House.

Going back to the question, in any organization, there has to be dialogue, communication between individuals or within the organization. By virtue of Organic Law on Provincial and Local Level Government, provincial governments are an important part of the entire government system. Therefore, issues of importance that confront provincial Governments need to be addressed. The last five years we have seen a lot of issues being raised by government in the Government caucus, including on the Floor of Parliament of issues of concerns.

I would like to give assurance to the Governor, that I will make it my business to organize the first meeting, if not end of this year, then the beginning of next year and make it an annual event. The last Governor's Conference, if I may recall, was held in Madang in 2018. I was then the Minister for Community Development when I attended and I've been told there has not been another conference since then. Governors can meet during this meeting to discuss and exchange ideas so that they can progress the provinces that they are in charge of.

Mr Speaker, I assure the Governor for Northern and all the governors again, that I will make it my business to have the first Governor's Conference either by end of this year or the beginning of next year and continue to have them through the next five years.

Thank you Mr Speaker

Mr AGENA GAMAI – Thank you Mr Speaker. Thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak on behalf of my people of Delta Fly.

Firstly, Mr Speaker, I want to congratulate you on your election for the second term to the Eleventh National Parliament. I also want to extend my congratulations to the Honorable Prime

Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister, other ministers, governors and the rest of the Members of Parliament on your elections to Parliament.

Mr Speaker I rise here on this Floor of Parliament to speak about the District Treasury operation in the Middle Fly district. The Treasury division of Middle Fly is not in operation to this date.

Mr Speaker, we are all aware about the Late Honorable Roy Biyama who passed away while he was the Member for Middle Fly and I was his DDA member back then. To this date since the member passed away, the operation of the District Treasury has stopped. It is not functioning

07/03

The Treasury operations are not functioning at the moment as I speak, my people are watching on television right now in Delta Fly and Middle Fly district.

Mr Speaker, my questions are?

(1) Can the good Minister for Finance and Implementation, inform the people of Delta Fly and Middle Fly districts when he will uplift the suspension of the district operating account and DSIP account?

(2) How long will it take for the good Minister and his Department Secretary to attend to these issues affecting the Middle Fly District's Treasury operations?

(3) Can the good Minister of Finance and Implementation and the Minister for Treasury help the two districts/

(4) How do we can spend our funds in our districts before the year ends?

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr RAINBO PAITA – Thank you, Mr Speaker. Before I respond to the important questions raised by the new Member for Delta Fly Electorate, I would like to also congratulate you on your re-election as the Speaker of the House.

I also congratulate the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister, Opposition Leader and his Deputy, the new MPs and everyone of us on this Floor of Parliament.

Mr Speaker, I take note of the good questions from the Member for Delta Fly Electorate, which was cut out from what used to be Middle Fly.

Mr Speaker, as you are aware, when there is a by-election or a Member passes on, it is proper that the Department of Treasury take precaution as an institution of Government.

In this case, when the former Member passed away, I believe the Department took all precautionary measures to ensure that the public funds were kept intact so that, it can be used when there is new member elected into office.

I believe the operational funds for the District Treasury, were not affected. The Treasury workers in the districts were paid. But, the project funds and any necessary funds that were in those district treasuries were quarantined and awaiting a time such as this, when the new Member like yourself would be in office to expend those funds.

In regard to the first question, on when we can uplift the suspension on the district treasury operating account? I believe we can do that immediately.

I have been advised through my Department Secretary that the new electorates that were created including Delta Fly, Wau Waria and the other districts, accounts have already been opened and are now functional.

The DSIP's that we are going to send and any other funding that we are going to send will go straight into the district treasury accounts.

How long will it take? It has been done two days ago and through the Chair, the honourable Member, it is operational now.

How long will it take to spend those funds? As continuing Members, we ensure that the government does not take back funds from the district treasury accounts. Those funds that were allocated for your projects are always in the district accounts. So, it is up to you and your DDA members to decide how you can expend those funds. We cannot tell you how fast, how long or how soon you can spend those money; it is all subject to you, your DDA and you board.

Mr Speaker, that's all I can say. If there are other queries or clarification needed, he is welcome to follow me to my office

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER – Before I allow the Member for Talasea to ask his question, I understand everyone one wants to raise their questions, but the Chair will allow the new MP's first.

08/03

Increase Police Personnel in West New Britain

Mr FREDDIE REU KUMAI – Mr Speaker, thank you for giving me the opportunity to ask my question on behalf of the people of Talasea to the Minister for Internal Security.

Firstly, I take this opportunity to congratulate you on your appointment as Speaker of the Eleventh Parliament and I thank the people of Manus Open for your re-election. Likewise, I

congratulate the Honourable James Marape on his re-election by the people of Tari-Pori for his fourth term and election as Prime Minister in this honourable House. I extend my congratulation to the Deputy Prime Minister and the ministers in this Government on their appointments to respective portfolios. I also would like to congratulate the Opposition Leader, Honourable Joseph Lelang on his elevation to this position. To all the other Members and Governors, I congratulate you all.

To the people of Talasea, I thank you for electing me as the Member for your electorate. On that note, I would like to thank the Prime Minister and the Members of the last Parliament for declaring Nakanai District, as a new electorate of its own in the country.

Mr Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister for Internal Security. Law and order is a big problem in this country. Over time, past and present Member of this Parliament have raised concerns on the law and order problems we are faced with; however, not much attention is given to seriously address lawlessness.

I am happy that the Prime Minister has given attention to the need to address law and order issues head on. Therefore, in his wisdom he combined the Police and Correctional Services ministries together into one as the Internal Security Ministry which you are in charge of.

Kimbe is a multi-cultured town which accommodates the rest of PNG. With the many different cultures and ethnic groups, the risks of ethnic clashes and lawlessness is rife. Within the last two years, from 2020 to 2022, 13 people have been murdered resulting from ethnic and gang related violence; the settlement fights between Gigo and Laliki this year, the gang fights between Section Five and Gigo Settlement last year, the fight in Dami Village and others that are having negative impacts on the economy and threatening businesses.

Mr Speaker, social services are equally affected with the health and education services being disrupted. The health workers including the doctors are now leaving Kimbe. Just recently, the Kimbe Secondary School administration block and also a Kimbe Primary School two-storey classroom were burnt down, arson, armed holdups, carjacking, ethnic clashes and petty crimes are becoming almost every day occurrences.

Mr Speaker, we all know that oil palm is a major contributor to the revenue purse of this country and I thank the Prime Minister for his foresight in creating the new Ministry for Oil Palm and the West New Britain Palm Oil Development will underpin the development of this important ministry going forward.

At this juncture, I would like to ask if the Minister for Internal Security can consider increasing the number of police personnel in West New Britain to match the increasing population that is proving to be stressful in the management of law and order?

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr PETER TSIAMALILI Jr – Thank you, Mr Speaker. Firstly, I would like to take this time to congratulate you on your appointment as Speaker.

I thank the new Member for Talasea for his question and I also would like to congratulate you and your people for giving you the opportunity to represent them in this House.

09/03

The question you raised is an important question that affects all of us in the 118 seats.

You questioned our manpower. In the recent plan of the Police Force where a review was carried out on our position as an organisation, we discovered that we have a big shortfall on manpower. We have an average of one policeman to 1145 citizens.

Under the United Nations policing average you require one policeman to serve 450 citizens. You can already see the glaring gap.

Under our corporate plan in the Police Force, we will need resources. Under the estimates, to ensure that the policing institution is fully equipped, fully functional with appropriate policing resources, it is estimated that we will need almost K3.9 billion to bring our police force to the required standards while increasing its manpower.

Honourable Member, under the corporate plan we have highlighted, regarding your question, whilst answering it, I know that across this House and this country, all our leaders have this pressing issue, just like yours.

Again, as I said yesterday, honourable Members of this honourable House, the organisation that comes under me will need all of our collaborative effort. Time and time again, police, although we say it is the number one organisation that needs to be looked at carefully to help us, we need to resource it.

Right now, our team needs, apart from what we allocated for the election, close to K60 million to have a joint operation to address the lawlessness, that happened during the election so we can start to take action and prosecute the perpetrators of the mishaps that affected us during the elections.

So, Mr Speaker, I hope I have adequately answered the question from our honourable Member and I will reemphasise how important it is that although we stress on law and order, I must take this opportunity to also highlight our government's policy on the issue of economic Independence.

Once we really invest in job creation in our country, our young men and women will relieve their idle hands because idle hands will bring problems to us.

So, I am appealing to all of us leaders to start empowering our youths and citizens. If we can keep them gainfully employed, we will reduce this law and order problem.

It is not a law and order issue as such; it is an order issue. The laws are already there. We just need to activate more activities in our country so we can reduce this situation we are faced with.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Ms RUFINA PETER – Thank you, Mr Speaker for giving me the opportunity to speak on behalf of my people of Central Province for the first time in this honourable House.

I would like to start by commending yourself, Mr Speaker and the Deputy Speaker for your election into your respective offices.

I also want to congratulate the Prime Minister and his Deputy for their election into their offices, and the Opposition Leader and his deputy.

Mr Speaker, it is only fitting that before I proceed with my questions, that I sincerely thank the voters and the people of Central Province, starting from the remotest part of Goilala that border Morobe, Oro and Gulf provinces, along the Hiritano and Magi highways, to the most remotes parts of Amazon Bay that borders with Milne Bay, for their support and confidence in my leadership, especially the women and the youth.

Mr Speaker, I also want to applaud the men of Central Province, in particular, the former two-term Governor of Central Province Alphonse Moroi and the chiefs of Goilala District for pioneering a paradigm shift pertaining to women in political leadership, resulting in Central Province making history in the successful election of a female Governor.

10/03

Traditional culture is a significant barrier for women's successful election into Parliament and apart from the issues of election administration. It is a great privilege and blessing that the people of Rai Coast and Central Province have given the nation of Papua New Guinea two women in this Eleventh Parliament.

Mr Speaker, it would be unfair or otherwise irresponsible in these times if perspectives of half of the country's population were absent in the highest level of decision making in the country; to participate in the review of 50 years of nationhood and inserting solid foundations for a strong democracy and a robust and resilient economy.

Mr Speaker, my series of questions are directed to the Minister for Works and Highways and I ask the Prime Minister, the Minister for National Planning and the Minister for Transport to take note. These questions relate to the National Road Transport Infrastructure plan and touches also on the National Government's Connect PNG commitment. Coming straight from the 2022 National General Elections, one of the priorities of my people of Central Province is to secure a safe and convenient road access to essential services and market access in the city.

I want to use this opportunity; firstly, to ask the government to outline its plan for improving road access in Central Province. Secondly, and related to my first point are my questions on the National Government's Connect PNG program.

Mr Speaker, I would like to start by commending the Marape-Rosso Government for the significant effort to realize the targets of the Vision 2050, the DSP 2030 and the respective MTDPs by putting together a comprehensive Connect PNG Economic Road Transport Infrastructure Development Program from 2020-2040. I note and congratulate the Government for the achievements against targets of the Connect PNG Program over the period 2019-2021, as per the Department of Works and Highways performance report for the stated period.

Mr Speaker, I also note that over the 2016-2021 period funding trends have led to a funding gap that reached an accumulated total of K2 billion in 2021. And a K45 billion in deferred maintenance for 80 per cent of the existing network of roads which are either in poor or impassible conditions.

While the Central Province supports the Government's Connect PNG program to maintain and improve existing roads, my people need new road links to the districts and to connect remote communities that lie mainly in the hinterlands of our province.

In other words; I am saying to the government, connect my community first before you start linking my province with the Morobe Province and the Highlands region through Gulf Province.

In addition, I would like to see the Central-Milne Bay road, the missing link, prioritized over the trans-islands highway. I make this call in serious consideration for the right, safety and the dignity of the people of Central Province.

Mr SPEAKER – Honourable Governor, the Chair will interrupt you, can you rephrase your statement to a question and let the Minister for Works and highways answer them.

Fix Daisama -Brown River Portion of Hiritano Highway

Ms RUFINA PETER – My questions are;

1) Can the Minister explain why the rehabilitation and maintenance of the 126 kilometers of Hiritano Highway which is recorded as complete still has the stretch of road from Daisama to Brown River in dire need of urgent maintenance?

2) Can the Minister assure the people of Central Province that the maintenance of this section of the road be prioritized and maintained?

11/03

Can the Minister also outline, what the department defines as major works for the Magi and Hiritano highways,' in the ongoing and upcoming works under Connect PNG Phase 1, 2022 – 2017?

Mr Speaker, can the Minister also assure the people of Goilala District and the Kuni LLG, that it will prioritise the road, the building of the Kolep bridge, which is identified in the Connect PNG roads and bridges as Kubuna Crossing; a 30 metre road-bridge which is a most significant link between the district and Port Moresby?

Mr Speaker, I am aware that road funding is going directly to the districts and provincial treasuries, instead of the Department of Works, as it was the case in the past. Is this part of the strategy to upgrade and build new roads in my province?

If yes, I would like the Minister to assure me, that his Department and the National Government is following a detailed road transport plan for Central Province with costing and time frames. And, if yes, can the Minister undertake to give my province a copy of the plan for reference, because as yet, I have not sighted one. Can the Minister provide an update or report on how much has been spent in my province, and where?

Mr Speaker, in terms of the Connect PNG Program; can the Minister for Works and Highways, also tell my people whether a social impact study has been undertaken, prior to approving this national undertaking? If not, why not? Social impact and environmental impact studies are required by law in such major infrastructure undertakings, simply because of the serious impact it will have on the lives of our people.

Finally, Mr Speaker, I ask the Minister to kindly facilitate a briefing on these issues, for the benefit of my Central Provincial Government and people. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr SOLAN MIRISIM – Let me take this time to thank the Governor for Central Province. I think this is the first time for Central Province to elect a female to represent them in Parliament. I want to congratulate you, as well as the people in your province.

I also want to congratulate you, Mr Speaker, for getting enormous support for becoming the Speaker, for the second term.

I also want to thank my people of Telefomin, who gave me the mandate to come back for the third time to this Parliament. I also want to thank the Marape-Rosso Government, for having confidence in my leadership by giving me the Ministry for Works.

Mr Speaker, I just recently took over the office for Ministry for Works. I have not been to the office yet. To answer the Governor's detailed questions, I will collect the Department of Works brief details and present a statement in the next Parliament sitting.

Before I do all that, you have already outlined some points. All of the roads of the districts is now the responsibility of the DDA. For the sake of the new Members, these are special intervention program funds that are going straight to the districts. The DDA looks after the roads in the districts. The provinces have intervention funds as well.

Mr William Powi – Point of order! Mr Speaker, in the interest of time, I am sorry to interrupt the Minister, but can I move a motion without notice to extend question time? We have only two minutes and some of us have questions to ask. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER – Honourable Governor, your point of order is in order, but since the Minister is still talking, I will ask, if he can move the motion to extend question time.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS – EXTENDED TIME FOR QUESTIONS

Motion by (**Mr Solan Mirisim**) agreed to –

That so much of the *Standing Orders* be suspended as it would prevent time for questions this day being extended by 20 minutes.

12/03

Election-Related Violence

Mr WILLIAM POWI – (*Inaudible*) I represent one of the provinces that has election related violence in the country. If we don't deal with this disaster, it will surely affect the country

entirely. I have noticed that this election related violence is a security issue. It undermines the power of the Crown, the Constitution and eventually if we as Independent State of this country don't deal with this, then it will undermine the existence of this country.

You can laugh at these questions whilst I'm asking them but when your turn comes you will face the same too. This is a matter of national importance and the entire Government must deal with this. We cannot allow the big man to be involved in crime and run free. I'm not saying this because I had 208 boxes that were burnt in front of police personnel and I have lost 15 innocent people and 49 houses burnt down in the heart of town. This is a national issue and it will surely undermine the existence of this country if we don't deal with it.

Therefore, I want to ask the Minister for Internal Security and both the Prime Minister and Attorney General can take note; if we need to deal with it by taking bipartisan approach than we must do so. We cannot sit back and allow an important issue like election related violence slip under the carpet.

Other electorates like Markham and Kabwum didn't expect this. I sincerely apologize for such a violence in my province that we are faced with. If we aren't careful eventually it will become a national disaster.

So, I want both the Government and the Opposition to deal with this issue and give comfort to our people. The power of the State and the existence of this country must be addressed, thank you Mr Speaker.

Minister for Internal Security, I am available and I am putting a big challenge in your hands now. I know that you are capable of handling it, so consult and we all can deal with this national issue, thank you.

Mr PETER TSIAMALILI Jr – Thank you Mr Speaker, I also take this time to congratulate the Honourable Governor, William Powi, for being re-elected to this honourable House.

The questions that he has asked are very important questions. As I have expressed it before regarding the police in relation to capacity building, before I answer Mr Speaker, may I take this opportunity to thank all the policemen and policewomen who have been engaged all through the country during the 2022 National General Election period.

Mr Speaker, although we were faced with a lot of challenges during the election period.

I must commend our front-liners who continue to maintain good order right across the country and therefore we are able to have Members represent this great country of ours. So, without them, this election would not have been successful and we would not be sitting in this honourable House like this. So let us give credit, where credit is due.

I thank the Police Commissioner, Mr David Manning and his team, our military forces and all the law enforcing agencies who worked collaboratively to enable the continuation of Parliament for the next five years.

Thank you Governor Powi for your question, we do not take the situation in your province lightly. Many similar problems occurred in several other provinces and I must assure you that before all these issues, we established an investigation task force team. The only challenge we had was equipping them with sufficient resources. So, Governor, I just want to give you my reassurance that I am aware of your problem and I thank you for your confidence in my work. Like I have said earlier, I will need each and everyone of you to support me. This law and order issue is everyone's business. I have consulted our Treasurer already and would need almost K60 million immediately so that I can carry out this work. But, Governor Powi, I want to assure you that we will work together to address this immediately and set a good precedent in places where destructions occurred. It occurred in a small part of our county but it was very tragic.

Mr Speaker, I will be initiating a security summit for all leaders around October, if time permits. All of us will meet and have the opportunity for us to once talk about the challenges that we face and what we can collaboratively do to address once and for all this law and order issue.

Thank you.

Supplementary Question

Involve Outside Help in Policing

Sir PETER IPATAS - Thank you, Mr Speaker. This law and order issue is a problem that has been here for a long time. I have been speaking on this issue on this Floor so many times. Don't think that we will solve this problem from within this country. How will we solve it? Minister, you have an opportunity to look at my suggestion to put our country first, if we are unable to manage, look at outside people to help us. Do not tell lies to the people of this country.

Mr SPEAKER - Honourable Governor, you are making a statement, can you ask your question?

Sir PETER IPATAS - Mr Speaker, this issue is very important that I want to stress the importance of this question. Look at the suggestions I am giving. This country needs to survive

as a country. The law and order issues will bring this country down as my fellow Governor for Southern Highlands has said, so let's take this head on.

During the election, security forces have been compromised, not all of them, but to an extent, some of them. They were bribed while on duty so let's tell the truth and deal with this issue honestly.

So, Minister, look at the options that I've been giving for years to involve outsiders to come and fix this issue so that all these agendas that the Prime Minister is putting can come to a reality. Let's not talk a lot here, Minister, I ask you to look at the alternative; involve outside police to come and help us to build up capacity and manage law and order problems in this country.

Thank you.

Mr PETER TSIAMALILI Jr - Thank you, Mr Speaker. Thank you, Honourable Governor Peter Ipatas for your question and the strong statement. Honourable Governor, I take note and as freshman into this position, I certainly will discuss it with my team.

We have very good bilateral partners that continue to support our sovereignty. You have raised this suggestion over time and before I came into this House, I have also heard and I see that it is a good strategy for us it to strengthen our force. Like in all organizations, you will have your strengths and your weaknesses and we have had some shortfalls but we must never give up on our people.

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Whilst I have this position, I can assure you, my good Governor, that I will do my job. You have made some very good and strategic comments that I will look into to build capacity and refine our Police Force and bring order, discipline and most importantly loyalty back into this country. Thank you Mr Speaker

Telecommunication in Rural Areas

Mr MARSH NAREWEC – Thank you Mr Speaker. Thank you for recognizing the people of Wau Waria, a new district in Morobe Province. Mr Speaker, before I speak, I would like to thank the people of Wau Waria for mandating me to be their first MP. I would also like to congratulate the Honorable Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister on your elections to the positions you are in now.

On behalf of the people of Wau Waria, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Prime Minister, the Honorable James Marape, Pangu Pati and the Marape Basil Government

from the Tenth Parliament for gifting the people of Wau Waria and the people of Morobe a new electorate. Now we have space in the Parliament to raise our concerns.

Mr Speaker, my question without notice is directed to the Minister for Communication and Information Technology, the Honorable Timothy Masiu and I would also like to congratulate him on his re-election of Member of South Bougainville and Minister for Communication and Information Technology. On behalf of the ICT community, I would also like to commend the Minister and his hardworking members for putting forward a new policy, the Government Digital Transformation Policy, during the last term of Parliament and also for passing the Digital Government Act.

We all know the road and electricity are enablers of economic growth and communication is also an enabler of economic growth and human development advancement. During this time, we have seen a lot of developments in communication. But in rural areas, communication has not reached them yet. Most of our people in the rural areas walk five hours just to make one phone call or send a text message and these can lead to other issues such as safety. For example, if they are out at sea and they need help and there is no communication that is an issue.

So my question is, these rural areas are not the best economical areas, therefore telecommunication companies don't operate there.

(1) So what is your plan, together with the agencies under you on how best to serve those people who are not in the economical areas in the rural areas of Papua New Guinea?

(2) We have been talking about co sharing of the communication towers, what is the progress of this co-sharing arrangement between these companies?

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There other telecommunication towers installed in those areas and negotiations should take place in order to reduce costing so that, the rural people can benefit through those communication towers.

(3) Can co-sharing of communication towers make communication affordable to people in rural areas?

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr TIMOTHY MASIU – Thank you, Mr Speaker. I also thank and congratulate the new Member for Wau Waria.

I rise on behalf of my people of South Bougainville to congratulate you on your appointment, as Speaker of the House for another term. I also congratulate your Deputy as well.

My congratulations extend to the Prime Minister and his Deputy, the Opposition Leader and his Deputy and to every member of the House.

I will go straight into answering the member's question. Firstly, regarding rural telecommunication, it is very important and I as the Minister also have a big interest in providing these services to the rural communities.

This is one of my major focuses since my appointment. I already spoke with NICTA and NBC regarding this issue and we are working hard. We hope to see progress in our work to help the rural communities out there. We are currently focused not only on mobile phone communication but through radios as well. Radios will help our people to get first-hand information and be aware of the progress of their government.

The project funds for rural telecommunication have been with the National Planning Ministry for some time now. The K10 million which was allocated for rural telecommunication in this year's budget is still there, so once we get these funds, these services will go out to the rural communities.

I know this is a concern to all members of Parliament because much of the areas are not covered by these telecommunication towers. Digicel was bought off by Telstra company and a new company just came in, which is Vodafone whilst, B-mobile and Telikom are our very own.

So, in order to improve these services, we need to work together with these operators. Although it is uneconomical for them businesswise, but it is also important for them to use satellite to beam signal down to those areas. Those are some negotiations that we are doing and are in progress. So, if they could not go and set up towers, they must make it possible to communicate through satellite.

Another way to help start services in rural areas, is to use Universal Access Scheme (UAS) funding. They operate under NICTA.

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They have a board of their own who generates income through operator's like Telikom/Bmobile, Digicel which was recently purchased by Telstra, Vodafone, NBC etcetera who pay them. From the portion we get, then we can help and I think this year, six provinces will benefit from the six towers.

This leads me to answer the second question. The towers which were funded by UAS are for all operators to use or co-share those towers. But, under the Act which we passed just before the closing of the Tenth Parliament, co-sharing of towers is part of the act. And I am aware that before Marape-Basil Government came into Parliament, there was some funds that the China

Exim Bank provided to build some towers in the country but I do not know where they were built, even the World Fund Bank put some funds into the construction of this towers. I need to know where those towers are so that all operators can use them because they are not private towers instead the government funded them. So on the co-sharing of towers yes, it is also part of our progress and we are encouraging all the operators to get together and come to a resolution of what we should do with the towers built by Digicel and also with the towers that Vodafone and Telikom are building.

So, Honourable Member, I want to thank you for asking your first question to me and it will go down in history for you and your people. This will also go down in history for me too as a first time member has asked me a question about these towers and this is the first question to be asked to me in this Eleventh Parliament.

I thank the Member for the very intelligent question and I want to assure the members of this House, just like the Minister for Internal Security has mentioned that these issues are for all of us to discuss. Communication is our business so let us all communicate and work together to address these issues. Also, members can use some funding under their DSIP to build their own tower like the Member for Tewai-Siassi who I would like to acknowledge for using his electorate DSIP Funds to build his electorate towers and there are other members too. If your build those towers than the operators can use them.

There is still outstanding work with NBC in Namatanai and Talasea yet to be completed but they should be finished soon. I will be visiting Manus next week to see how we can serve the people in the outer islands through our radio service.

Mr Speaker, I am not going to wait, I will be going to your electorate so you must follow me too so we can work together and identify the needs of your people and serve them as far as telecommunication is concerned in Manus, as well as Milne Bay and the Bougainville atolls.

With that, thank you for the good question and may God bless us all. Thank you.

ADJOURNMENT

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

That the Parliament do now adjourn.

The Parliament adjourned at 11.40 a.m.