

## SEVENTH DAY

Thursday 19 January 2023

### DRAFT HANSARD

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## **SEVENTH DAY**

**Thursday 19 January 2023**

The Speaker (**Mr Job Pomat**) took the Chair at 10.30 a.m., and invited the Governor of Manus, **Honourable Charlie Benjamin**, to say Prayers;

‘Our gracious, eternal and loving Father in Heaven, this morning mipela olgeta membas ikam lo ai blo yu. Mipela i askim wisdom, knowledge na understanding blo yu. Papa mipela igat planti sin lo laip blo mipela. Mipela i prea ba yu rausim olgeta nogut blo mipela with your blood on Calvary. Na dispela moning ba yu karamapim mipela wantaim your robe of righteousness.

Tete mipela i prea ba u stap wantaim Prime Minister blo mipela as em i stiaim kantri blo mipela, Deputy Prime Minister, ol Cabinet ministers, yu stap wantaim Oposisen Lida na olgeta memba blo Parliament husait istap tete. Stap wantaim Speaker blo mipela na givim em gudpela wisdom lo lidim mipela.

Papa tete em i important day, we samting mipela bai i wokim tete, em lo makim Governor-General. Papa mipela i prea lo wisdom, special knowledge na understanding so mipela iken lukluk lo olgeta hap blo Papua Niugini na olgeta regions, lukluk lo every land. Givim mipela gudpela wisdom so mipela iken makim raitpela man lo kamap Head of State blo kantri blo mipela.

Mipela i prea osem ba u stap wantaim mipela taim mipela igo insait lo program blo tete.. Amen.’

## **DEATH OF FORMER MEMBER – STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER**

**Mr SPEAKER** – Honourable Members, I have to inform the Parliament of the death of Mr Robert Ali Sakias. He was a former Member for Telefomin Open Electorate in the 6th National Parliament from 1997 to 2002.

During the term, he served as a Minister for Environment and Conservation in July 1997, vice-minister for Local Level Governments in December 1997 to July 1998, then Vice-Minister for Mining in July 1998. Following the installation of the Morauta Government, he was appointed Vice-Minister for Agriculture in December 1999 until December 2000, and a member of the Provincial Government Suspension Committee in November 1999. He was

voted as Governor of West Sepik Province on 9 November 2000, after Mr John Tekwie was appointed as Minister for Trade and Industry.

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

I thank the Parliament.

*(All honourable members stood in their places to observe a minute of silence in memory of the late gentleman)*

**02/07**

## **QUESTIONS**

### **Disbursement of School Fee Subsidy**

**Mr JOHN KAUPA** – Mr Speaker, I direct my questions to the Minister for Education. A colleague member asked the same question before but there still seems to be confusion amongst the general public as the school year approaches. Hopefully, your response can provide some clarity for the parents and schools.

Mr Speaker, the Minister for Education stated here in Parliament that the Government has paid all the required funds to schools throughout the country.

I urge him to further elaborate and clarify so that parents and guardians are assured. There is panic amongst the general public because schools have their own boards that govern the schools. The perception is that those boards have the powers to endorse and implement project fees and will burden parents and guardians despite the Government's commitment of free education throughout the country.

Can the Minister for Education confirm if these funds have reached the primary and secondary schools and clarify all these issues?

School starts next week and I am raising these issues as part of the Marape–Rosso Government's commitment to the ordinary people.

**Mr JIMMY UGURO** – Mr Speaker, I thank the Member for Moresby North-East for this very important question. Let me take this opportunity to welcome back our teachers nationwide who will be starting next week while the students will start the week after.

I thank all the teachers who are making their way back from holidays right throughout the country. We face another tough year in 2023 and I appeal to students to cooperate and work together this year.

I thank the Marape-Rosso Government for coming to the aid of parents and guardians who are facing these hardships. This free education program has run for almost three years and continues. After being hit hard by the Covid-19 pandemic the Government has continuously rolled out our school fee program to support our ordinary people throughout the country.

Almost K632 million under the TFF Program has been rolled out and a total project fee of over K160 million. These fees are calculated according to the National Education Board school fee limits. And they were not just projected outside of what is required in schools.

Every school in the nation have approved fee limits from elementary up to grade 12 including vocational schools. All these was taken into consideration and calculations were done accordingly.

This Government is committed and has never failed our people and our schools throughout the country. We have allocated money and they were paid out on time.

I take this opportunity to extend my gratitude to the Treasurer and the Finance Department who have worked tirelessly and have released almost 50 per cent subsidy, which is over K316 million. This allocation money will be ready this week and by next week they will be deposited into school accounts. That also goes for the project fees; 50 per cent of the K160 million – over K80 million – is ready to be deposited next week. The departments of Treasury and Finance are working hard to make sure these allocations are available in the banks for our schools.

**03/07**

All school bank accounts are with the Education Department. The banks are aware that a bulk payment will be made and they will then disburse the funds into the respective school accounts.

I would like to remind all school principals and the boards of management to not charge any fees to students. Report to your nearest education official if you notice a shortage of funds, or if there are some other delays with the remittance of your school funds. And if you happen to steal funds from the department, do let us know too.

**Mr Garry Juffa** – Point of Order! Can we stop this habit of asking the teachers and boards not to do this or that? There should be a compliance or enforcement mechanism within the ministry to ensure that it does not happen.

Time and time again, we keep reminding them not to do this or that. It is quite simple, just put an enforcement mechanism in place and ensure that they do not do it. And if they do disobey, there are precuring reactions to such actions.

**Mr SPEAKER** – Honourable Governor, I will have to over-rule your point of order. The Honourable Minister is only responding to questions that were raised. Your point of order seems to be a new matter, you may wish to raise it as a question or during Grievance Debate.

Honourable Minister, you may continue.

**Mr JIMMY UGURO** – Mr Speaker, we do have our control mechanisms in place. As in the case of my department we have school inspectors who are tasked to visit schools and inspect the principals and boards of governors who disobey. Two years ago, some principals were charged while others were suspended for disobeying our orders. To the parents out there; take note that this Government will not fail you, we are paying all fees.

To all schools, do relax some of your rules and follow the Government's guidelines to ensure we help our students.

### **Supplementary Question**

#### **Review School Fee Subsidy MOA**

**Mr ELIAS KAPAVORE** – Mr Speaker, my question to the Minister for Education refers to an MOA signed by the Department of Education and the East New Britain Provincial Administration for the school fee subsidy to be paid into a trust account before it is released to the respective provincial schools.

Schools in Pomio District never get their payments on a timely manner, therefore, can that agreement be reviewed so that payment of subsidies for schools in Pomio can go directly to the school accounts rather than going to the trust account.

**Mr JIMMY UGURO** – I thank the Member for Pomio for the supplementary question. The Department of Education does have an agreement with the East New Britain Provincial Administration to divert all subsidies to the trust account, and Enga Provincial Government is another one of the provinces with similar arrangement.

It is the sole decision of provincial governments if that want all their school subsidies to be paid to a trust account. If you are facing similar issues, your provincial governments

should report back if they are not able to manage it well. We can then review the agreement and see what needs to be done.

**Mr MARSH NARAWEC** – Thank you, Mr Speaker. My supplementary question is in relation to free education.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Honourable Member, let me just remind you that if you are asking a supplementary question, it must be in line with what was already asked. If you wish to ask a new question, I apologize but I will not entertain it.

### **Supplementary Question**

#### **FODE School Fee Subsidy**

**Mr MARSH NARAWEC** – We have students who have completed grade 10 and 12 but would like to upgrade their marks or wish to take up studies through Flexible Open Distance Education (FODE).

Are FODE Students included in the Free Education Policy that we are talking about?

In the districts, we have parents and people flocking into our offices seeking assistance for school fees. A list of all schools from our districts that are eligible for school fee subsidies must be sent to us so that we are aware and will attend to our peoples' queries accordingly and mostly for our reference purposes.

**Mr JIMMY UGURO** – Mr Speaker, many people don't know what FODE means. FODE stands for Flexible Open Distance Education and it caters for those who wish to upgrade their marks through distant mode.

**04/07**

It is a second chance given by this Government for students to upgrade their marks.

We have paid 100 per cent school fee subsidy on all FODE programs throughout the country. So FODE programs are free, for registered centres, check with your provincial FODE coordinators. They will give you the list which shows the amount of funding allocated to FODE programs. It is this Government's priority to ensure all districts, provinces and all the vocational schools and high schools must establish FODE centres so that we leave no one behind.

### **Project Fee Allocation Formula**

**Mr JAMES DONALD** – Thank you, Mr Speaker. My question is directed to the Minister for Education. But before that, let me make some clarification.

I would like the Minister to explain the difference between a school fee and a project fee. I believe a project fee is what the school boards are imposing to get the necessary school infrastructures built or to maintain classrooms, toilets and other facilities. Now let's be realistic, project fees are an important component of schools. Many schools are being successfully managed because of the funding received from project fees. This is particularly with private schools and mission-run schools. For example, Saint Gabriel School in my district was highly ranked in the recent selections in the country and this is because they have their own project fees. And this is how it works; they have an annual operation fee of K1.5 million, compared to a school like Mogulu or up at Nomad, which would cost an estimated K2.5 million.

In terms of sustaining the operations of the schools, the school fees alone are not enough so they have to look for ways to sustain their operations. We need to come up with a rational allocation.

Can the Minister explain the formula or method used to calculate the funding for each school or is it standardised funding?

Different schools have different needs and it is very difficult to sustain their operation throughout the year with the government funds being allocated.

**Mr JIMMY UGURO** –Mr Speaker, I thank the Member for North Fly for his good question. All fees being charged by schools have to be approved by the National Education Board. For project fees, it is calculated based on the number of the students and the different grading. For example, in elementary it could be K20 and in high school K200 so the calculations are based on the National Education Board approved fees.

When you multiply those fees with by the total number of students per school you will get the total amount.

But I want to inform the Parliament that the approved fee is the one that the Government is subsidising so that parents don't have to pay that component. However, that may not be enough to build a double-storey classroom or construct other facilities. So we encourage the schools, if you have bigger projects, you can also apply for PIP or DSIP funding from DDA or your local member. But these fees are the ones we got from the Education Department. The Government also encourages the local members to use the DSIP

funding well and education should be a priority area. Let us also look at the training for these schools to upgrade their standards to qualify for 166 drive and also resource them in terms of teaching and learning materials.

I encourage the members to assist the schools by identifying some of their projects and help fund them. It is not the Education Departments business alone, it's a collective effort and we must all contribute towards school administration and projects in our country.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**05/07**

### **Cloudy Bay Forestry Agreement**

**Sir PUKA TEMU** –Mr Speaker, my questions are directed to the Minister for Forests and if the Minister for Works and Highways and our good Treasurer can take note.

Honourable Speaker, in Abau, we have a forest project called Cloudy Bay FMA. It is one of the biggest in the country and it has gone through three different management companies. The first one was Northern District Sawmilling, then the PNG Sustainable Development and then after that, two others of Asian origin.

My questions are:

(1) Can the Minister help to facilitate the new project agreement?

Under the old project agreement which has lapsed, we negotiated a very good project agreement. But now that the exchanges have gone between three different developers, the new project agreement has fallen out of the truck and nobody is initiating it.

So, I am requesting the honourable Minister with his team and our provincial forest management committee to help re-initiate the discussion and negotiation of the new project agreement.

(2) Can the Minister for Forests ensure that the new set of policies that were introduced by the then Minister for Forest who is now the Minister for Works and Highways, be implemented in this Cloudy Bay forest management project?

Those set of policies that I have gone through are very good for any subject that you can think of in forestry, sustainable development, nursery, businesses, et cetera. So, may I request that in the negotiation of the new project agreement, the new policies that Cabinet approved during the time of Minister Mirisim as the Forest Minister, be implemented in this Cloudy Bay project.



Mr Speaker, I have two timber projects; one in Cloudy Bay which is this project and the other in Amazon Bay, which is the LLG connected to Milne Bay Province. Under our Connect PNG program, the Government has already nominated the link between Central Province and Milne Bay. This link will require road building through virgin forests in these two areas where the two projects are. The operator in Cloudy Bay is Cloudy Bay Timber and the operator in Amazon Bay is Magarida Timbers.

(3) Can the Minister, myself and the Minister for Works and Highways sit down together with the developers to negotiate a proper deal?

We have an opportunity to participate in these two projects. As they cut the timber through their logging roads, can the Works Department go and map out the road that will link Abau to Amazon Bay?

That is where the link will be and it's going to be an expensive exercise unless the Government can fund this link. So, I'm asking if we can negotiate a proper deal with these two companies that are already there with their bulldozers, et cetera, as they cut through the timber, and nominate a road. Can we say that this is the road that you have to cut through because it will be the permanent road and it will be part of the Magi Highway. Therefore, I am requesting to the Minister if that can be factored in as part of the negotiations that we are going through in the new project agreement. It will be an opportunity for these investors to participate in in this leg of our Connect PNG program between Central Province and Abau.

#### **Log Export Development Levy**

(4) Can the Minister release the long-awaited log export development levy for those of us who host these timber projects?

**06/07**

**Mr SALIO WAIPO** – Mr Speaker, I would like thank the Member for Abau, Sir Puka Temu, for the good questions. I am happy to stand on the Floor to answer the questions.

Firstly, the project that is located in Abau District has gone through Court and so I will not say a lot on this. It needs clarification from the Judiciary and the legal team from our department so I will not go further.

The second question is regarding the policy that the former Minister for Forests brought forth, the Department is working strongly and will bring some submissions to NEC for its perusal and approval.

In regards to Cloudy Bay and Amazon Bay, I want to inform the country that under this Government, both the Forest Department and Department of Works and Highway have

included the Connect PNG program so that through our developers in our districts, we are able to collect information on road activities inside their project areas. This will be a program that the Department of Forestry can capture in support of the Connect PNG Program through Works and Highway so that we can collect information through logging activities in the remote parts of our country. We can sit down and discuss with them to push the work of the road so that the National Government can take over this road and register it so that it can be under the Connect PNG Program.

Thirdly, I would like to thank the Treasurer. This morning, he has just told me that he has helped the district through the department. Whenever the funding has reached the account, I will let you know. So, Treasurer, thank you very much. For those who have been waiting, with text messages coming through my phone and I haven't responded, I'm sorry I'll put it this way. Thank you very much for the good question from the Member for Abau. I want you to put it in writing so that I can fully explain it and we can meet at a later date. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

### **Morobe - Set Up Mineral Refinery**

**Mr LUTHER WENGE** – Thank you, Mr Speaker, for giving me leave to ask a series of questions without notice. The questions that I'm going to raise will be directed to the Honourable Minister for Mining, and I invite the Prime Minister to take note.

Before I ask those questions, I would like to give the circumstances which will give rise to those questions.

In this country, Mr Speaker, minerals of all kinds are been mined by foreigners. All of those minerals like gold and copper, and others we may not know about, are being exported to other countries. In those countries, the gold or copper are refined more to extract other minerals.

Mr Speaker, Morobe is a country of gold and minerals. During colonial rule, Morobe was mined for gold and minerals which were taken out of the province, particularly from the Bulolo and Wau area.

Mr Speaker, we cannot continue to allow these things to happen. We must refine the minerals ourselves and extract the gold from other minerals, sell it and bring money into this country. This is 'hard money' which is valued higher when compared to Papua New Guinea Kina.

That is why, Mr Minister, I want to ask this simple question. I have stated before that we in Morobe are ready to set up a refinery so that we can refine gold and minerals of all kinds. I

can't speak for PNG but I will speak for Morobe because I have the political mandate to ask you this question.

(1) Can the Minister allow the Morobe Provincial Government to set up a refinery to refine all minerals of all kinds in the province of Morobe?

**07/07**

### **Permission to Conduct Mineral Exploration**

It is our policy that we are now going to invest in exploration to discover what minerals we have in the province. If we wait for the National Government to do the exploration, it is not their top priority and we can't wait for them. We can do it ourselves and conduct exploration in relation to gold and all the minerals, oil and gas.

(2) Can the Minister for Mining grant us the permission in consistent with the law by allowing us to do exploration of minerals of all kinds in the Morobe Province?

Thank you, Honourable Minister and Mr Speaker.

**Sir ANO PALA** – Thank you, Mr Speaker. Thank you, Honourable Governor of Morobe for raising that very important question.

The first question is in relation to refinery; as you know we have only one gold and silver refinery, it's privately own but it has closed down. Most of the companies are sending their minerals overseas for refining. I think alluvial gold miners are complaining that they need a refinery.

So Governor, what you are raising is what the country needs right now. If you have the resources, organization and the corporate structure ready, I will allow you to setup a refinery because we don't have a refinery at the moment.

I understand in Indonesia there are about 20 refineries and they don't allow minerals to be sent overseas for refining. So, it is important that somebody who is willing and has the resource and structure can come forward and I will give it to you, because it is overdue.

Our people are now taking ore overseas and having it refined but we don't know what's in that ore. They just put it in a container and take it overseas. It could be gold, silver or other minerals. But because of the refinery problem the business people send ores overseas for refining.

It is really important that we have somebody in the country who is prepared to put their money and resources down. If the Morobe Provincial Government is ready to do that then we can talk.

As for exploration, you also have the right to go into it. The laws that applies to the private sector mining companies also applies to provincial governments. If you can setup in a corporate structure and apply, the rules are the same. The playing field is level for everybody including the provincial governments.

So, my good Governor, what you raised is something that this industry, department and country needs. So, if you are ready, we can commence the process.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

### **Decentralise Financial Functions**

**Mr GARRY JUFFA** – Mr Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister for Finance and Planning. I just want to make a comment in relation to the response made by the Minister for Mining. Let's state that, if we want to build a refinery, it must be owned by Papua New Guineans 100 per cent.

My questions are directed to the Minister for Finance and Prime Minister to take note. In relation to the matters of Finance and Treasury in the provinces, I want to make a point here in support of what the Governor of Enga said some time ago about the Government strengthening provincial governments. And one of the strategies that we the governors supported, was the continued decentralization of function away from Waigani to the provinces, so that we can have greater control of what's happening in our provinces. One such area that requires decentralization is the finance functions.

Mr Speaker, the challenges posed by a dysfunctional provincial treasury office is causing a lot of frustration and headaches for the people of Papua New Guinea. I am sure most governors will agree. We have to deal with unqualified officers who take leave and disappear whenever they feel like, bank reconciliation which are not done for months, financial reports which are never delivered in a timely manner.

**08/07**

These erratic stop-start efforts are impeding development in provinces.

My questions are to the Minister for Finance and for the Prime Minister to take note of are;

- (1) When are these functions going to be decentralised?
- (2) Is there a plan for decentralisation?
- (3) If so, when can we know about this plan?

(4) How can we move it along so that provinces and districts can function as they ought to, instead of being held at ransom by public servants from the Finance Department?

The headquarter is not carrying out proper audits on a regular basis. For instance, if a report is not tabled on a monthly basis, it should immediately trigger an alert in Waigani, but it doesn't. We go for months without reports. Provincial governments and districts do not have oversight over the funds that are coming into their provinces and districts. It is quite frustrating.

We want to believe that this Government, our government which most governors support because it said that it would decentralise these functions and build and strengthen provincial governments. We want to believe that these functions will be decentralised. When is that going to happen, and can the Minister inform and give us some timelines so that we can continue to confidently support our government?

Thank you.

**Mr RAINBO PAITA** – Mr Speaker, I thank the concerns and questions raised by the good Governor of Northern Province. Particularly, in respect to the capacity of provincial treasury offices to function within the scope of what they ought to do, in terms of providing financial advisory role and the role that they play at the provincial level.

Mr Speaker, through you, in terms of the question of when we can start decentralising powers to provincial and district governments. I think that process has taken place already because by now, especially the district members may have realised that in each provinces there are district finance managers on the ground. Most districts have functional IFMs systems already running like accounts offices. To the districts, that function has already been devolved from Waigani to district governments.

In respect to provincial governments, through this question, most governors and members when they have issues with the capacity and ability of provincial treasurers or provincial finance managers, we facilitate in terms of investigating and auditing at the same time.

When there's issues of politics, and people not adhering to instructions by PEC or provincial administrations, the Finance Department always try to see how we can deal with those officers.

In terms of giving full powers, our government in the last term brought in a comprehensive legislation, which was the Decentralisation Bill. It came, but at the same time there were some issues raised on that particular bill so that it was sent back.

It was more of a whole government approach, instead of just Finance Department devolving financial powers to provincial governments. It was how the government could assess devolution and decentralisation of powers to provincial and district governments, and as well as how the DDA would come in to play in all these.

Mr Speaker, through you, I understand that sometimes we have cohesion between governors and district members and sometimes we don't. Sometimes we work in partnerships and sometimes we don't, and sometimes we try to manage both on the national level. We try to see the great picture between how provincial and district governments play.

I can assure the Governor that in this term of Parliament, we will work and try to devolve powers back. The Prime Minister has already given instructions since last term that we should transfer powers back to the provincial governments.

In conclusion;

(1) The capacity building.

For example, our Provincial Treasurer in Morobe recently passed away. When the Governor and the Provincial Administrator requested for an officer to go down and replace the deceased officer, there was an issue of accommodation that was raised. We have to build capacities on the ground.

That has been an ongoing challenge in the Finance Department. We have a program for district and provincial finance capacity building, which is for strengthening institutional housing for officers.

As the Prime Minister has said time and again, send the functions of Waigani back to the province and districts, so that Waigani will be a structure that only look after and manage a few functions.

Mr Speaker, the Governor has been raising this issue time and again in government caucus on how we can decentralise power. In this term of Government, I would to work with him as the Chairman of Public Service Reform, the Minister for Public Service and other key departments on how we can structure a fix that we can be able to devolve powers to provincial governments.

Mr Speaker, through you, yes we will do, and we will be working together in a collaborative approach, including him as Chairman of Public Service. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**09/07**

### **Supplementary Question**

### **Decentralise Employment Powers**

**Mr KONI IGUAN** – Mr Speaker, my supplementary is regarding powers of discipline officers. Some district finance managers seem to be operating differently from our CEOs. There are instances where some directives are given by the District Development Authority to the CEO and they are waiving those directives aside because they need to get approval from the national Finance Department and not from the CEO or the DDA.

Mr Speaker, my question is; Can the Minister decentralize the power to hire and fire back to the District Authority so that when the officers are not in line with the district directives they can be disciplined and charged? Just like how they discipline and charge other program managers.

**Mr SPEAKER** – Honourable Members and our good citizens in the Public Gallery before I allow the Minister to answer this question. let me remind you all that we must all switch our mobile phones off or put them on silent.

**Mr RAINBO PAITA** – Mr Speaker, I thank the Deputy Speaker and the Member for Markham for his very important supplementary question leading up after the Governor of Northern Province.

Mr Speaker, in regards to the district finance managers or officers in the district and I can relate with all the members because we all face the same issues be it our district CEOs or finance managers or certain officers, in respect to the question on whether to hire and fire and the decentralisation of such the powers, we have to consult with the Minister for Public Service where all the public servants come under the *Public Service Management Act* and they can verify which procedure we can use to discipline and charge officers on.

Mr Speaker, we have the same powers in finance and that is to liaise with our officers on the ground and most times we don't have powers as to how finance officers should be playing their role in their districts.

If the DDA has passed its budget and the district chairman concurs with it, the job of the district finance manager is simply to implement the budget. He does not need to get approvals or what not from the Department of Finance. I don't think there is a provision of that sort to consult the Department of Finance for approvals. If a Budget is passed, the officer should implement the directives as required by the DDA. If the district needs payment for contracts or commitments made by the DDA, the manager should fulfil those directives.

Mr Speaker, unless this advice is coming outside of the budget and you expect him to commit funding for that issue, he will consult the department for further advice.

As the finance manager on the ground, he should be upholding all the DDA directives and there is no need for further dialogue with the Department of Finance.

Let me make it clear that I don't have control over how your district is managed. It is you as Member and Chairman of the DDA who has full control in terms of implementing work.

If the finance manager is seeking approval from the Department of Finance, then I will have to state here that he is making an excuse that is not true.

District finance managers are there to advise you in terms of finance matters, according to the *Finance Management Act*, they are there to advise the DDA board.

Mr Speaker, my department has no power to intervene whether to discharge officers or discipline them in the districts.

In terms of removing them and discharging them, that is another issue that we need to consult the Public Service Department.

If they are found to be continuously defying directives we can work with the provincial administrators the CEO and the Department of Personnel Management for discharging matters.

I hope I have provided an answer to your concerns.

**10/07**

### **Supplementary Question**

#### **Review Legislation on Appointment of Finance Managers**

**Mr LUTHER WENGE** – My supplementary question is directed to the same Minister and my question refers to the Treasurer or who is now referred to as the Financial Manager of the province, and the district appointed under the Secretary for Finance as the Department of Personnel Management Guidelines and the Organic Law on Provincial and Local Level Government.

The finance managers are now disobeying orders because they seem to think that they do not come under the jurisdictions of the administrator in the province. All provincial and district appointments are done by the provincial administrator and all officers of the province and district obey his directives except for the so-called finance managers of the province and the district.



Can this law be reviewed so that we do not face similar issues like what the Member for Markham has already raised?

Introduce an amendment to the current law that gives power to the Secretary to appoint provincial and district finance managers to ensure that these positions must come under the provincial administrator like any other public servant in the province.

**Mr RAINBO PAITA** – I wish to thank the Governor of Morobe for his supplementary question which is basically in line with what the Governor of Northern has raised in terms of decentralization.

There was a legislation brought in relating to decentralization. Some of the governors suggested that we should meet again to discuss which powers to decentralize and other agendas like capacity building, policy and legal issues. As I can recall, the Prime Minister facilitated that meeting between the governors to really engage in the discussion on what powers to give the provincial governments.

We are aware that DDA is the implementing agency that is on the ground but what level of authority do we give to DDA to perform at the district level? And as mentioned by the Member for Markham; should the DDA be allowed to appoint its own district treasurer and officers? We are in conflict here because the provincial governments also want to appoint their own finance managers in their province.

So the whole government approach was that, instead of individual departments decentralising their powers, the Government wants to see which powers it can decentralise at the national level. This was the approach taken by the government and I am hopeful that during this session, we will look into this legislation. It is not only with finance because as much as you want power and authority financially, you want powers from other departments existing and operating in Waigani.

Mr Speaker, to be short and sharp in reference to this question, it is a work in progress on the legislation. Let me put on record here that my department is one of the first departments to have decentralized its powers to the provinces. I should not take credit for this as it was a work in progress taken on board by other Finance Ministers before me.

As for appointments of provincial administrators, by matter of policy, we come through the Provincial Executive Council (PEC) and that structure still stands. And if the government endeavors, the legislation is there and it is something that the Prime Minister has authorized for us to decentralize some powers to provinces and we have Bougainville and the Department of Lands which are some of the examples we have.

The Minister for Lands has given powers of lands back to the Autonomous Region of Bougainville and these are things that we have done in the last three years. We are not saying no, but it is just that we give back a structured approach. I look forward to working with the Governor of Morobe and all the other governors who want those powers; especially in terms of provincial and district appointments and we can prepare within this five year. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**11/07**

Finance managers within the provinces and districts and we can prepare within this five year. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

### **MOTION BY LEAVE**

**Mr RAINBO PAITA** (Finschhafen-Minister for Planning and Finance) – I ask Leave of Parliament to move a motion without notice?

Leave granted

### **SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS – ELECTION OF GOVERNOR GENERAL**

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

That so much of the *Standing Orders* be suspended as would prevent Parliament proceeding with the election of the Governor General forthwith.

### **ELECTION OF GOVERNOR GENERAL**

**Mr SPEAKER** – Honourable Members; I wish to inform the Parliament that as of Tuesday, 20 December 2022; the closing date of the nomination for the position of Governor General; a total of three proposal forms were handed to the Clerk of Parliament.

The Acting Clerk accepted proposal forms for these three candidates as they complied with the *Organic Law on the Nomination of the Governor-General*.

All three nominations were received before the closing time of 12:30 p.m. These proposal forms have been scrutinised by the Clerk and the suitability of the candidates has been sought with the Ombudsmen Commission, the Commissioner of Police and the Registrar of the Supreme and National Courts in line with the requirements under *Section 87* of the *Constitution* and *Section 5* of the *Organic Law on the Nomination of the Governor-General*.

From these, the integrity and suitability checks by the Clerk has been decided and there are no grounds to reject the proposal forms of any of the three candidates under *Section 5* of the *Organic Law*, and that they are suitable to contest for the position of Governor General.

In accordance with the practice of Parliament and as required under *Section 6(a)* of the *Organic Law on the Nomination of the Governor-General*, I am required to declare the names of the candidates furnished to me by the Clerk.

The names of the candidates in alphabetical order are as follows; Sir Bob Dadae, Mr Steven Pokawin and Ms Winnie Kiap.

In accordance with the requirements of *section 85(5)* of the *Constitution*, the Parliament is required to determine by two-thirds absolute majority vote of 79 members of Parliament the eligibility of Grand Chief Sir Bob Dadae to be appointed as Governor General for a second term.

Honourable Members, if Grand Chief Sir Bob Dade does not obtain the required two-thirds absolute majority vote of 79 members of Parliament to be appointed as the Governor-General for a second term, he will not be eligible for nomination by Parliament for appointment. On the other hand, if he obtains the required two-thirds absolute majority of the Parliament, he will be eligible for nomination by Parliament for appointment as the Governor-General for a second term.

Accordingly, we will now proceed with the vote as required by *section 85 (5)* of the *Constitution*.

**Mr JAMES MARAPE** (Tari-Pori – Prime Minister) – Mr Speaker, thank you very much for giving me an opportunity to move that the Parliament resolve in the first instance without discounting the merits of the other two candidates; Ms Madam Winnie Kiap and Mr Steven Pokawin. Two credible candidates. But invoking the provisions of the *Constitution* and for the sake of stability and continuity in the office of the Head of State.

Motion (by **Mr James Marape**) put–

That this Parliament resolve in the first instance that Grand Chief Sir Bob Dadae Governor-General of Papua New Guinea at present is eligible to be appointed for a second term as Governor-General.

**12/07**

In accordance with the practice of the Parliament, the Speaker ordered that the Bells be rung.

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

**13/07**

**Mr SPEAKER** – The result of the votes:

**AYES – 93**

**NOES – 5**

Motion so agreed to with the concurrence of an absolute two-thirds majority as required by the *Constitution*.

**Mr SPEAKER** – Honourable Members, Grand Chief Sir Bob Dadae, Governor-General, is eligible to be appointed for a second term as a candidate.

**Mr James Marape** – Point of Order! Mr Speaker, for *Hansard* sake it should be a candidate, not appointed.

**Mr SPEAKER** – Honourable Members, Grand Chief Sir Bob Dadae Governor-General is eligible to be a candidate for a second term. Honourable members, Parliament will now proceed to elect each nominee for the office of the Governor-General to fill the eminent vacancy.

Voting is by exhaustive secret ballot that each Member present must indicate on the ballot paper the names of the candidate for whom he or she wishes to vote. To qualify as the

Parliament's nominee, a candidate must receive a majority of the votes cast in the final ballot after the elimination process.

Mr Speaker ordered that the Bells be rung.

**14/07**

**Mr SPEAKER** – Honourable Members, will you please write on the ballot paper the name of the candidate for whom you wish to vote. The names of the candidates are:

- (1) Sir Bob Dadae
- (2) Mr Steven Pokawin
- (3) Ms Winnie Kiap

**15/07**

*(Voting in progress.)*

**16/07**

*(Voting in progress)*

**17/07**

*(Voting in progress)*

**18/07**

**Mr SPEAKER** – Honourable Members, the result of the ballot are as follows:

<b>Sir BOB DADE –</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>Mr STEVEN POKAWIN –</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Ms WINNIE KIAP –</b>	<b>33</b>

**Mr SPEAKER** – Honourable Members, the candidate with the least number of votes, Mr Steven Pokawin will be excluded from further ballot and a second ballot shall be held immediately.

Honourable Members, the Parliament will now proceed to its second ballot.

Voting is by exhaustive secret ballot and each member present must indicate on the Ballot paper the name of the candidate for whom he or she wishes to vote.

Honourable Members, I wish to inform Parliament that our two candidates are Sir Bob Dadae and Ms Winnie Kiap.

*(Voting in progress)*

**19/07**

**Mr SPEAKER** – Honorable members, the Clerk will now collect the ballots.

**Sir Ano Pala** – Mr. Speaker, Point of Order!

**20/07**

**Mr SPEAKER** – Honourable Minister, you are rising the second time again so I will allow you to express your point of order. What's your point of order?

**Sir ANO PALA** – Thank you, Mr Speaker, I feel that it is important that I raise this point and you can consider it later after you get advice from your Clerk or you count the votes. Mr Speaker, the votes were 69, 31 and 03. In that vote, a candidate has already scored the absolute majority. Now, in the case of an elimination process, you are only going into that process if nobody has scored absolute majority of votes.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**Mr SPEAKER** – Thank you Mr Minister; however, we are following the process. The process states that this is how we should do it and that is how we are doing it and the process has to be followed under the Organic Law. The Constitution states this.

Thank you.

*(Voting in progress)*

**21/07**

**Mr SPEAKER** – Honourable Members of Parliament, our people have waited since my announcement that the nominations for the Governor-General seat was open. This period has lapsed and the nominations were closed.

Today we have followed the due process of law to conduct the voting, whilst I have the opportunity and I am happy to inform Parliament that for the second and final ballot, the results are as follows:

**SIR BOB DADAE – 71**

**MS WINNIE KIAP – 33**

The Honourable Members, I now declare Sir Bob Dadae, elected as Parliament's nominee to occupy the Office of the Governor-General.

**22/07**

**Mr DOUGLAS TOMURIESA** (Kiriwina-Goodenough) – I want to take this opportunity on behalf of the people of Papua New Guinea to congratulate our current Governor-General, who has been re-elected by this House for a second term to represent the King of the Commonwealth in Papua New Guinea.

I want to also take this opportunity to congratulate Ms Winnie Kiap for contesting this race for the Governor-General's Office. It shows that in Papua New Guinea, we respect our women and there is a voice for them.

From the number of votes today, which is 104, there were 33 members who voted for Ms Winnie Kiap. On behalf of my people of Kiriwina-Goodenough, the people of Milne Bay, the Opposition and the people of Papua New Guinea, I thank and congratulate Ms Winnie Kiap.

Mr Speaker, at the same juncture, I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Governor-General, for being re-elected with a majority of 71 votes.

I know the Governor-General is listening to the statement from the Opposition in his office or within the precincts of this Parliament. Let me take this opportunity to be the voice of the quiet people of Papua New Guinea.

As the Governor-General, you are occupying a powerful office and it is your responsibility to remain impartial and be a protector and a guardian of the *Constitution* of Papua New Guinea. Your election was an election of confidence in this high office and you must serve the interest of this great nation.

Mr Speaker, let me emphasise that the buck stops with the Governor-General. All the laws passed by this House are only made laws with the stroke of your pen. The protection of

this office is in your hands. All the major contracts are only executed, when you, as the Governor-General sign on the dotted line. All appointments, whether it be for ministers or the prime minister, head of departments, and even the speaker is executed by this high office.

We hope that as the Governor-General who will occupy that seat, you will take note and be responsible because everything ends with you. We hope that your office will be protected by your own integrity to uphold the high office that you occupy as the representative of the King and the Commonwealth.

On behalf of my people of Kiriwina – Goodenough, the people of Milne Bay, the Opposition that I represent and PNG as a whole, I take this opportunity to congratulate you, Sir Bob Dadae and we look forward to a close working relationship with your office. The people of Papua New Guinea will be looking at you to maintain high integrity and respect of the office that you occupy. Congratulations, Sir Bob Dadae.

**Mr JAMES MARAPE** (Tari – Pori – Prime Minister) – Thank you, Mr Speaker, for giving me this opportunity to congratulate the Governor-General on his re-election for his next term.

**23/07**

I am pleased to note that there were three quality candidates who contested for the Governor-Generals vacancy, with the incumbent who has gained the support of an absolute majority to go back and serve his second term, Madam Winnie Kiap and Mr Stephen Pokawin. The two candidates that came second and third are equally woman and man of good standing in our society and I want to thank them for expressing their interest.

We are running by a constitutional process and Sir Bob has gained the enough numbers to continue as the Head of State.

Mr Speaker, when we came back into office as a government, we looked into the vacancy of the Head of State. Right from the start we had no reason to doubt Sir Bob Dadae's standing as the Governor General. Long before Ms Kiap and Mr Pokawin expressed their intentions to run, the government had already taken resolution for stability and continuity and also for a regional balance. This was a government resolution and brought to the fray by Pangu Party as the ruling Party and it was a caucus decision with a combined resolution other than anything else.



Mr Speaker, when we make this sort of decision's, we try to live with it and I want to reassure the people and this Parliament that in the last six (6) years he served, he has never brought the Office of the Governor-General into disrepute.

Sir, Bob came into Office by the same process on 28 February 2017 and has served distinctively representing our late Queen and now he will be representing our King.

The next six years conferred upon him through this process indicates above many things, presenting to the outside world who look at the long-term tenureship of our Head of State, a 12-year reign shows stability and continuity for that office.

Mr Speaker, I take this time to congratulate Sir Bob Dadae and as a man of faith in his own right who rises above politics and may those values carry on and my Government looks forward in working with him.

May God bless our King as we have now placed his representative into the Office of the Head of State.

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

**Mr Allan Bird** – Point of order! Mr Speaker, there were two members who rose to speak but you did not choose them yet you entertained the motion of question be put.

**Mr SPEAKER** – Honourable Governor, I take note of your point of order but as is practise, when the Prime Minister speaks on a matter, it is deemed that he closes all other speeches. Also when a member or minister moves that the question to be put, it is in the *Standing Orders* that the Speaker has to entertain that motion.

**Mr Luther Wenge** – Point of Order! I called division!

**Mr SPEAKER** – According to the advice I have been given, when the Chair entertains the motion of 'question be put', I cannot entertain division called.

**Mr Luther Wenge** – Point of Order! Even if the motion of 'question be put' is entertained, I still got the right to raise a division check the *Standing Orders*.

24/07

**Mr SPEAKER** – Honourable Governor, we have already entertained the motion of ‘question be put’; you should raise that division before that the motion was entertained.

*(Laughter in the Chamber)*

**Mr SPEAKER** – Governor, can you please resume your seat?

### **MOTION BY LEAVE**

**Mr RAINBO PAITA** (Finschhafen - Minister for Finance) – I ask leave of Parliament to move a motion without notice.

Leave granted.

### **SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS - RE-ARRANGEMENT OF BUSINESS**

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

That so much of the Standing orders be suspended as would prevent Government Business No.21 being called on forthwith.

### **NATIONAL TRADE BILL 2023**

#### **First Reading**

Bill presented by **Mr Richard Maru** and read a first time.

#### **Second Reading**

**Mr RICHARD MARU** (Yangoru-Saussia-Minister for International Trade and Investment) – I move –

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr Speaker, thank you for giving me this opportunity to present to this honourable House and the people of Papua New Guinea, the National Trade Bill for 2023.

Mr Speaker, successive governments have aspired towards achieving robust economic growth for our country. The PNG Vision 2050 specifically notes the importance of diversifying the economy by promoting and expanding trade and investment in the country. Therefore, the National Trade Bill is set out to contribute towards achieving this goal.

Mr Speaker, the National Trade Policy 2017-2032 declares the goal of developing the PNG economy as an attractive and competitive international trading market and reiterates PNG's commitment to the Multilateral Trading System. Although PNG has existing trade relations with other countries under bilateral and regional trade agreements and other related treaty arrangements, there have not been any significant increases in trade volumes, nor improvement in our trading capacity over the last 47 years.

Mr Speaker, this was due to the absence of a competent and dedicated office with a clear legislative mandate for coordinating PNG's efforts in addressing capacity issues for trade facilitating agencies, improving supply and production issues, negotiating new trade agreements and meeting export market requirements.

**25/07**

PNG efforts in addressing capacity issues with trade, facilitating agencies, improving supply and production issues, negotiating new trade agreements and meeting export market requirements.

For the last 47 years, PNG has been making reactive, uncoordinated, and ad-hoc decisions on trade matters which has resulted in inconsistent, and at times even conflicting decisions on trade issues, duplication of trade roles and responsibilities, and wastage of government time and resources

Mr Speaker, furthermore, the trade function has been continuously transferred between the Departments of Foreign Affairs and Commerce and Industry, as a division where its activities and programs were not a priority. These shifts in the trade function between the ministries occurred about fourteen times since independence which also resulted in the loss of institutional knowledge and memory, lack of proper coordination in trade negotiations, trade policy formulation and implementation, and as a consequence, trade and economic interests of the country being compromised.

Mr Speaker, this is one of the reasons why our friends from the Pacific are able to export their taro, ginger, and handicrafts to Australia and New Zealand while PNG which represents over 80 percent of the population and landmass in the region cannot get our agricultural and fisheries products into the Australian and New Zealand markets. This is because they have a coordinating entity with a legal framework and the necessary support unlike PNG.

While the international trade trends have been constantly changing within the world especially in the Asia Pacific region, PNG's international trade landscape has remained virtually unchanged. PNG has one bilateral trade agreement and three regional trade agreements. In contrast our main trading partners, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore and wider Asian region have expanded their trade regimes to secure better market access for their goods and services.

Mr Speaker, a classic example is, Australia and New Zealand both have both have free trade agreements with Indonesia and China. We haven't even started.

Mr Speaker, for the noting of this honourable House, our market preferences under the trade arrangements we have, are quickly eroding due to our competitors securing better market deals with our partners. For example, PNG's market access for fisheries products into the EU market is facing steep competition from the more efficient producers such as Thailand and Philippines. To give an example, I will talk about fish. Fish caught in PNG waters is sent to canneries in the Philippines and the same fish is canned and labelled in the Philippines and sent to the same European market to compete with our canned fish products.

They have access to that market because they can produce it much cheaper than we can and they are becoming a major threat to our national interest. Our own fish being labelled and canned overseas and competing with our canned fish product's at European markets which we have access to.

Mr Speaker, this is an immediate and urgent call for PNG to have a competent and dedicated office with a clear legal mandate to identify, negotiate and secure new and better market access for our goods and services. It also promotes transparency and predictability in trade policy formulation, trade negotiations, and trade policy implementation in the country.

Mr Speaker, this Government is committed to addressing these issues beginning with establishing an International Trade and Investment Ministry, and I thank the Prime Minister for this foresight and for entrusting me with this newly created ministry.

I had the honour as Trade Minister in 2017 of introducing the National Trade Policy, the SME Policy and the Master Plan, and I now have the honour of presenting the National Trade

Bill to Parliament.

Mr Speaker, to put it succinctly, the bill, therefore, seeks to address the need for the anchorage of the trade policy functions of government, as well as giving the legal mandate to the newly established National Trade Office to carry out its powers and functions as envisioned under the Trade Policy.

**26/07**

The bill serves to clearly define the functions of the ministry and the trade policy administration which has been lacking since Independence.

Mr Speaker, establishing the National Trade Office (the Office) was a critical step towards establishing a regulatory framework to support the implementation of the Trade Policy. As an initial step in realizing this, NEC under its Decision 99/2017, approved the administrative set up of the office pursuant to *section 33 of the Public Service (Management) Act 1995*. The office was physically established in 2020, with a dedicated office space and budgetary appropriation. While the National Trade Office is established through an NEC Decision, it requires the enabling legislation to effectively undertake its functions and responsibilities.

Mr Speaker, the launching of the policy is a milestone in the realization of the regulatory framework, it does not achieve the necessary levels of independence and predictability required of the entity that the government intends to oversee a multifaceted economic driver that will connect PNG businesses and consumers to the rest of the world.

Moreover, Mr Speaker, the legislative framework will stabilize the trade function and allow the office to coordinate and provide guidance in the trade policy decision-making process involving trade regulators and trade actors, to effectively address the adverse trade impacts identified in the policy in a more coordinated, constructive, consistent and monitored manner.

PNG's merchandise trade over the years has shown varying performances, recording surpluses, especially in the extractive sector whilst very poor performance in the non-extractive sector such as with the case of our trade with Australia, where 98 percent of our exports are concentrated in the extractive sector.

Mr Speaker, to give you some perspective; annually PNG only sends 60 million in goods like coffee and cocoa to Australia while Australia exports 600 million to Papua New Guinea. We can't even get our fresh fish and canned fish into Australia, this is the reality of PNG's merchandise trade over the years. We have not done very well

Mr Speaker, as you are aware, PNG's overall exports are concentrated in few commodities which are exported in either raw form or semi-processed. These include minerals, oil palm, coffee, copra, and cocoa to name a few.

In addition, Mr Speaker, we have continued to import basic goods such as rice, meat products, fruits, vegies, and dairy products with huge import bills, even though PNG is capable and can produce all these in country.

Mr Speaker, PNG's reliance on a few export commodities for foreign currency earnings and the lack of import substitution on basic food items has caused the unbalanced trade performance that is weakening the country's GDP growth and our foreign reserves. It is also contributing to the social fall-out that we are seeing, as our young people leaving secondary and tertiary education cannot find jobs.

Jobs created from import substitution activities such as fruit and vegetable farming, and livestock breeding and meat production can address the unemployment issue in this country as well as reduce the reliance on imports of basic foodstuff.

Mr Speaker, the following is a summary of the salient features of the bill:

(1) Introducing provisions that succinctly explain the purpose of the bill, ensuring compliance with constitutional requirements and highlights the application of other relevant laws;

(2) The establishment of the office as a statutory body with corporate personality, which possesses the appropriate levels of bureaucratic autonomy.

Mr Speaker, the Bill further provides for;

(1) Insertion of the necessary checks and balances through the establishment of an unambiguous governance structure, with the board as the main oversight body;

(2) A clear scope concerning the exercise of functions and powers on trade matters;

(3) Creation of the position of the Chief Trade Officer as the head of the office;

**27/07**

A clear mechanism for reporting between the various bodies established under the bill, including reporting lines to the minister responsible and the requisite financial administrative provisions.

Mr Deputy Speaker, therefore the functions of the office can be synthesized into the following four areas:

- To provide leadership and policy advice on the implementation of the policy and trade matters across all sectors.
- To spearhead the development and improvement of policy negotiations, promotions and regulations of trade and advice government accordingly.
- To coordinate and maintain oversight across all sectors on the implementation of the trade policy.
- And to play an advisory role of oversight for regulatory and facilitating agencies of government on trade related issues.

Mr Deputy Speaker, honourable members will know that the composition of the board is quite unique as it includes heads of trade facilitating agencies that have previously been operating in isolation instead of working together to facilitate trade.

Therefore, being on the board will allow the coordination and collaboration between this key trade facilitating agency on issues that directly impact PNG's ability to export and meeting the partner countries market requirements. The membership also includes the office responsible for Bougainville Affairs has a seat on the board to enhance the information sharing in building the institutions to grow the economy.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the bill has extra territorial application and establishes the coordination role of the office concerning reporting and this meeting information on specific matters prescribed under the multilateral trading system as it relates to the mandate of other national regulatory bodies such as, NISIT, NAQIA and Customs amongst others.

Importantly, Mr Deputy Speaker, the trade actors and the regulators are governed by different legislations, ministerial determinations and other function responsibilities that come under different jurisdictions of different government institutions including the private sector.

The National Trade Office only has the coordinating oversight, and facilitating role in trade policy development and implementation. As the office requires the legal mandate to perform each role effectively in coordinating trade for policy development and implementation which cuts across all the sectors overlapping other state agencies functional responsibilities.

Additionally, the office also deals with international trade agreements and conventions that are legally binding. One of its functional responsibilities is to take the lead in negotiating legally binding trade agreements. This requires an institution that has the legal mandate to

negotiate and enter into legally binding agreements on behalf of the State with the appropriate budget support.

To sum up, Mr Deputy Speaker, the bill will ensure that appropriate linkages are established between all relevant stakeholders both domestic and international. For Papua New Guinea to achieve the National Trade Policy vision of becoming an internationally competitive export-driven economy that is built on and aided by an efficient and expanding domestic market.

Mr Deputy Speaker, in the long-term gains from a robust trade policy and the proposed National Trade Bill will contribute to alleviating poverty, creating employment, advancing PNG's social and economic well-being. Even more so, trade has been identified by several international organizations such as the World Bank as a tool to respond to and recover from the Covid-19 pandemic going forward.

Finally, Mr Deputy Speaker, it is anticipated that the successful enactment to the bill will be another legacy achievement that demonstrate that the Marape-Rosso Government is serious about this commitment to undertake reforms necessary for Papua New Guinea's economic prosperity. I would therefore appreciate the support from the Honourable members of this House for this important bill.

I now commend the National Trade Bill 2023 to this Honourable House.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

**Mr KEITH IDUHU**(Hiri-Koiari) – Mr Deputy Speaker, I take note of the bill and would like to debate on some fundamental issues that arise out of this draft as it is.

**28/07**

Mr Speaker, to the contrary, whilst the bill is most possibly well intended to coordinate an uncoordinated and ad hoc decisions on trade matters, I fear, Mr Speaker, that it stands to do the complete opposite. And that is because, the bill from a close scrutiny of the provisions therein, has some very glaring inconsistencies. I would beg this House, for this bill is not possibly ready to be passed at this juncture.

The composition of the board, for instance, entails a list of people or positions ex-officio, but fundamentally omits the Governor of the Central Bank. That I feel is quite critical, because any trade matters of high importers with great value, there is a component of foreign exchange requirements. Any contracts that are raised, will require the auspicious or



supervision of the Central Bank. The Governor must be given a seat at these transactions or any transactions for that matter.

There is a fundamental error once again in section 9, subsection 1(a). Perhaps, the good Minister might entail at a later speech. There is contemplation for the departmental head of the department responsible for international trade to be on that board. Is there such a department? Is this not a redundant inclusion or is that intended for the head of this authority?

The provision itself is extremely vague. There is an absolute need also for the inclusion of the person responsible for customs to be possibly added on to that board.

There are fundamental concerns that I also raise that whilst the bill intends to exonerate certain bodies, I wonder how that would address sectors and authorities such as fisheries, forestry, mining, MRA, and oil and gas sectors. How is this bill contemplating their interactions? These are commodities or sectors that deal with international trade. Their commodities are of high value, high stake, and therefore of great importance.

Mr Speaker, if it is the will of the bill that these sectors are to be excluded, it opts to be noted, that these sectors must be expressly excluded. If they are left vague, it will leave a conundrum for the courts in interpreting this bill. We will find that there will be propositions for amendments after amendments.

My greatest fear is that, perhaps, this might have been best served as a department by policy direction of the Cabinet, because that is the function of a policy guiding office.

There is also a greater fear that there is an express provision for the contemplated authority, through the chief trade officer, who is equivalent of a managing director or a CEO, to have absolute power to engage temporary or casual staff, as and when is necessary to carry out the functions of the office, on such terms and conditions as determined by the chief trading officer. This is a lot of power for a managing director, a great deal of executive power and resources of the state.

Then, there is contemplation under section 36, that the funds of the office shall consist of any monies appropriated by law, for the purposes of carrying out or giving effect to this *Act*, and any monies receive in accordance with law, including talks about the subsection (c), all monies receive by the office for services provided by it, and (d), all monies receives in respect of rents, fees, levies and charters, all monies receives in respect to domestic industry support including, trade and enforcement support.

**29/07**

(e) Any monies received in respect of payments from administrative determinations. What is this? (f) Administration determinations at the will and whim of the chief trading officer.

Other settlement for trade offences, forfeited, market access and other payments received.

(g) All monies received by the office in respect of sale of real or personnel property owned by the office. This is not a real estate company and it cannot be set up as a real estate company. This is a provision that is most possibly, and my greatest respect, possibly redundant.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I'm also curious where this bill leaves the *Non Tax Revenue Act*. Do they interact together or do they not? That was the bill or legislation recently passed along with the 2023 Budget in November last year.

The officers entitled to retain and utilise monies collected pursuant to *Section 21 (1)* up to level of estimates of expected expenditure approved by the minister for achieving the efficient management of the office and for the purpose of capital expenditure. It also given power to create trust accounts.

Mr Deputy Speaker, this is my respectful view on the very important legislation that is intended for very noble intent and objective to achieve the greater income for GDP and if these are fundamental errors, erroneously or inadvertently inserted or left in without proper due care or attention by those who drafted it.

Mr Deputy Speaker, *Standing Order 24A 3(c)*, once it is available in this House, consider referring this Bill to the Parliamentary Legislative Committee to review and engage and give more meat to this bill or legislation before it is presented again.

Thank you.

**Mr KERENGA KUA** (Sinasina-Yonggamugl – Minister for Petroleum and Energy) – Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I stood up to commend the Minister for International Trade for bringing this bill and just as I did my colleague Member stood up and raised some very valid points which the Minister can take note of.

In my case, I think that the bill has already reached the Floor and we must keep moving it forward. This is because, a big gap exists in the way we conduct international trade. We have known all along about this big gap or vacuum that exists but how did it take almost 48 years before a leader noticed this vacuum.

This leader noticed it and said it was time to set up a team to fill this vacuum.

Empower it with authority or departmental status so that they can take responsibility in managing international trade issues in Papua New Guinea as well as other countries in the world as their core function.

For too long, we have kicked this responsibility back and forth like a football between many different departments, ministries and ministers. One time, we placed it under the Department of Foreign Affairs and another time, we placed it under the Investment Promotion Authority. But today, with this bill, it has become very clear that this is the team that will take responsibility.

They will have one primary focus which is to address this big trade imbalance between Papua New Guinea and rest of the international business partners. We are a big net importer and on the export, we have fallen too low.

Whilst each department is focusing on its own trade issues, there must be a department or a team to coordinate all the trade operations of individual departments like Petroleum and Energy. I need international investors, then there is Agriculture, Mining, Forestry, Fisheries, Manufacturing industries, we all need a department to take coordinate when it comes to international trade. So, I feel that it has taken too long reach this point.

**30/07**

It would be good, even if the bill has some gaps, questions and doubts to clarify, let us empower them by giving them the mandate to take on the responsibility.

I am happy with the work that the Minister has done and I am surprised by the speed in which he has brought this bill to the Floor of this House. The bill as covered all the bases and it is good to go. Whatever comments and discussions that have been raised, the Minister can take note and following some discussions he may have them included and let us move forward.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I have two points that I would like to raise and ask the Minister to take note and this is in relation to a section that refers to this law as having extra territorial effect. It is ok but normally it is not; but if after the bill is passed and he goes on to negotiate treaties with other countries that he would like trade with; if the countries do agree and sign an agreement then you can go onto say that this law enacted comes with extra territorial effect.

However, it is a work in progress so the Chair through you, I would like to ask if the Minister can mandate his department to begin negotiations country by country trade

agreements and link them to the extra territorial application for this law. Because without a treaty this law will not have an extra territorial effect.

Another area where we face a lot of hardships in relation to international trade is on cross-border international contracts. When we talk about international trade, there will always be contracts. When you have a contract, most times they go well but other times they do not go as we want them to, therefore there must be a procedure to protect us when the contracts do not go as planned.

For instance, if a Papua New Guinean business man finds he is in trouble after his international partner does not live up to his agreement; the businessman must have the right to enforce his contract agreement anywhere in the world where this other party has fled to. Right now, we are only promoting international trade but we are not paying attention to enforcing contracts onto the other countries when the contract agreements are breached.

We do not have recourse and therefore we lose everything because we do not have contracts to enforce on our international trade partners and we think that there are no laws to back us up when such happens. There are laws available but we do not use them or we do not know how to. One such law is the Reciprocal Enforcement of Judgement System, and it means that when the judgement of court is enforced in another to the other party, that same judgment can be made to you in your country.

For example, Malaysia and Papua New Guinea contract parties; if the contract is broken by the Malaysian party and Papua New Guinea suffers a huge loss financially; so the PNG party then gets a court summons here at the National Court; this order when taken over to Malaysia must have the ability to be registered in Kuala Lumpur and then can be enforced on the businessman who fled Papua New Guinea to recoup what was lost and this is called reciprocal enforcement.

**31/07**

Many countries in our neighborhood don't have this arrangement in place so when the contracts are broken they do not have the ability to chase and reclaim restitution for the damages that they have suffered. This is an area that both the Minister for International Trade and Investment, and the Attorney-General must pay attention to.

So, we must consider all our close neighbors, starting from all the Pacific Island countries, New Zealand, Australia, Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam, Thailand, Taiwan, Korea, Japan, and China. There is a huge volume of trade going on so we must make sure that there

is reciprocal enforcement of the judgment system underpinned by treaties between all these countries and our country.

So, when they come into trade with Papua New Guinea, they know that they cannot escape, and, on the same token, we cannot escape. They can enforce their contracts here and get restitution and if they spoil their contracts and go back to their countries then we can go after them and seek restitution in their countries.

This is a gap that I have highlighted as we pluck this gap with this bill, now being introduced by the Minister for International Trade and Investment, we must look at the gaps and fill them to operate on a balanced trade platform for everybody.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, I commend this National Trade Bill 2023.

**Mr LUTHER WENGE** (Morobe) – Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to support the introduction of this bill and I submit that this bill is very important for this country.

I noted the argument presented by the Member for Koiari-Hiri, he has raised some good points that have been omitted or need to be improved in this bill. I also noted the argument presented by Member for Sinasina-Yonggomugl, for making some important comments which need to be improved in the bill that has been presented.

But, I rise particularly to support the bill according to the rationale for the introduction of this bill. It has been a long while since we were colonised and then became an independent country. We have not been so intelligent, creative, and innovative, particularly in the trade in relation to the commodities that we produce in this country, or the commodities that we have not produced but we have potential to produce.

Secondly, in relation to the commodities that we import, we have not seriously considered the importation of those commodities into this country or whether those imports can be produced in this country.

Mr Minister, I want to commend you for the introduction of this bill because you are proposing an institution to be set up. The institution will ensure that all the commodities being imported in and exported out of this country in whatever form and kind are intelligently, creatively, and innovatively screened. I think that it is very important for this country.

Mr Deputy Speaker, commodities which we have a comparative and competitive advantage.

We can produce those commodities, we are in a better position to produce in abundance, in the quantity that we can export out of this country and we can bring in a lot of money into this country particularly the money which is high in value.

Our kina has gone down in value, it's not like pre-Independence and early Independence days. Our kina was valued at \$1.37 in US dollars', way much higher. Today we have gone down. And in my humble view, we should take advantage of those commodities, we have comparative and competitive advantage and produce more and surely enough we going to bring more money into this country and not just money but money with a higher value.

For example, the bamboo, seven years ago I was in China and in a very expensive hotel in Shang Hai, they cooked and prepared me the bamboo shoots. Bamboos are grown everywhere in my province and we eat them also. I thought that it was not eaten in the international community or anywhere in the world. But when I went to Shang Hai I ate bamboo shoots there also. So Mr Speaker, I said if we can supply bamboo shoots we have the competitive and comparative advantage on this product and we will bring more money into this country.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I'm using bamboo shoots as an example but there are other agricultural crops that we can export out of our country. If we can get scientists to find out the edibility of those crops and we can supply other regions with it. And this office will make sure that we will come up with regulations and we can find out who are the consumers. China is one country that we can sell our produce to because of their vast population.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I support the bill because we can negotiate with the Chinese people and tell them that we can provide the bamboo shoots for your country and we can make millions from the bamboo shoots and other agricultural crops that we have.

So Mr Minister, I am sure that from having this bill and this institution set up they will look at the commodities that we have comparative and competitive advantage on.

Secondly, Mr Speaker, this board will also look at the minerals sector and in oil and gas. Up in the Southern Highlands, they produce oil and gas, who says that we can't process to the final product and add value to it in this country and export it to other nations who will require oil and gas. We are now exporting raw material.

**33/07**

Mr Deputy Speaker, who says that we cannot produce the final products and add value to it. Who says that we cannot do it? We've been to university and we have couple of

universities in this country. The professionals and intelligent brains from the universities can help us to make sure that we have mineral processing plants in this country so that we can produce final products instead of exporting our raw materials to other countries in the world. As a result of exporting our raw materials, we are making little money. I am sure we can make millions and billions of kina out of the mineral processing plants.

I also ask the Minister for Mining about the type and kind of minerals that were exported from this country, especially the gold and copper. However, in the gold and copper there are other minerals also in them that the geologists can tell us more about, but the little I know from my grade 10 science is that; zinc, silver, plutonium and other minerals useful for users in this country and other international countries are in them, and that we can sell as well. This would bring strong currency into this country, when you produce them into the final product. This will add value and surely will bring a lot of money into the country and as a result the value of our currency will rise.

Therefore, I say that this particular office, when created, let's make sure that we negotiate and establish the mineral processing plant in the country so that we can produce final products from the raw minerals. We will not just produce the finish products and leave them there but I am sure this intelligent office will help us find international buyers for the final products because right now everyone is doing their job and nobody knows what they are doing.

Like what Mr Kerenga Kua has said, we can enter into a bilateral or unilateral trade agreement with other countries who are able to buy our final products; both the agricultural products and the mineral products and of course, the oil and gas products.

This particular institution has my total support, and as a nation, we should be looking forward to working and to make sure that we sell and export our finished products out of this country. When we have the facility like the mineral processing plant, we will have the potential to process our raw materials and minerals into a finished product and nobody will change it. We will put the finished products out to the market and they will be bound to buy our products according to the price that we set.

Mr Deputy Speaker, we can argue about small amendments here and there but the rational is very good. Mr Minister, I want to commend you for the introduction of this bill. I am sure, when we get this institution established through the passage of this particular bill, we can make a big difference. I don't want to see us importing things which we can produce in this country, for instance, rice. We can produce rice in here. The Markham valley is just smiling out there.

**34/07**

For instance; we can produce rice in the Markham Valley. We can come up with technologies to produce rice in abundance. Not only can we export raw rice but we can also convert it to the liking of the consumers in the international community. We are intelligent people and we can do it. We are just underestimating ourselves and importing goods that we can produce.

Mr Deputy Speaker, in regards to fish, we have surplus fish in our waters. With all due respect, we allowed Filipinos to come here and fish. They then export them to their cities for processing into finished products for sale. These are our fish, yet we are buying them from the Filipinos as a finished product. We are not thinking about how we can process our fish into different products for them to consume.

Mr Deputy Speaker, there is potential in this country for agriculture, minerals and gas products. God has blessed this country with resources, including human resource. We are not thinking deep and smart, thus underestimating ourselves. We always think foreigners are the only ones capable of doing things. We must think about what we can produce to the final consumer.

Mr Deputy Speaker, this is an important office and I will support the Minister, and vote for the bill. When this bill is passed, it will solve a lot of problems for this country in terms of trade of goods coming in and going out of the country. Once we have done that and revenue starts coming in, it will cover up for the loans that we have acquired.

When we export final products, we will make money. The amount that we are receiving are only for raw materials. I don't want us to get loans. Some people are going around saying that Australia is our development partner. When we sell more final products and start doing business with other countries with stronger currencies, the value of kina and toea will be higher.

It will be like those times before and right after independence, when our currency was equal to the American dollars. Now it is much less than that if you want to convert to American dollars. It is embarrassing. We floated the kina and now we are just exporting the raw materials. We have done poorly until now.

**35/07**

This office is a very important office, and I have all the confidence in this office, that when we start to execute the bill, surely, we can make a difference in this country.



Mr Deputy Speaker, I commend the bill to this Parliament.

**Mr RAINBO PAITA** (Finschhafen- Minister for Finance and Planning) – Mr. Deputy Speaker, thank you for allowing me to contribute to this bill.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I take note that amongst the many educated elites here in Parliament, three of our lawyers have given more of a legal opinion on the bill itself. I would like to contribute in the space of policy to support the Minister.

Mr Deputy Speaker, when the Prime Minister created the new office, International Trade and Investment, he appointed a very senior and capable Minister to lead this office. This bill coming to this floor in just months is an achievement for a new ministry created under the initiative of the Marape-Rosso Government and I think we must give some credit to the Minister and his Department for progressing this quickly, even though the new ministry

As I said, this is a new ministry under the vision of our Government, created under our leadership of the Minister who has been able to progress a lot of things in the space of trying to establish a trade office, in this case the legislation and at the same driving special economic zone and personally has taken a few of these steps himself.

So I would like to congratulate the Minister on the energy that he brings to this new ministry and to add value to our Government and our coalition as well.

My support to this debate, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think in the legal space, the Petroleum Minister, the good honourable Member, Keith and Governor of Morobe have stated some legal points where we can add future subsequent amendments to improve this bill.

As we always have bills on the floor, no bill comes to the floor being perfect and there's always room for amendments. As legislators, there's work for us to be on this floor to continuously amend them and put in new bills to amend in the future. For those gaps in law where our learned lawyers have seen and identified, I think, our good minister can take it on board.

At the same time, I can see space for a few improvements like the board composition. I think Minister, plus other departments like Agriculture and few others will want to be on the board in terms of giving their input in the space of trade.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, for example I'd like to add before I take my seat that in the last three years in my experience as Minister, I noticed that the alignment of driving trade has not been there and that's the vacuum that this legislation tries to fill. Take for example, when we

try to make a free trade agreement with China, it took us literally seven or six years for all agencies of government to work together to facilitate the trade agreement.

Now it took us seven years because of mismatch like the Minister for Petroleum said, Foreign Affairs do their own, Fisheries does their own, there's no alignment, there's no one point of driving trade in the country. So, in terms of the policy space, such as the National Trade Policy, it talks about creating PNG as an attractive trading market and this bill will ensure that we get those things up and running.

As we said, there is no perfect bill but minister is on the right track and I think as Government, we ought to give him the support in terms of passing this legislation so that he can get the National Trade Office function up and running and give him what he needs in terms of driving this sector forward. So I would like to put on record, that the trade policy that we have agreed on, this is just a complimentary bill to support the Minister and his department to run and I support this bill. Thank you, Mr. Deputy 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.

**36/07**

### **Message From The Governor-General**

A message from His Excellency the Governor-General was announced, recommending the expenditure of Public Monies in accordance with *Section 210* of the *Constitution* in so far as the Bill relates to, and provides for such expenditures.

### **Third Reading**

Leave granted to move the third reading forthwith.

**Mr RICHARD MARU** (Yangoru-Sausia - Minister for International Trade & Investment) – I move –

That the bill be now read a third time.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like to respond to a few of the comments that were made by our learned lawyers.

Firstly, the comment that it should be a department and not a statutory commercial organisation. The function has been with the department for the last 47 years and one of the problems with departments is that when you have functions in trade among many actors; like customs does its own thing and same goes for NAQIA. Unless you bring them into a board to sit together and work but it is very difficult to get them to corporate.

That has been a continuing issue for this country. Our different actors do not corporate and work together so this bill is drafted this way that for the first time you can bring all the key trade actors into one body and one board where they are empowered to sit down and collectively work together to drive the collective agenda of our Government.

For example, why are we not sending our taro to Australia when Samoa and Fiji can? The board will now be tasked to make sure that issue is attended to and all players from customs to NAQIA will now corporate with the agriculture department to drive that agenda. That is why we have brought them onto the board.

Let us look at the functions of the board itself, customs and NAQIA are on the board under this legislation, we cannot bring every body from all sectors as we already have 11 board seats and the act also provides for an ad hoc committee that the board can set up anytime as required for a specific area of need that the board defines it necessary and we have provided for that.

I just want to make it clear here, in the area of finances, no department or authority can open a trust account. The authorisation to do so can only come from the Finance Department. The bill only provides a provision that you can have a trust account but the National Trade Office does not have the authority.

If there is a need for a trust account, the Finance Department will give their approval for a trust account to be set up, if there is a need to collect fees; obviously there has to be rules and they have to come to the board and to the Government about what fees they need to charge. They still need to come back to the government by way of regulation and that is the next process after the law is passed. I really do not see a need for mining and other sectors to sit on this board, they are functioning under their own legislation and they are doing very well with out a need for this office.

The National Trade Office is only a coordinating body that brings the trade actors under a board. It is not going to go and do the job for NAQIA and any other body. It only coordinates the efforts of the various trade actors that we have. They have their own legislations and their own mandates with their own funding.

**37/07**

All we are doing is bringing trade under one body or umbrella to make sure it focusses on what's important for our country. We also need to build our capacity starting this year, we are considering a trade agreement with Indonesia and China.

Mr Deputy Speaker, we need an organization with the resources and the competence to start working on these negotiations. Once we have the trade agreements then they go beyond the borders of this country. We have bilateral trade agreements with individual countries and multilateral trade agreements with regions.

For example, currently we have the Melanesians Spearhead Group, the MSG Trade Agreement. And it goes beyond the boundaries of PNG, Vanuatu, Solomons Islands, and Fiji is also affected. So, agreements that this great office will now enter into will go beyond the boundaries of our country. So, they must have powers to negotiate with other countries and then bring it back to our government to approve. These are some comments that I wanted to add to this debate. Thank you.

**Mr Luther Wenge** – Point of Order! Sorry for disturbing the Member for Abau. But I understand and it's stated in the *Standing Order* that when the mover speaks then it's considered the end of the debate.

Sorry, with due respect you should allow the other members to debate before the mover speaks to close the debate. You check the *Standing Order*, Mr Deputy Speaker, it's stated in it.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** – Honourable Governor, your Point of Order is noted but I am using my discretion as the Chair to allow for other members to contribute to the debate. I allowed the Minister to clarify on other matters being raised by other members on that debate. Therefore, I will allow other members until and when 'the question be put 'is being called for.

**Sir PUKA TEMU** – Mr Deputy Speaker, my comments are brief but I am in full support of the initiatives of the government through the Minister, particularly through a very good policy and now the bill.

Just our national experience of having lots of boards in the country, yet many of them are not effective. We are establishing another board in a very important area – trade, and I hope its managed well.

Let me say this, the intention is excellent which means outside of the framework is okay but the furniture is not right. There are 11 members in the board and eight of them are public servants and only the manufacturing council representatives is an actual participant and so forth. But the rest even the *Act* didn't name the NICIT, Customs and NAQIA as ex-officials, they are public servants.

So, in actual fact when the board meets, the quorum is five; three must be ex-officials and two must be non-ex-officials. The non-ex-official is the only one representing the manufacturing council representative. When we create such an important board for international and domestic trade, you need the level of expertise to be way up there. The members of the board should be people who are players in the business but the board membership consists of all public servants. That's my concern Honourable Deputy Speaker, hopefully in the amendments that others have called for the Minister for Trade must relook at this.

For example, the PNG National Farmers' Association, they really should be part of the board. Remove one of those public servants. Otherwise, the policy and framework are great but the furniture may be out of order.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

**38/07**

**Mr BELDEN NAMA** – Thank you, Mr Speaker, I too would highly commend the Minister for International Trade and Investment and I would like to also commend the Prime Minister for using his initiative and his wisdom for creating this very important ministry of international trade and investment. It is long overdue and we are now heading into 50 years of independence, I thank the Prime Minister.

I see this bill as a very important bill because the creation of this board now acts as a central coordinating agency. In the past we never had such and our poor farmers grow cash crops. Now, the Prime Minister in his wisdom has created three new ministries by pulling them out from the Ministry of Agriculture and creating the Ministries of Livestock, Oil Palm

and Coffee. Thus, through this board that the Minister for International Trade and Investment is creating, we will be able to look at the international markets and we will be able to address the issues that the minister himself has pointed out, like why our taro is not accepted by Australia but they accept produce from other Pacific Island countries.

So, I would like to commend the Minister for acting in speed which is record time to present this National Trade Bill after six months of his appointment as the Minister. We may have legal issues but that is work in progress and because it is a new ministry such initiative must be supported. I am really thankful that he has brought this bill to Parliament and we must support it as it now acts as a central coordinating agency and as we move into our 50th Independence anniversary, we will be now able to address the country's trade issues both domestically and internationally.

So, Mr Minister, I highly commend the bill and I thank the Prime Minister for allocating this important ministry to the Honourable Richard Maru.

Thank you.

**Mr SPEAKER** – Before, I rule on the motion of the ‘question be put’ we have a point of order so I will allow it and then I will call for the question be put.

**Mr Keith Iduhu** – Point of Order! Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. My point of order is this, in rebuttal the good Minister makes remarks that there will be no trust account being set up but *section 37* is abundantly clear: The Chief Trade Officer shall and that is mandatory.

Perhaps that is a question for drafting but this is going to become law, this is the highest House in the country and should not be taken very lightly or watered down.

The Chief Trading Officer shall directly manage a Trust Account in accordance with that instrument by the Minister for Finance and the Trust Account may be applied for any purpose provided under the act, this is too much discretion, I must denote.

That is the only Point of Order, I just wanted to put it on record on the *Hansard* that these are the thoughts that we have and whilst we support the bill, we should support with intelligence.

Thank you, kindly.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** – Honourable Member, your Point of Order, I will rule out of order, as you are now debating the matter that you have already debated.

Motion – That the question be now put - put

The Bill requiring an absolute majority of 59 Members as required by the *Constitution*, Mr Speaker ordered that the Bells be rung.

The Parliament voted (Mr Deputy Speaker in the Chair) -

**39/07**

*(Voting in progress)*

**40/07**

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** – The Honourable Members the result are as follows:

**AYES – 81**

**NOES – 0**

Bill read a third time.

### **MOTION BY LEAVE**

**Mr RAINBO PAITA** (Finschhafen – Minister for Finance) – Mr Deputy Speaker, I ask leave of Parliament to move a motion without notice.

Leave granted.

**ESTABLISHMENT OF SPECIAL PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE  
ON HEALTH MATTERS AND APPOINTMENT  
OF MEMBERS**

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

That:

(1) this Parliament establishes a Special Parliamentary Committee on Health Matters consisting of (a) Mr Elias Kapavore as Chairman, (b) Mr Freddie Kumai as Deputy Chairman, Mr Jacob Maki, Mr Lohia Boe Samuel, Mr Ricky Morris, and Mr Simon Dumarinu as members of the committee.

(2) The Committee shall scrutinize the Department of Health and ensuring that the health legislation policy is required standards and implemented to attain high level of corporate and clinical governance across the health fraternities. Key policy demand includes; PHA regulations, *Tabaco Control Act*, *2015 Regulation Mental Health Act*, the *National Health Plan Act 2021 – 2030*, among others the Committee should consider appropriate.

(3) Conduct we use into the functionalities of provincial health authorities establish performance base tools in liaison with the Minister for Health report to Parliament on PHA performance.

(4) Ensure compulsory enduring through the requirements of the National Health Service Standard with undertaking for all health care facilities from level one to six to undergo respective facilities accreditation and services as to ascertain quality of healthcare provided to our citizens.

(5) Provide oversight support for the construction of the following health facilities; cancer, the Central Provincial Health, other facilities that Government has put on the agenda.

(6) Enquire into the corporate clinical governance issues pertaining to health matters in both public private healthcare facilities as the Committee determines.

(7) Scrutinizing conduct interviews with the National Department of Health and appropriate personnel's and matter relating to medical supplies, procurement, and distributions.

(8) The Committee shall of power to someone in conduct interviews with persons to solicit information on matters relating to health and the wellbeing in both private and public health facilities.

(9) Coordinate with respective authorities implement the Government's vision for standard alone medical university.

(10) Coordinate with National Department of Health monitor the country's efforts in meeting the target and goal number three health and wellbeing as a national obligation towards the UN 2030 SDG goal.

**Mr RAINBO PAITA** (Finschhafen – Minister for Finance) – Mr Speaker, before I move my motion, I'll like to thank the members of Parliament for coming back early when we adjourned Parliament last year. For us to deal with the urgent issue of appointing our Governor-General and I thank members from both sides of the House for their attendance.



Mr Deputy Speaker, some members have health issues but they attend Parliament sitting and I want to place on record my special thanks to the former Prime Minister, Governor of New Island Province, and few of our senior leaders who are under such circumstance, they decided to come and vote for this very prestigious office of the Governor-General.

I'll like to place on record our thanks on behalf of the Deputy Leader of Government Business and myself for members attending and dealing with Government Business.

**41/07**

At the same time, I take this opportunity to congratulate the elected Governor-General and the two other outstanding citizens of Papua New Guinea who contested to be Governor-General respectively and one was voted.

I want to place on record my congratulations to the Governor-General elect and at the same time on behalf of the people of Morobe; I think my Governor was in the process of thanking and we had a question being put so I thank this honorable House for the respect and confidence shown towards the people of Morobe to represent in this capacity.

And, at the same time as the Member for Finschhafen representing a small region in Fisika which is Tewae-Siassi, myself and Kabwum are thankful for having an elected candidate from our region.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

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

That the Parliament at its rising, adjourn to Tuesday, 14 March 2023, at 2 p.m.

The Parliament adjourned at 2.10 p.m.