

**FOURTH DAY**

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**Friday 14 March 2025**

**DRAFT HANSARD**

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**Subject:**

**Page No:**

<b>QUESTIONS .....</b>	<b>1</b>
Vacancy in the National Lands Board .....	2
Amending the Provincial Lands Board Act .....	2
Community Development Program .....	4
Funding for Afore to Safia Road.....	4
Upgrading and Sealing of District Roads.....	6
BSP National Staff Marginalized by Expat Recruits .....	7
Big Budget Allocations to the RPNGC.....	10
<i>Supplementary Question-</i> Impact of the money .....	12
 <b>SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS –</b>	
<b>EXTENDED TIME FOR QUESTIONS.....</b>	<b>13</b>
LLG Elections.....	13
 <b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF VISITORS – STATEMENT</b>	
<b>BY THE ASSISTANT SPEAKER .....</b>	<b>17</b>
 <b>ANSWERS TO PREVIOUS QUESTIONS -</b>	
<b>Questions by Honourable Kerenga Kua.....</b>	<b>17</b>
 <b>GRIEVANCE DEBATE.....</b>	<b>27</b>
 <b>ADJOURNMENT.....</b>	<b>45</b>

## FOURTH DAY

**Friday 14 March 2025**

The Assistant Speaker (**Mr Kansol Kamdaru**), took the Chair at 10 a.m.

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

Sitting suspended.

The Assistant Speaker again took the Chair at 10:45 a.m. and invited the Minister for Livestock and Member for South Fly, **Honourable Sekie Agisa** to say Prayers;

‘Thank you, God Almighty. We come before your throne on the floor of Parliament. We thank you once again for this bright, new day and for the air that we breathe and the many blessings that you bless us with, Eternal God, we commit ourselves and the people that we represent on this floor. We also thank both government and opposition leaders on this Floor who led us by your spirit as we discussed or looked at the agendas that we will go through. We thank you for the many things that you have done in our lives. We also thank you once again for leading us in many discussions. Thank you once again, God, for leading us and we ask for your leadership through your Holy Spirit. Amen’

## QUESTIONS

**Ms RUFINA PETER** – Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker. I rise to ask the Minister for Lands and Immigration and Deputy Prime Minister, Honourable John Rosso, an urgent question, but I just realised that the Deputy Prime Minister is not here, so I will probably ask this question to the Prime Minister.

## **Vacancy in the National Lands Board**

So, my question without notice is regarding the current vacancy in the position of chairperson of the National Lands Board. Mr Assistant Speaker, I take this opportunity to thank the minister and his department for facilitating the swearing-in of the Central Province Land Board members on the 28<sup>th</sup> of March, 2024. Given the calibre of the Central Province Land Board members, in terms of their vast experience and profiles as individuals and collectively, the Land Board members immediately commenced work together with two expatriates and staff of the Central Province Administration's Lands Division.

**02/04**

They have achieved some significant initiatives in terms of land matters in Central Province. However, they are still waiting for the formal induction by the Department of Lands and Fiscal Planning.

I am aware that the terms of the National Lands Board Chairman and its members expired, creating a significant administrative vacuum that is negatively affecting land administration processes across the country, including the operations of the Central Province Lands Board. Given that all the Provincial Land Board Chairpersons serve as Deputy Chairpersons to the National Lands Board Chairman, the absence of an appointed Chairman at the national level has resulted in delays in processing crucial land matters. This has in turn impacted land administration in Central Province and, I believe, in other provinces, affecting landowners, businesses, investors, and economic activities that are heavily dependent on land tenure security.

## **Amending the Provincial Lands Board Act**

Mr Assistant Speaker, my series of questions without notice to the Minister for Lands and Fiscal Planning are;

(1) Can the Minister inform this Parliament on how soon the Chairman of the National Lands Board will be appointed to restore the proper functioning of the National Lands Board and ensure that the Provincial Lands Board can effectively carry out their mandates?

(2). What interim measures, if any, have been put in place to ensure that the absence of the National Lands Board does not continue to disrupt land administration processes at the provincial level?

(3). Are there plans for the Government to consider amending the law to allow Provincial Lands Boards to function independently in such circumstances?

This matter requires urgent attention to restore confidence in land administration and governance in my province.

Before I sit, I would like to congratulate, firstly, the Speaker for appointing Honourable Francesca Semoso, the Member for North Bougainville, as Madam Assistant Speaker of Parliament. Thank you, Assistant Speaker, for allowing me to speak on behalf of the people of Central Province.

**Mr JAMES MARAPE** – Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker. Thank you, Governor of Central Province, for asking this important question of the National Lands Board.

I want to give assurance to her, through this question, that at the very earliest we shall fill the vacancy and get the appointed work on, and the subsequent work as far as the Provincial Land Administration and the Provincial Land Boards can be assisted.

But I would ask, Mr Assistant Speaker, that she puts the question in writing, pass it along to the Deputy Prime Minister, and he will respond accordingly to assure her that the Land Board Secretary will be filled at the very earliest.

Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker.

**Mr AMOS JOESPH AKEM** – Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker, for giving time to the people of Laigap.

Before I ask my question, I would like to extend my condolences from the people of Laigap to the people of New Ireland and this country on the passing of the Late Sir Julius Chan, the last man standing. I had the chance of first meeting him in the late 90s, when he visited Wabag with Albert Kipela, and the last time was when I was in the Opposition. I had the privilege and honour to be with him.

**03/04**

With that, I would also like to thank the Government for recognizing him for his leadership. I also like to thank the Government for passing these two important laws and amending the laws in the *Constitution* of this country, and also for appointing a female to chair the meeting, yesterday. Where our fathers left us in this country, we, the ones and the mothers, will stand together to bring this country forward, after 50 years.

### **Community Development Program**

This is the third time; I will ask this question to the Minister for Mining, when exactly will the Community Development Agreement for Porgera Gold Mine end? It has failed six times, and it is still going on. I want to know when it will end because the mine resettlement has not been done and it has been 30 years now. So, the people who live in the SML areas, such as the villages in Kulapi, Panandaka, and Alpis, are harbouring illegal miners who are causing a lot of trouble in the Porgera Gold Mine.

In the last agreement, CDA did not happen, so I want a clear time frame of when the CDA will be concluded. It has failed over and over but now, I need a certain time.

Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker.

**Mr WAKE GOI** – Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker and the Honourable Member, for asking your question, I think this is the second time.

Mr Assistant Speaker, the CDA is 95 per cent done, but the 5 per cent and some minor issues, so hopefully by the end of maybe this month or next month, it should be ready or completed. I assure you that because it was reported by my team at MRA that they are almost there.

Secondly, is the resettlement of these illegal miners that are causing a lot of trouble in the area. We do feel sorry for the companies that are operating as this is causing a lot of inconveniences in the lease area, especially in the SLM areas. Many of them are doing it and sometimes, it's really hard to control them, but at least they are managing it.

To resettle them it will take some work, so it is progressing very slowly, but maybe around June or July, we will see some big improvement in areas like identifying some land, and identifying some source of funding that we can use to resettle them. Some contentious issues are there, like funding, land, etc. The provincial governments are lined up with our department and are working around the clock to get this out of the way.

Thank you.

**04/04**

### **Funding for Afore to Safia Road**

**Mr DAVID ARORE** – Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister for Works and Highway. I have two questions;

(1) When will you release K10 million for our road from Afore to Safia through to Kupiano? The funds have been sitting in your department for over a year now. Please advise this Parliament when you will release these funds so the contractors can start the work.

(2) We have already started the work with our district funds on this road. Our district does not have any roads connecting the three LLGs. So, we have already started from Afore LLG, nearly to reach Safia LLG now.

But our problem now is that the machines are spoiling their gardens, which resulted in the villagers closing the road construction. My question is, will Works be compensating the villagers where the machines have been destroyed, or will our district meet the expenses? Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker

**Mr SOLAN MIRISIM** – Thank you Assistant Speaker and thank you Member for Ijivitari for raising a very good question. I will start by answering the last question first.

With regards to the food gardens within your LLGs and district, the district will compensate the garden owners for the construction of the roads. Under Connect PNG we do not have any compensation for gardens by law. But we have roads coming through your LLG.

Regarding your question about K10 million for the road from Afore to Kupiano, I assume that the funding has decreased to K4 million and you are fully aware of that.

**Mr David Arore** – Point of Order! Sorry Minister, as it was stated in the budget last year as K10 million, therefore I asked for the K10 million, my apologies.

**Mr SOLAN MIRISIM** – On record we have K4 million in the trust account. I will confirm the K10 million and come back to you. But I had advised you some time ago to come and get the K4 million to start the road, but you did not come and get the money.

**05/04**

So, I will check with my department and get back to you on the K10 million and the K4 million respectively. I know that K4 million is in the trust account and I believe you are aware of that.

**Mr WILLIAM HAGAHUNO** – Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker for recognizing the people of Kainantu. On behalf of my people and my family, I would like to convey our heartfelt

condolences to the family of the late Sir Julius Chan and also to the people of New Ireland Province.

I wish to also congratulate Ms Francesca Semoso for making history by presiding over the Parliament session yesterday, sitting in the Chair as Assistant Speaker, thank you, Speaker, for recognizing the efforts and contributions of our women folk.

My question is directed to the Minister for Works and Highways, and my question is about the road starting from Kainantu to Okapa, Lufa and Bena. This stretch of the road is an important road link in the Eastern Highland Province. Under Connect PNG, thousands have been spent to rehabilitate or build road links in and around the country, for our people in the remote areas or our rural districts to have access to goods and services.

Last year we were advised during our provincial assembly that the Government has committed K87 million under the Connect PNG Project to upgrade and seal this road. I put in a submission to the Minister for Works and Highways, with an amount of K101 million for the upgrade and sealing of this road.

This road does not only serve my district, it serves Okapa District, Lufa and Ungai Bena, and all these have MP representation in Parliament. We were only notified of what will be given, but going through the budget allocations, I did not see anything. If it's an oversight on my part, then I stand to be corrected.

### **Upgrading and Sealing of District Roads**

My questions are;

(1) When will the people of Eastern Highlands be recognized and this road, that I have mentioned, be considered for upgrading and sealing? This is an economic route, that our people need to access; when do you think we will be able to see work started on this road?

(2) Is it true that K87 million was allocated for this road?

(3) If not, then, when will the people of Eastern Highlands be recognized under the Connect PNG program or another program?

This road will link five electorates, and people who need to access basic services must live in these electorates too.

**Mr SOLAN MIRISIM** – Mr Assistant Speaker, through you, I wish to say that the road that he mentioned is a very important economic road, especially for coffee. Under the Connect PNG program, we are fully aware of this road. We tried to start work but some issues arose.

**06/04**

This particular road was funded by the ADB and the work was supposed to commence, but an officer was murdered there so the project is on hold at the moment. The NEC has approved the funding under the ADB Highlands Trench so we will put it out on the tender.

This is an important road; it serves five districts and is considered an economical road. So, I appeal to the members and people of these five districts that we have secured funding through ADB to seal this road under the Connect PNG Program, but the project is not progressing because of this incident. The Marape/Rosso Government are committed to these road projects under the Connect PNG Program.

We will resume work on the Eastern Highland roads starting from Kainantu to Obura-Wonenara and the road sealing in Kainantu. So many roads are in progress in the Eastern Highlands and Kainantu as well. We will also put on tender the four-lane road of Goroka town.

We are not forgetting Eastern Highland because it's an economical province through coffee and other garden produce. The Marape/Rosso Government through Connect PNG is committed to the road projects in Eastern Highlands to ensure that our people will have better road access to the market and to conduct other economic activities.

With that, thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker.

**Mr AIYE TAMBUA** – Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker, for allowing me to direct my questions to the Minister for State Enterprise.

### **BSP National Staff Marginalized by Expat Recruits**

Mr Assistant Speaker, my question concerns the issues surrounding BSP Bank and requires the government's attention to address it adequately, therefore I want to put it on this Floor. The BSP is one of the largest banks in the South Pacific region and not only here in Papua New Guinea. It employs many Papua New Guinean citizens, more than 2000, and they are still recruiting throughout the country.

Mr Assistant Speaker, the BSP has a 51 per cent share in this country and has 100 per cent share in other countries like Samoa, Tonga, and Niue.

Mr Assistant Speaker, our concern is that the national staff are being marginalized by BSP. The BSP bank now recruits expatriates to occupy the position of the national staff. The BSP management is renaming the positions of our national staff and they are suppressing them.

The work that can be done by our nationals is being recruited from other countries to do the job.

And we are being marginalized in our own country by our own bank and the board of directors. If we look at the management system of BSP Bank, we have less than 10 per cent nationals on the top management and the rest are expatriates.

**07/04**

Employing expatriates and yet we are declaring a K1 billion profit. Where is that K1 billion coming from? It's from the pockets of the citizens of this country and not from the smaller Pacific Island countries like Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, Niue and so forth. This money is coming from the citizens of this country, yet we are marginalizing our staff in our country and banking system.

*(Members interjecting)*

**Mr AIYE TAMBUA** – What is the government doing about this? What is the government's policy to protect our staff?

**Mr ASSISTANT SPEAKER** – Which Minister are you directing your questions to?

**Mr AIYE TAMBUA** – To the Minister for State Enterprises, I want the Minister for Immigration and the Minister for Labour and Employment to take note.

What are we doing to protect the rights of our citizens of this country in such big corporate businesses? We are also faced with similar issues from a multi-billion-kina company coming to our country. But coming from our nationally owned company is unfair to us, and it's an injustice to the citizens of this country.

Do we have a regulation in place to protect our people's rights in terms of employment? We are the biggest shareholders. What are we doing to bring this issue to the board and down to the management level to address it?

Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker.

**Mr WILLIAM DUMA** – Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker, I want to thank the Member for Goroka for asking these important questions. These questions have been raised informally

by many of our people on social media as well, and this matter has been discussed at various sections.

Firstly, I want to set the records straight here, that the Bank of South Pacific is not 100 per cent owned by our Papua New Guinean shareholders or institutions. The banking laws don't allow one single shareholder to own more than 20 per cent of a bank. Because the bank normally deals with other people's money. And these are rules set up by the Bank of PNG, and these are banking laws you will find in many other countries of the world. So, PNG is not an exception and banking is an international business.

When the then Morauta Government decided to merge the two banks, the former Banking Corporation and the smaller Bank South Pacific. The law required our government to sell down, that's why KC8 was known as the shareholder and eventually ended up owning only 20 per cent as required by the law.

If you look at the share register of BSP, the top six shareholders are our PNG institutions. The rest are international investors as well, so we don't own 100 per cent of BSP.

It's a bank owned by many investors both domestically and internationally as well. So, you have a lot of other pension funds and even overseas investors who are shareholders. As we all know BSP operates not only in PNG but in other parts of the Pacific Region as well.

When you go back to the employees of the bank, the bank recruits the best, which means people who can work anywhere in the world. Banks are by nature international, and our citizens employed by the bank have to meet those requirements. And if they are found lacking, then the bank will of course either retrench them or terminate them.

The fact is that it's headquartered in PNG and the majority is owned by our national institution, which does not necessarily mean that this bank will lower its standards. The issue of our Papua New Guineans being targeted and demoted and the decreasing number of Papua New Guineans in the national positions has been raised.

I raised this informally with the Chairman of the Bank and he told me that it's an issue they are looking at.

**08/04**

I am happy with the Member for Goroka for raising a very important question because, as you all know, the bank is headquartered in our country and was once used and owned by a majority of our people. Of course, we are naturally concerned and that's an important issue.

In terms of who gets in and who remains employed, that is a labour matter and in the absence of policy from this government requiring our banks to keep our people employed to a

certain level, then that is a matter that can be dealt with by our labour laws but as it is, our labour laws do not require banks or any other business to employ our people. These are business matters and a bank or any other business will employ someone who they think is competent and delivers for the business.

Banks are businesses and businesses are there to make money, so these are some of the challenges our people have to remember. The fact that BSP was once owned by people, so does not necessarily mean that the banks will lower their standards when it comes to employing and returning people.

So, while we expect BSP to give priority to our people, BSP being an international bank, is expected to employ people from all over the world as long as they meet the requirements.

However, to conclude, I want to assure our Member for Goroka that I will again write to the Chairman of BSP and express our concerns, and when that response is provided, I will let this Parliament know because it is an important matter.

Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker.

### **Big Budget Allocations to the RPNGC**

**Mr JAMES NOMANE** – Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker. My question without notice is directed to the police minister. Recently, we have seen a spike in violent crimes across the country. Mr Assistant Speaker, 50 years of nationhood and the government cannot guarantee the safety of its citizens.

In 2023, this honourable House passed a Budget and gave K549 million to the Police Department. In 2024, it increased this funding to K629 million. That's a 15 per cent increase. The total allocation from 2023 to 2024 was K1.178 billion, almost K1.2 billion.

In 2025, we have announced the highest appropriation of K703 million, yet another increase taking the total to K1.8 billion.

My question is, from 2023 to 2024 budget allocation of almost K1.2 billion, and we haven't seen an improvement in standards and discipline in the RPNGC. We haven't seen any solutions for police housing and improvements in the police capacity equipment and conditions, and we haven't seen any solution to the fleet management. We are still on the hire car, places with police around the country. We are not confident that we will meet the manpower targets of 7,000 by 2026.

Mr Assistant Speaker, I recently called for the police minister to tender his resignation because we have lost trust and confidence that he has what it takes to be the police minister for what is so important to the citizens of this country.

Mr Assistant Speaker, what are the cracks that are affecting the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary that are seeing a spike in violent crime throughout the country, and what are you doing about it?

Thank you.

**Mr PETER TSIAMALILI JNR** – Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker. I thank the good Deputy Opposition Leader for the energy that is provided this morning with his question. This is the reason why we have the Opposition to provide checks and balances to challenge the government because it is good for the government and the country.

Mr Assistant Speaker, regarding the question on the Budget, this government has made some commitments to put priority on law and order and as it stands, on record, we have invested in police as a government for the first time.

**09/04**

Mr Assistant Speaker, for the record, the culmination of what is happening today is because over some time we have not necessarily as a government addressed our policing.

So, at this point, our priority is to increase manpower. We've been talking about this and we've already started doing so, we've created the Bomana Centre of Excellence to increase our police numbers. We've now graduated over 500 young police men and women, and in the short intervention, we've also started engaging with provincial governments to increase our reserve police numbers. I thank the honourable leaders, those governors that have engaged with the RPNGC to increase our numbers.

Let me remind the House, that law and order is a partnership. We all have funds under our respective DSIP and PSIP. I must thank even the Opposition for using what little funds you have to support my work as minister responsible. It takes a collaborative effort. Let's not politicise law and order. Let's deal with what is responsibly our mandated responsibility also, and I thank all of you.

So, the increase of funds to the police was to increase manpower. Our emoluments must also be the same. A majority of the funds that we receive are because we need to increase our manpower too. K200 million is for PIP and about K400,000 goes to personal emoluments.

Our challenge with hire vehicles, you will all experience this, we use one source of supply, which is Ela Motors, and they have a huge challenge with vehicles coming into the country. So, while we have purchased, we are still waiting for the vehicles to be in the country, and therefore, it puts us in a position where we are still hiring.

So, these are some of the challenges we are facing with reorganizing our vehicle fleets to support all our provinces and districts in terms of our logistics supply for our police force.

So, Mr Assistant Speaker, speaking of money and the huge amounts of money we are receiving to address law and order, we are working on it. We are taking the responsibility to ensure that we increase our numbers, provide the appropriate logistics, and the challenges are there, but the intent is there and we are doing it.

So, Mr Assistant Speaker, I just want to say thank you and I've made myself clear on the funding that comes to the police. We continue to do so and I appreciate all the members, particularly the provinces that have signed up with the agreement on reserves to increase their numbers in the provinces, for them to be engaging with the RPNGC, in terms of increasing our presence in our communities.

### **Supplementary Question**

#### **Impact of the money**

**Mr ALLAN BIRD** – Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker. With great respect to the minister and our hard-working men and women in blue, the question is more of an M&E question. It's asking about outcomes, not so much about the amount of money that has been given. We know that's significant funds and this House has approved significant funds to the Police.

The question that's coming from the communities is, what is the impact of that money? The community would like to see the police taking control of the law-and-order situation, and as much as possible, making our lives safer.

So, the question from the Deputy Opposition Leader is about making the lives of our people safer. So, it would be nice if the minister could answer us, not just on the money, but go beyond the input, which is the money and let's get to the outcomes, which are the results. I think that's what the Deputy Opposition leader is asking and I'd like the minister to perhaps give us an insight into that. Thank you.

**10/04**

**Mr PETER TSIAMALILI JNR** – Thank you, good Governor, for this Supplementary Question.

Mr Assistant Speaker, like I said earlier, I spoke of the financial support that all of us have supported in terms of supporting policing, the correlation of increase of our numbers and the interventions that we're doing as a government will not happen overnight. It takes

consistency, it takes the efforts to address and get results and its common sense, but the intent is there.

The policies increase our numbers to ensure that we get appropriate expertise into the Police Force, and that's what we've done. This House cried out for international support, and we've opened up the recruitment to our Commonwealth offices to bring in the expertise that we need because there's a shortfall in our capacity in the Police Force. There's no trust anymore within the police force, and so by bringing this expertise, we bring up the skill set and empower our men to be able to appropriately execute their jobs.

So, the results are going to come, but we need just a little time to get it, and to work through it because it is a process and you all should know this. I will reiterate myself, if you plant a banana today, you are not going to eat it tomorrow. Similarly, we have just funded the Police Force and we have always worked like this in the Government, since 1975, but in this Government, we want to take responsibility.

I would like to thank you all because you all supported me to help the Police Force, so I need support from both the districts and the provinces.

Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker.

### **SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS – EXTENDED TIME FOR QUESTIONS**

Motion (by **Sir Puka Temu**) put –

That so much of the *Standing Orders* be suspended would prevent the time for Questions Without Notice this day being extended by 20 minutes.

There being no absolute majority, motion not carried.

Motion negative.

### **LLG Elections**

**Sir PUKA TEMU** – Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker, for allowing me to ask the last question.

My question is directed to the Honourable Minister for Inter-Governmental Relations.

Mr Assistant Speaker, yesterday, the Minister advised the Parliament and the country that in the Budget, there is about over K100 million allocated for the coming Local-Level Government Elections.

Today, as we are speaking, there are only five weeks to go before the Issuing of Writs, on 24 April, five weeks is a very short time. There is a lot of apprehension out there amongst managers of elections, provincial election advisory committees, retaining officers, et cetera, and the issue of updated electoral roll and everything.

Then there are two formats of presidential election, one by the people and in the Highlands Region and Morobe, by the ward members.

My questions are as follows;

(1) I understand that there is about K19 million worth of cheques yet to be approved, and we are running out of time, so when will those be cleared so that the Electoral Commissioner can start having funds to make the election work?

**11/04**

(2) I understand like in every other election, both national and local-level governments will ask the provincial governments and the district development authorities to help you with the upcoming elections. When will you issue those instructions and how much are we going to be allocated to help in the LLG elections? If that is going to be your instructions, when are the funds going to be released to the provinces and the districts?

Maybe you are expecting from the DSIPs, if we are going to be helped and if you admit that you are going to give instructions to provincial governors and administrators and DDAs to help you in the forthcoming elections.

And I must admit that we need to help each other. I think in the LLG elections, I think the provincial governments and district authorities should be able to help. But we need the funds also and we only got five weeks left before the rates are issued.

(3) Over the years in LLG elections and national elections, we've always asked provincial governments and local-level governments to help.

Minister, through you, Mr Assistant Speaker, would you have any plans to transfer the functions of local level governments to provincial governments rather than national governments taking responsibility?

Because there is so much Waigani Swamp issues, procrastinating, warranting issues, management issues, role update issues from Waigani to provinces, ward record not being allowed to present, all those issues. So, I believe that provincial governments and local-level

governments can do all these administrative functions better. Would you agree that your Government should now plan to transfer the powers of holding local-level governments to the provincial governments?

Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker.

**Mr SOROI EOE** – Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker, and I thank the Honourable Sir Puka Temu, Member for Abau, for his very important questions at this juncture of our history, particularly as we prepare for the LLG election, which I referred to yesterday in response to questions being raised by Member for Karamui-Nomane.

They are critical issues that we should be mindful of as we prepare for this important election. As we know, local-level government is defined under the *Constitution*.

And therefore, it's a critical *Constitution* and a very important part of our government system, just as national government is and provincial government are. I did mention yesterday about the funding issue, and funding issue has been identified.

Mr Assistant Speaker, it's K180 million and we would have not gone ahead if we had not consulted the Electoral Commissioner because by law, my ministry can organize LLG elections, but to conduct it, is the responsibility of the Electoral Commission. Therefore, that responsibility in terms of conducting and also how funds are to be utilised lies with Electoral Commissioner.

And so, as you referred to the K90 million floating cheques, I'll leave that matter to the Electoral Commissioner, as well as, of course, the Government to look at, but given the importance of this election, we cannot defer it any longer.

**12/04**

We need to have a third-level government functioning on the ground, and therefore, the election is going ahead.

After this, I will be in close consultation with my colleague, the minister who is assisting the Prime Minister, Honorable Richard Masere. We'll continue to liaise about how this LLG election is progressing. So, insofar as your first question is concerned, I think I've answered that.

The issue of the K90 million worth of floating cheques, insofar as the Electoral Commission is concerned. We'll leave that matter to the Electoral Commission, but our priority is to organize this election, and the funds that are therefore allocated must be used for that purpose, solely for that purpose, so that our third-level government is functioning.

I didn't get what you were referring to with your second question. But the third question you referred to is transferring the functions of Local Level Governments (LLGs) to provinces; it's a good suggestion. It's something that we can continue to look at as we are trying to reform the provincial government systems, especially when LLGs in the rural communities, where much of them are located in the provinces.

These are issues that we can look at in the future as to how we can improve the functions of LLGs on the ground. If they were to still exist at the national level as it has been, then so be it. But if we think administrative LLGs can exist at a provincial level, then that's an issue we need to look at.

We need to find the best solutions so that we can deliver to our people. Because LLGs are where the majority of our people are, and that's where we should be reaching out to our people. That's where we should be ensuring that there's government presence. And so, the reforms that we have done are basically to do with that.

Yesterday I did cover, particularly the leaders that we are looking at in terms of

**Sir Puka Temu** – Point of Order! Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker. The point of order is that our minister is diverting away from the three simple questions. One is, there are not 90 floating, but there is K19 million worth of checks that were earmarked for the elections, but they haven't been cleared yet.

The second point is, will the districts and provincial governments give instructions to provinces and districts to help you in the local-level government (LLG) election?

**Mr SOROI EOE** – Thank you. I think concerning the second issue, there's an understanding that an election is a collective issue, and that's where the provincial government and national government come together, including districts in sharing costs, and more importantly, we do the election so that we have a third level government on the ground.

So, if you are referring to what I've said, we should be looking at shared responsibilities, just like any other issues that we are looking at. I think we have also looked at the issue of the census, it's the same thing. We cannot just say it's a national government's responsibility. It should be the provincial government, as well as open members. And that's where we come in to try and minimize the responsibilities or the issues that we are to address so that we can adequately address the issue of LLG election on the ground. Because if we make a mistake, and if there is no third-level government, then we have a problem on the ground.

Thank you.

**13/04**

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF VISITORS –  
STATEMENT BY THE ASSISTANT SPEAKER**

**Mr ASSISTANT SPEAKER** – Honorable Members I have to inform the Parliament that Councilors and Pastors from Rai Coast LLG in Madang Province are present in the public gallery. On behalf of the National Parliament, I extend to them a very warm welcome.

**ANSWERS TO PREVIOUS QUESTIONS**

**Questions by Honourable Kerenga Kua**

**Mr PILA NININGI** (Imbonggu – Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) – I seek leave of the Parliament to answer questions directed to me by the Member for Sinasina-Yongomugl.

Certain questions have been directed to me regarding the appointment of the King's Counsel and this was never done before. We have done this for the first time and I am proud to say that we have taken a step; these questions are long as I have gone back to the history and for the benefit of the Members of Parliament and for the benefit of the Member for Sinasina-Yongomugl, I would like to place this on notice so that you are accurately answered.

**Mr Kerenga Kua** – Point of Order! Thank you; Mr Assistant Speaker, but I do not believe that incorporating into the Hansard is an adequate approach. This is a public legal issue with articulated questions openly on the Floor of Parliament. All the stakeholders are out there watching and waiting for an answer.

If he has an answer today, which is about 6 months of procrastination, then he needs to read it out on the Floor of Parliament. And I want him to have the opportunity to do it properly. So, I'm happy to wait until next Tuesday during question time, and give him the privilege to read his answer to this Parliament so we can all understand exactly how he unilaterally made the decision? It was not the NEC nor this Parliament.

**14/04**

So, we want him to carefully explain why he unilaterally took that decision to next week Tuesday and not now. That's the appropriate procedure; it's a public issue.

**Mr ASSISTANT SPEAKER** – The Honourable Minister, do you want to answer the question or incorporate it?

**Mr PILA NINIGI** – Mr Assistant Speaker, he has the right to ask questions and I have the right to answer. This is the way I am going to answer his question.

You have made the ruling already and I am following your ruling to incorporate it into *Hansard*.

*(Members interjecting)*

**Mr ASSISTANT SPEAKER** – Mr Minister, you may seek leave from the Chair to incorporate it into *Hansard*.

**Mr PILA NINIGI** – I seek leave of the Chair to incorporate my answers.

Leave granted.

*The Answers read as follows:*

During question time on 27 November 2024, the Member for Sinasina-Yongomugl, Honourable Kerenga Kua MP, made comments and asked a series of questions of the Attorney-General concerning the recent appointments of King's Counsel in Papua New Guinea.

In substance, the Member for Sinasina-Yongomugl questioned, at times in regrettable language, the lawfulness and desirability of the appointments of King's Counsel.

This House, the legal profession and the whole country may rest assured that the appointments are lawful and effective in all respects. The appointments adopted the principles and processes of the underlying law. Indeed, confirmation of that has been received from Buckingham Palace by the Assistant Private Secretary to His Majesty, King Charles III.

The appointments of our first King's Counsel are a strong vindication of Papua New Guinea's independence coming now to its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of nationhood, the maturity of our legal system and our equality amongst the other Commonwealth countries which have long made such appointments. Seeking appointment as King's Counsel will provide a clear career path for our lawyers, to encourage and inspire them to give of their best and achieve great heights, creating a pool of talent that will be available to all Papua New Guinean litigants who

seek access to our legal system. This is an important reform and development for our legal profession.

This is the Attorney-General's response to the Member for Sinasina- Yongomugl. At the outset it must be noted that the Member for Sinasina-Yongomugl has no concerns with the standing of the new King's Counsel in the legal profession or their suitability for appointment.

The Member for Sinasina-Yongomugl said that he has a "deep and abiding respect for (the appointees) and no aspersion is cast on their reputation and integrity". That much is common ground, each of the appointees are highly qualified and distinguished senior lawyers with decades of legal practice at the highest level and have demonstrated their service to the law and the legal profession.

Rather, the Member for Sinasina-Yongomugl's concerns are directed at the legal basis for the appointments and appointment process.

Some of the language used by the Member for Sinasina -Yongomugl, as a former legal practitioner, former President of the Law Society, and former Attorney-General, in raising his concerns is regrettable.

It is also apparent that the Member for Sinasina-Yongomugl is somewhat confused by the nature and consequences of the appointments. In his previous press statement dated 30 October 2024, the Member for Sinasina-Yongomugl confessed that "he has not done any research" yet found it appropriate to criticise the appointments. It is apparent from his current questions that he has still not done any research and fundamentally misapprehends the basis of the appointments.

It is hoped that this response clarifies matters and that the Member for Sinasina-Yongomugl can return to supporting the legal profession and its development in this country as he has done throughout his career.

***Question 1.***

Isn't it correct that the Lawyers Act is the only law in Papua New Guinea that provides for the practice of law by lawyers?

***Answer to Question 1***

The answer is "no". The starting point for the practice of law in Papua New Guinea is *Section 156(1) of the Constitution* which provides for the law officers of Papua New Guinea — the principal legal advisor to the National Executive, the Public Prosecutor and the Public Solicitor. *Section 156(2) of the Constitution* then provides that an Act of Parliament shall provide for the office of the principal legal advisor to the National Executive. The *Constitution*

is, therefore, a law in Papua New Guinea containing provisions that provide for the practice of law by lawyers.

The *Attorney General Act 1989*, made pursuant to *Section 156(2) of the Constitution*, provides for the establishment of the Office of the Attorney-General as the principal legal advisor to the National Executive.

Through amendments to it, the *Attorney General Act 1989* now also provides for the Office of the Solicitor-General, as the State's advocate before the Courts, and the Office of the State Solicitor, as the State's legal officer.

Each of the law officers, being Constitutional office holders, as well as the other offices created by the *Attorney General Act 1989*, are lawyers who provide legal services in accordance with the enabling Acts of their respective offices.

The *Attorney General Act 1989* also provides for the rights of appearance of overseas barristers and solicitors, as well as brief outs by the Attorney-General for private lawyers (including overseas lawyers) to represent the State.

The *Attorney General Act 1989* is, therefore, another law in Papua New Guinea that provides for the practice of law by lawyers.

The *Constitution* and the *Attorney General Act 1989* expressly recognise the underlying law as a fundamental source of law in Papua New Guinea. Many aspects of legal practice and the legal profession formed part of the principles and rules at common law and in equity which formed part of the underlying law. To the extent that any matter concerning the principles, rules, customs and traditions relating to legal practice or the legal profession was part of the underlying law at common law or in equity, it has the force of law — indeed, the force of Constitutional Law — in Papua New Guinea, unless it has been expressly modified or excluded by a Constitutional Law or another Act of Parliament.

The underlying law, as recognised by the *Constitution* and the *Attorney General Act 1989* is, therefore, another source of law in Papua New Guinea that contains principles and rules for the practice of law by lawyers.

Then there are the Rules of Court for the National and Supreme Courts, which include the National Court Rules 1983 and the Supreme Court Rules 2012 each of which contain rules that relate to the conduct of the lawyers who appear before the Courts.

The Rules of Court are, therefore, yet another source of law in Papua New Guinea that provide for the practice of law by lawyers.

It is sufficient to observe from the foregoing that there are many laws, statutes and rules which touch upon lawyers, the legal profession and the practice of law in particular circumstances.

The *Lawyers Act 1986*, being an *Act* relating to lawyers, is, therefore, not the only law in Papua New Guinea that concerns lawyers, the legal profession or practice of law.

It provides for the administrative and regulatory framework for the legal profession, including requirements for admission to practise, practising certificates, professional conduct, billing and trust accounts, and so on. It also provides for the establishment and operation of the Law Society of Papua New Guinea, the professional association representing the legal profession.

However, the *Lawyers Act of 1986* is not an exhaustive code that contains everything concerning or relating to every aspect of legal practice or the legal profession in Papua New Guinea (although it is a very important *Act* for that purpose).

The overriding logic adopted by the Member for Sinasina-Yongomugl that unless a matter concerning legal practice is expressly provided for in the *Lawyers Act 1986* results in that matter being "illegal" is, of course, plainly wrong.

***Question 2.***

Does the Attorney-General agree that the Lawyers Act as a legislation overrides any pronouncements of the common law which is interpretation by the judges from the court room?

***Answer to Question 2.***

The question is not entirely clear. As stated in answer to Question 1 above, the *Lawyers Act 1986* is an *Act* relating to lawyers, providing for the administrative and regulatory framework for the legal profession.

Where it expressly restricts or removes a common law right or modifies the underlying law (which includes the common law), then it will "override" the underlying law to that extent.

However, where is silent on a particular topic, then principles, rules, customs and traditions of the underlying law will continue to operate without change.

***Question 3.***

Can the Attorney-General confirm whether the Lawyers Act makes provision for the operation and existence for a group of lawyers called solicitors?

***Answer to Question 3.***

The *Lawyers Act 1986* does not provide for solicitors. As stated in answer to Question 1 above, the *Attorney General Act 1989* provides for the rights of appearance of overseas barristers and solicitors.

***Question 4.***

Can the Attorney-General confirm if the Lawyers Act makes similar provision for the operation of another class of lawyers called barristers?

***Answer to Question 4.***

The *Lawyers Act 1986* does not provide for a separate class of lawyers called barristers. However, refers to (overseas) barristers and contains provisions for their licensing.

Further, as stated in answer to Question 1 above, the *Attorney General Act 1989* also provides for the rights of appearance of overseas barristers and solicitors.

***Question 5.***

If the answers to questions 3 and 4 are "no" isn't it the case that the Lawyers Act makes provision for a merged profession that does not recognise the distinction between barristers or solicitors but under the Lawyers Act requires them to practice under the label of "lawyer" only by law under this country.

***Answer to Question 5.***

The answers to questions 3 and 4 are not an unqualified "no", however the legal profession in Papua New Guinea is a fused profession.

There is nothing unusual about the fused profession in Papua New Guinea. Many common law jurisdictions have a fused profession, for example, in the United States of America, the common law provinces of Canada, New Zealand, Malaysia and Singapore.

Even in Australia, the States of Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania have a fused profession, whilst Queensland and New South Wales retain separate professions.

Other jurisdictions, for example, throughout the United Kingdom, Republic of Ireland and Hong Kong, have separate professions. Each jurisdiction has determined whether to maintain separate professions, or to fuse them. Papua New Guinea is no different.

***Question 6.***

Does the Attorney-General agree that under the Lawyers Act there is no express or implied grant of power for him to appoint King's Counsel as a professional award?

***Answer to Question 6.***

King's Counsel ("KC", or, in full, "His Majesty's Counsel Learned in the Law"), when the reigning sovereign is male, or Queen's Counsel ("QC", or, in full, "Her Majesty's Counsel Learned in the Law"), when the reigning sovereign is female, is an office conferred by the Crown upon legal practitioners within the jurisdiction.

It is an ancient and very distinguished position. The first QC was Francis Bacon, 1<sup>st</sup> Viscount St Alban, who was appointed to the office by Queen Elizabeth I in 1597 to be her personal legal advisor (as distinct from the Attorney-General who remained the Government's chief legal advisor).

The power to appoint legal practitioners as King's Counsel is the prerogative right of the sovereign's representative, the Governor-General, in accordance with the advice of the Attorney-General, exercising powers pursuant to the underlying law recognised by the *Attorney General Act 1989*, made by letters patent under seal.

This has recently been confirmed by Buckingham Palace. The Assistant Private Secretary to His Majesty, King Charles III, Dr Nathan Ross, in congratulating the Governor-General on the new appointments stated that "Appointments of the KC title in other Realms are made by the Governors-General on appropriate advice from Realm authorities. We would be content for these appointments to be made in a similar way".

Accordingly, the Member for Sinasina-Yongomugl's question is misconceived:

- It is not the Attorney-General who made the appointments of King's Counsel, but rather the appointments were made by the Governor-General, on the advice of the Attorney-General pursuant to the underlying law.

- The power to appoint King's Counsel is not contained in the *Lawyers Act 1986*, but rather is the prerogative right of the Governor-General as the King's representative as recognised by the underlying law.

- The office of King's Counsel is not a "professional award", but rather is an office conferred on lawyers in the jurisdiction by the Governor-General as the King's representative on the advice of the Attorney-General pursuant to the underlying law.

Importantly, there is nothing in the *Lawyers Act 1986*, or any other reason in point of legal principle, legal practice, or custom, that precludes the appointments of King's Counsel in Papua New Guinea.

To the contrary, the first appointments of Papua New Guinea's King's Counsel are an appropriate recognition of outstanding service to the law and legal practice in Papua New Guinea. It is an important development for the legal profession and one that, after 50 years of independence, is appropriate and timely.

#### ***Question 7.***

Does the Attorney-General agree that the KC award system is a professional award system as distinguished from a civil or imperial award system like the Logohu award system or the British imperial award system

***Answer to Question 7.***

As stated above in answer to question 6, the appointment of King's Counsel is not an "award system", but rather an office conferred on lawyers within the jurisdiction by the Governor-General as the King's representative.

***Question 8.***

Can the Attorney-General agree that he never involved the judiciary in his selection of the candidates because the judiciary have the most visibility on the ability of lawyers appearing in the court rooms.

***Answer to Question 8.***

The Attorney-General consulted widely throughout Papua New Guinea and overseas on his decision to recommend appointments of King's Counsel. It is not appropriate to disclose what occurred during the course of such consultations, which ought to remain confidential. That is consistent with the practice and protocol in other jurisdictions which appoint King's Counsel.

Moreover, pursuant to *s.86(4) of the Constitution*, the question what, if any, advice was given to the Head of State, or by whom, is non-justiciable.

***Question 9.***

Can the Attorney-General admit or deny that he never consulted the Papua New Guinea Law Society who by virtue of the Lawyers Act is the only authority licensed and authorised by law to give out awards such as the licences to practice law that includes restricted practising certificate or unrestricted practising certificate.

***Answer to Question 9.***

The power to appoint King's Counsel does not reside in the *Lawyers Act 1986* or with the Papua New Guinea Law Society.

As stated in answer to question 6 above, the appointment of King's Counsel is not an "award", but rather an office conferred on lawyers within the jurisdiction by the Governor-General as the King's representative on the advice of the Attorney-General.

The requirement for all lawyers in Papua New Guinea to hold either a restricted or unrestricted practising certificate issued by the Papua New Guinea Law Society is a very different matter. There is no conflict between the requirement for all lawyers to hold the appropriate practising certificate and the appointments of King's Counsel.

As stated in answer to question 8 above, the Attorney-General consulted widely throughout Papua New Guinea and overseas on his decision to recommend appointments of King's Counsel. It is not appropriate to disclose what occurred during the course of such

consultations, which ought to remain confidential. That is consistent with the practice and protocol in other jurisdictions which appoint King's Counsel.

The Papua New Guinea Law Society should welcome this important development to the legal profession in Papua New Guinea.

Each Commonwealth jurisdiction has come to establish its own rules concerning the requirements for appointment of King's Counsel and the process for applying for appointment. It is anticipated that Papua New Guinea will come to develop and adopt its own unique practices. It is hoped that the Papua New Guinea Law Society will play an important part of this development for any future appointments.

***Question 10.***

Because the Attorney-General has assumed this power of unilaterally appointing these people can the Attorney-General now also agree that next Attorney-General whoever he might be has the same power to revoke these appointments therefore giving no stability to those appointments.

***Answer to Question 10.***

The answer is "no".

As stated in answer to question 6 above, it is not the Attorney-General who made the appointments of King's Counsel, but rather the appointments were made by the Governor-General on the advice of the Attorney-General. The Attorney-General has not assumed any power, unilaterally or otherwise.

A future Attorney-General will not be able to revoke existing appointments (though a future Attorney-General may choose not to make further recommendations for appointments). The appointments of King's Counsel enjoy absolute stability — it is a time-honoured process that has been in place across the Commonwealth of Nations for more than 400 years.

***Question 11.***

Can the Attorney-General admit in all sincerity and in good faith that he has made a blunder and committed a scandal and made a mockery of the laws including in particular of the Lawyers Act that he is supposed to be championing upholding and maintaining and policing it

***Answer to Question 11.***

This Government has taken strong positions on law and justice reform. Strengthening the rule of law and access to justice lies at the heart of a strong and prosperously functioning democracy.

At the top of our legal hierarchy, this Government has restructured the Court system to introduce a new Court of Appeal and greatly increased the number of Judges in recognition of

the number and complexity of cases now before the Courts. This increase in access to justice is a tangible commitment to the rule of law.

At the coalface of legal practice, our lawyers who appear before our Courts are expected to conduct themselves at the highest standards of skill, learning, integrity and diligence, and to faithfully assist the Courts in the administration of justice. We expect such standards of our lawyers because the quality of their work directly affects the functioning and outcomes of the Courts and, ultimately, it is from our most excellent lawyers that the appointments of our Judges are made.

The appointments of King's Counsel, for the first time in Papua New Guinea's history, is an important development for our legal profession which recognises those of our lawyers who have distinguished themselves and meet the highest standards.

It has been suggested that Papua New Guinea is "not ready" to introduce the appointment of King's Counsel. Are we not ready to demand excellence from our lawyers? Are we not ready to expect our lawyers to serve their clients and assist the Courts to the very highest of professional and ethical standards? Are we not ready, as a mature independent country, to appoint lawyers of the same rank as most other Commonwealth countries, including our neighbours in the region? Are we not ready to recognise those lawyers that have served the legal profession and the administration of justice at the highest level for many years? The answer to each of those is, of course, a resounding "yes!"<sup>9</sup>.

Seeking appointment as King's Counsel will provide a clear career path for our lawyers, to encourage and inspire them to give of their best and achieve great heights, creating a pool of talent that will be available to all Papua New Guinean litigants who seek access to our legal system. It will oblige our new King's Counsel as senior members of the profession to promote further improvements in the standard of the profession, through leadership in running cases, participating in continuing professional development initiatives and interacting with their colleagues in other jurisdictions. It is no doubt a very prestigious appointment which will clearly establish leadership in the profession.

To uphold the rule of law also means recognising and developing those traditions, systems and aspirations which have contributed to its success in other jurisdictions. Having successfully adopted the underlying law in Papua New Guinea, the appointments of our first King's Counsel are a strong vindication of Papua New Guinea's independence coming now to its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of nationhood, the maturity of our legal system and our equality amongst the other Commonwealth countries which have long made such appointments.

I congratulate each of our new King's Counsel on their achievement and look forward to their further contributions to law and legal practice in this country.

*(Members interjecting)*

**Mr ASSISTANT SPEAKER** – The Honourable Member for Sinasina-Yonggamugl, the answers have been incorporated into *Hansard* and it's now become a public document.

**Mr KERENGA KUA** – I want to raise my supplementary question, but I don't know the answer whether he said yes or no. I think we do it properly, Mr Assistant Speaker, let him answer it in full on Tuesday.

It's a public issue; we can't bury and hide it. Why are we trying to do this? Even the courts are interested to know the answer.

**Mr ASSISTANT SPEAKER** – The honourable Members, the Chair has already made the ruling so we will go by it.

## GRIEVANCE DEBATE

Question proposed –

That grievances be noted.

**Mr MARSH NARAWEC** (Wau-Waria) – Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker, for recognizing the people of Wau Waria.

Mr Assistant Speaker, I rise today to express my grievances in regards to the Hidden Valley MOA Review. But before I do so, on behalf of the people of Wau Waria, I want to pass our condolences to the people of New Ireland, Namatanai and PNG for the great loss of the chief of this country, Sir Julius Chan.

**15/04**

Mr Assistant Speaker, if you can kindly allow me more time to explain my letter, which I wanted to present to the Minister for Mining, because we, the duly elected Members of Parliament, are not included in the discussions of the MOA of the mining projects.

So, this letter demonstrates my position to be included in the review of the Hidden Valley Mining Agreement.

Mr Assistant Speaker, the Hidden Valley Mining Agreement MOA review has been delayed for over 10 years. When it was revised in 2014. I did not understand why it was delayed for so long until I read the revised MOA.

The late Deputy Prime Minister and Member for Bulolo, Honorable Sam Basil, wouldn't support it because the 2014 draft review has completely left out the Bulolo District as one of the key stakeholders.

My good Minister, this should not have happened. This is because the Provincial Government and the National Government are not always on the ground to face the socioeconomic impact of the mining operation. It is usually the DDAs and the LNGs that are very close to the people. And we face and feel the socioeconomic impact of the mine daily.

Therefore, the DDAs and LNGs should be included in the stakeholder agreement.

*(Members interjecting)*

Mr Assistant Speaker, following the contributions of the people of Wau-Waria to the current Hidden Valley Mining MOA review, maybe next week.

(1) The MOA was drafted before the creation of the new Wau-Waria District.

Therefore, the revised MOA must include Wau-Waria District in its entirety; and include Wau-Waria together with Bulolo District.

(2) Establishment of Hidden Valley Development Foundation, and that's a new entity. We already have three entities to deliver development to the impacted communities.

These are Provincial Government, DDAs and LNGs. There is no need for the establishment of a fourth entity. When we create a new entity, we create new core structures, we create new problems.

Therefore, remove the clause to establish Hidden Valley Development Foundation from the revised MOA draft, and that's the position of Wau-Waria District.

(3) National Government Commitment to the infrastructure projects for impacted communities.

The listing of the projects in MOA for the impacted communities was not working in the previous MOA. There is no guarantee that these infrastructure projects will be funded by the National Government in this new MOA.

Therefore, I demand that the National Government create an annual budgetary allocation as it did for Wafi-Golpu and other mining projects.

Annual budgetary allocation in the national budget is the only guarantee and assurance to the impacted communities that the National Government will fund these infrastructure projects.

(4) Royalties - precedent is already set by Morobe Provincial Government and Bulolo District when Honorable Luther Wenge and late Honorable Sam Basil signed an MOU to split the Morobe Provincial Government's component of the Hidden Valley royalty.

That same spirit of understanding must be carried into this revised MOA, but this time include the new Wau-Waria District

#### **16/04**

(5) Equity - There is no mention of equity in this MOA review draft, so I call up my good Prime Minister and other State Negotiating Team to also consider this in the Hidden Valley MOA Review.

(6) Special Support Grant – There must be an MOU between the provincial government and the impacted DDAs and LLGs where to apply for the special support grant.

Secondly, the price of gold has increased dramatically since the signing of the MOA, but the value of SSG for Hidden Valley has not increased. This connection must be addressed in our new draft MOA.

(7) Tax Credit Scheme – The Hidden Valley Mining and joint venture projects have operated for 15 years now. There should be no excuse that it will be in a taxable position or not. It is already in the taxable position; National Government, you are struggling to fix the Wau-Bulolo Highway, so you must ensure that this mining project is in the taxable position. It cannot give the project to another developer.

I demand that doubt, uncertainties and implications in the Tax Credit Scheme clause must be removed as soon as the MOA is gazetted, this mining project must start to pay taxes to the government, and I would recommend that the Tax Credit Scheme for Hidden Valley must be used entirely on the Wau-Bulolo Highway and not elsewhere.

(8) Business Development – Today, I have received so many complaints from landowners and the community at large regarding the operations of the landowner company MKW Holdings Limited. I note and accept that districts are in the goods and services monitoring committee, districts must also be part of the compliance team that will audit the implementation of the Business Development Plan of the Hidden Valley Mining Project.

(9) Employment and Training - Youth unemployment is a great concern for the impacted communities and therefore, the district must be part of the employment and training committee that will monitor the employment and training part of the project.

(10) Environment – It's the LLGs and DDAs that are on the ground and face the damages and impacts caused to the environment by the mining operation. The DDA must be involved in the environment.

(11) Some community concerns are being raised and I would like to bring them forward. It has been an issue for local alluvial miners to get an alluvial mining lease in the areas where the exploration license is held by the Hidden Valley. The exploration license must be given to Wau-Waria DDA. Exploration companies made it easy for the local alluvial miners to be given an alluvial mining lease.

Hidden Valley has an exploration license that covers some of the areas not within the mining area, and this is making it difficult for the local alluvial miners to get their alluvial mining lease because their CEOs and all these executives are down there in South Africa and our people are struggling to get the mining lease. That has to stop and address a new MOA.

The Wau-Waria DDA and the Morobe Provincial Government have budgeted to build the road from Wau to Tikagu, thank you Morobe Provincial Government. The part of the road will go through the mining lease area. Therefore, we need that part of the area to be captured in the MOA.

Thirdly, Harmony has claimed that it has the title of Portion 8 of the land in Wau town. They have not furnished a copy of the title to Wau-Waria DDA yet. We have plans to extend the Wau township on this land. If they have the title, they should surrender the land to us as a matter of urgency and priority.

Fourthly, Harmony has not built a single structure of its own in Wau Town even though it has operated in the last 18 years in Wau. Therefore, they must fund the Wau redevelopment to make Wau a mining township again. This is not only for Harmony's current and future projects. They have other projects in the district too. But for all the project landowners, and local alluvial miners, so that they can reinvest their income generated from the Hidden Valley mining project and other alluvial mining activities.

**17/04**

I want this to be a handshake during the signing of the revised MOA. Mr Assistant Speaker, I would like to seek leave of the Parliament to submit the position paper of the people of Wau-Waria to this Floor and hopefully, it will be given to the minister.

**Mr ASSISTANT SPEAKER** – Honourable member, if you have a question, you can ask the minister next week.

**Mr MARSH NARAWEC** – I don't have a question, but my position is that I do not have a chance to speak on the MOA review, so I want to make my position formal on the Floor here so that it can go to the review committee. I seek leave to incorporate this position in the Hansard to be taken to the review committee.

**Mr ASSISTANT SPEAKER** – Honourable member, you can send your document down to the Office of the Clerk and he can prepare the acceptance letter or rather prepare it as a petition so he can present it next week.

**Mr MARSH NARAWEC** – Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker, the Prime Minister, and everyone for the direction. Yes, we will make it as a petition in the next few days session of Parliament.

**Mr SOLEN LOIFA** (Menyamya) – Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker for acknowledging the people of Menyamya. Before I go into my grievance, I want to acknowledge the late Sir Julius Chan, an icon of this country. I extend the condolences of my people of Menyamya and my family to the people of New Ireland, Namatanai and his family.

My grievance has to do with agriculture; I want to speak in English; however, I will speak in Pidgin so that our people can hear what I have to say. Agriculture is the backbone of our country, well before the oil, gas, gold and copper were mined, our economy was supported by agriculture. Our economy was run by the coffee, cocoa and copra plantations, so agriculture runs in the blood of all our citizens.

There is no need to teach them, they were born with it. So, our government should look at creating jobs in the agriculture sector for our unemployed youths who are roaming the streets and looking for work. The government must put money into agriculture to create jobs, especially in big plantations such as Waghi Mek, which is now run down. There are plenty of big plantations in our country that are now run down, and these include cocoa, copra and coffee, such as Gumans in the Dei District.

**18/04**

These plantations brought money into the country when their coffee was exported out, but these plantations are not operating and bush is growing over it. So, I would like to ask the Government to create job opportunities for our youths.

Instead of taking the K10 million DSIP funds away, we should all work together and contribute K500 000 each, which will sum up to K950 million to operate a plantation in an area. Then next year, we can move to another area and do the same until we have a project all over the country. When we start exporting these cash crops out, then we will see our forex increase, so that our rural people too can have money in their pockets.

What I am trying to propose to the Government, is that we should all work together by investing in one or two major projects. Yes, the Government has been doing a lot of good things such as the roads and many other big impact projects, but we all know that agriculture is the backbone of this country, and it can be an approach to use to address the issue of youth unemployment.

We are talking about an oil and gas project, which requires technical and skilled workers, but with agriculture, anyone can do it as we do not have to go to school to learn about it.

Another thing is that if we can identify plantations that are not in operation and need managers, we can employ technical people from outside to come and operate them while our people can work in these plantations.

Lastly, like I have already mentioned, agriculture is an industry where we can create many jobs for our people so we should seriously consider working together in the agriculture space. Instead of taking all our DSIP funds away, and then coming back here to ask for more funding to address our issues.

We must not forget that before oil and gas came into play, our country's economy relied heavily on agriculture and can go back into that instead of depending on oil and gas. So, let's revive the agriculture sector in our country.

Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker.

**Mr ALLAN BIRD** (East Sepik) – Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker.

My grievance today is in regard to the question I asked to the Minister for Police, and there have been many talks about this during the week. I also heard the Member for Menyamya mention it in his debate and that is the issue of how we plan, implement and execute or get results. And, the most important thing is who is responsible.

Early in the week, there was a question being asked about an intervention for the minister responsible for the Electoral Commission and this points to one of the problems we face in the country. We just heard the Member for Wau-Waria talk about his issue, and how it involves four different State entities that are responsible for delivering the outcome, now, this to me points to the great inefficiency that exists in our systems.

Sometime back, I proposed a block grant system and separation of responsibilities, and this goes to the heart of what comes down and constitutes what we call the planning framework that is supposed to deliver some of these results.

**19/04**

So, let's look at the Police, the *Constitution* gives the responsibility for policing only to the Police, and nobody else. That is what the *Constitution* says, but if you do not like that then come and take it and distribute out to everyone.

I just heard the Minister for Police, say that that responsibility is for everyone and that is not what the *Constitution* says, and therein lies the problem. If the responsibility is given to someone, I'm just using the example of policing, but this applies across, it applies to the electoral commission, it applies to the discussion that the Honourable Member for Abau and the Honourable Minister for Provincial and Local-Level Government just said; The same principle applies, who is responsible?

Some time back, I had an altercation with the good minister responsible for the Electoral Commission. You know, when we were doing the updates for the Census, the minister responsible for the census, East Sepik Provincial Government put down K3.4 million to pay for that.

The question is, who is responsible for the outcomes? Is it the minister and his NSO team, or is it the East Sepik Provincial Government? But we were asked to pay. And the good minister stood up there and said that it was our fault, and, many other provincial governments, because we didn't deliver it.

But the question is, who is responsible? We just heard from the Minister of Police, who said that law and order, is everyone's responsibility. Yes, we all feel the pain, but the *Constitution* gives the responsibility to his department.

So, I want to say here that unless you make someone responsible for the results, nobody is going to be responsible for the results and that's what we are seeing. We are seeing this across a range of ministries and a range of responsibilities, Mr. Assistant Speaker.

When you ask the minister, he will blame the DDA, when you go to the DDA, he will blame the provincial government so we keep pointing fingers back and forth but nobody is actually responsible.

Therefore, we are not getting the results and our people are suffering. We have a complete lack of efficiency, starting from the top to the bottom, and you hear members complaining today about it.

The good Member from Menyamya, was talking about agriculture but whose responsibility, is it? The National Government, Provincial Government, DDA, LLG, or some other authority and I think the response needs to come from the government. The government needs to clarify how it wants these results delivered.

If you say that it is the responsibility of the East Sepik Provincial Government to do and then you come and investigate us and find out if we misused the money or did, we use the money as allocated. Someone should be responsible for the auditing.

I just heard the discussion of the good Minister for Provincial and LLG and the Honourable Member for Abau; the member for Abau, has been in this House for a very long time and he's a very experienced public servant as well. So when he is asking questions, it comes from a very deep place.

So, I think it's pertinent that we take note of it and more than that, do not just listen and go out of Parliament. After we walk out, we shake hands and go have lunch then everybody forgets and goes home and we don't fix it. Our people are suffering out there. You can go from agriculture to policing to roads to whatever but the problem is, there is no solution. And here's the thing, I heard the Honourable Kerenga Kua raise the question earlier to the Treasurer, I think the other day, about the issue of cutting back on the budget, to stop borrowing. I had a good Member for Yangorru-Sausia say that too, the Minister for International Trade.

Well, I'm suggesting to this House that if we come up with some efficiency between the different levels of government and who is responsible for delivering the outcomes, then you are going to make some savings.

The East Sepik Provincial Government, delivered a budget to the Treasurer the other day, and the Treasurer asked us, what percentage of your budget is going to the core service delivery objectives of government, education, health, law and order. Our calculation shows that 88 per cent of the East Sepik Provincial Government is going to these three key requirements of the Government.

**20/04**

Now, other departments are given K300 million, some are given K400 million, some are given K600 million, and they are supposed to deliver those same outcomes, not just in East Sepik, but in every other province.

The question is, are they being measured the same way that the East Sepik Provincial Government is being measured? Or, say, the Western Highlands Provincial Government? Or, say, the Central Provincial Government? Are we measured the same or not? Is it just the Treasury that's doing the checking? What about the others? And I circle back to my original point. If we want to fix the census, and we want to record everyone in East Sepik, we will have to give that job to the Electoral Commission, the National Statistics Office, or give it back to the East Sepik Provincial Government and then who will you ask to provide results? Will it be the East Sepik Provincial Government, or will it be NSO? Who will give it?

If we are going to register people for the LLG elections, that's going to come up now, the issue of the electoral roll update, who is going to do it? Is it going to be the Electoral Commission? Is it going to be the district? Is it going to be the provincial government? Who is going to do it and who do we hold accountable?

If we fixed all these things, I put it to the Floor that we can reduce the budget and borrowing. Right now, we are duplicating those functions everywhere.

And here's the other thing; if somebody does not deliver on the promise, like for example, we just said that the Police are picking up, what, K700, K800 million this year? East Sepik provincial government is spending almost K20 million on law and order, with no support from the National Government. But I want to say thank you that a Deputy Police Commissioner went over to Wewak for a visit to see how he can help the province on the weekend, and I want to thank the Police Commissioner for that. But more than that, if it's their responsibility and we feel the pain and burdens. Who is responsible?

If the Police are spending money on law and order, or the district is spending money, the Provincial Government is spending money on law and order, and still we haven't sorted out the problem. Who is responsible? Who do we hold accountable? Do you hold the Governor accountable? Because in East Sepik at the moment, every time there is a law-and-order problem, it's the Governor's problem. It's not the Police problem. But the Constitution tells me it's the responsibility of the Police. But who is measured against it? The Governor of East Sepik.

So, I want to implore the front bench of the Government; to please go back and separate the powers and responsibilities and tell us this is our responsibility and powers. So, we may all

be held accountable for our actions. We cannot keep coming to Parliament and blaming the district, LLG, or province. It's not good enough, we need results, and our people need results. It's not good enough. We need results, our people need results. And so I ask the front bench, please help us so we can all give you results at our various levels. Thank you, Mr. Assistant Speaker.

**Mr ELIAS KAPAVORE** (Pomio – Minister for Health) – Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker, I wish to use this opportunity to join the members of Parliament to offer my tribute to one of the leading founding fathers of our nation, the Right Honourable Late Julius Chan. It would be remiss of me not to acknowledge what the family has contributed to the maritime industry or shipping industry in Papua New Guinea.

A documentary by Henry Yakam appeared in *The National* Newspaper dated the 7th of February. He said he presented a perfect illustration of the two great pillars of our nation, saying that the late Grand Chief Sir Michael Thomas Somare, was the captain of MVPNG vessel, and the late Grand Chief Sir Julius Chan was the Chief Engineer of MVPNG. As the Captain, Sir Michael was the Commanding Chief. Sir Michael was still the captain when, before leaving or departing politics, he left with us the Vision 2050.

The chief engineer, on the other hand, pays attention to details. There is a certain level of coordination and trust between the captain and the chief engineer. The captain has the foresight knowing where the vessel is heading to, and the chief engineer knows how to get the vessel to that appropriate destination.

**21/04**

This analogy perfectly summarizes two great leaders of our nation. One thing stands out in the late Sir Julius Chan: he learned the skills to be the chief engineer from his father, Chin Pak, who was a trader from China and was involved in the shipping industry.

The Chan Family operated Vanmark Shipping out of Rabaul for many years. And I acknowledge this service, especially Michael Chan who operated it. The skills of those seamen.

**Mr Bryan Krammer** – Point of Order! With due respect to the good Minister and the speech he is giving a tribute in recognition for the late Sir Julius Chan, but this is a grievance debate; so, every Member has the opportunity now to debate on grievance concerning the electorate or issues in the country. So, to give a tribute speech, this is not the audience and the time to do this.

**Mr ASSISTANT SPEAKER** – Honorable Members, it is grievance debate time, so, he can speak on any given issue he would like to, including giving a tribute.

**Mr ELIAS KAPAVORE** – One important point I would like to share here is that we have MV Pomio Shipping Service and we are humbled and privileged to have been allowed to transport the delegation of East New Britain Province to Huris. I then knew that Huris was one of the shipping vessels that usually goes to my place and that supported many of our people. The burial of Sir Julius Chan was at Manmatinut and that is also the name of one of the vessels.

Mr Assistant Speaker, I would like to make a special point here, I know that the Merchant Shipping of 1975, is outdated. And we have many issues with coastal areas that must be re-visited by the Ministry of Transport, to ensure they do a proper assessment of coastal ports in our country. Many of our coastal ports were established in the 1950s, the navigation lights are not working well or not working at all.

While I pay tribute to this great man, I want to say that many of the Vanmark Shipping vessels are not functioning because they have fallen victim to the unsafe ports that we normally see along the coastal areas around our island regions. Please, Minister for Transport, have a look into this area, so that port safety assessment is conducted for the maritime areas of our country.

The shipping industry is increasing today, as well as the demand for it. The Maritime College in Madang was established in 1975, with a Merchant Shipping Act of 1975. It is important also to look into these particular areas, to ensure we fully accredit some of these important curricula as well. In paying respect to this leader, I want to say that Pomio Shipping is an integral part of shipping and we are seeing the demand for shipping.

I call upon the Ministry of Transport to do proper assessments of coastal ports in our country to make sure that they are safe. I want to say this and relate to the great man, Sir Julius Chan, who was an important engineer of the Ship MV PNG, since 1975, making sure that our economic institutions are fully established even today.

**22/04**

In conclusion, as I speak today, we have one of our leaders of East New Britain Province, whose casket is now flown to Kokopo. We have an assembly meeting today and on behalf of my family, we express our tributes and condolences to the passing of Senior Ereman

ToBaining. Who has been one of our pioneers in East New Britain Province and a leader in our country?

Our sincere condolences to the Member for Kokopo, Honourable Ereman ToBaining Jr and today they've established one of our best models in terms of governance at the ward level. So, on behalf of my people in Pomio District, I pass our sincere condolences to the people of Kokopo.

Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker, for allowing me to talk.

**Mr SASINDRAN MUTHUVEL** (West New Britain) – Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker, sometimes we are under the shadow of other bigger provinces, that's what we are struggling to come out.

Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker, I have heard many good debates from the honourable Members and I also would like to contribute.

Mr Assistant Speaker, we recently passed an important bill recognizing Papua New Guinea as a Christian country.

Mr Assistant Speaker, we must research and find out what was the main thing that sustained and united Papua New Guinea together before Christianity came to our country 100 years ago. Because, despite all these good values that came, we've seen in general the degradation of moral values everywhere. Especially, it's rampant in the last 30 years to be specific.

Mr Assistant Speaker, we need to address some of the fundamental issues rather than giving this identity as a Christian country. We don't have a problem with it, but whether we are practising that identity or not is the challenge now.

Because God doesn't need our recognition to exist. Whether we recognise him or not, he exists forever and always; omnipresent, omniscient, and present everywhere around the world. But we are failing to recognise his presence everywhere. So, if we know that he is present everywhere, then we don't behave the way we currently do. God's presence dwells in every human heart and living thing. We just need to acknowledge that we were created by God.

Mr Assistant Speaker, the general degradation, I see that in any country will be destroyed if we don't respect these three things;

(1) This country will be destroyed if we don't have respect for our mothers. I am afraid we might take that path. Our custom in the village is that they taught us to respect our mothers first and then our fathers. The third respected person is the teacher who imparted you with the knowledge and now you are talking smart here.

**23/04**

**Mr Allan Bird** – Point of Order! Good Governor is not talking to you but talking to me.

*(Laughter in the Chamber!)*

**Mr SASINDRAN MUTHUWEL** – Thank you Governor for the point of order. It's because I liked your speech, so I was referring to you.

*(Laughter in the Chamber!)*

**Mr ASSISTANT SPEAKER** – Honourable Governor, please address the Chair.

**Mr SASINDRAN MUTHUWEL** – We know that firstly we must respect our mother, and secondly respect our father, and thirdly our teacher and fourthly the Lord. If both parents were not alive, we would not be here. If the teacher didn't impart this knowledge, then we wouldn't know the Lord also. Even the Lord will recognise you if you respect your mother, father and your teacher and respect the Lord, only then will the Lord acknowledge that respect. Because the Lord wants us to respect these people who brought us into this world.

Sorry, Mr Assistant Speaker, there many things to mention here but I have limited time remaining so I will be brief.

Firstly, if we don't respect the women folks, we won't have a peaceful society. Secondly, if we don't respect our teachers and our infrastructure, we won't have a good society to live in. Thirdly, if we don't respect our leaders we will be faced with a lot of problems. If we decide to disrespect our leaders by saying all the bad things against them, there won't be peace in society.

Today we are living in such times because there is a general morale degradation, though we are surrounded by all sorts of religions with divided beliefs, fighting amongst themselves. We fail to recognise that if you were born into a Catholic family, then you are considered Catholic, SDA, and so forth.

So, which religion you were born into is not for you to decide, but the Lord only will decide.

Similarly, all this manner of religion is like a river. So where does the river flow to? It all flows to the sea. The moral of this is that the sea represents the Lord and so the destination

must be the same. We can have different routes to follow or race to achieve that destination. Therefore, we need to promote this unity because today people are dying in the name of religion.

Mr Assistant Speaker, the disrespect for mothers we recently saw is a red curse in West New Britain. Having said that, I want to thank all the policemen for their quick response in arresting the nine culprits within a week.

And all nine of them were below 18 years old, and it's very shocking because the kid was not born into this world as a spoiled kid. How this kid became spoiled was entirely dependent on the mother and father who raised him. All these kids who are born into this world are innocent, and good kids. The onus is on us parents to raise our children as responsible citizens of this country. If we parents fail to raise them well, they will become like rascals, rapists or you name it.

Mr Assistant Speaker, it's shocking because all the culprits were under 18 years old, and the policemen who assisted sent a bill of K1,300 as their allowance.

The need for developmental aspiration is everywhere in terms of education, health and so forth. Governor Allan Bird has raised a very important issue concerning giving the powers and responsibilities back to the provinces. We are duplicating functions and the same functions to the districts, local-level governments and provinces.

So that's why I appeal to the Prime Minister that during the 50<sup>th</sup> Independence Anniversary, the greatest gift we can give to the country is to devote all the powers and responsibilities to the provinces, districts and local-level governments.

**24/04**

Mr Assistant Speaker, it is recorded in the Hansard, you can write it down, but actually, the country will develop. You don't need to reinvent anything. In fact, all the ministers won't be able to lose their work but they will have work to do.

Yes, you hate listening to law and order problems from each governor or member and you continue to talk and focus on international and national agendas like talking to other country leaders or security or international trade and forget about our districts and provinces' agenda, we will be faced with law-and-order issues and breakdown in our wards and villages. That is why we are not developing our country. Our country is not developing, maybe because we want to please the Prime Minister, and we become a strength and dependent on ourselves.

We won't be in this position for long. The position we are having is not permanent, so while we have this change, we can truly bring some changes into this country. If we haven't

developed our country over the past 50 years, then we can give development priority to all our provinces and districts as a gift of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, and then within the next 5 to 10 years, we will see tangible results of development in our country.

I always give Bali in Indonesia as an example. A lot of international people don't know that Bali is in Indonesia, but everyone wants to go to Bali because Bali has become an attractive tourist destination, that's how it has been developed. For Indonesia and Bali, if one or two provinces are developed, automatically it shows that the country is developing.

Thank you.

**Mr JAMES DONALD** (North Fly) – Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker. I stood up consecutive times since this morning, and finally, I thank you for the recognition.

I would like to thank the front benchers because every Friday during the Parliament debate, they used to escape. However, I appreciate those of you who are still here.

*(Interjections)*

**Mr JAMES DONALD** – Why I mentioned the front bench because they are the Ministers and Cabinet Members and they must listen and take note of the issues we debate so that when there is an issue to address, it will be easy for them to make a decision.

My debate will be on a specific project. The responsible Minister whom I aimed at since morning till now is still here, the Minister for Public Service who could listen to my debate.

So, I would like to debate on the NID card. Your department is continuing to act smart. The Minister for Public Service has said they are going to deliver the Census, NID card, birth certificates and everything.

When our poor people go to the bank to open up new bank accounts, they tell them that they require NID cards. When our people want to travel out, they tell them that they require NID cards and even the students are required to provide an NID card.

This NID project has been sleeping for all these years. Mr Minister, you may be aware or not, but one of the social media statements that was going viral said, that if any NID officers come for medication to clinics and hospitals, they comment and said nurses must not attend to them, let them die outside. This is very true; I am not telling a lie here.

Many people have submitted their NID applications and they are still waiting. They have been waiting for so many years and the report we are getting is very not good.

In 2022, I officiated a NID office in my district, the police minister can witness. At that time, the department was under his ministry and I officiated the NID office under my district office with K500,000 on top of the K700,000 contract I signed. As of today, I haven't printed any NID cards yet. My people are still waiting in a queue. It's an embarrassment.

**Mr ASSISTANT SPEAKER** – Honourable Member, you fix your mic and speak on the mic.

**Mr JAMES DONALD** – Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker. So, my people of North Fly have applied for NID cards and have waited since 2022 till now. We are still waiting, and I'm just wondering, as to what is happening in other districts and provinces in our country.

**25/04**

It's an embarrassment to us as a country. I went to the NID office and they said that printing the NID card, ink, and all the other consumables would cost some K10 to K15 million and the Department or the project office is waiting for that money.

So, I'm wondering if the minister is working hard or not to bring this matter to the cabinet to address this issue. Is he talking in the cabinet to address it? Is he pushing for the funding to be made available? Elections are around the corner. People need the NID cards to stand in line to vote if we are going to adopt this system. These are the real issues we need to fix. Let's not come here to laugh and joke, we need to fix this. There's too much unnecessary talk and shouting here.

My grievance is towards the minister responsible, and if he can provide a detailed brief on the status of the NID cards. How many cards have been processed so far? We need to know as a country so we can understand the number of people who have applied and the challenges you are facing. Tell us what's happening, stop dreaming. Tell your cabinet how much funding you need. Bring it forward and work on it.

They said it's very difficult for them to work for the past two years as there has been no funding to assist them. My wife and children too are still waiting to get their NID cards. I am lucky because I am a member, mine was fast-tracked. You all got yours, do not lie. I came here, you all came here and they processed it, so we all got ours. How about your loved ones still waiting in the queue? Your uncles, *bubus* and children?

So, Mr Assistant Speaker, I think I had to make it an issue because the minister responsible must be accountable. He seems to be boastful about the completion of the census,

and on top of that he says the NID has been completed but it hasn't, so I'm putting him in the spotlight so he can sort this matter out. Thank you.

**Mr WIN BAKRI** (Tambul-Nebilyer – Minister for Commerce) – Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker. Before I say my grievance, I would like to thank my governor of Western Highlands, Honourable Wai Rapa, for purchasing 20 police vehicles of which two were donated to my district, Tambul, Mul Baiyer and Dei. In case I don't acknowledge this and some of you get surprised, so I say it out here and the whole country can hear it.

You purchased 20 vehicles and gave one to each district, so I thank you. Thank you also for addressing the law-and-order issues in our province on behalf of the other members, including Minister William Duma and Honourable Jacob Maki, while we are in Port Moresby.

I say thank you and acknowledge you. I don't see too many members thanking their governors so I must acknowledge my governor. Your leadership quality in the province is commendable because you are with the people. I will vote for you again. Last time there was a problem in my village where two tribes fought resulting in a death while others were hospitalised. It had not come to my knowledge yet, however, he had already gone ahead and made peace between the two tribes. So, Honourable Governor, I also thank you for this. We need more governors like my governor.

**Mr ASSISTANT SPEAKER** – Honourable Minister, please address the Chair.

**26/04**

Mr Assistant Speaker, I am speaking about my grievances, which is only 10 minutes, so do not disturb me.

*(Laughter in the Chamber)*

**Mr ASSISTANT SPEAKER** – Honourable Minister, I understand, but address the Chair when you are making your debate.

*(Laughter in the Chamber)*

**Mr WIN DAKI** – Sorry, he is behind me so I have to look back at him because it is our custom, PNG always follows custom but I will address you now.

I would like to thank my governor because I haven't seen him asking questions or raising issues about the province, but today he has, so thank you. I always sit here and when I hear my Governor asking questions about my province, I feel happy because at the end of the day if he asks questions I will benefit.

So, what can you do for your province or your district? We need to discuss and understand from the district and the provincial levels before we come up to the government or blame our Police Department for the law-and-order issues.

Let's talk about loans, I come from a business background, so when we get more loans, our business grows, when we get small loans, our business goes small, but when we get more and more loans, it grows fast.

Many of us are complaining about loans, but we need to understand that we need to get more loans for our country to grow. We must look at the work plan and the repayment plan. We are getting many loans, but we do not have a repayment plan, therefore, we do not achieve anything, and that is why we are talking a lot.

We have coffee, cocoa, fish, the forest and nearly everything in this country, so, Mr Prime Minister, why don't we get K50 billion and you distribute it amongst us and we do the work plan and the repayment plan so we all will know who will pay off the loan. Our country will grow if we get a big loan.

I am speaking in Tok Pisin, so all the members can understand. So, when we get more loans and stick to the repayment plan, we can get more planes for Air Niugini –

**Mr ASSISTANT SPEAKER** – Honourable Minister, sorry for interrupting you, can you address the Chair?

**Mr WIN DAKI** – You will give me another three minutes because you are disturbing me.

*(Laughter in the Chamber)*

**Mr WIN DAKI** – If we get loans, we can be able to get many planes, the ticket fare will be reduced, and also with the ships. We are always talking about loans, and the Prime Minister is afraid to get more loans.

**27/04**

Finally, most of us are talking about Connect PNG. What is Connect PNG? We are talking about roads, and roads are life. Do not involve politics in Connect PNG—roads are life, and they connect people. This also includes water and air transport. We must not politicize these essential services. We should be glad that we are connecting people—your life and my life are connected through roads. Through roads, other essential services like education, agriculture, and health become possible.

Once roads connect villages, police will be able to intervene and stop ongoing conflicts. Police are often hesitant to enter areas where there are no roads. Therefore, it is important not to politicize this initiative when the government is focusing on Connect PNG.

You have your DSIP and PSIP funds go back to your provinces and districts and do something for your country and your people. After achieving results, report to the government: ‘The K10 million you gave me, I did this and that, and now I need another K10 million to accomplish other important projects.’

Mr Assistant Speaker, are you listening? You should give me three more minutes.

*(Laughter in the Chamber)*

Motion – That grievances be noted – agreed to.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion (by **Peter Tsiamalili Jnr**) agreed to –

That the Parliament do now adjourn.

The Parliament adjourned at 1 p.m.