

2022-18

SECOND DAY

Wednesday, 29 March 2023

DRAFT HANSARD

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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

CORRECTIONS TO DAILY DRAFT HANSARD

The **Draft Hansard** is uncorrected, and it is also **privileged**, therefore Members have **one week** from the date of issue of this Draft Hansard which to **make corrections to their speeches**. Until the expiration of this one week, Draft Hansard must not be quoted as a final and accurate report of the debates of the House of Representatives.

Corrections may be marked on a copy of the **Daily Draft Hansard** and lodged at the Hansard Office.

Corrections should be authorized by **signature** and contain the **name of the person** making the corrections.

Corrections should relate only to inaccuracies; new matters may not be introduced.

LORETTA MASIRIA
Acting Principal Parliamentary Reporter

Second Day

March 29, 2023

Mr. SPEAKER - Good morning, Honorable Members. Today is our second day of the meeting this week. Shall we start with the Lord's Prayer? (Speaker leads the House in prayer.)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Before we begin, I have an announcement to make. You may have noticed the tents on the Parliament grounds. The Minister for Mines, Energy, and Petroleum will be launching the Energy Policy during our noon suspension. The Minister has prepared a full program, and refreshments will be served, so you won't need to leave the Parliament precincts for lunch. After the launch and lunch, we will resume at 2:00 pm.

I would like to remind all Honorable Members to attend the Energy Policy launch by the Minister. Thank you.

Moving on to the agenda, are any bills, petitions, or papers to discuss? Are there any committee reports to be presented?

Mr. CLERK - Mr. Speaker, I have received the final inquiry report from the Portfolio Committee on Health and Education, which has been published and is available in the notice paper. The report will be considered under the committee report. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER - Thank you, Clerk. Honorable Members, we will proceed directly to statements. Before we begin, the President will deliver two statements, followed by the Minister for Post-Referendum and Independence Implementation, and the Attorney General, who will also deliver a statement. As these statements may be related to the same issue of independence implementation, we will allow them to deliver their statements consecutively, and then we will debate them together.

To ensure a smooth process, we have prepared a procedure for this. I would like to call on the Leader of Government Business.

Mr. THOMAS PATA'AKU (Ramu/Education) - Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The entire process will occur, with the three statements delivered one after the other, followed by the debate later in the proceedings. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER - I kindly request the indulgence of the Members as we proceed in this manner. The three speakers will deliver their statements, and at the end of the final statement, we will

begin the debate. May I now invite the Honorable President to deliver the first statement? Please wait for a moment, Honorable Members. Honorable President?

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

Hon Ishmael Toroama

Mr. Speaker, as I rise in the chambers of this Honourable House to deliver my ministerial statement on various important matters concerning the government and people of Bougainville, I would like to make some acknowledgments that are of significance.

Firstly, I would like to warmly welcome Hon. Manasseh Makiba, the Minister for Bougainville Affairs, on his first official visit to Bougainville. I appreciate your acceptance of my invitation to visit Bougainville and for being the first-ever Minister for Bougainville Affairs to attend a Bougainville House of Representatives session.

Furthermore, I would like to extend my gratitude to the following leaders:

1. Hon. Saki Saloma – Minister for Energy
2. Hon. Dr. Kobby Bomareo – Minister for Housing
3. Hon. Lohia Boe Samuel – Member for Moresby North West Open
4. Hon. Richard Masere – Member of Popondetta Open
5. Hon. Dr. Billy Joseph – Member of Nipa Kutubu Open
6. Hon. William Bando – Member for Koroba-Lake Kopiago Open
7. Hon. David Arore – Member of Ijivitari Open
8. Hon. Lucas Dekena – Member for Gumine Open

On behalf of my government and people, I warmly welcome all of you to the Autonomous Region of Bougainville. I am eager to meet each of you, and I hope your brief stay with us will allow you to better understand our people.

Mr. Speaker, I also take this opportunity to welcome our two new Bougainville House of Representatives Members, Hon. Patrick Koles, the Member for Haku, and Hon. Didymus Napto Kisso, the Member for Nissan. Hon. Patrick Koles, your experience in the public service and development sector will be invaluable to our House. Hon. Didymus Napto Kisso, you have been chosen by your people to continue your father's legacy and lead the people of Nissan. We look forward to working with you both.

Furthermore, this year is a significant year for the government and people of Bougainville as we prepare for the Ratification of the 2019 Bougainville Referendum Results by the National Parliament of Papua

New Guinea. The Bougainville Peace Agreement of 2001 and Part XIV (16) of the National Constitution provide clear guidance on the parameters of this political process. After the referendum, the two governments must consult on the result, and we have already consulted over the outcome of 97.7% of Bougainvilleans who voted for independence. We now look forward to the National Government's commitment to ratifying the results this year.

Mr. Speaker, there have been three Post-Referendum Joint Consultations between the ABG and the National Government, which have produced several positive outcomes. Among them are the Wabag Road Map and the Era Kone Covenant, which have established a timeline for our political settlement (not before 2025 or no later than 2027) toward independence and set out the parameters that both governments must fulfill to ensure the implementation of the Bougainville Peace Agreement. I expect the National Government to honor these agreements and table the outcome of the consultations in the National Parliament this year ahead of the ratification, consistent with the terms of the Wabag Road Map that we jointly agreed upon.

The technical teams of both governments are currently deliberating the process of ratifying the Bougainville referendum results. According to the advice of the Solicitor General, the referendum is simply an endorsement of the results by the National Parliament. The technical teams must take this advice seriously and not waste time debating on semantics and legalities that are inconsistent with the legal framework of the Bougainville Peace Agreement. This issue is bound by history, conflict, and more importantly, the right of people to self-determination.

In the meantime, internal preparations for our Independence Readiness Mission must continue. Honorable Members, I expect you all to effect changes within our communities through innovative means to improve the lives of our people through positive socio-economic development. We must witness greater collaboration between the government and our community governments to mobilize our people and inspire them to be industrious and hardworking.

Mr. Speaker, it is true that the ABG faces capacity issues due to a lack of funding and resources, but we must not let this hinder our progress. Although our capacity issues may slow us down, we have the potential for growth and development. Our resilient people are our greatest resource, and we must invest in developing our capacity by empowering local businesses, supporting SMEs, and promoting education as a key factor in developing our mindset and human resource. By doing so, we can empower our people to be active in the development process of Bougainville.

In my previous parliamentary address, I highlighted economic development projects in the agriculture, forestry, and mining industries that the government is embarking on. These projects are focused on developing local economies and maximizing internal revenue for the government. I am pleased to

announce that most of these projects are about 90 percent complete and should be operational within the year. Once operational, they will generate revenue and provide employment opportunities for our people, making Bougainville fiscally self-reliant.

Furthermore, since forming the government in 2020, we have doubled ABG's internal revenue from K25 million to over K50 million within a year and a half, thanks to several small investments made by the government. With the upcoming projects, our financial projections show that Bougainville can cover half of our annual budget by 2025, or even more. It is an exciting time for Bougainville, and I am confident that our resilient people and the development projects we are undertaking will continue to drive growth and progress in our region.

As President, it is my priority to safeguard the rights of our people and support indigenous businesses. To achieve this, we must invest in local companies that are dedicated and have demonstrated initiative in aiding the government's efforts to develop Bougainville. In any large-scale economic development, foreign direct investment must always be in the best interest of our people. We must ensure that the benefit-sharing arrangement allows the people, through the government, to own up to fifty percent of the investment. The Bougainville Inward Investment Act serves as guiding legislation to ensure that investors, and even our people, comply with the government's policies on foreign direct investments.

Mr. Speaker, there has been significant interest from investors in Bougainville, but we have a rigorous vetting process that all investors must adhere to. Investors have shown particular interest in the agriculture, tourism, and extractive industries. However, I must emphasize that when it comes to discussing economic investment opportunities in Bougainville, Panguna is a topic that cannot be overlooked.

Mr. Speaker, my government's current policy on Panguna is to allow the landowners to resolve their differences with minimal external influence. The government has been facilitating their negotiations, and one critical point that the landowners have agreed upon is for a locally-owned entity to develop the mine if it reopens. At this pivotal time, I urge so-called investors and landowners with vested interests to refrain from interfering in the hard work that this government and the Panguna landowners have put into the mining consultations.

On the topic of Panguna, the Panguna Legacy Impact Assessment is progressing well. Local communities along the lower tailings area up to the Special Mining Lease Areas have provided positive feedback on the assessment. This assessment will enable the government to quantify the extent of damage caused by the mine during its operation and even after its closure, more than thirty years later.

Mr. Speaker, the government is committed to delivering several high-impact development projects in Bougainville this year. The 2023 Budget has allocated funds for these projects through the Restoration

and Development Grant and the Prime Minister's K100 million annual commitment to Bougainville. Our focus will be on building more roads, hospitals, and schools. Key programs that are already underway or will be carried out this year include:

- Finalizing the sealing of the John Teosin Highway.
- Continuing the upgrade and maintenance of the Kukul to Kohiso Road to complete the Buka Ring Road and prepare for sealing.
- Installing Desalination Units and Micro Power Grids for the outer islands.
- Constructing the Pangara and Tawera Bridges in Bana District.
- Constructing the Kihili Teacher's College.
- Upgrading the Arawa Hospital to the Provincial Level.
- Upgrading the Arawa School of Nursing.
- Upgrading and maintaining feeder roads in cocoa-intensive areas in each region.

The objective behind these essential infrastructure projects is to foster socioeconomic development that is locally driven. The emphasis is on creating local human resources, generating employment opportunities, and expanding the range of economic prospects in Bougainville through infrastructure development.

All funds from the National Government are allocated towards development projects. The ABGs solely operate using the Recurrent Grant and our internal revenue.

Mr. Speaker, Bougainville still heavily relies on funding from the National Government, particularly the Constitutionally guaranteed Recurrent and Restoration and Development Grants. These grants are frequently delayed, causing setbacks in the implementation of our development programs. However, I do not blame the National Government for these delays, as I understand the financial constraints they are facing. I believe this should serve as a motivation for the Autonomous Bougainville Government to generate more internal revenue and become self-sustainable, rather than depending entirely on the National Government.

Mr. Speaker, this year I have directed the Bougainville Administration to prioritize promoting and improving our economic growth as well as improving law and order throughout Bougainville. These two priorities must be taken seriously by the administration and our economic sector departments, including the Law and Justice Sector, the Department of Mining and Energy Resources, the Department of Economic Development, and the Department of Finance and Treasury.

As I mentioned earlier this year during my address to the Administration, we must realize that law and order and economic growth are interrelated. Our economy cannot flourish without the stability brought

about by enforcing law and order, creating a conducive environment for our economy to grow. In the same manner, law and order can only be effectively enforced if there is economic growth that earns revenue for the government to provide more funding to improve law and order.

Mr. Speaker, I want to reassure the Members of this Honourable House that the Bougainville Police Services have begun operations to clamp down on the current spike in lawlessness in Bougainville. In the last two months, there have been several developments in outstanding cases, including the apprehension of certain persons of interest. The Konnou Conflict in South Bougainville is another matter that needs the attention of the government, and we have a special committee dealing with this issue. Certain Bougainville leaders have chosen to ignore my government's attempts at resolving the Konnou issue. If that is their wish, then they have exiled themselves from their people.

Mr. Speaker, in 2025, Papua New Guinea will celebrate fifty years as an independent sovereign nation. It will also commence the two-year timeframe for Bougainville's political settlement as indicated by the Wabag Roadmap. As the country prepares to celebrate its Golden Jubilee, it must also consider Bougainville's long-standing aspirations of self-determination that even predates the country's independence. The eleventh Parliament of Papua New Guinea, through ratification, has the opportunity and privilege to resolve this matter once and for all.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to welcome Minister Makiba and his fellow Ministers and Members of the National Government to Bougainville. I must thank Prime Minister Hon. James Marape for his commitment to the government and people of Bougainville. Despite our differences in opinion, we maintain cordial relations, and we understand our positions in true Melanesian fashion.

My conscience and resolve are clear, this government and our people will never compromise on anything short of political independence for Bougainville. History attests to Bougainville's demands for sovereignty, so it is rightfully ours to claim.

God Bless Bougainville and Papua New Guinea. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Madam SPEAKER - Member for Baba for your question, we will now continue to Written Questions for Oral answers and we will resume debate.

Secondly, the quorum was taken in the morning and we will now continue with our Written Questions for Oral Answers

WRITTEN QUESTIONS FOR ORAL ANSWERS

K3.2m contract that was awarded to Trinity Engineering and Construction Ltd for the construction of bridges along the Siara/Koropovi Road

Mr. PAUL CHEUNG (Selau) - Thank you, Madam Speaker. This question is directed to the Minister for Technical Services but before I ask the question, I would like to thank this time to congratulate the Minister on his new ministries. I also thank this time to congratulate the new member for Haku and Nissan Constituencies.

Madam Speaker, this question is in reference to the question asked by the Member for Teua Constituency on the 14th of September, 2022 which was not answered by the then-former Minister who was not present at that time. The question concerns the K3.2m contract that was awarded to Trinity Engineering and Construction Ltd for the construction of bridges along the Siara/Koropovi Road. An additional K312, 054.54 for mobilization was also paid to the contractor.

The bridges have arrived and are sitting at the Dept of Works at the airport while the other containers are being stored in my constituency. Can the Minister explain to this Hon House and the people of Selau and Kunua District, Mahari and Teua Constituencies, why the construction of bridges has not commenced?

Mr. JOSEPH MONA (Lule/Tech Services) – Thank you, Madam Speaker and the member for Selau for bringing up this issue. Because I am new to the Ministry, this is the first time I am hearing of this issue. But there are many projects like this being brought to my office and I have been dealing with them since I got into this Office. There is the Arawa School of Nursing that has not been completed and I assure the member that I will take on this task and see where the problem is. We can then re-tender the project. I am trying to put in a good tender process so that the Administrative part of this project can be processed effectively. I will come up with a process and inform you later. Thank you.

Mr. PAUL CHEUNG – Supplementary

Can the Minister explain if the process was obtained through the right process? What happened?

Mr. JOSEPH MONA - Thank you once again. What normally happens is that contractors are paid up-front and I don't think this is a good process. Normally in the construction process, the contractor should use its funds to start the project and then with the normal administrative process, a claim is produced for additional funds to complete the project. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam SPEAKER - Hon Patrick Koles

Closure of Lemanmanu Health Centre

Mr. PATRICK KOLES (Haku) - Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have a question concerning the Lemanmanu Health Centre and it has been closed for some time now. The problem is with the landowners.

Can the Health Minister inform this House as to what steps are being taken to re-open the Lemanmanu Health Centre?

Mr. DENNIS LOKONAI (Bolave/Health) – Thank You, Member, for your question. We had a team engaged to conduct the inquiry on Health and I was the Chairman we went around; we started at Lemanmanu. When we got there, the community gathered and they assured us that they have decided to allow the facility to re-open. I think things are in order and we are going to meet with the community again tomorrow we are meeting with the community from Tanamalo who have also closed the school due to some landowner issues. At the same time, we will meet with the community at Lemanmanu to ensure the facility is re-opened for service. Thank you.

School Fee Assistance & Free Education by the National Government

Mr. PAIS TAEHU (Atolls) - Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Before I ask my question, I want to acknowledge the Minister for Education and give tribute to the former Minister for Education, for a job well done in looking after the office until Hand Over.

My question is directed to the Minister of Education. Can the Minister explain to this House the school fee assistance or free education by the National Government to all the schools? In this way, all the members are well informed so they can relay the message to the parents.

Mr. THOMAS PATAAKU(Ramu/Education) – Thank you member for Atolls for this good question. Members and the House, people of Bougainville, the school fees assistance from the National Government is a grant that is given to our schools by the National Government. We have all heard that there is free education but Hon Members, most times, this funding is never on time. I will have to go back to the Department and find out and Hon Member, I will come to you in black and white.

On our front, we have the National Government Free Education, and we have the School Fee Assistance Scheme available. Hon Members, I have to start with a submission to the cabinet to rescind a decision that was made on 12 of 2022 which gives the responsibility of managing this fund to the Minister. Because this is an administrative issue, we need to make sure that we bring it back to the

Department so that they discharge this responsibility. Hon members, the date of closure of the applications was the 26th of March but there are still applications coming in.

I want to say that as soon as these applications come in, they will be put together, and see how many students we can assist. For this year, we have millions for school fee assistance. At the same time, I want to advise the Parliament that the Department is appointing an officer to oversee the School Fee Assistance Scheme. He will work with the committee established by the Department to progress the school fees for our students. Thank you.

Mr. DIDYMUS NAPTO KISSO (Nissan) - Supplementary

Madam SPEAKER - Supplementary Question?

TFF & BEB Decision to impose fees

Mr. DIDYMUS NAPTO KISSO - Thank you, Madam Speaker. My supplementary is regarding the TFF or the BEB Decision to impose fees when we have the TFF. This is affecting especially Nissan and I am happy the member for Atolls has raised this question because it affects us at Nissan.

Nissan is not the same as all the other constituencies in Bougainville that are easy to make money. For example, times are hard for a parent who has two children attending Nissan High School. The income per capita is very hard in Nissan because of the transport system and accessibility to make money. Even though there is cocoa and copra in Nissan, accessibility is very difficult.

I would like the Hon Minister to consider this carefully, and give a special case for Nissan and Atolls so that an initial fee is paid especially for the High school to do away with it. Right now, we are denying the rights of the children of Nissan to receive an education. In the next years to come, we could be producing drug bodies not because the system allows it but because of no money.

We can say that funds are not given on funds but that is the case for all Bougainvilleans including the Parliament. We do not access funds on time and this is an administrative matter that needs to be proactive in this matter.

Could the Minister liaise with the department and consider these points?

The other point of access for us is the MV Tulele sitting duck at Kamarau. What is its status? This is our fallback for money going to Nissan and back here.

Madam SPEAKER - Member Nissan, please stick to your supplementary question.

An assurance on Nissan Students treated as a Special Case

Mr. DIDYMUS NAPTO KISSO - My supplementary question is can the Minister assure us that we are given a special case for our students in Nissan?

Mr. THOMAS PATAAKU - Thank you Hon Member for your supplementary question. Hon Members, we have a huge problem with the Atolls and Nissan. This year, after the school had opened, seven weeks later, I was told that the students from Atolls and Nissan have not arrived at the school.

According to the education policy, if you miss class for more than 15 days and over and exceed 30 days, you will not be allowed in the school. So this is the whole of the government approach and I

want to appeal that we need to look at Nissan and Atolls in terms of economic services and essential services such as health and education.

Hon Member, as per your request regarding the school fees, I will go back to the department and will consider them. I believe the Atolls and Nissan are disadvantaged in so many ways and fair consideration be given for a good decision to be made. If it means I go to the Cabinet to get funds to look at how best we address the situation. Thank you.

Tug of War between Raibor & Jomik on the Road between Pitono & Kessa

Mr. PATRICK KOLES – Thank you once again, Madam Deputy Speaker, this question is directed to the Minister for Works. But before I do that, let me congratulate you on your new post as the Minister for Technical Services.

My question concerns the tug-of-war between Raibro and Jomik on the road between Pitono to Kessa for the continued sealing work. Can the Minister inform this Honourable House of the status of this project and what is causing the delay? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam SPEAKER– Honourable Minister for Technical Services.

Mr. JOSEPH MONA (Lule/Tech Services) Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, and thank you honorable Member for Haku for this very important question regarding the Pitono- Kessa Road. After the BEC decision to award the contract to Jomik, the Department of Technical Services requested the contract documents to be transferred to the Department of Technical Services (DoTS) but then the National Works Department refused so that took a long time and luck just last week, they transferred the file to the Department of Technical Services (DoTS). So the latest is they are preparing their contract to be signed on Friday so the latest is like that. Thank you.

Partial Lifting of the Moratorium in Eivo/Torau & the Joint Venture Shares

Mr. CHARLES KAKAPETAI (Teua) – Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. My question is directed to the Minister for Mineral and Energy Resources, and I congratulate the Minister for being given this portfolio. However, these questions and their nature originate from the term of the former Mining Minister, but as you are here now, you can give us some answers.

I am speaking about the partial lifting of the moratorium in Eivo/Torau, which was lifted this year with Paruparu. The joint-venture shares show that Eivo/Torau is seventy-five percent and Karato/Torokina is twenty-five percent, and these percentage shares are the same as the Toremana joint venture.

Can the Minister inform the people of the concerned areas and the people of Bougainville of the Autonomous Government's current legal position on joint-venture share agreements? What does the Bougainville Mining Act say? With this question, did the resource owners and investors have to consult the Department of Mineral and Energy Resources and the Executive Government regarding the share agreements? And under which relevant Bougainville mining law?

Thirdly, does the share percentage reflect the ABG's Mining Act of 2015 that landowners own all the minerals six feet below and six feet above, or does this reflect that the investors are landowners while we are not?

The fourth part of this question is why the ABG share is not reflected in joint-venture agreements. And when and at what stage will the Bougainville State share be reflected in the benefit agreements? Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER – The Minister for Minerals and Energy.

Mr. ROBIN WILSON (Terra/ Minerals and Energy) – Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, and thank you, Honorable Charles Kakapetai, Member for Teua, for your questions. At the outset, I will respond by saying that the Bougainville Mining Act does not have any jurisdiction in determining or policing joint-venture agreements. That is the jurisdiction of another department or agency.

Regarding the second question, do the Landowners own in relation to consulting the Department, again, I will say no. The Landowners or resource owners do not have to consult the Department regarding matters pertaining to joint-venture agreements. The Mining Department does not regulate share arrangements; that responsibility lies with another department.

The Mining department does, however, issue licenses based on the kind of license they apply to. So, as I explained in the case of additional mining, the license will go to the Landowner company or Bougainvillean-owned company. If the joint venture is sixty-forty in favor of a foreign investor, then that joint venture is deemed a foreign company and therefore disqualified from being granted an additional mining license.

In terms of the ownership of the minerals, Landowners are the mineral owners. By agreeing to the joint venture, the Landowners transfer this ownership to the investor or the joint venture, not to the investor alone. Originally, the resources belong to them, but when they sign these types of agreements and agree to give a bigger portion to a foreign investor, it is a matter for the Landowners, and the law gives them ownership. If they want to give it to whoever, it is their business.

In the Mining Department, we can only regulate in terms of compliance. We check if the applicants have put in the right application for that particular license or if they have put in the wrong application, or if they are the ones qualified to apply for the license. These are things that we will do at the Mining Department. But in terms of the joint-venture agreements, it is unfortunately not the jurisdiction of the Department of Minerals and Energy Resources. However, we do conduct due diligence checks, as there is a part in the Mining Act that says the Department must check if they are true investors with capital or not.

Regarding the last question, why are ABG's shares not reflected in the joint venture? Again, it is not a matter for the Mining Department, and the Bougainville Mining Act does not require ABG to be a partner in the joint venture. That is not a requirement under the Bougainville Mining Act, but if ABG wants to partner with some of these joint ventures or investors, that is the jurisdiction of another department to look at. They can then put an application to the Mining Department so that the Department can check for compliance. If they meet everything and check everything, they can get the license; if not, we will send it back and inform them that they will not get any license because of all these reasons. Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker

Mr. FABIAN SALEU EPOTA (Torokina) – Supplementary question?

Madam SPEAKER – Supplementary question, Member for Torokina?

Mining Act gave many rights to landowners

Mr. FABIAN SALEU EPOTA (Member for Torokina) – Thank you, Mining Minister, for your explanations. Based on the question by the Member for Teua, even based on these explanations, I can see that investors are using the gap of landowners. Minister, are there any plans based on these issues that are happening? So far, there have been many cases, especially in Eivo/Torau and Torokina, about many investors using landowners to come in, and this is one of the gaps that I see. If there is a plan in the future to try and solve this issue, which many of them are coming in because they are ignorant and they don't really understand, even whichever the Mining Department can fit in to advise them because there are some legalities they don't know about. That is why I see that the Mining Act needs some changes to stop some of these things because these poor Landowners are just establishing their companies and some of them are just joining the joint venture without fully understanding the legal issues of it. So this is a short question to support this because we are seeing the gap already. Though on the other hand, Minister, you have said that it is not within your jurisdiction to give all these things, but as an authority, the government on the ground, we need to also protect the landowners. I think this Act

gave many rights to the landowners without them understanding these things. So thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER – Minister for Minerals and Energy Resources.

Mr. ROBIN WILSON– Madam Deputy Speaker, I lost the question as I thought that he was making a statement but if there was a – sorry,

Review of the Mining Act

Mr. FABIAN EPOTA– Thank you Mining Minister, is there a plan for a revisit and or review of this Mining Act to stop it?

Mr. ROBIN WILSON– Yes, thank you Member for Torokina, when I came in, the Department advised me that the President and BEC had already authorized that there will be a review of the Mining Act so to answer your question, yes.

Mr. EMMANUEL KAETAVARA– Supplementary question.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER – Supplementary question, Member for Baba?

Mr. EMMANUEL KAETAVARA - Firstly, Mr. Honorable Robin Wilson, congratulations again on the portfolio you now have. I believe it's in capable hands under your authority. I have only three supplementary questions, and I think two are related to each other in terms of investment, while the other one is in relation to exploration.

Who should be held liable for such an action? The Minister or who else?

Regarding the statement or the question you responded to yesterday regarding companies that are no longer operating or have ceased their operations down at the Tailings, or any other company related to the ministerial portfolio holder, when such an action occurs, and the law states particular standards of screening, to me, it is like when such an action occurs, such as what is happening down at the Tailings, who should be held liable for such an action? Should the Minister responsible be held liable, or who else?

Is there a Plan to review the Mining Act to allow for exploration?

My second question is in relation to the current activities on exploration that is happening, which is creating a lot of confusion in Bougainville. Is there a plan within the mining department to review the mining Act to ensure that we only focus on one area rather than allowing exploration to happen all over the region?

And the third question for the Mining Minister is, since you got this portfolio, I think the warning is coming through the office of the Technical Service Minister. Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER – Minister for Minerals and Energy Resources?

Mr. ROBIN WILSON - Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Thank you, Honorable Member, for Baba. In relation to the first question that you asked about who is held liable for a mistake done by another minister, my opinion is that I don't know what the law says, but if there are issues of misconduct that the minister or whoever has done, the best thing is to refer them to the Ombudsman. The President has done his part in replacing that minister. If there is evidence of wrongdoing, I believe that the Ombudsman is probably the right avenue to take that matter. As far as where the law has been broken, I, as the minister, want to make sure that the law takes precedence. I want to ensure that what went wrong must be corrected. To hold someone accountable for what they have done wrong, I don't think that is my responsibility. I am only here to fix what went wrong so that the law takes precedence and people trust the Government. That is my view on that. I think I don't know if I answered your question correctly, but that's my view. Unfortunately, Member, I missed your second question. Could you repeat it?

Regulation of alluvial mining

Mr. EMMANUEL C KAETAVARA - Has there been any progress on the statements that we have been making on the floor in relation to the regulation of alluvial mining, which is causing a lot of distress to the rivers downstream, as we are seeing in Arawa as well?

Mr. ROBIN WILSON - Thank you, Member, for Baba. I would like to inform you that before I came in, BEC had approved a review of the mining act. One of the critical areas that this review will address is the exploration licenses. Currently, the practice of first come, first served is followed, and we aim to review this process. We want to explore better alternatives such as public tenders to ensure fairness and transparency.

In addition, landowners are now establishing their own companies, and the law does not limit them to a single company. Therefore, two parties on one side and two parties on the other can establish their own companies, and the competition is based on the first come, first serve principle. We plan to remove this practice to ensure that only competent and experienced individuals participate in mining activities.

As BEC has approved the review of amendments to the mining act, this is the direction we are heading in.

Regarding the progress of alluvial mining and its destructive effects, unfortunately, Member, I cannot provide an answer at this time. I need to meet with the department and be briefed on the matter before I can respond accurately. However, I have made it clear that I do not support the use of mercury in Bougainville. When the department informed me that they were signing an MOU with NAC to monitor the amount of gold leaving Bougainville, I suggested that the MOU should also cover mercury use.

This will help to restrict the use of mercury to licensed individuals and prevent unauthorized use. Genuine gold buyers with valid licenses should also be allowed to purchase mercury. Those who use mercury without a license must be stopped. This is my personal view, and I have already discussed it with the department. I will provide you with an official position from the ministry and the department after I receive a briefing. Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Mr. PAIS TAEHU - (Atolls) Thank you, Madam Speaker. Before I ask my question, I want to acknowledge the Minister for Technical Services after being res-shuffled. This question will be new to you but as a matter of importance, I will ask this question.

1. Can the Minister explain to this House, the status of MV Tulele or what plans the government have for this ship?
2. Does your office have any plans to assist the Atolls and the coastline of Bougainville with the purchase of a new ship? If you have such plans in place, when will be able to see a ship sailing the waters of Bougainville?

The reason for asking this question is that there has not been any form of communication between my office and the office of the Technical Service in terms of any shipping awareness for the people of Atolls.

Madam SPEAKER - The Minister for Technical Services!

Mr. JOSEPH MONA - Thank you Madam Speaker and the Member for Atolls for your questions.

Firstly, MV Tulele - there has been an MNSA Report on the Tulele and the report wasn't good. There is a lot of work that needs to be done to get it operational and to get it licensed before operation. It is now incurring betting charges to an amount of K2 million. We have another problem with the ship not being able to be moved because of the faulty anchor. We need to make some very important decisions on the ship now to either sell it for scrap metal or move it somewhere.

On your second question – Are there any plans of getting a new ship for the Atolls/Nissan? Like in the past, I have been talking with you informally about setting up growth centers in the Atolls. This is because depending on the kind of shipping service we want to provide must be sustainable. We cannot just buy a ship and send it out to the ocean. It will be like other ships that have been bought in the past. We need to come up with a holistic approach to make it economical.

Please come to my office and we will discuss it and then maybe, we will buy a new ship.

Madam Speaker- Hon Members, that brings us to the end of the Written Questions for Oral Answers.

Mr. THOMAS PATAAKU - Thank you, Madam Speaker. Since the Speaker has put a question on the debates, I want to rescind that decision and a lot the debate to continue. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam SPEAKER - Those in favor, say aye. Those against? The ayes have it. Resumption of Debate –

Resumption of Debate - President and Attorney General's Statement

Mr. DENNIS LOKONAI (Bolave/Health) - First and foremost, I extend a warm welcome to our newly elected Members, the Member for Haku and the Member for Nissan. Additionally, I would like to express my gratitude to the President for his recent Cabinet appointments and reshuffles.

Moving on, I would like to take a moment to reflect on the significant statements made this morning by our leaders, the President, and the Attorney General. Their statements were both insightful and comprehensive, providing a clear overview of our history, political journey, current situation, and prospects. In essence, they outlined our past, present, and future aspirations.

In my reflection on our history, I recognize that our political journey was precipitated by the mistakes made by our colonizers. By drawing an artificial boundary between Bougainville and the Solomon Islands during their colonial administration, Bougainville was left in a state of limbo, which ultimately led to a decade-long conflict that resulted in the loss of over 20,000 lives.

So, the process we have followed, based on the Bougainville Peace Agreement, was to correct the mistake made in the past. The peace agreement has three pillars - weapons disposal, autonomy, and referendum - which have already been fully implemented. The referendum showed overwhelming support for independence, and we have satisfied this requirement in the peace agreement. The peace agreement is legally enshrined in the Constitution of Bougainville, part 40 of the Papua New Guinea Constitution, and the Organic Law on Peacebuilding in Bougainville. This is a legal process we have taken to find a permanent solution.

When we hear such statements this morning, I believe that the people from the National Government are convinced that they will support this during ratification. Now our government, the Fourth House, has completed the last part of its work, culminating in the Era Kone Covenant, starting from the Sharp Agreement to the Wabag Roadmap. Thank you, President, for your leadership, and Cabinet for your appointments and re-alignments. Thank you to all the Members; each of us has made contributions in one way or another. Lastly, thank you, AG, for our resolve to be united.

We must remain united and continue to stand together to reach the end of our journey. I believe that getting married is a good analogy for becoming a nation. When a boy or girl decides to get married, they do not have everything they need. However, they are allowed to get married and eventually, they will have everything they need after working hard. As a married couple, they will work together to develop things, build a house, generate money, and establish things that they need for their family.

Similarly, when we want to become a nation, we should not let Papua New Guinea hold us back by saying we have no money, no economy, or no institutions. Papua New Guinea did not have anything when it became independent, but it built up over time. Bougainville will do the same. We will receive political recognition, and we will build up over time.

I fully support the two statements that were presented, and I think we should start thinking like people who are already independent. We should not keep asking for things and putting conditions on ourselves. Instead, we should focus on talking to our people in the constituency and working together to make progress. We should not ask about the progress of the government or what it has done, but we should take responsibility for our development and work towards our goals.

We need to ask ourselves what we are doing to support the government and how we can prepare our communities for independence. As a community leader, I urge my fellow ward members to encourage a change in mindset and attitude among our people. We have already decided to become independent, so we must start thinking, speaking, and acting like a nation that is already independent.

When Jesus came to Earth, he urged people to repent and change their mindset because the kingdom of heaven was already within them. Similarly, we must realize that we are already independent because of our decision, and we must adopt this mindset to make it a reality.

I always remember Kabui's statement that we have reached a point of no return. We should not consider different options because we have already voted and made our decision. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Ms. AMANDA MASONO (Women Rep – North/Public Service) – Thank you, Madam Speaker, for allowing me to comment on the three important statements that were presented this morning, two by the President and the Attorney General on our political process.

I would like to thank the President for his statement and his unwavering stand in support of our political process and which is independence for Bougainville. He continues to advocate how the government of the day will deliver to our people. I support his statement, in particular, on the indigenous business that we need to create for our landowners.

While I concur with the statement, I would also like to appeal to the Ministers and members to talk to our people that in any arrangements, especially in line with the Inward Investment Act, which states that for the investors to come, they must join the venture with our local business or indigenous. I want to appeal that we must support our people to ensure the shares and the arrangement are always 50/50. We must fall short in going 40/60, but I believe the true spirit of independence is making the investors agree to a 50/50 share or arrangement. My concern is why agree to less than 50 when we own the land, we own the resources and we should negotiate for 50/50 arrangements, and we have the negotiating powers. It is time that we move in that direction if we are serious about talking about independence for Bougainville.

The President is pressed against time as time is not on our side, and we only have two and a half years, and the ratification is this year. It calls for all of us to stand together and support the President. I want to thank the President for having the faith in me to give this Ministry of the Public Service. As the new minister for Public Service, my job now is to get the bureaucracy and the public service machinery to support the political vision. The Public Service vision must be aligned with the political vision and at the same time connect right down to the districts and the community governments. At the end of the day, our job is to deliver goods and services to the people while supporting the political process.

The statement by the Attorney General, and as a young and a first-time member of this Honourable House, I give credit and respect to someone like the Attorney who is also a lawyer by profession, and I give my full respect to him. We don't have many Bougainvilleans left with institutional memory. People who have been there from the start know the intention why the National Constitution was drafted this way in relation to the provisions of the Bougainville Referendum, the Ratification, and all the intentions. For me to appreciate how far Bougainville has come, and why the provisions of the National Constitution are drafted and crafted in that manner, gives me a new spirit to continue to hold on to this dream. I believe this statement is timely, not because we have the visiting delegation from the National Parliament and obviously for them to visit and listen to how far we have come and all the intentions as a lawyer when you read and interpret the text, you must not concentrate on the actual text of the law but must also learn to appreciate the background and context and why the law is drafted with the intentions.

I am happy that the Attorney General was able to deliver his statement in this house, and the Leaders of the National Parliament are here, hearing for themselves. I want to appeal to all the Bougainvilleans outside who have had this opportunity or if you do not have the opportunity to listen, to turn on your radios this afternoon and listen to the statement delivered by Honorable Ezikeil Masatt on our political journey to appreciate where the government is at this political time and the position ABG is taking as we move forward in preparing for the ratification. The onus is on us as we have all heard the three statements of how the political journey is taking place, and it is also on us, each individual. The question is, what are we doing to support the government? I appeal to the Ministers of the Cabinet as a reminder, a wake-up call to give our support to the President. The President has faith in us and has given us all the important portfolios to educate the Departmental Heads and Public Servants to come in line and give support. It is a challenge to see the political vision on its own while the Public Service and the bureaucracy are not giving their support to the political vision.

As the new Public Service Minister, I make my commitment today that I will do my best to ensure the Public Service machinery is aligned with the political vision that is being driven by the President. The Independence Ready process and the Bougainville Public Service are the first departments that will spearhead the work preparation in the Department. As the new Public Service Minister, I do not know where we are up to in terms of the preparation to align the independence process to the whole administration structure, and it is my job to find out.

My appeal to all of us after hearing the three statements presented is that let us all work together as leaders of this fourth House so that we deliver as per the timeline, and we must ensure the public service, our departmental heads, and officers who are tasked to support the important political journey is aligned and they are working. Thank you, Madam Speaker

Mr. MATHAIS SALAS - Thank you, Madam Speaker. I also want to take this time to speak in support of the President's statement and the Attorney General's. Firstly, I want to acknowledge and welcome the two newly elected members to the government. I firmly believe that they will work well together with the government, especially the Member for Haku who has vast experience in administration and has now joined politics. If you categorize politicians, the Member for Haku can be called a Parliamentarian. Parliamentarians are people who have experience in politics and the administration of politics. This is the classification I give to the new Member for Haku. He went as far as being the chief administrator of our administration. Thank you. I also acknowledge the newly elected Member for Nissan and believe he can carry on the legacy left by his father.

I want to speak in support of the President's statement regarding my statement. Firstly, I support him while talking about the impact projects. I want to make it clear, Madam Speaker, that for the last two

full financial years, and I will provide a full picture that after Christmas of 2021, Boxing Day, funding for the projects under RDG and PIP Recurrent was received in full. That is why there were no projects implemented for this particular year. Last year, we had the same experience. All the funding for Recurrent, RDG, and PIP was received on 30 December. These funds were received very late after the 2023 budget was approved. In other words, what it means is that we were not able to implement last year's budget because the funding came late for those two years. Funding is now available, and the implementation of high-impact projects is possible. The relevant departments in consultation with the Technical Division involved in the implementation of the projects must work faster. I have made visits to the concerned departments and advised that cash is now available and that they should go through the process of implementation. I have taken up this issue with the new Minister for the Technical Department, who has vast experience in the tendering process, which he was involved in before taking up politics. I will work closely with him to ensure we implement some of these high-impact projects when cash is available. We have had regular meetings so far and have reached this understanding.

For the high-impact projects, such as the construction of the Pangara and Tewara bridges in Bana, it is in the 2023 budget, and the cash is not yet available, Madam Speaker. The construction of the Kihili Teachers College has been diverted, and the venue will be in Buin. This is last year's budget, and cash is available. There were two components. There is K15m and also another K3m, totaling K18m, which should be implemented with the cash being available. I want to thank the Technical Minister and want this project implemented.

The upgrade of the Arawa Hospital to the Provincial Level is the Prime Minister's commitment. Cash has been available since 30th December, and I have consulted with the Secretary for Health, and yesterday was the second consultation. K70m is now available. When are we going to implement these projects? I suggested that he put out the tender for the design of the building. He is now going to consult with the Technical Secretary and the Minister for the Technical Department.

Madam Speaker, another high-impact project is the upgrade of the Arawa School of Nursing. K50 million in cash was made available on the 30th of December 2022, and it has been sitting here for the last three months. I consulted with the Minister for the Technical Department last week and would like these high-impact projects implemented as mentioned by the President in his statement. They should all go through the normal process of tender in consultation with the Department of Education for this program.

The other project involves upgrading feeder roads in cocoa-intensive areas across each region. Fortunately, in 2023, we received additional funding of K10 million for infrastructure and K8 million

for feeder roads in each region. However, we have not yet received the funding for these projects. I will update the government on the status of this funding in my statement later this year.

I would like to thank Hon Tsiamalili, the man behind the Police and Security, who has been assisting me and the department in doing follow-ups with this funding. We also need to understand, Madam Speaker, that Papua New Guinea (PNG) faces cash problems. If you look at PNG's 2023 budget status in my speech, their expenditure for 2023 is K24 billion, but they only had the capacity under the internal revenue of K17 billion, and they passed what they call a deficit budget. They get a loan to fill the gap in the deficit budget, and that is how PNG has been operating for the last 7-8 years. We need to sympathize with PNG as they are also trying their best to assist us, but they have their issues. They have a foreign and domestic debt of K50 billion, and this debt continues to increase because they continue to get new loans to supplement their budget. This is just to give you an idea as to why PNG is also slow in giving its funding.

On the issue of the Attorney General's statement, as an institutional memory, when I raise awareness of the issue of breaking away, I refer back to 1921 to give some background information. In support of the Attorney General's statement, Madam Speaker, if we look at Bougainville's history, when Germany went into World War 1 from 1914 to 1918, Australia asked the League of Nations to colonize New Guinea, and the Territory of Papua was under Australia, and that is how we were colonized. The annexation of our colonization was in 1921, but the negotiation with the League of Nations for Australia to colonize us was done in 1920. When the League of Nations approved, they were told that we were an entrusted territory of the United Nations. As soon as we were colonized by Australia, our Bougainvilleans did not want Australia to look after us. They wanted America to look after us, and this is all recorded. In 1949, after being colonized by Australia, a law was made called the PNG Act 1949 to amalgamate the territory of Papua and New Guinea, and it was called the Territory of Papua New Guinea under the PNG Act 1949. This is the same process we are following but in another form through the Organic Law on Peace Building in Bougainville because of the crisis. After that, in April 1964, when the House of Assembly was established, Paul Lapun and John Teosin, together with Fr. Willey who made the arrangements, made a trip to the United Nations to tell them that we do not want to be part of Papua New Guinea.

I am a strong advocate for independence, and I want to share a message with those who went to Port Moresby but are not here. When the House of Assembly was formed, Paul Lapun, John Teosin, and Father Walley, a Catholic priest, traveled to the United Nations and were informed that we would be granted self-government with Papua New Guinea. The second trip was made in 1972, three years before PNG gained independence. Funds were raised to send Mr. Leo Hannet and Theodore Miriung to the United Nations to express Bougainville's desire for independence before PNG. This historical event is

documented by the United Nations, which informed them that breaking away from PNG was not allowed under the PNG Constitution. However, since we did not want Australia to take care of us, we preferred America instead. The United Nations was aware that we did not wish to be part of PNG and Australia. In 1962, the United Nations sent a special envoy to Kieta. A major meeting was held at Kuka Village with all Bougainvillean representatives to inform the United Nations that we did not want to be part of PNG. A law was then enacted by the United Nations General Assembly regarding the rights of indigenous people. The special envoy, led by a person named Hugh Foot, drafted international law, which took four years and was called the International Covenant and Political Rights. This is the law on which I always campaign, particularly Articles 1, 2, 3, and 4, which address the indigenous people's right to self-determination. When this was presented to the United Nations General Assembly in 1966, 144 countries voted, and only four countries voted against it, Madam Speaker. The four countries that voted against were Australia, America, Canada, and New Zealand. Do you know why? It is because they have indigenous people, and I want to make it clear. If you have read the news, Tony Regan, whom the Mining Department wants to bring across to make an amendment, went on social media saying that Bougainville will not break away until the four superpowers give their approval or green light. Tony Regan is an enemy of Bougainville's independence.

I am sharing this history to ensure that we are clear on the matter. To support this process, Madam Speaker, I want to remind Australia and PNG that in 2008, our PNG representative to the United Nations General Assembly submitted ratification to implement this law. The ratification was approved, and I have a copy of it. This means that PNG has informed the United Nations that they will comply with and implement this law. In simple terms, this means that they have already assured the United Nations that PNG will grant independence to Bougainville. That's why I wanted the members of the National Government to hear about it, and a copy of the ratification in 2008 was given to our technical team.

Before I conclude, I would like to ask: if we don't achieve the desired outcome through this process, what is the next step? I am not a lawyer, but this particular law can be presented to the International Court of Justice. Their office is located in Hague, the Netherlands. We can take PNG to court as the ratification was already given to the United Nations for Bougainville to gain independence. With this, Madam Speaker, I thank you for allowing me to share some institutional memory.

Mr. THOMAS PATA'AKU - Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would also like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the President and the Honorable Minister for Independence Ready Mission, Honorable Ezekiel Masatt, as well as our AG. Thank you, President, for your unwavering leadership and for consistently showing us the way forward in our journey toward independence. It is through your continuous efforts that we can achieve progress in all aspects of development, despite the challenges that we face.

Honorable Members, I will not take up too much of your time. Firstly, I want to express my appreciation for the projects that the President has highlighted, particularly the installation of desalination units for micro-powered grids on the outer islands. I always commend the President for prioritizing the needs of the less fortunate members of our society. If we continue to allocate the majority of our budgets to advantaged areas, we will not be able to make the necessary changes that are required in Bougainville. By prioritizing the needs of the most vulnerable members of our society, we can revolutionize the way development is carried out in Bougainville.

As a leader, I recognize that even after we become independent, we will need to revolutionize public service. We must ensure that the bulk of the public service, which is currently centralized at headquarters, is relocated to where our people are located. We need to prioritize serving our people, and this can only be achieved by ensuring that we are present in the communities that we serve. If we fail to address these issues, we will simply be replicating the same problems that we see in Papua New Guinea. Once again, thank you, Mr. President, for your guidance and leadership.

Thank you, Mr. President, for your commitment to improving the feeder roads in Bougainville. Fixing the feeder roads will enable our people to have easier access to markets and transport their products, which will ultimately help to boost the local economy. I appreciate your focus on this issue and the positive impact it will have on our communities.

I also want to thank the government for prioritizing the development of Tawera and Pangara. As a Southerner, I have personally experienced the challenges of traveling through these areas, and I am grateful for the improvements that have been made. The investment in these areas, including the construction of bridges, will make a significant difference in the lives of our people by making travel safer and more efficient.

Additionally, I am impressed by the progress that has been made in Pangara and the efforts to transform it into a more modern community. This is the type of development that we need to see throughout Bougainville to ensure that all of our people have access to the resources and opportunities necessary to thrive.

Thank you, Mr. President, for your leadership and continued commitment to the development of Bougainville.

I will not comment on other matters. Thank you, Minister, for bringing attention to this funding as well as the president of the teachers' college. Recently, we met with landowners in Buin, and I informed the department that I want that school to be operational by 2025. We want the first class to begin in 2025. Minister, thank you for this funding, and we must ensure that we use it to establish such projects for our children.

Regarding the statement made by the AG, I believe that we are already culturally linked with Papua New Guinea through our intermarriages. There is no one to follow me, and I only have two nieces, whose father is from Karkar in Madang. Therefore, it is essential that if Papua New Guinea approves it, we must develop two parallel economies. If one economy is down, the other can assist. It is critical, and that is why Australia is coming to us from different fronts, building schools and office complexes. These are the kinds of aid that can support each other, and we can work together. The economy that prospers must remember the other because we are Melanesians, as many are saying.

Hon. Members, I would like to highlight one more thing. The leaders of Papua New Guinea need to recognize that the process we started was the first step in stopping the war and the bloodshed. Even the National Parliament, when they next meet, should acknowledge that this process alone halted the crisis in Bougainville.

The Attorney General is expressing that if the person from Madang is dead, then we are also dead. This is a little concerning. However, we should also remind them that if they give Bougainville the green light to break away, then we can stop Papua New Guinea with our constitution. We cannot allow other provinces to become independent, as this may cause fear in the Prime Minister, who may hesitate to approve our request. Therefore, we need to reassert Papua New Guinea's borders with our laws and ensure that no one will cause trouble.

Madam Speaker, those are my thoughts for this afternoon. Thank you for allowing me to share them.

Mr. BERNARD BOBOS (Peit) Madam Deputy Speaker, I would like to begin by acknowledging the former ministers and others who received new ministries in the BEC. I also want to express my appreciation to those who previously served. I would like to welcome the delegation from Papua New Guinea who came to listen. Moreover, I would like to welcome the two honorable Members for Haku, Patrick Koles, and Nissan, and thank them for joining the politics of ABG. It is not an easy task, as you can hear.

I acknowledge the statements of the honorable President and Attorney General, including the debates to which each member contributed. For myself, I see that the Parliament of Papua New Guinea, and we as well as those working in the administration, are educated, people. It is not hard for us to understand the little things like what the ministers have now, as they have mentioned.

For how long have human beings been marginalized? I also wanted the white men to stay so we could continuously marginalize them. We used to hear about international human rights; Papua New Guinea also has human rights. Then don't come and talk to us about human rights when you cannot ratify us. So, Mr. President and Attorney General, thank you for reminding us. Listen carefully to all these

colonial masters who administered during this time; they had mixed feelings. For those who were young at that time in the Parliament of Australia, Papua New Guinea, we should not continue with all this suppression.

We must walk on the right path. Our administration of ABG and our political leaders must be loyal. Likewise, Papua New Guinea must also be loyal to Bougainville. The Panguna mine was meant to help Bougainville become what it is today, and Australia also played a part in this. So, when I talk about human rights and international human rights, please be mindful of what we are discussing. We are talking about justice, and yet we are still walking on injustice. We legislate laws, but we must also ensure that we are just. This goes to all, even the government of Australia and other governments wherever Papua New Guinea is concerned. Please, let us talk about justice. Thank you very much for all the comments.

Mr. PAIS TAEHU - Madam Deputy Speaker, I would like to begin by endorsing the important statements made by both the Ministers and Members in this House. These statements remind us of our journey towards a referendum status and our obligations to work with the Executive Government. As a representative of the people of Nissan and Atolls, I am pleased to say that these statements are very clear and helpful. However, I would like to emphasize a few points, particularly the Sharpe Agreement which calls for an effective drawdown of powers. The Attorney General's statement on this matter is very clear, and we must work towards its implementation as soon as possible.

I also urge the Minister for Public Servants to ensure that our bureaucrats are following the six strategy points mentioned by our President. They need to work efficiently to speed up the process, which is currently very slow. We cannot afford to be slow like a bulldozer in implementing these important strategies.

Moreover, I request that the Government consider the economic sector of Atolls. We do not have cocoa or copra; instead, we rely on fishing, particularly tuna fishing. I request the Minister for DPI to look at sections 47 and 51 to bring economic benefits closer to our people. We need a market for our fish, and we are willing to provide it if the government helps us. We are a remote community and need to be considered a priority in any development plans for Bougainville.

In conclusion, I would like to express my gratitude for the statements made by the President and the Attorney General. They have reminded us of our journey and our obligation to work together toward our destination. On behalf of the people of Atolls, I am thankful for the Government's support, and I look forward to presenting my statement tomorrow. Thank you.

Motion for Adjournment

Madam SPEAKER - The motion before us is that the statements made by the President and the Minister for Bougainville Independence Mission Implementation this morning be agreed to. All those in favor say aye, and those against say no. The ayes have it. I now call upon the Leader of Government Business.

Mr. THOMAS PATA'AKU - Thank you, Madam Speaker. I hereby move that this session be adjourned to tomorrow, the 30th of March at 10.00 am. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam SPEAKER - The Question is that the motion be agreed to. Those in favor say aye? Those against say no? The ayes have it.

This House is now adjourned to 10.00 am tomorrow.