

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD AT PANGUNA ON SUNDAY 31ST JULY, 1988
BETWEEN :-

NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

REPRESENTED BY : FR. JOHN MDMIS
MINISTER FOR PROVINCIAL AFFAIRS AND
LEADER OF M.A. PARTY

MR. PATTERSON LOWA
MINISTER FOR MINERALS AND ENERGY

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

REPRESENTED BY : MR. J. C. KABUI
PREMIER

MR. P. TSIAMALILI
ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY

PANGUNA LANDOWNERS ASSOCIATION

REPRESENTED BY : MR. F. ONA
SECRETARY

AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE

BOUGAINVILLE COPPER LIMITED

REPRESENTED BY : MR. J. L. AUNA
GENERAL MANAGER - PERSONNEL SERVICES

MR. P. MAPAH
MANAGER - LIAISON & MEDIA SERVICES

DP 001250

The meeting organized by the National and Provincial Governments was scheduled for 10.00 a.m. At 11.15 a.m. when all the participants turned up it was proposed by Francis One and agreed by both Government representatives that the Minister be taken to view places like Dabera Village prior to the meeting. The Landowners and the Government representatives proceeded on this

lunch was provided between 12.30 p.m. and 1.30 p.m. at the Mess and Mess. All officials except the Premier (who chose to lunch somewhere else) had lunch in the Mess.

The meeting proper started at 1.40 p.m. Mr. Tsiamalili started to introduce the Government Officials present when he was interrupted by Mr. One with a request for Mr. Pariu (Secretary of the old Panguna Landowners Association) to leave. He threatened to walk out of the meeting with his members if Mr. Pariu was allowed to participate in the meeting. After some exchange of words Mr. Pariu was requested by the Chairman of the meeting to leave the meeting and to make a separate representation to the Minister or Fr. Morris at a later stage if he so desired.

Mr. Tsiamalili then introduced the Government Officials and advised that Mr. Bale would be the Chairman of proceedings.

Mr. Bale thanked everybody for attending the meeting at short notice. He asked the Landowners through Mr. One to brief Minister Lowe on their list of demands.

Mr. One expressed surprise at being asked to do this saying that the demands were already presented to the Government and the Company. He then proceeded reading the demands made in their letters dated 5th April and delivered on the 11th of April.

These letters are those which demand K10 billion from the Company and the return of 50% of all Government revenue derived from BCL between 1972 and 1988.

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Minister Lova was then asked to speak. He advised that the first thing he did after taking office as Minister for Minerals and Energy was to ask his Department to tell him of all the outstanding problems. The Panguna Landowner grievances/demands was but one of many around PNG. He cited for example similar grievances/demands in Enga, OK Tedi, Misima and Lihir. He asked the Landowners to give him one month (the whole of August) to review their demands and come back to them. He mentioned a meeting which is scheduled for the 16th and 17th August 1988 to discuss issues including those from the Panguna, OK Tedi, Misima and Enga Landowners and the relevant Government Policies/Legislations relating to them. All Provincial Secretariats will be represented at this meeting.

Minister Lova then mentioned that his Province (West New Britain) last year generated a total of K54m and received only K4m from the National Government. This he said was from the export of Copra, cocoa etc. and not from mining. He mentioned this to show that it was not only NCP that is not getting its fair share of revenue out of what the Province earn.

Minister Lova referred to the Review of the Mining Act which was started by the previous Government saying that it would be continued by the present Government. This he told the Landowners would be the right vehicle to make any changes. He referred to the BCA review saying that if there was something which is not right or proper they will be dealt with during the review.

Mr. Lova said BCL makes K3n per day. He then questioned the Government Officials whether they are working for money or for the people. If you are working for the people you should give answers now.

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Minister Leva told Francis that he sympathised with him but could not give him any answers there and then. He told him "how could I do one thing for Bougainville and not for the other Provinces". The Minister added that he had already instructed his Officers to work on the demands being discussed. The Minister then questioned the rationale behind PLA asking amounts like K10 billion when the National Budget is only K1 billion. Where will we get the money the Minister asked the landowners.

Barinal Belo. I have already said that the issues raised (demands) need time to be look at carefully and the Minister has asked for one month.

Mr. One then asked whether or not the Government and the Company were collaborating. The Minister responded advising that the Government looks after everybody including the Company.

Mr. One challenged why the Minister and Mr. Belo and in fact everybody keeps talking about the new Government when he knows that it is the same Government and same administration.

Fr. Mendis explained that what the Minister is saying is that the Government Administration (Public Services) is like a Machine, for example a car. A car cannot move unless there is a driver. The Government is the same. The Public Servants are there but they cannot move without a political directive or decision.

Fr. Mendis - MA has very definite ideas on improving benefits to the people and Provincial Government from Mining and other Businesses. The present policies and arrangements he said need to be improved. He told the landowners that no individual Minister can give answers to the demands or make changes to present Government policies. The full Cabinet must consider and decide on the issues and any likely changes.

Minister Loug then re-iterated his request for the one month in which to consider the issues emphasising the recent change of Government. He noted that although the demands were submitted to the previous Government the new Government particularly himself, needed time to consider them.

Mr. Gino - These problems are not new. They started with the CRA days. "You members like R. Beje, Fr. Momis never come to see us and hear our problems. There are no developments at Panguna. The BCL agreement has expired and why is the Company still operating. We the landowners will close the mine."

R. Beje - The Agreement has not expired but it is time to review it. As Fr. Momis and the Minister Loug have explained, the main problem is how to share the revenue from the mine.

Mr. Gino - The Premier and I are concerned just the same as you people. I agree with Francis that some of the problems date back to the CRA days. Despite this, some of us think that things will happen when we ask for them. This is not so. In Government you must follow the law. This is an opportune time to initiate changes since many other mines are coming up."

Mr. Gino - "We heard what you said and are saying but we are determined to close the mine. The Economy of this country is dependent on BCL. We have nothing to lose. The Government and the Company will be the losers."

Fr. Momis - re-iterated the need to give some time to review the current Government policies.

Landowner - Which one of you leaders is able to challenge BCL's power?

Minister Loug - "Government can control and direct Companies including BCL within the law."

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Mr. One - "We don't want BCL to stay here. You are being bribed. You can go somewhere else. We are not worried about money. Money is something nothing. The operation is causing hazard healthwise. We don't want to talk anymore."

Fr. Momis - re - BCL Agreement. "The Agreement was negotiated during the reign of the Colonial Government and re-negotiated in 1974. There are provisions that need changing but this have to be done properly within the law."

P. Hale - "The Minister is prepared to stay an extra day if you still wish to talk."

P. One - "We want an answer either positive or negative at least on one of our demands now."

Minister Loun - The answer is "yes" I am committed to take up and review your demands. Both Fr. Momis and I agree that Landowners must get a fair share of benefits from mining and other operations. I repeat once again that the timing for initiating changes is ideal now with the number of new Mines coming up in other Provinces and the support that will come from members representing those Provinces. An indication for my commitment to take interest in your problems is my attendance at this meeting."

Fr. Momis - I support and endorse the views expressed by the Minister.

Franklin Kahu - "The problems are widespread. For example at the last National Premiers Conference a resolution was passed calling for better deals to be given to Landowners."

P. One - "I did not hear any answer to our request." He then requested that a written Government response be given by 9.00 a.m. Monday 1st August, 1988. The government agreed to do so."

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The meeting concluded at 5.15 p.m. The meeting took this long through both sides repeating themselves at least 10 times over.

Joe
by ALMA

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