

**FRIDAY, 12TH FEBRUARY, 2016**

The House met at 9.30 a.m. pursuant to adjournment.

MADAM SPEAKER took the Chair and read the Prayer.

**PRESENT**

All the Honourable Members were present, except the Hon. Minister for Industry, Trade and Tourism; the Hon. Minister for Foreign Affairs; the Hon. Prof. B.C. Prasad; the Hon. Roko T.T.S. Draunidalo; the Hon. P. Singh; and the Hon. Ratu N.T. Lalabalavu.

**COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR**

Motion of No Confidence – Hon. Prime Minister

MADAM SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, a Motion of No Confidence in the Hon. Prime Minister was received early this morning and pursuant to Standing Order 49( 5), this debate will take precedence over any other business.

I now call upon the Hon. Semesa Karavaki to move his motion.

**MOTION OF NO CONFIDENCE – HON. PRIME MINISTER**

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- Madam Speaker, I move the motion under my name that pursuant to Section 94(1) of the Constitution and Standing Order 49, I move a motion of no confidence to the Prime Minister that he immediately ceases to hold office and propose the name of Ro Teimumu Vuikaba Kapa, a Member of Parliament to be the Prime Minister.

(Chorus of interjections)

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. Do we have a seconder?

HON. RATU I.D.TIKOCA.- Madam Speaker, I beg to second the motion.

MADAM SPEAKER.- I now call upon the Hon. Karavaki to speak on his motion.

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Honourable Prime Minister, the Cabinet Ministers, Honourable Members of Parliament, the Leader of the Opposition: I rise this morning to speak on this motion and indeed today is a day that will go down in history, where we are actually following the ...

(Chorus of interjections)

... provisions that are laid down in the Constitution for the removal or the dismissal of any sitting Prime Minister from his Office.

You will see, Madam Speaker, Section 93 of the Constitution provides that the Leader of the Party that had won the Elections with majority of seats in Parliament, he becomes our Prime Minister. Under Section 63 also, Madam Speaker, that that Office can become vacant on conditions



provided in there if he dies, of course he has not died, Madam Speaker, or he resigns or he had failed to qualify to be a member of Parliament. That is when that seat will become vacant and normally there is a process where we will come again to Parliament to elect the one to become the Prime Minister.

Apart from that. Madam Speaker, under Section 94 of the Constitution, there is the only other way a sitting Prime Minister can be removed and that is by way of a Motion of No Confidence, and that is why I am coming this way, Madam Speaker, under Section 94. We have already had the Elections in 2014 to 2016.

(Hon. Members interjected)

It has become very apparent and very clear now that this nation need to be redeemed, it needs to be safe and the only way it needs to be safe Madam Speaker, is to change the Prime Minister because it is going down a road leading to destruction and ruin. It is obvious and is apparent, Madam Speaker, this is why we come in this manner.

I come with a heavy heart, Madam Speaker, but there is no other alternative for me, but to come in this manner. You see, Madam Speaker, we now can see very clearly in this country the system that had been brought in by the FijiFirst Government in the pretext, Madam Speaker, of reform. In fact the reform that is taking place now, is the introduction of socialism into this country. That is the basis of reform.

(Chorus of interjections)

You know, Madam Speaker, this country does not need a strong man to lead it, it needs someone to heal the wounds that this country is suffering from.

(Chorus of interjections)

It is someone to heal it and obviously the Honourable Prime Minister now is truly an enforcer and portrays himself as a strong man, but he knows he is not a healer.

(Chorus of interjections)

He is not a healer. We need a healer, Madam Speaker. This land is going through hurt and it is trying to find its way to redeem itself, but it cannot because the control imposed on it is so rigid that it has to find another alternative way.

Madam Speaker, I am reminded of the writing in the *Scriptures* in 2 Chronicles 7:14, and I quote:

“If my people which are called by my name shall humble themselves, (humility is important, Madam Speaker, so, first of all humble themselves) and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and will heal their land.”

Our land is hurting, our land is crying out, crying out to be redeemed. It needs a leader that can lead it to prosperity, true prosperity, now the Government is building on the foundation of sand, not on stone.

Madam Speaker, when the storm comes, when the flood rises, when the wind blows, it falls and it falls and it falls enormously. This is what this Government is all about. It needs to understand that there are principles that are entrenched in the principles of the Almighty. That is the only way that we can build our foundation on the rock and it can withstand storms, tempests, floods, anything - it cannot be moved.

However, Madam Speaker, why I am saying this is, since principles have been brought in now, changes have taken place on the basis of *iTaukei* interests and *iTaukei* property rights, they have been changed. We must understand that what is in the Constitution now and the motion that I am going through now, Madam Speaker, is a motion that even God allows. He removes the leaders, He bring in leaders. The Government might be saying “Well, God brought the Prime Minister in”, God also takes him out.

(Hon. Member interjected)

This is God’s principle, this is God’s process. This is who we are, we are to recognise that God controls the affairs of this nation and all nations of the earth. This is what he says in Daniel 4:25:

“That they shall drive thee from man.”

The leader will be driven out.

“And thy dwelling shall be with the beast of the field and they shall make thee to eat grass like oxen and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven seven times shall pass through thee till thou know that the most high ruler in the kingdom of men and give thee to whom so ever he will.”

MADAM SPEAKER.- Order! I think what you are making reference to is making insinuations on a person. Please refrain from making personal attacks but deal with the policies and system of governments that you are complaining about. No personal attacks and no insinuations on anything to do with a person.

Thank you.

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- Madam Speaker, am I insinuating anything?

MADAM SPEAKER.- Yes, you are.

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- I apologise, if I had done so.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you.

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- Well, that is God’s ways, Madam Speaker. He brings in leaders, and He also removes them. That is what I was saying.

We understand, Madam Speaker, that the principles of God had allowed the *iTaukei* people to come and occupy this land, Fiji, and become their land and their country. Madam Speaker, in Deuteronomy 9:6 it says:

“Understand, therefore, that the Lord your God giveth thee not this good land to possess it for thy righteousness for thy art a stiff-necked people”.

Although we may be bad people, Madam Speaker, but God gives us what we own and God’s principles does not allow for someone to come and take your possession and remove your rights without even getting the consent and approval from the owners.

That is what I am saying, Madam Speaker, this is what this Government has done. They have brought in decrees and laws to control the interests and property rights of the *iTaukei* people. However, these rights are divine rights, Madam Speaker. I will not only say they are human rights, they are divine rights. No one, not even a leader who calls himself a leader by God has the right to subvert that, not even a leader. Then he says, “Well God brought me here”, but remember this is divine rights and if a leader says that he has been brought in by God and does not recognise that, that means he does not recognise the very one that he has professed that puts him in the office.

Madam Speaker, if some people say, “That is the Old Testament”, I will then read from Acts 17:26, where Dr. Luke is stating this:

“And it made one of blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth and had determined the times before appointed and the bounds of their habitation”.

This is God’s structure, it brings the *iTaukei* people into this nation, gave them this land and also provides the boundary of their habitation and says, “This is yours”, and this is how it is to every nation in the world, the Chinese, the Indians, the Americans, everywhere. He gave them the bounds of their nation.

This is what I am saying, Madam Speaker, that is the principle that God had laid down. Any other principles and policies that have been put into place, Madam Speaker, are actually against the divine principles of God. If the Government comes in and puts in place decrees and laws to take away these rights without even consulting the owner of this land, even the United Nations itself, Madam Speaker, has stated that that should not be done but I am speaking on the divine principles. What men wants to do, they want to look at these standards, virtues and values and want to follow it because it is the only safe way for us to live, the only safe way and there is no other way. However, this Government, Madam Speaker, had brought in policies that will remove this, even without consulting them. Now, Madam Speaker, the policy that is coming up not to even recognise the rights of the customary *qoliqoli* owners to exercise their ownership rights.

What the Government is doing now Madam Speaker, why I am very concerned and the reason why this motion is brought before this House because the Government is trying to bring all the interests and property rights of the *iTaukei* under his umbrella, under his power. Why it wants to do that Madam Speaker? it is doing that so that it can distribute it on their principles of equality.

HON. P.B. KUMAR.- What is wrong with that?

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- That is not God’s principle. God gives us our property, He gives you your property, and I do not come and take it without your consent. I come and ask you because you own it. That is God’s principle, and that is what I am talking about, Madam Speaker.

However, this Government, Madam Speaker, does not recognise that, and I am concerned for the future of this country.

(Hon. Members interjected)

I am concerned for the future of this country. The way this nation has been governed and the way it has been led, it needs to change its leader because this is the only way, Madam Speaker, and I appeal to you Honourable Members sitting on the other side.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Please, do not refer to a Member.

(Hon. Members interjected)

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- They should also understand because this motion needs the majority of Honourable Members of the House to carry it, and I believe as I speak from the words of inspiration, conviction is now taking place in their hearts.

(Hon. Members interjected)

After this, Madam Speaker, if they know who they are and, of course, if they listen to the words of truth, that is the only way in which someone who is enslaved by material gains; enslaved by all other interests; and enslaved by the evil spirits can be freed from their slavery. So, the only way they can be freed from their slavery, Madam Speaker, is that they are to support this motion because tomorrow we should have a new Prime Minister.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- Tomorrow. we should have a new Prime Minister; ...

(Chorus of interjections)

... a Prime Minister who knows the healings of God to heal this nation.

(Chorus of interjections)

Unfortunately, Madam Speaker, not a Prime Minister who allows for the extraction of a very poor retired school teacher from his house in the night – one who knows nothing. He knew nothing. The only thing he knew was that he called or he texted the Hon. Prime Minister and the only thing that happened was, soldiers and police came to his house to remove him from there before they beat him up.

HON. OPPOSITION MEMBER.- So sad.

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- But this is the Prime Minister of the land, we cannot have one, Madam Speaker, that will do this to his own citizens; the citizens who look up to him; the citizens who want to bring all their problems to him; but instead they go through the darkest night of their lives. This man, Madam Speaker,...

(Hon. Member interjected)

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- ... says to me “I have never been in a police station in my life and I was on the verge of being dead. I was trying to catch my breath.”

(Chorus of interjections)

Madam Speaker, this is the way that our leader is treating the members of this nation.

(Chorus of interjections)

It is said, Madam Speaker, if the shepherd...

(Chorus of Interjections)

... does not care for his flock, then he is an alien not a shepherd. He lives on the flock and he does not care whether they are alive or dead, this is why, Madam Speaker, this nation needs to change its leader. It needs someone who can take this country to prosperity, built on the entrenched principles of God.

(Chorus of interjections)

If you want something, Madam Speaker, you can ask for it.

Now, they make laws and impose things on the *iTaukei* people. You know, Madam Speaker, now they say that it does not matter if the *Bose Levu Vakaturaga* has been removed, but people are entrenching their interests. They know that slowly, slowly and systematically, they will remove the *iTaukei* race from the face of this earth.

(Chorus of interjections)

Madam Speaker, as I say today, time will reveal ...

(Chorus of interjections)

... and time will reveal. We need to change our Prime Minister. We have come this way in this House, so we need a majority - listen to the small voice convicting you.

(Chorus of interjections)

Madam Speaker, yesterday, this House passed the changes to amend most of the Standing Orders. The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) had summoned the Ministry of Finance for information about salaries of Hon. Ministers and still they said they cannot release it, why? Madam Speaker, what are they hiding?

(Chorus of interjections)

Why the change, Madam Speaker? , The change has been done for the Government to protect its own interests, Madam Speaker, it is public information.

(Chorus of interjections)

They do not have it.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- They have it, Madam Speaker. It's been handed over to them.

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- When was it?

Madam Speaker, I plead today that this House should seriously consider this motion and not look at it as being brought from the Opposition office. It is brought on behalf of the nation and it is in the interest of the nation to lead the future generation. Madam Speaker, I plead with everyone in this House to allow us to have a new Prime Minister tomorrow.

(Chorus of interjections)

From tomorrow, we must have a new Prime Minister, and everyone should know that when we have a new Prime Minister, there is no FijiFirst Government to lead this nation anymore.

(Laughter)

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. The House is now open for debate. I give the floor to the Hon. Ratu Kiliraki.

HON. RATU K. KILIRAKI.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am very passionate about the mahogany industry because it is associated with landowners.

As you know, there are 14 stations in Fiji that have mahogany plantations and these are located in Nukurua, Colo-i-Suva, Galoa, Naboutini, Baravi, Nausori Highland, Nadarivatu, Wainunu, Dreketi, Korotaci and Navonu, which covers the whole of Fiji. The multiplier effect is that these assets are worth billions of dollars.

I talk from a perspective of a mahogany landowner and it touches my heart because indigenous *iTaukei* landowners have been marginalised and no direct participation in the mahogany industry. They have been waiting for 40 to 50 years for the mahogany to mature for harvesting.

Nukurua is now harvesting. Nukurua station consists of 42 *mataqali* and you can imagine with the 14 stations throughout Fiji and when you multiply that by the number of *mataqali* and also by the number of members of the *mataqali*, you can imagine the figure that will come out from that in regards to the landowners.

They have not participated in logging, replanting and you know, I have been raising questions here in regards to mahogany because I am not satisfied with the Government (on the watch of the Hon. Prime Minister) that this has come into place.

You see, Madam Speaker, the mahogany industry is governed by the Mahogany Industry Council of which the Hon. Prime Minister is the Chairman, including the Hon. Attorney-General, the Hon. Minister for Fisheries and Forests, the Chairman of Fiji Mahogany Trust and some other nominees of the Hon. Prime Minister who have not been nominated yet.

In 2014, they sat only once, 2015, they was no sitting and now we are in 2016. Madam Speaker, how can you manage, how can you provide for this industry, with this billion dollar multiple value to the country to be under the Hon. Prime Minister? That is why mahogany landowners have no confidence in the Hon. Prime Minister. You know, Madam Speaker, the credibility (I suspect corruption) and transparency in the issuance of licences are governed by the



MIC of which the Hon. Prime Minister and Hon. Attorney-General give their decisions. You may remember the sustainable mahogany industry of which the Hon. Prime Minister was shown in the papers, holding a guitar, they are allocated 30,000 cubic meters per year.

Also, 40,000 cubic meters for Western Pacific which exists only in the book, no physical, only by name. That takes this 40,000 to Sustainable Mahogany Industry (SMI) of which about 70,000 cubic meters altogether, and 70 per cent of the total mahogany production every year. He was supposed to value add here, he was supposed to make guitars, you know what, Madam Speaker, he only exported about 4 per cent of the production of guitar parts, and where is the 96 per cent of the production? All rough sawn timber that is exported. value added outside of Fiji.

(Chorus of interjections)

You imagine how much money is going out of this country. Madam Speaker, landowners are not participating in the replanting, weeding, logging and harvesting, not including to at least be given the direct participation to access to the logs.

There are 10 licences to buy logs, of which Pacific Western Timbers are the top grades: grade one, grade two, grade three, but premium figures. Your two indigenous companies are given grades four and five. These are the least, the worst grades of mahogany that are given to landowners and they are only given over 1,000, 1,500 cubic meters, which takes three and four months to harvest and they finish their quota. What is left is for the rest of the six and seven months. You know, Madam Speaker, this is coming from the hearts of landowners that they no longer have confidence in the Hon. Prime Minister to look after their affairs in regards to mahogany, Madam Speaker. Thank you Madam Speaker.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA. – Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER. – Honourable Gavoka.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA. – Let me also contribute to this motion before the House and at the outset, Madam Speaker, it is a difficult day for us in Fiji, to bring this motion to the House and to be debating regarding the leadership of the land. It is very simple, Madam Speaker, we are at a juncture in our development that we now need a healer and not an enforcer. That is basically where we are coming from Madam Speaker.

Where we are today, Madam Speaker, we are hearing that conditions in the country have improved after eight or nine years of stagnation. What we are not saying, Madam Speaker, is that he cannot continue with the way he is ruling Fiji to take us into the future. Dictatorship, enforcing has had its days and if you look at any, historically, these type of leaderships are short lived. They cannot last forever.

My colleague here was referring to the Bible. It is like building the biblical house on the sand. It will collapse. It is time to change tracks. It is time to have a healer to lead this country.

Madam Speaker there are many contentious issues that the Government of the day is trying to address. It can be done by a healer not by an enforcer.

We now have the issue about the flag and we are simply saying from this side, “it is so dear to the people of Fiji, have a referendum and let them have a say.” We could go on about the significance of this flag to the vast majority of the people in this country, especially Christians. As

we know, the Union Jack has the Cross of Saint George, the Cross of Saint Andrew. These are people who died for Christ. Saint George, as we know, was a military officer in the Roman Army and because he stood up against the persecution of the Christians, the Roman Emperor had him executed.

We know Saint Andrew, the brother of the preacher; he was a disciple of Jesus Christ. He was also executed in Greece and he died. He wanted his cross to be diagonal, that is the Cross of Saint Andrew for Scotland.

These are the people who died for Christ at that period when Christianity started out and there is a vast number of people in Fiji who also died for Christ. In Fiji, our own people went across into parts of Fiji that was still in darkness, they died and they went to Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, the New Hebrides, taking the Word of Christ, heeding the Word of Christ about the Great Commission: “Ye shall be witnesses unto me, in Jerusalem, in Judea, in Samaria and to the ends of the world.”

Today, Madam Speaker, there are people in Fiji who can relate, who are still alive, who took the message of Christ and know how difficult it was within the islands.

Only a few months ago, a school teacher from Lelean, who went as a missionary to the Solomon Islands in the `60s was relating his experience to his Church in Namadi and people were in tears when he talked about the difficulties they faced, especially when he contracted Malaria twelve months into his mission. His wife began to cry because she saw within that island, graves of missionaries from Fiji: a Rotuman missionary with his Rotuman wife; a missionary with his two children and his wife; people who died; and he said that in every island in the Solomon Islands, in every cemetery are graves of Fijian missionaries.

We know about Papua New Guinea, we know about the people from Ra who died there in the 1800s and in many parts of Fiji, both Methodists and Seventh Day Adventists who died in Papua New Guinea whilst taking the Word of Christ. So how can we say, how can FijiFirst and the Hon. Prime Minister say we will remove that flag, it is a relic. It is a link to the past for this country, it is dear to us. We know that it is going to be divisive. Let us end it. That is why an enforcer will continue to push his agenda in spite of all these overwhelming proofs that the flag is not something that we do not want to change.

Madam Speaker, we all know that on the day of Independence when the Union Jack came down, the chiefs of Fiji who revered the flag so much did not want to have it lowered on the same day as the Noble Banner Blue went up. That was the custom in most of the newly independent nations. On a particular hour, down came the Union Flag, up went the new flag. The chiefs of Fiji said “no we won’t do with the Union Jack, it is so important to us.”

So they had a trooping of the colour a day before to lower the Union Jack and hoist the Noble Banner Blue on the next day. That is how much the Union Jack meant to us and we tend to say, “I think across the board that because it is British and many countries in the world are perhaps anti-British. It is meaningless to us but Fiji is different, Madam Speaker. We put it this way, in the context of the indigenous people, the British in Fiji, through them, today the indigenous people of this country own 90 percent of the land - 90 percent and that is almost unprecedented anywhere the British rules.

In New Zealand, the Maoris make up 16 percent of the population but own 6 percent of the land. We know about Australia, we know about North America, the first settlers, so this is one country where we value the legendary of the British and, Madam Speaker, that is where we need

to change leadership because we feel that all the reasoning we can put before FijiFirst, before the leader of the day, he will not change his mind. Earlier, he has said in this House that he is an enforcer, so please let us change the leadership, put a healer in place to heal the land and bring the people together.

Madam Speaker, I come from the Western Division and there is a distribution of lease which is now being embraced by our people in a very positive way but in the process, it has weakened the real structure.

Now, when people come in and say “so and so, your cousin has passed away, let’s go, pay our tribute.” It is now difficult to mobilise the people because in the past, it was the chiefs, because the chiefs got part of the money, they were the ones who were able to call everyone together; “let’s go, do the right thing with our relatives down the road.”

Now, everyone is equal, it is very hard, Madam Speaker, to now mobilise the village, mobilise the *yavusa* or *tokatoka* to do what has been or what you have been doing all these years.

Having said that, let us embrace the equal distribution and I know that the young welcome it, but in the process, what we could have done was say “alright, you are going get a portion directly, but put 10 per cent to help your *vanua*”, it is very simple. Distribute the lease to everyone but 10 per cent to go to your *vanua* because the *vanua* is their anchor, their *vanua* is almost like their God. By dismantling and not resourcing the *vanua*, you are going to see a disintegration of the *vanua*.

It was a disintegration, and this is why people are saying, “Are these people determined to commit genocide.” I mean, that is basically what people are saying. When the *vanua* disintegrates, there is going to be genocide. I mean, that is the long and short of it. We are fortunate in Fiji that we have the *vanua*, we have the chiefs, Madam Speaker.

To FijiFirst, Madam Speaker, the GCC is like a relic, that they should no longer be part of a Fijian way of life. But, Madam Speaker, without the GCC, without the chiefs who were custodians of our land, custodians of our *itovo* and everything we have, we are today a very viable and strong community in the world. They may disagree with this but again, 90 per cent of the land in Fiji is in the hands of the *iTaukei*. Who should we thank? The chiefs because of their relationship with the Crown and that is why we are here today.

Madam Speaker, about our custom and culture, when Prime Minister Modi visited Fiji....

(Hon. Members interjected)

MADAM SPEAKER.- Order! Order! Order!

Hon. Gavoka has the floor, he has the right to be heard. Please, allow him to speak.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Thank you, Madam Speaker.

... last year for one day, we know for certain from sources who told us that wherever he went in Suva on that day, he kept talking about the traditional ceremony of welcome accorded to him by the people of *Bulu*. Everywhere he went, everywhere he went!

(Hon. Members interjected)

Has this group asked themselves, I mean this is a leader of a country of one billion people and he was touched beyond measure by the custom and tradition of a small nation of people in the South Pacific, how was it that their custom touched him? Who kept the integrity of that custom? The chiefs of this country, the chiefs whom you have abolished, the Chiefs that you are downgrading.

(Hon. Members interjected)

The people of Bulu have maintained the integrity of their custom because of their paramount chief, and because of the relationship between the chiefs in this country.

If he is going to go with this crowd in here, Madam Speaker, one day there will be no more tradition like that, that you are so proud to display to the whole world. You are so proud of it, but you are weakening the structure of that system. I love this, Madam Speaker, everywhere the Ministers go, they are greeted with a *tabua* during *qaloqalovi*, and I am proud of it. I say, “Wow, this is lovely”, everywhere they, but do they realise that the *tabua* is saying to them, “this is binding us together, you and I, binding our *vanua*, binding our Chiefs to you and I?” Do you realise that or you just accept it and say, “Throw this away” or “the Chiefs are no longer viable, are no longer to be supported?”

Madam Speaker, what they are doing to this country by marginalising a huge part of our population in order to progress Fiji is fraught with danger. You do not know the number of people you have marginalised in this country, you do not know because you just keep enforcing and you have a leadership style that is enforcing and enforcing, so that is why today, we need a leader.

Madam Speaker, there are many things that one can do to bring healing to this country but it must start with a change of thinking, a change in leadership style and that is why we are saying we need in this country a healer, in Hon. Ro Teimumu Kepa, we do not need an enforcer. We need to change the incumbent because his style of leadership is not good for this country.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- I give the floor to Hon. Bulitavu.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Madam Speaker, I would like to contribute to the motion that is before the House. I hope all Honourable Members will leave emotions aside, and we will only talk about policies and that is why this motion has been brought to the floor.

You know very well, Madam Speaker, that for the last two years, the Hon. Prime Minister has been absent from the Budget sitting to defend its own budget. He was absent in the 2014 Budget, even last year’s Budget.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Please, do not make reference to the person, focus on policies and the governance system.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Very well, Madam Speaker, I will try to focus on that.

On Tuesday, Madam Speaker, I had asked a question to the Hon. Prime Minister on why he needs to change the flag and the benefits that the new flag will bring and from the answer that was given, I was not even convinced.

Madam Speaker, when you see the current flag, it reflects the preamble of the 1997 Constitution, and that was the answer that the Hon. Prime Minister should have given. If you look at the constitutional history of the preamble of the 1997 Constitution, it talks about the arrival of our ancestors and it is there in the flag, you can see the canoe there. If you look at the preamble, it talks about how Fiji was ceded to Great Britain, it is also in the shield that is there. If you look at the 1997 Constitution, it talks about how the indigenous Fijians were actually converted from heathenism to Christianity through the power of the name of Jesus Christ. It is written in the preamble.

In the 2013 Constitution, Madam Speaker, you will not find anything like that. In the 1997 Constitution, you will find a very important clause there, 'WITH GOD AS OUR WITNESS, GIVE OURSELVES THIS CONSTITUTION'. In the 2013 Constitution, 'WE GIVE OURSELVES THIS CONSTITUTION'. In the 1997 Constitution, it had a provision where the State and religion are to be separate, and in the 2013 Constitution, it again repeats the same provision that were there.

The Bainimarama-led Government is not the first government that says that they are the only government who has brought Fiji to become a secular State, it was already there. They are just relabeling all these, Madam Speaker. If you look back on how this Government has performed, look at some of the policies and an example is the Free Textbooks policy, but where are the textbooks? Textbooks have still not reached our schools. The three reasons given were by the:

1. Hon. Minister for Education on television where he said that textbooks from last year were yet to be returned by the students;
2. Hon. Attorney-General on television where he said, that there were some problems with the tender and they were going to call for tenders and award the tender to the winner who will take up the contract for another five years; and
3. Hon. Prime Minister when opening a ceremony in the Western Division, blamed some public officials for being corrupt.

(Hon. Members interjected)

People are really confused, Madam Speaker. They talk about the policy of free medicine but there are no drugs in the hospital. The Assistant Minister for Health stated in a press release that it was because of the process, but why was the procurement late? What were they doing, knowing very well that stock was going to run out? These are the things that they have promised the people and the people are frustrated. That is why they do not have any confidence in the Government of the day.

(Laughter)

There are many policies, Madam Speaker. The Hon. Minister for Agriculture talks about CBUL but I ask, what has CBUL done to the indigenous people? Madam Speaker, iTLTB has not done anything to improve the status of the indigenous *iTaukei* landowners to move from passive land providers to become entrepreneurs, it has done nothing. CBUL for only our landowners to be locked in the colonial and neo-colonial arrangement of lease system – nothing else. We only receive lease, nothing else.

They opened up the Land Bank, that is another policy but what has the Land Bank done? It has deepened the problem, Madam Speaker, and the same arrangement that was with iTLTB,

where landlord and tenant, a colonial model, is still being practiced by the Land Bank - nothing else.

(Laughter)

They may be laughing but that is the fact.

In 2009, the Hon. Prime Minister outlined in his Budget speech that he was going to transfer thousands of hectares of mahogany plantation to indigenous owners and that has not happened. What has happened to all these promises, Madam Speaker?

In 2009 to 2011, the Hon. Prime Minister announced a joint venture when he announced the Waisoi Copper Mining in Namosi and after Nawailevu nothing has come about. There is no joint venture agreement between the landowners and mining companies where the landowners can go into to own shares in those companies.

Landowners just received rentals and the fair share of royalty for the future generation. The other day, the Hon. Minister for Lands was asked in regards to Tuvatu Mining Project, the licence that was given there, the Hon. Minister failed to say three things that the people are confused about:

- (i) the mineral belongs to the State;
- (ii) the bill that needs passage in this House to determine the fair share of the royalty has not being brought before the House;
- (iii) the formula which will determine that has not come in; and
- (iv) in regards to when the royalty comes with the Department of Land, it is for the future generation.

The landowners today cannot access it, landowners are facing difficulties, Madam Speaker. They want to send their children to school for education but those funds are with the Government and Government becomes the trustee. The Hon. Minister for Agriculture when he was Commissioner Northern, nothing has helped landowners from these developments.

(Hon. Member interjected)

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.-I do not have any confidence in him.

Going back to the flag, Madam Speaker.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- I don't have confidence in the Hon. Prime Minister.

(Chorus of interjections)

(Laughter)

Listen. I think they are trying to divert the issues here. The issue here is that, people are complaining about the Government: the cost of living is very high; the food prices are high; they have removed VAT, Madam Speaker, and they said they have reduced it to 9 per cent, but all those basic food items that were zero VAT, people are paying now paying, Madam Speaker. These are

the frustrations, there is plenty poverty around. Squatters are looking for land but they are all settling around.

Madam Speaker, Government has done nothing in that regard. They have got their policies, when they are asked here, some of the Ministers do not have answers. That is a government that we do not need at the moment in Fiji. We need a government that will come to the concerns of the people when in need.

I will go back to the flag, Madam Speaker. One of the very important things which I disagree with in the change of flag is the founding authority that was in the flag that the Government is removing. In every change and every flag, there are concepts as the Hon. Prime Minister is saying, but the symbols that are there should have an underlining authority which should be the foundation of our nation. Our underlining authority in the current flag is the cross, which is the greatest transformation that had ever come through our land which converted our ancestors.

If the new flag holds on to the founding authority, that could have been the way forward but the Hon. Prime Minister has said that it is the right time to move away from that authority, from that Christian value, to move into another authority which we do not know. The new flag will be based on what authority? Those, Madam Speaker, are some things that I would like to bring to this debate.

The other thing, Madam Speaker, the Government is saying that it is multi-ethnic, equal citizenry, they always talk about that and the Hon. Prime Minister talks about that everywhere he goes, but if we look back at the policies since 2006 to this year, most of the policies are pro-indigenous. The Hon. Prime Minister is talking about this Government as not being racist, this Government is for everyone, but if you look at the policies and all the projects implemented, it is pro-indigenous. He is targeting the indigenous community in our rural areas simply for electoral gain. This has been the confusion of our Hon. Prime Minister, whether he is hiding behind the mask. He is also pro-indigenous and at the same time he wants to preach about the universal principles.

(Hon. Member interjected)

You have to understand, go and get all the projects that the Government has done, then you will see that the Government is pro-indigenous.

Madam Speaker, the efficiency of their services: Yesterday I talked about the ability of the Government to transform itself, to come back to the Civil Service culture. When we had the Interim Government during the military regime, the Military had done what we call “the militarisation of development.” So the four Commissioners in our Divisions were Military Officers and everything that was brought abused all the processes of the Civil Service: people came directly to the Commission to give their complaints; and people were removed because of allegations of corruption and people who wanted to come directly to the Hon. Prime Minister could just come direct because it was just like a military arrangement. However, when we now come to democracy, we have what we call a “cargo cult” because people are so used to the shortcuts, people are so used to things that are being given because Government wants to appease them.

When the processes of our budget are implemented or when allocations are given, people are finding it frustrating when these things are not coming as normal like before and that is something that is so entrenched in our system which the Government has not changed and

Government in those circumstances has made it very difficult for people to access those things, Madam Speaker.

In addition, Madam Speaker just to conclude, the other point I would like to raise, there are plenty promises in the budget. The Hon. Prime Minister goes around Fiji and says “read your Budget book, the Estimates” but that is the duty of all Divisional Officers, the DPOs, the Planning officers and PAs to go to the people and tell them where their needs can be addressed but do not tell them to read the Budget.

These are simple things, Madam Speaker, which people are frustrated about and they cannot adjust to the programmes and policies of the Government.

With that, Madam Speaker, I support the motion that is before the House.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now give the floor to the Hon. Salote Radrodro.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Madam Speaker, I rise to make my contribution to the motion before the House, the motion of no confidence on the Head of the Government. Madam Speaker, after the 80 years of military rule, the 2014 General Elections provided an opportunity to rebuild our democracy. However, Madam Speaker, the Political Party Decree provided an uneven playing field for all other political parties, except the FijiFirst. For example. Madam Speaker,

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Point of order!

MADAM SPEAKER.- Point of order!

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, the motion on the floor is a motion of no confidence against the Prime Minister and not a motion of no confidence against the Government, there is huge difference. Two of the members from the Opposition have already stood up and said they have no confidence in the Government, but the motion actually is about the Prime Minister; very distinct issues.

The Hon. Radrodro has just said there is no confidence in the Government. Perhaps, they have no confidence in their leader who they are proposing, that is why they are not mentioning the leader. Just a point of clarification, Madam Speaker, there is a world of difference between the Government and Prime Minister - speak on the motion.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Can I make a ruling, first?

I have already mentioned that we prefer not to have personal attacks or personal statements straight or directly to the Hon. Prime Minister, however they can talk on policies and the system of governance and what is happening.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- It is a ruling?

MADAM SPEAKER.- If I need to, otherwise, there is a fine line and that it will be very difficult to control. I apologise, Hon. Bulitavu, did you stand up to raise a point of order?

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- (inaudible)

Thank you, Hon. Salote Radrodro, you may continue.



HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Madam Speaker, I note the intervention from the Hon. Attorney-General but my point of mentioning the Head of Government and not the Prime Minister because you had ruled that, we are not to mention the Prime Minister in person, so I thought Head of Government would be ....

Anyway, Madam Speaker, the political party that did not meet the threshold, all their voters were also thrown away. This means that their voices are not being represented in any other political party or in this House. Having said that, Madam Speaker, we participated in the 2014 General Elections, with the hope that Fiji will recapture, rebuild our democracy.

Madam Speaker, from my experience as someone who has officiated in the past General Election process, in the previous Elections, the 2014 General Elections, especially in the counting has been one that all political parties except the FijiFirst has raised strong objections in how the result has been processed.

Madam Speaker, this is the second year of the so-called Parliamentary democracy, 2016 is the second year and the amendments to the Standing Order yesterday is perfectly an example of Parliamentary dictatorship that still continues in this House.

Madam Speaker, the people of Fiji, let me iterate that Fiji is still under military rule in the guise of democracy.

Madam Speaker, the Civil Service and statutory bodies are still being militarised with cronies from the military or from the Government side still in the Civil Service. Nothing much has changed, Madam Speaker. I had raised this issue in my maiden speech and the military personnel are still in the Civil Service. Also, Madam Speaker, when we look around, the military officers are still all around us: the President; the Commissioner of Police; the Permanent Secretaries; the Heads of Mission and so on and so forth. Madam Speaker, the people are still fearful and this Government has continued with instilling fear in the people.

Madam Speaker, let me touch on the budget. Budget, in any government, is considered the heartbeat of the government. However, Madam Speaker, in the debate for the 2016 Budget, the Hon. Prime Minister, the Head of Government was not in the House and, Madam Speaker, this speaks a thousand words on his commitment to the people of Fiji. Madam Speaker, we asked the question, having done that, is that a reflection of a Prime Minister who cares about the people of Fiji?

(Hon. Member interjected)

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Madam Speaker, let me also highlight the theme of the 2015 Budget, “Turning Promises into Deeds”, and I would urge the Hon. Minister of Finance (he is not here) if he could provide us in terms of the effective implementation or the achievements of all the promises that have been turned into deeds.

Madam Speaker, if the Hon. Prime Minister really cares about the people of Fiji, then the Government, particularly those at vulnerable positions like those under the poverty categories, why not restate the VAT-zero rated items, why did the Government take that away? That is a reflection of a government that does not care about people in vulnerable positions or people who are in the poverty category.

Also, Madam Speaker, what has the Government or the Head of Government done in terms of creating more employment, bearing in mind that infrastructure development that does not create employment opportunities for the people and can be considered as bad financial management of taxpayers' money.

(Hon. Member interjected)

Madam Speaker, unemployment, violence against women and children are on an unprecedented high. Madam Speaker, take for example, the motion to change the flag, why change the flag when people are happy with the current flag? Why fix something when it is not broken? The people watching the recent rugby matches held up the present flags with such pride and happiness, so why waste taxpayers' money on such activities that is not of priority right now?

Madam Speaker, since the last Elections, this Government and the Hon. Prime Minister as the Head, has never made any effort to set up a Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

(Hon. Member interjected)

Madam Speaker, around the world, countries that have come out of dictatorship have all made concerted effort to set up a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, to be able to offer an opportunity to the people to come forward and air their hurts, injustices, treatments done to them and their grievances.

Madam Speaker, there has been a big breach of our human rights and nothing that has been done to address them and, if the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was established, it would provide an avenue to address all these human rights abuse.

Madam Speaker, if the Hon. Prime Minister is for the people, then establish a Truth and Reconciliation Commission to help bring the people together, only then the Hon. Prime Minister will know that people have been hurt and are still hurting.

Madam Speaker, the indigenous people are hurting more because of the non-consultative ways that they have been treated in having dismantled institutions such as the *Bose Levu Vakaturaga*, as well as the Land Bank Decree and the *Qoliqoli* Bill. Therefore, Madam Speaker, the indigenous people are feeling very vulnerable and my greatest concern are the legislation that are in place to validate what the Government is doing.

Madam Speaker, let me refresh our memories of the 2000 *coup*. The now Hon. Prime Minister was the then Commodore and he declared a State of Emergency, where the country was to be run by the Military Council and the primary objective for the interim administration and I quote "To take the country to good governance, rid of corruption and bad practices and at the same time promote well-being of Fiji for its people at earliest opportunity."

Madam Speaker, in 2015, FICAC has reported that almost 6,365 complaints have been received, but only 335 were identified to fall under the FICAC for investigative purposes and who knows, maybe only 15 or so will be convicted.

Madam Speaker, 6,030 cases were identified as not falling under the FICAC responsibility. So, we ask, Madam Speaker, of the real motivation, what is the real motivation behind that 2006 *coup* if the reported figures from FICAC speaks ours.

Madam Speaker, this is a clear reflection of shifting goal posts by the Government to suite their own agenda, just like yesterday, the amendment of the Standing Orders which has effectively shut out the members of the public in raising their concerns through petitions, because petitions will now be voted and we know the Government has the majority.

Madam Speaker, also the Members of the Opposition have been denied the opportunity to debate effectively as captured in the Prayer that you, Madam Speaker, read every morning that we debate honestly, effectively for the good of our people.

Madam Speaker, in view of the aforesaid, I support the motion of no confidence on the Hon. Prime Minister and move that he will be replaced. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you, I now give the floor to the Hon. Nawaikula.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- I rise to make my contribution. The motion that we have before the House is brought under Section 94 (1) of the Constitution for the motion of no confidence in the Hon. Prime Minister. We can do that, but we need the support from the other side and this side, we are asking sincerely for your support in having to achieve this.

(Hon. Members interjected)

We are entitled to do this under our Constitution. The reason why I wish to elaborate here in giving my support are few:

1. Under the leadership of the current Prime Minister, this Government has been responsible for great suffering to the people of this country.
2. There has been hurt, turmoil, and torture.
3. There has been suppression of the rights of a particular group of people.
4. There has also been a tremendous or substantial abuse of human rights.
5. There has been no real development in democracy.

For those reasons, I urge the other side of the House to support us in this motion and vote with us, as they should.

Madam Speaker, how can we on this side as well as those on the other side forget the great suffering of these people? How can we forget the people who lost employment? How can we forget those people with children who lost employment? They had to pay for their mortgages. These were done under this Government and under the leadership of the current Prime Minister.

How can we forget the cries of 13 CRW families which, still today, no charges have been laid? These are critical things. Justice is still waiting, and that is the responsibility of this Government under the leadership of the current Prime Minister.

Madam Speaker, how can we forget the suppression of a group of people? This Government has been totally responsible for the suppression of the rights of the indigenous

peoples and yet, this Government signed a treaty, ILOC169, to protect the cultural institutions but the Government came back and passed the Decree to terminate the Great Council of Chiefs. Under that Treaty, the Government undertook to consult with indigenous people before any change of policy or any laws are passed that affect their rights.

However, you have all these laws or Decrees. You have the Mahogany Decree, the Native Lands Decree, the Fijian Affairs Decree that took away our name, the *Qoliqoli* Decree, we were not consulted on those and this was during the headship of the Hon. Prime Minister, and that is the reason for this motion because we need a change.

In relation to the Surfing Decree, that took away the rights of the indigenous people from levying a sum for the use of their *qoliqoli*. Now, we have another declaration coming in, forbidding them to exercise their rights, all under the leadership of the Hon. Prime Minister. The thing that we are looking forward to, Madam Speaker, we went into Elections with a lot of excitement, we know that there was going to be a change, we know there will be real democracy, but no.

Madam Speaker, from day one, we wanted to dialogue on every instances. Even now, we are still saying that we want the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission. It is not only for us, but for those on the other side because we said; “We don’t need to try you. We don’t need to send you to prison. We don’t need to try you for treason.” This is the way to do it. The way to do this is by having a Truth and Reconciliation Commission so that we can forget, we can forgive, and we can heal, but that has not occurred and that is the reason for this motion.

We had this debacle this last week, the abuse of Standing Order 51. We were looking forward to a time of lively debate, engaging the public as we should under the Constitution in the making of laws but only this week, we are up to number eight. Eight laws were passed in this House through Standing Order 51 and we were told that some of those were not substantial. They are very, very substantial, Madam Speaker. Some of those laws were read in the first instances, coming into this House and there is a need for that. We have again and instance where the Government tried to sneak in motions, and that is simply not on, that means democracy is not developing. That is why we are sick and tired and we are saying, “no more.” That is why we are saying, “we need to change”, and that is the reason why I support the motion.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. I give the floor to the Hon. Nanovo.

(Hon. Members interjected)

HON. RATU S.V. NANOVO.- Madam Speaker, I rise this morning to support the motion that is before the House. We, on this side of the House, have seen that the Hon. Prime Minister has destroyed the indigenous’ rights in their very own land, as highlighted in the following areas:

(Chorus of Interjections)

- 1) The removal of the *Bose Levu Vakaturaga* (Great Council of Chiefs): They are saying that the current Constitution guarantees the rights of the indigenous people. To us, that is not so because what was guaranteed in the previous

Constitution stands very high as compared to what we have in the current Constitution.

- 2) The use of the name 'Fijians' to refer to all the citizens of this country: Where on earth do we get this idea from? The reason is because the name of a country can only be related to who is the indigenous race of that country. In Fiji, the name 'Fijians' should only be referred to the indigenous *iTaukei* and not to anyone else.
- 3) We are not even allowed to speak in our own mother tongue in this august House: We toured around the country, overseas, we saw that this is the only country in the world that does not allow this, and that is a very sorry state.
- 4) We are not allowed to acknowledge our God, our Creator and our Redeemer in this august House: This has totally destroyed a tradition that used to be observed in this august House and by doing that, it will be hard to get the blessings from our God about this land.
- 5) The controversial equal distribution of lease money which has created serious social problems in our society: Previously, the lease money was usually paid to the *mataqali* because the *mataqali* is the owner of the land and therefore, the lease money should go to the *mataqali*. When they were doing that, the *mataqali* was able to do some developments like village housing, scholarships, church developments, through that money because the money that was coming to them towards the *mataqali* was substantial enough to meet all those allocations. Through that, they were able to take bank loans to do their village housing scheme. When that was taken away from them, some of those communities still owe debts to the bank. They are now arguing as to who is going to pay for the debts and if the bank takes charge of what has happened now, it will really create more poverty towards the *mataqali* than what it was before. So, it will create more problems rather than solving them.
- 6) It has taken away the Fijian Affairs Scholarship: Previously, when Fijian students wanted to go to USP or other tertiary institutions, they had scholarships to look forward to, but now, if they do not have the required marks they will have to take a loan and that, coupled with the unemployment rate in Fiji right now, will bring them further down to where they were before, especially when low income-earners are now being charged with another 9 per cent VAT to pay from this year onwards, which was not there last year.

With those words, Madam Speaker, I support the motion and it is high time that we must have a new Prime Minister.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. I give the floor to the Hon. Mikaele Leawere.

HON. M.R. LEAWERE.- Madam Speaker, allow me to contribute very briefly regarding the motion of no confidence on the Hon. Prime Minister.

I am very passionate about education and the policies that have been made are not conducive to positive learning in terms of scholarships. Before, Madam Speaker, we used to have FAB Scholarships, where indigenous people had access to tertiary studies by applying for

scholarships. Now that has been taken away by this current Government, as well as the Multi-Ethnic, and these are the avenues where parents of this nation seek or their students seek or pursue further studies in terms of obtaining a scholarship because due to the income of the parents, they are not able to properly send their children to tertiary institutions.

With the introduction of the Toppers Scholarship, Madam Speaker, the current Government is not a system where parents are assisted because those who are able to afford like parents who have an income they can support their children, they are able to support their children in as far as applying for a scholarship. The Toppers Scholarship is not helping in that regard.

The issue, Madam Speaker, that was raised yesterday by the Hon. Minister for Education on parental engagement, the questions that had been asked, the question that has been raised is, how the Government can or how can the Ministry of Education assist parents in terms of helping students take further studies in terms of what is available.

We used to have Public Service Scholarships which is not there now. When students are able to go for further studies, they are able to do that with the help of scholarships through PSC, FAB and of course the Multi-Ethnic Scholarship which is not there.

Madam Speaker, this is my brief coordination this morning as I feel for the parents of this country because they have no access to further education because the scholarship schemes have been taken away by this Government through the leadership of the current Hon. Prime Minister and I stand to support this motion. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. I give the floor to the Hon. Vadei.

HON. A.T. VADEI.- I rise to support the motion this morning. I have been getting numerous complaints from military personnel who were discharged in 2012 and until today, these are some of the injustices.

Firstly, they have not got their last pay and also leave pay.

Secondly, the promotion of a non-performing Medical Practitioner in the Pathology Department to be Associate Professor with the Fiji National University. This is injustice to our local practitioners who have the qualification and who have the merit to be promoted as an Associate Professor in the Pathology Department to teach in our universities.

(Hon. Member interjected)

These are some of the inconsistencies in our policies and injustices under the leadership of our Hon. Prime Minister. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

(Chorus of interjections)

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now give the floor to the Hon. Karavaki for his right of reply.

(Chorus of interjections)

MADAM SPEAKER.- I am sorry. Hon. Minister for Health.

HON. J. USAMATE.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to thank you for the opportunity to be able to speak on the motion and to say that I think it is a motion that should not have been brought in the first place. There is nothing that has been stated in this House that provides a basis on which such a motion should be debated in the first place. I regard it as an absurd motion.

(Chorus of interjections)

Over the past few days, we have been hearing about the demise of democracy, the fact that democracy has passed away, but what is democracy? Democracy is government for the people and by the people.

(Chorus of interjections)

Democracy is when people speak and we listen to what they say.

Just before we had the Elections, all of us prayed about this Elections. We prayed to our God, we asked God, “please give us a leader, give us a group that can lead this country.” A lot of us fasted, a lot of us are now in our ministry, I am sure the Hon. Karavaki was one of those who, like a lot of people, fasted about this to get these results. The results have been given, the people of Fiji have spoken. There is just one person in this House, just one person was voted by more people in this country than all the rest of us Members of Parliament combined; just one person.

(Chorus of interjections)

MADAM SPEAKER.- Order! All these interjection are getting disorderly, please.

HON. J. USAMATE.- When we talk about democracy, we are talking about listening to the people. The people of this country have chosen one person, more people have voted for him than the rest of us combined and put together. The people of this country have shown through the votes that they put in who they want to lead this country and then you have the audacity to come here into this august House and talk about the fact that we need to change the leader. The people of this country have already spoken and that is what they have talked about.

The Hon. Karavaki has talked about the importance of listening to divine, that is true but I remind the Hon. Karavaki to read Romans chapter 13 vs 1; what does it say?

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- Tell us!

HON. J. USAMATE.- You tell me, you are the *talatala*. Romans chapter 13 verse 1, what does it say, read your *Bible*. It says that people in leadership are brought to lead, they are brought there because God allows them to lead. This is what has happened and He does change, but in this case there has been nothing that has been expressed in this House that shows that there is adequate reason for this.

You have talked about the need for healing. For a long time in this country, the people who needed healing, who needed looking after were the most marginalised in society. This Government has put in policies through the Ministry of Social Welfare and through the Ministry of Education to try to make sure that those who want education, those who did not have any avenue to be looked after by, they now can come to this Government and this Government provides the kind of things that they need.

(Chorus of interjections)

Never before have we had opportunities where anyone, they do not have to pay any more school fees, those things are provided.

(Chorus of interjections)

We now have provisions where people do not even have to worry about their bus fares, that has been provided. This is healing, healing for people who want education, never before has this happened. This has happened under the leadership of the current Prime Minister and you want to remove the current Prime Minister who is able to heal and meet the needs of the people of this country. I will tell you, there have been statements asking “why was the Prime Minister not here during the Budget discussion?”

Let me tell you what leadership is all about. Leadership is not about having to do everything, leadership is about having a vision, taking that vision, planting it in the heads of all your people so that they share that vision and then they move the country forward.

(Applause)

We on this Government side share the Prime Minister’s vision. That is why he does not have to be here because he knows he can count on us to take that vision and move it forward, that is what leadership is about. Leadership is not about being there all the time. I am trying to teach the Honourable Members on the other side what is leadership is all about. That for us is leadership. Leadership is also, you can only elect someone that has the confidence of everyone in that party. In this side of the House, all of us believe in our leader. I am not too sure that you can say the same thing about the opposite side of the House.

(Chorus of interjections)

A lot of the other issues that have been mentioned today, there have been a lot of talk today about the flag. Yes, we believe that the British and all the things that they did for us were very good but they also did some things that were very bad that led to all the problems that we had in the past. One is the divisive, divide and rule-type of strategies. Through that divisive, divide and rule, it has brought us to the problems that we had in 1987 and so forth. This leader with his vision and these principles that are now encapsulated in this Constitution is trying to build a united Fiji; a Fiji that is strong is not a Fiji as I mentioned yesterday that keeps looking at the rear vision mirror and thinks that everything that happened in the past is good.

There a lot of bad things that happened in the past, we need to be able to look at where we are today, decide what is best for our country to move forward and implement those kinds of things. You need a leader with vision and courage: a leader who will walk all over this country; will ride on horses; and talk to everyone in this country. That is the kind of leader we have in our Hon. Prime Minister and that is why this motion is absurd, it should have never even be considered in the first place. I give my 100 per cent backing to the Hon. Prime Minister.

MADAM SPEAKER.- I give the floor to the Hon. Rosy Akbar.

HON. R.S. AKBAR.- Madam Speaker, I stand in support of our Hon. Prime Minister and at the outset, I would like to say that I strongly oppose the motion before the House the motion on the vote of no confidence against the Hon. Prime Minister.



Madam Speaker, I would like to reiterate the words of the Hon. Minister for Health who stood in support of our Hon. Prime Minister and a few things I would like to bring to the attention of the House. From what I understand about democracy, we have been hearing these words “democracy is dying, we are mourning for the death of democracy.” From what I understand, democracy is about majority rule, it is about the voice of the people, it is about numbers, which this side of the House has and, Madam Speaker, I just heard the Hon. Karavaki saying “It is time for a change”. Of course, you will get your chance come 2018. This is not the time to change, come 2018 – allow the people to speak and you will see us come back, taking a lot more people to our side.

(Chorus of interjections)

Madam Speaker, I heard the Hon. Members from the other side stand up in support of the motion. If I heard correctly, not one Member spoke for the person, whose name has been proposed to take over the leadership.

(Chorus of interjections)

All we heard was the Hon. Prime Minister has done this, he is an enforcer, he is a dictator but not for once have I heard support for their own leader. Why? She will be the healer

HON. GOVT MEMBER.- They do not trust her!

HON. R.S. AKBAR.- Tell us!

Madam Speaker, we cannot pretend to be blind. We cannot pretend to turn a blind eye to what is happening around us. Too often, the issues that the other side have brought up in support of the motion has been debated in the House in terms of oral questions from the other side and nothing new came up.

Education was mentioned. There was mention about why was there a need for all of us to be called ‘Fijians’. Why not? Why cannot all of us be called Fijians? For how long was a group of people treated as second class? What is wrong with that? What is wrong? That is my right to be called a ‘Fijian’, no one can take that away.

(Chorus of interjections)

(Applause)

I am very new to politics. Too often, Madam Speaker, we have heard the preaching of the church, we had unpractical, unrealistic suggestions coming. For example, yesterday, let me go back. One Member said; “Every House should have a cow”, without thinking, how is that practical? One Member said, “We should not drink cow’s milk because it is not fit” - utter confusion.

(Hon. Member interjected)

HON. R.S. AKBAR.- Time and again, Madam Speaker, we hear about the disarray in the office of the Opposition. Time and again, we hear of that and here is a motion before the House of no confidence against our Hon. Prime Minister and for our Hon. Prime Minister to

be replaced with the Hon. Leader of the Opposition, who has, in my view, not shown sound leadership.

I am a champion of women's rights, I like to champion for women's empowerment and leadership but in no certain terms do I see the Hon. Leader of the Opposition fitting in the shoes of the Hon. Prime Minister.

Madam Speaker, again, as mentioned by the Hon. Minister for Health, our Prime Minister is undoubtedly the most popular Prime Minister in Fiji's history. Again, the results of the 2014 General Elections has clearly shown that, when our Hon. Prime Minister captured more votes than any other party combined. This is a thumping revelation that the Hon. Prime Minister is more popular than his own party. He is the Prime Minister for the people, not for a particular group. Our Prime Minister has dismantled the structures of institutionalised racism, which has existed since Fiji became independent in 1970.

(Hon. Member interjected)

Madam Speaker, this includes granting equal citizenry to all Fijians and I am sure, people in Fiji and across the world, would appreciate the fact that for the first time, we have equal citizenry in this country which has dismantled the formal barriers that remained an impediment to achieving multiculturalism. For decades, minorities such as us indo-Fijians were marginalised in the land of our birth and it is due to our Hon. Prime Minister and his vision that a country for all has eventuated in this.

Our Prime Minister, Madam Speaker, is a man of words, as mentioned, a man of commitment, a man of dedication, a man of passion and of course, like his name symbolises his strength. He is not afraid to see things the way they are and is not afraid to speak out and take bold steps.

Another quality our Prime Minister has, he is very charismatic, Madam Speaker, wherever our Hon. Prime Minister is, one only has to open his or her eyes to see how people flock to him: young, old and children all desire to be around our Prime Minister. That is one quality, Madam Speaker, I do not think the proposed nominee has.

Madam Speaker, this motion is basically like this "when children do not have their own way, so, I do not like you." Basically, this motion is about that. From the other side "we do not like the Prime Minister because he is doing good because he is not giving in to our demands." That is democracy. Please open your eyes and see the good, please open your eyes and see the good that the country has achieved under the leadership of our Hon. Prime Minister.

(Hon. Members interjected)

I am sure this side of the House will oppose the motion and like the mover of the motion said, "Come tomorrow, we will have a new Prime Minister." - in your dreams! Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. A. SUDHAKAR.- Madam Speaker, when Hon. Karavaki was presenting his motion, he said that today is a big day in history. Of course, it is a big day in history because Hon. Karavaki has moved April fool's day from April to February.

(Laughter)

He has brought the April fool's day forward because his motion is the biggest joke I have heard since April the fool's day last year. Why I am saying that is because this motion is being brought to make fun of this system here.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. A. SUDHAKAR.- That is what I am saying, it is a joke.

(Chorus of interjections)

Madam Speaker, I was a young child in 1987 when Sitiveni Rabuka executed the *coup*. That was the death of democracy in this country. The entire system was fragmented, damaged and since that time, all Fiji has seen is a type of politics that the Opposition party is trying to bring to this country.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. A. SUDHAKAR.- It was divisive rule: separate the people, separate the chiefs from the commoners and separate the Indo-Fijians from the Fijians. When will this country learn? When will the Opposition learn?

(Hon Members interjected)

Madam Speaker, in 2000, when George Speight took over power from a democratically elected Government, who rose to the occasion? The nation needed a hero. Who was the hero? It was not the Hon. Ro Teimumu Kepa, she did not rise to the occasion. If anything, she was hugging George Speight at the time. The only man who rose to the occasion was our current Hon. Prime Minister. He is the hero of the nation.

(Chorus of interjections)

He came, he was instrumental behind the *Muanikau Accord* and saw the release of the prisoners who were in for 58 days. The political prisoners were released and he was the man who was instrumental, no one else. If you hold elections today, he will win more votes because he is the hero of the nation. He does not go around hugging people who execute *coups*, he puts them in prison.

(Chorus of interjections)

He puts people who break democracy into prison. He does not hug them.

In 2001, when Qarase took power, they formed a party and took power and racism was institutionalised. People were given scholarships on race based. I was the victim of that as well because I did not get a scholarship in law, everyone else received it. They nationalised racism in the Civil Service, in employment and then everything was race-based. Even from 1970, everything was race-based but it became worst under the Qarase-led Government.

Who was the man who rose to the occasion, who was the man who took charge of the country? It was not Hon. Ro Teimumu Kepa, it was none other than the Hon. Prime Minister. He took matters into his own hands and cleaned the system. Then today, they have the audacity of

asking this Parliament to decide against him. What do you want to do, do you want to go a thousand years or two thousand years back into history? We are not prepared to go back into history! As the Hon. Minister for Health had said, stop looking in the rear vision mirror, you will have an accident, you will crash and you will die. We want to look forward, and the only person in this country who has the vision and leadership to go forward is the Hon. Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama, no one else.

(Applause)

Madam Speaker, he is the father of the new Fiji. Under his command, we are all equal for the first time. When we fill government forms, if you are an Indian, you write your father's name but now, you do not do it anymore because he is the man who made us all Fijians. When America goes to war, they are all Americans. When Germany goes to play football, they are all Germans. Only in Fiji, you are either called an Indian, Fijian, Chinese and whatever race you belong to.

This man has made us all equal and the progress that this country is seeing today is his doing. I am surprised with the audacity of the Opposition to ask us to remove him. If anything, you should be supporting him because he is building a Fiji for you and me. Look at this side of the House that he is leading. Look at your side of the House, where is the Fiji that was there before and after Independence that you want! This is the Fiji that he wants. Look at the composition of all of us on this side, we consist of *iTaukei*, Indians, Part-Europeans, everyone is here, we have a Sikh here as well. However, the Fiji that you want, not the whole of that side, part of this is ours, come the next election, most of that will be ours and we are going to capture all the seats during the next election ...

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- In your dreams!

HON. A. SUDHAKAR.- No, no, in his dreams because he is good. He will lead Fiji. The Hon. Prime Minister will ensure that because of his sound leadership, one day, all the 50 seats will be accommodated by FijiFirst.

(Laughter)

Madam Speaker, it also surprises me and actually brings the understanding of the word 'audacity' in question when they asked that the person who polled 202,459 votes, that is, 41 per cent of the total votes cast to be replaced by a person who polled less than 40,000 or 50,000 votes (49,485)?

(Hon. Member interjected)

It is not against me, the motion is against him, and it is your motion. You want to replace the leader who polled almost half of the votes of this nation, with a Member who did not even have 50 per cent, who received nine 9 per cent?

This party, Madam Speaker, that moved the motion is a party that is already fragmented within, they cannot manage their own affairs. They cannot see what is being cooked in their own kitchen and they want to challenge our own Prime Minister. Madam Speaker, the *Gaunavinaka Report* is testimony of that. The Honourable Member, whom they want to replace our Prime Minister with does not even have the confidence of their own party.

(Chorus of interjections)

In fact, the only reason she is sitting in this House is because she was pardoned by the party. The recommendation was for her to be removed and I would read from it in a while.

To my surprise, Madam Speaker, the person who has moved this motion was also a signatory to that letter on 19th August, 2015 and sent to the hierarchy of SODELPA, asking for her to be removed.

(Hon. Members interjected)

HON. A. SUDHAKAR.- Hon. Karavaki, Hon. Bulitavu and Hon. Leawere were signatories to that letter. This is like a soccer or rugby team where half of them are defending and half of them are taking their own goals. You give these people leadership, they will score their own goals against their own party. They will walk out even before they move the budget, and this country will collapse.

Madam Speaker, the *Gaunavinaka Report* highlights that there was mismanagement of funds. A person who cannot control \$225,000, how would you expect that person to control \$3 billion worth of Government property? When will we learn?

(Hon. Opposition Member interjected)

It is your report that is saying it, I am not saying it. It is your independent report that is saying it.

Madam Speaker, that is such an example. Two days ago when we wanted to bring a legislation that would have removed racism from the Civil Service, they were opposed to it. They want the Civil Service to be race-based as was before. When will they learn?

Yesterday, when we were trying to bring in a Bill which would enable us to get experts from other countries to save the lives of our people and help the sick and the poor, they were opposed to it. To give power in their hands, all of us will die because they have got no vision. As the Hon. Minister said, they are in a reverse gear.

Madam Speaker, as Hon. Karavaki has raised, I am going to read the conclusion of the *Gaunavinaka Report*, I quote:

“These findings humbly recommends that the Leader of Opposition resigns as a Member of Parliament because the position warrants professionalism to meet international best practice. When one leads their party to the General Elections, and if a party has lost, the leader steps down.”

She should have stepped down long ago, forget about having a dream of becoming the Prime Minister.

“The Hon. Leader of Opposition must remove the idea that SODELPA won and FijiFirst rigged the Elections. Whether it was rigged or not, her leadership so far has been highly questionable and has brought distrust among people who look up to her as a symbol of hope.”

“SODELPA cannot afford to survive politically if the Hon. Leader of Opposition and her inner circle continue to lead without any strategic plan.”

You cannot even lead a party, you want to lead the nation? This is an April fool's day joke, as I have said earlier.

“This type of leadership displayed by the Opposition Office is indeed absurd, unethical, childish and unprofessional.”

These are not my words, these are words from your own Report. You should make a copy and distribute it to your supporters. An immediate change was asked for by this Report.

Madam Speaker, this motion brought by Hon. Karavaki should not only be thrown out, it should be torn up, burnt and thrown off in the waters of Suva Point because it does not have any merit, Madam Speaker. What I am asking is, if there is any credibility left in any of the Members of the SODELPA Party, they should immediately stand up and apologise to this Honourable gentleman here, the Leader of our nation, because if this gentleman is not there, they will be fighting not amongst different races, you will fight and die within your own race.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Madam Speaker, I rise to demonstrate why this motion is a joke, and it should end up in one of our nearest rubbish bins somewhere here.

Madam Speaker, in the early morning of 12<sup>th</sup> January, 2016, I together with some of my colleagues from the Ministry of Education were at Duavata Secondary School near Udu Point, waiting for the Hon. Prime Minister at about 8.30 a.m. to open a new classroom and a library.

Madam Speaker, the Hon. Prime Minister arrived on time at 8.30 a.m. Imagine the time he got up, left Labasa Town and came to Duavata Secondary School, and the function was over on time. From Duavata Secondary School, we have to go to Wavuwavu Primary School but midway along the way is Nubu Primary School. The surrounding community knew that the Hon. Prime Minister would be passing through, so they got around in front of the road near a bus shelter which did not have any seat but there was a floor. Madam Speaker, the Hon. Prime Minister saw them on the side of the road, hopped out of his vehicle, sat down on the floor and had a quick meeting with them (a 45 minute meeting or so) with a baseball cap.

Madam Speaker, the Hon. Prime Minister answered all their questions, asked a staff member to deal with those issues, and got back in his vehicle. Madam Speaker, I asked my security, I said, and I quote:

(Hon. Member interjected)

MADAM SPEAKER.- Order!

(Chorus of interjections)

MADAM SPEAKER.- Order!

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Listen, when you finish your noise, I will resume.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, for as long as I can hear the Hon. Member who has the call, I will continue to allow him or her. I will continue to allow your interjections but

once the interjections are too loud and I cannot hear the Hon. Member speaking, that is when it becomes disorderly. Please, have some respect and also allow the Hon. Member who has the call to speak.

Thank you.

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Madam Speaker, I asked the security; “Bose, what would you think, if the Hon. Ro Teimumu Kepa was the Prime Minister, would she ever sit down like this on the floor and address them?” His response was, “Never, never!”

(Chorus of interjections)

MADAM SPEAKER.- Point of order!

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- He’s personalising the issue.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. Please do not personalise issues.

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Madam Speaker, I want them to read this article. Here is our Hon. Prime Minister, sitting with a baseball cap with the people on the floor; this is a leader.

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- What is special about that?

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- This is the leader of the people in this country, Madam Speaker, I have got copies for them.

HON.V.R. GAVOKA.- Point of order, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Point of order.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Madam Speaker, we understand that in the Standing Orders we do not say anything harmful, we do not say anything that is likely to harm relations in this country. You cannot suggest the *Roko Tui Dreketi* to sit on the floor, you cannot, that is harmful in the manner you are saying it here. In the manner you are saying it here, with us Fijians you cannot ask the *Roko Tui Dreketi* to sit on the floor. Madam Speaker, he should withdraw that.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, I would like to know which provision of the Standing Orders does that breach?

MADAM SPEAKER.- Can you quote which Standing Order you are referring to?

HON V.R. GAVOKA.- I do not have the exact one but we do not say things that are likely to incite feelings in the House and in the country.

HON. OPPOSITION MEMBER.- Section 42.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Section 42, Madam Speaker.

HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- She is here as a politician, she is not here as a *Adi* or *Ro* that is what I had always talked about when I talk about leadership in this country. She is here as a politician, she should accept that.

(Chorus of interjections)

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. May I remind Honourable Members that when you bring up a point of order, the point of order has to be based on the Standing Orders, and if it not in the Standing Orders, then the point of order does not qualify. So, the point of order brought about by the Hon. Gavoka does not qualify under the point of order process.

(Inaudible interjection)

I have made my ruling. Thank you. I now give the floor to the Hon. Minister for Education.

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Madam Speaker, I made copies of this article, I want every potential leader of this country to read and emulate the Prime Minister of this country on how a leader should be.

(Chorus of interjections)

My time now.

Madam Speaker, a leader who is able to relate to the ordinary Fijians, immaterial of where they are and how they are. This country has never before seen a truly, committed and a genuine leader who is concerned about raising the living standards of people, immaterial of whether they originate from Udu Point, Yasawa to Kadavu, or from the squatter settlements; immaterial of what ethnicity they belong to; what religious belief they hold, Madam Speaker, this is a true statesman and never before this country has a good leader.

Madam Speaker, this is the first time this country has a Prime Minister who says, “We are one people, one nation and we have a common destiny.” Madam Speaker, this is the only Prime Minister who coined this ideology and put this into practice on the eve of an election.

Madam Speaker, on the eve of an election, other leaders in other countries would move away from extreme right to extreme left to the centre. In a political spectrum, Madam Speaker (some of them might understand what I am talking about), we have got extreme right wings, extreme left wings, come closer to the elections, they will try to come to the middle.

Madam Speaker, our leader held on to this ideology that we are one people, we are one nation and we have a common destiny. We are all Fijians, Madam Speaker, other leaders would have compromised on the eve of an election, he did not compromise, he did not do it despite being invited to a provincial council meeting in Rewa, where they presented a *tabua* and said; “you are our own, you come back to us, we will make you the leader.” Madam Speaker, he said, “No. Here is a constitution that I delivered, come with us, we will form a party, we will lead this country.” Madam Speaker, he did not compromise, even on the eve of Elections. No, he stood by, that is why he is a true leader of this country.

Madam Speaker, on 17th September, 2014, the people of this country were given a choice to go to the ballot box, put their nominee as to who they want to lead this country. The Hon. Prime Minister, Voreqe Bainimarama received 202,459 votes and the person who had been proposed to be Prime Minister received only 49,285 votes. Madam Speaker, combine all



the votes of the 49 members, we still have less votes than the votes that the Hon. Prime Minister received alone single-handedly.

(Inaudible interjection)

Madam Speaker, the proposed candidate was the Education Minister sometime back. Children were struggling to go to primary schools, they could not afford to pay their fees; she did nothing. Children could not go to school, they did not have bus fare - she did nothing.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Point of order.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Point of Order.

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- What is wrong with that?

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- We had enough of this, she said she was responsible for that, you are not allowed to impute improper motives.

(Chorus of interjections)

You are not a kid. He is not a kid.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- You are not allowed to impute improper motives on another Member and you are not a kid. You need not be.

MADAM SPEAKER.- I do not see anything wrong with the statements that have been made. I will allow the Honourable Minister for Education to continue.

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Madam Speaker, I had been a victim of this, we were struggling from Nawaicoba Nadi to go to Sangam College, the three of us did not have bus fare. We used to rotate, today my elder brother would go to school, tomorrow I would go to school. Madam Speaker, in the rural setting, we may have enough to eat but we did not have cash, and to find cash in the morning, every day for bus fare, was not an easy thing for us.

People used to stay home just because they could not pay bus fare. No one bothered about these children in the greater community in the rural setting, Madam Speaker until the Prime Minister came in.

Madam Speaker, people who were returned from schools by school management because they could not pay fees, no one did anything. There was the Minister for Education leading the country at that time, they did not do anything. The university remained a dream for people who were struggling to send their children to, it became the domain of the elites only. Madam Speaker, our Prime Minister came and dismantled these policies of elitism and made education for every ordinary Fijian as well. Today anyone getting admission to university will be funded through the Government's financial scheme. This is not acceptable to them, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, children could not go to primary school. Listen!

MADAM SPEAKER.- I hear you, please continue.

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Children could not go to primary school because they did not have anything to eat, Madam Speaker, this is the first Prime Minister who has the guts to introduce free milk and Weet-Bix to Year 1; first time ever.

Madam Speaker, under the leadership of the former Education Minister whose system brought in chaos, let me read an article from *Fiji Times* dated 18<sup>th</sup> August, 2004 - Teacher beats 30 students.

“30 students have filed a complaint with Police against a teacher who claimed that he beat them several times with a stick because they were making noise in the classroom. The Education Minister, Ro Teimumu Kepa was not available for comment.”

That is the kind of Education Minister we had before, Madam Speaker.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Point of order.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Point of order.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Madam Speaker, when speaking, a Member must not impute improper motives on any other member.

MADAM SPEAKER.- The statement that is being made is really on the policies of the former or the proposed Prime Minister and the policies of the current Prime Minister. He is referring to the policies that he has. Thank you, please continue Honourable Minister.

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Madam Speaker, she could not manage the education system, she could not deliver education to ordinary Fijians. Education became the domain of the elite in the urban area and a selected few who belonged to the club that they belonged to.

Madam Speaker, under the leadership of the Hon. Bainimarama, education is now a reality. Madam Speaker, every individual, every household has a dream; whether they are from Udu Point, Yasawa or Kadavu, they too want to send their children to primary school, high school and university. This is the Prime Minister who made the dream come true.

Madam Speaker, ordinary Fijians from rural areas used to sell the only blood bullock they used to farm in the cane, they do not have to do this anymore. Ordinary Fijians who used to have a little bit of money in the superannuation (FNPF) used to withdraw that money to send their children to high school and university, Madam Speaker. They do not have to do that anymore because the financial assistance that this Government has provided, immaterial of where you are, you can get that to go and study in a university.

Madam Speaker, I have met so many people and they are saying, “We will emulate, we will emulate the financial scheme that Fiji has in other countries, in other Pacific region, the Caribbean region and in a small state of the African region,” Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, the Commonwealth Secretary-General is now asking us to provide him with our model so that it is given out to the other countries in the Caribbean region and in the small state of African region.

Madam Speaker, a person who cannot control a party of 15, wants to lead the country. Madam Speaker, we cannot compare ....

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.-.- Point of order. You do not personalise the issues, please.

(Chorus of interjections)

MADAM SPEAKER.- The debate is on ...

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Had I known, Madam Speaker, I would have said the same thing about the Hon. Prime Minister, but you stopped us from saying things like that.

MADAM SPEAKER.- The debate is between the Prime Minister and the proposed Prime Minister and the policies and the programmes that we have for everyone's information. Please continue.

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Madam Speaker, here is the motion that they have filed saying, and let me read the motion for them; "That pursuant to Section 94(1) of the 2013 Constitution, I propose the name of Ro Temumu Vuikaba Kepa to be Prime Minister of this country." What is wrong with that?

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Madam Speaker, she cannot manage a party of 15, so many divisions there, and she wants to lead the country. Madam Speaker, this motion is a joke, it should end up in the rubbish bin. We support our Prime Minister, the real true leader of this country, never before this country has this kind of leader. Thank you.

(Chorus of interjections)

MADAM SPEAKER.- I now give the floor to the Honourable Dulakiverata.

HON. J. DULAKIVERATA.- Thank you, Madam Speaker, I rise to contribute to the motion on the floor.

Madam Speaker, we all know that eight years into the leadership of the old regime, we have been suppressed, the people of this country were abused and marginalised.

(Hon. Members interjected)

In 2014, Madam Speaker, when we had the General Elections, we thought that we were on our way to true democracy but unfortunately, the actions of this Government in the last one-and-a-half years have not demonstrated that we are serious or the Government is serious about achieving true democracy.

(Hon. Members interjected)

What we had been harping about in this House and in yesterday's sitting especially has proved that this Government is not really serious about achieving this true democracy.

Madam Speaker, this side of the House knows as well as the general public that this Government is operating in fear. It is the fear, Madam Speaker, of doing the right thing because all this while, they have been doing all the wrong things.

(Chorus of interjections and laughter)

We want to remind this Government, Madam Speaker, that there is nothing to fear about. If they have to fear something, they only fear God. If God is with us, we will all do the right thing.

Madam Speaker, we have already offered the olive branch to the Government to work with us. We want them to work with us for the benefit of this country, people and the future generation. The Government still have the time to consider that, it is never too late.

Madam Speaker, I would like to reiterate what I have said in this House before, and that is, we need a Truth and Reconciliation Commission. There is a lot of hurt out there, Madam Speaker, we need to come together and to move forward.

Madam Speaker, we need a healer. We do not need an enforcer, the country is hurting. Madam Speaker, this is a beautiful country with wonderful people. If the whole world has to believe the slogan “Fiji, the way the world should be”; then we should all practise true democracy and decency. Madam Speaker, once the focus is on oneself, the benefits and concerns of the whole are lost.

Madam Speaker, we have heard instances when members of the public had been victims of assaults and abuse in the hands of our security forces. These are the very people who should be protecting them. Madam Speaker, it is unfortunate that after the Elections in 2014, the incidences continue to emerge. My biggest fear, Madam Speaker, even a time will come when the people of this country ...

(Chorus of interjections)

...will have no more faith in the security forces and decide to organise themselves to protect them, their families and their properties. When this happens, Madam Speaker, it will be a sad day for this country. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now give the floor to the Hon. Lorna Eden.

HON. L. EDEN.- Thank you Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker of all the idiotic, outrageous crazy things the Opposition Party has done to-date, this motion by far has outdone the rest ....

(Laughter)

... and I think it is number one on top of the pops.

Madam Speaker, I had the opportunity to join our Hon. Prime Minister’s tours of both the North and the West over the last couple of weeks and I have to say that the passionate and positive reception afforded to our Prime Minister by every settlements and village that we visited was overwhelming. So overwhelming, Madam Speaker, that it brought tears to my eyes

time and time again. He treats everyone as equal, regardless of colour, creed, or wealth and he listens and acts.

Madam Speaker, nearly everyone we met told me that this was the first time that they had ever met a Prime Minister of Fiji. The first time, Madam Speaker, that they were able to talk to a Prime Minister of Fiji and one who listens and tries to do all possible to fix their problems. These people, Madam Speaker, were not acting, they were genuinely pleased to see our Prime Minister. If they were not pleased, Madam Speaker, they would not have rushed up to him, to shake his hand, hug him and give him pecks on his cheeks.

Madam Speaker, the stamina that our Hon. Prime Minister has is amazing, and that only reiterates his love and concern for every Fijian. He listens and he cares for everyone. He does not care for airs and flairs and he will even hop on a horse to get to areas that are yet to be provided with roads and the key to that is 'yet to be provided with roads'.

Madam Speaker, allow me to share some facts that will make it abundantly clear why our Hon. Prime Minister is and will continue to be our Hon. Prime Minister. In the 2014 democratic Elections, the total number of votes gathered by the 50 of us who won seats in this honourable House totalled 389,142. Of this 389,142, our Hon. Prime Minister on his own, Madam Speaker, won a whopping 202,459 which equates to 52 per cent on his own, in comparison, Madam Speaker, with the lady whom the Opposition wants to become the Prime Minister, who won a measly 13 per cent with just 49,484 votes.

The maths is clear, Madam Speaker, and if we are to listen to the voice of the people, we clearly want our Hon. Prime Minister right where he is. On top of this, Madam Speaker, it is becoming abundantly clear by the day that those who did not vote for our Hon. Prime Minister in the last Elections have very quickly jumped ship and will definitely vote for him in the next Election.

(Chorus of interjections)

We will see.

Madam Speaker, I could go on and on about the limitless positives of our Hon. Prime Minister, but sensible people in our country already know this, and certainly do not want to hear us waste time on this ludicrous motion.

Madam Speaker, before I finish, I would also like to say that our Hon. Prime Minister is the first Prime Minister of Fiji to seriously and diligently advocate the rights of women and children. As a woman and a mother, I know I am joined by thousands and thousands of likeminded sensible men, women and children, who are forever grateful for his unwavering and caring leadership.

Madam Speaker, I do not support this ridiculous motion.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. I will now give the floor to the Hon. Alivereti Nabulivou.

HON. A. NABULIVOU.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. It has been a sad day today.

(Chorus of Interjections)

Madam Speaker, allow me to add on some support to the Hon. Prime Minister. I speak in opposition to the motion against our greatly, respected and beloved Hon. Prime Minister.

Our Hon. Prime Minister is a man of the people. He has stood up for the little men, against those who imagine they are born to rule and who would steal democracy from us when given half a chance.

The Hon. Prime Minister has stood firmly and courageously against those who stand for rebellion and insurrection, and bloodshed as the proper means of gaining power. He saved this country from the disgraceful debacle under the previous Prime Minister and his Speight fellow travellers. What did the Hon. Leader of the Opposition do? She stood in silent approval, like all her colleagues, whilst our country was hijacked. Shame on the Leader of the Opposition and her gang!

MADAM SPEAKER.- Order! Please use more respectful words.

HON. A. NABULIVOU.- Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It is for the Hon. Leader of the Opposition or her colleagues who should be brought to account. What a shame, it is that she does not support our Hon. Prime Minister in putting his country back on the road to proper democratic rule in carefully measured steps, designed to give every citizen a fair say and participation in Government.

Our Hon. Prime Minister has what it takes to be a good Prime Minister. He is a good Prime Minister, the proof is there. He has integrity. At great risk to himself, he stood up against the bullies, thugs, murderers and crooks - the thieves of democracy. He kept his promise in bringing back the country to parliamentary democracy. It is unimaginable what the thieves of democracy would have done. Can you imagine the Hon. Leader of the Opposition doing that? Never in a million years. They were born to rule, shame on them all, they are yesterday's people, about to be consigned to the dustbin of history.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Honourable Member, you are verging into personal attack at times. Please, this is my last warning, just be mindful of the words you use.

HON. A. NABULIVOU.- To finally have a leader who is not motivated by self-interest or look after his chiefly cronies or wealthy businessmen. What a wonderful breath of fresh air!

To conclude, Madam Speaker, since the 2014 Elections, our beloved country has moved on. We have moved from what some perceived as a failed State to now, what is widely held to be a role model. We have good governance, parliamentary democracy and the rule of law.

(Chorus of interjections)

These advances are in no small measure due to the good man we now have at the helm. Yes, he is a good man by any measure!

I urge all Honourable Members, even Hon. Opposition Members, to remember their oath of office and do what is right for this country. No honest speaking Member could support this motion. When this motion fails, as it will, the Hon. Leader of the Opposition should do the right thing and resign.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- I will now give the floor to the Hon. Alvick Maharaj.

HON. A.A. MAHARAJ.- Madam Speaker, I would also agree to the sentiments of Hon. Nabulivou that it is a very sad day for Parliament when such a motion has been brought to remove our beloved Hon. Prime Minister. Look at these Honourable Members, on my right, is any one of them capable enough to be the Prime Minister?

(Chorus of interjections)

I totally believe there are self-proclaimed ones but no one has the mandate of the Fijians. That is why, Madam Speaker, our Hon. Prime Minister received 52 per cent of the total votes compared to others in the Parliament.

(Chorus of interjections)

People have spoken through General Elections, so what these bunch of SODELPA Members are doing here today is nothing more than a joke and more so, a pathetic joke.

(Chorus of interjections)

They want to lead the country. Look at them, Madam Speaker, for the whole of this week, they have been coming in late after Prayer sessions when they do not respect the Morning Prayer and here they are, trying to preach the principles of God.

(Chorus of interjections)

We never had a leader like our Hon. Prime Minister. Is it not funny how childish it is for them to come up with such a motion and then beg Hon. Members from our side to vote for such a pathetic motion? The way our beloved Hon. Prime Minister has led this country in past years, no other leader in the history of Fiji has ever done. They talk about the Lord sending the *iTaukei* to this land and gave the land to them and what they failed to realise that it was only the Lord's wish that others also come to this land known as Fiji.

(Chorus of interjections)

What about other essentials of life, Madam Speaker, the equal rights that the *Bible* preaches? Where were these leaders when our rights were suppressed ever since Girmitiyas came to Fiji? Where were they when we were recognised as Indo-Fijian and others?

(Chorus of interjections)

It is this man, Madam Speaker, our Hon. Prime Minister, who gave us equal citizenry and equal rights. No leader in the history of Fiji has had the guts to do it, only our Hon. Prime Minister.

Where were the leaders when our rights were crushed during the 2000 *coup*? Who was the man that stood high to say "no this is wrong". Only our Hon. Prime Minister. He was the man who said "Looting at Suva City was wrong." The rape that took place in many places around the

country was wrong. Where were the Opposition when ladies and women were taken from home in front of their fathers, brothers and sons?" No one had the courage to stand up and say, "These need to stop", only our Hon. Prime Minister.

Where were the chiefs at that time, where were the landlords, where were these Members on the other side at that point in time? Our people were tortured to an extent during the 1987 and 2000 *coups*, that people felt we were still in the Stone Age. It is our Hon. Prime Minister who is working to take Fiji towards modernisation. Our future, our peoples' future are in the best hands today, Madam Speaker.

Look at the policy under the leadership of our Hon. Prime Minister. It has brought betterment to the country. The Opposition's attempt to remove our Hon. Prime Minister has forgotten that our Hon. Prime Minister has the mandate of the people in the country. I request the Opposition to throw the motion out of the window and just wait for 2018, where the people will speak for themselves and the way we are going to tow the motion in Parliament today, SODELPA is going to be thrown out by all Fijians in 2018.

What they also failed to remember is that, not only the voters of Fijians through Indian decent voted for him, the *iTaukei* community voted for him as well. So, the Opposition's claim to be the only representative of the *iTaukei* community in Parliament is very wrong. The Hon. Prime Minister represents everyone. Therefore, Madam Speaker, this is basically what I am going to do to this particular motion from my side. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER.- I now give the floor to the Hon. Jilila Kumar.

HON. J.N. KUMAR.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. I stand, Madam Speaker, to speak against the motion before the House. There are few reasons why I go against this motion.

Firstly, I have learnt to obey, support and give my true allegiance to my leader because this is biblical, Madam Speaker. My conviction tells me that the Hon. Prime Minister has been chosen by God to lead the nation because of his God given gifts of loving, caring, humility, a family man and down to earth person. Madam Speaker, the nation needs a man like that who is really available and always ready to see the needs of the people.

Secondly, Madam Speaker, as a Christian, I have no right to judge others in this case to unfairly judge the Hon. Prime Minister because when we do that, we are taking over God's work. This is dangerous in terms of Christianity. Madam Speaker, in this case, if you want to know who the best Prime Minister is, wait for the 2018 General Elections. I am 100 per cent sure that our own Hon. Prime Minister will again win the majority vote because he has proven that by 'walking the talk' in his visitations to all parts of Fiji.

Thirdly, Madam Speaker, I can confidently say in this august House that the FijiFirst Government which our own Hon. Prime Minister is the Leader of, his vision is biblical because it is based on oneness which is one people, one nation and he treats the people of Fiji equally, despite the different ethnicity, religion or status.

Fourthly and lastly, Madam Speaker, I appeal to my colleagues from the other side of the House to work together with the Government by supporting our Hon. Prime Minister in moving Fiji forward to the best of all our abilities. Moving a vote of no confidence is not an answer and we must humble ourselves to be positive, supportive and give all our allegiance to our leader



because that is our duty as Members of this august House. May our good Lord bless our Hon. Prime Minister and our nation.

Thank you for your indulgence, Madam Speaker, and Honourable Members,

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now give the floor to the Hon. Dr. Brij Lal.

HON. DR. B. LAL.- Madam Speaker, I rise to very strongly oppose the motion that has been put and very strongly support the Hon. Prime Minister. The Opposition has been saying, “We need a healer”. We have the healer, the Hon. Prime Minister is the healer, but please stop acting like a killer.

(Laughter)

Successful people build each other up, they motivate, inspire and push others up, but unsuccessful people find excuses and complain.

(Laughter)

Today, is not a pleasant day in our country, which has been rated as the most firmly and happy nation in the world. Every Member of this House wants our country to be a place of prosperity and hope for every citizen. We all want opportunities to be extended to those who were denied by past governments. We all want a Prime Minister we can believe in, someone with the commitment and the vision to take us forward and that is all found in no other person but in our Hon. Prime Minister. He has given us the hope, he gave us the belief that we are moving in the right direction, he respected and upheld the Constitution and placed the needs of the people before the needs of his party. He gave us the glimpse of what a non-racial and a united Fiji should look like. He is a selfless leader who embodied the democratic dream. At no cost, we want this dream to fade.

For the past 17 months, the Hon. Prime Minister has led the nation with dedication, commitment, discipline, integrity, hard work and passion. We cannot allow this to be destroyed. True leaders are born and not made and so is our Hon. Prime Minister.

Our caring Hon. Prime Minister has a high level of integrity in both public life and private life. The Hon. Prime Minister has always shown respect to women, men, children, disabled, young and the old and every citizen of this country. Our Hon. Prime Minister has the capacity and desire to unite the people of this country and refrain at every opportunity from dividing the people for political reasons. This is why we are all called Fijians.

Our Hon. Prime Minister has seen every citizen, every business in this country succeed and prosper and has created legislations to assist them. Our Hon. Prime Minister has always put the interest of Fiji ahead of his personal and political interest.

Our Hon. Prime Minister has looked at our challenges and has never seen anything as a backlog.

Our Hon. Prime Minister has worked tirelessly to make every citizen of this country independent in their thinking, their actions and financial means and all these can be sighted in the education, infrastructure developments, agricultural and other small business enterprises.

Our Hon. Prime Minister ensures that development is in the best interests of all and not a few, through the policy of universal education, social security, health and poverty alleviation.

Our Hon. Prime Minister has embodied the values, principles and habits which are relevant to the Fijian society. He has the interests of the population at heart and can lead by example and is not blinded by the power he holds.

Our Hon. Prime Minister provides a good image of the country he leads through his presentation and the ability to understand critical issues, has good diplomatic attitudes and is able to negotiate effectively. Our Hon. Prime Minister is visionary.

Our Hon. Prime Minister listens to his fellow citizens, is very close to them and also takes difficult decisions when there is a need. I believe when you consider what he has been able to achieve in the 17 months by this FijiFirst Government, the lavishness of the Prime Minister himself speaks.

Recently, the world's largest democracy, India, the Prime Minister made the comment, when he was criticised and I quote: "I am looking at empowering the poor of my country, how to make the poor of India self-sufficient is my focus." He promised that what other governments did not do in 50 years, he will achieve that in 50 months.

Madam Speaker, this is exactly what our Prime Minister is doing for this country. It is said, "Ignorance is the night of the mind, but a night without the moon and the star."

The people went to the polls in September, 2014 and cast 202,459 votes in favour of 279, the Prime Minister. This is 41 per cent of the total votes cast, this shows confidence of the Fijians.

For the progress of this nation and its people, I quote what Martin Luther King Junior said and this very well fits our Prime Minister and I quote "If you cannot fly, run, if you cannot run, then walk, if you cannot walk, then crawl, but whatever you do, you have to keep moving forward", and this country is moving everyone forward.

In conclusion, let me say, "Kill tension before tension kills you, reach your goals before the goal kills you, live life before life leaves you." We want a happy Fiji, we need Hon. Bainimarama as our Prime Minister and to the Opposition – "do not change the goal post, try to make a score"

(Laughter)

That is more important. I support the Hon. Prime Minister.

(Chorus of interjections)

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now give the floor to the Hon. Veena Bhatnagar.

HON. V.K. BHATNAGAR.- Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, moving a vote of no confidence in the Hon. Prime Minister by the Opposition is simply making a mockery of this august House. It is simply ridiculous. What is

this, some kind of a joke? Honourable Members, our side of the House, please beware of evil spirits because time and again, a lot has been spoken about God and divinity.

Madam Speaker, if the Honourable Members on the other side of the House really believe in God, then let me remind them that God wanted our nation to be led by the Hon. Prime Minister, Mr. Voreqe Bainimarama. He wanted this to happen and this is why it happened. It is His destiny to rule, our Prime Minister's destiny to rule and a handful of people cannot take it away from him, they cannot. It is God's will that our Prime Minister, Hon. Bainimarama leads our nation. At this juncture, I would like to thank God for giving us a Prime Minister who cares, who puts Fiji first and also puts Fijians first, Madam Speaker. He is a healer, in fact, a real healer.

Madam Speaker, people listening and watching the Parliament proceedings are no fools, they are intelligent people and they know that the Opposition has no solid reason to move this motion. It simply holds no water, I would rather they stop making a mockery of this House and mockery of themselves as well.

Madam Speaker, as far as the flag is concerned, it is high time we had our own flag. It must change and it shall change for reasons best known to all. Madam Speaker, while the Opposition continues harping, whining and retracting our Prime Minister, our Government will continue working in the best interests of all Fijians.

Madam Speaker, our Hon. Prime Minister is the people's choice. Our Hon. Prime Minister who won an overwhelming mandate with the highest single vote from the Fijian people in the September, 2014 Elections. The Fijian people have given him the mandate to govern and going against the Hon. Prime Minister means going against the people who bestowed their love and trust in their hero.

In what world are the handful of people living, sitting in the Opposition, what do they think? They can move a motion of no confidence and the Hon. Prime Minister will be removed? Hon. Members who have boycotted this Parliament at most crucial times, as passing of the Appropriation Bills, can be anything but trustworthy. Had they the slightest of respect for the people who voted for them, they would have contributed towards the Bill, but no, they ran away, all of them ran away. This goes on to prove that they do not have the slightest interest of any Fijian at heart and today, they think they can put the Leader of Opposition in our Prime Minister's chair? A Prime Minister who had 202,457 votes to his credit, as compared to the Leader of the Opposition with 49,485 votes only. Where is the comparison? There is no comparison, Madam Speaker, our Hon. Prime Minister alone has 41 per cent of the total votes cast in these Elections.

Our Prime Minister said, and I quote: "I am greatly honoured and humbled that the Fijian people put their trust in me to lead them into a new and true democracy. My absolute promise is that we will govern for the wellbeing of all Fijians."

Madam Speaker, it goes without saying that our Hon. Prime Minister 'walks the talk', to fulfil his promise to the fellow Fijians. He has been working tirelessly for the betterment of all the Fijian people, regardless of class, race, gender, creed, religious beliefs, et cetera. Throughout his involvement in governing Fiji since 2006 has not demonstrated an ounce or a shred of racism and for him, everyone is equal, we all are Fijians.

On the recent community developments and projects completed and commissioned, the Northern and Western Divisions include building of villages and community schools after destruction by either fire or natural disaster. Housing for squatters and the granting of renewal of land leases, supply of clean and safe drinking water to certain communities and settlements, which never ever had this facility, construction of roads, new bridges, fair distribution of course is from landowning units to the common people, the fishing rights, equal distribution of land lease money, et cetera.

Looking internationally, a very good representation in the recent global forum on climate change in France, in which the Hon. Prime Minister played a leading role, which was acknowledged and recognised by world leaders, including the US and the UN.

Madam Speaker, I was fortunate to be with the Hon. Prime Minister during his Western tour. I had witnessed the overwhelming support and respect for the Prime Minister. People were humbled by his presence, they applauded the way our Hon. Prime Minister listened to their grievances and summoned the relevant authorities to immediately attend to their concerns. In fact, I do not think there has ever been a Prime Minister who personally reached out to the people of this nation in the manner our Hon. Prime Minister has, and I am sure the majority of Fijian people share the same thoughts. It is the will of voters for the Hon. Prime Minister to be their leader, mentor and guide.

A leader who believes in equity and unity. Yes, he is strong, he is compassionate, he is humble and he is the people's choice. One must remember, by moving such motions, the Opposition is undermining the verdict of the Fijian people and of course, is an insult to our fellow Fijians. No Opposition can take this right away from our Hon. Prime Minister. We salute our Hon. Prime Minister for his wisdom and a vision for an inclusive and a united Fiji.

We support our Hon. Prime Minister, God bless our Hon. Prime Minister and God bless Fiji and all the Fijians. *Vinaka Vakalevu.*

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you, I now give the floor to the Hon. Leader of Opposition.

HON. RO. T.V. KEPÄ.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. This morning, I am just rising to defend myself on some of the points that came up from the Government side and I thank you for your interventions and your contributions to today's motion.

Firstly, on the Hon. Minister for Education, I hope he will not run away. After he has completed his term, it would be interesting to find out what the history books have to say about his term, in terms of the policies and reforms, where there is no consultation or very little. So, what will the stakeholders, the school communities, the parents and guardians on these very drastic moves that you are making without any consultation, if any, with them?

Now, you must have gone through my term in the Ministry with a very fine tooth comb. Now, if he can find a 'no comment' on some corporal punishment that was unfortunately made to children, probably I was not even in the country. But if that is all he can find, then it does not say much for the gross negligence and gross corruption that we were taken out of our term in office when the *coup* happened in 2006. We were accused of corruption and negligence and that is why the *coup* took place and no one until today, Madam Speaker, has been successfully tried in a court of law on these charges. So, that was previous to his term in office and what I am pointing out here, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, just going back to some other points that were made by other Honourable Members, I have lived in the village for the last eight years and I enjoy living in the village. I think this is one of the most beautiful villages in Fiji. I sat on the floor every day, Madam Speaker, but I do not sit on the floor with the baseball cap on because that is against our custom. In terms of my being a 'Ro', *Ratu Voreqe Bainimara* has never, ever complained about being a *Ratu*, so you know, that is another side, Madam Speaker.

In terms of the grant that has been given to our office, we have had internal investigations and there is no misappropriation of funds, Hon. Sudhakar, and that will be confirmed by the auditors when they have gone through it.

Now, in the case of the term 'Fijian', Madam Speaker, I myself, welcome it. I embrace it for everyone. Why it was not initially accepted, Madam Speaker, because it came through by a Decree and amongst all the other Decrees that it came about, it was suddenly imposed upon us. Had we have been given time to have consultations on it, I am sure, everyone would have embraced it but the fact is, when very important matters are shoved down our throats and we suddenly see it on TV, no consultation, that is what had happened initially. So, that is what the enforcer does, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I think that is all I have to say of what has been said about me. In the 2000 *coup*, Madam Speaker, again Hon. Sudhakar, said that I was standing there with George Speight. I was standing there and I have spoken to that when the Hon. Prime Minister brought it up because my niece was a hostage during that time. I had gone to Parliament to visit my niece, on behalf of her parents and I had gone in to ask George Speight who was in authority at that time, if I could visit her. He was able to give me that permission to visit her and it was shortly after my visit that the Hon. Prime Minister offered me a Minister's role in the Interim Government. But I could not take it up, Madam Speaker, because of my niece being a hostage. So, I thank you, Hon. Prime Minister, for offering me that ministerial position, which I had to decline, thank you very much.

Madam Speaker, until now, the 2006 *coup* - one of the things I have to thank the Hon. Prime Minister for depriving us of our livelihood at that time. I thank you, Hon. Prime Minister, can you look up at me. Thank you.

HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- Thank you. I enjoyed that.

(Laughter)

HON. RO. T.V. KEPÄ.- I have enjoyed my time in the village where he - dictatorship, Madam Speaker, and from that time until now, eight years of dictatorship. We have Decrees still in place, the Media is very much a part of our life, Media Decree, QORVIS with a million dollar budget every year, will make anyone look good. If we have the machinery of Government behind us, to visit all these various places, we would look good too, Madam Speaker.

(Hon. Member interjected)

Now, on Monday, I did stand up in this House and say that it was the beginning of the death of democracy. Today, you will see me, I am fully in black because on Monday when the power went out, Madam Speaker, through no one's fault.



On Tuesday, suddenly without this going through the Business Committee, after the Communication from the Chair, I believe, Madam Speaker, you did not know and neither did the Secretariat, when the Hon. Attorney-General brought up that motion in support of your decision on the suspension of the NFP and that was unknown to us. That is just dictatorship shown to us, where he can just come and move a motion and no one knows anything about it.

Throughout the week, Madam Speaker, we have had dictatorship, Standing Order 51 has been used to fast track the Bills and many of those Bills are very important. Without any consultation with these stakeholders or with the public, those Bills have been passed and now we realise that the Hon. Attorney-General, his other hat is Minister for Foreign Affairs, where the Treaties and Conventions have to be taken through the Attorney-General's office. So there you are, Madam Speaker. Yesterday, was the nail on the Parliament democracy coffin, Madam Speaker, where the Bills were fast-tracked according to Standing Orders and the Petition which allows people to have their voices heard in Parliament, now has to have 40 per cent of Members of Parliament which we know is 30 Members, and that was written deliberately because there are only 18 of us when we are all here...

(Hon. Member interjected)

... that means that people will not have a voice in this House, Madam, Speaker, that is the death of democracy. What we want to say here, Madam Speaker, is that, we just have to be aware, especially the positions of the Speaker and Secretariat in terms of how we need to go through the Standing Orders that I know, that is Government and us here in Parliament but we also have to give opportunities for people's voices to be heard and I hope, Madam Speaker, that you will allow us, through some petitions that will go up, so that we will not have dictatorship in this House and some semblance of democracy. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, as you know Friday's sitting usually last until 12.30 p.m., so we will now call on the Honourable Leader of the Government in Parliament.

### **SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS**

HON. LEADER OF THE GOVERNMENT IN PARLIAMENT.- Madam Speaker, under Standing Order 6, I move:

That so much of Standing Orders 23(1) and 34(5) are suspended so as to allow the House to complete the debate on the motion of no confidence by allowing all Members to speak and to allow the House to complete Government business which is of urgency.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. A. SUDHAKAR.- I second the motion, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you, does anyone oppose?

(Chorus of yes and noes)

MADAM SPEAKER.- There being opposition, Parliament will now vote on that motion.

HON. LEADER OF THE GOVERNMENT IN PARLIAMENT.- Madam Speaker, can I clarify that, my motion was for us to continue with the debate, to allow all the other Members who have not participated in the debate to also participate and of course, for us to complete a Government business which is of urgency which we need to bring to the House today.

MADAM SPEAKER.- The question is, so much of Standing Orders 23 (1) and 34 (5) are suspended as to allow the House to complete the debate and also to complete the Government business for today. Does any Member oppose that?

(Chorus of yes and noes)

MADAM SPEAKER.- There being opposition, Parliament will vote on the motion.

Votes cast:

Ayes:	28
Noes:	11
Not Voted:	11

Motion agreed to.

We will allow the House to complete the debate on this motion and to also complete the Government business for the day.

### **RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON THE MOTION OF NO CONFIDENCE - PRIME MINISTER**

MADAM SPEAKER.- I now give the floor to the Hon. Mohammed Abe Dean.

HON. M.M.A. DEAN.- Madam Speaker, our one and only beloved Prime Minister, Members of the Opposition, I would just like to contribute as to what my experience throughout the whole week was. Today, for me, was the most entertaining one and this is for me was one of the biggest jokes in the Parliament. Anyways, we are here as a party, we represent values of optimism, moving forward and the positive thing that I see from this motion is that we are given an opportunity to say something about our great leader.

Madam Speaker, you do not need experience in life to see the inspiration and the changes that are coming. They are saying that I am learning. Okay, fair enough, I am learning but, Madam Speaker, as a teacher and some Honourable Members from the Opposition also prevailed from the education background, should have seen the inspiration and the positive effects, in particular of the education policies on the lives of all the school children in Fiji, regardless of the fact which school they are going to. When we go and teach in a school, we stand in front and we see the students as our children. I do not put aside the *iTaukei* students or the Fijians of Indian descent, “Okay, you go that side, I will only teach this group of people.” Neither the parents complain or come with issues that I do not want you to teach because you are from another ethnicity or racial background.

These are exactly the values which our Hon. Prime Minister is trying to promote in this country and it is a very sad fact, as a matter of fact, they are saying that it is time to change. They had this dream before the 2014 Elections. The results are clear, the FijiFirst Party got the mandate



of the majority of the people. Now, they are back into this dream, again that change will come in the 2018 elections. My advice is, “Keep on dreaming, and keep on dreaming.”

(Laughter)

The reality will come in 2018.

Madam Speaker, another thing I want to elaborate on is that, if you are a leader, you also need to see the simplicity in you. The Hon. Dr. Reddy, our Education Minister has shown everyone the article on the simplicity of our Hon. Prime Minister. You must also see the same thing, please. References from history is also being told to us. If you look closely at the policies of the British, they had a policy of indirect rule. At that time, they used to make policies in such a way that when you read, it would sound very appealing to the public but in reality, when you study, the whole pretext or the whole idea behind their policies was based on divide and rule. That is how the British were able to maintain their empire.

We saw what they were doing in India, they divided India in terms of religion, they came to Fiji, they divided it in terms of races and all this while, the *iTaukei* people were believing that they are doing a lot for us. One Honourable Member mentioned that they gave 90 per cent of the land to the Fijians. Before the arrival of the British, 100 per cent of the land were owned by the *iTaukei* people.

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- That is the way it should be.

HON. M.M.A. DEAN.- They took 10 per cent of the land. This is how they are manipulating the facts to us. They are seriously manipulating the facts to us.

Madam Speaker, this motion, like I had mentioned, it is a joke, it is entertaining because it keeps us awake. As I said, it is a joke. All the Fijians must support this person, in particular if you are from a teaching profession and you do not get inspired by the policies of the Bainimarama-led Government, then you must also think, how are you thinking as a teacher? Your priority should be your children, even though they are from different homes and ethnic backgrounds, but when they enter their classrooms, your priority should be them and you must see the difference the policies are making on their lives. So, as a teacher, I have been emphasising that while we were campaigning for the party.

When I delivered my maiden speech, I made it very short and simple because the whole idea is giving the message, not using high vocabularies and terminologies, and again, as a citizen of Fiji, as a parent, as a brother, as a father, as a husband, and as a teacher, I strongly support our one and only Hon. Prime Minister, and I oppose this motion.

HON. P.B. KUMAR.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise to speak against the motion before us.

Madam Speaker, it is so unfortunate that the very person that has been proposed to be the Prime Minister has to stand up in this House and defend herself. It is so unfortunate...

(Hon. Member interjected)

and that shows that she has got no support within, as you can see in the empty benches and before bringing in a motion like this, you need to have unity and support within.

(Hon Members interjected)

Madam Speaker, the very best thing the Honourable Leader of the Opposition could have done was to resign when her party lost because you led the party and that would have been the honourable thing for the Leader of the Opposition to do, to resign as a party leader.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Please, address the Speaker.

HON. P.B. KUMAR.- But now, they have got a different way of bringing this motion

....

MADAM SPEAKER.- Order, I am making a ruling that you, please, address the Speaker and not directly to the Hon. Member. The use of the word “you” is really inappropriate.

HON. P.B. KUMAR.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. The mover of this motion is the same person who was missing in action during the first day of the Elections. I just want to remind the people of this nation ...

(Hon. Member interjected)

... about the calibre of this man.

Madam Speaker, all the issues that have been brought up by the Opposition in terms of contributions towards the support of the motion have been dealt with in this House and we have Ministers who have responded to all those contributions and wasted almost three to four hours.

Madam Speaker, the only thing that I can gather, (I have been in politics for quite a long time and from contributions the Opposition have made are ‘politics of the past’, ‘politics of race’, they cannot see and digest the success of the FijiFirst Government.

Madam Speaker, if nothing more than an attempt at a smear campaign under the guise and protection of the Parliamentary privilege for its sheer lack of integrity, this motion needs to be thrown out of this Parliament. Ask the ordinary Fijian to debate or even think about such a motion and you will get a more direct response and method to deal with this waste of Parliamentary time and abuse of Parliamentary privilege.

On the motion, there is the question on the intense and motives of the Opposition to bring forth such a motion. Is it because they have lost their minds or they worked this out as a *Bible* way, to engineer political mileage and insult the respected leader of this nation. I suspect that first they lost their minds, then they decided on this plan.

I have travelled with the Hon. Prime Minister and witnessed firsthand the respect, honour and love bestowed upon him by the ordinary Fijians. It only begs the massive electoral support in democratic Elections that elevated him to Prime Ministership.

Madam Speaker, one has to go and sit during the ‘*Talanoa Sessions*’, and witness the tears, and the smiles of the ordinary Fijians. This is the fact and we have heard from the very people who have voted for the Leader of Opposition. They are saying that until to-date, they have not come back but you people have come back and you can see the tears flowing.

(Hon. Members interjected)

Madam Speaker, these are some of the things that they cannot digest because as a Government, we are reaching out to the ordinary Fijians of this country. This Government is prepared to listen to the people and not dictate to the people, let us get it right.

Madam Speaker, if the movers of this motion feel that they will galvanise anti-PM or anti-Government support, then they are in for a shock.

(Hon. Member interjected)

The Hon. Leader of the Opposition failed to display leadership to engage with Government, to take this country forward. The only thing they are better off at is to boycott, walk-out and protest.

Madam Speaker, the motion of no confidence is an indication of the gutter level politics that the Opposition has sunk to and that is coming from a party, beset by internal rifts and ongoing questions on leadership.

Madam Speaker, maybe the Leader of the Opposition has not learnt from her experience on motions of no confidence in her own leadership. Maybe, Madam Speaker, that is too much to ask from her, given her ongoing battles to stay as Leader of Opposition or maybe she is hoping to use this motion ...

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- Do not personalise.

HON. P.B. KUMAR.- That is your problem.

... as research for her own survival. It is a sad day to note the depth that the Opposition has sunk to in order to stay in the news and in the media.

Madam Speaker, in the Fijian Parliamentary history, this is the first such motion against a sitting Prime Minister. It is pettiness of the worst kind, it is an insult on the constitutional position of a Prime Minister.

Madam Speaker, this motion is a motion of desperation, desperate people resort to desperate measures.

(Laughter)

They are beginning and behaving like 'fish without water', after they lost the General Elections. This motion would be a joke outside, a bad and a badly timed joke. Madam Speaker, not only me, all my colleagues here and the majority of the Fijians have full confidence in the current Hon. Prime Minister and I oppose the motion that is before the House.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you, Honourable Members, I now give the floor to the Hon. Balmindar Singh.

HON B. SINGH.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I rise to contribute to the debate and diffuse all the sentiments expressed by Opposition Members.

Madam Speaker, how can we support a motion when her own party members questioned her integrity; when her own party members have no confidence in her leadership? Then, how can the Fijians have confidence in her leadership?

True democracy was reflected during the 2014 General Election where the proposed Prime Minister (Hon. T.V. Kupa) only had one quarter of the votes against the Hon. Prime Minister who had threefold of what she scored. It is a shame today, Madam. It is a joke, and making a mockery of this Parliament. We cannot compare apples with oranges. Please bring realities to the fore on the underpinning solid foundation laid by the Hon. Prime Minister.

Madam Speaker, the Hon. Prime Minister has been hailed by many as the best performing leader since our nation's Independence. He is a true leader, who keeps to focus on his core policy areas to propel the nation forward, such as education, health, law and order and infrastructure development. The Bainimarama-led Government has worked hard to build its reputation and image around the world which has improved significantly, compared to the bad old days when there was nothing but negative reporting of the country.

On page 25 of the *Malaysian Business Magazine*, January 2015 edition, says and I quote:

“Fiji's Prime Minister, Frank Bainimarama,... begins 2015 arguably at the height of his power after being democratically elected by his people and praised and acknowledged internationally.”

The Hon. Prime Minister's sustained efforts to remove the diversified race-based politics of the past and for his vision for inclusiveness and equal citizenry was exemplified in the controversial move to call everyone a Fijian.

This morning, we heard from Hon. Salote Radrodro, when he raised the events following the *coups* of 2000, but completely missed something. Does she know who led our nation out of that *coup*? Look at him, he is just sitting right here! It was our Hon. Prime Minister, who led our nation through the hardest times of our history when the racist underbelly of our nation rose to take centre stage for all the world to see when once ordinary men and women became looters, thieves and haters of their fellowmen. Our Hon. Prime Minister kept his head and steered this country back towards democracy. Which one of you could have done that?

The Opposition are masters of fuelling intolerance and ethnic division. What power do you have to unite a nation? The racialism and elitism of 2000 did not die. Yes, inequality did not die; elitism did not die. It simply went back underground and is slowly trying to worm its way back towards relevance.

Madam Speaker, our Hon. Prime Minister is an extraordinary leader, who has faced huge challenges since in office, but his determination and commitment to build a better Fiji has not deterred him from exploring opportunities to grow the economy and improve the livelihoods of our people.

The Hon. Prime Minister has pioneered efforts towards greater unprecedented economic integration between the Pacific and the world. How often have you heard the comment, 'he or she is born a leader?' There are certain characteristics found in some people that seem to naturally put them in a position where they are looked up to as a leader. Madam

Speaker, whether, in fact, a person is a born leader with devout skills and abilities to become a leader is open for debate. There are some characteristics that are found in good leaders which is imperative for Hon. Bainimarama.

This motion is nothing but a spoiled-child's tantrum or anger and frustration. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now give the floor to the Hon. Vijay Nath.

HON. V. NATH.- Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I am speaking against the motion before this House. This motion has no merit. It is a waste of time of this august House, and I strongly condemn this motion.

Madam Speaker, I will join the Hon. Minister for Education, a dynamic Minister, in sharing my personal experiences before this House. If one may remember, during my maiden speech where I shared my disappointment and feelings.

Madam Speaker, at final year of high school, I was awarded the most prestigious award in any high school calendar, the Dux of the School. That was the only time a minister since beginning from Year 1 to Year 13, I had never ever met any minister. Of course, even after getting that award, I could not get any scholarship because of my ethnic background.

Madam Speaker, in those days, even there was no TELS Loan Scheme. I only wish that our Hon. Prime Minister was there then, 20 years before. I believe many young people like me would have received this privilege of getting a scholarship or not even that, a TELS Loan Scheme. I could not even go to any university because I had four other siblings; three of them were in high schools and my father was the only breadwinner. I had to join the workforce, then after working, I started again with my university studies.

Madam Speaker, between 1990 to 2007, I never met any minister, until 2007 when again, the Hon. Prime Minister was seen on the ground all the time. Madam Speaker, this is very important, you will find that at this point in time, the TELS Loan Scheme is even awarded to the high school teachers, who also qualify.

Madam Speaker, our Hon. Prime Minister has done a wonderful job since his appointment as Prime Minister of our beloved nation and deserves a motion of appreciation and not condemnation. The whole world out there is watching at the reception service he is providing to Fiji, the region and the world.

Madam Speaker, I join the rest of my colleagues on this side and Honourable Members of this House in strongly condemning the motion by speaking against it before the House.

MADAM SPEAKER.- I give the floor to the Hon. Iliesa Delana.

HON. I. DELANA.- Madam Speaker, I rise to add my objection and total rejection of the motion before the House that seeks the removal of the leader of the Government and the Hon. Prime Minister.

Madam Speaker, it was just 17 months ago when Fiji went to the polls. I still can clearly recall the outcome of the 2014 General Elections. The people of Fiji spoke and the mandate of

the majority of Fijians was loud and clear, and that was for our current Hon. Prime Minister to again lead our nation.

Madam Speaker, I believe every Fijians' decision to vote for the Hon. Prime Minister Bainimarama at the ballot was not a blind and indecisive one. The Fijian people had witnessed and have been recipients of the many well-planned and thoughtful developments throughout Fiji.

Developments, Madam Speaker, are directed towards all levels of the community for all races and ages. Prime Minister Bainimarama's tenure ahead of 2014 General Elections was a testimony enough that he can lead our nation and has the approval of Fijians.

Madam Speaker, most, if not all, Fijians have collectively benefited from the vast developments implemented through the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Bainimarama. Free tuition, free text books and free bus fares for all secondary and primary students, unprecedented and momentum achievements and it can only be attributed to Prime Minister Bainimarama and his leadership. Countless miles in inroads have been built throughout Fiji with major roads being improved and tarsealed. New schools, hospitals and nursing stations have been built with major developments in our towns and major urban centres, the list goes on, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, his leadership, intuition and vision for Fiji is unmatched and I wish to voice my disapproval of the motion before the House and strongly show my support towards the Prime Minister and his leadership.

Madam Speaker, for persons with disabilities are celebrating Fiji's recognitions of their rights as envisaged in the 2013 Constitution of the Republic of Fiji. This is another big achievement for Prime Minister Bainimarama. The disabled minority now feels at home, they feel that they belong, secure and their future looking bright. We thank Prime Minister Bainimarama for advocating inclusiveness and equality not only for disabled persons but for all citizens living in Fiji, despite our differences in ethnicity, age, creed or gender.

Madam Speaker, our Prime Minister's leadership records and achievements show much of the calibre of the man himself and every Fijian can testify to this fact.

Madam Speaker, the Opposition must answer to the people of Fiji for bringing forth this motion before the House, a motion that threatens the very mandate given by the Fijian people to the Prime Minister and this Government.

Madam Speaker, I do not support the motion before the House. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- I see a wedding ring on your finger, on behalf of Parliament, we congratulate you and your good wife on your recent wedding.

(Applause)

MADAM SPEAKER.- I now give the floor to the Hon. Niumataiwalu.

HON. M.A. NIUMATAIWALU.- *Vinaka*. Madam Speaker, I rise to oppose the motion and would like to speak on several things that I have seen about our Prime Minister, the Leader of the FijiFirst Government. As I had said on Tuesday during my maiden speech that we are

involved with Marriage Ministries International. We have done training in Suva, Nasinu, Sigatoka, Nadi, Lautoka, Ba, Tavua, Vatukoula dealing with families, wanting better families to strengthen this nation.

One of the attributes that I saw in the leader of this current Government is that he is a man of character, a man who upholds family values. In the recent past, we saw that he stood up for the sanctity of marriage, that for us is very powerful. The *Bible* says for a man to lead, he has to look after his house, if he can look after his house, he is good enough to lead.

I believe that the Government has a leader that the people have put in place. We have heard of biblical quotes here this morning, the *Bible* says that only the Lord promotes. When the Lord lifts up, the Lord can put down but it is not for man to usher in like Uriah trying to hold onto the cart that was holding the ark of the covenant, because when we try and move things before the Lord moves them, we will face the consequences, and I believe the time is right, the Lord has given the current Government the mandate to lead.

I grew up in Toorak, Raiwaqa and in Topline. We have heard of the slangs “Jah Key” and I came through that and I have heard this side of the House. My old man was one who was NFP and he helped set up the Nationalist Party, but I stand here as someone whose seen a new light, something that the Prime Minister had said that you have to be pro-Fiji. I stand here as a person who is pro-Fiji, a person who wants to see that. As I am a Christian, I do not want to see that other ethnic groups are being downtrodden. The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness and the last of it is self-control. I can only control myself, we are hearing about the healer, there is only one healer - Jesus is the Healer. If He heals our hearts, then we can come and work together to move the nation forward.

So, Madam Speaker, I rise to oppose the motion before us, I would not like to delve into the proposal from the Opposition on who they prefer to be leader, but I am just stating the fact here that the people have spoken, why can they not wait until 2018? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you, I give the floor to the Honourable Minister for Defence.

HON. CAPT. T.L. NATUVA.- The Hon. Prime Minister, Hon. Leader of the Opposition, Honourable Members, I rise to respond to the motion of no confidence moved by the Honourable Semesa Karavaki against the leader of the nation, and I do not support the motion.

We were waiting for all the military personnel to speak, and we will all speak. We support the Hon. Prime Minister to the end. This is a long haul, it is a long way for us to democracy and we are achieving what we want, and we want to stay in power for quite a while to take this country forward. Let me remind the Honourable Members of the Opposition that this Government, since it resumed office, has relatively achieved more than any other Government since Independence.

Ratu Mara achieved a lot, other leaders achieved a lot, but the Hon. Prime Minister achieved everything for everyone and for the Fijians.

(Chorus of interjections)

The Hon. Prime Minister, in his visionary leadership, has taken bold steps in implementing policies; bold steps in implementing policy decisions, resulting in drastic changes. We were talking about the changes, about the *Bose Levu Vakaturaga*; those are the bold steps that he took in order to take this Government forward.

(Chorus of interjections)

Drastic changes in various government institutions and private sector to stimulate economic growth, good governance and development. I am going to be very short because all the things that were supposed to be said about our Hon. Prime Minister has been said. Since we have limited time, and I have other military personnel wanting to talk about our Prime Minister, I am going to be very short.

I can confidently say that the Government has improved the livelihood of all Fijian people, particularly the marginalised and the vulnerable in our society, I will name a few, infrastructure development, as you can see in the papers every day, accessibility to basic necessity, assistance through social housing scheme, free education, empowering Fijians through micro-business enterprises, to name a few.

An Honourable Member from the other side mentioned about education, the old system of giving scholarships, this Government managed to provide scholarships for the people so that they can all enter university. This has never been done before.

The Hon. Prime Minister's prominence through championing such a controversial issue like climate change in the regional and international forum has enabled Fiji to progress towards mitigating these changes. We took the lead role in front of all the big countries in the world.

Internationally, our own Prime Minister has seen the following achievements, I will just name a few:

- (i) Formal diplomatic relations with 179 countries of the 193 UN States
- (ii) Championing the 'Look North Policy'; 'Friends to All and Enemy to None'
- (iii) Establishment of diplomatic missions with Abu Dhabi, Geneva, Republic of Korea, Shanghai in China, South Africa, Ethiopia.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- South Africa!

HON. CAPT. T.L. NATUVA.- Correction, Honourable Gavoka, Ethiopia was South Africa before.

- (i) Establishment of PIDF - Principle of inclusivity, to include all the private sector also
- (ii) Chairmanship of MSG, G77, International Sugar Organisation and the most recent UNESCAP 71 session, to name a few.

During his leadership, two powerful world leaders visited Fiji. This has never happened before.

In essence the transition from the interim to the democratic-elected government has inevitably won many hearts of Fijians as reflected in the outcome of the 2014 General Elections. The numbers have been mentioned and I do not want to mention it again.



On the motion of no confidence, initiated by the Honourable Member of the Opposition, I must say that they should accept the reality of democracy. The Election is over and the nation has made their choice as the majority rules. It seems that the Opposition has forgotten the realities of democracy, but maybe this is another way of doing it when they bring up this motion.

In realising this enormous achievement, I would like to challenge the Leader of the Opposition, being nominated to replace the Hon. Prime Minister through the motion before us, I fail to understand for inciting this meaningless motion in bringing this Government into disrepute. The integrity of Opposition of which its leadership has been questionable all along and this has gradually disintegrated the solidarity of the Opposition and their party. It only reflects that the Hon. Leader is incapable to lead the nation, tantamount to social fragmentation and chaos if the opportunity permits.

(Chorus of interjections)

MADAM SPEAKER.- Order! We have the Hon. Minister of Defence that has the call, please let us hear him out. Thank you.

HON. CAPT. T.L. NATUVA.- May I refer to the dream statement by the Hon. Karavaki that God installs leaders and also remove them.

The Opposition still cannot accept that the current Prime Minister is chosen by God as attested to in the results of the General Elections. May I substantiate this from the *Bible* in the Book of *Romans* as was mentioned in Chapter 13: Verse 1 and I quote, “Only God can give authority to anyone and He puts these rulers in their places” Madam Speaker, I thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now give the floor to the Hon. Vunivalu.

HON. S.B. VUNIVALU.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise this afternoon on behalf of the people of Fiji and all the denominations in this country. As I am a Christian, I will quote from Jeremiah, Chapter 1: Verse 5, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you and before you were born I consecrated you. I appointed you perfect to the nations”. That is the Honourable Prime Minister.

HON. OPPOSITION MEMBER.- That is Jeremiah.

HON. S.B. VUNIVALU.- That is a different Jeremiah from Nabua.

(Laughter)

Madam Speaker, today is a very sad day for me because of the people of this nation. I am worried about the people of this nation not this Opposition, I am not worried about them. I am worried about the people of this nation who voted for us, the majority of us and the Hon. Prime Minister of Fiji and especially as I quote from the Bible, the Prime Ministers supporters and where he comes from, the *vanua* and his parents; they are listening now.

I was in Rararua Village when an elder was singing a song, a verse. It is a *meke* from Ra, almost 80 years ago where the Hon. Prime Minister’s name was mentioned that he will lead the nation.

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- For how long?

HON. S.B. VUNIVALU.- Before you were born.

(Laughter)

Madam Speaker, in a game, whichever game: rugby, soccer or netball, one will win and one will lose. You people are on the losing side. You can wait for the 2018 General Elections then you will see that most of us will be sitting in your seats.

(Laughter)

Madam Speaker, the people of this nation need a true leader. We have proved it in the past 18 months with what we have done, even he helped your voters too and what you have done this morning in bringing up this motion here, that is why I am worried about the people of Fiji and what they are saying, to remove the Honourable Prime Minister and bring in the Leader of the Opposition. You know in my maiden speech, I did say that a good opposition makes a good government, but you never heal your party first, where is Beddoes? Where is Tabaiwalu?

(Laughter)

You want to come and heal our party, heal yourself first! What will the people of this nation say? This is the Government of the day and we have the majority of the seats. I already mentioned once, we will always end up in the vote; whatever you want, we will end up in a vote, I really want to vote right now to stop everything.

(Laughter)

I do not worry about you and do not care about you. What do you want, it is in your dream!

(Hon. Member interjected)

HON. S.B. VUNIVALU.- I am concerned about the motion by Hon. Karavaki because he always mentioned about the bible. In the beginning, God gave everything except for the fruit.

(Laughter)

HON. OPP. MEMBER.- What fruit?

HON. S.B. VUNIVALU.- Maybe apple.

(Laughter)

And you are telling the nation that the milk is not good.

(Laughter)

HON. OPP. MEMBER.- Cow's milk.

HON. S.B. VUNIVALU.- God gave milk to our mothers.

(Laughter)

That is the first liquid that goes in your mouth when you are born. That is why we are alive, it is because of the milk.

(Laughter)

And what the Hon. Prime Minister is doing, is giving free milk.

(Laughter)

HON. OPP. MEMBER.- He's giving the cow's milk.

HON. S.B. VUNIVALU.- We do not believe in cow's milk, we need another kind of milk.

(Laughter)

Madam Speaker, the Hon. Karavaki had moved a motion of no confidence to the Hon. Prime Minister, just because they walked out yesterday, and today they bring in this motion.

(Hon. Member interjected)

HON. S.B. VUNIVALU.- In the previous day, you were supposed to bring a motion of no confidence for the Speaker.

(Hon. Member interjected)

HON. S.B. VUNIVALU.- So, why did you change your mind?

(Laughter)

Are you afraid? If anyone tries to put out the Hon. Prime Minister today, you will see this man here (pointing to himself).

(Laughter)

This thing can be seen by Fiji and throw it out there. I am serious about you.

(Laughter)

(Hon. Member interjected)

HON. S.B. VUNIVALU.- *Nomu serious tiko noqu loma ni serious.*

(Laughter)

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

In regards to the chiefs of Fiji, out of all the chiefs in Fiji are chiefs in the *Vola ni Kawa Bula*, no one is great and no one is small. Some of the chiefs in the country have a lot of land and they are not members of the GCC. They are always hurt, and they told me that. They told me that plenty chiefs in Fiji, “we are all the same in the *Vola ni Kawa Bula*”, but only some are great but they are all the same chiefs. That is in regards to the Great Council of Chiefs and I want to remind Koicalevu.

Madam Speaker, to conclude this afternoon, I feel sorry that from tomorrow onwards we will be here for another 18 years and the Hon. Prime Minister Josai Voreqe Bainimarama will still be our Prime Minister until another 100 years. Thank you, very much.

(Applause)

MADAM SPEAKER.- I now give the floor to the Hon. Cawaki.

HON. CDR. J.R. CAWAKI.- Madam Speaker, I rise to contribute to the debate on the Opposition’s motion and wish to register that I do not support the motion of no confidence to the Hon. Prime Minister, as moved by Hon. Karavaki.

Madam Speaker, today it is a very sad day for Fiji because way back in 2006, because of the inefficiencies of the governance of this land, we started a movement. That movement was to change Fiji to be a prosperous place for this generation and for generations to come.

Madam Speaker, much has been said from this side about how the Hon. Prime Minister took Fiji to where we are today. As a former Divisional Commissioner, and I understand there are other three on this side and one on the other side, who was a former Divisional Commissioner in the Western Division. During my time in the Western Division, I visited places that he has not visited and I have been told that I was the first Divisional Commissioner to visit the Western Division.

(Hon. Members interjected)

HON. CDR. J.R. CAWAKI.- It is very sad today that developments that we have done from 2006 until today, the very same group of people who once enjoyed and are still enjoying the swift flow and progress of developments for the last 10 years that was headed by the Hon. Prime Minister are now in this House, moving a motion of no confidence to the leader who progressed Fiji back to true democracy.

(Hon. Members interjected)

Madam Speaker, I have seen the faces of poverty; I have seen the faces of wonder; I have seen the faces of disbelief; and during my time, there were lots of flood and cyclones, and the first person who appeared to be on my side as Divisional Commissioner was the Hon. Prime Minister...

HON. GOVT. MEMBERS.- Hear, hear!

HON. CDR. J.R. CAWAKI.- ...leading the team in the relief, response and even the rehabilitation works. If you go to the Western Division now, you will see houses in almost every village, the rehabilitation houses for our people who had their houses damaged during

the cyclones. Madam Speaker, that is a reflection of a good leader that unfortunately the Opposition today have moved a motion of no confidence against him.

Madam Speaker, the rate of development is unprecedented, and I would say it will continue to be beyond 2018.

Madam Speaker, let me go back to the Elections. The result of the Elections in 2014 is very much reflected and indicative of the respect of the Fijian people to a leader to earn both the respect and the trust of the Fijian people that he received 52 per cent. Today, we want to change that 52 per cent to an Honourable Member of Parliament who only earned 9.9 per cent.

The figures do not add up, Madam Speaker. The people had spoken, and this side of the House with the other portion on the other side, respect the votes and the trust of the people to the FijiFirst Government.

Madam Speaker, before I conclude, we on this side of the House, pursuant to Section 93(2) of the Constitution had won more than 50 per cent of the total number of seats in this House and we have chosen our leader to become the Prime Minister and our Prime Minister will remain because he is the leader, and will remain the Prime Minister of Fiji until the next elections. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER. – Thank you. I now give the floor to the Honourable Minister for Youth and Sports.

HON. LT. COL. L.B. TUITUBOU.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to contribute to the debate on hand, as I oppose the motion that was put across the House this morning. I am in a dilemma, I do not know about the rest of Government, but I see no humility this morning although the mover of the motion spoke about humility. It was stated by President Monson and I quote, “walking where Jesus walked is less important than walking as He walked.” We heard a lot of sermons this morning, a lot of talking and this Government has ‘walked the talk’.

(Hon. Members interjected)

HON. LT. COL. L.B. TUITUBOU.- Not just talking, its walk the talk.

Madam Speaker, in the past 17 months, we have been hearing the Opposition harping about developments. We have been delivering the service that the people of Fiji wanted and if we look at the past, most developments go to the indigenous people. The developments by the Government,, majority go to the indigenous people. I can witness this as I have the data for the Central Division.

I was surprised this morning that we have a proposed Prime Minister. In 2012 it was part of the PSIP to construct or to do that project that was brought up a few days ago in the province of Rewa, but it was sad that it had come through the *Bose ni Tikina* and due to personal interests of the chiefs of that *tikina*, that project did not come to reality because it was opposed. However, a few days ago, it was brought in again into the House due to some personal agenda, I do not know, but it was in the 2012 PSIP for them to construct that road.

Madam Speaker, I further applaud the Prime Minister in meeting his constitutional obligation and upholding the law. The Hon. Prime Minister does not waste time as we have seen and we have witnessed in the past. He gets to deliver the service to the people whom we know that much needed service is needed by the people, so while the Opposition may not have the confidence

as we heard this morning in the Prime Minister or his leadership or his ability or integrity, I for one have to say, I have full confidence in the Prime Minister. I oppose the current motion and will follow my conscience and vote for him as the Prime Minister and remain as the Prime Minister. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

(Hon. Members interjected)

MADAM SPEAKER. – Thank you. I now give the floor to the Honourable O’ Connor.

HON. A.D. O’ CONNOR. – Thank you Madam Speaker. I only wish I had the permission to sing one of Everly Brothers’ numbers, the ‘*Dream, Dream, Dream*’ to the Opposition.

Madam Speaker, I thank you for giving me the opportunity to show my objection to the motion before the House. I need not dwell on the successes of the Government since taking office some 17 months ago, which is evident today, including our participation and recognition in the international arena, brought about by our Hon. Prime Minister’s vision and foresight.

Madam Speaker, Hon. Salote Radrodro mentioned that military personnel still hold senior positions. In 2006, when our Hon. Prime Minister needed people to assist him in running the country, senior civil servants protected their own interests for fear of travel sanctions. Hence, the Prime Minister appointed military personnel to these administrative positions. Madam Speaker, which Prime Minister has ever trekked into the hinterlands; what Prime Minister has ever ridden on horseback; or taken to punts; which Prime Minister has ever waded through flowing streams? This Prime Minister, Madam Speaker, has particularly done so when inspecting disaster stricken areas where previous Prime Ministers have taken to the air. That is reality, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I oppose the motion before this House. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER. – Thank you. I now give the floor to the Hon. Netani Rika.

HON. LT. COL. N. RIKA. – Madam Speaker, I rise to make my short contribution to the motion before the House. My view of the motion is a waste of time.

(Laughter)

It is another political ploy and political strategy used by the other side of the House to balance the rapid, positive developments the country is experiencing now. They are also playing on the emotions of the people.

The 2014 Elections has given the Hon. Prime Minister the mandate of the people to lead the country. The people of this country have spoken in the last Elections of 2014. The other side of the House does not have the mandate. We all know the next election is around the corner, four years is not long. Let us be patient and wait for the next Elections.

I thank you for the sermons delivered by the mover of the motion. Let me remind him that God has provided a season for everything in this world and leadership of the country is godly. This is the Hon. Voreqe Bainimarama’s season of leadership and we need to support that.

(Hon. Member interjected)

Now, Madam Speaker, we are going through a time of change and we all know change is inevitable. Change for the better and that is the vision of our Hon. Prime Minister.

The Hon. Prime Minister is a dynamic and a visionary leader, a man of principle and we must appreciate that. He has done so much to raise the standard of life for this beloved country. He has brought enormous changes to this country, both locally and internationally. We all know that we cannot please all the people and he is the champion of the people of this country.

Madam Speaker, allow me to conclude with an illustration, a short story to compare this situation. During the early years, the Nadi International Airport security system was not like what we have today, and these two ladies were returning to Canada after holidaying in Fiji. As we understand, our people who live overseas when they come back, they always take with them things from Fiji.

On their way back, they took with them a carton of crabs - live crabs. While they were queuing up in the Immigration queue, the carton was behind them and what they did not realise, a tourist, a gentleman was behind them and the tourist was so afraid when he saw the claws of the crab coming out of the box. He went to the Immigration officer and said, "Excuse me Sir, there is a crab trying to get out of that box," and the Immigration officer told him, "do not worry." He returned and the second time, he saw the claws fully extended out. So, he went back to the Immigration officer and asked the officer "Excuse me, Sir, that crab is trying to get out of that box." So, the Immigration officer looked at the box and saw this claw extended out and he told the tourist "Do not worry, that is the Fijian crab," and then he asked the Immigration officer, "what about the Fijian crab?" This Immigration officer told him, "you know the Fijian crab, when one crab tries to get out of the box, the other one at the bottom pulls him down," and that is the situation we are going through now. Madam Speaker, I oppose the motion.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now give the floor to the Hon. Minister for Fisheries and Forest.

HON. O. NAIQAMU.- Madam Speaker, I rise before this august House to express my outrage and complete disgust with the motion that the Opposition has raised. It is totally unwarranted, childish and the lowest form of cheap politics, which this House should never entertain.

(Hon. Members interjected)

I question the real intentions of such a motion. We are all here for the people who put us here to serve them. Is it so hard to accept the reality of today that the very people we serve, voted in the Hon. Prime Minister, with a clear majority, this premature removal tantamount to complete and total rejection of the voice of the people.

It is laughable that some of the Hon. Members of the Opposition, during their tenure in government, have their very own chance to make real changes that will truly benefit the people of this country, but they chose not to for their own selfish gains.

Madam Speaker, our Hon. Prime Minister is the saviour and the founder of the modern progressive and prosperous Fiji. He is the only one and God chosen leader to ensure that all the people of this nation come together as one; irrespective of race, religion and colour.

The motion that has been put forward in this House by the Hon. Member, is clear cut of not knowing the feelings of the ordinary *iTaukei* of this land. As I have already mentioned, he is the saviour that the world knows today. He has stopped the sale of Fijian *iTaukei* land and all the transfers. He is the man, no other than the one who saved the ordinary Fijians in villages, the *iTaukei*, for the first time in history to put in the Constitution of this land that for the *iTaukei*, your land is protected forever, not ever before.

The Opposition, there are numbers in the opposite side who participated in the sale and transfer of the *iTaukei* land on restriction. Now it is freehold, thanks to Bainimarama, thank your God for giving a leader who can make and love all the people of this nation to be as one. Now, take out the fears from the *iTaukei*. Where are the fears now? There are no fears, your land is secure, my *tau*, your land in Kadavu is secure. No longer will my *tau* say “Oh, ‘I am afraid my land will be taken away,” No, in the 2013 Constitution, it clearly entrenched and says that the *iTaukei* land is secure.

Madam Speaker, they talk about the *qoliqoli*, this is the Government that has put the wrong into the right direction. They are talking about my announcement, my declaration. I will be reaching out next week, I will be visiting all the *iTaukei Qoliqoli* offices, starting from next week, to put in place, to regularise it, that is the vision of this Government, to ensure that landowners are no longer called ‘resource rich and cash poor.’

(Hon. Member interjected)

So, this Government has to ensure that every *iTaukei*, every resource owners will benefit: the pine landowners; the mahogany landowners, even the fisheries owners, they all come together to ensure they benefit from this dynamic leadership, from our current Hon. Prime Minister of the land. Thank you Madam Speaker.

(Applause)

MADAM SPEAKER.- I give the floor to the Hon. Inia Seruiratu.

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Thank you Madam Speaker. Wisdom would have led the mover of the motion and the Opposition party not to bring this motion to the honourable House.

His *Bible* and my *Bible* tells me that the mouth speaks what the heart is full of. This is a motion borne out of frustration, arrogance, animosity, bitterness, jealousy and not humility. Wisdom would have led the mover of the motion not to bring this before this honourable House. It is disgraceful and shameful.

Madam Speaker, it is a deviation from the *Gauna Vinaka Report*. Everyone in Fiji knows that the boat that the proposed Hon. Prime Minister is in charge of is rocking and rocking badly, probably they need the healer because of the situation, the storm that they are going through. It is a deviation from the issues that they are going through.

Madam Speaker, it is a sad day for the Hon. Members of the Opposition. I say this again because as I have stated, they have internal issues to sort out amongst themselves and I would suggest, they deal with those issues first.

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- What issues?



HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Do not deny the issues, Madam Speaker, because you need to take care of your own backyard .before you go and say a lot about the others and what is happening in their own issues.

The issues brought out again here, we have debated these during motions and question time, so there is nothing new. I am reminded of the words of George Bernard Shaw where he says, "Progress is impossible without change, and those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything."

(Hon. Members interjected)

Madam Speaker, we are defined by our paradigms.

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- That's why there should be a change!

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- This is a Party that is stuck in the paradigms of the past, irrelevant, struggling, Madam Speaker. People who cannot change their mind cannot change anything. If anything, let us change our paradigm because we are on a new wave. This is a new journey for Fiji, we are journeying towards prosperity.

(Hon. Members interjected)

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- One of the issues, Madam Speaker, is the changing of the flag. Of course, we value our past and we value all the Christianity signs – St. George, St. Michael, but it is not St. George and St. Michael on the flag that will save Fiji because the Christ in us is the hope of glory. It is not Christ on the flag, Madam Speaker.

Paradigms of the past; in the year 2000, Madam Speaker, the very same flag was lowered, another flag was hoisted in Parliament.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Yes, true.

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Let me say that again, the very same flag that they want to maintain was lowered in Parliament in the year 2000, and an alternative flag was hoisted. We have gone through that, Madam Speaker, so why do we not have another new flag?

New journey; Madam Speaker, *iTaukei* participation in businesses, again, the civil issue about the *iqoliqoli*. We have an issue, it is not Government's fault, Madam Speaker. We need to take responsibility as well, and I am saying this as an *iTaukei* because we have serious problems in managing our own affairs, managing our own entrepreneurs, and we have problems in managing the funds and the resources that we have. The Hon. Bulitavu very well knows the problems faced by the Labasa Tikina and the Hon. Ratu Nanovo knows the problem faced by the Kadavu Holdings.

Madam Speaker, I am saying this because we all want the *iTaukeis* to participate in business, but the problem with the *iTaukei* is when the *Ratu* or the Committee or Adi steals the money or mismanages the funds, it is swept under the carpet. Let us address these issues, if we are to move forward, Madam Speaker. Let us talk about it, we are all equally challenged so that we can go back. Our people need leadership, but it needs good leadership; it needs accountable leadership; let us not blame the Government, Madam Speaker.

A lot of people benefitted from CBUL, it was the national interest that is important and foremost. Landowners, Madam Speaker, have earned more than \$30 million from the subsidy, and I am only talking about subsidy alone. Where is that \$30 million? You do not have to blame iTLTB because iTLTB is the custodian but they distribute to the people. People make decisions about the funds that they are given. Of course, it is time for us to move into business, be competitive, but let us make the right decision and let us have good leadership so that we can move forward.

Militarisation of the Civil Service; This is unfair, Madam Speaker. People speak about the Military but they do not know much about the Military because they think the Military is all about guns and machetes. They do not know what Military Officers go through or know what training they go through. There are better Military Officers out there than those or some in the Civil Service.

Look at the record! It is not new, Madam Speaker. When the nation needs good leadership, people from the Military have to be posted to the Civil Service: Ilaisa Kacisolomone was a Divisional Commissioner; Savenaca Draunidalo was a Divisional Commissioner; Mataiasi Lomaloma was a Divisional Commissioner; Jone Bolaitamana was a Divisional Commissioner; and Hon. Ratu Tikoca was a Divisional Commissioner, so when the country needs it, there are good brains out there. Fiji has invested on all of them, so militarisation of the Civil Service, Madam Speaker, is not really an issue. Their record speaks volumes because they are result-oriented, they do things.

*Qoliqoli*; Madam Speaker, it takes moral courage to rectify the wrongs in our society. We may be unfavourable but in the end, we will be respected for doing the right thing. We have done it on land issues and, of course, it is wrong for our chiefs to be receiving money from people in the illegal way, Madam Speaker.

Of course, we understand the concerns of the chiefs, we understand the needs in the *vanua*, but let me come back to what Hon. Gavoka stated about why the need for equal distribution of money, our customary obligations, et cetera. Madam Speaker, we were doing that even before money came into this society, but the problem now is that the value has shifted.

My grandparents, Madam Speaker, paddled to Viwa Island, they paddled to Naivuruvuru Village, they paddled to Ucunivanua where we have our blood ties, et cetera, because they valued the relationship rather than the money, there was no money then. However, people are now crying for money, but we are still continuing today. We still attend the *reguregu*, and we meet the traditional obligations. It not about money, Madam Speaker, it is what we value and we need to look at that seriously.

I do not have to defend the Hon. Prime Minister, Madam Speaker, and I do not want to because the truth speaks for itself. You do not need to defend the truth, the truth is the truth.

(Applause)

It is unfolding before our very own eyes and I say this again, we are defined by our paradigm. Whatever Fiji is seeing, whatever it is going through and experiencing right now, that is the paradigm, that is the wisdom, that is the vision in him. We do not have to defend it, but we hook on to that paradigm, we hook on to that vision, and we want him to remain as Prime Minister, Madam Speaker. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now give the floor to the Honourable Minister for Employment Productivity and Industrial Relations.

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- Madam Speaker, I stand before the House to show my total disappointment towards the motion that was put before the House this morning. I thought I should make my presentation very short. As I have served with the Hon. Prime Minister 30 years ago when we attended HMS Service (Naval College) and basically, I think I do not need to say any more about the respect and knowledge that I have on his integrity and performance.

Madam Speaker, for 12 months I held the position of the Government Whip, and during those 12 months I have had close association with the Opposition Chief Whip and the Assistant Whip. During those 12 months, I have basically suggested to them that if they do not move away from the idea of direct conflict and direct opposition to Government, this situation will arise.

It has been a huge difficulty for me to try and convince the two Whips, especially the Hon. Tikoca to shift his focus on the way to deal with issues that is debated in Parliament. I then concentrated on Hon. Radrodro in trying to convince her to change the whole focus of how they would like to perceive, and how they would like to put their views in this Parliament. I know that Hon. Salote Radrodro had a very difficult position to try and follow what I had advised her because of their own instability within their own caucus - the SODELPA.

There have been three major groupings in SODELPA that I had observed during my discussions with the two Whips, and if they had resolved their internal issues, and pick on the strengths that they can play when coming into Parliament to debate issues, this situation would not have arisen today. This is the sign of frustrations or not being able to make a change or to make a difference in the discussions that are being held in this House. Instead of being confrontational, they should have played the advocate of suggesting improvements or suggestions that can make things better during debates in the House.

(Hon. Member interjected)

I do not support the motion because this is simply the face of a frustrated party that cannot accept that 32 and 15 counts at the end of the day. That is the basic simple arithmetic, and if they had accepted that from day one, and accept that they have come and formed a coalition with three other members that gives them an 18, it will never match. Madam Speaker, 32 is too far stronger than the 18, and that is the fact that they have to accept. If they had accepted that from day one, we would have not ended up in this situation here today.

Madam Speaker, I do not support the motion. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now give the floor to the Hon. Attorney-General.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Thank you. Madam Speaker, I would like to start off on a very positive note regarding the Leader of the Opposition. I would like to welcome her acknowledgment of the fact, probably after some 15 months or so, which she now finally accepts that everyone in Fiji can be called a Fijian. I would like to thank her for that because she said that earlier during the debate today.

Madam Speaker, I do not want to dwell on the negatives of the Leader of the Opposition, who is the proposed alternative Prime Minister, but whatever I say about the Hon. Prime Minister, I would take that to mean the opposite to what the Leader of Opposition can offer us.

Madam Speaker, just on a few technical matters, the Hon. Karavaki has moved a motion under Section 94 would have also read Section 93. Section 93 says, Madam Speaker, that a person can only become a Prime Minister if they have 50 per cent or more of the support of the House of Parliament. Section 94 is envisaged in a situation where you have no clear cut majority winner, where you have a coalition of parties, that is where Section 93 kicks in. In this particular case, Madam Speaker, as the Constitution provides, we have a clear cut party that has clearly won the Elections and as highlighted by the Hon. Minister for Labour, 32 verses 18 seats.

Madam Speaker, there are a few comments and some of the comments have been raised by the other side. The issue of human rights has arisen. Human rights, Madam Speaker, is actually applicable to every single individual, indeed the Universal Declaration on Human Rights is premised on the belief, on the notion, on the principle that every single individual human being on the face of this earth is as equal as the next person.

Madam Speaker, I am not someone who wears my religion on my sleeve, nor do I proselytise about religion but as I have said in this House before, there is one single thing that I know that all religions of this world teach and that is, God views everyone equally and we are all children of God. If we start from that fundamental premise, Madam Speaker, a lot of these arguments about quotations from different scriptures et cetera would not be debated today because that should be a value and a principle that should govern our individual everyday lives, not about simply proselytising, but how we interact with each other.

Madam Speaker, the reality is this, a number of issues that I fully support, the Hon. Minister for Labour's thinking about the rationale as to why this motion has been brought today, Madam Speaker. The rationale, Madam Speaker, is a distraction. The rationale, Madam Speaker, is that you have an Opposition that has not been able to remodel itself as an effective Opposition. They have not come to terms with the fact that they are in the Opposition, that is what every single party must do. FijiFirst in fact had a plan that if we did not win, they would want an effective Opposition they could make, everyone needs to plan for the alternative. Madam Speaker, they have not been able to do that, so today they are grappling at straws. They are now bringing up issues that can be brought about through the normal process.

Hon. Ratu Kiliraki continues to go on about the mahogany industry as if all the ills of the mahogany industry has been brought about because of the Decree. He does not talk about the past, he does not talk about the lack of reforestation, he does not talk about the fact that mahogany was being stolen in daylight and night time from the different forests, how individual members of landowning units were paid money on the side by unscrupulous business people and the selling of this valuable mahogany. The grading was wrong and I want to inform this House, Madam Speaker, earlier this week we have reported to FICAC some of the illegal trade that are taking place in the mahogany business, it is a huge industry.

No other government, Madam Speaker, has recognised the fact that Fiji has the largest planted mahogany forest in the world. No other government has been able to rebrand it, pure Fiji mahogany, we branded the trademark in about 20 different jurisdictions. It is increasing the value of it, Madam Speaker, they are simply obsessed by one or two companies and they think that is the whole paradigm regarding mahogany industry.

Reforestation has been taking place, we have talked about that. Madam Speaker, the reality is that, that will now flow and have a positive impact, the amount of land rental that usually paid previously was what you called "peppercorn rent" - five shillings, \$2, \$3, now

they are actually getting paid value for those leases. Madam Speaker, this is the reality, what they are trying to do through this motion is to bring about a whole heap of issues based on ethnicity, based on fear, based on some form of adverse event about to take place in Fiji; no such thing is taking place.

The Hon. Members from the other side said, “We want to meet the Prime Minister because the country is in a state of crisis, let us get together”, there is no crisis in Fiji. The economy is doing well, people are being served, in fact many of their own members who elected them, voters who elected them, are benefiting from the entire system that this Government is offering. Even Hon. Bilitavu is taking advantage of the *iTaukei* \$10 million that we have set aside for land development. He sent me an email the other day, they had an application. We welcome that, this is the kind of partnership we want. We should not admonish him for that, he should be congratulated. However, that is the reality, Madam Speaker, on the ground. We have about four or five land developers that are about to take place, the scoping missions are being done, right from Tamavua, Wairabetia and to Saweni. All these issues, Madam Speaker, are taking place.

On the lease money, now, we have now registration with the VKB, people are getting lease moneys directly. During Elections time, we had individual young *iTaukei* people and mind you, Madam Speaker, the reason why FijiFirst got such a large number of votes, if you do the analysis, majority of the youth and women in this country voted for FijiFirst. That is a fact and that also bodes well for us too because these young people have faith in this Government and they will continue to have faith in this Government, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, that is the reality. They talk about the flag. The Hon. Minister for Agriculture has spoken about that. Madam Speaker, there are many countries, and I do not want to get into the area of ethnicity and religion, the reality is, Madam Speaker, there are many countries, majority of the countries in the world are Christian countries. Do they all have the Cross of Saint George on their flags to serve and show that they are Christian countries? No, that does not mean that and the Hon. Minister for Agriculture made a fantastic point. It is about what we have inside us is what that matters.

(Hon. Members interjected)

We are talking about having indigenous symbols on our flag. So everyone knows this is Fiji. What is wrong in having indigenous symbols on our flag? What is wrong with that? This flag that we have at the moment which we all respect was actually chosen by four men. There was no referendum and they decided in a matter of two or three days. There were about 400 applications to vet. We have over 2,000 applications now. We already have a new law on the flag. That, Madam Speaker, is the reality.

We talk about the British as if everything was hunky-dory, everything was perfect. The same way they talked about as if prior to 5 December, 2006, Fiji was perfect. It was not.

Let us read our history. We are going to talk about history in Fiji, talk about the people in Colo who were slaughtered. That is where we get the derogative term “*kai-colo*” today. They need to read history, they need to read about Simione Durutalo’s writings about Fijian history, not a sanitized colonial version of our history, he wrote about the history that actually took place.

These are the issues, Madam Speaker, that we are facing today. These are the realities that we are facing today. There are many other countries that do have indigenous land ownership: Samoa, which was colonised by the Germans and then the Kiwis through the British. We have African countries that also have those type of protection too, in the traditional ownership of land, Madam Speaker. However, what they are trying to do is to pass on a fear mongering tactic. They are saying “oh, the *qoliqoli* rights are lost.” Has the Hon. Minister for Fisheries said that that they do not have *qoliqoli* rights? Has the Hon. Minister for Agriculture said that? Has the Hon. Prime Minister said that? No.

What they are saying is, we need to rationalise as to what is happening in terms of practice on the ground vis-à-vis, the current law. We may even review the current law to provide benefits. We are looking at the Maori model, how they actually have rights to fishing areas and how the Maoris are benefiting, where the State actually pays them upfront and then they are able to give licenses. We need to talk about things like fish stock. Everyone talks about getting the money, no one talks about fish stock. No one says you can harvest 1,000 tonnes of *kawakawa*, 1,000 tonnes of *saga*.. There is no such mechanism put in place. We want to put that in place.

No Government, Madam Speaker, is perfect, no Government, in the history of Fiji, or any other country. This Government recognises the fact that sometimes we need to improve things. We have openly admitted that. What is wrong with that? What is wrong in putting in place laws and policies that recognise the changes in systems in society?

They want to keep society in one static motion. They think this is how our society should be and therefore, it will be like this. They forget the things that there are many institutional provisions that we have today that were in fact imposed on Fiji, what they call separate development. Some parts of Fiji did not even know what a *Roko* was. There are some Members of that House who are already benefiting from equal distribution of land lease monies.

The reality is, Madam Speaker, that these are the changes that are taking place in Fiji. The reality, Madam Speaker, is that there was alienation, permanent alienation of *i-Taukei* land even after independence. The Constitution as the Hon. Member for Fisheries and Forests rightly pointed out, now protects that. We should not try and create fear, Madam Speaker, for the sake of remaining prominent in the media. We should not try and get the votes of people built upon fear. We should try and win the votes of the people based on sound policies. Policies, Madam Speaker, there is a national approach. We must have a national approach, a long-term approach, Madam Speaker, that is how you are able to build the country; that is how you are able to empower the country, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I also wanted to highlight a couple of other points, I know that a lot of figures have been thrown about but again I want to reiterate as the last Member speaking from this side. The Hon. Prime Minister received over 202,000 votes in the Elections that was recently held. The Leader of Opposition received about 49,485 odd votes. To put that into perspective, Hon. Salote Radrodro, for example, received 2,300 votes or 0.46 percent. If all the votes of everyone in this House were to be accumulated into one, we still have far less votes than the Hon. Prime Minister. That is the magnitude with which the Fijian people supported him. That is the magnitude of it, Madam Speaker. It is unprecedented. It is completely unprecedented. The Constitution says, Madam Speaker, that the term of Government may end after three and a half years at the minimum, and a maximum of four years. The Hon. Members can wait until March, 2018, if the Elections are held then, or latest in September 2018.

The reality, Madam Speaker, that these types of motions, we know that this particular motion has now been brought to your attention about three times this week. It is not a 'Mickey Mouse affair'. You are simply bringing a motion of no confidence against the Hon. Prime Minister, then decide to withdraw it, put it in again, withdraw it, put it in again, withdraw it. It is a serious matter. They talk about the assault on democracy. You know, I think they have just developed a cliché term, 'death of democracy.'

Let me talk very briefly about the Standing Orders. They had walked out again as they did in the first Budget, Madam Speaker, where the most important thing, the Hon. Bulitavu talked about was the Hon. Prime Minister not being there for the Budget. He had a reason. He had national duties overseas. They had no reason to be absent. They had no reason to be absent from the first Budget, Madam Speaker. They had no reason to be absent from the Companies Bill when it was being debated. Madam Speaker, did they have any reason yesterday to walk out? This is the kind of leadership that they are proposing, to be the alternative leadership, Madam Speaker.

The Standing Orders, Madam Speaker, with the amendments, does not mean that they cannot bring any motions. We have been told that petitions will be brought in by one signature only, but if there is an issue, they can bring it by way of a weekly statement; they can bring it by way of a question; and they can bring it by way of a motion.

Australia and New Zealand Public Accounts Committees, both are chaired by people from Government. Do they go and say that "oh, that's biased? No, they do not. In fact, they want us to try and be like the Aussies and the Kiwis, but when it comes to us, suddenly the rules change and there, of course, Madam Speaker, as highlighted yesterday, were some specific benefits from it.

Madam Speaker, I want to very quickly highlight one very other important issue that the Hon. Minister for Women highlighted. Under this Government, Madam Speaker, there has never been so much public debates, statements, and an open support by any Prime Minister to openly discuss issues of sexual assault, abuse of children, domestic violence. In fact, this Government has brought those laws about, refined and reformed the old penal code that we have from the British about a 110 years ago. We now have new offenses pertaining to sexual assault, to rape. We made it gender neutral. The Prime Minister talks about nearly everywhere he goes and he says "do not abuse your women, do not abuse your children, do not carry out sexual assault", Madam Speaker. These are the kind of issues, Madam Speaker that this Hon. Prime Minister is involved in. These are everyday real issues. Madam Speaker, we have a Constitution that is translated in the Braille language, not just Braille English, but Braille *iTaukei* too.

Madam Speaker, we have just introduced in Parliament last week a new law regarding disabled persons. We have modernisation of our laws. We have ratified UNCAT. We have peer review programmes.

These are all the things that have been done under our Hon. Prime Minister. One thing, individually I can say as a person, Madam Speaker, from a philosophical perspective, under the Hon. Prime Minister, Fiji has never been philosophically more liberal. He has allowed us the space to think about and go into areas where people before would not even traverse into. It was like a taboo, we should not talk about that.

We now have young people discussing issues openly, discussing issues of socio-economic differences. Most of the Members on that side of the House seem to be obsessed by ethnicity, a very dichotomous approach. You know, the old tradition of Indo-Fijian versus the *iTaukei*, but let me tell you another dimension, Madam Speaker, it is not as simple as that. They are intra injustices within those groups; whether it is based on gender, socio-economic differences, whether its provinces, whether its maritime or rural areas, these are the kind of differences that we really need to address. That is the fundamental crux of any caring government; that is the fundamental crux of any caring Prime Minister, and that is exactly what our Hon. Prime Minister is, Madam Speaker. He has allowed us the opportunity, and history, Madam Speaker, and we will judge him as that; a man who has stood for principles, a man who has not sought to simplify complex issues by giving this facade or ethnicity or communal politics, and as Hon. Kumar had rightly pointed out, someone who could have very easily fallen prey to that, but he did not because he is taking a principled approach.

Madam Speaker, we would like to say that, of course, the fact that this motion has been brought about in a very unthought-of manner, it has made a mockery of the system.

(Hon. Member interjected)

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- So, I would please appeal to the other side, this is now the opportunity. You now have 29 people speak in support of the Hon. Prime Minister, his policies and his vision. I do not know how many people are there on the other side now, about 14 or odd of them, who have spoken and I understand that some have not spoken but Madam Speaker, the point is this, that these kind of motions should not be seen as a vehicle simply to enunciate or talk about policy matters that they may be grappling with; there are other mechanisms through that. Let us not try and win political mileage by simply trying to create fear or discord, that is what the intention of the motion is.

Madam Speaker, of course, with those things said, I would like to say that we obviously reject this motion, and that we presently have a Prime Minister, who has empowered all ordinary Fijians and I believe that, that was reflected in the support that he received, and that is what democracy is all about. It is about people making their choices. They have chosen him as our leader and we must continue with him as our leader.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. Lastly, I invite the Hon. Nadalo to have the floor.

HON. R.N.NADALO.- Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I rise to also contribute towards the motion before the House this morning. Madam Speaker, it is a pity that this motion has come before this august House.

Madam Speaker, the very reason why we are here in this august House is through the mandate of the Fijian people. It is through that mandate, Madam Speaker, that our Hon. Prime Minister is now leading the country. It is a pity that all Honourable Members on the opposite side of the House want to challenge the mandate of all Fijians in this very august House.

It is a pity that the Honourable mover of the motion and his nominee have been blindfolded by the rest of the Opposition members. It is a pity, Madam Speaker, that the Honourable Mover is hiding behind the *Bible* to pollute the minds of all Fijians and I am glad



that all Honourable Opposition Members have now come to their senses in desperately trying to put FijiFirst before their very own.

Therefore, Madam Speaker I do not support the motion. *Vinaka vakalevu.*

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you very much, Honourable Members. That concludes the end of our debate and I will now invite Hon. Karavaki to give his right of reply.

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- Thank you, Madam Speaker.

We have heard almost everyone in the House about their views on the motion that I have brought to this House. As I listen, majority of the views given by the Government is based on the results of the last Elections.

Madam Speaker, the numbers they have given is not disputed, but one thing they have forgotten is that, things changed from 2014 to 2015, and we are now in 2016. We cannot keep on saying today that what happened in 2014 is still the same today. We cannot say that...

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- ...because if they want to find out, go to another Elections now!

(Chorus of interjections)

Then they will find out the actual truth.

However, Madam Speaker, they seem to misunderstand the reason and the purpose of this motion. Most of them used words that dictate or reflect their misunderstanding because, Madam Speaker, the reason for bringing this motion is very simple, with due respect, the Hon. Prime Minister is a very good man, a very good person.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- ....but he is not a good leader.

(Laughter)

Madam Speaker, the very purpose this motion was brought before the House is because I myself believe that they can build a government that come into place because if they cannot, then we are waiting to go and do that.

(Chorus of interjections)

The proposed Prime Minister is the one who is going to lead in building up a system that is basically built on a firm foundation and will not be moved. She will withstand the tempest, the storm and the floods, whatever she will face, she will never fall, but Madam Speaker, what I have basically brought in (I have used Scriptures that was purposely done to lay down the basis of our understanding because the ownership of land is given by God), they can build on that foundation, not in everything else.

Madam Speaker, the basis of doing that is for them to understand that you cannot build economic growth by denying the property rights, the ownership rights and based on that and other things, you can build a very strong economy.

(Hon. Member interjected)

No, the Constitution says that, but if you go to the villages now, Madam Speaker, and I do not know how many of them have been to their village...

(Chorus of interjections)

... the traditional structure is crumbling.

(Hon. Member interjected)

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- Why, Madam Speaker? It is because of this very basis, they are ignoring or sweeping away the property rights and the ownership rights, although they can lift up their Constitution and say, "It is in here."

However, deceptively, Madam Speaker, they are doing things that have taken out the control of the *iTaukei* people. If we go to the villages, they are receiving their lease money and the others will say, "The younger people are not listening anymore." They are not listening anymore because that is exactly what they want.

(Chorus of interjections)

I am saying, Madam Speaker, that the basis of true development is to recognise those divine rights and build on them. You do not take that away and try to bring them to your control as Government and use it on the basis of equality, no! They simply missed the point and that is the only thing missing, to get their consent, respect that and then build up their economy on that. We cannot go and get someone else's property without asking for it, without an approval being given and go and give it to someone else. That is simply what I am saying, Madam Speaker. That is simply what I am saying, Madam Speaker.

The Constitution even deprived the landowners, those properties that were compulsorily acquired before. Now, most of them have been permanently denied of that because the Constitution had put a bar to the return of those properties, of those land. That is coveting, Madam Speaker, it is coveting. Madam Speaker, in fact, the officials from the Lands Department, officials from iTLTB, they even said that the Solicitor-General had given the legal opinion that that is so, under the Constitution, it cannot be returned but they denied that over here in this House. This is the kind of lies being told over here in this House.

(Chorus of interjections)

MADAM SPEAKER.- Please withdraw the word 'lies'.

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- I withdraw that, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you.

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- The Solicitor-General himself had given an opinion on that and they said, “No, it is not right”. The Hon. Attorney-General must know this very well and he is saying, “No, that is not right.” This is why the Hon. Prime Minister does not pay attention to this, that it is time to change, Madam Speaker, but this country will need to be saved. I bring this personal agenda for no other reason, but I brought this because of my care and love for this nation.

(Chorus of interjections)

I care about the future generation because if this is not done, if this is not recognised and respected, this nation one day and very soon will find itself in a position it has never expected it will be in.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- Madam Speaker, we cannot use developments. Many, many speakers have spoken about developments. We cannot use developments to subvert this very important principle. We cannot use development for that vision. It does not matter what kind of development you do but that injustice is still there. It cannot be approved or justified or on the basis of a lot of developments being carried out, riding on a horseback to the interior of the islands or crossing the river, that cannot be used to justify by taking away the rights that was divinely given to these people without consulting them. It cannot be used.

(Hon. Member interjected)

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- Madam Speaker, it is very simple - respect those ownership rights, get their consent, speak to them because if they do not, I thought I would use this sense to change their minds, but it seems that they are adamant, they will not change. If they do not change then I hope the Hon. Prime Minister will take on board what I am saying now because that is the only reason this country will never come to destruction.

Madam Speaker, I note that the Government is relying on the vote of the youths. What I am saying is really the basis of why they are hoping for the votes of the youths. You know the indigenous people, what is going on now, the Government is hoping that they will be able to control these people on the basis of developments because they are trying to destroy the very root and the basis of their traditional structures. That is the very reason why they are hoping, if they are successful, they will be able to entrench their position to continue to lead this country perpetually, but, Madam Speaker, God looks over us. II Corinthians chapter 6, it says that: “We are co-workers with Christ.” God will never send angels to come and change this government, it uses people who He can trust on this earth to work together with Him.

Madam Speaker, you do not expect for us to say we have laid down the time of Elections, after four years we will have another Elections. He sees the hearts of people and He changes leaders according to His will. We cannot say, “No God, you cannot do it.” He does it according to His will and that is the very purpose of this motion.

The very purpose of this motion, we are saying that it is time now to change and the time for everyone in this House to listen to the small voice. I am giving them another opportunity, Madam Speaker, to listen to that small voice and to ensure that they do what the small voice is telling them, not because of what goes down in their pockets, not because of material gains but because of that small voice, they must listen to and vote according to what the small voice is telling them.

(Chorus of interjections)

Madam Speaker, they are wanting to vote but they know when the vote is cast, they are going to get the numbers and I am giving them that last opportunity because their vote today is on them. They must accept that. This will be like the Jews who sold Jesus to be killed and said “Well, His death is upon us.” Madam Speaker, 70 years after that, they were destroyed and even their temple. This is exactly what is happening here in this House and I am pleading to them once more.

(Chorus of Interjections)

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- Once more, , Madam Speaker, ....

(Laughter)

This is the last call that they must listen to the small voice. That is all, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you very much, Honourable Members. We have had a very interesting and a healthy debate and now we are coming to the end of the debate process. Parliament will now vote on the motion.

The question is that, pursuant to Section 94 (1) of the 2013 Constitution the Hon. Semesa Karavaki moves a motion of no confidence in the Prime Minister and that he immediately ceases to hold office and he proposes the name of Ro Teimumu Vuikaba Kapa,, Member of Parliament, to be the Prime Minister. Does anyone oppose the motion?

(Chorus of yes and noes)

MADAM SPEAKER.-

There being opposition, Parliament will vote on the motion.

Votes cast:

Ayes:	11
Noes:	28
Not Voted:	11

Motion defeated.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, based on the suspension motion that was voted and agreed to earlier, that we complete the debate on that motion and deal with the Government motion that is before us.

We will now go on to the suspension motion by Government. I now call on the Leader of Government in Parliament.

## SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

HON. LEADER OF THE GOVERNMENT IN PARLIAMENT.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. Our request for suspension was for the Hon. Attorney-General to move a motion. Basically, Madam Speaker, it is of national importance. This is about the Paris Agreement and this Agreement needs to be signed in April and the Government has just received correspondence from the United Nations that our Head of Government, together with the other leaders, need to approve and perhaps the ratification as well in April and at that time, Madam Speaker, because of our proposed dates for Parliament in April, we would not be convening then and that is the reason behind the motion, and I would ask the indulgence of the House, Madam Speaker, for the Honourable Attorney-General to quickly move the motion before the House.

HON. A. SUDHAKAR.- Madam Speaker, I second the motion.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now call upon the Honourable Attorney-General to have the floor.

## RATIFICATION OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, I move that:

Parliament approves the ratification of the Paris Agreement without being referred to the Committee on the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Madam Speaker, I beg to second the motion.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Honourable Attorney-General, you have the floor.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, the Hon. Prime Minister received notification of this yesterday. Just by way of background, Madam Speaker, United Nations Secretary-General, Ban Ki-Moon has invited all world leaders to a signing ceremony on 22<sup>nd</sup> April, 2016 for the historic Climate Change Agreement that was reached in Paris in December, last year.

The signing event will take place in the UN Headquarters in New York. On the first day, the Agreement will be opened for signatures, which coincides with the observance of the International Mother Earth Day, observed in many countries as simply Earth Day.

The Secretary-General intends to use the occasion of the signing ceremony to further engage leaders from business and civil societies to put the new agreement into action. In his invitation, the learned Secretary-General said that the leaders' participation could also facilitate the early entry into force with the Paris Agreement and provide, and I quote, Madam Speaker: "For the smooth finalisation of the operation details needed to give effect to the provisions of the new Agreement."

Madam Speaker, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change of 1992, aims to achieve, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Convention, the stabilisation of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that prevents dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system, Madam Speaker.

As at December 2015, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change had 196 State parties of which Fiji, of course, is a party.

Madam Speaker, in 2014, a number of UN Climate Scientists called for the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), released the 5th Assessment Report, confirming that despite long held recognition, human development and industrial activity were causing the earth atmosphere to warm and despite efforts to address this through the differentiated commitments under the UN Climate Convention, the earth continued to warm at alarming rates.

Scientists confirm the last 14 years as the warmest years on record. Scientists' signals also indicate that this warming could continue to worsen, leading to manifold suffering if urgent measures were not taken now to drastically reduce manmade causes of greenhouse gas emissions.

In Paris last year, Madam Speaker, to which our Hon. Prime Minister attended, together with one of the largest contingents from the Pacific, the 196 parties of the UN Climate Change gathered to recommit to the shared goal that was started in 1992 of protecting the climate from climate change.

The Paris Climate talks culminated in a historic agreement that attempts to combat runaway climate change. This commitment, Madam Speaker, is expected to catalyse actions and investment towards the low carbon resilient and sustainable future, which many of us have in fact discussed in this House.

The Paris Agreement is the first agreement that joins all nations in a common cause based on each nation's historic, current and future responsibilities to safeguard and protect planet earth.

Madam Speaker, the main aim remains fixed to Article 2 of the UN Climate Convention to keeping global temperatures to rise essentially well below two degrees Celsius and to drive efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degrees over pre-industrial levels. Additionally, the Agreement aims to strengthen capability to deal with the impact of climate change, Madam Speaker.

What are the implications for Fiji, Madam Speaker?

The Paris Agreement requires all countries to take action while recognising the differing economic situation and circumstances. Under the Paris Agreement, Madam Speaker, countries are responsible for taking action in both mitigation and adaptation.

For Fiji, Madam Speaker, the benchmark for its commitment will be sourced from its officially submitted, nationally determined climate actions for INDCs. All countries have a common responsibility, to implement these nationally determined plans as these will assist in the reduction of projected global temperature rise.

The Paris Agreement, Madam Speaker, not only formalises the process of developing national plans, but it also provides a binding requirement to access, assess and review progress on these plans. This mechanism, Madam Speaker, will require countries to continuously upgrade their commitments and ensure that there will be no backtracking.

The Paris Agreement is a call for all governments that they are ready to implement the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda which, Madam Speaker, of course, you will be spearheading through this Parliament.

To meet these ambitious and important goals, Madam Speaker, developed industrial countries and large business corporations alike shall set the necessary financial flows in place to ensure developing countries and the most vulnerable are able to take stronger actions at the national and local levels.

For Fiji, a large part of our contribution is our pledge to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through our intended nationally determined contributions, in particular, our commitment on renewable energy and to drastically reducing its dependency in fossil fuels such as outlined in the green growth framework. This strategically positions Fiji, Madam Speaker, to benefit from the initiatives laid out in the Paris Agreement.

In November last year, before COP 21, Fiji submitted its pledge to voluntarily reduce carbon emissions by 30 percent from business as usual levels by 2030. This pledge was confirmed in the Paris Meeting, Madam Speaker. This commitment would be achieved through investment in renewable energy to fully meet our electricity demand by the Year 2030.

Madam Speaker, we will only be able to achieve this target if we receive external funding and support from developed countries.

Alone, Fiji can achieve 10 percent reduction in emissions through our Green Growth Framework, but with the additional funding, our target is, of course, 30 percent.

The legal implications as such, the Paris Agreement is a legal instrument that will guide the process for universal actions to combat climate change. Unlike the Kyoto Protocol that kept the United States and a few other industrial developed countries away from signing onto the first commitment period, the Paris Agreement is a result of delicate compromise, and is a high grade of legally binding and non-binding provisions. The Agreement consists of a core agreement that governs the international process which should be binding on States while there are elements that are not part of a legally binding agreement. The intended nationally determined contributions are not binding but it could be at the national level, if Fiji so decides.

Madam Speaker, Fiji is one of the few signatories to the Kyoto Protocol and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and benefitted immensely from its State party membership. A large part of its derived benefits was from State party allocations to fulfil obligations under the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol and access of resources made available to developing countries.

The world, Madam Speaker, has finally agreed to a framework for cooperating from Climate Change that is fit for a purpose, whether or not this has become a true turning point, Madam Speaker, for the world, though depends critically on how seriously countries follow through.

Fiji's move to sign up in New York and through our preparations for ratification is our commitment to mobilise the urgent and strong international support for this global problem which concerns us all.

Madam Speaker, Fiji, of course, wants to be one of the first States to ratify this Convention.

Madam Speaker, in light of the above, we move:

That the Parliament approves the ratification of the Paris Agreement and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Madam Speaker, before I stand down also, I would also like to highlight to this honourable House that even the Hon. Leader of the Opposition has given her support to the signing and the ratification of this Paris Agreement that is now being formally called the Paris Agreement.

I have got a clipping from the *Fiji Times* on Sunday, 13<sup>th</sup> December, it reads:

“The Opposition Leader Ro Teimumu Kepa has welcomed the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and says that Fiji should be one of the nations to define its success and victory.”

So, Madam Speaker, this is quite an emphatic endorsement by the Hon. Leader of the Opposition for the Paris Agreement. It is an agreement, of course, Madam Speaker, that the world has agreed to. It is quite a momentous occasion actually for us where we had even industrialised countries like USA and various other countries that previously stood outside the domain of any internationally-agreed structure, and they stood outside and made comments. Now, they are actually part of this Agreement and I think it would be amiss of Fiji to miss out on this opportunity when the Hon. Prime Minister will be there on 22<sup>nd</sup> April, 2016, and to be one of the first Pacific Island States to actually sign this climate change Agreement.

Madam Speaker, before I sit down, you will also know that Fiji has been recognised for its leadership role in escalating the awareness internationally about the impact of climate change, in particular for Small Island Developing States that are vulnerable, in particular to one of the side effects of climate change which is rising sea levels. We have already seen a number of villages, both in Fiji and, of course, in other countries like Tuvalu, et cetera, that can go under water very soon and even Kiribati where they are only 12 feet above sea level.

It has enormous impacts in the South Pacific and Fiji as you know, Madam Speaker, has also allocated some funding in this year's budget. Apart from having some mitigation programmes and policies to address the side effects of climate change, we also want to establish Fiji as one of the leading island nations in the world to discuss the new areas of legal implications of climate change, such as climate change refugees, the legal implications on the loss of land and land that sinks under water above the territoriality of particular countries that sink under water, and of course, ownership, et cetera, that comes into it.

So, Madam Speaker, with the endorsement by the Hon. Leader of the Opposition publicly about this, and the fact that this Paris Agreement, Madam Speaker, has been internationally accepted, and indeed parties have signed to it, and the world is recognising that it is the best way forward, we propose that we now vote on this motion and that we all take a unanimous decision in supporting the ratification of this Paris Agreement.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now open the floor for debate.



HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Thank you, Madam Speaker.

On behalf of the Opposition, our Leader has also been at the forefront of this initiative and we applaud the work of Government towards contributing to this as part of the global community. At this time, we understand and we know that the Hon. Prime Minister was in Paris but had to come back early because of bereavement in the family and our condolences, Hon. Prime Minister, from our side with the recent loss.

HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- *Vinaka!*

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Yes, Madam Speaker, we fully support the ratification of the Paris Agreement, knowing what the world is going through today. It is very urgent that we react in this manner to help, hopefully, address this threat to mankind.

We may wish to ask for clarification on what Ministry will be entrusted with the management of climate change from our end here in Fiji, if that could be clarified to us, so we understand how well we have structured this.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. Would you like to make the clarification now?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, the practical application falls with the Ministry of National Planning because as we know that climate change has a huge impact, not just on rising sea levels but its impact on agriculture and infrastructure processes. So, the Ministry of National Planning will coordinate with all the Ministries, hence, climate change is under the ministerial assignment but in terms of the diplomatic instruments that need to be lodged, they are, of course, always done by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. They are also able to, through our Missions, speak on different areas whenever there are forums and our Hon. Prime Minister, of course, his office is also involved in this because he has been at the forefront. Indeed, he has been invited to speak on a number of such issues regarding the impact on development through climate change issues and I understand that the Hon. Prime Minister is also being invited to speak at a very high level gathering of World Leaders in New Delhi next month, Madam Speaker.

Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER.- I invite other inputs to the debate, if any.

(Pause)

There being no other inputs, I would like to call upon the Hon. Attorney-General.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I would like to thank the Opposition for their recognition of this and indeed, it is a matter that we all need, as Honourable Members of this House, to support. We need to be mindful of the effects of climate change, and we look forward to the ratification of this Agreement and be the first Pacific Island country to have our Leader go there and actually ratify it on the day itself.



Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER- Thank you. The Parliament will now vote. The question is that Parliament approves the ratification of the Paris Agreement and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Question put.

Motion agreed to.

(Applause)

### **ADJOURNMENT**

MADAM SPEAKER.- I now call on the Leader of the Government in Parliament.

HON. LEADER OF THE GOVERNMENT IN PARLIAMENT.- Madam Speaker, I beg to move:

That Parliament adjourns until Monday, 25<sup>th</sup> April, 2016 at 9.30 a.m.

HON. A. SUDHAKAR.- Madam Speaker, I beg to second the motion.

Question put.

Motion agreed to.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you very much, Honourable Members.

The Parliament adjourned at 2.46 p.m.