

FRIDAY, 3RD JUNE, 2016

The Parliament resumed at 9.40 a.m. pursuant to adjournment.

HONOURABLE SPEAKER took the Chair and read the Prayer.

PRESENT

All Honourable Members were present, except the Honourable Minister for Foreign Affairs; the Honourable Minister for Local Government, Housing and Environment, Infrastructure and Transport; the Honourable Minister for Health and Medical Services; and the Honourable Professor B.C. Prasad.

MINUTES

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

That the Minutes of the sitting of Parliament held on Thursday, 2nd June, 2016, as previously circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed.

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

Question put.

Motion agreed to.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CHAIR

Requests for Written Ruling

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, at the outset, I would like to inform that I had received three requests for written rulings and I will consider these and give my rulings on notice.

Acknowledgement of Honourable Members and Visitors in the Gallery

I welcome all Honourable Members to this sitting of Parliament.

I warmly welcome members of the public joining us in the gallery, and those watching proceedings on television, internet and listening to the radio. Thank you for taking interest in your Parliament.

PRESENTATION OF REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

Report of the Privileges Committee on the Breach of Privileges -
Honourable Roko T.T.S. Draunidalo

HON. SPEAKER.- I now call on the Deputy Speaker, Honourable Ruveni Nadalo to take the floor.

HON. R. NADALO.- Madam Speaker, a matter of privilege was raised with the Honourable Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 134(1) on Thursday 2nd June, 2016. The Honourable Speaker ruled

that in her opinion, there had been a *prima facie* breach of privilege, as she referred the matter to the Privileges Committee and directed that a report be tabled in Parliament no later than Friday 3rd June, 2016.

This report differs from those Standing Committees, in that, the proceedings were held in camera. I thank all Honourable Members of the Committee for the hard work and determination shown and respectfully commend this Report to Parliament.

HON. SPEAKER.- Please hand the Report to the Secretary-General.

(Report handed to the Secretary-General)

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, we will now suspend the proceedings, to allow Members to read the Report of the Privileges Committee, as I am allowing the Honourable Government Whip to move a suspension motion without notice, pursuant to Standing Order 6(2), to suspend Standing Order 46(2), in order to allow the Honourable Leader of the Government in Parliament to move a motion without notice.

The Parliament is now suspended until the bell is rung. Thank you, Honourable Members.

The Parliament adjourned at 9.42 a.m.

The Parliament resumed at 10.29 a.m.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you, Honourable Members, you may be seated. We will move on from where we left off. I now call on the Government Whip to move his motion.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

HON. A. SUDHAKAR.- Madam Speaker, I beg to move:

That so much of Standing Order 46(2) be suspended, to allow the Leader of Government in Parliament to move his motion without notice.

HON. SPEAKER.- Is there a seconder?

HON. LT. COL. N. RIKA.- Madam Speaker, I beg to second the motion.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Parliament will now vote, the question is, that so much of Standing Order 46(2) is suspended, to allow the Leader of Government in Parliament to move his motion without notice. Does any Member oppose the motion?

HON. OPPOSITION MEMBERS.- Yes.

HON. SPEAKER.- There being opposition, Parliament will vote on this motion.

Question put.

<u>Votes Cast:</u>		
Ayes	-	28
Noes	-	15
Not Voted	-	7

Motion agreed to.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. There being 28 Ayes, 15 Noes and 7 have not voted, the motion is therefore, agreed to. I now call on the Leader of the Government in Parliament to move his motion.

BREACH OF PRIVILEGES – HON. ROKO T.T.S. DRAUNIDALO

HON. LEADER OF THE GOVERNMENT IN PARLIAMENT.- Madam Speaker, having received the Report of the Privileges Committee, I move, pursuant to Standing Order 47, that:

1. Parliament endorses the findings of the Privileges Committee that the Honourable Tupou Draunidalo has contravened Standing Order 62 (4)(a) and (d) in circumstances that were not only a grave and serious breach of privilege but a contempt of Parliament.
2. Honourable Tupou Draunidalo must issue a formal apology in writing within five working days to the Minister for Education, Heritage and Arts, this Parliament and the people of Fiji. The apology must reflect the severity of the breach and the fact that it has had far reaching effects.

The apology format should also recognise that the Honourable Minister did not, in fact, utter the words “dumb natives”.

3. Honourable Tupou Draunidalo must be suspended for the remainder of the term of Parliament with immediate effect.
4. During the period of suspension, the Honourable Tupou Draunidalo is not allowed to enter the Parliamentary precincts, including the Opposition office. Immediately upon Honourable Tupou Draunidalo’s suspension, she must be ordered to leave the Parliamentary precincts and to remain outside of Parliamentary precincts.
5. If the Honourable Tupou Draunidalo fails to comply with any of the above, the necessary enforcement measures must be imposed to ensure compliance.

Madam Speaker, I move that this motion now be debated and voted upon immediately. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Is there any seconder?

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

HON. SPEAKER.- I now call upon the Leader of the Government in Parliament to speak on this motion.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- I rise on a Point of Order, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Point of Order.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Standing Order 32(2), Madam Speaker. The *Hansard* which the whole investigation by the Privileges Committee relied upon, is unedited and it is still incorrect. There is a seven days period that is there, according to Standing Order 32(2) that allows any corrections to that, so we cannot rely on the piece of evidence which the Privileges Committee had relied upon.

It is unedited, only until when that is final, Madam Speaker, it gives the right to the Honourable Members to correct, then only that can be used. I need a written ruling on that, Madam Speaker, and the advice by the Director for Legislature is also attached with the Report in that regard. I need a written ruling.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. You will get a written ruling on your Point of Order. Leader of the Government in Parliament, please continue.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Madam Speaker, I stand in relation to your plenary powers. The prayers that are sought here are pretty severe and they tantamount to punishing Honourable Tupou Draunidalo and if we move on the motion, without the ruling and accepting that as evidence, it would be a debacle.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you, the Point of Order process really is on rules and procedures which we are following and the issue that you have brought up can be brought up in the debate. Thank you, Leader of the Government, please continue.

HON. LEADER OF THE GOVERNMENT IN PARLIAMENT. - Let me also clarify that we also heard the audio recording rather than relying solely on the Verbatim Reports.

(Chorus of interjections)

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- My point is that, this whole evidence can be amended. The whole proceedings is too wordy. It can be amended. Honourable Tupou can say to what is stated to her, then what happens? What would be the result of this?

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you.

HON. A. SUDHAKAR.- Madam Speaker.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- He is a lawyer, he should know.

HON. A. SUDHAKAR. - I know that and I am going to teach you law now.

Madam Speaker, Standing Order 32(2) says and I quote:

“The report must be published, and a copy of it sent to each member as soon as practicable. However, before publishing the report, a copy of any part of it that contains a speech by a member must be sent to that member for correction of any grammatical or other minor technical error. No corrections that alter the meaning, emphasis, or substance of the member’s speech may be made.”

So, are they trying to say that whatever was said and recorded in the *Hansard* found the minor grammatical error is wrong? They have not even pointed out what is the error they are complaining of?

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- This time, who is stupid?

HON. A. SUDHAKAR.- No, it is for minor grammatical errors.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. A. SUDHAKAR.- No, it is for minor grammatical errors.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. SPEAKER.- Order! Thank you.

HON. A. SUDHAKAR.- You don’t even need a lawyer to understand.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Order, order! Thank you, your Point of Order is clear.

But the *Hansard Report*, if there are any changes to the *Hansard Report*, it is only for editorial. The content of the *Hansard Report* cannot be changed. It is only the editorial mistakes that may happen, that can be changed. Thank you. Honourable Leader of the Government in Parliament, please continue.

HON. LEADER OF THE GOVERNMENT IN PARLIAMENT.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. As directed by your office, the Privileges Committee met last night to deliberate on a matter of privilege raised by the Honourable Attorney-General

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- A Point of Order, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Point of Order.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Madam Speaker, if you look at Page 1760 of the *Daily Hansard* of Wednesday, 1st June, 2016, you are on record, Madam, in saying that the Honourable Dr. Reddy should have raised a point of order, then the rule that would apply is that, if the Honourable Dr. Reddy is offended, then he seeks to withdraw. That is the rule, Madam Speaker. It has been inconsistent, what you have ruled earlier and the procedure that you have allowed to allow this motion to come about. Can we have a written ruling on that too?

HON. SPEAKER.- You will have that the written ruling on that one.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Can I read that, Madam Speaker, for the benefit of the House. Madam Speaker, on record you said,

“Honourable Dr. Mahendra Reddy, as I had mentioned previously, if someone says anything that is offensive to another Member, it is only that Member who should bring up a point of order and if he rejects the statement, then I will ask for a withdrawal. This time, Honourable Dr. Mahendra Reddy was the target and he continued without reacting to that statement, please continue.”

You allowed that, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- That was on a different issue.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- That was the issue, Madam Speaker. It was the same issue.

(Chorus of interjections)

I need a ruling too on that, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- This whole issue has been referred to the Privileges Committee and they have met and they have scrutinised the Report, even the *Hansard Report* and they have made a ruling based on that. What I said on that was, that ruling was on a different issue altogether. It was a different wording that was mentioned. Thank you, please continue.

HON. LEADER OF THE GOVERNMENT IN PARLIAMENT.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Opposition is making so much noise this morning. We would have expected that during the deliberations of the Committee yesterday, but they opted not to turn up in the deliberations of the Committee, Madam Speaker.

(Chorus of interjections)

Madam Speaker, let me start by the deliberations of the Committee, Committee proceedings. You have a letter referenced “Parliament 6/19”, addressed to the Honourable Leader of the Opposition about the membership of the Privileges Committee.

The Opposition opted to turn up in the Committee, despite your instructions with the Honourable Tupou Draunidalo and the Honourable Karavaki, where they argued initially in the sitting of the Committee, Madam Speaker, that the Honourable Attorney-General, as a complainant, can also not be a member and, of course, sit there as a judge, and the list goes on. You can refer to the verbatim report on pages 5 and 6.

So, we, on this side of the House deliberated in the Committee Room and we agreed that the Honourable Attorney-General recused himself, and then we will find an Alternate Member.

The analysis of the Opposition is always slow, they should have picked up then that we are willing to sit and discuss, deliberate on the facts of the offence and make the submissions to Parliament, who will do the judgment, Madam Speaker. That did not happen.

We brought in an Alternate Member, however, the Honourable Karavaki had stated before the Committee (it is in the verbatim report), that due to the short notice given, they were unable to find a replacement, but as I walked out of our office into the Committee room, the room upstairs was still full of Members.

(Hon. Member interjects)

HON. LEADER OF THE GOVERNMENT IN PARLIAMENT.- They were still in the room but the excuse given was, they have other work to do.

(Hon. Member interjects)

HON. LEADER OF THE GOVERNMENT IN PARLIAMENT. -They will respect (it is on page 6 of the verbatim report), the deliberations or whatever the findings of the Committee. So, we took that in good faith, Madam Speaker.

However, when we proceeded with the sitting, (I am saying this because they are making so much noise this morning), when we sat in the deliberations without the Honourable Attorney-General, the Honourable Member did indicate (let me read from Page 6 of the verbatim report) “there were a few exchanges”, but this is what I want to say: “On that note, Mr. Chairman, in my view, Honourable Draunidalo had been pre-judged and despite our presence over here, a part of this Committee, the conclusion is already determined.”

That was their interpretation, Madam Speaker, and that was their choice. Whether they wanted to abort the Honourable Draunidalo, who knows, but they should have been there according to your instructions (Parliament 6/19) and they opted not to be present in the Committee.

We had showed willingness, Madam Speaker, they missed that opportunity. That should have been the first indication, the willingness. She left the Committee room.

Then we heard the evidence from the Honourable Attorney-General and then the Honourable Draunidalo, she opted to remain silent. That is her right, Madam Speaker, we respect her right, but that was a missed opportunity,

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. LEADER OF THE GOVERNMENT IN PARLIAMENT.- The expectation of the Committee was for her to show remorse, offer an apology, correct the statement.

(Hon. Members interject)

HON. RO T.V. KEPÄ.- Madam Speaker, Point of Order.

HON. SPEAKER.- Point of Order.

HON. RO T.V. KEPÄ.- Point of Order 60 on relevancy, Madam Speaker.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. RO T.V. KEPÄ.- In terms of the two that came before the Privileges Committee, Madam Speaker, one was Honourable Karavaki and the other one was Honourable Tupou Draunidalo. As I had also written to you, in that, we believed for justice to be played out.

We felt that it was only fair that the accused be present, and I am quoting from the letter I wrote to you, Madam Speaker. We felt that it was only fair that the accused be present also at this meeting, because in the previous Privileges Committee meeting, the Honourable Attorney-General who should have recused himself from that deliberation in terms of the Honourable Ratu Naiqama Lalabalavu, he was present during the whole proceedings.

So, we felt it was only fair this time, Madam Speaker, that the accused be present also at that meeting. We made this conscience decision, Madam Speaker, because we have a conscience on this side and you know, you do not always sit on the other side, because even in the lowest courts of the land, the accused is present, and this is supposed to be the highest court of the land, Madam Speaker, where the accused is also present. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Based on the procedures of the House, I am giving the floor to the Honourable Leader of the Government in Parliament to make a 20 minutes' presentation and I am following that procedure. The issue raised can be brought up in the debate. Thank you. The Honourable Leader of the Government, please continue.

HON. LEADER OF THE GOVERNMENT IN PARLIAMENT.- Yes, Madam Speaker, I did mention that the Honourable Attorney-General recused and he was not present in the Committee meeting, Madam Speaker, that I had mentioned already.

I have stated, Madam Speaker, that we respected the decision of the Honourable Draunidalo to remain silent, but to the Members of the Committee, that was regrettable. As I have stated, an opportunity to show remorse, perhaps make corrections to the statement, offer an apology because that carries a lot of weight in the deliberations of the Committee and in mitigation as well, Madam Speaker. It is evident that they want to fight the system and that is their option and so that decision is respected, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, as I have stated, the Honourable Draunidalo was invited by the Committee to present her views on the matter but excused herself on the ground of her right to silence.

Madam Speaker, if I may refer to the report in Fiji, given our history, there is a need to strengthen the institution of Parliament and make serious matters to protect the dignity and the supremacy of the legislature. For this reason, Madam Speaker, matters of contempt and offensive conduct towards Parliament must be treated seriously.

It is more important, Madam Speaker, that Parliament upholds the required behaviour of Parliament, in particular, the prohibition against speaking words that are likely to promote or provoke feelings of ill will or hostility between communities or ethnic groups in Fiji.

We all know our history, Madam Speaker, and we do not want to go that path again and we, the leaders, must walk the talk - ...

(Hon. Members interject)

HON. LEADER OF THE GOVERNMENT IN PARLIAMENT.- ... “one nation, one purpose, one destiny.” Let us build a better Fiji, let us show example, Madam Speaker, not only in the way we conduct ourselves, in the words that we speak. People are listening ...

(Hon. Members interject)

HON. LEADER OF THE GOVERNMENT IN PARLIAMENT.- ... and our people, if I may go to this, the next one, Madam Speaker, the comments has also lead to a flurry of social media responses.

At 10.09 on the same day, Madam Speaker, this has gone on *Facebook* to the world from one Pita Waqavonovono.

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. LEADER OF THE GOVERNMENT IN PARLIAMENT.- “Dear world,” Madam Speaker, I will stop there.

(Hon. Members interjects)

It is neither the example we want to set as a standard of behaviour for Members of Parliament nor is it the standard of behaviour that the Fijian population should receive from its elected Members of Parliament. Such conduct undermines Parliament, it undermines the Constitution and it undermines our democracy. Therefore, we must take proper action to protect our Parliament in democracy and the interests of all Fijians.

It is also critical that our children and our younger population are not exposed to this type of behaviour and racial slurs, particularly, Madam Speaker. If Parliament accepts this behaviour from an Honourable Member of Parliament, it will be condoning such conduct and this sort of behaviour is not acceptable in Fiji today and should not be accepted in this august House.

(Hon. Member interject)

For this reason, Madam Speaker, in accordance with the recommendations made by the Privileges Committee, I make that this motion that the Honourable Draunidalo be disciplined for her conduct. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

(Hon. Member interject)

HON. SPEAKER.- The motion is now open for debate.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Madam Speaker, before we proceed to the debate, I beg that you allow me to raise a point of order because I feel this is to be considered as a preliminary point.

I appreciate what the Honourable Minister has said in relation to their meeting but the issue that I wish to raise a point of order in relation to, is the third prayer. The third prayer, Madam Speaker, is asking that Honourable Draunidalo be suspended for the remaining term, that is where I wish to raise this point of order. My simple application is that, I am standing under Standing Order. 76, that has to be amended. The period is out of order because Standing Order 76 limits it to, for the first offence, three days, then six days and the maximum is 28 days.

Madam Speaker, I also wish to refer in relation to your preliminary powers so that it is important to maintain the value of this Parliament, consistent with the value of parliaments elsewhere and I wish that you make a ruling in relation to that.

There is a good authority in relation to that; the decision of Ratu Naiqama, which I wish to table now, and only on that simple point, for the remaining term is over and beyond what is required. That is the only thing and I wish, if you allow me to tender the decision of the IPU in relation to Ratu Naiqama, and that should guide you in making a ruling.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. I note your point of order and it is very clear, but the point of order process should really be on an issue that I can make a ruling on, and the issue that you are making and the decision that has been made by the Committee.

The Committee has made the recommendation and it is Parliament that will make the decision. So, the issue that you are bringing up can be brought up, as I have said, in the debate.

Thank you, Parliament is now open for debate. The Honourable Minister for Education.

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Madam Speaker, on Wednesday night, when I arrived home, my wife told me that she heard in the *Fiji TV* news ...

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. GOVT. MEMBER.- Listen!

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Madam Speaker, I still do not see any remorse from that side. They are asking us to change the motion. There is no remorse from that side, they never appeared in the Committee, that is the place where they should have asked for lessening of the trial, et cetera. They never showed up.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. DR. M. REDDY. ... that Honourable Draunidalo called me 'fool and idiot.' I said to her that someone had also told me, but I did not hear that at that point in time. I said to her that she had a habit of doing that and that is alright.

Madam Speaker, around 10.30 in the night, a friend of mine called me and said that there are a number of comments in the social media, interpreting me to say that I called the *iTaukeis* in this country “dumb natives”.

(Hon. Member interjects)

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Madam Speaker, I told my friend that I have never said that inside or outside Parliament - never. I asked him to forward to me those clips on viber. Madam Speaker, I read those comments, I felt broken.

Madam Speaker, I have grown up amongst the *iTaukei* community. My next door neighbour is an *iTaukei*, a former famous rugby player in Fiji, Mr. Sainivalati Laulau. The whole settlement on the other side, as well as on the right hand side of my home, are *iTaukei*.settlements, Madam Speaker, and I grew up among them.

One whole year I stayed with a Samoan family whilst attending Alafua Campus in Samoa and I was fed and looked after by them. Now, whenever I go to Samoa, I take loads of stuff for my family there.

Madam Speaker, this comment by the Honourable Member has done irreparable damage to myself, at a time when our Honourable Prime Minister is trying to define this country’s future, saying that ‘we are one people, one country and one destiny.’ Madam Speaker, we are trying our best to mend the broken race relations of the past and never before, a leader is able to say that we are all Fijians.

Madam Speaker, often we hear *Talatalas* in this country say that we are all God’s children. What does that mean? We are not different; if we have frizzy hair or straight hair, dark or white colour, Madam Speaker, and with our physical differences, we are all children of one God, by whatever name we call that.

Madam Speaker, these kind of comments contribute to irreparable damage to the future of this country. We are so proud that we grow up and raised in a country with multiracial views, multiethnic societies, where our children are equal to become well-rounded and prepare their wealth to be future citizens of this country.

We are blessed to be raised in this country because from the beginning, from when we were young, we tend to learn about each other, understand each other’s culture and religious values and therefore, as we grow up, we can accommodate each other. While we are trying our best to do that, Madam Speaker, we find people who occupy the highest house in this country, trying to do the very negative, the very reverse of that, to destroy the very social capital we are trying to develop in this country.

HON. SPEAKER.- Point of Order.

HON. RATU. I.D. TIKOCA.- Madam Speaker, the reference referring to the Committee that they have heard, what was recorded in the video? Did you hear that yesterday, during the sitting? And if it is, can we hear it here?

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. RATU I.D. TIKOCA.- Let us establish the base of fact, whether you are probably telling us something totally wrong. This House needs to be furnished with the truth, nothing but the truth, that is what I have been telling about. So we need to hear that; come on, let us hear it!

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Madam Speaker, the Committee heard the audio record, that was the work of the Committee and let us not dilute the issue. Let us not deviate from the truth and let us proceed with this, Madam Speaker.

HON. RATU I.D. TIKOCA.- May I rise on a Point of Order, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Point of Order.

HON. RATU. I.D. TIKOCA.- Can we hear it here or are you allowing us to play it, so that everyone can hear it? Why do you not want to hear the truth? Let us hear the truth, this is the Parliament.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. RATU I.D. TIKOCA.- No, no, let us hear it here. You are framing it, you are fabricating it, it is your own creation. That is what we need, we need to hear it, the public in Fiji is listening, whether you are right or wrong.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. RATU I.D. TIKOCA.- We want to hear it, Madam Speaker. Please, let us hear that.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. SPEAKER.- Order!

HON. RATU. I.D. TIKOCA.- Are you saying the truth, nothing but the truth? Just press it and let us hear it, that is easy.

HON. SPEAKER.- Order, order!

HON. RATU I.D. TIKOCA.- Do it, what is wrong with that? Let us hear it!

HON. SPEAKER.- The issue raised does not qualify under that point of order process. The issue raised is the duty of the Committee that has already deliberated, but not under the point of order process which you are following.

(Hon. Member interjects)

Your point of order is, therefore, not acceptable.

HON. RATU. I.D. TIKOCA.- Madam Speaker, we need to vote on it. We need to know what we are voting for. We need to vote for the truth, not your report.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. RATU. I.D. TIKOCA.- Come on, be fair to the people of Fiji. Com one, you

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. SPEAKER.- Order! Honourable Minister for Education, please continue.

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Madam Speaker, as I alluded to earlier on, at this critical juncture, our Honourable Prime Minister has delivered for the first time ever in this country a Constitution which recognises that we are all one. We have got a common destiny. We are not different, if you are from a different ethnic group or different colour, Madam Speaker, and we are trying our best.

Often when I go and visit schools and when I talk to my senior staff, I tell them that we have in our custody children from ages 5 to 18. At least in primary and secondary schools, children are hungry for knowledge and this is the time, if we want to secure a future, stable and a prosperous Fiji, we need to ensure that they get the right to education, which will define the future Fiji.

Madam Speaker, I tell them, and continuously remind them that we are responsible for future Fiji. We have to ensure that our children do not differentiate one another because they belong to a different ethnic group, gender, class or cast system, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, based on the Constitution, we have done remarkably well because everyone in this country now have accepted that we all are Fijians.

These kind of comments which have gone viral, ending in the social media and addressed deliberately, saying “Dear World” that this Honourable Member of Parliament has said this particular comment, Madam Speaker, demonstrates that it is a calculated attempt to destroy what we have done in terms of building social capital, and building and bridging the gaps that used to exist before in the past, Madam Speaker, between the two mainstream ethnic groups in Fiji.

Madam Speaker, I have never said that, never said it inside or outside Parliament, and I will never say it because of my upbringing. Madam Speaker, I feel hurt and I am quite hurt.

Madam Speaker, this morning, I received an email from one of my very senior staff in the Ministry, the Deputy Secretary, he wrote to me, and I quote:

“Honourable Minister, Sir, do not worry about people who play on race cards and peoples’ emotions, they are fighting a losing battle. The common people have learnt the lessons of the past.

Honourable Draunidalo should have been told that we just gave a boat and engine to her people yesterday. The people who came yesterday are her close relatives, she will know today what God has to deceiving hearts.

Deputy Secretary.”

Madam Speaker, yesterday during lunch break, I was at Waisomo House basement, giving a boat and engine to this community from Lau. The school management came all the way from Lau, they have been deprived of transporting their children from one part of the island to the other. Madam Speaker, I was sitting there when they were doing the traditional ceremony and I was thinking to myself, “these people have been told that I have said this kind of statement, which I had never said”, I felt bad.

Madam Speaker, this should never have happened in this House. This is the highest body in this country and this institution should set examples to the rest of the country. The calculated deliberate attempt to tarnish the Government's image and to break race relations in this country should never be allowed, Madam Speaker. We have to take a stand today, and therefore, I support this motion. Thank you.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Madam Speaker, I rise on a Point of Order.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Point of Order.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Madam Speaker, I need clarification in regards to the audio recording that was brought to your attention. Where was the recording from, Madam Speaker? Was it an official recording or from a communications company?

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. SPEAKER.- It was the recording captured in the audio system of Parliament. Thank you. Are there any other comments? Thank you, Honourable Roko Tupou Draunidalo.

HON. ROKO. T.T.S DRAUNIDALO.- Madam Speaker, it is sad, very sad that the Honourable Attorney-General has seen fit to create this big drama from his and his Government's racist and insecure perspective of everything.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. ROKO. T.T.S DRAUNIDALO.- We, in my Party, knows only too well that this Government loves the race card. Their very existence and survival depends on their use of the race card.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. ROKO. T.T.S DRAUNIDALO.- Their movement, Madam Speaker, began in December 2006 after successfully painting the SDL Government as a racist government. It did not help, that prominent leaders of the non-indigenous communities at the time fell for that spin and joined the then Commodore's bandwagon.

They have since fallen out, Madam Speaker, of course, because those leaders saw the error of what they had joined, and are now back in large groupings of multicultural opposition parties who are opposed to the race card playing Government that sits on the other side.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. ROKO. T.T.S DRAUNIDALO.- This Government, Madam Speaker, wants everything to be about race because it suits their agenda of divide and rule.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. ROKO. T.T.S DRAUNIDALO.- It is sad, very sad for Fiji, Madam Speaker, for a country that has had political upheavals for 30 years because politicians have played the race card, which gives the Military the key to carry out their military *coups* - the military *coup* culture, Madam Speaker, that I have railed against in this House and outside, day in and day out, and I will continue to do so.

And really, Madam Speaker, that is what this Government objects to. They want me and my Party out of here by any means because we do not subscribe to their race relations disaster views nor do we subscribe to their pro-*coup* culture views. We detest both and say so in their face, and they just cannot handle it, Madam Speaker.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. ROKO. T.T.S DRAUNIDALO.- Now, to address what transpired on the day in question, it is clear to us from the video and the audio (which has not been allowed here again like the previous privileges matter and those who were sitting in judgment cannot hear the evidence) that the Honourable Minister for Education was insulting us, taunting us and denigrating us, all of us in the Opposition benches.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. ROKO. T.T.S DRAUNIDALO.- The Honourable Minister was pointing at the Honourable Leader of the Opposition and Honourable Members, nodding his head and to us, it mirrored the racist-ape gesture of the Honourable Attorney-General ...

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. ROKO. T.T.S DRAUNIDALO.- ...or Darth Vader in this House, and all the while telling us that no one on our side, including the Honourable Prem Singh was a Topper. He was implying that we were all intellectually inferior.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. ROKO. T.T.S DRAUNIDALO.- This is not the first time that the Honourable Minister has behaved in this way. He always finds a way to insult Honourable Members of the Opposition in his speeches. It is a sport for him, Madam Speaker, and he visibly enjoys himself while at it. He loves to dish out the insults, but he cannot take any retorts at all.

Back to the relevant time, Madam Speaker, the Honourable Prem Singh by the way, is a fourth generation native of this country.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. ROKO. T.T.S DRAUNIDALO.- Just in case that little fact was lost on the Government.

Carrying on, Madam Speaker, *Hansard* does not record that I referred to the Honourable Minister as a “fool”. It is the Honourable Attorney-General who complained that I called the Honourable Minister a “fool”.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. ROKO. T.T.S DRAUNIDALO.- The *Hansard* does not pick up all of the free flowing discussions, Madam Speaker, interjections and words spoken at the time, but if you listen to the audio, it clearly is different from what the *Hansard* records.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. ROKO. T.T.S DRAUNIDALO.- And this, Madam Speaker, is not the first time, we have had issues with *Hansard* or verbatim. It has happened before in the Committee and it led to the suspension of an important Standing Orders Committee meeting which you chaired, so that the verbatim could be corrected.

Back to the recording, I stood up at the relevant time, Madam Speaker, to reply to the Honourable Attorney-General's complaint and I said; "And he implied worse in his speech." Did I say that he said; "Dumb native?" I said; "And he implied worse in his speech." Then I asked; "Calling us dumb natives?", before I said; "You idiot!" At the same time, the recording picks up, Madam Speaker, an Honourable Member near me asking the Honourable Minister; "Are you calling us fools?"

Let me say something else about the exchange, Madam Speaker, the Honourable Minister was calling himself a Topper back in the day when he was matriculating but this term has only become part of Government policy over the last two years, I believe, not when the Honourable Minister was qualifying for tertiary studies. It is, therefore, fair to say that he was misleading Parliament.

If he did not mean it in a literal sense, Madam Speaker, then he was implying that he was an elite, matriculating student while no one on the Opposition bench was, including the Honourable Prem Singh, not an elite. He was implying that we were all intellectually inferior, dumb or idiots.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. ROKO. T.T.S DRAUNIDALO.- That was what he was implying, Madam Speaker. If he can dish it out and you allow it, he should expect it back. And if that was his intention, Madam Speaker, to denigrate all of us on this side in that way, then he was a fool for doing so. If that was his intention then he was a fool in doing so. And let me remind this Government again, Madam Speaker, the Honourable Prem Singh is a fourth generation native.

HON. GOVT. MEMBERS.- Awh!

HON. ROKO T.T.S. DRAUNIDALO.- We do not and did not see race, Madam Speaker, only the Government does because it suits their political agenda to carve up the country on race, gender and whatever else they can, they are divisive."

In any case, Madam Speaker, you made a ruling after that exchange and your ruling was, and I quote from Page 1760 of the *Uncorrected Daily Hansard* of Wednesday 1st June, 2016:

"Honourable Dr. Mahendra Reddy, as I had mentioned before, as I had mentioned previously, if someone says anything that is offensive to another Member, it is only if that Member brings up a Point of Order that he rejects that statement, then I will ask for withdrawal. This time, Dr. Mahendra Reddy was the target and he continued without reacting to that statement, so please, continue."

And the House continued with its business.

We broke for morning tea (I believe it was) and the Honourable Attorney-General joked to me while I was in line for lemon tea about why we got so riled up about being referred to as 'non-Toppers', and instead of the words used, I could have used the word 'obtuse', Madam Speaker.

I also shared a brief light moment with Honourable Reddy on the way back to the House from the break. That is where we could have left the matter, Madam Speaker, but no, the Honourable Attorney-General and his Government wants to play the race card in bringing in these shoddy charges. And all of the attachments to the report, Madam Speaker, are comments that I did not make, and neither myself nor anyone in my Party made those comments.

(Hon. Member interjects)

HON. ROKO T.T.S. DRAUNIDALO.- Again, Madam Speaker, when I asked the Honourable Minister if he was referring to us as dumb natives, that included Honourable Prem Singh who is a fourth generation native, who was sitting next to me and was certainly subjected to the Honourable Minister's derogatory conduct. Yes, I thought he was a fool for doing so, behaving in such a derogatory manner towards us, especially, Madam Speaker, when he has shifty ground to stand on, his Ministry is a shamble. Children never get their materials, text books and learning on time. There is mounting pressure on teachers and students...

(Honourable Member interjects)

HON. ROKO T.T.S. DRAUNIDALO.- ...especially regarding content and exams.

Madam Speaker, 85,000 students are still under sheds and yet, the Honourable Minister wants to spend his time in Parliament acting in the way that he does. So this is all a distraction from his problems, we know. Now, the Honourable Attorney-General wants the distraction to last a little longer.

They should both take a leaf out of their Prime Minister's book, who made concessions in his speech the other day instead of distractions, distractions, distractions, to take attention away from the real issues of post-*Winston*, lack of finances and lack of recovery.

As for the charges of inciting ill-will in the community, that is a joke coming from this divisive Government that hangs onto the race card. This Government that runs roughshod over indigenous cultural institutions - GCC and the iTLTB and doing its best, Madam Speaker, to tear up the social fabric or *solesolevaki* part of the indigenous culture...

(Honourable Members interjects)

HON. ROKO T.T.S. DRAUNIDALO.- ...with Honourable Ministers who make racists derogatory comments whenever they feel the need, they do that all the time, and insulting all races while they are at it. Then they bring these shady charges to add salt to the wound.

Madam Speaker, just yesterday, the Honourable Attorney-General implied that the Honourable Prem Singh was just a cane farmer, who had no business discussing passport laws. You asked him to withdraw and he did after I intervened on behalf of Honourable Singh, because I found his comments denigrating to cane farmers or those in cane farming in general, to say that they did not have the expertise or some sort of elite matriculation to discuss passport laws.

Madam Speaker, if, however, anyone in this House or outside, or anyone else in Fiji takes offence for what they think they have heard or manufactured to have heard, I unreservedly apologise. I say again, Madam Speaker, please consider the context that I have put to you. You have the powers under Standing

Order 18 to put an end to all of these now without it going to a vote. Everything that occurs here, largely reflects back on your good self as you have ultimate powers to stop it.

When you contemplate all of the context, Madam Speaker, let me humanise this issue a little bit more by telling the House (in case it needed telling) that I come from a proud line of leaders who gave their lives to the service of racial harmony in this country.

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. ROKO T.T.S. DRAUNIDALO.- My stepfather in 1987 and my mother in the 1990s – Dr. Bavadra and Kuini Teimumu Vuikaba Speed were both removed from office as Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister respectfully at gun point by soldiers with a racist and bigoted cause. My father suffered the same fate in 2006 and he had more close friends and namesakes in the other communities than the rest of us put together. I followed both of the former into what was then predominantly parties for communities other than the indigenous community.

We could have all joined the predominately indigenous parties and thrived. We could have them led them too in due course but we were and are about a beautiful vision for Fiji, a multicultural one where all cultures can be celebrated without offending another, and where indigenous rights thrived simultaneously. None of us, Madam Speaker, could achieve any of that, if we all lumped on one side of the political divide. We needed to bridge the gap.

I am, therefore, now President of the National Federation Party, a party of 50 years plus that has always idolised multicultural harmony and peace, and by its many actions, put that into practice, working with the Alliance and later SVT Governments to find common ground between the two big communities. Give and take, and that is what we have preached to this divisive Government day in and day out, to be inclusive and to stop promoting feelings of ill-will between the large communities.

As I have said, others before me had given lifetimes of service to those ideals. I do and will continue to. Nothing happens here will change by mind. All of these interruptions placed in our way, Madam Speaker, are temporary in nature. History has shown the interruptions and injustices augur well for us in the long run. History judges us very kindly.

Madam Speaker, as the Prime Minister Winston Churchill once told his opponents in Europe; “Do your worst and we will do our best. The people in the end will have the final say.” Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. I give the floor to the Honourable Bulitavu.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Thank you, Madam Speaker, my contribution to the motion that is before the House is, first of all, I would like to put on record that I do not support the motion that is before the House.

Let me take you step by step, Madam Speaker, through the *Hansard* and also, for the benefit of Honourable Members of the House.

In the *Uncorrected Daily Hansard* of Wednesday, 1st June, 2016; the Honourable Dr. Reddy is recorded as saying on Page 1760, and I quote:

“If there was any toppers from the other side, Madam Speaker, they would not have raised this issue of petition, Madam Speaker, unfortunately there are no toppers there. Madam Speaker, I tell you in another ten years’ time, five years’ time there will be some toppers sitting that side that but they will be part of this side, Madam Speaker.”

(Laughter)”

Then Honourable Draunidalo is recorded saying, “a fool.”

Madam Speaker, when you analyse that statement, the Committee has not established if the record had stated, if Honourable Draunidalo had stated, “You are a fool,” then she would be referring to the person who was speaking during that time, but in this particular record it says, “a fool.”

If you look back at the context, Madam Speaker, of the previous statement by the Honourable Minister for Education, he was referring to a person in future, if that particular person is sitting this side and Toppers, to understand the policies or the intent of the FijiFirst Government, will cross the floor or join the FijiFirst Government but that person is non-existent, Madam Speaker. So that ‘a fool’ refers to the person who will change his ideology to move that side.

If Honourable Draunidalo had said, “You are a fool”, then it refers to him, it is a big difference, Madam Speaker.

And it goes down, Madam Speaker, to say. Then after that the Honourable Reddy then said that
....

HON. J.V. BANIMARAMA.- (inaudible)

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- You have to learn Honourable Prime Minister, you have to learn, because the Committee had failed to establish it and the Honourable Minister for Trade can help you on that.

Then the Honourable Minister for Education said, “I was a Topper”, which is a contentious statement, Madam Speaker, given that the Toppers started two or three years ago, so he was not a Topper.

(Hon. Member interjects)

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- I was also one...

(Hon. Member interjects)

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- ... from the perspective that you were good in school, but to say the words that were said, literally, it will mean the scheme itself.

You have heard, Madam Speaker, that the audio recording and the *Hansard* recording is inconsistent. That is why I had raised a Point of Order earlier, Madam Speaker, asking you; who gave you the recording of the audio? So, it came from Parliament and the *Hansard* is also from Parliament, so the two Parliamentary records do not match. That is another issue, Madam Speaker, on its own, and it comes down to nowhere in the report did the Committee at least investigated or look further into whether the *Hansard* record or the audio was tampered with or not. That was never done, there is no record of that proceeding happening, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, if you go down, you will see that the Honourable Attorney-General stood up and said, I quote; “Madam Speaker, a point of order. Hon. Draunidalo just called the Minister for Finance “a fool”, referring to the context which I had referred to earlier, Madam Speaker. However, the Honourable Draunidalo said, I quote: “And he provided worse in his speech, calling us “dumb natives, you idiot”; meaning, Madam Speaker, that in previous occasions, the Honourable Attorney-General too does that. He points at us like this (pointing his finger to his head), but we do not personalise it. We do not get offended because we are honourable people.

The Committee has not established whether the Honourable Draunidalo was referring to the Honourable Minister for Education or was referring to comments that used to be said or previously said by the Honourable Attorney-General.

(Laughter)

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- The Committee did not weigh that, Madam Speaker...

(Hon. Member interjects)

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- I am coming to your statement! I am coming to your statement! You have to listen and learn Prime Minister, you do not know the law!

(Honourable Member interjects)

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Madam Speaker, there was a chorus of interjections there, so we cannot establish who call who, “idiot” or “dumb natives” because it is clear from the *Hansard* that the Honourable Draunidalo was referring to previous occasions when those words were uttered in this august House.

Madam Speaker, I then come down to the Point of Order that I had raised earlier in regards to your ruling on the matter. It was wrong according to the record. Madam Speaker, you already cautioned the Honourable Attorney-General and said, “You are not supposed to be the one to be raising this issue. The Honourable Minister for Education was supposed to raise that issue.” They have already cautioned, and you had given your advice to Honourable Members.

I will take it, Madam Speaker, that you are in overall control of this august House, so you gave an advice that was based on wisdom and it was based on the privileges that are in this House. If that was serious enough, the Honourable Minister for Education would have stood up and said, “I was offended”, similar to what the Honourable Prem Singh did yesterday. He said that he was offended, and then the Honourable Attorney-General did the same thing, he withdrew. He did not take that opportunity, and I just cannot see why that proceeded after you had already cautioned the House.

Madam Speaker, I will now go into the evidence that was given by Witness No. 1, which is the Honourable Attorney-General himself. If you go to Page 8 – Annex 3, that is, the verbatim, in the last paragraph, this is the statement given by the Honourable Attorney-General to the Committee, and I quote:

“When we broke for morning tea, I met Honourable Draunidalo and I said to her, “why do you get so violent in your reactions?” So sort of smile, I have known her from before, in fact she worked for me, I was her Manager when I was working for the Colonial

Group of Companies. So I do have a relationship with her and I asked her, “Why do you get so violent?” I said, “You did not have to call him a fool.”

And after that, Madam Speaker, if you go down, that whole statement given by the Honourable Attorney-General is only driven by previous hatred. Referring to instances when they were working at the Colonial Group of Companies, those were issues that were there, he came and gave the evidence here to the Committee that Honourable Tupou Draunidalo has got this history of hatred, and that is no evidence. That is useless to give here. You read your statement.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Where?

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- On Page 8.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Yes, what word? Where did I say that?

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Last paragraph.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Where did I say that?

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- I am saying, Madam Speaker, you can see that it is driven by previous things, assuming....

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- I am coming to that. Madam Speaker, moving on to Page 9....

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. M.D. BULTAVU.- Just refer to your books.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. A. SUDHAKAR.- Where is the word?

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- You did not do a good job, my friend.

(Chorus of interjection)

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Madam Speaker, then there was a communication between Vijay Narayan of Communications Fiji Limited and the Honourable Attorney-General, and he had replied to Vijay Narayan. What Vijay Narayan said, I quote: “*Bula* Sir, you had raised a Point of Order saying that Draunidalo called Reddy a fool. So, she then got up and said, ‘calling us dumb natives, you idiot’. Will this matter be taken further? Thanks”, Vijay Narayan said.

Then in response, the Honourable Attorney-General said, and I quote:

“I did not hear the second part, did you hear it?” See, he is not even sure, Madam Speaker.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Yes, I did not hear it.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Then I come down to the very important thing, Madam Speaker.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- (Inaudible)

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- I am coming further down. Wait, I am coming further down.

Madam Speaker, we will go down the big paragraph which starts with “When we broke for Parliament for the day....”, this is what the Honourable Attorney-General said,...

HON. J. DULAKIVERATA.- Carry on, carry on.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- (Inaudible)

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- ...and I quote:

“And as the *Hansard* says, Honourable Draunidalo, not apparently but she did say it, there is no question about it, it is recorded, “And he implied first in his speech calling us dumb natives, you idiot!” Now one would assume that when she responded because I had just raised a Point of Order saying, “She called him a fool.” She responded and said, “And he implied first in his speech by calling us dumb natives, you idiot!”

Madam Speaker, this is where the Honourable Attorney-General said, I quote:

“I assume the idiot was me, whether the idiot was me or whether the idiot was Honourable Dr. Reddy or anyone else in the room that in itself is offensive”.

That is assumption, Madam Speaker.

(Hon. Member interjects)

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- But what I find more offensive

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- That is assumption, Madam Speaker.

(HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- (Inaudible)

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- That is his statement and that statement cannot be relied upon. The Committee is not established and that statement should not be relied upon.

(Honourable Member interjects)

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- If you go down to the concluding analysis or facts, it is very poorly done, Madam Speaker. Nowhere in there is the analysis or facts. You will see that they have said that this is what the Honourable Attorney-General assumed, and this is the evidence to back his assumption.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Oh, no. No!

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Nowhere, Madam Speaker! Then that he talked about the political issue and what they are doing with the Honourable Prime Minister, blaming that everyone is racist and not them.

If you look at all that, Madam Speaker, it comes down to your powers. It will be a disgrace to this House, Madam Speaker, it will be against the dignity of this House, if this is put to the vote because the Committee's findings has not been established, it is based on no evidence.

(Honourable Member interjects)

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- You cannot convict, you cannot bring in this kind of motion, Madam Speaker, with this much evidence to say that we put it to a vote.

With those remarks, Madam Speaker, I would like to appeal to your additional powers here. Standing Orders 18 and 20, and for the integrity of this House, to uphold the dignity of this House, Madam Speaker, considering that there have been many other cases that have proceeded before this House, we do not want to put your Chair to question your ability, Madam Speaker. You are a good Speaker, Madam Speaker, a very good Speaker.

(Laughter)

The problem here, Madam Speaker, is that the Committee has not established what needs to be established and leave aside the prayers, Madam Speaker, which cannot be used because the Committee, in the first place, has not established its case. Thank you Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Minister for Lands.

HON. M.R. VUNIWAQA.- Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I stand to support the motion before the House. From the outset, if all we were talking about here were the words "you fool" or "you idiot", I do not believe that, Madam Speaker, would have referred this matter to the Privileges Committee. The words we are dealing with here, and the Honourable Draunidalo herself had stated in her statement this morning are the words "and he implied worse in his speech calling us dumb natives, you idiot", and he implied worse in his speech calling us "dumb natives". Those words, Madam Speaker.

I refer, Madam Speaker, to Standing Order 62 (4)(d),

"It is out of order for a member, to use words that are likely to promote or provoke feelings of ill-will or hostility between communities or ethnic groups within Fiji."

If it was just a personal attack against Honourable Dr. Reddy, again I say, it would not have been that serious but the words used and attributing that to Honourable Dr. Reddy immediately after those words were spoken, Honourable Draunidalo this morning inserted certain exclamation marks, punctuation marks within that statement, but the Fijian people on the television, this House, and certain Members of this House when those words were spoken, all we heard were "you implied worse in your speech, calling us dumb natives, you idiot", implying that Honourable Dr. Reddy uttered the words "dumb natives"; he did not. He said it this morning and the audio and the verbatim reports all established that.

(Honourable Members interject)

After those words were spoken, Madam Speaker, immediately, the Honourable Leader of the Government in the House had stated that was posted on *Facebook*, and I would like to read what was posted on *Facebook* by a Pita Waqavonovono. This is what members of the public heard when the Honourable Draunidalo said those words:

“Dear world, the Minister for Education, Mahendra Reddy just referred to Members of the Opposition as “dumb natives”, while referring to himself as a topper, I just hate racists who rely on the stereotypes to look smarter. Honourable Tupou Draunidalo rose to call him “an idiot” for making such a revelation so this is what FijiFirst is all about labelling and sidelining the indigenous because we are natives and assumed dumb, stupid, uneducated.”

That is what people heard, that is what Members of this House heard. We did not see the punctuation marks, we heard what she said and that is how it came out.

(Hon. Member interjects)

After that initial posting on *Facebook*, comments followed, racial slurs. The comments that the Honourable Draunidalo stated in this House has clearly caused feelings of hostility between communities, between ethnic groups in Fiji, the very thing that our Standing Orders prohibits and the very thing that we, as Members of this House, should not be doing.

Honourable Draunidalo in her statement this morning, Madam Speaker, referred to the Honourable Attorney-General during morning tea that morning, coming to her and telling her, “Why did you call the Honourable Reddy ‘fool’? There were other discussions by the Honourable Bulitavu implying that the House, Members of this side, that Honourable Dr. Reddy knew, heard, but did not raise it and further implying that because of your ruling, Madam Speaker, what Honourable Draunidalo had said should not be considered because Honourable Dr. Reddy himself had not raised it at that point in time. Honourable Dr. Reddy did not hear it; the Honourable Attorney-General did not hear it; it was only after, as the Honourable Attorney-General had stated in the verbatim report of the Committee proceedings yesterday. They were not aware of it until they were told by the media. It was on national television, we heard it that night.

(Inaudible interjection)

HON. M.R. VUNIWAQA.- I was sitting here, I heard it.

The Honourable Attorney-General, the verbatim reports will show, Madam Speaker, he interjected when the Honourable Draunidalo was calling Honourable Reddy “a fool” and that was what your decision was on. It is clear that the other side, Madam Speaker, is trying to downplay the statement that was made by Honourable Draunidalo, trying to murky the waters by using the words, calling him, “idiot, fool”. That is not the real point here.

This matter was referred to the Privileges Committee, basically because of the seriousness of the words “dumb natives” attributing that to a Member of this House, saying that that Member had called certain other Members “dumb natives”. That has connotations that goes beyond this House and the connotations are showing on social media and in other groups around the country and we cannot deny that. Honourable Draunidalo cannot deny that, no one cannot deny that. In fact, Madam Speaker, I would have thought as a responsible Member of this House, seeing the impact that her statement has made on social media, she should have come out and corrected it, corrected Pita Waqavonovono’s post, as a

responsible Member of this House. She should have said “No, Dr. Reddy did not say that”. But no, she did not do that, what did she do? She makes a comment, she comments further on the social media page, on the post that Pita Waqavonovono wrote. She said, and I quote:

“Then the ‘non-toppers’ asked the self-proclaimed ‘toppers’ about WTO technical issues/offices but the toppers were unaware, ignorant and could not answer the question”.

She did not correct what Pita Waqavonovono said, she did not.

(Hon. Members interject)

HON. M.R. VUNIWAQA.- Madam Speaker, we are seeing here a new ‘low’, the level that Members will stoop to, to get political mileage. This time, like some other times, other times, lying to the Fijian people, riling up Fijians upon ethnic lines.

Fiji has come a long way since the days of racially divisive policies. The FijiFirst Party under the leadership of the Honourable Prime Minister for the first time in the history of this country brought in a policy of a common citizenry, a country where we will no longer be discriminated against on the basis of our ethnicity...

(Acclamation)

... a country of equal opportunities for all Fijians, a country where we are all known simply as Fijians ...

(Acclamation)

... irrespective of our ethnicity. It has been heartening to hear the Honourable Leader of the Opposition herself in February this year supporting the FijiFirst Party Government’s policy to call all Fijians “Fijian” despite her party’s stance on the issue.

(Honourable Member interjects)

HON. M.R. VUNIWAQA.- We have come a long way and in one single sweep, the statement made by Honourable Draunidalo took us back a few steps, looking at comments by Fijians on what she uttered in this House.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. M.R. VUNIWAQA.- Madam Speaker, the words spoken by Honourable Draunidalo or the way the Honourable Draunidalo falsely blamed Honourable Dr. Reddy for calling us “dumb natives” were not only likely to promote or provoke feelings of ill-will or hostility between communities or ethnic groups within Fiji.

Madam Speaker, she keeps saying we are playing the race card, really, she is the one who used the words “dumb natives”. It was not Honourable Dr. Reddy, it was not anyone on this side, so really who is playing the race card here?

(Chorus of interjections)

Madam Speaker, the words that were uttered have been considered by the Committee. They have given her and Members of the Opposition an opportunity to present their points at the Committee stage, to look at the facts, to tell the Committee the verbatim report is wrong, they did not. They preferred to play everything out on television, Madam Speaker, so that they can get an opportunity to murk the waters a bit, emphasising on “it is really the “fool” or “idiot” the words that are an issue here. No, Madam Speaker, it is “dumb natives”. Those words are the issue here.

So, Madam Speaker, the evidence is clear, the Fijian people heard the Honourable Roko Tupou Draunidalo, really she should have known better, she is a lawyer, she is respected, not only within her occupation category but also in the *vanua* and this is the kind of character, the kind of words that can come out from someone, a Member of the highest House of this land. Members of this House should be the epitome of all that is good and proper in society. The words we speak, everything we say is judged, every single word.

HON. ROKO T.T.S. DRAUNIDALO.- The Honourable Minister is casting aspersions which is not allowed under the Standing Orders. She is making out that I am a racist, which I have just explained, Madam Speaker.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. ROKO T.T.S. DRAUNIDALO.- Madam Speaker, I did not, I am complaining at the time the comments have been made, as the Honourable Speaker has ruled. Casting aspersions on me that I am a racist when I have just explained what I said. I was asking the Honourable Minister for Education, he implied words “are you referring to us as ‘dumb natives?’”, including the Honourable Singh. Why are these aspersions being cast, Madam Speaker?

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Minister, please continue.

HON. M.R. VUNIWAQA.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. Like I said, the Honourable Draunidalo can input as many punctuation marks as she would like into that statement but the Fijian people heard what they heard on that day.

Madam Speaker, with all that, I support the motion before the House and the recommendations within. We cannot condone such behaviour from Members of this House. Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now give the floor to the Honourable Prem Singh.

HON. P. SINGH.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise with a heavy heart on an issue concerning, not only a fellow Honourable Member of this Parliament, but a woman in her own right: a chief, who is living and practicing a life of simplicity; my colleague; my Party President and above all, my very loyal and trusted friend, and a friend for a very long time and whose parents stood the test of time.

Madam Speaker, if vindictiveness has fallen to the gutter level, this has to be it. There is no other way I can put it but let me just respond to the Leader of the Government in Parliament who was bringing in the motion, he referred and all the other comments are being referred to the recommendations of the Privileges Committee. Madam Speaker, Privileges Committee, according to Section 127 of the Standing Orders, there are five Members; two of whom are appointed by the Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Madam Speaker, the two Members that the Honourable Leader of the Opposition appointed were the Honourable Tupou Draunidalo and the Honourable Karavaki. There was a communication between, according to your wisdom, Madam Speaker, from you to the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, that Honourable Tupou Draunidalo cannot be a member of the Committee.

Madam Speaker, as the Standing Order 127 says that all communications are with the Honourable Leader of the Opposition. It was late in the night when this was brought to the attention of the Honourable Tupou Draunidalo that she cannot be part of the Committee and there was no other replacement around. In fact, I was not in the precincts of Parliament, Madam Speaker, so just to put on record that the accused in this case, the Honourable Tupou Draunidalo, was denied the right to be present in the meeting.

Madam Speaker, this whole saga, either on video or audio or verbatim, the genesis of all these finds roots in what transpired that day. Let me remind this House, Madam Speaker, continuous mocking of the Opposition by the Honourable Minister for Education provoked Honourable Draunidalo.

(Chorus of interjections)

Madam Speaker, the Minister's actions tantamount to racial, tout, and this is very evident and revelling in the television footage of the proceedings. So, one wonders about his claim of being a topper while the Opposition is not.

My colleague, the Honourable Bulitavu has alluded to the facts as they were, which led to these exchanges, but let me just say this, there were lots of Point of Orders raised today and this concerns directly with the proceedings and of course, the deliberations within the Committee.

Madam Speaker, our very own Constitution of 2013 gives everyone a right to defend himself. As the Honourable Tupou Draunidalo had said that during the proceedings, as the Honourable Dr. Reddy was offended, she advances an undeserved apology. It is not only at the Committee stage, Madam Speaker, that we can defend, in this august House all the recommendations of the Committee are brought to this august House and this is the forum. So, I just like to make those comments.

Furthermore, Madam Speaker, what Honourable Tupou Draunidalo said that day, she never said that Dr. Reddy said this, the words "dumb natives". All she said was that during his contribution to the debate, the words used by Honourable Dr. Reddy were inferring that this side of the House, where it comprises of *iTaukei* and Fijians, he inferred the words "dumb natives". That was an inference, Madam. She never said that the Honourable Dr. Reddy said these words and I think that is on record. These all led to the exchanges and the consequences that happened after that.

Madam Speaker, the Honourable Draunidalo's response is in no way a breach of parliamentary privilege. She rightly stated that the Honourable Minister was referring to the Opposition as "dumb". She said "dumb natives" because the Opposition almost exclusively comprise of indigenous Fijians and *iTaukei*.

Madam Speaker, I further refer you to the three annexures in this Report. The first, they refer to Anand Babla's case and in his case, the punishment was that the Member was suspended for two sittings of Parliament.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- What did he do?

HON. P. SINGH.- Madam Speaker, the late Mr. Butadroka's case, he was suspended for the first three days, then the Committee convened and suspended him for two months.

Madam Speaker, one of the recommendations here is that Honourable Tupou Draunidalo be suspended for the rest of the term of Parliament. May I ask, Madam Speaker, in my view, the term of Parliament ends every year when it is prorogued. I think this is where, I say, that this is an opportune time, this is the forum where Honourable Tupou Draunidalo has said that if she has caused any offence to Honourable Dr. Reddy, she has advanced that apology. Thank you. Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now give the floor to the Honourable Sudhakar.

HON. A. SUDHAKAR.- Thank you, Madam Speaker, I also rise this morning with a heavy heart, the heart that is heavier than that of Honourable Prem Singh.

Madam Speaker, why I said that my heart is heavy is because today, I see a challenge by an irresponsible Member of the Opposition to the hard work done by the Honourable Prime Minister in this country, a Prime Minister who for the past 16 years has worked tirelessly and effortlessly in bringing the people together. He has walked bare foot, on foot, trying to unite the people of this country. He is an example of what Fiji should be and today, his hard work, his efforts of bringing the nation together has been challenged because someone from this honourable House has used words that are derogatory to my *iTaukei* brothers and sisters, something that was not said by the Honourable Dr. Reddy, my esteemed colleague, for something that was manufactured by this irresponsible Member of the Opposition side.

Madam Speaker, about a year ago, something extraordinary happened in this Parliament where another Member of the Opposition uttered some derogatory remarks against yourself. That was done outside but we had to bring it back to this House to set an example that this kind of behaviour will not be accepted.

(Inaudible interjections from the Opposition)

HON. A. SUDHAKAR.- Quote the relevant jurisdiction, please.

Now, but there are some people on the Opposition side who are in no mood to learn, they do not learn from history, they do not learn from their mistakes.

Madam Speaker, some months back, the same Honourable Member, while I was speaking to this House called me a "fool". It was, I thought it hurts, I mean, I am certainly not a fool for her information, but I chose to forgive her, even though she did not apologise, I thought "okay, just let it go", but then there are some people who do not deserve to be forgiven because they keep on repeating their mistakes, they keep on doing the same thing at a graver level, at a more hurtful level.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. A. SUDHAKAR.- Madam Speaker, she uttered the word "idiot" as in the *Hansard* for a man of the calibre of Honourable Dr. Mahendra Reddy, who is twice, three times, four times more qualified than most of us here. He has a PhD for God's sake. A person like him, he is the Education Minister of the Republic, thousands of school children look up to him, they see him as a role model, he goes around building schools, he goes around helping the children and they call him "a fool" and to make it worse, when the Honourable Attorney-General tried to defend him and tried to raise a Point of Order, she goes ahead and calls him an "idiot".

HON. OPPOSITION MEMBER.- It is there!

HON. A. SUDHAKAR.- It is there, read it! This is the type of behaviour that this Parliament cannot condone, it has been happening.

On the one side, we have our Honourable Prime Minister, who is trying to bridge the gap between the different races in Fiji and on the other side, we have people like Honourable Draunidalo who are just fuelling the fires of hatred and division. She is calling our Party, she is calling the Honourable Prime Minister, accusing him of playing a race card. He is not the man who said those two words, it is shameful for me to even quote, to say things like “dumb natives”. No one on this side, even in their dreams can say those two words, because we take our *iTaukei* brothers and sisters as our own, as our blood brothers and sisters. We do not stoop to that level.

The 32 on this side and a part on that side cannot even dream of uttering those two words and forget about even Honourable Dr. Reddy. Honourable Dr. Reddy, who has a PhD, the Minister of Education of this Republic will never and he has not said those words and to implicate him to say that he has used those words is a mockery, is untrue and I will go to the extent of saying it is a white lie.

Madam Speaker, we have heard from Honourable Draunidalo this morning, she talked about a party, the oldest party in this country and that this party always propose, promotes, propagates equality and non-division but it is this party that stood against the party of Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, a multiracial Alliance Party, with a predominant ethnic Indian Party to challenge it, using its power. When they won in 1977 on a racial divide, they could not form the Government because they had divided themselves on religious lines; there was that Dove faction and the Flower faction.

HON. ROKO T.T.S. DRAUNIDALO.- Race card.

HON. A. SUDHAKAR.- Now, that is the party, they are playing the race card and they are accusing the Honourable Prime Minister for playing the race card. Open the books of history and it will show you what the NFP has done to this country. NFP has almost always played the race card and now she says the same and uses the word ‘race card’ ten times in her speech trying to tell the people, trying to fool the people of Fiji that we are the people who are playing the race card. Not us, Madam Speaker, the 32 Government Members on this side are much more honourable than that.

Madam Speaker, after using the words “fool” and “idiot”, she could have gone on damage control and apologised, but she went ahead and used the words, and I quote from the *Hansard*, “People of Fiji I am not who is saying this “dumb natives”. No one said it, Honourable Dr. Reddy certainly did not say it and she went and repeated it. This is the type of spread of misinformation that is not expected from an Honourable Member of this House. Distortion of facts and misinformation is expected from journalists of *Fiji Times*, we expect this from *Fiji Times*, the distortion of facts and not from an Honourable Member of this House.

Well, what Honourable Draunidalo has done, probably qualifies her better to get a job of a journalist with *Fiji Times* because she is well qualified for that. And to compound matters further, Madam Speaker, the social media, as highlighted by Honourable Vuniwaqa, has stated that the people who use the social media, even on NFP’s official website, we read comments like “Dr. Reddy has lost sanity after doing PhD”. This is coming from the official site of NFP, read by one Kamal Iyer, or someone.

The social media people, people who believe social media blindly and started accusing Honourable Dr. Reddy and are calling for his resignation, they should be more vigilant, they should be more responsible. The social media without inquiring the truth, and even without reading the *Hansard*, even without hearing the recording, one has started calling for Honourable Reddy's resignation, some calling him a racist, some calling FijiFirst the party of racism. This is the type of distortion, the damage has been done, and that is exactly what is prohibited by the Standing Orders and with your permission, I will read from Standing Order 62(4), and I quote:

“Prohibited references

- (4) It is out of order for a member, when speaking, to use-
- (a) Offensive words against Parliament or another member;
 - (d) words that are like to promote or provoke feelings of ill-will or hostility between communities or ethnic groups within Fiji.”

There is no other further evidence needed, Madam Speaker, that her words, her references have promoted ill feelings between different communities of the country because of the utterances that we have seen on *Facebook*. Those people who write on party official websites, even SODELPA NZ which carries the SODELPA tag, if they try and disassociate from that site, they should have reported it. They also called FijiFirst racist, they use swear words which I cannot use in this House. If these people had read the *Hansard*, they would have seen that it was Honourable Draunidalo who manufactured the words and I quote, “dumb Fijians” and this is out of thin air that she manufactured, nothing of that sort was implied by Honourable Dr. Reddy.

These irresponsible and discourteous people, one like Pita Waqavonovono, Aklesh Vin Singh who is also a Aklesh Naleen, a *nom de plume* or fake name, one Vineet Singh, one Anshu Lata, a former NFP candidate, these people are adding fuel to the fire. They are damaging the already fragile relationship, Pita Waqavonovono. The Honourable Prime Minister had stated earlier, he is trying to fix, we are the fixers here and they want to do the damage. The National Federation Party,...

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. A. SUDHAKAR.- ... the party of which she is responsible for...

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. A. SUDHAKAR.- ...I am calling them irresponsible.

The Party that she professes to be the President of, did not retract the statements from their Official Facebook page, even the Member speaking today showed no remorse, even if she had shown some remorse, it would have been a mitigating factor, but no. She went on and kept on implying it and she admitted. In fact, in a court of law, that would have been the end of it. She admitted calling Dr. Reddy a fool, she admitted calling the Honourable Attorney-General an idiot. She admitted, it was an admission.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you, Honourable Member.

The only thing that she did not admit, but it is in the Hansard are the two words and I quote again (these are not my words, I am quoting) “dumb native”. This is something that she said. She only stopped short of admitting that, has she done that probably, I would not have been standing and talking because that is the end of the matter.

They also write things like on their Facebook page and where their members also contribute, “Mahendra Reddy is....

HON. ROKO. T.T.S. DRAUNIDALO.- Point of Order, Madam Speaker.

(Hon. Member interjects)

HON. SPEAKER.- Point of Order.

HON. ROKO. T.T.S. DRAUNIDALO.- Madam Speaker, again he is casting aspersions and now brought in members of the NFP party; Kamal Iyer and Anshu Lata. Why is he casting aspersions on them, when they are not here to defend themselves? Playing the race card?

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. GOVT. MEMBER.- Who brings up race? You!

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you, Honourable Member.

HON. A. SUDHAKAR.- They even, in their contributions say, “Speaker has just flip flopped in her ruling.” They are even not sparing you, Madam Speaker. This is the integrity of this Party.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Member, I am just making a ruling on the Point of Order raised, that you must not bring in names of people outside of this House, who are not here to defend themselves. Thank you, please continue

HON. A. SUDHAKAR.- And all these, Madam Speaker (I will continue from there) because of the misinformation and untrue statements provided by an irresponsible Member of NFP.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- How can you talk to that...?

HON. A. SUDHAKAR.- Who else said it? Had the Member been more responsible, she would have said, communicated and would have published that the Honourable Dr. Reddy did not say those things, but Honourable Vuniwaqa has read it, the whole comments on the web page. She fuelled it, she furthered the agenda. She should have done the honourable thing yesterday, Honourable Speaker, and resigned immediately yesterday, but she showed no remorse. And when she stood up today to speak, she shamelessly continued with the distortion of facts. She said that Honourable Dr Reddy implied the words “dumb natives” when that was not said and Hon. Dr. Reddy spoke before and denied saying that. It is in the *Hansard*, it is in the recording, he never used those two words.

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. A. SUDHAKAR.- Then she went ahead, and as mentioned earlier, she called our Government, a racist Government - playing the race card. Who has been playing the race card for the past 50 years?

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Member, you are getting repetitious, please be succinct.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. A. SUDHAKAR.- Madam Speaker, it is probably hurting these guys - that is why, Madam Speaker, therefore, from what I have said so far, have mentioned in the House, read from the *Hansard*, read from the Standing Orders. I support this motion and I endorse the recommendations of the Privileges Committee.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now give the floor to someone from the Opposition, Honourable Gavoka.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. This is like a bad dream. About a year ago, our boys came back from that victorious end of a tournament in London and there were celebrations out here at Albert Park on the evening and we were here debating about the ousted from Parliament of the Leader of the SODELPA Party. A little over a year, today, last week, we again celebrated the return of our boys from another victorious campaign in the Sevens Tournament and immediately after that, we are here debating about the ouster of the President of the National Federation Party.

It is like a bad dream, Madam Speaker; a bad dream indeed. What are we coming to? Look at the recommendations in this Report by the Committee; a Committee that was primarily Members of FijiFirst. They want her, Madam Speaker, over some words that were used during the heat of the debate. they want her to be ousted from Parliament from today until 2018. That is why we are here today, doing this, Madam Speaker. I feel ashamed that I am part of this Parliament that is doing this, when we have something better to do. We are here to talk about the ousting of the Honourable Member over something said in the heat of the debate for her to be totally out of Parliament.

(Honourable Member interjects)

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Madam Speaker, Standing Order 76(3) says, I quote: “first offence, three days; second offence, seven days; ...

HON. GOVT. MEMBER.- Disorderly conduct ...

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- ... and third offence 28 days”. Here, one offence, totally out of Parliament. Where is the sense of balance? Where is the goodwill? Where is the new Fiji that FijiFirst is trying to preach to us every day? Where is it?

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. GOVT. MEMBER.- Read the Minutes!

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Madam Speaker, the Honourable Minister for Lands talks about using inflammatory language, upsetting the *vanua*, quoting Standing Order 62(4). Madam Speaker, the *vanua* needs to be protected. I agree with her, but let us remember one thing in this very House, the Honourable Prime Minister said, “the chiefs are accidents of birth”, right in this House, right in this House..

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- If you say you upset the *vanua* with statements like that, what about when the Honourable Prime Minister said that the chiefs are accidents of birth?

(Chorus of interjections)

When he said that the chiefs are never mentioned in the *Holy Bible*, I would refer him to Romans: 13: “*O ira na Turaga sa mai vua na Kalou.*” Absolutely! Absolutely!

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- In English.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- “Authority is from God and the chiefs are our authority,” Madam Speaker, and we revere them and we follow what they dictate. I could also ask him to look at 1 Peter 2:17: “*Rerevaka na Kalou ka doka na Tui*”.

HON. MEMBER.- In English.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Madam Speaker, “Fear God and Honour the King”, that is the English version of it. The king in my context is my *Turaga*, na *Turaga ni Vanua*, my paramount Chief, the *Na Kalevu*, that is my king.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- If you say, that they were not even mentioned in the Bible, they are accidents of birth, that is grave, much more serious than what is being implied today that has been said by the Honourable Draunidalo.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Madam Speaker, it is always the race card. It is always the race card. Who started this race card thing?

Here, Madam Speaker, we know that the International Parliamentary Union has ruled that we erred very badly in the way we treated the *Turaga na Tui Cakau*. They have said that and that is the international community of parliamentarians and our Honourable Prime Minister and his team go to these people to go and *kerekere*, and help us with TC *Winston*. He said that yesterday. He is all over the world borrowing, asking people for the fund. How can he go out and ask for understanding from people to help Fiji, when he is allowing this to happen in his Parliament in Fiji? He should put a stop to this.

Madam Speaker, if you say we have a new Fiji, we must have a sense of balance. What FijiFirst is doing today is go for the jugular. At the drop of a hat, they go for the jugular NFP, because of an accounting situation with their reports either they could have been called to correct it or suspended, they went for suspension. This is not healthy for Fiji, Madam Speaker. This Government is afraid of its own shadows and I warn them.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- They will be sending a very wrong signal to this country in the way they treat an Honourable Member, a leader of her Party, and one who is known for who she is in a traditional

sense also, Madam Speaker. She is my *vasu*, she is from Navosa, Nadroga and the people would be watching today. We treat people with a sense of responsibility, with balance, you do not do this over one word. You want her to be totally out of Parliament for the whole duration of this Parliament.

HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- This is the Fiji we want.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Is it the Fiji we want, to call our chiefs “accidents of birth”, is that the Fiji we want?

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Madam Speaker, the Fiji that they want is a Fiji that will take us to disaster.

What will happen, Madam Speaker, the danger in this way is that, the people will realise that you cannot talk to FijiFirst. Once she goes, how many of us will left in this House? 16. The people of Fiji will know that there is no dialogue with FijiFirst, whatever they do will happen, there is no point in talking to them. It is a dictatorship and that is very, very dangerous, Madam Speaker. I have often spoken about the tyranny of the majority. You have to be responsible in the way you hold your power, it is not the way, and you are not exercising it the way you are doing it today.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Madam Speaker, I am very concerned that the way it is going, there is no dialogue. The Prime Minister will be seen to be a man who is 1 one way, my way or the highway’, and let me remind the House about Tunisia, Madam Speaker.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Tunisia was ruled by an army man for 23 years. He was the darling of the World Bank of the IMF. He did everything right: he created infrastructure; built up the middle class; won the Elections year in year out (about 90 percent to 95 percent), but what he did not see, Madam Speaker, was the poverty, the sense of depression that existed in Tunisia at that time. He was not listening to them.

In 2009/2010, Madam Speaker, Tunisia was rated as one of the best performing economies in the Northern part of Africa. As I had said, the darling of the IMF, the darling of the World Bank. However, in January 2011, Madam Speaker, a young man, because of poverty, wanted to go and sell some fruits was thrown out from where he was selling his fruits and he poured gasoline over himself and set himself on fire - self-immolation because of the poverty that the Government did not see. Ben Ali was the name of this General, he did not see it.

This young of man of 26 burnt himself and immediately Tunisia erupted. Ben Ali hit hard, but after two weeks, the whole of Tunisia was in turmoil. His Generals said, “Sir, we cannot contain this.” Ben Ali wanted to negotiate but the people of Tunisia knew that he was not the person you could talk to. They continued with the demonstration, they continued with what they were doing. Then two weeks later, Ben Ali caught a flight in the evening to run to Saudi Arabia, where he spent most of his life, where he died.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- He wanted to go to France but France said, “No, we cannot take you”. That is because the people of Tunisia realised that it is pointless talking to this guy. He does not believe in dialogue, he may create infrastructure, he may be the darling of the World Bank, he may be the darling of IMF (International Monetary Fund) but poverty is rife, corruption is rife, those conditions are rife in this country...

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- ... we cannot talk to this guy, hence the demonstration. That, Madam Speaker, is what we should watch in this country, that we can have dialogue.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- FijiFirst says that they cannot talk. If they cannot talk, now they are showing it to us, they do not want to talk to anyone. The time will come ...

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- ... when the people will say, “it is pointless talking to these guys”, and this country will suffer for it.

Madam Speaker, I would ask everyone to think deeply about where we are heading. We cannot do this, we are out of the darkness, out of hideous darkness. Let us handle this with responsibility, with a sense of balance and let us apply what is in the Standing Order; three days, seven days, or 28 days.

HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- No, you got the wrong Standing Order!

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Two years? The Standing Order, according to the Honourable Prime Minister Bainimarama, is where all of us are to go outside, that is what he wants. That is the Standing Order he wants.

(Laughter)

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- That is the Standing Order he wants.

(Chorus of interjections)

Madam Speaker, I would ask everyone to deal with this with responsibility, with a sense of balance and thinking of everyone watching this proceeding today and I tell you what, we are sending mixed signals, we are creating mixed feelings in the community, and this is very, very divisive and very dangerous for Fiji. I suggest, Madam Speaker, that we go according to the Standing Order. You have been given the report but I believe, as per Standing Order 18, you have the right, Madam Speaker, to make a ruling and say, “If you need me to censor, it will be according to Standing Order 76”. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now give the floor to the Honourable Alvick Maharaj.

HON. A.A. MAHARAJ.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, after hearing what has been transpiring from this morning, I would like to share something that transpired between me and one of my colleagues in my pharmacy yesterday, during a discussion session.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. A.A. MAHARAJ.- Madam Speaker, there is a medical condition known as Schizophrenia. This is a very interesting medical condition, Madam Speaker, one of the signs of this particular medical condition is hallucination, whereby people actually hear words and sentences which have not been even uttered by anyone.

This happens, Madam Speaker, because of imbalance between neurotransmitters, such as dopamine in the brain, in simple chemical imbalance in the brain. What is more interesting about this condition, Madam Speaker, is, when you tell the patient that no one has said it, they just would not agree to it, even to an extent if you record and play it for them, they will not believe it. Now I am coming to the important point, Madam Speaker, this patient hears things which is already in the brain, nothing from outside.

Madam Speaker, now coming back to what transpired in Parliament a couple of days back, someone heard something in Parliament, which was never said by the Honourable Minister of Education.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. A.A. MAHARAJ.- It is not us, Madam Speaker. Finally, it comes out as what has been going in their minds about the natives.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. A.A. MAHARAJ.- They themselves campaign as the saviours of the natives and, Madam Speaker, it is a disgrace, when for political advantage, they present with one face and in reality, they have some other face.

Madam Speaker, one of the Honourable Members uttered this morning, “we have done nothing wrong”. So according to him, and I would like to ask him, calling natives dumb, is that right? Definitely, for me and FijiFirst, it is not.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. A.A. MAHARAJ.- Madam Speaker, Honourable Mosese Bulitavu stood and passed comments about our Government but we did not object to it, not did our beloved Honourable Prime Minister. We know, and the whole country knows, that we cannot have a better Prime Minister than our Honourable Josaia Bainimarama.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. A.A. MAHARAJ.- And it is really funny, Madam Speaker, that some of them they think that they can be a better Prime Minister...

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. A.A. MAHARAJ.- ... but, Madam Speaker, calling natives is just not on.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. A.A. MAHARAJ.- While we live in the 21st Century, we are trying to remove racial discrimination from our country and our society, which has never been done by any of the previous governments, opposition, they truly believe in racial lines, that is why they are bringing these things up. How many people's feeling have been hurt by such comments? While we are putting in all efforts to remove racial discrimination and here, we are with comments which are demolishing our efforts.

They are going to an extent, Madam Speaker, whereby now they are taking gesture as evidence. They are reading between the lines, where were they when the Committee was sitting yesterday? Why were they not present there, to actually defend the Honourable Member? Why are they actually bringing it up to the Parliament today? Madam Speaker, this is just not acceptable and therefore, I totally support the motion.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now give the floor to the Honourable Nawaikula.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Madam Speaker, I wish to be noted for the record that I am sincerely disappointed that my point of order was not taken for the reason that, if it was so, it would have resolved the whole thing.

We take no issue in relation to discipline, but the concern here is the term that Honourable Draunidalo would be out for the remainder of the year. It is already *fait accompli* that after this, she will be out for the remaining term of Parliament and also to join the Honourable Ratu Naiqama Lalabalavu.

Madam Speaker, I say this because I feel with all sincerity that you have the power to resolve this under Standing Order 18, in which the decorum and respectability of the House is in your good hands, and in relation to that, you would have allowed everything else. We can debate here about the disciplinary matters, but it is the punishment of up to two years, that is the concern, and that could only be cured by an intervention and my sincere belief from your good-self, Madam Speaker.

We know Standing Order 134 does not mention anything about the severity of the offence that they can recommend. It does not say that they can even recommend that the person has to be suspended. In the same way, Standing Order 76 does not even also say that, it is only a guide but we can use it as a guide.

Standing Order 76 says, as the Honourable Members from the other side said, for gross misconduct, you can do that for a maximum of 28 days but we can use that as a guide, but it is entirely wrong to dismiss or suspend a member for any term more than that. I wish to say that, that has been clear to us. We already have the same kind of experience last year and a very clear ruling has been made in relation to that, and if I could be allowed to quote what they stated in relation to that. This is what they say;

“... that the decision by the parliament to suspend him for two years for remarks made outside of parliament at a local party meeting is both inappropriate, also in the absence of a clearly legal basis.”

That is telling us that in fact, we should really look into this. We should look at other legal avenues and do not bring it here.

So they are saying that –

“In the absence of a clearly legal basis, it was both inappropriate that he be given a two-year suspension and it was also wholly disproportionate as it not only deprives him of the right to exercise his parliamentary mandate, but also deprives his electorate from representation in parliament for a period covering half the term of Parliament; it considers also in this regard that alternative, regular legal revenues could have been pursued instead to obtain redress for the slander or libel in the case at hand.”

As well, it was hoping “that his suspension will soon be lifted.”

We could have taken that as a guide and it is very clear from that ruling that we, Parliamentarians, have a human right and a mandate to be here. We have also a human right to be here as a representative. So therefore, it cuts really directly into that, if we dismiss a person for more than what is reasonable or more than necessary. That is the whole point that I wish to say here, Madam Speaker, because it will all come down to that and the loser will be democracy. We will look funny.

(Honourable Members interject)

The International Inter Parliamentary has stated for us, I know it does not have any direct powers over us, but it gives us a guideline of what are the common values of all Parliaments around the world, so they all regard that as a standard and we should adhere to that. And I can tell you, Madam Speaker, that it is no secret that I took up the matter in relation to the Honourable Lalabalavu to the IPU, but everywhere I go, as soon as you mention two-years, they laugh, they could not believe it. They could not believe that a Member could be removed or suspended from Parliament for 2 years ...

(Chorus of interjections)

... for that reason because we have, it is our human right to be here, it is our mandate, it is also the mandate that we, as representatives, must and should give a kind of punishment that is reasonable and two and a half years is certainly not reasonable.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now give the floor to the Honourable Dr. Brij Lal.

HON. ROKO T.T.S. DRAUNIDALO.- Point of Order, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Point of Order!

HON. ROKO T.T.S. DRAUNIDALO.- I wanted to stand up right after the previous speaker, the Honourable Alvick Maharaj, but the Honourable Nawaikula was already on his feet.

I wish to bring your attention to words uttered by the Honourable Alvick Maharaj when he was insinuating that Members who are in the Opposition that he was describing a mental condition, Schizophrenia, and casting aspersions on Members of the Opposition, and I ask you, having hallucinations and talking about intermittent and whatever medical terms he was using. Madam Speaker, I wish to ask you to ask the Honourable Member if that is indeed what he said and the aspersion that he cast, that he withdraw it and apologise to us.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you for bringing up that issue. In fact, Schizophrenia is a condition of the mind and it is disrespectful to refer to the mental powers of Members, and I would like to ask the Honourable Alvick Maharaj to withdraw that reference.

HON. A.A. MAHARAJ.- I withdraw.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now give the floor to Honourable Dr. Brij Lal.

HON. DR. B. LAL.- Madam Speaker, I rise to support the motion before the House. We all sit here in the highest office of this country. The 50 Members of this House are the 50 best people out of the 850,000 people we have in this country.

(Chorus of interjections)

The country went to the polls in September 2014 and the voters have picked us to represent them here. Each person was picked on his or her popularity, contribution to the community, leadership skills and ability to contribute to the development of the nation. Our role here, as rightfully said by a writer is:

“Do all good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, for all the people you can, as long as you ever can.”

Therefore, do not do the damage. We are trying to recover from the damages of *Cyclone Winston*.

Standing Order 62 very clearly states what we cannot speak in this House. As for the contributions, as per the Constitution of this country and as per the ethics and values of FijiFirst, we do not want to get into racial, ethnic and religious divides. Those days are gone, we are in a new Fiji.

The country is looking at all of us to be very honourable Members: who believe in God; who have good personal values; who love people; who foster relationship; who are compassionate; who are courageous; who continue to learn; who have a sense of humour and are happy people.

Society judges people by the values, the morals and the ethics that we have. Values are the rules by which we make decisions about the right and the wrong, about ‘the should’ and ‘should not’ and about the good and the bad. Morals have greater social element to values and we tend to have a very broad acceptance of those. Ethics tend to be codified into our formal system or set of rules. The biggest problem with people is, that they always assume. God has given us two ears and we must use it wisely to listen to things carefully.

The Honourable Dr. Reddy, Minister for Education, did not utter some of the words on which we are debating and unfortunately, others have heard it. We are proud to be citizens of a beautiful country, Fiji, which is multiracial and multicultural, which makes us beautiful and unique. Here in Fiji, we have qualities of life and value which many countries strive for but never attain such things as unity and togetherness of different races, the peace and harmony amongst the people, the tolerance, understanding, happiness and prosperity.

Pope John Paul, when he visited Fiji in 1986 said, and I quote:

“I admire the way people of such diverse cultures and backgrounds live together here in harmony and peace. You differ widely among yourselves, and yet you are one united nation.”

It is sad that our people do not realise these values.

A famous writer said, “the most potent and effective men and women are those with religious underpinning to their lives.” To not have some of this kind of spiritual practice in one’s life is a serious mistake. If we possess these qualities and values, we will respect each other and we will care for each other, and thus there will be much more peace and harmony.

Madam Speaker, let me conclude, with a very short story.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Member, I will ask you to continue with your short story after this, but we really need to have the Honourable Leader of the Government in Parliament to move a motion.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

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

That so much of Standing Order 23(1) is suspended so as to allow the House to complete the debates on the Privileges motion before the House.

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

Question put.

Motion agreed to.

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON THE BREACH OF PRIVILEGES – HON. ROKO T.T.S. DRAUNIDALO

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, we will continue with the debate on the motion before the House. I will ask the Honourable Dr. Brij Lal to continue.

HON. DR. B. LAL.- Madam Speaker, let me share a very short story which is usually shared by Mahatma Gandhi. He said:

“God said to me, your task is to build a better world. I answered, how can I do that? The world is such large, so vast, so complicated now and I am such a small and useless person. There is nothing that I can do but God in his great wisdom said, just build a better you.”

Honourable Members, you will never be a Member of Parliament forever. As long as you are here, leave a mark, make a difference and leave a legacy, let us live peacefully. Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now give the floor to the Honourable Karavaki.

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- Madam Speaker, as I was getting ready this morning to come to Parliament, the first decision that I was to make was, what clothes do I have to put on? I have the white

that I used to wear, I have the black that I also wear, and I have the blue. Madam Speaker, I decided to put on blue today, unfortunately because I was wearing black yesterday.

Madam Speaker, If I wear white, it depicts the righteousness of Christ. If I wear the black, it depicts the agony and the suffering of Christ at the cross to save me from my sin. If I wear blue, it depicts a sinful person living on the earth, wanting to obey every commandment of God. It is a commandment keeper, that is why I come to Parliament today with the blue.

Madam Speaker, I became a member of the Privileges Committee. We have heard that we were not part of the Privileges Committee and yes, I excused myself from the Privileges Committee and also, there was no other MPs around to replace the Honourable Draunidalo because immediately after that when I went upstairs, there was no one else there, all had gone.

Madam Speaker, the reason I had excused myself because during our deliberations before I had made the decision, the Honourable Attorney-General made a comment that generated some very quick conviction in me. One was that in particular, the facts are very straightforward, they cannot be disputed.

Madam Speaker, I had also been a part of the Privileges Committee in the case of the Honourable Ratu Lalabalavu and I had experienced over there that during the discussions, there was no basis for reconciliation, no basis of comprehensive review of everything, everything was just along party lines. And I am not a person, Madam Speaker, to be put in that kind of situation because my mandate is justice, and the justice that I refer to is the justice of God.

Immediately then at that time, the first conviction that came to me was I Corinthians: 10, Madam Speaker, which talks about the experience of the Israelites on their journey from Egypt to the Promised Land and Paul had written there, that all those experiences had been written for the benefit of those who will live in the last days. That, to me, I reflect on what we had encountered in the last event, and that history tells me and what also the Honourable Attorney-General had said, that nothing will change because King Solomon says, “Nothing is new under the sun. What has happened before, it will happen again.”

HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- King Solomon was there?

HON. MEMBER.- Yes, King Solomon, King David.

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- You want to say that, Sir?

HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- Was King Solomon there?

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- Which Solomon are you talking about?

HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- You are talking about King Solomon, was he there last night?

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- I said, “he said”, King Solomon stated that, Madam Speaker.

And that is the reason, Madam Speaker, it hurts me to see that, that is the environment that we have here in this Parliament, and a conviction that came to me, if that is the case, I just might as well excuse myself. I did ask the Honourable Deputy Speaker who is the Chairman, for leave, on that basis, and that was why I excused myself and we were not part of the discussions. We were also not part of this Report, the Report that had being produced over here.

Although, yes, I agree, it is the Report of the Privileges Committee but we are not part of that Report. I only hope that to be clarified, why I was not there because this issue will be personalised to me and that is why I have explained, Madam Speaker, the reason why I was not there.

Madam Speaker, the issue of the Privileges Committee, as I understand by reading the Standing Order, when there is a matter that comes into the attention of a Member, it is to invoke, not immediately but after the occurrence of that event. Then he can come through to this House and ask whether that matter is in breach of any requirements of the Standing Orders.

Now, we are talking about the breach of Standing Order 62, but if that matter was brought up immediately after that, then we would follow the procedure that are in there, including Standing Order 76. However, that was not done because it was not brought up immediately at that time.

Therefore, the alternative when it is discovered later on, then it is brought up like it is in this case, and it is taken to the Privileges Committee, the Privileges Committee will have to look into it and to see whether a privilege has been breached under the Standing Order. Then it will come back to this House, like we are doing right now. Nowhere else in the Standing Orders where it prescribes any penalty, except under Standing Order 76. The only difference is, the one that goes to the Privileges Committee and the one that is debated immediately during its occurrence, that is the only difference because one is invoked immediately, the other one is brought up later on and taken to the Privileges Committee, but the penalty is the same.

HON. GOVERNMENT MEMBERS.- No, no!

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- Madam Speaker, that is what must be understood.

HON. GOVERNMENT MEMBERS.- No, no!

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- We cannot, Madam Speaker, go to the case law because we have our own Standing Orders here to follow.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- If there is nothing there, then we go to the case law. We cannot go to the case law and ignore the very rules that we have formulated.

HON. OPPOSITION MEMBERS.- Hear, hear!

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- Madam Speaker, that is my humble understanding. Maybe, because I did not give the instruction for the writing of this Standing Order, and that is probably why people will say that I am not right, but you read the law, the general application is applied. If the penalty is prescribed here, that is the only penalty that this House can invoke, nothing else, Madam Speaker, that is the only penalty. When it comes in this House, I see the prayers over here, Madam Speaker, the suspension will take the period of two years, or even more, to the end of the term of Parliament. That is grose, Madam Speaker, and that is not what the Standing Order talks about.

As I had explained, Madam Speaker, the only difference are the pathways; one went to the Privileges Committee because it was brought later on after discovered by the Member, and that is the process. One can make the ruling right there and then, to name the Member and then the debate ensues

later on, and then the decision is made. That is the only difference I understand, but now we have the report coming back and it is obviously apparent that it is outside the periphery of the penalty stated under Standing Order 76. Now, Madam Speaker, we are bringing in the case laws, the case laws are based on what? To base it on our own supposition, and we cast the very rules that we have aside and put in new ideals that happen in different situations, that is not the same with our situation in this House.

Madam Speaker, I always be myself, I am not a politician, but I am a person, a sinful person living on this world destined for final destruction, wanting to follow God's justice. And I pray to you, Madam Speaker, the very basis of the existence of Parliament, that it must reflect on the justice of God. You know what I fear, Madam Speaker, what is going on here might end up to a point in time where there will be a law for no one to speak a word against the Honourable Prime Minister and the Honourable Attorney-General.

Madam Speaker, in Matthew 12:32, it says, and I quote:

“Whoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man shall be forgiven, but whoever speaketh a word against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven in this world, and in the world to come.”

Who is trying to be the Holy Ghost here? Who is trying to be the Holy Ghost?

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Them! (pointing at the Government side)

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Right there! Right there!

HON. S.D. KARAVALKI.- Even the Son of Man, Jesus Christ Himself said, “If you speak a word against Me you can be forgiven”. You know why, Madam Speaker, why that someone speaking a word against the Holy Ghost cannot be forgiven, because that is the only basis of salvation of man, because when the Holy Spirit cannot convict and speak to us any more, then our hope is gone. He is the only basis of our salvation.

Madam Speaker, I am concerned with the way that we are going over here, any small word that will offend someone, we do not have a forgiving spirit here...

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- A small word?

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- ...not a word.

(Hon. Member interjects)

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- Jesus said, “A foolish man, the one who takes the lamp without the oil”. Jesus Himself says he is a fool, he is a foolish man...

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- ...and also the one who builds his house upon the sand, he is a foolish man because when the waves come, the storm comes and the tempest come, he will fall. What is wrong with that? He talks about our situation and we learn from our situation. “Foolish” is not a bad word, it is a word that we learn from. We have to look at it and see how we can learn but unfortunately, we are putting ourselves over here in a position where no one should speak a word against us. There is no

humility, and Madam Speaker, that is a very sad situation. I will continue to say such things, Madam Speaker, because if there is darkness, then light must come into darkness. Why light must come, so that we can all be bearers of light, because there is so much darkness, we cannot even have the spirit to forgive each other.

Madam Speaker, this is a sad situation and as I contribute today, I am saying this because my primary task is to please the Creator, and without that, we will continue to pull in our own directions as human beings, as Members of Parliament, thinking that our own ideals are better than the others, and we cannot see a common goal, a common position for the betterment of this country because if we cannot forgive each other in this Parliament, then the people out there cannot forgive each other. That is the message of light that must come into this Parliament, the spirit of forgiveness.

That is why, Madam Speaker, I speak in this Parliament that Members of Parliament must examine the process that we are taking. We do not go and bring the authorities from outside, we only look at our own laws and our own laws tell us, the only penalty that are prescribed over there is under Standing Order 76. And, I plead in the name of the Lord, Madam Speaker, that we can see justice and that spirit to be in us as we make a decision in this case.

Madam Speaker, I propose and suggest that this prayer is not in accordance with the Constitution because our Standing Orders derive from the authority of the Constitution, and our Standing Orders is also against our Standing Order, and we must be careful with that as we proceed, that we proceed on the basis that we work in this Parliament for the betterment of the nation.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- I give the floor to the Honourable Balmindar Singh.

HON. B. SINGH.- Madam Speaker, I rise this afternoon to raise my concerns in regard to the derogatory comments made by the Honourable Draunidalo.

Madam Speaker, I am truly saddened and disappointed on the disrespect and demeaning behaviour of the Honourable Member, who is perceived to be practising and upholding good leadership, transparency and to be a law-abiding citizen. The words uttered are unacceptable and uncalled for.

Madam Speaker, we all have been voted by the citizens of this beloved nation to do our ethical best and take our nation forward. However, it seems that there are a select few, who have ulterior motives and drag us through the dirtiest possible remarks.

Madam Speaker, we need to respect the decorum of this august House, and it is important that we maintain ethical leadership, preventing misconduct and in raising standard of integrity of this highest institution.

Madam Speaker, it is not the examples we want to set here, a standard or acceptable behaviour for this high institution, and equally for the citizens as this undermines the very institution that the Constitution, and that we all need to protect in ensuring acceptable parliamentary democracy and respect.

Madam Speaker, a recent study was undertaken before elections in Canada and found the largest reason for voter decline was negative people attitude towards politicians. This study says, Madam Speaker, and I quote:

“There is a widespread perception that politicians are not selfless, lack credibility and are not true to their words.”

The question arises, why?

Madam Speaker, the precise answer is because of insulting, disrespectful, unkind, unfettering and demeaning behaviour of some Honourable Members. Therefore, Madam Speaker, we, the representatives of the people have a moral obligation and responsibility to uphold the highest ethical principles and to relay to each other in a manner that is becoming of such exemplary beings

In our democratic society, ethical leadership is everyone’s business. The tone must be set at the top, especially as Members of this august House, who occupy such essential place in our system of Government.

Madam Speaker, there are serious crimes which call for serious conduct. Ethic lies at the core of the successful society, and ethical leadership is one of our greatest continuing need.

We, as leaders, have committed ourselves to uphold good leadership, and to the Constitution of this land in the principle that commits us to the recognition and protection of human rights and respect for human dignity. We simply do not condone such behaviour, neither insults.

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

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now give the floor to the Honourable Aseri Radrodro.

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- Madam Speaker, I rise to give my short contribution on the motion that is before the House this morning.

First of all, Madam Speaker, I think this Report should not have made its way to this House, because it is inconsistent with the requirements of the Standing Orders. The Privileges Committee membership, Madam Speaker, it says and its reference in their Report that, “The Privileges Committee members shall comprise of five members appointed by the Speaker, in consultation with the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition.” So, that basically relates that the Privileges Committee should comprise Members from both sides of the House. In this Report, as we can see, it is only signed by three Members, and the Chair of the Committee, and that shows that it is inconsistent with the requirements of the Standing Orders.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- It is not even mentioned here, Madam Speaker, it is only relating to Standing Order 127(1)(b), there is no relation to the quorum or what has been highlighted by the Honourable Members.

Madam Speaker, if I take you to the contents of the Report, the makeup of the Committee has already indicated some biasness in the decision that has been taken. On Page 14 of the Verbatim Report, Honourable Draunidalo has stated that, and I quote:

“... I am going to take my right to silence and if I may be excused from the meeting.”

She has already excused herself. And further down, Honourable Seruiratu stated, and I quote:

“...that the Honourable Draunidalo opted not to give a statement and exercise her right to remain silent. But based on the audio and the *Hansard Report*, it is plain clear that she is guilty. Thank you.”

Madam Speaker, this is why I am saying that the makeup of the Committee is already showing a biased intent, in terms of the decision of the Committee. The absence of the full makeup of the Committee has already prejudged the Members of the Committee.

Further on, Madam Speaker, on Page 17, the Committee was looking for a jurisdiction and the advice was given by Mr. J. Ditoka.

“MR. J. DITOKA.- I should have mentioned that in the Fijian jurisdiction once you suspend a Member that penalty is automatic.”

And, it further goes down, from Honourable Koya:

“HON. F.S. KOYA.- Mr. Chairman, are we sure of that? Correct me if I am wrong but expulsion would mean someone else comes along in terms of like we have done before if someone has gone to another job, et cetera, if that is the correct case or they lose their seat altogether?”

What I am trying to imply here, Madam Speaker, is that the Committee themselves is biased in the conduct of the meeting.

(Hon. Member interjects)

Madam Speaker, then it goes on to Page 18, on Honourable Koya, which says, and I quote:

“HON. F.S. KOYA.- Mr. Chairman, just specifically with respect, because of the gravity of what we actually have before us causing, provoking ill-will, ill-feeling and hostility between communities, that is the kind of thing I am actually asking about. Has there been something similar to that extent in other jurisdictions?”

Madam Speaker, there is nothing in the *Hansard Report* that states that the statement is causing ill feeling. It is the Committee themselves that has designed the conduct of the meeting and the decision is already based on the Committee’s Report.

On the recommendation of the Committee, Madam Speaker, it saddens me to note that none of the recommendations here is relating to the Standing Orders, as have already been highlighted by Honourable Members:

- (1) “Must apologise...”; this is not relating to any Sections of the Standing Orders;
- (2) “Be suspended for the rest of the term...”; it is not even relating to any Standing Orders.
- (3) “During the period of suspension...”; there is no relation to the Standing Orders; and
- (4) “The requirements of the above, that necessary enforcement measures must be imposed to ensure compliance...”

Where is the Standing Orders requirement in these recommendations that have been imposed by the Committee? Therefore, Madam Speaker, I reiterate that this Report is biased in its nature, and it should have never made its way into Parliament, in terms of the recommendations that are here.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- May I rise on a Point of Order, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Point of Order.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Madam Speaker, Standing Order 20. That is your additional power, Madam Speaker, given the argument that has been put to the House by the Honourable Aseri Radrodro, it is clear, Madam Speaker, it is very clear. I would like to refer you to the Minutes of the Meeting, that it is clear, Madam Speaker, that the Honourable Attorney-General, the complainant was there....

HON. M.R. VUNIWAQA.- May I rise on a Point of Order, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Point of Order.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Madam, I am on the floor.

HON. M.R. VUNIWAQA.- The Honourable Member has had his chance, he is making a fresh submission, that is not a point of order he is making.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- It is a point of order. My point of order, Madam Speaker, I seek your powers for you to suspend the whole proceedings, because there is plenty doubt, plenty procedures that were not followed, even the Honourable Attorney-General was present, only when the Honourable Karavaki raised the issue that he must not be there, then he withdrew. When he withdrew, Madam Speaker, he came again to become a witness. Madam Speaker, so the Committee itself before the Honourable Attorney-General moved out had already formed the opinion on what basis of the judgment.

Madam Speaker, in that, I ask your powers to suspend the whole proceedings and at least order a new investigation into this or take this report and appoint an Independent Legal Committee to scrutinise this.

(Chorus of interjections)

That is within your powers. You have those powers, Madam Speaker, and I would like a ruling from you.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. SPEAKER.- Under Standing Order 47(5) which states: “A motion being debated...”, I do not have the powers to rescind, only by leave of Parliament. Therefore, on that particular Point of Order, I will ask Parliament to vote on whether to suspend this motion or not.

The question is to suspend this sitting or suspend the motion.

HON. M.D. BULIVATU.- We can come back another day.

HON. SPEAKER.- That is the question and Parliament will vote on that motion. Open the vote.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- I rise on a Point of Order.

HON. SPEAKER.- I am asking the leave of Parliament to agree that we suspend or withdraw the motion. I would like to have it on record, to vote on it.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Madam Speaker, a Point of Order.

HON. SPEAKER.- Let me just complete this Point of Order. Parliament will vote to suspend and withdraw the motion or not, because I cannot do it on my own. Under Standing Order 47(5), I cannot do it, Parliament will have to do it. Open the vote.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Before that procedure, I wish to raise a Point of Order.

HON. SPEAKER.- Let me just complete this.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- I am standing here under Standing Order 18.

HON. SPEAKER.- I am aware of that. I have no powers under Standing Order 18 to rescind a recommendation or any motion that is approved by Parliament, not under Standing Order 18.

Question put.

<u>Votes cast:</u>		
Ayes	:	13
Noes	:	29
Not voted	:	8

Motion is defeated and therefore, I cannot suspend this motion.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Can I raise my Point of Order now, Madam Speaker?

HON. SPEAKER.- And your Point of Order?

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- My Point of Order is that under Standing Order 18, you have every power because in the end, this will be a reflection, not on the Parliament but in you, Madam Speaker. You have every power to maintain the decorum and the respectability of this House. You do not have to put it by vote. You can suspend this and seek further legal opinion or whatever and come back. That is my humble submission.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Under my powers under Standing Order 18, it is my role to ensure that Parliament maintains decorum but not to rescind or revoke any recommendation of a Select Committee or any motion approved by Parliament. I do not have that power, I am sorry. Under Standing Order 18, I do not have that power.

We will continue with the debate and I ask Honourable Salote Radrodro to have the floor.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise to make a contribution to the debate. First and foremost, I must state that I do not support it. May I draw our attention to the Summary of the 2016 Budget which states, “The future, a strong Fiji, a fair Fiji, a healthy Fiji.”

Madam Speaker, I find this report very unfair.

HON. GOVERNMENT MEMBER.- Why?

HON. OPPOSITION MEMBER.- Hey, come on!

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- This report, Madam Speaker, like the Honourable Aseri Radrodro had mentioned should not have come to this House. We look at this report, there were no Members of the Opposition in the Committee.

(Chorus of interjections from Government)

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- And there is no hurry. Why are we hurrying with this issue? Why are we rushing? The Chair could have informed you, Madam Speaker, that to defer the meeting to another time, to another day so that we can be fair in the make-up of the Committee. If the make-up of the Committee is so one sided like that, of course, the report will not be fair.

Madam Speaker, in democracy, a big pillar of democracy is justice and for the course of justice to prevail, we need time. Indeed, according to Standing Order 76, for any breach of privileges under this House, the penalties are stated very clearly there. Also, as alluded to by previous speakers, the recommendations as in this report does not align to any of the recommendations or what is stated under Standing Order 76.

Madam Speaker, we ask, are these recommendations fair, if they are not aligned to our rules of engagement in this House which is the Standing Orders? Where have the Committee got these recommendations from? If they cannot align the recommendations under Standing Order 76, then they should have suspended that Committee and make recommendations on their new recommendations.

Madam Speaker, you will agree that these recommendations are very severe and I must state here, that in trying to build our new democracy, since we have just come out of military dictatorship for the last nine years, we have been sent on overseas trips to go and observe how Parliament operate in other countries. That is the effort by this Parliament to be able to build our democracy.

Madam Speaker, we have seen from our experience, from the exchanges of Parliamentary Exchanges Programme that we have attended that the Speaker, if any of the Members behave disorderly in the House, the Member is sent out and it is up to the Speaker, it is one hour, it can be two hours, it can be half of the day.

In our last trip, I believe, Madam Speaker, it was under your leadership as the leader of the delegation to the Federal Parliament in Canberra.

HON. SPEAKER.- Order, please do not bring the Speaker into your debate.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- I recall, Madam Speaker, the Speaker of the Federal Parliament made a ruling that one of the Members was suspended for one whole day and even in the dinner that was hosted by the Honourable Speaker of the Federal Parliament in Australia, in our honour of the Fiji delegation, the Member that was suspended that day was also invited to the dinner.

HON. A.T. VADEI.- That is good heart, not black heart.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- That, Madam Speaker, reflects that democracy is not being personalised.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Well, not in Fiji's FijiFirst.

HON. A.T. VADEI.- Dirty hearts.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Madam Speaker, with a struggling democracy like ours, we need to separate personal issues from the real democratic issues and, Madam Speaker, this is the House for it. We cannot afford to be petty, we cannot afford to be very emotional and easily offended. We are here representing the people of Fiji, and we should be bold to say what we believe should be said in this House for the betterment of the country, if, indeed we are to achieve a "strong Fiji, a fair Fiji, and a healthy Fiji." If we are going to be petty and remain personal then our democracy unfortunately, Madam Speaker, will never progress.

In this House, Madam Speaker, the Honourable Ratu Naiqama Lalabalavu had been suspended along similar lines, you look at the recommendations in this report, is not much different from the one that was put against Ratu Naiqama.

And Madam Speaker, Honourable Draunidalo had apologised. She had apologised in her presentation this morning. I believe, Madam Speaker, that is adequate.

The second recommendation is to be suspended for the rest of the term of Parliament with immediate from 3rd June, 2016 is just unjustified. It is unjustified, Madam Speaker, and I beg of you that we look at these recommendations against Standing Order 76 where it is very clear. Why can Honourable Draunidalo, if she is indeed guilty, not be suspended for one or two hours? Why can she not be suspended for half a day or one day as stated in the Standing Orders?

Standing Orders is our rules of engagement in here, and we cannot just be creating or putting down recommendations that are outside the Standing Order, and maybe these recommendations, Madam Speaker, are just being made up by the Committee because that is what they wanted to do, just to penalise.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- They want to intimidate us. They want to penalise us. They want to punish us.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Therefore, Madam Speaker, I recommend that these recommendations as stated in this report be taken back to another independent Committee, a Disciplinary Committee that could look at these issues more objectively.

Madam Speaker, I must also raise here my concern, because like as already been mentioned, this report should not have made its way here, not at all and we have taken up the whole of this morning, looking at this issue which should not have come here at all, when we should be using this day to raise questions to the Government's performance, to scrutinise Government's performance because it is

Opposition day and we have used up this day just looking at this issue which should not have come here in the first place. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now give the floor to the Honourable Nabulivou.

HON. A. NABULIVOU.- Thank you. Madam Speaker, I rise to add my contribution in support of the motion today.

Madam Speaker, I also wish to speak today on the most unfortunate words spoken by the Honourable Tupou Draunidalo in respect of my esteemed colleague, the Honourable Mahendra Reddy. First, let it be said, I am proud to have as a colleague such a distinguished Fijian as Honourable Reddy. It is an absolute disgrace that we have to waste the time of Parliament in dealing with gross breach of privilege committed by the Honourable Member.

Many of us witnessed or heard the outburst of the Honourable Tupou. If she had any common sense, she would have immediately withdrawn her remarks and apologised both to Honourable Reddy and to this House. Let us be clear, Honourable Reddy did not use the expression “dumb Fijian” in any sense to describe Honourable Tupou or anyone else.

We are all Fijians, all of us who call Fiji our home, some of us are brighter than others, and some are less so. That biological fact does not permit any of us to abuse others less fortunate. That is something I strongly believe and so does Honourable Reddy. That is why I belong to FijiFirst. FijiFirst is the party for every Fijian and not just those privileged by accidents of birth. Of course being born into privilege gives no guarantee that a person will be intelligent or a good citizen. That is a self-evident truth for all of us to see.

It is not clear from the objectionable spray given by the Honourable Tupou whether she was using the word “dumb” adjectively in relation to the word “Fijian” in the *Kaiviti* sense, with specific reference to herself or in some fictitious general slur against all *Kaiviti*. What is clear is that to introduce such as inflammatory note into public debate is a calculated attempt to undermine all that we have worked for in bringing Fiji back from the brink of disaster.

Those utterances are out of order under Standing Order 62 and should be dealt with accordingly. I am surprised Honourable Tupou seems unable or unwilling to understand that. I pose the question: did she say what she said out of mischief or sheer stupidity or did she allow someone else to put her up to it?

I turn now to the offensive words used against Honourable Reddy. Madam Speaker, we should all know coarse language of that kind should never be used in this House. Those words are a flagrant breach of Standing Order 62. The use of this type of language by Honourable Members brings this House into disrepute. It is the language of the drunken bar room brawler and not something which should come from the lips of a parliamentarian.

When I told my wife Luisa, she was astonished and said to me, “She is not a lady. No decent woman would speak like that. Why do you let her do it?” Yes, Madam Speaker, my good wife is absolutely right on the mark. We have a duty to stop Honourable Tupou and to discourage others from following suit. No decent and right thinking Member could possibly endorse that behaviour of Honourable Tupou. If they do, they stand condemn as well. But let me be fair, I urge the Honourable Tupou to immediately withdraw regrettable remarks against Honourable Reddy and apologise. Let us be charitable and give her the opportunity to repent. If she does not take the opportunity, how clear is that?

Madam Speaker, if the Honourable Tupou does not immediately see the light and repent, then we must deal with her firmly to protect the reputation of this Parliament.

Madam Speaker, I know you are fiercely independent in the exercise of your office, and I do not presume to demand how you should exercise your office. However, I might respectfully say so, it occurs to me there are two possible ways forward.

On the one hand, you might care to name the Honourable Tupou and proceed to deal with her by way of a motion for suspension, for a relatively short period of time. On the other hand, and this may be best, it lies in the hands of Parliament itself to suspend Standing Orders and provide for the discipline of Members under Section 73 of the Constitution and perhaps in stronger terms than presently laid down in the Standing Orders.

The harsh reality is that Honourable Tupou has openly defied the Standing Order and openly denied your authority, Madam Speaker.

It is time for this House to say “Honourable Tupou, do the right thing or go from this place and if you do not go, we will move you.” Madam Speaker, thank you so much.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Point of Order.

HON. SPEAKER.- Point of Order.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Standing Order 20. Madam Speaker, I seek your additional powers, given the contribution given by the Honourable Nabulivou that now they have given the option for the Honourable Draunidalo to withdraw and they do not proceed with the motion, but the prayers of the motion is quite specific. If that is the case, Madam Speaker, can the Government amend the motion because it is inconsistent now? I need a ruling on that, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- May I seek clarification on this?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, just clarify Honourable Bulitavu knows that if you want to move an amendment to the motion, it must be done by the person who wants to move it, not some third party who is interpreting a statement by another person. You know that as a lawyer.

So, Madam Speaker, that point of order of his is not valid. Honourable Nabulivou has made a statement, that is his contribution to the motion. If there is something that he has said that Honourable Bulitavu agrees with, it does not mean Honourable Bulitavu suddenly stands up and says, “let us grab hold of those three sentences that he said and let us move an amendment to the motion.” We are simply talking on the motion and that is his contribution. We will now move on to the next person.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. I cannot make a ruling on the content of a speech, only on the procedure, but thank you for that input. I now give the floor to the Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

HON. P. SINGH.- Madam Speaker, on a Point of Order.

HON. SPEAKER.- Point of Order.

HON. P. SINGH.- I refer to the response by the Honourable Nabulivou, there were inferences drawn as “stupidity” and he called Tupou. It should be, ‘Honourable Tupou Draunidalo’ when we make references to Members of this House.

HON. A. NABULIVOU.- I am sorry, Madam Speaker, it should be Honourable Tupou.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now give the floor to the Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

HON. RO T.V. KEPÄ.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. I thank the Honourable Members from this side of the House for their contributions to this motion before the House. What we see before us here is dictatorship at its lowest. We see this in the 2013 Constitution, where it also deals with Chapter 10 on Immunity - absolute and unconditional immunity given to the other side and when we see it also in the Standing Orders. From 5th December, 2006 the *coup* took place and the main players are across the room. Over 200 Decrees were put into place to tighten their hold of the country through this dictatorship and we still see it in this House even up until today. This has been evident ...

(Hon. Member interjects)

HON. RO T.V. KEPÄ.- ... would we not have the fast tracking of Bills under Standing Order 51. Up until now, 59 Bills have been fast tracked from 2014 to 2016 and we have three very important Bills this week, which are far reaching and encompassing everyone in Fiji:

- i) Prevention of Bribery (Amendment) Bill;
- ii) FICAC (Amendment) Bill; and
- iii) Passports (Amendment) Bill.

And some of these have their genesis in 2007 right after the *coup* that the Honourable Prime Minister led and we see this dictatorship carried out from that time until today.

HON. GOVERNMENT MEMBER.- Not dictatorship, it is leadership.

HON. RO T.V. KEPÄ.- Dictatorship, Madam Speaker.

Right now, we are deliberating on this case and we know what the foregone conclusion is. It is the tyranny of the majority, where they believe that might is right.

The reality in this, Madam Speaker, is that you know most days we are provoked here in Parliament and Honourable Reddy, who is sitting opposite there uses his position to ridicule our side, but we rise above it, Madam Speaker. We know he has issues, he is suffering, he is stressed, everyday we hear comments and I see the Honourable Prime Minister also making gestures on the other side, just continue Honourable Prime Minister! It is always nice to see you back here and making gestures.

(Laughter)

Madam Speaker, Honourable Reddy talks down to people. He picks on me and I enjoy it. You know I have a very broad back. So, whatever he says, he ridicules us, denigrates us, speaks in a very condescending manner to us, we take it. No one takes an offence at it. So, as soon as someone from this side says something, you know people on the other side rise up because they can give it, Madam Speaker, but they cannot take it. That is always the case from the other side. We are used to this because dictatorship again, Madam Speaker, at its worst.

The words used in this case, “fool, native, idiot”, we hear this every day, Madam Speaker, on the school playground, where the children are calling each other names, pushing each other and saying, “Oh, you silly fool, *lialia, ulukau*”, but that is all part of the school playground where children are allowed to be normal human beings and no offence is taken. But here, the Parliamentary Privileges that used to be given in the past, we do not have that in this Parliament. We can use it outside of the House but it cannot be used here. So, something is wrong, Madam Speaker.

Here, we are looking at a term of over two years. There has been a gross reaction, gross injustice over the top, it is inhumane. In Standing Order 76, what is wrong with the three days, the seven days or the 28 days? Even in the report from this Committee, we saw that the Secretariat was asked to cite some examples from various jurisdictions and they cited some examples. They were very good examples, but then we see on Page 21, the Honourable Seruiratu goes right in there and comes up with this very severe punishment, which we see here before us today and which we are deliberating.

Madam Speaker, we heard in this House that they are relying a lot on what was said on the social media. We have no control of the social media. Even the other side of the House, some of the things they say on social media we do not take offence at. We know it is part of social media and it is part of the environment of the day. So, they are quoting from social media, we have no response to social media because it is up to people what they say on social media.

We heard in this sitting, Madam Speaker, where they are talking about the peacemakers, “Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called sons of God; that came from the other side. And also part of that same beatitude is “Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.”

Madam Speaker, all we want from this side is justice, fairness and mercy. This is the Fiji we want, not the Fiji that the Honourable Prime Minister has been talking about, where dictatorship will again win today, if we continue with this inside Parliament as they have been doing all along and democracy will surely be lost. I do not support this motion.

HON. SPEAKER.- I now give the floor to the Honourable Veena Bhatnagar.

HON. V.K. BHATNAGAR.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. Honestly speaking, I never wished to speak against the lady, but the seriousness and the nature of the offence has compelled me to speak. The reality is that the Honourable Members on the other side of the House are overlooking the seriousness of the offence by saying that this motion should not have been brought to this House. Asking for forgiveness means you have sinned and asking for lesser punishment means, you do need to be punished because you did wrong.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. V.K. BHATNAGAR.- Madam Speaker, time and again, your good-self have reminded the Honourable Members of this House to refrain from using such words that might be offensive or derogatory, but unfortunately some Honourable Members have immense pleasure in calling people “fools” and “idiots”. Well, as you mentioned, Madam Speaker, if the Member who is accorded these remarks does not oppose, then the matter rests, but, Madam Speaker, when due to wrong interpretations, wrong assumptions, wrong presumptions, wrong signals are sent out to the general public, then the matter becomes a crisis.

As in the case of Honourable Roko Tupou Draunidalo's comments in reply to an objection by the Honourable Attorney-General, first she calls Honourable Dr. Mahendra Reddy "a fool" and when objected to by Honourable Attorney-General, she calls him, "an idiot". All tolerated, but no, Madam Speaker, we are not going to tolerate, zero tolerance if one tries to instigate or prompt racial discrimination or provoke disharmony. We are not tolerating that.

On one hand, our Honourable Prime Minister is trying so hard to keep the beloved people of our nation united, and on the other, Members through their dishonourable utterances, to prompt racism. It is not about a small word offending someone, as Honourable Semesa Karavaki had mentioned. Words which insight racism are not small, Madam Speaker, they are not small, no parliamentary privilege is larger than the unity of our people.

Madam Speaker, Honourable Draunidalo said and I quote, "and he provided worse in his speech, calling us dumb natives, you idiot." Now anyone listening to this statement will definitely get sentiment and offended but the fact is, that Honourable Dr. Mahendra Reddy never made any such comments. Now people who have gone viral on social media did not know that Honourable Dr. Mahendra Reddy had never uttered the words "dumb natives", but as a result of Honourable Roko Tupou Draunidalo's wrong assumptions, presumptions and interpretations, it has prompted the members of the public to post dirty and unfavourable comments in the social media and which has prompted and given rise to a feeling of hatred and racial discrimination.

This is what transpired after her comments, Madam Speaker. This is Madam Speaker, morally, socially and culturally offensive. Why can the Opposition Members not see that or understand the seriousness of the comments made by Honourable Roko Tupou Draunidalo? Why can they not see what transpired after the comments were made? Instigating chaos, prompting hatred is an offence, Madam Speaker, we cannot and do not condone such behaviour.

Under Standing Order 62(4), Madam Speaker, it says and I quote:

"It is out of order for a member, when speaking, to use –

- (a) offensive words against Parliament or another member;
- (b) treasonable words;
- (c) seditious words; or
- (d) words that are likely to promote or provoke feelings of ill-will or hostility between communities or ethnic groups within Fiji".

Now, Madam Speaker, it is evident from their posts on the social media that Honourable Roko Tupou Draunidalo's wrong accusations, that Honourable Dr. Mahendra Reddy had called them "dumb natives" has prompted and provoked feelings of ill-will or hostility amongst people.

In conclusion, Madam Speaker, I strongly believe this nature of offence calls for serious disciplinary action. I support the motion. Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now give the floor to the Honourable Dulakiverata.

HON. J. DULAKIVERATA.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. I want to make a very short contribution to the motion before the House. Madam Speaker, if this motion is going to go through today, it will be a sad day for democracy and a sad day for this country.

Few days ago, Madam Speaker, unfortunately the Honourable Prime Minister was not here, I mentioned that his side of the House needs some counselling to adhere or to practice the democratic process that this Parliament should be doing.

Madam Speaker, you have all the submissions by both sides of the House. We have had enlightened them from all our legal brains in this Honourable House. Madam Speaker, we have found from the reports that there are flaws in the report.

The Standing Order, Madam Speaker, is our Bible in this House. Anything that is done or we do in this House should be referred or should be in accordance with the provisions of the Standing Orders. So the recommendations by the Committee, Madam Speaker, as had been explained by my colleagues on this side of the House does not or did not reflect the provisions of these Standing Orders. Therefore, Madam Speaker, I said that this Standing Order does not support this report, it is not supposed to be used as a basis of the decision to be made in this House today.

My colleague on this House, Madam Speaker, suggested that this thing should be moved forward to another day for discussion.

Madam Speaker, time is the greatest healer. We are engaging in a discussion for something that is not very clear, the bases of the things that were said in this House. There have been a lot of misconceptions, all these things, Madam Speaker, need to be cleared and verified.

Madam Speaker, I plead with you that you have the power, this is your House, that the decision should be suspended, there should be another investigation, it should be carried out so that it is aligned to the Standing Orders.

Madam Speaker, I think all had been said, you have the benefit of hearing from all the submissions then again, I plead with you, that you would make the right decision. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Point of Order!

HON. RO T.V. KEPÄ.- I am always happy to see the Honourable Prime Minister back here in the House. He was making some comments on my leadership, Madam Speaker. What I want to state here is that, I did not have to plot or to scheme or to plan to bring a Government down to grab on to leadership role, Madam Speaker.

HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- Thank you.

HON. RO T.V. KEPÄ.- I have rightfully taken up my mantle of leadership, whether it is in the *Vanua*, or in the Opposition or elsewhere, through legal means. I have never had to do it through an illegal take over. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

(Chorus of interjection)

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. The issue can be brought as a substantive motion but not a point of order.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Point of Order.

HON. P. SINGH.- Madam Speaker, I wish to move an amendment to the motion.

Madam Speaker, without prejudice, I beg to move:

That a motion to amend the motion before the House so that Honourable Tupou Draunidalo:

- (1) Immediately withdraw the words ‘dumb natives’.
- (2) Apologises to the Honourable Minister, Dr. Mahendra Reddy, the House and to Fiji.
- (3) A suspension from the House for a term that is allowed within Standing Orders 76 of the Standing Order.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Madam Speaker, I beg to second the motion.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. We will consider this amendment and I repeat, in accordance with Standing Order 104, without prejudice I move a motion to amend the motion before the House and this is their amendment that has been presented so that the Honourable Tupou Draunidalo:

- (1) Immediately withdraw the words ‘dumb natives’.
- (2) Apologises to the Honourable Minister, Dr. Mahendra Reddy, the House and to Fiji.
- (3) A suspension from the House for a term that is allowed within Standing Orders 76 and to the maximum of 28 days.

This amendment is open for debate before we put it to vote. Honourable Nawaikula.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- I feel that this amendment is very, very important to bring respectability to this House, to make it consistent with the values of other Parliaments. As I say before, Standing Order 134, can give us a guide, that was in relation to disorderly conduct and 3 days, or 7 days, or 28 days. At the same time, Standing Order 134, which gives the power to the Privileges Committee does not say anything. Certainly, it does not say that they come here and recommend to the House that any Honourable Member is to be suspended for eternal. So we must take the middle line, what is reasonable in relation to an offence, like we say, and this will restore that, and like I said, Madam Speaker, if you do not do this, the loser will be democracy, the other side of the House is not the face of democracy, in this case, you the Speaker, is that face, so it is important to maintain that fairness.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. We are still in debate on this amendment, are there any other input? Honourable Bulitavu.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. I concur with my Honourable friend. We are all Honourable Members here. We are all representatives of the people and, Madam Speaker, we are the leaders of this nation. We should not consider this Parliament to come and eliminate our political opponents. We have to think like a leader and if the Honourable Member of this House is willing to allow this House to do whatever is being prayed according to the amendment motion, then we, as Honourable Members, must remove our political bias and look on the privileges and see how we can uphold the dignity of this House, unless we have other motives.

Madam Speaker, I know Government will be considering why did the Opposition not come to the meeting to raise this, but again that debate has already proceeded and we are here now, given that Honourable Members of the other side of the House have shared their opinion also that they are able to give and take.

As Honourable Members, even Madam, this particular motion will help you, Madam Speaker. You are the sole controller of this House and you hold the foundation, the cornerstone of this House and

this is one motion that you lift today, the nation of Fiji and the people will know that our leaders can even dialogue, and even talk and agree on certain things, although they have different political ideologists.

Given that, Madam Speaker, I would like to turn your attention to Standing Order 75 (1), in that regards, it is very important to confirm whatever suspension that will be given to be handed down. It has to be in accordance with the Standing Orders and in Standing Order 75(1), it specifically states and let me read,

“The Speaker may order any member whose conduct is highly disorderly or repeatedly violates the Standing Orders to withdraw immediately from Parliament for a period of time that the Speaker decides, being no more than the remainder of that sitting day.”

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Speak on the motion.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- The authority is with you, Madam Speaker.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Point of Order, Madam Speaker. Honourable Prem Singh has moved an amendment to the motion that is on the floor and, Madam Speaker, you have allowed the amendment to be now debated upon and the Honourable Members have been asked to speak on the amendment to the motion. Honourable Bulitavu is talking about your powers and your ability to be able to change matters, that is not the issue. The issue on the floor is whether he is supporting the amendment made by Honourable Prem Singh or not, which he should restrict his statement to.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. You are quite right, please restrict your statements.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- I will restrict myself to the motion. Madam Speaker, this side of the House, I stand to support the amendment to the motion for the benefit of this august House and the benefit of the nation.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. The Honourable Ratu Kiliraki.

HON. RATU K. KILIRAKI.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. I support the amendment motion that is before the House. The mandate of the nation through this Parliament is through your prayers every morning, Madam Speaker, and if I can relate to part of the prayers, is that our prayers as Members of Parliament mandated by God to deliberate on issues of the nation to be just and fair. Justice and fairness and that is the prayer that we pray every morning from you, Madam Speaker.

We must embrace that and we must dwell on that for this House to be credible to the people of the nation that mandated us to be in this House and through this amendment to the motion, because I have difficulty in viewing the report in regards to Standing Order 118 on the quorum and the quorum of the meeting of the Privileges Committee, in respect to Standing Order 127, the actions of the Opposition through the advice of the Leader of Opposition and I have difficulty in that. So for justice and fairness, I support the amendment motion so that this House is reflected to be just and fair. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. I give the floor to the Honourable Viliame Gavoka.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Thank you, Madam Speaker, the amendment to the motion, I believe is timely. We have had a whole day of debating this issue, I think we have covered many grounds, I think we have learnt from it in a big way,

I think at the end of all these, the decorum that we need in this Chamber will be assured. What has been said, has been said. It is time for us leaders to compromise, that is why we are sent here to reason with each other, and it is time to show compassion.

We will be leaving here, it is a Friday. Let the dialogue across the country, over the weekend, a positive one. Let people see that their leaders in Parliament, thrashed out an issue openly and managed to come to a compromise; a compromise that does justice to this House; a compromise that is fair; a compromise that means that there is goodwill in this country. It is all been said, Madam Speaker, let us show compassion.

The President of NFP is willing to apologise to the Honourable Reddy, to the nation, and will take a 28 days suspension from Parliament. That is a great compromise, came out of people of goodwill, let us show people that we have goodwill. I would urge everyone please, show the compassion, vote on this and let us end this and come back in the next sitting, full of goodwill to do the business of what the people have sent us to this Parliament to do. Thank you Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you, Honourable Leader of Opposition.

HON. RO T.V. KEPA.- Madam Speaker, I rise in support of the amendment to this motion. As had alluded to earlier from the Honourable Rika, where he had alluded to the peacemakers. Today, Madam Speaker, we are mindful of the words, “whatever you sow you shall reap” and we are looking for mercy most of the time. “And blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy.” Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you, Honourable Dulakiverata.

HON. J. DULAKIVERATA.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to support the amendment motion. I know the other side of the House has the mandate, they have the number. When you have the number, you can do anything but it must be used responsibly.

I plead with the other side of the House that if we agree to this amendment motion, this will be the new beginning for this Parliament and for this country. I know they have agreed but the Bible says, “If you humble yourself, God will exalt you”. If you exalt yourself, God is going to humble you.

(Laughter)

So, Madam Speaker, I support the amendment motion and I ask, especially the Honourable Prime Minister, to agree to this amendment, thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. I give the floor to the Honourable Salote Radrodro.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise to support the amendment motion, based on the Standing Orders and also based on our Prayer, “that we debate our nation’s affairs and pass laws for the betterment and welfare of all Fijians. Let God guide us in our deliberations and grant us the wisdom to do what is just and fair.” and I believe Madam Speaker, the revised motion is just and fair and I commend it and support it, Madam Speaker. Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- There being no other input and just before we put this to the vote, I would like to remind Members that it is a general rule in Parliament that the Speaker is never brought into the debate and the Speaker has been brought to the debate so many times and quoting from the Standing Orders and giving me extra powers, which I really do not have.

We are considering both the amendment and the substantive motions together, you will have your right of reply and then I will ask the Leader of Government for his right of reply.

Before you give your right of reply on the amendment, there are others that would like to speak on the substantive motion because we will be dealing with both amendments and substantive motion together, and therefore, is there any other input to the substantive motion or the amendment? Thank you, Honourable Attorney General.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to speak in support of the motion by the Honourable Leader of Government. Madam Speaker, what is happening in this House today is most unfortunate. It is most unfortunate that we have spent, as rightly pointed out by the other side, half of the day today when it is the Opposition's day to debate a matter that should have never arisen in this House.

Madam Speaker, if you can see the consistency, the reality is that this side of the House, including that side, has always taken a principled position. There have been attributions to try and demean what has been decided by the Privileges Committee as saying that we are unable to handle comments. Madam Speaker, we get it every day: "fool, idiot", no, that is not the issue here; "fool, "idiots" gets withdrawn; wrongly accused of saying that I am denigrating cane farmers; I did not, please read the *Hansard*; Prime Minister gets called "dictatorship"; Honourable Bilitavu told him, that he cannot run Government; Honourable Tikoca and I have our sparring matches and I think I make his life interesting.

Madam Speaker, the reality is, we have far worse things said, and I can tell you from this side of the House, we have always been very principled on this. The issue on Honourable Lalabalavu has been raised because it denigrated Parliament. It denigrated your office, that was the subject matter. I am not bringing it into the debate, Madam Speaker, but that was subject matter.

In this particular instance, as all the Members of this side of the House has said, and even if you read the verbatim, from the proceedings from yesterday, they said, "alright, that was said." Wherever said, the "idiot" was said to me, everyone knew the fool was said to Honourable Dr. Reddy, whether it was said to me or to Dr. Reddy it does not matter, but the fact that here you have a stereotyping and a conjecture being made and a concoction in fact, Madam Speaker, it is a concoction because he never said it. It was imputed that he meant that all native people are dumb, the word 'native' in itself has very negative connotations.

Native was used in the 18th century, today when you say native, it is seen as barbaric or people who are uncivilised, that is the connotation and we have a very fanciful expansion of the definition of the word 'native' that Honourable Singh is now a native, that he is indigenous. I am sure Honourable Nawaikula is not going to take him in his membership when he goes to New York. This is the kind of fanciful explanation that was given, Madam Speaker, we have a history.

When Doctor Bavadra was appointed Prime Minister of this country, who I have a lot of respect for, I have his books and all sorts of things. The removal of his government, after four weeks, they said, "Reddy the captain, Bavadra the boat" or whatever it was, implying it was a Indian and Fijian thing at

those times they called it. When Mahendra Chaudhry was the Prime Minister, you see the documentaries been produced by USP. You have senators from the then SVT Government and I can quote now, they were saying at Civic Centre, “Who is the head of legislature? “Chaudhry”, “Kaidia”, “Hindu”, “Tevoro”. Who is the head of the Judiciary? “Reddy”, “Kaidia”, “Hindu”, “Tevoro”. It is documented, that is the kind of background we have come from, Madam Speaker, where you had removal of governments justified on the basis of ethnicity. This is why Madam Speaker, it is critically important that Members of this House to which everyone is listening to, must carry a particular standard, this is why it is in the Standing Order 62.

(Honourable Member interjects)

Madam Speaker, that is why it is critical and this is part and parcel of what one may call the growing pains, the growing pains of having a modern, fair and just society. This is part of it, and the growing pains are more for those people who do not comply with the new standards. That is what we want to inculcate. We do not want the young children who the Honourable Dr. Mahendra Reddy goes and talks to and addresses to think, “This guy called me a ‘dumb native’”.

We have heard this morning, we have taken time, some have questioned whether the records are accurate, some have questioned whether the transcript is accurate, some have questioned whether there was a quorum, et cetera, Honourable Draunidalo is now imputing punctuation marks, it was a question, et cetera. However, Madam Speaker, the reality is, as Honourable Vuniwaqa had said, what was heard on *Fiji One* was exactly what was recorded in the *Hansard*. That is what the Fijian people heard. That is the issue, Madam Speaker. It is a principled position.

The Honourable Ratu Tikoca last year said that I said; “*iTaukei* people” three days after when we were in the Committee in this House when I did the Darth Vader impersonation and everyone laughed, including him. However, three days later, he came back and said that I had said that all *iTaukei* people are monkeys.

HON. RATU I.D. TIKOCA.- May I rise on a Point of Order, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Point of Order, Honourable Ratu Tikoca.

HON. RATU I.D. TIKOCA.- I am still left to discuss with him in regards to that action. Action is louder than what is said. You did that in front of everyone and people, you acted a monkey referring to native people, that is what you did.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. RATU I.D. TIKOCA.- Actions speak louder than words! That is it. *Kemudrau talega drau wili kina* (both of you are also included).

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, I cannot make a ruling on that particular issue because the issue does not qualify the other Point of Order process. Therefore, Honourable Attorney-General, you may continue with the debate and not to refer to this issue.

HON. A SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, my point that I was trying to raise that we take a principle position and, Madam Speaker, because people from the other side have taken their personal

experiences, I also want to take my personal experiences from this Parliament. When I went home last night and this morning, my wife asked me, “Did Mr. Reddy call indigenous people ‘dumb’, because that is what she read in social media? That, in fact, the issue that I am referring to has given rise to the issue I have just raised. Does that mean by imputing that, “he imputed that” or “she imputed that”? Am I calling my lovely wife that I love so much, “a monkey”? Are my children half monkeys? Is my father in law a monkey? Of course, not! This is the principle that we take on this side of the House, Madam Speaker, it is a very serious matter. It is a very serious matter, Madam Speaker!

(Acclamation)

HON. GOVT MEMBER.- *Vinaka.*

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, the Honourable Members on the other side, including Honourable Draunidalo, was given the opportunity to present her side, even if you read the verbatim. And even I said that and I will read from Page 11 of the Privileges Committee Verbatim Report, I quote:

“Mr. Chairman, if she said that, maybe in a moment a rush of the blood to the head and suddenly she saw this happening, if she was an honourable person, she would have immediately probably gone to the media or *Facebook* page and said, “look, it is my mistake, that was my own deduction, Hon. Reddy did not say that.”

I even said that, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, it goes to show that there is no remorse, there is justification. The Honourable Prem Singh today has been declared a native, just to justify that.

Madam Speaker, the point is, we are taking a principled position. We ask this Honourable House that in order for us to have a new way of thinking in which people are treated equally, people are treated fairly, where we have governments and politicians focussing on policies; talking about poverty, inclusion and addressing issues in maritime areas, not at the click of a button and every statement we make that we suddenly think about ethnicity. That, Madam Speaker, is what we are saying because that has been our history. We have had people in the past Parliaments where they have said Indo-Fijians are like para-grass. The then Prime Minister said that that is the right of expression. Our Prime Minister would never tolerate any one of us making any stereotypical remarks of anyone, even the Eskimos, because we do not believe in that, it is a principled position. We need to take the policy-decision, and Madam Speaker, this is why it is critically important for us to stay focussed.

I mean, we have had issues where we talked about Tunisia. The history of Tunisia, Madam Speaker is completely different. I would even suggest our revolution began in 2007, that is when it began, Madam Speaker. The inequality, the poverty, the inability of political parties to participate in the Elections was a hallmark of the Tunisian Government, but that is not happening in Fiji, Madam Speaker. The inequality has decreased, the rate of poverty has decreased, Madam Speaker, we have free Elections, invalid votes (I believe) are below 1 percent, and no political parties are stopped from participating. These are the kind of hallmarks of what is happening in Fiji, that did not happen in Tunisia, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, the reality is this; we have to be extremely vigilant in protecting the sanctity of this Parliament. We have to be extremely vigilant in not allowing communal flames to take hold again because we want our younger people to have a brighter future. We spent three or four days in this House talking about climate change, but climate change does not recognise ethnicity! Tropical cyclone does not

recognise ethnicity! It is simply something that is a phenomenon that we all have to deal with as citizens of this country, and to reduce everything to that way of thinking, Madam Speaker, is a tragedy, and we must stop that tragedy from happening, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, this is why we support this motion because this motion is an indication of the manner and how we believe this is such a severe matter that needs to be dealt with severely. It is not a small matter that we are making a big deal. There were so many comments coming from the other side about being incompetent, et cetera, we take it on the chin all the time. Dr. Reddy takes it on the chin all the time. The Honourable Leawere says that he is not a good Minister. I get called all sorts of comments. The Honourable Prime Minister gets called on all sorts of comments. We take it, it is to the person, it is not to the institution, it is not to a group of people, that is the difference. Such attitude, not only homogenise and creates a monolith of people, it also does not recognise the inequalities within our supposed homogenous group. That, Madam Speaker, is a reality.

Madam Speaker, I would like to end by saying that it is not an easy issue. It is not something that we say, “Let us deal with it. Get the Honourable Draunidalo suspended”. No! It is with a lot of angst that we are dealing with this situation, Madam Speaker, but it is a matter of principle, and one hopes that the other side sees the need to establish a principled approach to our governance. It is very very important, Madam Speaker, not scoring cheap political points.

On that note, Madam Speaker, I would like to support the motion. It is an important issue. As highlighted by the Honourable Leader of the House, it has taken a life of its own. It is now drawing all other issues. This is why we have said that it needs to be dealt with quickly, decisively and a very strong leadership that needs to be shown by this Parliament.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. RATU I.D. TIKOCA.- Madam Speaker, I want to make a statement on the same issue. I have not had my chance.

Madam Speaker, first and foremost, on the issues of the amendment motion, the latest Speaker had just scored the biggest strategy. I would like to remind him, “When you try to lead this country, you must have the sense of balance.

Now, you are trying to emphasise calling us as one name ‘Fijian’”. The new ‘Fijian’ that you two are creating does not have an address, it does not have a culture, it does not have a tradition, it does only what you people are amplifying in Parliament today, that it is not promoting democracy, it is not humble and that it is not actually providing a balance.

When you talk about the biggest tragedy, the biggest tragedy is when you find from all the native people, you are promoting your own kind in almost all CEO appointments in this country. Where is the balance? Where is the balance? That is tragedy.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- What are you talking about?

HON. RATU I.D. TIKOCA.- I am talking about exactly that. You can count the number of CEOs and all those people that we are providing support to, which is not balanced?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- What is not balanced?

HON. RATU I.D. TIKOCA.- Exactly that!

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. RATU I.D. TIKOCA.- Exactly that! You are promoting your own kind in positions.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. RATU I.D. TIKOCA.- This is the thing that I am saying.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, may I rise on a Point of Order.

HON. SPEAKER.- A Point of Order.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- A Point of Order, Madam Speaker. The Honourable Ratu Tikoca said that I am promoting people of my own kind. That is making a communal reference. The Standing Orders does not allow for a Member of the House to make communal references. What is my own kind? People from Nadroga? Am I a Muslim? Because I am Fijian? Because I went to Marist? What is my own kind? You tell me, what is my own kind?

HON. RATU I.D. TIKOCA.- You want me to stand up?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Yes.

HON. RATU I.D. TIKOCA.- It is on record, and we can see with our own eyes, it is all deployed.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- What is ‘my own kind’, Madam Speaker? That is the issue, because...

HON. RATU I.D. TIKOCA.- The issue remains...

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- ...he needs to be reprimanded for saying it is ‘my own kind’.

HON. RATU I.D. TIKOCA.- That is why the natives are worried about your reference.

HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- What natives? Whose worried?

HON. RATU I.D. TIKOCA.- I’m talking about the people that we represent.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- (Inaudible)

HON. RATU I.D. TIKOCA.- No, not at all. I am saying that we are all Fijians, but what type of Fijian are we promoting?

HON. SPEAKER.- Order!

HON. RATU I.D. TIKOCA.- That is the old problem of this House that....

HON. SPEAKER.- Order!

Honourable Member, you are going over and above what we are discussing right now. We are discussing the motion, the support or non-support of the amendment to the motion, and I request that you restrict yourself to those issues.

HON. RATU I.D. TIKOCA.- Madam Speaker, I will talk on the amendment motion. It is really based on us finding a base place for us to make a decision that is honourable, that befits this House and also the implication of that to the people listening to us as we represent them.

What is important is, not the way we are debating things. What is important to see is what has been alluded to by the people who are requesting a balanced mind.

(Hon. Member interjects)

HON. RATU I.D. TIKOCA.- Remember, Honourable Member, I can refer to when you want to throw a bottle at me, that is threat. That is a threat. And I did not want to do and challenge you on that, that is a threat. When you acted to me like a monkey, I did not.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- (Inaudible)

HON. RATU I.D. TIKOCA.- No, no! That is in reference to what has been said. That is why I said, 'actions speaks louder than what you have said.'

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Three days later, three days later!

HON. RATU I.D. TIKOCA.- So, Madam Speaker, I only want to beg the whole House to remember that if you want to take this country forward on democracy, I am begging us all, to see it from a very mature view as we are supposed to be showing maturity to the people whom we represent.

I support the smendment Motion. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. There being no other input, I now give the floor to the Honourable Prem Singh for his right of reply.

HON. P. SINGH.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. I wish to reply to the amendment clause that I moved.

Madam Speaker, except this time, I rise with the heaviest of heart and implore upon the Honourable Prime Minister and his team, and in fact the Government side, that, Madam Speaker, you will note that the rules governing this House is our Standing Orders.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Hear, hear!

HON. P. SINGH.- All I am seeking, Madam Speaker, and as the Honourable Attorney-General has rightly alluded to, that we have to initiate policies. Any policy decision, Madam Speaker, should be within the ambits of the law, and our law is the Standing Orders.

Madam Speaker, the merits and the demerits of the argument from the Honourable Leader of the Government side, it can only be brought to light in its own perspective if we view the footage, because the footage will show the truth - what has been said and what has been reported.

Madam Speaker, that aside, be that as it may, I implore this House that we should not depart from the standard procedures laid out in the Standing Orders. So, the prayers that I have are substituted on the original motion is that, that we dish out the punishment as a matter of policy within the law, and the law is very clear under Section 76 of the Standing Orders. We cannot go outside of this, Madam Speaker. What I am suggesting is that, by doing this we are putting to rest all the concerns that have been raised by way of Point of Orders and the procedural matters regarding the Committee itself.

So, Madam Speaker, I implore you that we must remain within the ambits of the Standing Orders and nowhere in the Standing Orders says that a Member can be suspended for the rest of the term of Parliament, and in fact, Madam Speaker, it is not a suspension, it is an expulsion. I do not think that the gravity of the offence can even suggest that we go that far.

I reiterate, Madam Speaker, that the Standing Orders is very clear and we must keep ourselves within the confines of the law, and this will go a long way. The policy decisions that the Honourable Attorney-General talked about, yes, we agree that there should be a standard, but the tariff cannot be anything more than what is prescribed in the law. We may have erred once, but once we do it again, and this is what we are trying to bring to the House and we implore the other side of the House that the amendment is the best way to solve the impasse.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. OPPOSITION MEMBERS.- Hear, hear!

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. I would just like to remind the Honourable Member that I can only accept the first two amendments, Amendment 1 and Amendment 2, but Amendment 3 which is, "...a suspension from the House for a term that is allowed...", the words "a term that is allowed" is unclear. So, I am not able to accept that third amendment.

HON. P. SINGH.- (Inaudible)

HON. SPEAKER.- The amendments that you have proposed are three; Amendment 1 is to immediately withdraw the words 'dumb native'; Amendment 2 is clear – apologises to the Honourable Minister Reddy, the House and Fiji; but Amendment 3 is unclear – suspension from the House for a term that is allowed within the Standing Orders, the term, we do not know.

HON. P. SINGH.- Madam Speaker, I had mentioned that it can go up to the maximum of 28 days.

HON. SPEAKER.- I am sorry, that was not in the amendment that is...

HON. P. SINGH.- Yes, but the motion in general says under Standing Order 76. I propose a maximum of that.

HON. SPEAKER.- It is not clear.

HON. P. SINGH.- It is up to 28 days, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Yes, but...

HON. P. SINGH.- I had mentioned that in accordance with Section 76 of the Standing Orders.

HON. SPEAKER.- The amendment, therefore, is a suspension from the House for a term that is allowed within Standing Orders 76 up to 28 days. That should have been clear.

Alright, I will now give the right of reply to the Honourable Leader of the Government in Parliament on the substantive motion.

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, let me clarify a few issues raised from the other side by the Honourable Radrodro, why the rush, and this Report should not have entered Parliament in the first place. The simple answer, Madam Speaker on why the rush, the Committee worked on your directive, and I will read that out.

“The Privileges Committee is directed to meet today, 2nd June, 2016 and provide its report to Parliament for tabling in Parliament on Friday, 3rd June, 2016, and Parliament shall consider the Report of the Privileges Committee tomorrow.”

That was why the rush. It is a biased Report, according to the other side of the House.

Again, I refer to my earlier statement that their representative in the Committee had opted to withdraw from their participation and of course, again, I say that this side has worked and whatever the Committee will decide, I respect that and that is the Committee’s decision, in view of our presence or not, it will still be there and will be discussed in the House, and we are exactly discussing in the House today, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, of course, let me clarify the issue raised by the Honourable Prem Singh about the Honourable Draunidalo’s participation. Probably, the Opposition is not aware, Madam Speaker, that according to your records, the Honourable Salote Radrodro is a member of the Privileges Committee. She did not appear in the first case that was brought to the Privileges Committee and again she has not attended the sitting yesterday.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- A Point of Order, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Point of order.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Madam Speaker, I would like to refer to that comment. There was a letter written in the first case for Ratu Naiqama that the Honourable Tupou Draunidalo was my replacement in the Privileges Committee. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. LEADER OF THE GOVERNMENT IN PARLIAMENT.- Thank you, Madam Speaker, that is accepted and that is exactly what you are stating here in your letter to the Honourable Leader of Opposition. Let me read that out:

“The previous occasion that the Privileges Committee met, the Honourable Tupou Draunidalo had sat in the Committee, I understand that she was substituting for the Honourable Salote Radrodro. It is important to note that as the subject of the inquiry, and it is not appropriate that Honourable Draunidalo sit on the Committee. I therefore, advise that in the event, either the Honourable Semesa Karavaki (he did attend, Madam Speaker) or

Honourable Salote Radrodro are unavailable, you must nominate a Member, other than the Honourable Draunidalo to sit as an alternate member”.

Let me just clarify to the Honourable Prem Singh that according to the Honourable Speaker’s record, the Honourable Salote Radrodro is expected to sit in the Committee, so the Committee did its deliberations. Unfortunately, the other side of the House did not trust the Committee, Madam Speaker. Initially from the very beginning, they did not have faith in the Committee. And unfortunately

HON. RO T.V. KEPÄ.- A Point of Order, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- A Point of Order.

HON. RO T.V. KEPÄ.- The Committee is pointing out, we had also written in response to your letter to state there that the decision to have Honourable Tupou Draunidalo there is that, even in the lowest courts of the land, the accused appears. So, in this particular case, Madam Speaker, it was a conscience decision that was made and that Honourable Tupou Draunidalo be there to hear what was said about her and for her to deliberate on it. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Sorry, I just put on this. Can you just repeat your Point of Order and very succinct on that probably?

HON. RO T.V. KEPÄ.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. This was a point of clarification for the Chair of the Privileges Committee, in which he stated there that we were to send another Member to be the second Member with the Honourable Karavaki.

I had stated here earlier today, and I am repeating it, Madam Speaker, that the decision to have Honourable Tupou Draunidalo there as the second Member from the Opposition side, Madam Speaker was that, it was a conscience decision because this is supposed to be the highest court of the land and even in the lowest courts of the land, the accused appear there to hear what is being said about them. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you and under the Point of Order process, the issue raised should be one in which the Speaker is able to make a ruling. At this point in time, I am unable to make a ruling on the issue that you have raised and therefore, does not qualify under the Point of Order process. I will ask the Honourable Leader of Government to continue, please.

HON. LEADER OF THE GOVERNMENT IN PARLIAMENT.-Thank you, Madam Speaker. If there was any letter at all, unfortunately, the Honourable Member did not table that to the Chair of the Committee, the Honourable Deputy Speaker.

The Honourable Mosese Bulitavu initially raised a point of order on the validity of the Privileges Committee Verbatim Report, but it is amazing that later on in his submission, in his response to the motion before the House, he was again referring to the same. He was reading from the same Verbatim Report, which he questioned in the first place, Madam Speaker. So, I find that very interesting indeed, Madam Speaker. The expectation in the Committee, as I have said, are unfortunately you lost your opportunity, you should have seized your opportunity then. We were coming there with an open clean heart, ready for discussions, ready for dialogue, the cue was, he was leaving but unfortunately, you opted not to participate and then the Honourable Draunidalo also opted to remain silent, Madam Speaker. We respected that.

(Hon Member interjects)

Then all of a sudden, this morning, the Honourable Member is asking for forgiveness. Of course, God's love is unconditional but the condition is repentance, Madam Speaker. Non-attendance yesterday, that showed us that there was no remorse, that was what we were expecting, Madam Speaker, there was no pre-judgment at all. We have to find, establish the fact, then present it to the Committee, and all of a sudden this morning, I have said it on my opening statement, they wanted to roll with this. They wanted to test the waters, but now that they know that there is a dead end, now they want to, in the House.

What are we doing, Madam Speaker? There is condition - repentance. I did mention this, simply was a statement of apology, show remorse, and then the Committee would have done all these discussions in the House. We did the discussions yesterday, but again, we respect the decision taken by the other side, but let us get to the point. Disorderly conduct under Standing Order 76, Madam Speaker.

HON. P. SINGH.- Madam Speaker, a Point of Order.

HON. SPEAKER.- Point of Order.

HON. P. SINGH.- Madam Speaker, the Committee is only the recommending authority. It cannot be the jury and the judge, as alluded to by the Leader.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. GOVT. MEMBER.- Exactly, the motion is there!

HON. P. SINGH.- And the recommendations of that Committee, this is the House where you debate it and this is what we did.

(Chorus of interjections)

They are talking about repentance, Madam Speaker, in this House, that repentance came. We offered an unreserved apology, Madam Speaker, so just do not mix the two. The work of the Committee is to recommend, in absence or without, and it is in this House that we go to the extent of deciding on the future and this is the basis of our amendment motion, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- The Committee has made the recommendations and the recommendations are debated and it is based on the consultation, the repentance and all should have been done in the Committee stage, but we are now debating on the substantive motion.

HON. P. SINGH.- Madam Speaker, I am not arguing on those lines. All I am saying is that, there is continuous reference from the Leader of the House that the accused did not appear before the Committee. This is the House, this is where it is discussed, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Your Point of Order is taken and I am sure the Leader of Government in Parliament has noted your concern. Thank you. I give the floor to the Honourable Minister to continue.

HON. LEADER OF THE GOVERNMENT IN PARLIAMENT.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. Let just cut straight to the issue. The issue before the House is Standing Order 62(4)(d), which is on the

words that are likely to promote or provoke feelings of ill-will or hostility between communities or ethnic groups in Fiji. That is the real issue that we are debating upon this morning, Madam Speaker.

Section 76 of the Standing Orders is on disorderly conduct, but this is a matter of privilege, Madam Speaker. That is why it is brought before this Parliament before this House, so that accordingly, as rightly pointed out by the Honourable Prem Singh, it is this House that will do the judgment, based on the facts presented by the Committee and according to the Committee, there is contravention of Standing Order 62(4)(d), Madam Speaker.

Again, let me just emphasise, this is a principled approach. The Honourable Nawaikula said that our friends, partners on the other side of the globe are laughing, let them laugh.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- (Inaudible)

HON. COL. LT. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Let them laugh, Madam Speaker, but they were not laughing with us when this House was invaded.

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- (Inaudible)

HON. COL. LT. I.B. SERUIRATU.- They were not laughing with us. Madam Speaker, we have a responsibility, it is a principled approach...

HON. P. SINGH.- (Inaudible)

HON. COL. LT. I.B. SERUIRATU.- It is a principled approach.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- (Inaudible)

HON. COL. LT. I.B. SERUIRATU.- It is a principled approach. Thank you, Madam Speaker, thank you for your attention.

Madam Speaker, let me again say this....

HON. ROKO T.T.S. DRAUNIDALO.- (Inaudible)

(Laughter)

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- (Inaudible)

HON. COL. LT. I.B. SERUIRATU.- According to the Honourable Nawaikula, the biggest loser will be democracy, democracy will be the winner...

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Do not be selective.

(Laughter)

HON. SPEAKER.- Order! Let us maintain decorum in the House. Let us have respect in the House. Let us hear out the Honourable Member that has the floor. Please continue.

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- I was just saying, Madam Speaker, that this is it, a principled approach, politics aside, we know our history, what we went through in the past and this side of the House is taking this principled approach so that our democracy can be sustainable. Let the people laugh, but it is the responsibility of this Parliament to ensure the sanctity of the House, Madam Speaker, and that is where this side of the House is coming from. It is about sustaining our democracy in the long term. We are looking at the long term, Madam Speaker, we are not here to please people.

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- We are here to be respected because we are doing the right thing.

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- (Inaudible)

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

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Thank you, Madam Speaker, therefore this side of the House stands firm on the substantive motion and of course, move that we vote on the motion.

HON. RATU I.D. TIKOCA.- Point of Order.

HON. SPEAKER.- Point of Order

HON. RATU I.D. TIKOCA.- There was a drama coming from that end, they are all pointing to this direction. I want to raise the issue that there is one thing that is proven in this House, when the Honourable Prime Minister stated; “Be quiet because of my *coup*, that is why you are sitting there remember 2006”. That was what he said...

HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- So?

HON. RATU I.D. TIKOCA.- ...and that is why, when the order comes he says “yes”, and that is why he will be reflected all the time in this House. The conscience is not given, the conscience is not given, you check the point of order.

HON. F.S. KOYA.- Madam Speaker, Point of Order. The Honourable Member rises all the time but there is no Point of Order, what is the point of order, Madam Speaker.

HON. RATU I.D. TIKOCA.- You did not wake up to that time, so....

HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- (Inaudible interjections)

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you, there being no point of order raised at that time, we will continue where we left off and we will now put the motion to the vote.

Firstly, the amendment and the question is that, the Honourable Tupou Draunidalo....

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Point of Order, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Point of Order.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- I apologise for interrupting, Madam Speaker. The Point of Order is under Standing Order 20, the additional powers, Madam Speaker. Standing Order 62 and Standing Order

20 all come under your powers, they all come under your discretion. I am still on my feet, I have not finished with the Point of Order, you can raise yours later.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Point of Order.

HON. SPEAKER.- You can address, but you are referring to Standing Order...

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- I am referring to additional powers on Standing Order 20. My request is, I really think that from morning until now, there have been two views and there is still doubt. Madam Speaker, I request that you exercise your additional powers to at least make a Ruling on another future sitting date, after you have consulted the legal opinions, go through all the debates that were done today and compare it with the findings of the Committee.

Madam Speaker, I had referred you earlier to Standing Order 75, which states that the period of suspension is decided by you. This side of the House had argued about Standing Order 76, but again, there was a different opinion from the other side of the House.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- I am appealing to this because previously, during the debate on the Standing Orders, you already exercised those powers, can you exercise those powers, Madam.

HON. SPEAKER.- Order! Order.

Your Point of Order does not qualify. It is irrelevant at this stage of this procedure, we are now into the voting stage. Therefore, we will now vote on the amendment first and the amendment says that the Honourable Tupou Draunidalo:

- (1) immediately withdraw the words “dumb natives”;
- (2) apologise to the Honourable Minister for Education (M. Reddy) and the House and Fiji;
and
- (3) that her suspension from the House for a term of up to 28 days

Does any Member oppose that amendment?

There being opposition, we will now vote on that amendment.

Question put.

Votes Cast:

Ayes	:	16
Noes	:	28
Not voted	:	6

Motion defeated.

Honourable Members, the Parliament will now vote on the substantive motion and the question is that, pursuant to Standing Order 47:

1. Parliament endorses the findings of the Privileges Committee that Honourable Tupou Draunidalo has contravened Standing Orders 62(4)(a) and (d) in circumstances that were not only grave and serious breach of privilege but a contempt of Parliament;
2. Honourable Tupou Draunidalo must issue a formal public apology in writing within five working days to the Honourable Minister for Education, Heritage and Arts, this Parliament and the people of Fiji and the apology must reflect the severity of the breach and the fact that, it has had far reaching effects. The apology format should also recognise that the Honourable Minister did not in fact, utter the words “dumb natives”;
3. Honourable Tupou Draunidalo must be suspended for the remaining term of Parliament with immediate effect; and
4. During the period of suspension, that Honourable Tupou Draunidalo is not allowed to enter the Parliamentary precincts, including the Opposition Office. Immediately upon Honourable Tupou Draunidalo’s suspension, she must be ordered to leave the Parliamentary precincts and to remain outside the Parliamentary precincts; and
5. If Honourable Tupou Draunidalo fails to comply with any of the above, the necessary enforcement measures must be imposed to ensure compliance.

Does any Member oppose the motion?

There being opposition, Parliament will now vote on the motion.

Question put.

<u>Votes Cast:</u>			
Ayes	:		28
Noes	:		16
Not voted	:		6

Motion agreed to.

(Hon. Opposition Members walked out of the Chambers)

ADJOURNMENT

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

HON. LEADER OF THE GOVERNMENT IN PARLIAMENT- Madam Speaker, I move that Parliament adjourns until Wednesday 22nd June, 2016 at 7.30 p.m..

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

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you.

The Parliament will adjourn, as mentioned, to Wednesday 22nd June, 2016 at 7.30 p.m., and I take it that no Member opposes this motion, now that the Opposition have vacated their seats.

The Parliament is now adjourned to Wednesday 22nd June, 2016 at 7.30 p.m.

The Parliament adjourned at 2.41 p.m.