

PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI



PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

DAILY HANSARD

FRIDAY, 28TH APRIL, 2017

[CORRECTED COPY]

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FRIDAY, 28TH APRIL, 2017

The Parliament met at 9.32. a.m., pursuant to adjournment.

HONOURABLE SPEAKER took the Chair and read the Prayer.

PRESENT

All the Honourable Members were present, except the Honourable Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation; the Assistant Minister for Youth and Sports; and the Honourable Ratu S.V. Nanovo.

MINUTES

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

That the Minutes of the sitting of Parliament held on Thursday, 27th April 2017, 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.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CHAIR

Welcome

HON. SPEAKER.- I welcome all Honourable Members to the final sitting day of Parliament for the month of April. I also welcome members of the public joining us in the gallery and those watching proceedings on television and the internet and listening on the radio.

There is a final group of Politics and Government PL100 students from USP who are here with us today. Welcome and thank you for taking interest in your Parliament.

I also welcome our friends from Nadi - welcome to Parliament.

Daily Hansard – Thursday, 27th April, 2017

For the information of Honourable Members, the *Daily Hansard* Report for yesterday will be circulated as soon as they complete printing this morning. Thank you.

POINT OF ORDER

Motion – GCC

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- With due respect, Madam Speaker, I rise on a Point of Order. Section 74 is a right of a Member to rise on a Point of Order; Section 124 gives the Business Committee its authority, powers and duties; and Section 48 is about inadmissible motions.

I rise on a Point of Order, Madam Speaker, because I am not satisfied with the explanation given to me of the exclusion of my motion that was supposed to be debated today. I have looked at Section 48, which would give me some direction of the reasons why my motion has been excluded, I cannot see any reason there, Madam Speaker.

So I humbly come before you, Madam Speaker, this morning really to ask you, if there is a direction that my motion can be brought back in the later sitting, because it is basically a debate, if that was being requested on the proper accommodations of the interest of the *iTaukei* people that was being vested with the Great Council of Chiefs (GCC) because the GCC is no longer there under the Act. In its place, the Fijian Affairs Board has taken over, it is basically the process of taking care of that interest.

That is what the motion was about, Madam Speaker. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you very much. The Business Committee had looked at your motion and we deliberated on it, and based on the rulings that we have made and based on the Standing Orders as well, the Business Committee found it inadmissible, and that is the decision of the Business Committee.

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- Madam Speaker, with due respect. It appears to me that the Business Committee therefore is operating on an unwritten rule because we should be guided by the rule that is in the Standing Orders.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Member, I thank you...

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- It is a sad state, Madam Speaker...

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you, thank you. I have made my

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- It is a sad state, Madam Speaker, that...

HON. SPEAKER.- Order! Thank you, I have made my ruling on the issue. If you like you can write again to the Business Committee and we will consider it further. We did mention in the Business Committee that you may reword it to be admissible maybe but the gist of the motion is inadmissible because it has other aspects of the issue that could occur.

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

Petition for Cane Growers

HON. PROF. B.C. PRASAD.- Point of Order, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Point of Order.

HON. PROF. B.C. PRASAD.- Madam Speaker, I rise on a Point of Order seeking clarification why I was not allowed to move a petition that I submitted to your good-self as required under Standing Order 37 on Tuesday, 25th April, 2017.

I received your reply at 9.15 this morning, Madam Speaker, and you make reference to Standing Order 66 (1). I respectfully submit the fact that I was not allowed to move a motion for petition to be referred to the relevant Standing Committee in violation of the Standing Order 37 as well as the breach of Section 72 of the Constitution of the Republic of Fiji. Section 66 (1) Madam Speaker, does not refer to petitions and it also does not relate to a subject matter that was raised before.

The provision on presentation of petitions is extremely clear. A petition must be in conformity to the Constitution and must not create ill-will and hostility. The petition that was submitted to you, Madam Speaker, is about cane growers seeking Parliamentary intervention to help them achieve a minimum granted price for a tonne of cane.

The petition signed by 404 registered growers throughout the Western Division cane belts from Rakiraki to Sigatoka does not violate this provision or any other provision on the Constitution and Standing Orders.

Madam Speaker, the merits and demerits of this or any petition can only be determined after it is moved in Parliament. Additionally, it does not breach Standing Order 37(4), 37(5) and 37(6) lays out the procedure of what happens when a petition is moved. There is nothing that overrules it once the Speaker decides a petition is in order. It is the Speaker's call because a petition is sent to the Speaker. I am surprised that this decision has been made and based on your previous rulings of 8th July, 2015 and again on 23rd March, 2017, I think this petition should have been allowed.

No aspect of it clashes with Bills No. 19 and 20. Madam Speaker, Bills 19 and 20 before the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Economic Affairs do not address the issue of implementing a minimum guaranteed cane price. It is all about amending the Sugar Industry Act, neither has the issue been raised and voted upon in any motion, previous petition, or question that was asked in the last six months. In any case, your rulings of 8th July, 2015 and 23rd March, 2017 make it extremely clear why petitions are important and on 23rd March, you re-iterated your ruling and I quote:

“The right of citizens to petition their Parliament and the power of Parliament to deal with petition is an ancient right and was affirmed by the House of Commons in 1669. It is a fundamental right of the citizen, which is preserved in our Standing Orders. It is the only means by which individuals can directly place grievances before the Parliament on matters which the Government has jurisdiction”.

Madam Speaker, Section 72(b) of the Constitution says:

“Parliament must facilitate public participation in the legislative and other processes of Parliament and its committees.”

Section 72 of the Constitution relates to petitions, public access and participation. Denial of a petition, more so, if it complies with Standing Order 37 is a breach of the Constitution. In any case, Government under Standing Order 37 has the right to reply to the petition and also vote either for or against it.

Essentially, Madam Speaker, this petition is in order and I once again respectfully submit that it should be moved in Parliament without delay, based on your previous rulings and in conformity to both Standing Order 37 and Section 72 of the *Constitution of the Republic of Fiji*.

Any delay in determining the future of the petition when there is no need to since it conforms to every provision required for accepting and moving of a petition will deny the cane growers who signed the petition their right to be heard by Parliament and constitute a breach of Section 72 (b) of the Constitution. It concerns their livelihood and future before the start of the crushing season. I await your ruling Madam Speaker, on this.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you, Honourable Leader of NFP. My decision is on the basis that the Parliament in its 23rd March Sitting debated a motion moved by Honourable Prem Singh that a petition relating to the sugar industry be referred to the relevant Standing Committee. The motion and the ensuing debate discussed the grievances of the sugarcane growers, including concerns on cane prices which is the subject of the petition I received this week.

My review is that the subject was adequately covered in that earlier petition motion in March. You are actually quoting from the Standing Orders, quoting on the rules regarding petitions but it is not touching on the subject of the petition. The inadmissibility of your petition was really on the subject of the petition which had been discussed in the sitting previously, and therefore cannot be brought back to Parliament until after six months. Therefore, under Standing Order 66 (1), I am not allowing this matter to be brought before Parliament again and therefore I rule accordingly.

I now call on the Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts Committee to have the floor.

PRESENTATION OF REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

Standing Committee on Public Accounts Committee Audit of Government Commercial Companies and Commercial Statutory Authorities 2009-2013 (Volume two of three)

HON. A. SUDHAKAR.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I rise this morning in my capacity as the Chairperson of the Public Accounts Committee. I am pleased to present the Report of the Public Accounts Committee on the Audits of Government Commercial Companies and Commercial Statutory Authorities of the Report of the Auditor-General from 2009 to 2013 - Volume two of three. Madam Speaker, because of the large number of entities that have been covered in our scrutiny and the volume of work, we have divided our reports into two volumes.

This is my second report as the Chair of the Standing Committee for Public Accounts. I welcome the opportunity to showcase the progress commercial entities in Fiji continue to make, even the issues are defined in these reports have either been resolved or either process of being addressed.

There are no issues outstanding needing referrals to investigative bodies such as FICAC and the relationship between most entities and the Audit Office seem to be open and healthy dialogue.

While some financial statements have been of higher standard than others, the Committee is now in a position to advise Parliament that the Committee has successfully reviewed an audited accounts from 2009 to 2013 of the listed entities and that recommendations made by the OAG are being pursued and clarified or are resolved by these entities.

I would like to thank the representatives of each entity covered by this report. Although some entities received short notice for public hearings, most responded in a positive way. I also thank fellow Committee Members for their efforts in clearing this backlog. Members of both Government and Opposition engaged in this process in a constructive manner and this is appreciated.

This report contains 11 recommendations by the Committee listed on the following page. These recommendations have been made in good faith, and we urge the relevant party for which the recommendation is made, to consider and respond accordingly.

It should be noted that these reports are on accounts of entities from 2009 to 2013 and may not necessarily reflect the current position. A lot of issues were resolved, corrective measures put in place before the reports came to the Committee. At this juncture, Madam Speaker, I would like to highlight that a lot of entities and statutory authorities have incorporated a lot of recommendations made by OAG, which has reflected in future accounts and a lot of things are improving in terms of profitability and management of these entities.

On behalf of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, I commend this report to the Parliament.

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

(Report handed to Secretary-General)

HON. A. SUDHAKAR.- Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 121(5), I hereby move a motion without notice that a debate on the contents of the Report is initiated at a future sitting.

HON. SPEAKER.- Do we have a seconder?

HON. M.M.A. DEAN.- Madam Speaker, I second the motion.

HON. SPEAKER.- Parliament will now vote and the question is, that a debate on the contents of the report is initiated at a future sitting. Does any Member Oppose?

(Chorus of “noes”)

HON. SPEAKER.- As no Member opposes, the motion is agreed to unanimously.

I now call on the Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts to have the floor.

Standing Committee on Public Accounts Committee
Audit of Government Commercial Companies and Commercial Statutory Authorities 2009-2013
(Volume three of three)

HON. A. SUDHAKAR.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. As stated earlier that we have done our reports in two volumes. I am pleased to present the report of the Public Accounts Committee on the Audits of Government Commercial Companies and Commercial Statutory Authorities of the Auditor-General's Reports of 2009 to 2013 (Volume three of three).

This is my third report as the Chair of the Standing Committee for Public Accounts and concludes the three volumes of oversight of Government commercial entities in Fiji of that period.

There are only two recommendations attached to this report. The Committee is increasing its optimism that entities are making significant improvements in financial management. At this juncture, I would like to highlight that the previous Report where 11 recommendations and now there is two only, that means there is improvement and entities are in fact adapting to a lot of recommendations that have been made by the OAG.

There are no issues needing further referral to investigative bodies such as FICAC within this report, and the relationship between entities and the Audit Office appears to be open and transparent.

It should be noted, however, that the period which this report addresses is from 2009 to 2013 therefore, the issues noted may not be current. The future reports would explore the issues which may exist currently in those entities.

I would like to thank the representatives of each entity covered by this report, particularly at the time of the public hearings held by the Public Accounts Committee. Although some entities received short notice, most responded in a positive way.

I also thank the fellow committee members for their efforts. Members of both the Government and Opposition engaged in the process in a constructive manner and this is appreciated. Recommendations have been made in good faith, and we urge the relevant party for which the recommendation is made, to consider and respond accordingly.

On behalf of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, I commend this Report to Parliament.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you, please hand the Report to the Secretary-General.

(Report handed to Secretary-General)

HON. A. SUDHAKAR.- Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 121(5), I hereby move a motion without notice that a debate on the contents of the Report is initiated at a future sitting.

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

HON. M.M.A. DEAN. - Madam Speaker, I second the motion

HON. SPEAKER. - Thank you. Parliament will now vote and the question is, that a debate on the contents of the Report is initiated a future sitting.

Does any Member oppose?

(Chorus of “noes”)

There being no opposition, the motion is agreed to unanimously.

Thank you. We will move on to question Time.

Point of Order

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

HON. SPEAKER. - Point of Order.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO. - Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise to raise a Point of Order before we move on to questions, in accordance with Standing Order 34, titled - Order of Parliament Business, specifically item 5, and may I quote:

“Government Business takes precedence over any other public business except on a Friday sitting in which case Opposition business takes precedence over any other public business item.”

Madam Speaker, you will also note that in previous Fridays’, our questions from this side of the House were usually tabled first, but you will note in today’s Order Paper the questions from Government side are being listed first, and the questions from the Members of the Opposition bench appears in Questions 134/2017 by Honourable Mosese Bilitavu; 135/2017 by Honourable Aseri Radrodoro; 136/2017 by Honourable Mikaele Leawere; and 137/2017 by Honourable Ro Teimumu Kepa.

Madam Speaker, I request that in accordance with Standing Order 34 (5), this Order Paper be reviewed this morning and allow the questions by the Opposition to be heard first, followed by the questions from the Government side. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER. -Thank you.

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU. - Madam Speaker, can I make a clarification on the issue raised by the Opposition Whip, please? There are 4 days, that is Government’s day, but those 4 days, we have been giving the Opposition the questions to be asked by them first, and we have no problems with that since the opening of this Parliament. So I do not see the reasons why they are raising the

issue again this morning.

HON. SPEAKER. - Thank you. Not only that, we arrange the questions in order of receipt from Members, but we will ensure that all your questions will be taken care of within the sitting time this morning. I note what the Honourable Minister for Fisheries has said, and which is quite right, but the Business Committee has agreed to the Order Paper as is and we will comply accordingly.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO. - Madam Speaker, in regards to today being a very short day, may I request under Standing Order 34(5) if we could, through you, revise the order of the Paper and we ask our questions first. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU. - This has been agreed to by the Business Committee, so why we change it now?

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. SPEAKER. - Thank you. I will make my decision on this and I do appreciate the concern raised by the Opposition and I will agree to your request. We will now handle your questions first before Government questions. Therefore, I now give the floor to the Honourable Mosese Bulitavu to ask his question.

QUESTIONS

Oral Questions

Process and Fees – Fisherman's Licence (Question No. 134/2017)

HON. M.D. BULITAVU asked the Government, upon notice:

Can the Honourable Minister for Fisheries explain the process and fees a fisherman has to pay before a licence is issued.”

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU (Minister for Fisheries). - Madam Speaker, I rise to respond to the question posed by Honourable Bulitavu, and I thank him for the question.

Madam Speaker, a fisherman has to follow a process and pay certain charges before a licence is issued. The Fishers Act Cap 158, Section 5(3) specifies what must be done for a fisherman to use licences, especially in the subsidiary legislation 2 part 3 and 2 parts 4 and 5 on the Fees and Processes respectively.

Anyway, Madam Speaker, firstly, the applicant has to go to the Fisheries Office to get a consent form on which this application is written up, he has to take it to the customary fishing right owners on which area he is applying for to be considered.

Madam Speaker, if the customary fishing right owner is agreeable, then this will be taken to the Provincial Office for the *Roko Tui* to verify.

Once the *Roko Tui* has verified, it will be taken to the Commissioner's Office of that division and the Commissioner will then issue a permit which will be then taken to the fisheries officer for that division to issue the licence. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER. - Honourable Dulakiverata.

HON. J. DULAKIVERATA. - Supplementary question.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Supplementary question.

HON. J. DULAKIVERATA.- Madam Speaker; you know life has become very difficult for people living in villages because of the many regulations that have been imposed on them. The question is, can you have some distinctions between commercial fishermen and people who fish for their livelihood in the villages? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER. - Honourable Minister.

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU. - Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I thank the Honourable Member for the supplementary question. I have a copy of the legislation here which simplifies the processes that needs to be taken, and it is very simple. There are different levels of fees that have to be paid and I can explain it to the Honourable Members if they want to, I have got it in my hand now.

(Honourable Member interjects)

HON. SPEAKER. - Thank you. Honourable Nawaikula.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA. - The fishing right owners are the native communities, not the Government. So, why is the Government collecting these licenses when it does not belong to them? Is it not a breach of their rights?

(Chorus of interjections from Government side)

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- You do not own the rights. It is owned by the people. They should be the one levying this money? What is your business there?

(Laughter)

What is your business there? You do not own those rights?

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. SPEAKER. - Honourable Minister.

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU. - Madam Speaker, I thank the Honourable Member for asking that question, but as normal...

HON. N. NAWAIKULA. - What's normal?

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU. - And now he is trying to fish.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA. - Is that normal!

(Laughter)

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU. - He is fishing around. Basically, the Ministry of Fisheries is in charge of management of this regulation and that is basically what we do.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA. - (inaudible)

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. SPEAKER. - Honourable Biman Prasad.

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. PROF. B.C. PRASAD. - Thank you, Madam Speaker. Can I ask the Honourable Minister, in the last session of Parliament, there were some confusion about the actual fees? Can the Honourable Minister inform the Parliament if the new licence fee has been determined?

HON. SPEAKER. - Thank you. Honourable Minister.

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU. - Madam Speaker, I thank the Honourable Member for the question, but the licence fee is basically in this document here, it has not changed. So I would recommend and suggest to the Honourable Members of the Opposition to come and get a copy of it, and I will issue it to them.

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

HON. RATU K. KILIRAKI. - Thank you, Madam Speaker, a supplementary question. Can the Honourable Minister inform this House, in regards to the licensing of fresh water clams fishermen, what is the position in terms of licenses? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER. - Thank you. Honourable Minister.

HON. RATU K. KILIRAKI. - Fresh water clams, the *Kai*.

(Laughter)

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU. - Thank you, Madam Speaker and I thank the Honourable Member for the question. Basically, a licence to carry out that operation is \$5.28 and that is paid by anyone that fish for *Kai* and doing it commercially. For their own consumption, there is no need for licence. Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- I now give the floor to the Honourable Aseri Radrodro to ask his question.

Status of PWD Depots around Fiji
(Question No. 135/ 2017)

HON. A.M. RADRODRO asked the Government, upon notice:

Can the Honourable Minister for Local Government, Housing and Environment, Infrastructure and Transport inform this House as to the arrangement now in place for all Depots around Fiji which used to be managed by PWD and their status to-date?

HON. P.B. KUMAR (Minister for Local Government, Housing and Environment, Infrastructure and Transport).- Madam Speaker, I rise to respond to the question asked by the Honourable Member and I thank him for the question.

Madam Speaker, the Fiji Roads Authority (FRA) currently manages 31 Depots in total, as follows:

- Central Division - 5;
- Northern Division - 19;
- Western Division - 7; and
- Eastern Division - 9.

Madam Speaker, the FRA Maintenance contractors in the Northern, Eastern and Western Divisions are utilising these Depots. FRA has leased these Depots on commercial basis.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Nawaikula?

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Madam Speaker, just like FRA, those premises are now rundown and left undone, grasses are over-grown. Can you assure the House that this will be cleaned and repaired, please?

HON. P.B. KUMAR.- Madam Speaker, as I have said, all those Depots have been leased to the FRA contractors. There is an agreement in place and the maintenance of Depots is also included in there and any Depots that are rundown or overgrown with grass as the Honourable Member has mentioned, definitely FRA can write to them and make sure those are kept clean.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Dulakiverata?

HON. J. DULAKIVERATA.- Madam Speaker, most of those Depots are in the rural areas which are located on *iTaukei* lands and the Government have leases on those sites and they pay rent. They should be utilised for what they are used for, if not, they should be returned to the landowners.

My question is; most of the contractors like Naim, have been using all those Depots for their own use. Do they pay rent to the Government for using those Depots?

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister?

HON. P.B. KUMAR.- Madam Speaker, as I had mentioned earlier on that, these Depots are leased to the FRA contractors, namely Higgins, Fulton Hogan, and the company that has been mentioned by the Honourable Member, Naim is no longer in the country. They do not operate any of our Depots. The sub-contractors that I had mentioned are the only ones that manage these Depots.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Ratu Kiliraki?

HON. RATU K. KILIRAKI.- A supplementary question; Madam Speaker. Depots, during the PWD days, had the responsibility for looking after districts. Now that those Depots are being rented to contractors, can the Honourable Minister inform this House whether those contractors will be there permanently to look after the districts, as previously was the role of those depots?

HON. P.B. KUMAR.- Madam Speaker, there is an agreement in place and upon expiry, FRA will decide on the renewal, whether to renew or not but currently that is the understanding between FRA and the contractors.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now give the floor to the Honourable Mikaele Leawere to ask his question.

Plans for Redeployment of Head-teachers
(Question No. 136/2017)

HON. M.R. LEAWERE asked the Government, upon notice:

Can the Honourable Minister for Education, Heritage and Arts inform this House as to what plans are being made to redeploy Head-teachers who are not being placed in their substantive positions?

HON. DR. M. REDDY (Minister for Education, Heritage and Arts).- Madam Speaker, I rise to respond to the question asked by the Honourable Member and I want to thank him for asking this question.

Madam Speaker, there are 24 Head-teachers in the six Education Districts, who have not been placed in their substantive positions but they are holding on to their substantive grade and, therefore, are paid at that particular level.

As per the number of schools I probably would not read out the names of the school and the Head, but the reasons why they are not placed in their substantive positions of that particular schools are due to:

- Medical reasons; the six Officers were not able to perform at that level at the moment.

- Disciplinary cases; nine Officers due to disciplinary cases;
- Travelling issues; the five Officers have asked if we could place them somewhere else because it is too far to travel and because their parents, et cetera, are here and they want to come back. They still hold that substantive grade and their salary but we have placed them in different schools, waiting to see if that grade position is vacant so we can give them that leadership position.
- Management issues; four Officers whereby the management said; “We do not want that particular person”, and they have given their reason, we have decided to pull them back.

There are cases where the staff member himself/herself said; “We do not want to go because there is a disciplinary issue”, and for the safety of the staff member, we have decided to pull the staff member away from that particular school. For example, a school in Bua where we have moved the head of the school to Nadi and then we have to reinstate that person. So we gave that particular academic grade and the person himself does not want to go back to that school for his safety. The person opted to be in Nadi but we could not find an empty school of that grade to give that person that position at the Vice Principal (VP) level but wait until a school of his grade is vacant to take that same leadership position, but the person is paid the salary of that substantive grade and holds that particular grade.

Again, Madam Speaker, the six Officers, due to medical condition; nine Officers due to disciplinary case; five Officers for personal reasons and the staff members opted to move off, for example, to come to Suva, et cetera, and we said; “Yes, fine, we can hold that particular grade but we will give the leadership position when there is a vacancy with the same grade”, and they have agreed. Also, management issues, four Officers.

Madam Speaker, just to answer the Honourable Member about the strategies, in the past month, we were able to post six displaced head-teachers, either at the substantive position or to act in a higher position as the vacancy arise. This includes one Officer, whom we placed at the Holy Trinity; one Officer at J.N. Jokhan Memorial School; one Officer decided to move to Curriculum Advisory Services (CAS); we placed one officer in the Labasa Education Office looking after ECE; we placed one Officer at Drasa Avenue Primary School and one in Karavi Public School, so we were able to do that.

The remaining 24 Officers, Madam Speaker, we are looking at placing them as the positions become vacant so before these positions are processed, we will give them the first opportunity to take on that particular substantive position and then these positions will be processed to be filled in with new applicants. So that is the strategy and we are looking at, may be in a few months’ time, to fill in those by whoever wants to take up substantive positions in that area while the others who had opted out due to medical reasons and not to take the position, for example, a person who was promoted as VP at John Wesley College in Raiwaqa, for medical reason has given up and wanting to move on, Madam Speaker. Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Mohammed Dean?

HON. M.M.A. DEAN. - Madam Speaker, a supplementary question to the Honourable Minister; can the Honourable Minister please elaborate on how the Ministry of Education is dealing with cases of disciplinary issues internally?

HON. SPEAKER. - Honourable Minister?

HON. M.M.A. DEAN. - No, the Honourable Minister highlighted in his response that there are nine cases of disciplinary issues, Madam Speaker, so I just wanted further elaboration on how the Ministry of Education is dealing with that?

HON. SPEAKER. - Honourable Minister?

HON. DR. M. REDDY. - Madam Speaker, I want to thank the Honourable Member for asking that question. Madam Speaker, if there is a disciplinary case against a teacher, sometimes it is better to remove the teacher from that particular place due to emotions within the community around the place. There are cases where we had to move the teacher immediately from that particular school so we then waited until the whole process is completed and the process will lead to going to the Public Service Disciplinary Tribunal. It takes a bit of time so in those cases, we have to move the teacher from there and put him either to the Education Office or Headquarters or another school close to where the teacher would want to be placed without having to spend too much money on the accommodation, et cetera. The process is, we do our investigation and then we file the case with the Public Service Disciplinary Tribunal. Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER. - Thank you. Supplementary question, Honourable Nawaikula.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- The problem with the Ministry is that, the Executives makes its own appointing process and then the Honourable Minister as a politician makes another process. For example, in my school, two head-teachers arrived on the same day and one has to go away, and they float from here to here to here. Can the Honourable Minister please assure this House that 'no more', that he will not interfere with the appointment process of the Ministry, please?

HON. S.B. VUNIVALU.- Which school?

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- My school.

(Laughter)

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- St. Joseph the Worker is the name of the school.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Your question is clear, please Honourable Minister provide the response.

HON. DR. M. REDDY. - Madam Speaker, I am not sure which school he is referring to and how come there are two head-teachers reporting to the school and one had to leave.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA. - It happens all the time and they are blaming you.

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- No, no! Madam Speaker, I would want to get more details from the Honourable Member so that I can find out and provide details to him on how it happened.

HON NAWAIKULA.- Many schools, if I give you their names, you will sack them.

HON. SPEAKER.- Order! Honourable Prem Singh!

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. P. SINGH.- Supplementary question, Madam Speaker; what is the Ministry's view on head-teachers who are charged by Police for criminal offences and are still in school?

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Madam Speaker, generally if a teacher is charged by the Police then immediately the teacher is suspended, if the issue is dealing with the school itself, now if there is a domestic matter which does not affect the school, then we examine the nature of the matter and then the teacher can perform until the teacher is found guilty.

HON. SPEAKER. - Thank you. Honourable Mikaele Leawere.

HON. M.R. LEAWERE. - Madam Speaker, I thank the Honourable Minister for highlighting in this House about the redeployment of teachers. I have one question that I would like to ask the Honourable Minister, and I am not talking about those with disciplinary cases, I am asking about those other teachers.

HON. V.NATH. - Ask the question!

HON. M.R. LEAWERE. - I am just about to ask the question. Will those teachers retain their salaries, despite the fact that they have not been performing their appropriate duties in schools?

HON. SPEAKER. - Thank you. Honourable Minister?

HON. DR. M. REDDY. - Madam Speaker, I just mentioned to him that unless they are demoted through the Public Service Disciplinary Tribunal, once you suspend them they maintain their substantive grade and they maintain the salary. If they were acting, then once we move them, then they lose their acting position and they will go back to their substantive grade and they will get the pay according to the substantive grade.

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

Ways to prevent power outages
(Question No. 137/2017)

HON. RO T.V. KEPA asked the Government, upon notice:

Can the Honourable Minister of Local Government, Housing, Environment, Infrastructure and Transport briefly explain how power outages can be prevented?

HON. P.B. KUMAR (Minister of Local Government, Housing and Environment, Infrastructure and Transport). - Madam Speaker, I rise to respond to the question asked by the Honourable Member and I also thank her.

Madam Speaker, to explain how power outages can be prevented, we first need to establish what are the causes of power outages. This is caused in a number of ways and some of the many reasons include:

- Vegetation contacting power lines;
- Fires on FEA power poles and assets;
- Vehicle accident involving FEA power poles;
- Vandalism
- Excavators digging into power cables;
- Failure of aged assets;
- Lightning;
- Damage to the power system due to natural disasters, for example, cyclones, floods and landslides; and
- Overloading of circuits by customers.

Madam Speaker, the general public can assist in preventing power outage by:

- Ensuring that trees on their properties are kept trimmed and well clear from the power lines;
- Taking precautions to ensure that cane fires do not spread to power poles;
- Do not burn rubbish near power poles and electricity live boxes;
- Taking care while driving to ensure that they do not drive on to power poles;
- Encouraging everyone to keep a look out against vandalism of the power network;
- Checking for the existence of underground power cables before carrying out excavation works; and
- No illegal connections resulting in overloading of FEA power systems.

Madam Speaker, FEA is working continuously towards preventing power outage by:

- implementing an ongoing programme to replace aged assets;
- conducting regular inspection of the power system to ensure failing assets are identified and programme for the replacement; and
- regular testing of the protection system to ensure that they operate as required to protect the power system from the damages.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. RO. T. V. KEPA. - Madam Speaker, a supplementary question.

HON. SPEAKER. - Supplementary question.

HON. RO T.V. KEPA. - These power outages happen all over Fiji, so from people who know more about power, we are told that these blackouts or outages could only happen if the lightning arresters were not maintained and one failed. How is FEA maintaining their transmission network?

HON. SPEAKER. - Thank you. Honourable Minister?

HON. P.B. KUMAR. - Honourable Speaker, I could not get what the Honourable Leader of Opposition asked.

HON. SPEAKER. - Would you like to repeat your question, please?

HON. P.B. KUMAR.- Yes, please.

HON. RO T.V. KEPA. - Madam Speaker, these power outages happened all over Fiji at one time. So, from people who know more about power we are told that these power outages could only happen if the lighting arresters were not maintained?

HON. SPEAKER. - Order! Order! When you say people who know more about these things, who are you referring to?

HON. RO T.V. KEPA. - People who had worked for FEA, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Are you insinuating that the Honourable Minister does not know as much?

HON. RO T.V. KEPA.- No, I am not, Madam Speaker. So, what they are saying is that these happened if the lightening arresters were not maintained and one failed. So, my question to the Honourable Minister is, how is FEA is maintaining their transmission network? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister?

HON. P.B. KUMAR.- Madam Speaker, honestly, I do not know who are these people and as far I am concerned I have not heard such things from anyone.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Viliame Gavoka?

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Madam Speaker, we do realise that FEA has to upgrade their systems and there are natural disasters, et cetera, but there are two things. Firstly, is the duration of the outages is intolerable, given this day and age and secondly, the area that is covered. Surely, FEA must now have a system to try and reduce the duration of the shortages and localise the outages to affect only a small area as opposed to the broad areas that they are currently covering. These are the two issues, Madam Speaker, that are affecting the consumers.

HON. GOVT. MEMBERS.- What is your question?

HON. SPEAKER.- There was no question.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Madam Speaker, how can FEA work towards improving this system? I mean, it is coming from the consumers.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Minister?

HON. P.B. SINGH.- Madam Speaker, there are two parts to it; how quick they can normalise and which is purely dependant on the nature of the outage. But as we all know when there is such cases, FEA works 24/7 to make sure that that is put in place. So I do not sees any real issues in regards to that.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Biman Prasad?

HON. PROF. B.C. PRASAD.- Madam Speaker, I just want to ask a very specific question. FEA sometimes back said that with the purchase of the new generators, power outage will be a thing of the past. Do we have enough power generators now or we are still planning to purchase more?

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister!

HON. P.B. SINGH.- Madam Speaker, you will realise that Honourable Prem Singh had a written question on that but it was withdrawn. But to go back on what Honourable Member is asking, there are plans to purchase more generators but one must understand that it is not only the power that we get from Nadarivatu that the generators are not working. They are both working parallel, but definitely there are plans to buy more generators.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Leawere?

HON. M.R. LEAWARE.- Madam Speaker, the Honourable Minister had mentioned that FEA works 24/7 which is very good and they work very hard, especially the workers. Can the Honourable Minister ensure that the workers are given the award which has been pending for the last three years?

HON. SPEAKER.- Can you just repeat your question?

HON. M.R. LEAWARE.- The Honourable Minister just mentioned that FEA works 24/7 in terms of these outages. I just want to ask him if there is any pay increase being planned for the FEA workers, which has been pending for the last three years?

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. I will not permit that question, it deviates from the original question.

I will now give the floor to the Honourable Dr. Brij Lal.

Amendments to the Workmen's Compensation Act
(Question No. 131/2017)

HON. DR. B. LAL asked the Government, upon notice:

One of the recent amendments to the Workmen's Compensation Act that was passed by Parliament, increased the quantum for death cases from \$24,000 to \$50,000. Can the Honourable Minister for Employment, Productivity and Industrial Relations explain what prompted these changes and how many death cases has been paid by the employers under the amendment?

HON. J. USAMATE (Minister for Employment, Productivity and Industrial Relations).- Madam Speaker, I rise to respond to the question asked by the Honourable Member and I would like to thank him for his question.

Madam Speaker, yes, the amount of money that can be compensated for a death has increased from \$24,000 to \$50,000. This amendment to the Act came into being from July, 2015 and the reason is fairly simple; it is because there has been no change to the quantum that is paid for death out of Workers' Compensation since 1994. Since 1994, as we are all aware, there have been changes in the cost of living, the cost of everything has increased, so Government felt that it was appropriate that this be increased from \$24,000 to \$50,000. So that is more than 100 percent increase for that time period from 1994 to 2015.

For the information of the House, as per the question, the number of death cases that have been paid by the employers under the amendment, the Ministry has now processed and paid out a total of \$537,221.92 for 12 death cases under this new amendment. This includes seven cases from the private sector and five cases from Government. So, we hope these amounts can be used by the dependants and the survivors of those who have passed away so that they can continue to maintain and look after their lives and the lives of their family members. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Nabulivou?

HON. A. NABULIVOU.- A supplementary question, Madam Speaker, to the Honourable Minister. Can the Ministry provide statistics on the rate of disposition of Workmen's Compensation cases and the work undertaken by the Ministry in dealing with high risk industries?

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Minister?

HON. J. USAMATE.- Madam Speaker, I thank the Honourable Nabulivou for his question.

The Workmen's Compensation Act gives a legal responsibility for employers to compensate workers who sustained injuries or deaths arising out of the course of their employment and this compensation is done through monetary payments. All the cases that are reported to the Ministry are investigated to determine the cause of injuries and deaths, and the reports are then submitted to medical practitioners for their expert opinions and assessment to determine the status of each case. Once these reports are available, and if any percentage of disability is awarded to the workers or medical opinion stating that the death was work-related, the Ministry will then calculate the claim before seeking the employers' consent for the payment of compensation to the workers concerned, or the dependants of the deceased workers.

On the disposition of cases, my Ministry has successfully settled 1,246 cases in 2015 that comprised 158 death cases and 1,088 injury cases. For the year 2016, a total of 1,061 cases were settled, comprising of 862 injury cases and 199 death cases.

Madam Speaker, in terms of dealing with high risk industries, my Ministry is working very closely with the employers and workers through their respective in-house Occupational Health and Safety Committees to ensure that the requirements under the Health and Safety at Work Act are fulfilled, and we will continue to work closely with employers and other stakeholders to ensure the health and safety of workers are safeguarded and workers who are injured or die due to their work are appropriately compensated. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Nawaikula?

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Could the Honourable Minister advise this House, for the same period, how many cases were refused, what were the reasons for their refusal and what should the public know

before they lodge their application? A lot of them complained because they put their hope into the application but was refused and turned away.

HON. SPEAKER.- The onus is on you, Honourable Minister, if you want to answer that statistical question?

HON. J. USAMATE.- Yes, there is a lot of statistics in that question, Madam Speaker, I would not attempt to provide the statistics but let me.....

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- (inaudible)

HON. SPEAKER.- Order!

HON. J. USAMATE.-...let me elucidate a bit on the things that I have just mentioned. If someone gets hurt in a workplace or someone dies arising out of employment, there has to be a medical practitioner to actually state that the death or the injury arose because of work. There can be people who pass away in a workplace but their death is not because of something that happened as a result of work but something that happened outside of work.

So, that determination has to be done first, it has to be done by the person that is being trained. Someone could have a stroke at the workplace, that stroke could have arisen because of something that happened in the workplace, could be because he had been eating the wrong kinds of food on a daily basis.

So, there has to be a connection that is established by the medical practitioner and the event that took place. Sometimes the delays are happening because there is a need to establish that link; if a medical practitioner says “a person dies and it is not arising out of occupation itself”, if that linkage cannot be established, then there will not be a worker’s compensation.

Sometimes it is delayed because we are waiting, sometimes the information is not forthcoming from the employer, other times the delay is in getting the reports from the doctors that do these assessments. So, it is not as if anyone is trying to stop compensation being paid, it could be for a whole lot of reasons and the prime things too, the delay is because if you want to understand the implication of injury on a person, you cannot determine the implications, for instance for a hand. If someone has an injury to that hand, you cannot determine the compensation to be paid the following day. You have to wait for 12 months to see the impact of that on the person’s hand, then you can then calculate the percentage loss to the hand. Sometimes it takes 12 months, 18 months, and all of these requires the expertise or a medical practitioner. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- I give the floor to the Honourable Parmod Chand

HON. P. CHAND.- Supplementary question, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Supplementary question.

HON. P. CHAND.- Following on with what the Honourable Minister has just said, I would like to know, are there any medical practitioners registered with the Ministry under the new Act to carry out impairment assessment training?

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister.

HON. J. USAMATE.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. For the past few years, the Ministry has been using a Doctor Dowda from Australia and he has been training medical practitioners in Fiji on the use of these international codes that are used.

We also have a fully-fledged doctor within the Ministry, Dr. Tikoinayau, he has got a Post-Graduate qualification in this area.

So, in total, we have trained more than 200 doctors in the public and private sectors, who have been taken through the intricacies of using the codes of how you assess the percentage loss in terms of injuries and deaths.

So, the answer is yes, we have more than 200 doctors in Fiji who have been trained and with the current amendments to the legislation, it is only those doctors that have been trained that are allowed to make these assessments.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now move on to the next question.

HON. DR. B. LAL.- Supplementary question.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Supplementary question, Honourable Brij Lal.

HON. DR. B. LAL.- The Minister; what is the total number of workmen's compensation cases that are outstanding and what measures have the Ministry implemented to ensure instant disposal of these cases? Thank you.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. J. USAMATE.- I am sure, Madam Speaker, that the people of Fiji would like me to answer that question so they can understand the situation.

Madam Speaker, there are five key players in the administration of workmen's compensation. It is important that members of the public are aware of this because sometimes they can bring up issues and the cause of those issues are because they lack awareness on these issues. So, there are five key players;

1. The Employers;
2. Workers;
3. Medical practitioners;
4. Employment Relations Tribunal; and
5. Ministry of Employment.

As at December 2016, the Ministry had a total of 2,359 cases pending. These include 347 death cases and 2,012 injury cases; 79 per cent of the cases pending are either because we are still waiting for the post-injury period. As I had already mentioned, if someone has an injury to the hand, you have to 12 or 18 months before you can make that assessment and the other one is that sometimes we have to await the doctors.

So, 79 per cent of the delays will be either because we are waiting for that period to run out, whether its 12 months or 18 months and we are also in other cases, its waiting for the doctors to give their medical assessments. 6 percent of the total pending cases is because we are waiting for the Employment Relations Tribunal to make its decisions on these cases and only 15 percent of the delay of the total pending cases is because we are awaiting the employer to provide us the employment records that allows us to complete the investigation into the cases that are being processed. There are certain challenges faced by the Ministry to resolve these cases.

Firstly, the high mobility of workers: Sometimes it is hard to track them, sometimes the phone numbers that they give changes, so it becomes very difficult to locate them. The Ministry has had great difficulties in locating clients, despite the numerous media marketing approaches taken. Secondly, the release of claims, delayed payments from the employers is another major concern and these are vital for the Ministry to process and pay out to the workers and to be able to conclude the cases.

To effectively address these challenges, the workmen's compensation service has been ISO certified so that we can continually improve the processes and the procedures and cases are investigated in line with the Standard Operating Procedures. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Now, I will move to the next question. I would like to apologise to Honourable Politini for overlooking his place on the agenda.

I now give the floor to the Honourable Howard Politini to ask his question.

Co-President – Fiji's Champion for the Ocean Conference
(Question No. 130/2017)

HON. H.R.T. POLITINI asked the Government, upon notice:

Can the Honourable Minister for Fisheries brief the House on his important role as Co-President with Sweden at the recent preparatory meeting and its outcomes and especially as Fiji's champion for the Ocean Conference and its relevance to Fiji's Oceans and Fisheries? Thank you Madam Speaker.

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU (Minister for Fisheries).- Thank you, Madam Speaker and I thank the Honourable Politini for the question.

Madam Speaker, it is now widely known that the Ocean Conference had come into prominence through a resolution by the United Nation General Assembly Resolution 70/226 of 22nd December, 2015, which mandated that a high level UN Conference to support the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14, which aims to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development, coinciding with the World Oceans Day. It used to be held in June, in New York from 5th to the 9th.

Madam Speaker, Fiji plays an important role in these preparatory processes towards the June Conference, as it serves as Co-President on the Conference with Sweden and that has just been completed successfully in finalising the theme for the seven partnership dialogue and considering the call for action, which generally to submit support from countries to support the implementation of a

Goal 14, which is the general call to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development. In the lead-up to the summit Madam Speaker, under the plan and the timelines that has been complying, Fiji's leadership in the Ocean Champion will be preparing Fiji's and the regional approach towards the meeting. The main meeting in June will be Co-Chaired by the Honourable Prime Minister and that is also a very significant role for a small country like ours to play.

Madam Speaker, leading Fiji's charge to compile what we currently have in place, focusing towards the goals and make voluntary commitments is challenging as it is cross-sectorial. More exciting and challenging is to solicit support from countries which are developing island States to support the implementation of Goal 14; a call to conserve and sustainability use the oceans and marine resources for sustainable development and at the same time motivating them to make voluntary commitments.

Madam Speaker, all is progressing well and the Pacific Regional Preparatory which had run for 3 days has just been completed. It was designed to specifically inform leaders on the global call for the implementation of SDG14 and to solicit the Small Island Developing States to make voluntary commitments, and I just read this morning, Madam Speaker, that there are already 87 voluntary commitments that have been made, and at the same time put together a common position towards the summit.

Madam Speaker, the summit means a lot for Fijians as almost 60 percent of Fiji's population are coastal dwellers and survive from what comes from the ocean. The fisheries products from the ocean amounts to almost \$260 million annually and it is critical that our oceans are kept clean and healthy as to sustainably support sustainable fisheries, products and health.

Madam Speaker, the summit is a platform where Fiji can strengthen its call for assistance internationally that nation States heed to this call as responsible custodians of fish stocks and marine resources in their waters all over the worlds ocean. And also for bigger players to heed and ratify the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, which will be a decisive step towards addressing the growing crisis of pollution, overfishing and the loss of marine habitats.

Madam Speaker, it is also important that Fiji, from the summit can make a contribution by pleading to developed nations to prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities as migratory species of fish, especially tuna, can be affected by the pollution by member countries that contribute to their waters before arriving in Fiji's Exclusive Economic Zone or EEZ.

Madam Speaker, the summit will be very beneficial to Fiji, apart from soliciting support from member nations to live up to the responsibilities they are in. Such UN resolutions which will also be supported from the development funds like Global Environment Fund (GEF) and the Climate Change Fund put together by developed countries to assist Members in achieving the SDG and doing adaptation projects. Thank you Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Balmindar Singh.

HON. B. SINGH.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. Most of the targets of Sustainable Development Goal 14 specifically addresses the impact of climate change. What impacts have been noticed in the fisheries offshore sector and can the Honourable Minister of Fisheries inform the House on what measures are being taken to mitigate them? Thank you, Madam.

HON. SPEAKER.- The Honourable Minister?

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- Madam Speaker, to introduce its effects on the ocean, climate change is affecting ocean temperatures. The supply of nutrients, ocean chemistry, food chains, wind system, ocean currents and extreme events, such as cyclones have a direct effect on fish and the ocean. Of all these, in turn affect the distribution, abundance, breeding cycles, and migration of marine plants and animals that millions of people rely on for food and income.

Madam Speaker, evidence is emerging that marine organisms may be responding faster to climate change than land-based plants and animals. As the climate warms, marine plants and animals are shifting towards the poles, changing marine food webs, and impacting on the plants and animals, including people that depend on them. The slower ocean dynamics also means that some changes such as ocean acidification will be irreversible in this century.

The above effect, Madam Speaker, has been identified to have impacted on the migratory pattern of fish stocks in the offshore sector, mostly on tuna species as the range of stocks go to the inshore sector have also been impacted on it. These have some contributions to the low catchers in Fiji.

A fish stock has stayed longer in the North equatorial region around Papua New Guinea, where it is hotter, and most of the tuna stocks adapt to warm water environment. Madam Speaker, the migratory pattern of the stocks also has been affected by the variability among living organisms which is biodiversity, and affects and modifies the ecosystem that in turn then affects nutrient cycling and species composition.

The nutrients are food to these fish and the stock will congregate where the nutrients move to. These Madam Speaker, led to be impacts on Fiji and will reduce our chances of catching more fish compared to the Northern Pacific where the PNAs are.

Madam Speaker, to mitigate against the impact of what has been touched by atmospheric concentration of greenhouse gases, which is carbon dioxide and methane, will only have a long term solution. Our attempts through the Ocean Conference is to call for developed countries who have not ratified the Kyoto Protocol to ratify it, as it commits States parties to reduce greenhouse gas emissions based on the premise that global warming exists and human-made CO² emissions have caused it.

On the national level, Madam Speaker, the Ministry is doing conservation measures and is using measures to promote sustainable use of fish stocks. The establishing of the TAC or Total Allowable Catch at 2,000 metric tonnes is an adaptation strategy to bring about ecologically sustainability which drives to maintain the offshore fish stocks and the species are regulated to be harvested sustainably.

Madam Speaker, secondly, to curb poaching, to bring about sustainable extraction ...

HON OPP. MEMBER.- No reading is allowed.

HON CDR S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- ... through this illegal unreported, unregulated fishing IUU fishing, that needs to be curbed.

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- I am trying to educate you.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- The Ministry has measures in place like VMS ...

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Madam Speaker, please ask the Honourable Minister to stop, this is question time.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. SPEAKER.- Order! I think you will understand that that question is very technical in nature and therefore the reason that the Minister is reading.

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- Thank you Madam Speaker. Thank you for the ignorance from the other side.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Madam Speaker, Point of Order. I think the Standing Orders says that you should not read your speeches during oral questions. The opening sentence yes, but supplementary questions, he already has a written statement. Something is not right here, Madam Speaker. Something is not right here, Madam Speaker!

(Laughter)

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. I have made my ruling. You may continue, Honourable Minister and read your answer.

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- Thank you Madam Speaker. It is a technical issue and I am just referring to my notes Madam Speaker.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- The Ministry has measures in place like VMS boarding operations to check licences and growing sophisticated farms trans ability through the use of catch documentation or certification schemes, information management system, including digital forms grossly and expensive database as well as cooperation among agency. Thank you Madam Speaker.

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

HON. PROF B.C. PRASAD.- Thank you Madam Speaker. I just wanted to ask the Minister, following on from his response, does Fiji have a position on marine genetic resources because that might feature in the conference itself? Does Fiji have a position?

HON. SPEAKER.- The onus is on the Honourable Minister to answer that question. You can provide a written answer. Would you like to provide a written answer?

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- Yes, Madam Speaker. Please, this is too technical for me.

(Laughter)

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Prem Singh.

HON. P. SINGH.- Just a supplementary question. Is blue carbon also something that Fiji intends to progress at the UN Ocean Conference?

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- Yes Madam Speaker. As it is the World Ocean Conference, anything to do with ocean will be important.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Nawaikula.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- The Honourable Minister should know. You want to go overseas, you start at home first – backyard because Sweden, COP23 are all the same. You go and shout there but nothing here.

So can you please advise the House what are the local programmes to protect Fiji's oceans, how long have you had these programmes for, and what assessments and monitoring have you done in relation to them?

(Honourable Member interjects)

(Laughter)

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Please do not refer to the fish stocks because that relate to fisheries. This is the ocean and the coastal waters.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. A supplementary question should really relate to just one subject and not two or three. Therefore, that question is inadmissible. I now give the floor to Honourable Nabulivou.

HON. A. NABULIVOU.- A question to the Honourable Minister. How bad is climate change in Fiji and what lessons have we learnt from changing climate affecting Fiji?

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister.

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- Madam Speaker, as the question is quite technical I would like to refer to my notes.

(Laughter)

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- I thank the Honourable Member for the question Madam Speaker.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- Madam Speaker, the first lesson ...

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- Please listen and learn!

... Fiji has learnt is that climate change is affecting Fiji too, and it is not only the low lying islands of the other 21 small island development States and territories in the region that is affected.

Madam Speaker, what we are going through in Fiji is not as bad as what the other small island States in the region are going through or beginning to discover. Some of them have their food supply of bread fruit and taro and are getting affected by sea water, even their source of drinking water which comes from water wells are getting contaminated. This is very important to the Opposition, Madam Speaker, I do not know why they do not want to listen. We in Fiji are lucky...

(Honourable Members interject)

... as this is not happening to us because we are volcanic and much higher altitude in our land masses. Madam Speaker...

(Laughter)

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- Madam Speaker, what we in Fiji has experienced that the process of climate change, the incidence of cyclone has decreased but the power of the cyclone has increased, fewer the storms, but stronger ones.

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- The impact of Fisheries on *TC Winston* is an example of this, let alone the impact to the other sectors of the nations and lives. The more violent storms and the adverse effects on corals are beginning to show, that habitats for fish are destroyed and also breeding grounds for food resources to marine life face degradation.

On the positive side, Madam Speaker, we in Fiji have learnt to be more proactive and we build houses to be more resilient up to Category 5 and above cyclones to build further away from the coastline after the recent devastation of *TC Winston*.

Madam Speaker, the above is beginning to build up a breed of people that will produce a culture of resilience and solely we are being taught by our own situations to come up with mitigation measures and projects like getting involved in mangrove planting, projects to rebuild Fiji habitats and to protect our coastlines.

Also, inland dwellers are encouraged to culture fish and prawns or increase the intensity of aquaculture products to be able to grow or breed fish that you can control its environment. They are to survive and produce feed to reduce in the vulnerabilities of the effect on climate change.

Madam Speaker, the Ministry of Fisheries is putting up more FAD or Fish Aggregating Device to encourage people to fish around FADs and relieve the pressure on damaged reef and coral. This was the damaged caused by the cyclone, thus building up its own resilient mechanism and likewise the fish stocks and species.

It is also building up resilience the Ministry with NGO and the community are setting up more marine protected areas as to manage their local resources in relation to consumption, to prevent for example over-fishing and irresponsible means of extraction.

Madam Speaker, I have shared above what we have learnt and how we are building up resilience through proactive means and project. I thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

HON. RATU K. KILIRAKI.- Supplementary question, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Supplementary question.

HON. RATU K. KILIRAKI.- Ocean absorbs carbon dioxide, excessive emission of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere and its blocked by the ocean, leads to bleaching of corals and this is related to the Forestry programme of REDD+ and also the destructive developments like the bungalows, initial survey by the Fisheries that in Sovi Bay because of the narrowness of the in- shore, the biodiversity will be totally destroyed.

So my question to the Honourable Minister is, does the Ministry of Fisheries have any impact into the national development in terms of having a cleaner ocean to be able to present a true picture of our programme on the world stage? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Minister.

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- Honourable Speaker, the question is totally different, it should be asked to the Minister for Agriculture and also to the Minister for Forests.

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. RATU K. KILIRAKI.- The question, Madam Speaker, is whether the fisheries has an impact on the ocean policy of the Government, in terms of destructive developments like the bungalows as well as the REDD+, the emission of carbon dioxide because the ocean is a natural absorber of carbon dioxide. Excessive absorption of carbon dioxide will lead to the acidification of the ocean that creates bleaching on the coral, so you have a relationship there, Madam Speaker.

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you Honourable Kiliraki, you also provided the answer to your question. I now give the floor to Honourable Ashneel Sudhakar to ask his question.

2017-2018 National Budget High School and University Student Consultations
(Question No. 132/2017)

HON. A. SUDHAKAR asked the Government, upon notice:

The 2017-2018 National Budget High School and University Student consultations has been progressing well.

Can the Honourable Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Public enterprises, Civil Service and Communications brief this House on what are some key issues highlighted at these discussions and how will the Ministry hope to tackle them? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. I give the floor to the Honourable Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Public Enterprises, Civil Service and Communications.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Point of Order, Madam Speaker, just to clarify because this particular question probably would be more relevant if this could be addressed in the Honourable Minister for Economy's Budget speech, and probably this question is arising from the budget consultations.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. This question had been approved by the Business Committee to be tabled in today's sitting and we will comply.

Thank you, I give the floor to the Honourable Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Public Enterprises, Civil Service and Communications.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM (Honourable Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Public Enterprises, Civil Service and Communications).- Thank you, Madam Speaker. It is interesting that Honourable Bilitavu is raising a Point of Order on this when it was actually agreed to in the Business Committee meeting. Maybe he is following the leader of his party who sits outside this Parliament and who actually makes a comment when we said that we will be having public consultations, particularly school consultations. He had said that there was no need for it, and these are the very same people who talk about participation of the ordinary Fijians in Governmental process...

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- ... and, Madam Speaker, this is precisely what this public consultation, particularly schools and university students is doing. It is hearing from the ordinary men and women, in particular the young people of our country as to what they would like in the budget; what sort of issues that they have regarding the budget; and also in order to educate them precisely as to what the budgetary process is: how it functions; and what actually happens in practical terms.

Madam Speaker, it was also interesting that this is in the side that our former trade unionist said “what will the ordinary man learn from going to these consultations? What will he gain? Obviously he forgets the fact that through these consultations, we are hearing from the members of the public. Obviously, from these consultations we get people to understand when someone stands up in this Parliament and says “Debt to GDP ratio, foreign reserves”, they are able to actually understand what it means in a very tangible manner.

Madam Speaker, the Government last year in the public consultation process started consulting schools. We had three locations last year; Labasa College in Labasa, Natabua High School and Suva Grammar School, where we had consultations in schools. Given the overwhelming response last year, Madam Speaker, we decided to have consultations with all the schools in all the different districts and so far, Madam Speaker, we have had consultations, as far as schools are concerned in Navua; Vashist Muni School, in Suva; Suva Grammar School. We had consultations in Nausori with all the schools in the Tailevu and Naitasiri area, Sigatoka Methodist, Swami Vivekananda College, Natabua College and Xavier College and will be again going out in the schools later on in the next few weeks where we will be attending Montfort Technical Institute, Labasa College and also in Savusavu.

Madam Speaker, we are going to have for the first time also consultations with the Universities, so we will be going to the FNU Campus in Natabua, FNU Campus in Samabula, FNU Campus in Nasinu, University of Fiji Saweni Campus and the USP Laucala Campus in the month of May, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, the participations have been very very good. In fact, the numbers have been very good. We have had actually few hundred students attend each of these consultations - very large, of course you cannot believe everything that the *Fiji Times* says. They have been saying in the public consultations that there have been very low turnout. In fact there is an article here and that is why we keep calling them the OT - the Opposition Times, they said no one had turned up in Tavua for the public consultations when factually it was incorrect. They said there were very few people who attended the one in Rakiraki.

Madam Speaker, the various issues that have been raised during these consultations by the students, we found out a number of issues that are cross-cutting in all the different locations. A major problem about the school bus services that is provided by the school bus companies. They are saying that a lot of the bus companies, through their drivers, are refusing to take students after particular hours, they are refusing to take students sometimes when the buses are full, they generally bring for the school trips, sort of, most substandard bus for the school bus services and they used the better buses for the other public services. That was highlighted very, very strongly by all the students .

We spent, Madam Speaker, \$21 million a year in subsidizing school travel and, of course, the bus companies benefit from that.

Madam Speaker, the other issue that has been raised, firstly, all the students in all the locations said that they love the idea of the consultations, they felt that it gave them a very good understanding about the budgetary process and the terminologies that are being used in Parliament, they said that they want more of it, it really empowered them, we had, for example, in Vashist Muni College in Navua with schools coming out from the upper reaches of Namosi, people actually travelled hours, so all of these schools, Madam Speaker, is not just we have Suva Grammar students. There were something like 27 schools that actually attended the Suva Grammar consultations. We had 25 schools in Nausori, eight schools in Vashist Muni College, Sigatoka Methodist High School had 12 schools, Swami

Vivekanandan College had 9 schools, Natabua High School 11 schools and Xavier College also had nine schools also. We will be going out in the next three weeks to Penang Sangam High School as we have said, Tavua College, Labasa College and Monfort Technical Institute in Savusavu.

The other issue that was also raised by the students, Madam Speaker, there are lot of queries in respect of TELS and TOPPERS. There was a lot of misinformation out there, we clarified a lot of the issues. There were some matters that were brought to our attention. One of them in particular, we have already discussion with the Honourable Minister for Education in this respect, that there are certain courses that are now available at FNU in particular in the engineering area, where you do not actually need to do Year 13. You can actually do Year 12 and go straight to FNU, but they are not entitled to TELS. So, they are saying that obviously, they are missing out. So they are being forced to do Year 13, only then can they get TELS. So these are some of the issues that we have been discussing and how we can streamline that and actually address that, Madam Speaker.

Some of the other issues that were discussed was also the need for having professional counsellors in schools. What was really interesting, Madam Speaker, as we have highlighted under the TOPPERS Scheme, most of the TOPPERS scholarships are given in the area of science, including areas such as psychology because there is shortage of trained people in that area. In nearly all the schools, they have said; “We want professional counsellors”, and when we asked them they said; “How many of you when you finish school will want to become a professional councillor?” In most of the schools, none of them said; “Yes.” So, there is in fact, Madam Speaker, not a huge uptake on people wanting to see counselling as a professional career for themselves. People see the need for it but no one wants to see the specific career path. There is a dis-connectivity between the need and people wanting to actually supply to that particular market. So, we discussed a lot of that.

Of course, there is a need for professional counsellors. A lot of the teachers as we find in many of the schools are actually doubling up as counsellors, who sometimes may not necessarily have the skill sets but precisely for the reason because there are not enough professional trained people.

Depending on the districts we had some schools, for example, lack some basic amenities. There is one particular school that does not actually have electricity, so we talked about how we can get them access to electricity. We talked about how do we expand the Government Tele-Centres because as you know, Government started these Tele-Centres which was opened by the Honourable Prime Minister two to three years ago and some more schools want to be part of the Tele-Centre Programme and we are looking at the expansion of that.

The other issue, Madam Speaker, that was also raised was about getting more science teachers. We have had some discussions on that about getting more science and mathematics teachers. Currently, there is a fulfilment of that demand but people want more experienced people. As we know many, years ago we had people who are teaching in high schools who had Masters. Many of us in this Parliament would have had attended high schools where people who had actually done Masters or even PhDs were teaching in high schools. We are having discussions with Ministry of Education as to how we can actually incentivise that as part of the job evaluation exercise. Madam Speaker, as you know the remuneration exercise, one of the areas that we are looking at is to how to increase the remuneration is if we have better qualified civil servants. So the higher level of qualification they get,

the better rewarded they get so there is actually an incentive. And as we have said that we are reviewing all the salaries and that is actually very much part and parcel of that.

The other thing, Madam Speaker, is that the feedback we got quite commonly was the students were very happy with the Open Merit Recruitment in the Civil Service. They felt that all would have a fair chance. A lot of them were very appreciative of the retirement age of 55. They believe that they would be given better opportunities to join the Civil Service, in particular. The other point, of course, was that there was a general feedback that whilst there may be certain issues pertaining to TELS in terms of administrative side of things, that the opportunities that are now been given to them will obviously be quite enormous.

We, of course, had some specific ones where certain schools that came from rural areas talked about various issues in their specific area that were specifically pertinent to them, for example, travelling times, buses not coming on time, flooding that they have faced for years that may have happened because if there was a heavy rain, they were not be able to access their schools. So, these are the kinds of issues that were addressed with us.

We also talked about the rebuilding of the schools because some of the students actually came from schools that had been damaged by *TC Winston*. We talked about the rebuild programme and they, of course, were very appreciative of that.

There were other issues, for example, wanting more footpaths and streetlights. Of course, we had highlighted these in this Parliament in the last year's budget and has been highlighted in the last couple of months that we will be focussing a lot on those areas to get streetlights and footpaths. In fact, the rural street lighting has been very much appreciated.

Probably, I will stop there, but the last and not least was the issue about getting better playing grounds or sports fields because some of the rural areas do not actually have proper playing fields. As we know, that the Government through the Ministry of Youth and Sports and also through the Prime Minister's Office, are focussing on that. Some schools obviously want it quicker, but that was one of the issues that was highlighted by them.

Madam Speaker, we would also like to say that through this process, we would like to encourage all Fijians and not only school students and university students but the public consultations will still continue and it will finish round about 19th May. In fact, this weekend we will be in Labasa and Savusavu, but if anyone wants to give their submission, they can simply email budgetconsultation@economy.gov.fj, and they can give in their submission. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON SPEAKER.- Any supplementary questions? Honourable Bulitavu?

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- A supplementary question, Madam Speaker, one of the responses by some students in regards to salaries of Ministers in one of the responses in one of the session that was undertaken and the answer that was given by the Honourable Minister for Economy was that, Ministers need to be paid well in order to minimise corruption. Can the Honourable Minister explain the logic behind that?

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Yes, you may have read that, I know whether in *Fiji Times* but actually I was misquoted in that. I will answer that.

It is very interesting, Madam Speaker, we have also seen some of the questions that the Honourable Leader of Opposition try to ask and some of the questions that have been in the past couple of weeks. Obviously, they are getting a lot feedback from the newspapers in respect of the consultations. Your question is a classic example of that, you are citing something that you read because of these consultations.

Madam Speaker, the question was asked at Swami Vivekananda College in Nadi a particular student asked the question where he cited three countries in which the ministers get very low salaries. He said that in these countries those ministers and Prime Minister get low salaries but in Fiji by comparison, the Ministers are getting a higher salary. This is precisely what I said and is from the horse's mouth; "Look, I can actually tell you dozens and dozens of countries where ministers get paid far more than what we get paid." That was the first thing that I highlighted. I said to him that when you look at public accountability, when you look at good governance, and I gave the example of Police Officers. I said if you are paying a Police Officer as Police Officers who were being paid under the previous Governments in this country getting paid \$6,000 or \$7,000 when they are actually out on the streets, when they are actually going to book someone and the person driving who gets pulled out is driving a pajero, the person driving the pajero knows the Police Officer gets paid \$6,000 or \$7,000.

The Police Officer has four or five children, they are at home watching television about advertisements on McDonalds. He wants to take his children to McDonalds. If the pajero guy who is driving the car is being pulled up, he knows that he gets paid \$6,000 to \$7,000 a year, he is likely to offer him a bribe and the Police Officer is likely to take, he can be tempted to take a bribe. This is why in most countries and in countries, for example, Singapore and I use that as an example, people who are at the front end of enforcing the law, people at the border, immigration people, police officers, customs, people who manage our tax collection, all of these people are paid at a very competitive rate to ensure that those sorts of issues do not take place. Of course, Madam Speaker, we can talk about the salary that the Honourable Leader of the Opposition is now getting than the previous Leader of the Opposition did not get, it is a very high salary. You see, this is where they are trying to concoct things, very selective, very selective in their analysis.

(Honourable Opposition Members interject)

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Extremely selective! The moment I talked about the Honourable Leader of the Opposition's salary, they are saying that I am being selective. The moment that I am going to talk about all of these Members of Parliaments (MPs) salaries, they are going to say I am being selective because the salaries that MPs used to receive previously was about \$22,000 and guess how they made their money? They had select Committees or their Committees are hearing or listening to a Bill for two years and used to pick on a daily basis the allowances. In fact, those allowances were more than their actual salaries. They are the kind of shenanigans that takes place.

The reality, Madam Speaker, is that when people come into this Parliament, you need to be able to get good calibre of people, not people who cannot find a job anywhere else and they end up here. So, that is precisely what I had said to them and so, the Honourable Member is obviously putting that out of context. But it is very good, we actually appreciated that, and the student then came in and discussed it with me afterwards. He said; "You know I wanted to raise this because some people are talking about this." We had a good discussion about it.

Again, Madam Speaker, these things are being blown out of proportion but we welcome this kind of discussions because it actually opens up the thought process and the ideas of people. Thank you.

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

HON. S.B. VUNIVALU.- Madam Speaker, a supplementary question; are there any plans to have more consultations with high schools and university students in the near future in terms of the national budget?

HON. SPEAKER.- The Honourable Minister?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, I thank the Honourable Member. As highlighted, Honourable Member, the consultations will continue, just to let you know, as I had said this weekend, we have the public consultations in Savusavu and Labasa tomorrow. We then have school consultations on 10th May at Penang Sangam High School where we actually expect six schools to come, in Tavua which is on the same day in the afternoon, we are expecting five schools and these are all high schools.

On the morning of 11th May, we have university consultations at FNU Lautoka and in the afternoon also, we have consultations at the University of Fiji Saweni Campus.

On 12th May, we actually have three consultations; at the USP Laucala Campus in the morning and we do not know how many people will turn up but hopefully, a lot of them; from 12.00 p.m., to 2.00 p.m., is at the FNU Samabula Campus; and from 3.00 p.m., to 5.00 p.m., at FNU Nasinu Campus.

We will then have public consultations at Tailevu North College in Korovou; we have private sector consultations in Suva on 16th May; we then have 19th May school consultations at Montfort Technical College in Savusavu, 19th May school consultations at Labasa College in Labasa; and in that evening we have private sector consultations in Labasa at the Labasa College.

Madam Speaker, the reality is, 69.4 percent of the population is below the age of 40. As we continuously say in these consultations, the youth really are the fire belly of this country. We need to empower them, not just in terms of giving them the right to access to affordable education, research and training, we passed the Bill yesterday regarding the setting up of a Research Council for them to be able to get access grants, but also to empower them with the knowledge so they are better informed about the workings of any Government, workings of the budget so then when they listen to news and when they are able to make contributions in a few years' time, some of them will end up in this building, some of them will become leaders outside in companies or whatever they may be doing,

even in their homes, at least, they will have a better understanding and all of that holistically, will contribute to improving Fiji as a whole. Thank you.

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

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Madam Speaker, the Honourable Minister spoke about TELS and as you know, a lot of concerns has been shown about TELS which, to us, the reality is that, TELS is a huge burden.

As you know, Madam Speaker, one of my motions this week that was disallowed was to consider ways to make TELS repayment less stressful but that was not allowed. Let me ask this question then; how is Government explaining the potential burden that people may carry with TELS for most of their working lives?

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Minister, if that question is relevant is to the initial question you may provide an answer.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, not directly linked to it, but I will address it in any case.

Madam Speaker, the Honourable Members from the other side forget, in particular, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, who is a former Minister for Education, forget that no other Government has given TELS to the people of Fiji.

HON. GOVERNMENT MEMBERS.- Hear, hear!

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- No other Government! You have opened up the door, I will speak about it. No other Government, Madam Speaker!

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- You are the worst!

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- No other Government, Madam Speaker!

HON. MEMBER.- We have 600 scholarships.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- No other Government, Madam Speaker, for example, has made education free from Early Childhood all the way to Year 13, no other Government.

HON. GOVT. MEMBERS.- Hear, hear!

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- It is a fact.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- The SDL Manifesto.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- It is a fact, obviously, no one ready because you only got 15 seats or 18 seats whatever it is.

Madam Speaker, the fact of the matter is this, no other Government has done that, so we got free education all the way to Year 13. There are so many hundreds of Fijians, who have said to us; “We wish we had this in our time, at least, I would have finished high school.”

HON. GOVT. MEMBERS.- Hear, hear!

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Then, Madam Speaker, we have the confused Toppers with TELS. Then, Madam Speaker, we are now on an open merit recruitment basis, our offering scholarships of about 630 scholarships now. These scholarships are offered in the subject areas that are critical importance to Fiji, for example, we do not offer Toppers for people to become lawyers. We have many lawyers, there is no shortage of it. There may be a shortage of good ones, but the fact that the matter is, Madam Speaker, but at the end we have a lot of lawyers.

Madam Speaker, the Toppers is skewed in the areas of science. We have a shortage of people in the area of science, medicine, nursing, speech therapist, counsellors, pharmacists, engineers, land surveyors, town planners, veterinary science, et cetera, it is skewed in those areas. This is given to people we pay for everything, all the expense of day to day, including accommodation, et cetera.

Then, Madam Speaker, if a person cannot get the Toppers and they cannot afford to pay their university fees, they can get what they call a Tertiary Education Loan. The Tertiary Education Loan is given to those students and we pay their university fees. They start paying that loan back, and the maximum interest rate for a person who completes it is 1.5 percent. If a person comes from a low income family, they do not pay any interest. And they do not pay that loan as a lump sum, but they paid that loan once only they start working, and a payment arrangement is made. It is not for the rest of their lives. It is a ridiculous exaggeration!

We are not similar to jurisdictions, like USA where they pay interest rate at commercial rates. This is precisely a particular programme where people pay a maximum 1.5 percent should they finish their course, and only once they start working.

Madam Speaker, as we have seen today and I stand to be corrected on the exact figures, there is something like 14,000 to 15,000 students who are now being given assistance through the TELS programme. Again, there are hundreds and thousands of people who have said to us; “We wish there was something similar to TELS, at least, I could have gone to University. I came first, second or third in my class.”

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

HON. SPEAKER.- Point of Order!

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- I would like to correct what the Honourable Minister for Economy had just mentioned about the....

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. SPEAKER.- Order! The Point of Order is directed at the Speaker and the Speaker makes the correction.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- ...that the Honourable Minister for Economy withdraws the statement....

HON. SPEAKER.- Sorry, Honourable Member, can you just repeat what you have just said on the Point of Order?

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- My Point of Order is that, what the Honourable Minister for Economy had mentioned in terms of TELS not available is misleading because before, there was a Student Loan Scheme available in the Public Service and it was part of the scholarship system. So that comment or that remark by the Honourable Minister for Economy is misleading. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister, would you like to clarify?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, the Honourable Member should listen carefully to what I said. I did not, in any way, neglect what was done before. I said there is no such thing as TELS. You had the PSC Scholarship, you had scholarships being given on the basis of ethnicity before. So, Madam Speaker, there has been no other such scheme. The total combined number of people who were given assistance under the old scheme and a lot of it was in a very haphazard manner, for example, the Multi-Ethnic Scholarship, when they used to say scholarships, it is like a couple of hundred dollars. TELS actually pays for the entire fees, it is completely different.

Let me get back to my main point, Madam Speaker, as I was saying, there have been literally hundreds, if not, thousands of people who have said to us; “We wish we had a TELS Programme or Toppers Programme before because we could have actually gone to University.” They said; “We used to do really well in our schools”, but they say their father or mother could not afford to send them to university. But today they said; “My children or grandchildren have that opportunity.” So that is the reality, Madam Speaker. Some Honourable Members from the other side, I heard them say it is a burden.

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- Yes.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, what is better, is it better for a person who manages to finish high school because now they do not have to pay school fees? Let me remind you, we all talk about gender equality. All studies have shown that whenever parents had to make a choice between sending their children to school and if they have five children and they could not afford to pay the school fees for all of them, guess who mainly got to stay at home? The girls because they were seen to be the ones who get married off. They do not recognise that! Guess what the parents had to do when they had to make a choice between sending their children to university? Guess who gets to stay back at home? The girls, the women. It is a fact!

(Honourable Opposition Members interject)

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- It is a fact! You see, I have touched the raw nerve of them. Suddenly they are now thinking about all the women workers, but they think of that, Madam Speaker. They do not like that, but that is a fact. All studies have shown that. Go and look at all the studies, you need to do a lot more reading.

Madam Speaker, the reality is that, today under this Programme, more students are benefitting. Today, under this Programme we are empowering more and more of our youths, who will provide that intellectual input for this country, to take it up to the next level, Madam Speaker. And the point that I am trying to make is, is it not better that a person gets a tertiary qualification or even a technical qualification and have a small amount of loan that is not burdensome for them to be able to pay that? They will be able to pay better because their salary levels would be lot better because they have a tertiary qualification. It is preposterous to say that is a burden!

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- It is a burden because they have to pay.

HON. MEMBER.- Madam Speaker, that is nothing.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Leader of Opposition, supplementary question.

HON. RO T.V. KEP A.- A supplementary question, Madam Speaker, on the TELS issue, this has been brought up by students and it has been highlighted in the media. Can the Honourable Minister explain why 200 percent penalty is there with the TELS defaulters, thus making it difficult for students and their parents to find loan guarantors?

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, the substantive question is about budget consultations. We have now opened up the door into TELS, talking about scholarships, percentage, et cetera. I have said in my introduction...

(Hon. Opposition Member interjects)

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- ...you opened up the door, not us, , the Honourable Member sitting behind you.

(Laughter)

(Hon. Opposition Member interjects)

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- I know that. I know that, there is no denying of it.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, as we have said that a number of administrative issues have been raised by the students and a lot of these issues will be addressed. We have also discussed and I have said in my introductory remarks that we are having meetings with the

Honourable Minister, we will be having meetings with the TSLB Board, a lot of it is administrative, there are some oversight in some of the areas but, of course, they will all be ironed out and we are here to continuously improve that. It is a new scheme and, of course, as with any new scheme anywhere, you will have one or two flaws here and there, but the fact of the matter is, it is a good scheme and we will continuously seek to improve it, we will continuously seek to ensure that it is not as burdensome as they are trying to make it up but it will be efficient.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Salote Radrodro?

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Madam Speaker, budget consultation is part and parcel of the administrative function of the Permanent Secretary and his staff and according to the Constitution, Section 127(3), and I quote:

“The permanent secretary of a Ministry is responsible to the Minister concerned for the efficient, effective and economical management of the ministry....”

Madam Speaker, can the Honourable Minister explain why is the Minister making it his responsibility and usurping the responsibilities of the Permanent Secretary in undertaking the budget consultation?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, the Honourable Radrodro is, unfortunately, showing her ignorance. She is reading Section 127(3) of the Constitution that talks about the administration of the Ministry.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- That is part of it!

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- That has got nothing to do with the public consultations.

Madam Speaker, the reality is this, they always come here and tell us that we are not democratic, this Government is not democratic, this Parliament is not democratic, we need to hear from members of the public, we need to hear their voices; but when we are actually going out and doing that, they do not like that.

Then suddenly the door is open, then they are quoting from Section 127(3) of the Constitution when they hardly referred to it, they only referred to it when it suits them, but again, they get it wrong. You have got it wrong!

It is about the administration of the Ministry, Madam Speaker, in the same way as the administration of Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Forests, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Fisheries, Ministry of Education or Department of Social Welfare, is done by the Permanent Secretaries, we all know that.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- You are interfering!

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- What interference is there, Madam Speaker, this is superfluous.

They are now clutching at straws. She is probably listening to her leader. Her leader is caught in a time warp. Her leader who is outside Parliament is caught in a time warp, I am not talking about the Honourable Leader of Opposition. It is a fact, she is just resounding that. At least, you should listen to your Honourable Leader of Opposition, not your leader outside.

(Laughter)

Your leader outside is taking you back to your 1990s, taking you back to the 1990s when the demographics were different, when they did not do consultations. We are doing consultation, Madam Speaker.

The Permanent Secretary for Economy last week met up with all the permanent secretaries of the different ministries. She is doing her administrative side of the Budget. We will then again, Madam Speaker, apart from these Budget consultations, and I actually got it in the programme here, from the 18th to 21st April, because the first round actually has taken place, now the first round of Permanent Secretary for Economy with the ministries from the 18th to 21st of April, she is doing that. We are doing the public consultations.

Again, Madam Speaker, from 15th to 18th May, the Honourable Ministers, together with their permanent secretaries will then come and meet the Honourable Minister for Economy and the Permanent Secretary for Economy and we will do a second round of the administrative side. This is the extensive level of consultations that are taking place. Unfortunately Honourable Radrodro is like a leader caught in a time-warp and she does not realise that when she quotes from the Constitution, she needs to be legally correct. This routing of interference is in fact a thorn in their side. It is a thorn in their side because they do not want us to go and talk to the members of the public. Contradicting - they talk about democracy.

HON. SPEAKER.- Point of Order.

HON. A. SUDHAKAR.- Supplementary question. Madam Speaker, for the benefit of the students who are sitting in the gallery, can the Honourable Minister please explain ...

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. A. SUDHAKAR.- Please, listen to me. You are not listening, that is the problem.

... why it is important for the students to actively participate in this Budget Consultations?

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Minister.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, I think I have sort of answered this question earlier on but I will further elucidate, just to reiterate that it is critically important for the youths of our country to be able to be empowered with the knowledge regarding government processes. It is really very important. As I said, 69.4 percent of the population of this country is below the age of 40.

Madam Speaker, Honourable Salote Radrodro always goes on that we have a development plan in place and as we said the other day, we are going to get the development plan climate sensitised. In the same way, Madam Speaker, when we eke out a 20-year development plan, we need to be able to be aware as to what will happen to Fiji in the demographics, in 30 years' time.

These youths that constitute 70 percent of our population, in 30 years' time will be the older generation, so our ability to address their issues and their challenges when they are in their 50s and 60s, obviously will be quite different. So they will also at the same time be the people who will drive this country. If they are from this age, educated and knowledgeable about how the economy works, how the budgetary process works, they have a say in it, they not only feel like they are part of society but also part of administrative making or decision-making. They also, Madam Speaker, will have the right level of knowledge and exposure to be able to make this decision themselves when they take up positions of leadership, and hopefully then we will have better calibre of Members of this House also in the future. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Nawaikula.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Madam Speaker, for the benefit of the students who are at the gallery, what answer did the Honourable Minister give or will he give to the students who want free tuition at tertiary and university level?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, none of the students so far have asked us that. Honourable Nawaikula is not a student, but one may think he is sometimes. Madam Speaker, one of the most enlightening experiences in these Budget consultations is to see the level of wisdom that actually exist with many of these young people of our country. They do not make those kind of very flagrant comments as Honourable Nawaikula is doing. They actually understand how a government, any government with limited resources needs to balance all the different priority areas.

They understand that, Madam Speaker, and the examples that we do have in the same way that we talk about the budget for a house, that we need to have a budget for your house, you need to be able to give priorities to different areas depending on how your house is at that moment constituted. You make it priorities to certain areas because that will further the welfare of your house. Other times you give priority to other areas but it is all about a balancing act.

Madam Speaker, that balancing act and the ability to appreciate that is not better in terms of a better understanding by our youths that Honourable Nawaikula is demonstrating today.

HON. SPEAKER.- We will move on to the next question and I invite the Honourable Ruveni Nadalo to take the floor.

Coconut Industry
(Question No. 133/2017)

HON. R. NADALO asked the Government, upon notice:

Can the Honourable Minister for Agriculture, Rural and Maritime Development and National Disaster Management brief this House on the steps taken to beef up the coconut industry after *Cyclone Winston*?

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU (Minister for Agriculture, Rural and Maritime Development and National Disaster Management).- Madam Speaker, can I read my answer this morning?

(Laughter)

I wish to thank the Honourable Member for raising this question. Again, the coconut industry is one of the very important industries for the agriculture sector and its resilience as well, and Government continues to encourage our people to rehabilitate and develop it to become a vibrant industry, given that apart from sugarcane, where we have about 250,000 people that benefit directly and indirectly with the coconut industry.

We have about 100,000 farmers and their families who are dependent on it for their livelihood as well.

To go directly to the answer to the question, Madam Speaker, we have a five-year plan. Why five years? I will justify, Madam Speaker. This five-year plan is not only about the replacement for the fallen trees, but it is about the rehabilitation and the replacement of the senile trees as well.

One of the biggest problems that we face now in the industry is the age of the old senile trees that we have and most of them are not fruiting normally as we would expect and this is one of the major contributors to the production level in as far as coconut is concerned.

Let me just assure this Honourable House, Madam Speaker, that again Government through the Ministry of Agriculture is committed to revitalising the coconut industry and has mapped out this five-year plan that I have alluded to.

Why five years? One of the biggest problems now, Madam Speaker, is sourcing, what we call “seed nuts” because of the devastation, particularly in the main coconut growing areas. One of our biggest issue now is getting seed nuts because most of the nuts fell prematurely during *Cyclone Winston*.

Where are we sourcing seed nuts now, Madam Speaker? The only option for us now is to bring most of our seed nuts from Rotuma, and I must thank the Rotuman community and of course the Government shipping services for providing us with the assistance for us to get coconut seeds from Rotuma.

We have brought across about 40,000 seeds and this has been raised in the various nurseries throughout Fiji, particularly concentrated in the main areas that were devastated during *Cyclone Winston*, Madam Speaker.

As I have stated, about 40,000 seeds we have already raised and this has been distributed to these growing areas.

The other challenge, Madam Speaker, is the repairing of infrastructure, coconut driers and the facilities that they have, particularly in Lomaiviti, Lau and Vanua Levu, and of course the major industries like Copra Millers as well.

Of course, we are continuing, apart from the seeds that we are already bringing across from Rotuma, we are also working on selecting other mother palms throughout Fiji, and again because of the devastation, usually after cyclones, the recovery for coconut trees to get back to the normal fruiting cycle takes 18 to 24 months.

So, this is one of our big challenges now, apart from Rotuma we are looking at other mother palms within Viti Levu and the other areas, Madam Speaker, I will stop there for the meantime.

HON. SPEAKER. - Thank you supplementary question, Honourable Nawaikula.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA. - Madam Speaker, the coconut industry is just like the sugar industry and that Government, the other side has killed it, you have killed this important industry that sustains, according to their own statistics, 100,000 families and the same problem. So, the same problem is the amount that the farmer gets.

What assurance can the Honourable Minister give to this House that the farmers will have a steady rate of income, steady rate of price or mill-gate price?

HON. SPEAKER. - Thank you. Honourable Minister.

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU. - Madam Speaker, let me assure all coconut farmers that Government has increased the price for copra. It is running now at around \$900 or so per tonne.

Again, like any other commodity, it is driven by the price and Government subsidises the price, Madam Speaker, and we have one of the best prices offered now for the farmers, I have talked \$900 plus per tonne of copra. Not only that, but we have also made some major changes, not only for copra but other coconut by-products Madam Speaker, and I am particularly referring to the recent purchases by AMA (Agro Marketing Authority) and of course Copra Millers in Savusavu.

They have state-of-the-art technology on Virgin Coconut Oil (VCO) and this again are recent investments by Government so that we are not only focusing on crude coconut oil but of course there are more options and better prices as well offered in VCO and VCO by-products, Madam Speaker, So, the assurance is, we are offering better prices through corporate subsidy and of course, we have brought in new technologies as well for other alternative by-products.

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

HON. DR. B. LAL. - Thank you Madam Speaker, supplementary question. Does the ministry have plans to establish nurseries in other areas that were not affected by *Cyclone Winston*? Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER. - Thank you. Honourable Minister.

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Yes Madam Speaker, again if we go back to 2003, Fiji hosted the Asia Pacific Coconut Community Conference here and government embarked on a 1 million replanting programme which we are still in the process of continuing, but we have also established nurseries. This is again a new initiative by the Ministry for Agriculture because traditionally coconut is more heavily concentrated in the Northern Division, and of course the Eastern Division and the coastal areas, along particularly Viti Levu.

However, Madam Speaker, we have established nurseries in Nadroga and Navosa. If you drive past Cuvu, you will see a coconut nursery there. We have also established nursery along the Nakorotubu coast. Of course in Lakena in Nausori, we have nursery in there as well. Babavoce in Tailevu, we have nurseries there as well, Madam Speaker. In Savusavu, we have apart from Wainigata, we have also asked Copra Millers for their facility and we have raised about 6,000 seedlings in Savusavu alone using the Copra Millers facility.

In Naitasiri, in Lomaivuna, we have also established the coconut nursery in Lomaivuna as well and of course in Koro, Ovalau, Vanua Balavu, Mua in Taveuni, these are all the recent nurseries that we have established and we will continue to move into these areas. Some Honourable Members may ask, how about Ba and the Tavua area? We are sourcing from Dobuilevu. Dobuilevu has a nursery, apart from Nakorotubu coast.

Why not establish nurseries in there? Madam Speaker, it is just because of the weather pattern we prefer to keep it in the intermediate zones rather than pushing it into the dry zones because of water problems, because the nuts would need to be watered regularly, particularly as they are developing. Thank you Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER. - Honourable Howard Politini you have the floor.

HON. H.R.T. POLITINI. - Supplementary question, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER. - Supplementary question.

HON. H.R.T. POLITINI. - Coconut, being a lucrative product for health and wellbeing, what is Government doing to improve the marketing of these coconut products and its by-products? Thank you Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER. - Honourable Minister.

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU. - Madam Speaker, I have partly answered this question when the Honourable Nawaikula raised his question about the prices. I have talked about VCO. Again, let me say, Madam Speaker, that one of the major problems that we face in this industry is the mono product are out of coconut which is crude coconut oil loaded from Savusavu port at Valaga Bay, but Government has realised this and is working with Asia-Pacific coconut community, we have ventured into new options and new market segments as well, Madam Speaker.

For us to do that, we need a state-of-the-art facility in Fiji and that facility is now in Mua, in Taveuni. We call it the Whole Nut Processing Centre. The Whole Nut Processing Centre, apart from oil, teaches our women particularly how to use the husk, the shell to do carbon charcoal, this is the Whole Nut Processing Centre in Taveuni.

I have talked about the two new technologies the centrifuge filtration system that is now available with AMA and Copra Millers in Taveuni. This is a technology that we sourced from our partners in the Asian countries and that will also raise the level of products that we have, Madam Speaker.

Likewise, in terms of research, we are continuing with our research at Koronivia. We are looking at other products like coconut wine, coconut yogurt, coconut milk because all these are important for us.

In terms of technical assistance Madam Speaker, we have sought the assistance of the Indian Government, we have two Indian specialists now in the country, one is with Copra Millers in Savusavu, looking at the technology and of course paid by Copra Millers and that is another specialist that is with the Ministry of Agriculture, based in Koronivia looking at the whole industry plan that will be linked up to the crop strategy plan that we are now currently formulating and which will be passed on to Government as well. Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER. - Honourable Ratu Kiliraki you have the floor.

HON. RATU K. KILIRAKI. - Thank you Madam Speaker, once you have the market on the dried coconuts, we have a booming green coconut industry that is sold on the streets. In terms of the Government programme, how can he address all those in regards to developing the green coconut milks?

HON. LT. COL I.B. SERUIRATU. - Yes, Madam Speaker, I totally agree with the Honourable Member, a huge potential. There are some interests already registered with the Ministry by the private sector. Again, I go back to the answer that I raised in this honourable House the other day, this is why our agriculture statistics is so important because logistics will be a huge problem for us.

Most of the investors, they prefer to be closer to the plantations, and this is one of the reasons why we have decentralised the breeding programme and moved nurseries into the potential areas, particularly in the West, because, firstly, because the West is strategic, the tourism market we look forward to the day where we will replace a glass of orange juice with coconuts and not only that coconut water is one of the niche products now on the market, Madam Speaker. But, of course when I talk about logistics, again, apart from the technology, the packaging material will be a big challenge for us and this is what the investors are looking on and I have a team in the Ministry of Agriculture, a taskforce that was set up few years ago to look into these other alternatives, but definitely the ministry is looking seriously into developing this, together with the private sector.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Anare Vadei.

HON. A.T. VADEI.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. I just want to ask the Honourable Minister about the project that just started off, using biodiesel and coconut by-products; what is the status now?

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister.

HON. COL. LT. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Madam Speaker, let me assure the Honourable Member that we are revisiting that together with the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport because it is their project, but as Minister responsible for Rural Development, I am interested in this and not only that, Madam Speaker, as the Climate Champion, one of the key thematic areas under sustainable transportation in the agenda of the COP, Madam Speaker, is sustainable transportation. One of the thematic areas is the use of biofuel in public transportation and I see huge potentials for Fiji, in terms of our NVC, and in terms of projects particularly on mitigation, where we can move into this so that we can better utilise the product out of the biofuels stations that we have.

Again, the market has also is perhaps the big challenge now because in Koro, Vanua Balavu and Rabi, where we have these machines, there is very limited machinery there. So, we are looking at the options now, improving the technology, market access and of course we see huge potentials in sustainable transportation as part of the global climate action agenda, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. We will now move on to the next item in the Order Paper and I call on the Honourable Professor Biman Prasad to ask his written question.

Written Question

Total Value of imported goods
(Question No. 138/2017)

HON. PROF. B.C. PRASAD asked the Government, upon notice:

Would the Honourable Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Public Enterprises, Civil Service and Communication inform Parliament the total value of import duty, Value Added Tax and any other revenue collected by Government per litre of unleaded fuel, diesel, premix, kerosene, LPG and cooking gas for the last financial year?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM (Honourable Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Public Enterprises, Civil Service and Communications).- Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I will table my answer at a later sitting day, as permitted under Standing Order 45(3). Thank you.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. SPEAKER.- Before we move on to the next item on the Order Paper, I will allow Honourable Niko Nawaikula to make a personal explanation. Pursuant to Standing Order 80 the matter to be explained must be personal to the Member seeking permission to make a personal explanation.

The procedure cannot be used to make a personal explanation on behalf of another Member. This process is used to explain to Parliament matters of personal nature that may reflect the honour or integrity of a Member. It can be used to correct an earlier answer or statement, for example by a Minister or by a Member to correct an earlier statement or explain something that has occurred outside the Parliament. But this is not another channel for taking issue with or debating a statement made in debate or outside the Parliament on the ground that it is mistaken or wrong.

In the past, I have allowed Members to make personal statements and the same requirements will apply here as well. The Honourable Nawaikula will read out his personal explanation to which I have a copy. If the Honourable Member deviates from the script, I will ask him to take his seat. There is no debate on the statement and I now give the floor to the Honourable Nawaikula.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. If you just allow me to deviate so I can apologise.

HON. SPEAKER.- Please just read.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- First, I just want to apologise.

HON. SPEAKER.- You are not apologising.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Alright.

HON. SPEAKER.- Do not deviate from what has been submitted.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, thank you for giving me this opportunity, under Standing Order 80 to give a personal explanation.

Madam Speaker, on Wednesday, 26th April, 2017, I asked a supplementary question, asking whether the Honourable Minister for Defence will consider taking up with Government a proposal to

legalise the commercial harvesting of marijuana. This question, and my letter explanation was taken to the media and has been misquoted and misrepresented by the media and public to mean that I stand for legalising the consumption of marijuana. As a result, this has subjected me in my family to enormous public pressure and some very blunt jokes. Needless to say, Madam Speaker, this has hurt me and those very close to me, to the extent that even my wife has summoned me to keep my mouth shut here in Parliament ...

(Laughter)

... and whatever I say to remember my Catholic faith and to be consistent with its teachings.

Madam Speaker, for the record and for clarification to the public, I did not and will not ever promote the legalisation of the consumption of marijuana. It is against the teachings of my Catholic faith and I will be foolish even to say that as a grandfather, father and a parent.

What I had said then and this is clear from *Hansard* and the comments that I made and clarified earlier later to the media was in reference to the commercial harvesting of marijuana, and that is based on the many, many products that can be obtained from this plant, including medicinal to cure illness, fabric, manufacture clothes, bags and other goods. I hope this will now put this matter to rest.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you.

END OF WEEK'S STATEMENTS

Overwater Bungalow

HON. SPEAKER.- The Honourable Viliame Gavoka and the Honourable Mosese Bulitavu have given notice to make end of week's statements under Standing Order 35. Each Member may speak up to 10 minutes with a 10 minutes response by the relevant Minister responsible. There will be no other debate. I now call on the Honourable Viliame Gavoka to deliver his statement.

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

Madam Speaker, I wish to speak on a new tourism products that will benefit Fiji greatly and take our tourism to another level.

Madam Speaker, these are the overwater bungalows, which today we will see in Likuliku Resort, to some extent in Momi, and helping in a big way to change the product offering in our country.

As you know, Madam Speaker, my background is in tourism and I was in charge of marketing for the National Tourism Organisation, FVB, and at one point, our products offering in Fiji was viewed to be stale and boring,

When we used to develop the Japanese market, the Honourable Minister for Defence will remember this when I used to visit Japan, came a time when Japan with a huge honeymoon contents in its tourism to Fiji was comparing us with the French Polynesia with the Maldives, Seychelles and other Indian ocean destinations that had these overwater bungalows. As a honeymooner, the images of overwater bangalows compare to our land base resorts was quite critical to the Japanese in making their decisions on where to go for their honeymoon. And the same now is happening with China and other sources of tourism for Fiji. So, it is a product that needs to be developed.

Likuliku is doing very well, it is a high yield product. Likuliku; you pay \$3,880 a night. That is the kind of rates they command. Momi; I think as introductory, at this point, it is about \$1500 to \$1600. So, the yield is very high and the attraction is equally very, very high, appealing rather.

In the coral coast, Madam Speaker, where I come from, the potential for this is quite huge. Already, there are two projects that want to develop overwater bungalows between the coast and the reef. I have shown the Standing Committee Members on Natural Resources about some graphics or what they will look like. They are quite spectacular, sitting between the reef and the coast line. When we develop this to the extent that we can, Fiji's Tourism will only strengthen.

We already have some huge beautiful resorts, boutique, four or five and some are six star hotels, so Fiji, in terms of product offering is pretty well positioned but overwater bungalows will take it to another level. It is a phenomena that Fiji needs to embrace and I will ask all the stakeholders and Government to look into this very seriously and I encourage it but overwater bungalows are going to sit on *qoliqoli*. We must ensure that the process of developing this includes the *qoliqoli* owners. They must be properly consulted, they must be part of the process and they must benefit in the creation of the wealth that comes from overwater bungalows. As I said earlier, the yield is quite huge.

Today, Madam Speaker, the *qoliqoli* belongs to the State. So if someone comes in to build an overwater bungalow on a *qoliqoli*, there is no lease that goes to the *qoliqoli* owners of what we call now the indigenous people who now fish on those areas. It will be incumbent upon us to relook at this arrangement and make sure that when they give away that *qoliqoli* which will be forever, for eternity, that the compensation level is equitable and sufficient. I do not believe that we can come in with Department of Fisheries, make an assessment of the way the *qoliqoli* is going to be destroyed and pay \$100,000 or \$200,000 year, and leave it at that. I believe, going forward, whenever a resort is built on a *qoliqoli*, the formula must be set out, similar to the land-based resorts.

Land based resorts, Madam Speaker, the landowners get 3 percent of all gross receipts. And if you look at Likuliku Resort today, if they have that lease for 99 years at the rate that they have today, in 99 years they will have collected some \$2 billion out of those *buress* or overwater bungalows. Likuliku Resort, I believe, they were paid a sum that was assessed to be the *qoliqoli* that was destroyed, that they will not have it any more, and that is the end of it. You pay them at Likuliku, and they have nothing else, no other stake in the bungalows today. That has to change. If you want us to be a big part of our tourism, we must change it to ensure that the *qoliqoli* owner has the same return as the land-based landowner.

This, Madam Speaker, is very critical. If you drive through the Coral Coast, yes, they can have spectacular resorts sitting on those reefs but they can also be frightening because as soon as you build, there is no more harvesting of the sea for the coastal areas. So it behoves us, Madam Speaker, and I would plead with Parliament today as we go forward, as we develop this, we must take into consideration balancing the sharing of the wealth in an equitable manner.

I believe the best way to do it is to ensure that the lease on the *qoliqolis* is to be similar to the lease on the land, if not, higher because the land is like this, the landowner can give away a bit of his land for a hotel, he has got other land. He has got another valley, another hill, another coastal area but when you give your *qoliqoli*, that is it. So if you are talking about 3 percent today for the land-based landowner, we should consider something higher for the *qoliqoli* owners but as a minimum, we must give something and not what you currently have, to take the *qoliqoli*, pay them an assessment of what has been damaged and that is the end of the story.

Momi is like that, they have been paid for the damage done to their *i qoliqoli*. They now have overwater bungalows on that *qoliqoli* area and they have no further share going forward. That to me, Madam Speaker, is very critical. Tourism, from my experience, will only thrive if everyone benefits. Every stakeholder must benefit from this, Madam Speaker.

It has been known in some parts of the Indian Ocean where people began to resent that choice piece of land and choice areas were taken out by huge conglomerates, the big companies and denying the local people the use of those areas. We must try and avoid this, hence the need to be careful with the way we go about our overwater bungalows. We all know that tourism is number one and we all need to support it and we must support overwater bungalows, but with great care.

I just want to add in here, Madam Speaker, the concern about tourism, we must also be careful when you have a five star or six star resort in a locality, look after the local community. I quoted the case about Natadola Inter-Continental, adjacent to Sansana Village, a five star hotel, the Golf Course but Sanasana Village has a road that must have been built during the days of the Romans, it is breaking apart. Tourists like to see that what they bring into this country also benefit the local community. You saw yesterday on television a guest from Outrigger, going to a local school, helping build the school, that is now the cultural aspect of tourism which goes well with the fantasy that we provide in our top resorts.

Madam Speaker, let me just state here, that tourism is also very, very sensitive to statements that can suggest forms of dislocation within our community. And I would ask the Honourable Minister for Defence please, ask the Military not to make public statements, like they did yesterday. The Methodist Church is free to say what they want to say, they are part of the dialogue but once the Military starts exerting itself in the public areas...

(Hon. Government Member interjects)

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- ..., given our record in 1987, 2000 and 2006, they begin to create anxiety so please, ask the Military to stay back and let dialogue flow normally in this country. Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- In the absence of the Honourable Minister of Tourism I will give the floor to the Honourable Attorney-General to speak in response.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, we thought it was about focussing on the new product that would obviously be new when we saw the statement that will be about the latter part of what the Honourable Member was talking about. Madam Speaker, no doubt overwater bungalows a is feature in many countries in the world.

Madam Speaker, also the fact of the matter is that, that is one segment in the market, it is not the only thing in the market that is missing in Fiji. Likuliku obviously is a well-known one, Momi now, of course, is there. As the Honourable Minister, the climate champion has reminded us in this House and from the other side, Honourable Ratu Kiliraki spoke about over development. For example, when people build overwater bungalows, we also need to be aware of the impact of the overwater bungalows on the biodiversity and on the environment. Will it cause coral bleaching? What kind of environmental damage will it bring about too?

All of these, Madam Speaker, is assessed prior to any approval being given, and they are guided by the Environmental Management Act. In this way, the Honourable Member is again incorrect,

qoliqoli compensation is not paid for damage, it is paid for the loss of access to that *qoliqoli* area. It is not about damage because if it was about damage, the Environmental Management Act would not allow the damage to take place in the first place. That is why you have an Environmental Impact Assessment carried out, so fundamentally that argument is flawed.

Qoliqoli is about compensation and, Madam Speaker, again, it is incorrect to say that if a group of landowners does, for example, decide to participate whether in a partnership form or whether in a form by way of giving a lease through the Government, the fact of the matter is that, a *qoliqoli* area which may be required for overwater bungalows could be a very limited area. If you look at Likuliku itself, they have not given up their entire *qoliqoli* area, the *qoliqoli* owners have not given up their entire area, they have given a small segment of their *qoliqoli* area. So it is incorrect to say that when you allow *qoliqoli* areas to be given up, they gave up their entire *qoliqoli* area. It is factually incorrect.

Madam Speaker, the fact of the matter is that, the tourism market in Fiji, there are many other areas that are under-marketed or we do not have capacity; there are the MICE market - Meeting, Incentives, Conventions, Exhibitions. We do not have, Madam Speaker, in Fiji any facility to hold very comfortably, for example, a 1,500 people gathering, 2,000 people gathering, 3000 gathering. We cannot, for example, have large exhibitions, we cannot have large major events, so that is also one area we need to develop and I am happy to say that the Fiji National Provident Fund, and I happen to have it with me, is actually at the moment finalising the prints and they are building a convention centre in Momi also to complement Momi, that will host at least three-and-a-half thousand people in a banquet facility for more than 4,000 people.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- White elephant!

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, I am also happy to announce that the Asian Development Bank (ADB), immediately after the completion of this building, will host the annual meeting of the ADB which has never been held in the Pacific and they have chosen Fiji for that. That type of facility actually opens up the market...

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- White elephant!

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.-... opens up the segmentation.

Madam Speaker, this is the kind of negativity, saying 'white elephant'. We have not even opened up this market. Why do you think that Government is partnering, for example, with Fiji Airways, flying to Singapore, Hong Kong, San Francisco, Los Angeles. We are the hub of the Pacific. Anyone who knows about the modern day tourism sector will tell you that the market choices are looking for new destinations and new way. Obviously, this is the way to go. The FNPF is making this investment because they see the potential in it. Other hoteliers are encouraging them to do it because they see the potential in it, so that, of course, is also one segment.

Madam Speaker, the reality is that, if we want to look at, and the Honourable Member talked about the Indian Ocean. Mauritius does not have a similar land arrangement or *qoliqoli* issue that we have. Maldives is completely a different setup too, so I do not know which other Indian Oceanic country he is talking about. Those are the two major tourism destinations in the Indian Ocean. Seychelles has a completely different setup. The land tenure that we have in Fiji is very unique. The system here is very unique. So again, I do not know what reference he is making to and to which country. It is incorrect to do that kind of comparison.

Secondly, Madam Speaker, a lease, as Honourable Member had said is for entirety, leases are never given for entirety. The legal definition of the word 'lease', he should consult the Honourable Member sitting next to him, is that it is for a temporary period, whether it is for 99 years or whether it is for 30 years, it is still not in perpetuity. The ownership still rests with their original title holder. Lease always come to an end.

No doubt, Madam Speaker, many of the deals that was done in the 1970s and 1980s were not fair deals. At that time, the iTLTB or NLTB as it was known then, did not do a fair deal for the landowners. It did not provide them with that commercial knowledge that they needed to be able to negotiate, they did not do that. The story today is very different. We cannot be actually using the examples of 1970s and 1980s to say it will be replicated again under this Government. This Government will never allow that to happen, Madam Speaker. So, they are not comparing apples with apples.

Similarly, Madam Speaker, the equal distribution of land lease monies has also ensured that not only a handful of people have access to the wealth that is generated from leasing.

HON. OPPOSITION MEMBER.- Peanuts!

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- They say, 'peanuts'. Through the Honourable Prime Minister, we now have trust funds setup for people who are below the age of 18 years. Some of them by the time they get to the age of 18, they will have a million dollars in their bank account, and they call it peanuts. That never happened! That never happened, Madam Speaker! We can give you numerous stories about that.

Again, Madam Speaker, and I have used this word a number of times because unfortunately, that is what they are doing, the obfuscation of the facts, obfuscation of realities, selective use of information and selective use of data. We are not arguing with the fact that overwater bungalows are not a good thing but again, it needs to follow a proper process.

We also believe, Madam Speaker, that everyone that is going to be a partner needs to be consulted, no one is ever denying that. The way it has been presented is as if people will not be consulted. But, unfortunately, Madam Speaker, a thorough and proper assessment of such a proposal needs to be based on facts and unfortunately, what the Honourable Member has done, he has not essentially presented all the facts.

Madam Speaker, we, of course, are continuously looking at enhancing the tourism sector in Fiji. As we have said on numerous occasions, Fiji has now reached out to China and India. India, in five years' time, will be the largest outbound market in the world. Even if we were to get even 1 percent of the largest outbound market, we will be doing very well. Frankly, at the moment, the Indians are the ones who are giving us the highest yield per head per person, so we need to nurture, inculcate and encourage these markets.

One of the issues we were told when we recently visited India, the Indians were saying; why are you marketing Fiji only as a honeymoon destination?" Indians want to do sky-diving, diving, and apparently diving is a big thing for them. So we also need to change the way that we think about tourism, the way that we think about marketing our country and to the different market sources, so it is a holistic approach, Madam Speaker.

Again, Madam Speaker, the reality is that the future looks bright, and the reality is that we have to actually do things smarter. We have to get the right intellectual input and be able to make these assessments, make these investments, make or create the discourse in respect of the tourism sector but with facts.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now call on the Honourable Mosese Bilitavu to deliver his statement.

Flooding Caused by Poor Drainage – Rural Roads

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Thank you Madam Speaker. My end of week statement will be on flooding caused by poor drainage and my focus will be on the rural roads, in this regard.

Madam Speaker, I think throughout the week, there has been questions from this side of the House to the other side, and most of those questions were in regards to roads and infrastructure and probably, on FRA. There have also been issues that was brought to the attention of Parliament in regards to certain petitions signed by people in regards to the performance of certain contractors with regard to rural roads.

But back to the issue, Madam Speaker, in regards to flooding caused by poor drainage, I will focus my statement to specific areas around Vanua Levu, probably the rural areas. In one particular area, if you go from Labasa Town to Siberia which is called the Vunicuicui Road, it has been a flood prone area and this has been highlighted in the media several times. I think there has not been any solution since then. Even the Advisory Councils, the *turaga ni koros*, the *mata ni tikinas* from the area, have been finding it difficult by numerous calls to FRA. This particular issue has not been attended to.

If you go to that particular area, Madam Speaker, it is quite low and there is a river bank on the right hand side of the road and the water comes from the mountain after heavy rain. This was previously managed by the Public Works Department (PWD) and they were doing a very good job, although with only \$60 million budget per year, they managed to clear and clean those drains timely.

Madam Speaker, at the moment there are contractors that are contracted with FRA and around Vanua Levu, you have the Black & White Company, you have Juicy Transport, Fulton Hogan and these are several companies that are contracted to these areas. But if you move around these rural areas, people complain about the services that are provided and the technical experts that are engaged in these areas. Most of the people in the area complain about poor drainage that causes flooding and flooding causes bad road conditions and again, after a flood the road is not maintained.

If you go around the area, Madam Speaker, the v-drains are quite small. Sometimes, if you make a proper inspection in the area, the culverts are even higher than the deck of the v-drain, so the water cannot even reach the culvert. That questions, Madam Speaker, the ability of these contractors, whether they are really qualified to do a proper job in these particular areas. And given that this particular problem has created problems to the public, especially in transportation movement. It has stopped people from going to work, it prevents students from attending school in several instances, and even the transportation companies in those areas, the public service vehicles, bus companies and taxis can also testify and say that this particular area has been a problem for a long time.

Madam Speaker, I thought about bringing this issue to Parliament in order to call upon the relevant Minister and Ministry to look at this particular problem with urgency because it affects our rural people. Not only making new roads, Madam Speaker, but also to see that the roads that are currently being used could cater for the public who are currently using it.

Most of the roads, Madam Speaker, the road from Tabia to Niurua in Macuata, used to be a two lane road but if you go there now, it is just only one lane. Even the road edge near the drain is all covered with mud and grass, even there is overgrown grass inside the track on the road.

Madam Speaker, those are some of the complaints. Despite the Honourable Prime Minister moving around in the Northern Division and probably have received similar complaints, we call on the Government to see this as an urgent matter and try to resolve this because it will help the movement of our people, people who are voters also taxpayers.

I would like to also propose to Government to relook at the whole structure itself, how these contractors are contracted. Although, there is a Monitoring Unit at Fiji Roads Authority (FRA) which looks into the performance of these contractors but I think that needs to be reviewed on those basis, Madam Speaker, given the timings that they do, the cleaning and maintenance and also to get proper experts that should probably be the best people who will handle this particular area.

As I have said, Madam Speaker, these are some of the issues and probably, we will need to revisit the old structure that was there, given the massive allocation that is given to FRA which is about \$600 million per year, but it is not reflected on our current conditions of road and drainage.

Madam Speaker, we probably have a 2014-2020 Development Plan by Government in regards to Vanua Levu infrastructure and roads, but I think it is slow in implementation, but we plead to Government to speed up those projects to help our rural people, especially enjoying the services of better roads so that they can travel on better times to do with their business dealings and other economic activities.

Madam Speaker, as I have said, there needs to be proper thought in this regards. The people in this particular area call on Government, especially the Honourable Minister, to look at this seriously and try to coordinate things with FRA and with contractors and especially with the other relevant authorities in the Northern Division where these complaints are lodged to be attended in a very timely manner.

With that, Madam Speaker, I thank you.

HON. SPEAKER. - Thank you. With the absence of the Minister for Local Government, Housing and Environment and Infrastructure and Transport, I will give the floor to the Honourable Minister for Agriculture to respond.

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU. - Madam Speaker, again, I do convey the apology of the Honourable Minister responsible for infrastructure and transport. You will see from his responses this morning, Madam Speaker, he is not well and he has retired to get some rest. So I will answer or provide the response from Government this morning.

Madam Speaker, again, the challenge with Government is not only about a particular area, Vunicuicui or Siberia or Vunivau or Tabia to Niurua, but Government looks at the whole of Fiji.

HON. GOVT. MEMBERS.- Hear, hear!

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU. – And, of course, when you are talking about the allocation of \$600 million, Madam Speaker, of course it is a lot of money, but that \$600 million is not sufficient for all the demands that are there, given the state of our infrastructure. Let me also state, Madam Speaker, that fixing the neglect of yesteryears is going to take time. The Government, of course, has plans to fix these problems.

Let me talk about the flooding in that specific area, Madam Speaker, I am well aware of the flooding in Vunicuicui and Siberia as a former Commissioner Northern and, of course, as Minister responsible for Land and Water Resources Management in the Ministry for Agriculture. Of course, it is the state of the road. If you go to Siberia, Madam Speaker, and the Honourable Parmod Chand would know actually this that it is the structure of the road. I have talked about the neglect over years, the drains, of course, are much higher now than the level of the road. This is not only in Siberia, it is almost throughout Vanua Levu before this current Government came in, Madam Speaker.

Government has fixed most of these roads and again, Madam Speaker, on bus services, let me justify what I have stated. Before, the bus did not service Kubulau.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- The people of Kubulau used to pay \$250 just to get to Nabouwalu because they have to hire a carrier, there were no bus services but now, they are paying \$7 to get to Nabouwalu from Kubulau. Why? Better roads, and now the buses are operating in that area, Madam Speaker. That is one, the neglect over the years and the state of the roads have continued to deteriorate, Madam Speaker.

The second contributing factor to the flooding, Madam Speaker, this area, if you go upstream, there is a lot of gravel extraction happening there. Why? The Environment Management Act came into place in 2008. So, the years of unsupervised illegal extraction happening upstream, that is the major contributing factor to the flooding.

Thirdly, Madam Speaker, is the logging. I know that area very well, and this is the former Commissioner speaking.

(Laughter)

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU. - Logging upstream, Madam Speaker, is another major contributing factor to this problem. If you know that area, Madam Speaker, there is an island in the middle of the river - the Labasa River, which is another major contributing factor because whenever we have excessive rainfall, this island splits the direction of the flow.

I will come back to the drainage issue, Madam Speaker. Water works on surfaces and gaps. When you create a surface, it will find a gap, so when this island in the middle of the river surfaces, it makes water flow and find gaps.

Thirdly, Madam Speaker, the Ministry for Agriculture has a short-term solution and is looking at allocating another flood control gate down at Vakamasisuasua because the one next to the village in Labasa causes the backflow to Naodamu. That is the flooding issue.

Madam Speaker, on drainage, I have already stated in this House when I talked about climate change and disaster management, that one of the problems that we have with our infrastructure (this is not new, it is old) is that the drainage that we have are not flood drains. There is a difference between drains for roads and flood drains.

Madam Speaker, if we go through the *Hansard* record, I did specifically state that for flood drains, it needs funding because it costs a lot of money because you have to increase the width and you also have to increase the depth. This is why I am saying, Madam Speaker, that it takes time to fix these problems.

It is not only the fault of the FRA, it is not only the fault of Government but, Madam Speaker, it is also the individual developments that are happening. If you go to Seaqaqa and likewise, it is happening as well in Vunicuicui, when farmers or local communities build a new house, they will have their roads and construct culverts and sometimes they even bury the drains, Madam Speaker, so that they can have a crossing and that the cane trucks can go across to the main roads as well.

It is not only the problem made by FRA, but it is the developments that are happening in the areas as well, Madam Speaker. How are we going to address this? There is a three-phase plan for that particular road but I really do not want to concentrate on that road only, Madam Speaker, because Government has got a lot of other plans because right now we want the bus to run into Dogotuki where the Honourable Member comes from, and of course in Lakeba and, Saqani as well, where I come from.

(Laughter)

So, this is why we are looking at the allocation of the resources accordingly. But there is a three-phased plan already for the Siberia/Vunicuicui Road, Madam Speaker, and the first phase of that is in the next year's budget (2017-2018 Budget) where we will just lift up the road itself – reshape the road and, of course, the immediate drains that are there.

Let me also mention, Madam Speaker, this is something that has been fixed by the Labasa Town Council already and that is, water works on services and gaps. The water that comes from that area, Madam Speaker, usually stagnates at the CDP area because there is no drainage there and the tramline is running in that area. That has been fixed by the Labasa Town Council, and of course, Government has got plans to do a three-phased development to fix the Siberia Road. Let me assure all the communities throughout Fiji that we will fix the Vunicuicui Road and all the other roads, so that they can get access to the services that they deserve.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

(Honourable Member interjects)

HON. SPEAKER.- We will move on to the next Item in the Order Paper. I now call on the Leader of the Government in Parliament to have the floor.

ADJOURNMENT

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

That Parliament adjourns until Monday, 22nd May, 2017 at 9.30 a.m.

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

HON. SPEAKER.- Parliament will now vote on the motion.

Question put.

The Question is:

That Parliament adjourns until Monday, 22nd May, 2017 at 9.30 a.m.

Does any Member oppose?

HON. MEMBERS.- No.

Since no Member opposes, the motion is therefore agreed to unanimously.

Motion agreed to.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, I thank you most sincerely for all the deliberations today, very healthy and robust debate. Thank you for your contribution.

Parliament is now adjourned until Monday, 22nd May, 2017 at 9.30 a.m.

The Parliament adjourned at 12.32 p.m.