

MONDAY, 1ST DECEMBER, 2014

The Parliament resumed at 11.45 a.m. pursuant to adjournment.

MADAM SPEAKER took the Chair and read the Prayer.

PRESENT

All honourable Members were present, except the honourable Prime Minister and Minister for *iTaukei* Affairs and Sugar; the honourable Minister for Youth and Sports; and the honourable Assistant Minister for Health and Medical Services.

CLARIFICATION ON SPEAKER'S RULING - POINT OF ORDER

HON. RATU I.D. TIKOCA.- Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order, in reference to Standing Order 34(1)(c).

We see an urgent need for clarification from you, Madam Speaker, on the ruling that you made on 21st November, 2014. Following the point of order that we raised pursuant to Standing Order 99(2), you made the ruling that you will not allow the Consequential Bills to proceed beyond the first Reading until the Appropriation Bill has passed all stages.

During the conclusion of the Budget Address, the honourable Minister of Finance then moved these Bills to be passed by Parliament, through the expedited provision of Standing Order 51. The honourable Leader of Government in Parliament then seconded the motion, as well as reaffirmed that the particular application made by the honourable Minister of Finance regarding Standing Order 51 were expedited in the reading of the Bills through the process of Parliament, is allowable under the Standing Orders. Immediately after this, you, Madam Speaker, invoked Standing Order 91 (a) and (b). The Opposition had abstained because the consequential Bills were to be tabled only, and not proceed to the first Reading.

Madam Speaker, after tabling of the consequential Bills, we believe it would have been correct to adjourn Parliament. However, you allowed the honourable Minister of Finance to move the motion, to allow the Bills to be read for the first time.

With respect, we see breach of Parliamentary tradition, and this ruling.

Madam Speaker, Section 77 (6) (d) of the Constitution states, and I quote:

“The Speaker, Deputy Speaker, or any other person presiding at any time, in the performance of the functions of the Speaker –

- (d) has authority to maintain order and decorum in Parliament, in accordance with its standing orders and parliamentary tradition.”

Madam Speaker, we humbly seek clarification from you in regards to your ruling, to bring in conformity the proceedings of 21st November, 2014 in accordance with the Standing Orders and Parliamentary tradition as set out in the 2013 Constitution. In addition, the honourable

Minister had not complied with Standing Order 99 (2), which is to deliver the Appropriation Bill with the Estimates. This came four days later.

Furthermore, the honourable Minister's Budget Address came in on Thursday, 27th November has not given us a fair chance to reply. Therefore, we suggest that procedures undertaken on 21st November, 2014 be corrected. Thank you Madam.

MADAM SPEAKER.- I beg the indulgence of Parliament, if you can give us about five minutes to discuss this further.

The Parliament adjourned at 11.52 a.m.

The Parliament resumed at 12.00 p.m.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Honourable Member, I thank you for your point of order. You have raised a number of issues.

As honourable Members can see from the *Order Paper*, the Government proposes to withdraw Bill Nos. 2 to 13 of 2014. Also, as I will announce in my Communication from the Chair shortly, the Business Committee has agreed that the Appropriation Bill will not be called for debate today. Therefore, as this point of order does not now relate directly to today's business, I will take this matter under consideration and make my ruling on this point of order tomorrow morning.

MINUTES

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

That the Minutes of the sitting of Parliament held on Friday, 21st November, 2014, as previously circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed.

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- Madam Speaker, I beg to second the motion.

Question put.

Votes cast:

Ayes	-	47
Absent	-	3

Motion agreed to.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

Apology – Hon. Dr. Biman Prasad

MADAM SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, at the outset, I welcome you to this week's meeting and I apologise for the late start of the sitting this morning.

I draw the attention of honourable Members of this august Parliament to Item No. 8 in today's *Order Paper*. This motion, honourable Members, was tabled for debate this morning, however, following approaches by Members of the Opposition in the Business Committee, an urgent Business Committee meeting was held this morning regarding this.

The motion was brought by the Government, that is, the honourable and learned Attorney-General, regarding the need to uphold the integrity and sanctity of the Office of the Speaker of this august Parliament. The facts pertaining to the motion was that, the honourable Dr. Biman

Prasad made statements to the media, questioning the impartiality of the Speaker, that is, my impartiality.

Honourable Members of Parliament, may I remind you that confidence in the impartiality of the Speaker is an indispensable condition of procedures and many conventions exist, which have, as their object, not only to ensure the impartiality of the Speaker, but to also ensure that the impartiality is generally recognised.

The Speaker is in a special position, being the embodiment of Parliament. Reflections upon the Speaker's character or conduct directly attack the very institution of Parliament itself. This unfortunate incident of comments made to the media about the Speaker cannot be condoned. This was the purpose of the motion. There are a number of examples throughout the Commonwealth as to how honourable Members have been reprimanded for making such comments.

I wish to thank the Government, the honourable and learned Attorney-General for withdrawing this motion. Since the honourable Dr. Prasad has apologised to me for making those comments to the media about the Office of the Speaker in the Business Committee meeting this morning, I had accepted his apology and thanked him for that.

I wish to take this opportunity to again remind all honourable Members of Parliament that we must, at all times, protect this Parliament and its integrity, which means protecting the sanctity of the Office of the Speaker.

Following honourable Dr. Prasad's apology, the honourable and learned Attorney-General has, therefore, withdrawn his motion listed as Item No. 8 in the *Order Paper*. I also wish to advise honourable Members that the Business Committee has agreed that Parliament will adjourn today after the conclusion of Item No. 9. Item Nos. 10 and 11 will appear in the *Order Paper* for tomorrow.

World Aids Day

May I also remind honourable Members that today is "World Aids Day", and you can see behind me, the red ribbon signifying the day. I am pleased that our Parliament is playing its part in acknowledging this very important issue. The theme for this year's World Aids Day is "Close the Gap".

Membership of Committees

MADAM SPEAKER.- In accordance with Standing Order 115(4), I wish to advise Parliament that the following honourable Members have been appointed to the various Parliamentary Committees:

Business Committee (9 Members)

1. Hon. Dr. Jiko Luveni (Speaker) - Chairperson
2. Hon. Rear Admiral (Ret.) Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama (Prime Minister and Minister for *iTaukei* Affairs and Sugar)

3. Hon. Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum (Minister for Finance, Public Enterprises, Public Service, Attorney-General and Minister for Justice)
4. Hon. Ro Teimumu V. Kepa (Leader of the Opposition)
5. Hon. Lt. Col. Pio Tikoduadua (Minister for Infrastructure and Transport)
6. Hon. Commander Semi T. Koroilavesau
7. Hon. Roko Tupou T.S. Draunidalo
8. Hon. Dr. Biman C. Prasad
9. Hon. Ratu Isoa D. Tikoca

Standing Orders Committee (5 Members)

1. Hon. Dr. Jiko Luveni (Speaker) - Chairperson
2. Hon. Lt. Col. Pio Tikoduadua (Minister for Infrastructure and Transport)
3. Hon. Commander Semi T. Koroilavesau
4. Hon. Prem Singh
5. Hon. Ratu Isoa D. Tikoca

Public Accounts Committee (5 Members)

1. Hon. Dr. Biman C. Prasad - Chairman
2. Hon. Balmindar Singh
3. Hon. Commander Semi T. Koroilavesau
4. Hon. Sanjit Patel
5. Hon. Aseri Radrodro

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs – 2013 Annual Report (*Parliamentary Paper No. 27 of 2014*)

MADAM SPEAKER.- I will refer the Report to the relevant Standing Committee under Standing Order 38, once the Committees are established.

PRESENTATION OF REPORTS

HON. LEADER OF GOVERNMENT IN PARLIAMENT.- Madam Speaker, I beg to table the *Standing Order's Committee Report*, as amended for 2014.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

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

That within the provisions of the Standing Orders, to set aside those elements to allow the use of the Standing Orders, as tabled today, in the next sitting of Parliament.

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- Madam Speaker, I beg to second the motion.

HON. LEADER OF GOVERNMENT IN THE PARLIAMENT.- Madam Speaker, I rise to comment on how the Business Committee came up with this bipartisan agreement, to suspend the

Standing Orders so as to allow the use of the amended Standing Orders during the next meeting of Parliament, so that it does not have to go through the mandatory requirement of the Standing Orders.

I would like to inform Parliament that this is something that we had reached consensus on and would like to thank all honourable Members of the Business Committee for allowing us to table this amended Standing Orders, as the requirement of Parliament demands.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, I invite a debate on the motion that Standing Orders be suspended to allow Parliament to adopt the amendments recommended by the Standing Orders Committee.

HON. RATU N. T. LALABALAVU.- Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. This side of the Chamber fully agrees with what has been stated by the honourable Leader of Government in Parliament. It is just the decision to debate on the issue and given that the amendments are not here, which should come as Papers Laid on the Table, I seek your indulgence, as to how are we going to proceed with the debate, since there is no amendment laid on the Table.

HON. LEADER OF GOVERNMENT IN PARLIAMENT.- Madam Speaker, I thank the honourable Member for his comments, but today's tabling of the amended Standing Orders is a bi-partisan issue, with the concurrence of all honourable Members of the Business Committee. I also note and the fact that it has been discussed by the Standing Orders Committee, both sides of Parliament had been given time to consider and make their comments. There were no additional comments, so at the last meeting of the Business Committee, we mutually agreed that we would adopt it.

We also agreed that under Standing Orders (6) and (128) (2) (b), that we do not have to go through the mandatory period to have the Standing Orders adopted, but to waive so that we can use it tomorrow during the debate. However, Madam Speaker, the honourable Members on the other side have been given adequate time to have a look at the amended Standing Orders and we had mutually agreed on the issue that I table today before Parliament.

HON. RATU N.T. LALABALAVU.– Madam Speaker, that is exactly the point that we are raising on this side of Parliament as well. Now, we are being invited to debate on something that is supposed to be in front of us. That is the confusion, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.– My ruling on this is that this amendment of Standing Orders had been very comprehensively discussed and agreed to in the last sitting. It was agreed that this would be tabled today, or to be voted on and to be accepted.

Honourable Members, we will now vote on the question that the amendments recommended by the Standing Orders Committee in their report, the Amendment of Standing Orders 2014, be adopted by Parliament.

Question put.

Votes cast:
Ayes - 47

Not Voted - 3

Motion agreed to.

WITHDRAWAL – BILL NOS. 2 TO 13 OF 2014

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM. – Madam Speaker, I beg to move:

That under Standing Order 90, Bill Nos. 2 to 13 of 2014 be withdrawn.

HON. LEADER OF GOVERNMENT IN PARLIAMENT.- Madam Speaker, I beg to second the motion.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, Standing Order 90 does allow that a Member who is in charge of a Bill, may withdraw the Bill at any time before the Bill has been read a third time.

Madam Speaker, as you may recall that following the slight confusion last week on Friday, 21st November, 2014, Bill Nos. 2 to 13 were presented, and given the fact that we wanted the Bills to be moved through Parliament under Standing Order 51, we withdrew these Bills and that they be presented at a later stage. This does not, in any way, prejudice the proceedings of Parliament nor does it, in anyway, hinder the Appropriation Bill being read for the first time. Of course, we will have it read for the second time tomorrow, now that the amendments have been made today.

HON. S. D. KARAVAKI.– Madam Speaker, it is indeed a great thing for Parliament to re-visit this issue before it proceeds to finality. We can understand that we are learning in the process and in doing so, we can correct things as we go on.

I believe, as the motion had been tabled this morning to withdraw those consequential Bills, it confirms it. In that, what was done was wrong. It was not according to the Standing Orders and it is important, therefore, for the other side, especially the honourable and learned Attorney General.

HON. OPPOSITION MEMBERS.- Tell them!

(Laughter)

HON. S. D. KARAVAKI. – This is, in my view, Madam Speaker, a gross legal negligence of the highest order, because the whole Parliament should be guided by the Government, especially the honourable and learned Attorney General. We had been taken, when they were tabled, that it was correct, although we had pointed out, Madam Speaker, that it was wrong. It must not be taken in this Parliament, Madam Speaker, because they have the numbers ...

HON. RATU N.T. LALABALAVU.- They should listen.

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- ... and we do not have it. For them, they have this perception that they do not need to listen to this side, because there are a lot of good advice coming from this side for them to understand the proper way to go about things.

HON. OPPOSITION MEMBERS.- Hear, hear!

HON. S. D. KARAVAKI. –That is my point, Madam Speaker. We acknowledge the way we are learning, but at the same time, we are looking at the Government to guide this Parliament in a proper way, but it was not.

(Laughter)

We can accept at this point that Government has taken to follow what we had actually submitted in the last sitting when those reports were tabled, that is our position. We thank, Madam Speaker, that we are now going back to what we had earlier advised them on.

HON. F.S. KOYA.- Madam Speaker, maybe, the honourable Member should read Standing Order 51 in its entirety. It does allow for a motion for a Bill to proceed without delay. Just for the benefit of this Parliament, maybe I ought to read it, and this also allows it to be done at any time and in no way, shape or form, does this show that the honourable and learned Attorney-General was negligent at any time. It is a procedure that is allowed within the Standing Orders and it can be done at any time and very simply put, maybe the honourable Member should read Standing Order 51 in its entirety.

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- Madam Speaker, if it was done under Section 51, they should have laid down a proper programme to follow, but they did not do that. Instead, they were following Standing Order 84 of which it was read over here that those Bills be referred to a future date. That is the normal tabling of normal bills.

I must advise this Chamber, Madam Speaker, that that is not correct. If they are following Standing Order 51, a proper programme should have been laid before this Parliament because it needed to be expedited, but they did not do that. It was following Standing Order 84 which is for normal bills, and that is my point. The other side of the Chamber should take advice from this side.

(Laughter)

MADAM SPEAKER.- Order, order!

Are there any comments from Government?

HON. F.S. KOYA.- Madam Speaker, I will read it in its entirety. Standing Order 51 reads, and I quote:

- “(1) A motion requesting that Parliament consider a Bill without delay may be moved without notice.
- (1) The motion must set out how and when Parliament will deal with each stage of the Bill’s passage through Parliament, including –
- (a) whether the Bill will pass through 1 or more stages at a single sitting and, if so, which stages;
 - (b) what if any time limits will apply to any debates on the Bill during its passage; and
 - (c) whether the Bill will be referred to a standing committee or other committees of Parliament.”

The operative paragraph, Madam Speaker, is Paragraph 3, and I quote:

“(3) The motion to proceed without delay in relation to a Bill may be moved at any stage of the progression of the Bill through Parliament.”

So, two things must be remembered; it can be done without notice and it can be done at any stage.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Madam Speaker, I wish to make a brief contribution. First, before moving on, Standing Order 51, to my learned colleague on the other side of the Chamber, that does not happen in this case because Madam Speaker had already made a ruling. She made a ruling that those consequential Bills will only go as far as the first reading. So Standing Order 51 does not come into play, but that is not my point.

My point is that Standing Order 90 requires leave of this august Chamber, and for that he must give a reason, and the reason given by the other side was a mistake. It was a mistake on their part to go ahead and move that motion after Madam Speaker had already made her ruling. The other side of the House made a mistake here, and that is the reason why they are withdrawing this Bill.

HON. RATU N. LALABALAVU.- Shame!

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- But that is not the only mistake that they have made. They have made many, many mistakes in presenting these Bills. The first mistake was when you made this omission on the tabled Appropriation Bill on Friday, 21st November, 2014. The first mistake the Government side made was in relation to Standing Order 99(2) which states and I quote:

“(2) The Bill, to be known as the Appropriation Bill, must be accompanied by a document, to be known as the Estimates, being the details of the appropriation amounts contained in the Bill. The Estimates must be circulated to all members immediately after the Bill is introduced.”

Where were the Estimates? There were no Estimates here. The Estimates were not tabled here. The Estimates were given to us four days later, Tuesday, 25th November, 2014 – that was a mistake. So, how can we trust the Government? It has to be honest with our money, if it is not honest enough in what it is doing.

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

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- It is very vital and important. So the point of the matter, Madam Speaker, is that it gives a very bad impression to the public of what they are doing. I know the honourable Minister looks bad here, but he must deal with his subordinates because they are not making him look good here by presenting something by mistake, and late as well.

The other point is that, I realised that it was not published by Government Printing. Why? I do not know. So for that reason, I do not support this motion.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, it is rather entertaining, the comments from the other side of the Chamber. It is a very simple motion. The motion is to withdraw the Bills that are presented. The honourable Member presenting the Bill has the ability to do so, if he does not go beyond the first Reading. In fact I also referred honourable Members to the *Uncorrected copy of the Daily Hansard* of Friday, 21st November, 2014, at page 223 and if you look at the Bills when they were presented under Standing Order 51. By having that ruling, on the fast tracking of those Bills, by saying it will not go beyond first Reading, it contradicts Standing Order 51.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- She made a ruling.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- In Standing Order 51, there is no latitude to have a shortening of what is the provision within Standing Order 51 itself.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Irrelevant, she made a ruling.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Read Standing Order 51 – it does not allow you to do that.

Therefore, Madam Speaker, in the interest of efficiency and in the interest of removing those contradictions, we have said that we would withdraw those Bills and we have the right to reintroduce them. As the honourable Faizal Koya has pointed out, we have the ability to re-introduce those Bills under Standing Order 51 which we will do.

Madam Speaker, some of the comments coming from the other side of the Chamber are full of contradictions. I do not want to elaborate on that, we have much bigger issues before us, so under Standing Order 90, we wish to withdraw those Bills and we have the motion on the floor.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you very much for that very much lively debate.

I remind honourable Members that the amended Standing Orders is now in operation. I will, therefore, ask if any Members opposes this motion or any Member who wants to vote against the motion to withdraw those Bills should immediately say they oppose the motion.

Since no one is opposing the motion, the motion is carried.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, I know that motion is carried but I would just like to clarify one point. I completely forgot that honourable Nawaikula had raised and said that the Estimates were not presented.

Madam Speaker, there were two books that were presented on Friday, 21st November, 2014. If you read the title of one of those two books, it says, “*Supplement to the 2015 Budget Estimates*”. This book here with me has the title “*Budget Estimates 2015*”. This year, we have given you three documents, as opposed to two documents. This one here (referring to the Budget Estimates) has narration, telling you exactly the purpose of that particular Department or Ministry.

(Chorus of interjections)

MADAM SPEAKER.- Order! Order!

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- The detailed Estimates were given to you on Friday. If you read the detailed Estimates, it gives you the specific breakdown of each SEG, Programme and Activity.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- No.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- It has the detailed Estimates, that is what you were after.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Address the Chair!

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- That was what you were after, Madam Speaker.

(Laughter)

I cannot help it! He is addressing me directly.

(Laughter)

It must be the Vanua Levu thing.

(Laughter)

MADAM SPEAKER.- Carry on, please. Honourable Members from Vanua Levu and Nadroga, can you please address the Chair?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, the reality is this; the honourable Members from the other side were given two documents on Friday when the Appropriation Bill was presented. If you read Standing Order 99(2), it states, and I quote:

“The Bill, to be known as the Appropriation Bill, must be accompanied by a document, to be known as the Estimates, being the details of the appropriation amounts contained in the Bill. The Estimates must be circulated to all members immediately after the Bill is introduced.”

What we are saying, Madam Speaker, is that, in this particular instance, we have, in fact, given them the detailed Estimates on the day itself.

HON. OPPOSITION MEMBERS.- No, no!

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.-. What they received, Madam Speaker, was the detailed Estimates. That is not the detailed Estimates, that is the Summary of the Estimates.

HON. OPPOSITION MEMBERS.- No, no!

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.-. The detailed Estimates was given on Friday itself, Madam Speaker.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- But in the other way round!

MADAM SPEAKER.- Order, please! I cannot hear the honourable Minister.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.-. There were two books. In fact, this is a summary, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, if I could refer you, for example, to page 236 of the Budget Estimates, it says and I quote:

“Head No. 32 – MINISTRY OF FISHERIES AND FORESTS
Programme 2 – Forestry

ACTIVITY 3 – Training and Education”.

Then you have the various SEGs. You do not have the details of these SEGs on the opposite side, in fact, the details of these SEGs are all presented in the booklet that is called the “*Supplement to the 2015 Budget Estimates - Details of Expenditure*” which was presented to the honourable Members on the other side, including this side of the Chamber.

HON. OPPOSITION MEMBERS.- No, no!

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.-. That was what was presented on Friday, 21st November, so no honourable Member in this Parliament can say that they were not given the details or the expenditure which are contained in these two books.

HON. DR. B.C. PRASAD.- Madam Speaker, I think the honourable Minister is really confused.

The Estimates which, according to the Constitution and the Standing Orders, states very clearly, that this is the Appropriation Bill, a budget of \$3.3 billion, the expenditure, the deficit and then you have the Estimates. That document, Madam Speaker, was never presented to us after the delivery of the Budget Address.

HON. OPPOSITION MEMBERS.- Hear, hear!

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- They were presented.

HON. DR. B.C. PRASAD.- No, I received the detailed Budget Estimates. I was looking for those figures, Madam Speaker, and I received that on Saturday afternoon, the following day after the Budget Address.

Madam Speaker, let me also say this, that it is almost a tradition that the Budget Speech by the honourable Minister for Finance is also immediately available to the Members of Parliament. The honourable Minister’s speech came to us six days after the delivery of the Budget. Now, that means that we did not have access to those documents and not only that, some Members did not get the Estimates until Monday, Madam Speaker. However, the Budget Speech was not available until six days after the delivery of the Speech of the honourable Minister. I think it is something that we were very, very concerned with.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Since we have had a few more comments, I will now give the opportunity to the honourable Minister of Finance for his right of reply before we round up.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, as usual, the other side of this Chamber is trying to make a storm in a tea cup.

(Laughter)

That is their usual tactic.

Madam Speaker, I could have let this matter rest because as you know, the motion had already been agreed to, but I stood up to clarify. The point is that, they had all the information before them and it does not, in any way, prejudice their ability to comment on the Estimates, as well as the Appropriation Bill.

HON. GOVT. MEMBERS.- Hear, hear!

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- It is very simple as that. Again, this is what I am saying, there is another storm in the tea cup because unfortunately, they do not have anything necessary to hold on to. So, let us make this matter rest for the time being.

HON. GOVT. MEMBERS.- Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS AND REPLIES

Sale of Government Assets in 2015 (Question No. 1/2014)

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

Would the honourable Attorney-General, Minister for Finance, Public Enterprises, Public Service and Communications inform the Parliament on what Government assets will be sold off in 2015?

HON. A. SAYED KHAIYUM (Attorney-General and Minister for Finance, Public Enterprises, Public Service and Communications).- Madam Speaker, Sir, I rise to reply to the question asked by the honourable Member but before doing so, I was somewhat initially perplexed by this question because it simply indicates somehow or the other that Government has never sold assets before. For the honourable Member's information, Government has been selling assets since Independence. You have Government assets that are sold when those assets are boarded. We sell motor vehicles, office equipment, furniture, so it would be good if we could get some specific questions. Nonetheless, I assume that the honourable Member is talking about the asset sales that has been referred to in the Budget.

Madam Speaker, also, the premise of the question is (I think) somewhat misplaced because when we talk about selling off Government assets, they are not sell-off physical assets *per se*. As we have noted previously, we are exploring avenues and we are, in fact, talking to a number of multi-lateral partners, including the Asian Development Bank (ADB), in terms of divesting some of the shares that are held in Government-owned entities.

Worldwide, Madam Speaker, this is the trend. Indeed recently, the sale of the subsidiary company of Fiji Ports Corporation Limited (FPCL) which is Ports Terminal Limited (PTL), to Aitken Spence, a partial divestment of those shares, has shown that the turnaround times of vessels coming into Fiji has greatly improved. Indeed, many vessels used to come to Fiji previously but because of the inefficiencies at the Port, they usually charge an additional levy per container because the Port's Management was very, very inefficient. It is obviously a legacy issue which we have inherited from the previous governments. So, now with the divestment of those shares, and I have some figures

here, the vessel turnaround times have improved by at least, 23 per cent. So obviously, divestment of shares does provide greater efficiencies.

Government is not going to sell shares or sell off assets or real estate simply at a whim. We are looking at the best possible partners, with the view to ensuring that we get greater efficiency, that Government does not dabble into commercial areas that do not require dabbling into. So the Government entities that have been identified are; Airports Fiji Limited (AFL), negotiations have in fact already been underway for a period of time already; and Fiji Ports Corporation Limited (FPCL). Again, with all these critical strategic corporations owned by Government, we are not looking at the whole sale of these entities, but at the partial divestment of shares. Similarly, with the Fiji Electricity Authority, and at the moment, we are into talks with the Fiji National Provident Fund (FNPF) regarding our overseas embassies.

Madam Speaker, for our overseas embassies, our previous leaders had the foresight for example to purchase properties in now what has become very special areas in Downtown London. So, our missions are very expensive real estates. At the moment, we are in negotiation with FNPF because Government is in the business of running Government. Government should not be in the business of painting walls and fixing up doors. So, when you have entities that have expertise in that, they are able to manage that. It increases their overseas portfolio, making sure that there is a better return for the members of FNPF, giving them an investment portfolio overseas, and at the same time, Government is able to access assets that is well maintained and managed.

Therefore, to answer the question specifically for the honourable Member, we are looking at AFL at the moment. We are also looking at FEA, and again in conjunction with the partial divestment of the shares, we are looking at separating the regulatory arm from the commercial arm of these entities. As you know, Madam Speaker, FEA also has a regulatory role. Most countries have now moved on to having an independent regulatory arm of an institution that provides the very basic amenity, like electricity. Similarly, with water, so we are at the same time simultaneously working of setting up a regulatory body that will have an oversight over these entities, and it is always with the view that we get a better return for the Fijian people, and of course, in order to be able to streamline our own processes.

Madam Speaker, it is also very critical to understand that previous governments, and if you see in the Estimates which was presented to everyone on time.

(Chorus of Interjections)

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- If you see the Estimates on the subsidy that previously was, for example, given to South Pacific Fertilizers, and mind you, Madam Speaker, South Pacific Fertilizers is not owned by the Fijian Government. It is owned by two other separate legal entities, but previous governments have been ploughing money into these entities and these taxpayers monies have gone. Yes, it did provide a particular methodology to subsidise fertilizers but now we are recording this as debt owed to Government, because if it is recorded as debt owed to Government, then that debt can be turned into equity, if divestment of those entities take place.

Let me give you a classic example, Madam Speaker. Fiji Sugar Corporation was owned or is it owned still by the Fijian Government, Fijian Holdings, and shareholders; Fiji National

Provident Fund, Y.P. Reddy, and some other individual owners. In all these years, none of these other entities, apart from the Fijian Government, has ploughed money into FSC.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- A point of order, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, the honourable Minister is deviating from a very simple question. We do not want a long explanation as to why, and the Government's plan as to the reason for this because we have other supplementary questions. He is just buying time by not allowing supplementary questions to be asked on the principal question.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM. - Madam Speaker, it is not buying time. I do not know that there was a time to buy here. The point is, I am trying to explain to the honourable Member because the question actually tells you that they are very simplistic notion about sales. So, just finishing up, and I will get back exactly to the Government sales, and I have highlighted some of them already.

The point is, Madam Speaker, that Government needs to be cognisant of the fact that we need to ensure that taxpayers' money is spent wisely, and if Government is going to plough money into any entity, whether it is partially or fully owned by Government, it needs to be able to reflect that. So, we are looking at AFL, FEA, FPCL, and I have also highlighted the fact that we are looking at some of the embassies, and indeed we are very close to putting the final price on them.

We have in fact, for example, Madam Speaker, with AFL been negotiating for a long period of time. We want to get the maxim optimum value out of it, and we are also looking at the Printing & Stationery Department.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- A supplementary question, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, the honourable Minister gave a very long explanation as to why Government is planning to sell these assets. My supplementary question is, can the honourable Minister inform Parliament, when can the investing receipts, as part of the normal revenue, be realised in 2015 which is in the Estimates?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- I really do not understand the question, and is it in relation to the sale of Government assets?

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- It is related, Madam Speaker. This is in regards to the \$510 million, the proposed sale of public assets. It is part of revenue and is already in the Budget. What we are trying to get from the honourable Minister responsible as to when this can be realised, as part of normal revenue in 2015.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- I assume that, just for clarifications so that I can answer that question correctly, when will the sales be completed? Is that what you are asking?

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Yes, when can the sales be completed because it is already incorporated as normal revenue in 2015?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM. - Thank you, Madam Speaker. I thank the honourable Member for this question because in fact, if one looks at the Operating Expenditure of Government, and then look at the revenue that Government will get apart from the asset sales, we can meet all our Operating Expenditure through our normal revenue generation with tax collection, et cetera. Of course, I cannot give you a specific answer as to when they will be completed, Madam Speaker, but they will definitely be completed in 2015.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- A supplementary question, Madam Speaker. You do not sell off government asset as a matter of course, but you can only do so in exceptional circumstances. The concern always is control, because obviously you would not want to have a Chinese company taking control of FEA.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- What is your question?

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Hang on, I am coming to that. I have two questions; first, what is the reason for the sale of these assets and secondly, will you give first options to local companies? Please stick to those two questions, do not go away.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, again perhaps, it is a lack of understanding on the other side of the Chamber and I have already stated this.

(Chorus of interjections)

I gave the reasons in the beginning as to why asset sales are done. There is a greater efficiency. The fact that I highlighted the issue about PTL, Government has not sold off PTL in its entirety. A world fortune 200 company outside USA is now managing PTL, which means greater efficiency in ship turnaround which means no levies for our containers and greater reduction in consumer pricing. So, these are the reasons why sometimes asset sales do take place and these sales take place through an open tender process. For example, in AFL, it was advertised, we had about six entities that actually put in their expressions of interests for these, and all of them were foreign companies. There were no local entities that put in a submission for that. But again, I raise the point, it does not mean Government will lose control. You see, there is a misconception on the other side of the Chamber that because you diverse shares, Government will lose control. You can sell 49 per cent, 40 per cent, 35 per cent or 10 per cent, so divestment does not mean loss of control. Perhaps, we can have a lesson in commercial law at some stage.

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- A supplementary question, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- That would be the last supplementary question.

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.-, Madam Speaker. With the explanations on the asset sales, we see that in 2014, there was also similar figure stated in the 2014 Budget, likewise for similar assets. Can the honourable Minister inform Parliament, whether these assets were not divested or sold off and what actions did Government take to accommodate the shortfall in its revenue for 2014?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, if I can make a point of order, the supplementary question is supposed to be in relation to the substantive question. The substantive question is, would the honourable Minister please inform Parliament, what Government assets would be sold off in 2015? If the honourable Radrodro wants to raise an issue regarding that, he can raise it as a separate question but not supplementary, and please give notice for it.

HON GOVERNMENT MEMBERS.- Hear! Hear!

HON. A SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Please understand the rules.

(Chorus of interjections)

MADAM SPEAKER.- I will stop any more comments on that particular question. We have been very much enlightened by it, and thank you very much for the information given.

Withdrawal of Landowning Units – Land Bank
(Question No. 2/2014)

HON. J. DULAKIVERATA asked the Government, upon notice:

Can the honourable Minister for Lands and Mineral Resources confirm and inform Parliament if the landowning units can withdraw their land allotment from the Land Bank, if they wish to use their land for economic activities and for their own use and sustenance?

HON. M. VUNIWAQA (Minister for Lands and Mineral Resources).- Madam Speaker, I rise to respond to the question asked by the honourable Member and thank him for his question.

Madam Speaker, the answer is yes, land that has been deposited into the Land Bank can be withdrawn and that is allowed under Regulation 6 of the Land Use Regulations. It requires the trustees of the landowning unit to make the request formally in writing.

It also requires that, at least, five years has passed since the depositing of the land in the Land Bank. That, Madam Speaker, is basically the timeline that is given to the Land Bank, to get investors for land that is deposited in the Land Bank.

The third condition is that, the land is currently not leased to anyone.

The fourth one being, the land is not likely to be leased in the one year, immediately after the request for cessation of designation is made.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- A supplementary question, Madam Speaker. In my area, there is land deposited into the Land Bank that is lying idle. Can the honourable Minister explain to us, what the status of that land is, and if the landowners are getting any benefits while the land is lying idle? What is the Government doing about it - the idle land in the Land Bank?

HON. J. USAMATE.- Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I think that supplementary question needs to be directly related to the question that was asked before. That question, to me, appears to be a totally new question.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister for Lands, if the supplementary question is related to the land in the Land Bank, you may answer the question?

HON. M. VUNIWAQA.- Madam Speaker, perhaps, I should explain a bit about land that is deposited into the Land Bank.

First of all, most of these land that are deposited into the Land Bank need to be surveyed. Most of them are deposited without that being done. They need to be developed and that is the function that Government is taking as well. So in short, the answer is that there are about 79 parcels of land that have been deposited into the Land Bank. Out of these 79 parcels of land, about 26 of them are currently leased, the rest need an input by Government to be surveyed and developed before it can become attractive to Government. To that end, Government has provided in the 2015 budget a sum of \$2.5 million to assist in doing this.

HON. RATU S. NANOVO.- Madam Speaker, a supplementary question to the honourable Minister; if the sub-lessee wishes to cancel his lease, can the landowning unit have the first right of refusal to get their land back?

HON. M. VUNIWAQA.- Madam Speaker, that relates again to the first question - the withdrawal of land from the Land Bank. I have already specified the conditions for the withdrawal.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you.

UN Draft Report of the Working Group of the Universal Periodic Review
(Question No. 3/2014)

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Madam Speaker, before I ask the question standing under my name, I would like make a brief explanation.

Madam Speaker, after the closure of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) in Geneva, the Working Group sat and made some recommendations and Recommendation No. 101.10 (the subject of this question) says, as suggested by Estonia, and I quote:

“That Fiji establishes a Constitutional Commission to conduct a comprehensive review of the 2013 Constitution, and carry out national consultations to ensure that the Constitution is reflective of the will of the people”.

Also, Recommendation No. 101.11, which was suggested by Namibia recommends, and I quote:

“That Fiji considers establishing a Constitutional Commission to conduct a comprehensive review of the Constitution, thereby ensuring that it is reflective of the

will and aspiration of the citizens of Fiji, seeing that this might help to bring about a stable political structure”.

In addition, Recommendation No. 101.31, which was suggested by Canada and became part of the recommendation, recommended and I quote:

“That Fiji amends the legislative and constitutional framework to maintain the separation of powers and cease any executive interference with the independence of the judiciary and lawyers, and ensure that the process governing the qualification and discipline of lawyers and judges are free from political interference”.

My question is:

Can the honourable and learned Attorney-General, Minister of Finance, Public Enterprises, Public Service and Communications explain what follow up actions have been taken by the Government regarding these Recommendations, which are Recommendation Nos. 101.10, 101.11 and 101.31?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM. (Attorney-General and Minister of Finance, Public Enterprises, Public Service and Communications).- Madam Speaker, I rise to reply to Parliamentary Question No. 3/20144 raised by honourable Nawaikula, and I thank him for this question because there obviously seems to be a lot of misinformation about the actual processes regarding the Periodic Review.

Madam Speaker, if you could just indulge me for a few minutes, it needs to be explained. The Universal Periodical Review (UPR) is actually done every four years by all the member countries. There are about 193 UN Member States and the review is taken place by the Working Group. The Recommendations that the honourable Nawaikula referred to are individual recommendations by individual member countries, so it is not the Council but individual countries.

We received a total of 137 Recommendations and we accepted 98 of them, of which we have already carried out 12 of those Recommendations. For example, someone stood up and said, “When will you bring in laws regarding the criminalisation of violence against women?”. Sierra Leone did not know that we already have a Domestic Violence Decree in place.

The other countries that raised issues pertaining to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) were not even informed that we actually had verified CEDAW. So, this is why we had earlier said that we had accepted 12 of those Recommendations, and we have already complied with those.

What it also tells us, Madam Speaker, is that, these Recommendations do not necessarily have the correct factual footing and the way it works is that, Government goes and presents its report. Prior to Government going there, we also have a number of NGOs from Fiji that were funded by external parties that also went and lobbied. Sometimes it is quite obvious that they do not necessarily tell them the truth. So, your country is actually sitting up, not knowing all the facts and asking questions, and that turns into Recommendations.

The Recommendations specifically mentioned by the honourable Member talks about the establishment of the Constitution Commission. The Fijian Constitution is quite clear, Madam Speaker. It says that the way to review the Constitution is by way of a referendum. If this Parliament has three-quarters support to amend the Constitution, then it can do so, subject to three quarters of the voters are registered. That is simply the case.

Madam Speaker, this is an individual Recommendation made by the country of Estonia (if you probably ask them, most of them probably do not know where Fiji is), making comments about the Constitution Commission in Fiji. Similarly, we have Namibia that talks about ensuring the Commission, again to reflect the will and aspirations. Let me say quite categorically, Madam Speaker, that there is no Commission in place, and there would not be one because the Constitution has other mechanisms for the review of the Constitution.

Secondly, there were widespread consultations on the Constitution. The third point regarding that has been raised by the

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- No consultation.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Can I finish, or do you want to raise a supplementary point?

MADAM SPEAKER.- Order, order!. You may continue, honourable Minister.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam, Speaker, the third recommendation, which was 101.31, says “amending the legislative Constitution framework to maintain the separation of powers.”

The Constitution cannot be any more clearer than the separation of powers. In fact, Madam Speaker, this is the first time in any Fijian Constitution that says the Judiciary must be completely separate and its funding as well. No other Constitution has ever said that.

We have the Judicial Services Commission. Let me put it into perspective, Madam Speaker. In Australia and New Zealand, in the appointment of judges, they do not have a Judicial Services Commission. The Attorney-General makes a recommendation and whoever is recommended is appointed by the governor. That is how it works in Australia and New Zealand.

In Fiji, we have the Judicial Services Commission. It consists of five people. They make various recommendations and they do not get the approval of the Attorney-General but they consult the Attorney-General. That is how judges are appointed in Fiji, Madam Speaker.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- The recommendation states expressly that the following recommendations will be examined by Fiji. It will provide responses in due time but no later than the 28th Session of the Human Rights Council in March of 2015.

Can the honourable Minister please explain what steps are being made in relation to these recommendations because obviously, these countries know what happened here when they burnt the *Ghai Constitution* and they bring this one without consulting anyone?

MADAM SPEAKER.- Honourable Member, the question is clear and I can ask the honourable Minister to reply.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- I will answer the question regarding what steps are being taken, Madam Speaker. The number of steps that are being taken regarding some of the recommendations and where we can progress it.

On the point about the Ghai Commission that has been raised, there have been a lot of talks about it having received 7000 submissions. We had consultations throughout Fiji in about 19 different locations with over a thousand submissions. The point is, if you look at the Fijian Constitution, as it stands, it has a number of provisions that were also recommended by the Ghai Commission, including the fact that everyone should be called Fijians. If you read the Preamble of the draft Constitution by the Ghai Commission, it says that we are Fijians. Many of the provisions in the draft Constitution by the Ghai Commission, including socio-economic rights, have been included.

Now regarding our reporting to that, we will obviously report to them and we will point out that these recommendations do not necessarily fall in line. In the same way, for example, we will go back and tell them that we actually have laws regarding domestic violence. We have ratified CEDAW, this is simply the line that we will take and I also want to add that when they talked about 101.31, it is about governing the qualifications, both on the discipline of lawyers and judges.

Lawyers are *quasi* judicial officers. This is the only government that sets up an independent Legal Services Commission. So when lawyers, for example, do not return the fees to their clients, or carry out professional misconduct, they also get disciplined through an independent body.

Similarly, this is for the first time, under this Constitution that should there be a tribunal set up in terms of any professional misconduct by a judge. The report of the tribunal must be made public. The Constitution also says that the recommendation of the tribunal must be adhered to, it cannot be dealt with in a political manner. This is the first time this Constitution guarantees the very independent process for that particular system.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, I will close the discussions on that question.

Proposed High Commission
(Question No, 4/2014)

HON. RATU S. MATANITOBUA asked the Government, upon notice:

Can the honourable Minister for Foreign Affairs inform Parliament, if there are moves in progress to use sections of Thurston Gardens for the purpose of building a proposed high commission?

HON. RATU I. KUBUABOLA (Minister for Foreign Affairs).- Madam Speaker, I thank the honourable Member for the question.

I think the question is not totally correct, it is not sections of Thurston Gardens. If you go to the Museum, it is the land on the left and Thurston Gardens is on the right.

The honourable Member would remember that when he was small, he used to go and watch the netball games there – not rugby.

(Laughter)

That is the land, Madam Speaker. It has been given to the Government of India for the chancery and also for their residence. In exchange, we are getting a prime land in Chibakura in Delhi. The land here is about 1.6 acres and about FJ\$1.5 million. In Delhi, it is FJ\$107 million (the latest valuation), and it is about .93 acres.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- A supplementation question, Madam Speaker. Can the honourable Minister please explain what zoning is that location and whether there will be a need to rezoning before that proceeds?

HON. RATU I. KUBUABOLA.- Madam Speaker, I do not have the zoning particulars, but it will be rezoned, to allow for office and residence of the Indian High Commission.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- The British High Commission?

HON. RATU I. KUBUABOLA.- The British High Commission's residence is just above that piece of land.

HON. RATU K. KILIRAKI.- A supplementary question, Madam Speaker. Given the historical significance of the land, was there any public consultation with the Suvavou people, who were the original owners?

HON. RATU I. KUBUABOLA.- The land belongs to the State and felt that it was a very good deal to get that piece of land in Delhi. As you know, the valuation in Delhi is FJ\$107 million and this piece of land is only FJ\$1.5 million.

HON. RATU V.M. TAGIVETAUA.- A supplementary question, Madam Speaker. Just following up to the previous supplementary question, was consideration given to the people of Suvavou to be heard, in terms of the action taken by Government?

HON. RATU I. KUBUABOLA.- Madam Speaker, I think I have answered that question. The land belongs to the State and the Government of Fiji felt and believed that it was a very good deal because we will have a permanent presence in Delhi and that we needed to have a piece of land to build our residence and our chancery. It is on lease anyway.

Odour – Kinoya Sewerage Treatment Plant
(Question No. 5/14)

HON. S. RADRODRO asked the Government, upon notice:

Can the honourable Minister for Infrastructure and Transport let Parliament know what action is being planned to eliminate the stench from the Kinoya Sewerage?

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA (Minister for Infrastructure and Transport).- Madam Speaker, I thank the honourable Member for her question. I will make some attempt to add fragrance to this question which has odour in it.

(Laughter)

Madam Speaker, the Kinoya Sewerage Treatment has been under capacity for a long time, from when it was built. Obviously, the population in the Suva-Nausori corridor has increased significantly over the years since it was constructed and this has put a lot of pressure on the system.

Also, one of the contributing reasons why the treatment plant is projecting so much odour is the long distance within the waste water reticulation system. So when it gets flushed down, it comes all the way to Kinoya and there are lots of activities. Along the way, it builds up all these odour and when it reaches Kinoya, obviously we experience what we are experiencing today.

One other significant factor also that has contributed is the extent in which the trade wastes are being discharged by various places that use the sewer system to remove wastes from their own trade offices. What we are doing about it is, you would have noticed from the announcement of the 2015 Budget that there is a significant contribution by Government in the area of water development, particularly that this is going to go into waste water management. We know that in the past, the concentration is always on getting water for people to drink but we have recognised that this area of waste water management has been a very, very neglected area in our nation, so we are pouring a significant amount of resources to be able to help in waste water management.

We have stakeholders that are helping us also to manage this, particularly the Asian Development Bank (ADB), which has come to our aid in the last few months, to help us with the plan on how we were going to handle this particular strain that we have on the waste water treatment, especially in Kinoya. We have a Master Plan obviously, Madam Speaker, in order to handle this, and it is relatively to help the requirement at Kinoya, to cater for 500,000 equivalent persons in 2033. So, we are going long-term on this.

We have submitted a tender. This has already been called and it is for the Sequence Batch Reactor (SBR). In layman's term, the SBR is big tech, where they process sewer as it comes through. The SBR, this new work that we are doing, will allow for the trickling of oxygen through the system so that it helps to reduce the stench that goes into the air as consequence of that process.

We have also established a septic sludge and management facility, and it is something that we are pushing for in 2015. Essentially, as you know, 70 per cent of the homes in the Suva-Nausori corridor actually have septic tanks. So all the waste is taken to Kinoya and we are now tendering out a work on the septic sludge and management facility, and in that case, all the waste water that comes from the septic tanks (I suppose with all the alien substances that are in it) will be able to be treated separately, without it going to the SBR.

Furthermore, we have put out a tender for the construction of a clarifier and the refurbishment of two trickling filters, which are already underway and when we have the SBR up and running, we will be able to cater for at least 130,000 equivalent persons capacity for the sewerage system in Kinoya. However, in the short-term, Madam Speaker, we had called for a tender, which is going to be awarded in a few weeks or so. Essentially, this is a short term solution to call for interest whereby we have already identified certain enzymes and chemicals which companies could provide in order to reduce the stench now and the odour coming out from that.

This whole process is going to take up to six months to do, and hopefully within that time, there should be a significant reduction in the odour, temporarily coming out of Kinoya at the moment.

Madam Speaker, that is the answer to the question raised by the honourable Member.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Madam Speaker, a supplementary question. Thank you, honourable Minister for that explanation and which if I hear you correctly, you said it is a temporary arrangement but if you hear my question properly, I had asked, when will the stench be eliminated? So, I hope that work will be seriously pursued to ensure the elimination of the stench because that area is a very densely populated one. I also wonder and I believe, this has health effects on the people that live around that area.

Madam Speaker, I wonder what kind of strategies the honourable Minister has in place, in terms of research and survey on the impact of this on peoples' health.

Also, we know that Government has given some kind of compensation to retired workers, and if the honourable Minister could also consider some kind of compensation to the residence that have long suffered the stench from the Kinoya Sewerage Treatment Plant.

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- Madam Speaker, I thank the honourable Member for her supplementary question. Obviously, the Kinoya Sewerage Treatment Plant has been there from previous governments. This Government, I believe, is the only Government that has ever taken an initiative to try to fix this issue.

HON. GOVT. MEMBERS.- Hear, hear.

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- I think also, Madam Speaker, the Ministry of Health has also campaigning very, very strongly on the Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs). To reduce the stench, I think, Madam Speaker, if we could all do by having a little bit of vegetarian every day.

(Laughter)

Release of 45 Soldiers in Golan Heights
(Question No. 6/2014)

HON. RATU I.D. TIKOCA asked the Government upon notice:

Can the honourable Minister for Immigration, National Security and Defence explain the conditions under which our soldiers were released in Golan Heights?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- A point of order, Madam Speaker, the question that was given to us read as follows:

“Can the Minister explain the conditions under which the US\$20 million was paid for the release of 45 soldiers in Golan Heights?”

It seems that this has been changed.

HON. RATU I.D. TIKOCA.- Madam Speaker, I sought this question with the honourable and learned Attorney-General during our meeting....

(Laughter)

.... and that is why the question has been rephrased. Can I request the honourable Minister to answer that question.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Honourable Member, there has been an amendment to that question. We will now go back to the question that has been tabled this morning and that is the question on the release of the 45 soldiers from the Golan Heights.

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- Madam. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. This question was never made known to our side, obviously to the honourable Minister for Immigration, National Security and Defence.

Our discussion, Madam Speaker, was about the very question and I know the honourable and learned Attorney-General had raised to the honourable Opposition Whip the fact that he had to qualify the amount that he had raised in his question. I do not think that we were ever given any

Madam Speaker, definitely, there was an issue on the withdrawal of a particular question and there was going to be a question made and Madam, you fully understand this that we are going to submit a new question but not an amendment to the one that has just been asked. That is what the honourable Minister will reply to, and not a new question.

HON. RATU I.D. TIKOCA.- Do you want me to rephrase the question?

Can the honourable Minister for Immigration, National Security and Defence explain the conditions under which the US\$20 million was paid for the release of our soldiers in Golan Heights? Is that what you want, honourable Minister?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, on that question, I raised a point of order because under Standing Order 44 (5), as we had raised in the Business Committee meeting, it says and I quote:

“If a statement is included in a question, the member asking the question is responsible for the accuracy of the statement.”

The honourable Member needs to say where he got the US\$20 million figure from.

This is why on that point of order, I would like to add, that we had raised this in the Business Committee meeting, Madam Speaker, as you are aware and we had said that he needs to verify that. And they said “noted”, but no one informed this side of the Chamber that the question was going to be re-phrased. We do not have a problem with the rephrasing. If it is going to be rephrased, we need to be informed about it. That is all we are simply saying. That is all. Thank you.

HON. RATU I.D. TIKOCA. – Madam Speaker, I had offered to ask an alternative as we discussed, but not probably appearing in our *Order Paper* this morning and therefore, this particular question is being withdrawn. Thank you.

HON. MEMBERS OF THE OPPOSITION. – Hear! Hear!

MADAM SPEAKER. – Thank you, the question is withdrawn.

Honourable Members, thank you very much for this very lively discussion this morning.

The Parliament is now adjourned until 9.30 a.m. tomorrow, Tuesday, 2nd December, 2014.

The Parliament adjourned at 1.30 p.m.