

**MONDAY, 6<sup>TH</sup> JULY, 2015**

The Parliament resumed at 9.35 a.m. pursuant to adjournment.

MADAM SPEAKER took the Chair and read the Prayer.

**PRESENT**

All Members were present, except the Honourable Assistant Minister for Youth and Sports; the Honourable Minister for Youth and Sports; the Honourable Ruveni N. Nadalo; and the Honourable Ratu Isoa D. Tikoca.

**ADMINISTRATION OF OATH OR AFFIRMATION**

The following Member subscribed to the Administration of Oath or Affirmation and took his seat in the Chamber:

Honourable Alexander David O'Connor.

**SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS**

HON. LEADER OF GOVERNMENT IN PARLIAMENT.- Madam Speaker, I move that Standing Orders is suspended to allow the new honourable Member of Parliament to make his maiden speech.

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

Question put.

Motion agreed to.

**MAIDEN SPEECH – NEW MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT**

MADAM SPEAKER.- I now wish to inform the honourable Member that as per the Standing Orders, he will have up to 20 minutes to make his speech. The warning bell will ring at 15 minutes and the final one at 20 minutes. I now call upon the honourable Alexander David O'Connor to make his maiden speech.

HON. A.D. O'CONNOR.- Madam Speaker, the honourable Prime Minister and fellow Cabinet Ministers, the honourable Leader of Opposition, honourable Members of Parliament, members of the public in the gallery, and those watching television from the comforts of their homes; a very good morning to you all.

It is indeed a great honour and privilege to take my place in this honourable House today as a FijiFirst Member of Parliament.

I rise as a newly elected Member of Parliament, and take this opportunity to tell all Fijians of this beloved nation of ours, that I am ready to serve them in the best way possible for the betterment of all.

As I stand in this Chamber where all great leaders of the past have had their say in leading the nation, reminds me of the enormous challenge I face, and the sacred trust that has been placed in us all who have been called to serve as parliamentarians.

I pledge before you all today that I will carry out my duties diligently, honestly and transparently to the best of my ability.

Madam Speaker, please allow me to briefly voice my reasons for choosing to stand for FijiFirst in last year's General Elections. I chose to stand for FijiFirst because of its core values, that is, integrity, diversity, resilience, self-reliance, equality, fairness, compassion and meritocracy. These core values are the very fabrics of any society and I personally believe that these core values will build a very healthy and prosperous nation. Therefore, it is our very humble and ardent duty as parents and adults to embrace these values and to teach our children and grandchildren these values as they will be our leaders of tomorrow. I therefore, at this juncture, Madam Speaker, wish to convey my sincere gratitude to the FijiFirst leader, Ratu Voreqe Bainimarama and the FijiFirst General Secretary, the honourable and learned Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum for their trust and confidence in allowing me to stand for FijiFirst in the 2014 General Elections.

Madam Speaker, may I take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank a number of people in the lead up to this historic moment in my life.

First, I want to thank Almighty God for His enduring guidance, constant love and direction, shower of blessings, and the gift of wisdom during my life's journey to this day.

I wish to thank my late parents for their teachings, guidance, love and family unity, which are evident today in all my siblings and families. I wish they were both here today to witness this noble milestone.

I wish to thank my three wonderful children; Sherman, who did us proud until his passing; Erica, who has given Margaret and I three wonderful grandchildren, and Lyndon who has recently embarked on his long awaited career in the airline industry.

I wish to thank my election campaign team, led by the illustrious Mr. Faiyaz Ali, Lyndon, Erica, Cameron Lutuni, William Rounds and none other than Benjamin St John, with whose knowledge and guidance made it possible to visit all the locations we called in.

Thanks also to David Handyside of Vatukoula; Eddie and Pat Lockington of Ba; Daniel Heffernan of Nadi; Chris Work of Sigatoka; Lionel Danford of Navua; Mrs Claire Aull and Ronald Lilo of Suva; Frank Whippy, Romulus Lanyon; Vesi Simpson; Teddy Fong of Savusavu; and Fred and May Steiner of Labasa.

I wish to thank the electorates who had confidence in me and gave me their votes, particularly in the North, including Vivili settlement. A special mention to my *kaivata* in Kadavu for their vote although I was not able to visit them.

HON. MEMBERS.- *Vinaka*.

HON. A.D. O'CONNOR.- I wish to thank both my immediate and extended families and friends for their moral and spiritual support. Lastly, I wish to thank my wife, Margaret,

who, without a doubt has truly been a pillar of strength and is a true and sterling example upholding the vows we took on 2<sup>nd</sup> July, 1977, some 38 years ago.

Madam Speaker, I wish to thank the honourable Prime Minister for his concerns for the disadvantaged and the underprivileged, particularly children in society, an area, I too, have affection for and have been assisting in with the introduction of a “love-in-action home” in Lautoka, with children of Delana Primary School being housed in.

Madam Speaker, although I come from an engineering background, I count myself as an advocate of the environment and green growth, having being brought up in the dense forests of Colo-i-Suva in the late 1950s and 1960s and in latter years became a training manager in health, safety and the environment, a role I took on as a challenge.

I therefore wish to thank and congratulate the honourable Prime Minister in his contributions through recent participation and addresses he made on poverty alleviation, global warming and its effect on Pacific Island countries and Green Growth Framework at the United Nations Summit, the G77 plus China, the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) and most recently, the African Caribbean and Pacific States European Union forum.

Madam Speaker, in the seven and a half years prior to the General Elections, the Interim Government, under the leadership of the Rear Admiral (Ret'd) Voreqe Bainimarama had begun delivering and serving the people of Fiji, the very fundamentals of creating an inclusive and economically strong Fiji. In the nine months of its reign, the Bainimarama Government has continued to grow on these fundamentals and in particular on its values and objectives. These were, Madam Speaker to:

- implement and uphold the Fijian constitution;
- sponsor programmes for the dissemination and adoption by Fijians of the core values and attributes of the FijiFirst;
- serve the best interest of Fijians by putting Fiji first;
- uphold the rights, freedom and dignity of all Fijians;
- preserve, protect and defend the independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of Fiji;
- promote and foster common and equal citizenry;
- safeguard the freedom and advance the well-being of Fijians through a representative and democratic government;
- forge a nation of proud Fijians, to build a fair, just and tolerant society and to bind them together by patriotism, honour, dedication and commitment to Fiji;
- build a dynamic society which is disciplined and self-reliant and then which rewards are accorded to each Fijian's performance and contribution to society;
- create a society where there is compassion and action for the less fortunate and underprivileged;
- foster support and promote the values of healthy competition, self-sufficiency and free enterprise;
- achieve the optimum and economic development and social and cultural fulfilment;
- safeguard our environment, to have the natural world protected for the benefit of present and future generations;
- encourage the participation of Fijian workers as partners together with business and government in fostering the economic growth and the development of Fiji;

- foster an environment for healthy economic growth in which workers have the best prospects for employment, earning sustainable wages and lifting living standards;
- honour men and women who have sacrificed their lives and service to the nation; and
- to provide the best opportunities for all Fijians to achieve their maximum potential through education and training so that there will be a place and role for every Fijian.

Madam Speaker, the Bainimarama Government is well on its way to enduring these values and objectives.

The economy: this Government has attracted investment, both local and foreign, by lowering the personal and corporate taxes, the reduction of tariffs on a wide range of goods and the creation of tax-free zones, of all which have a roll-on effect to more spending and creating employment.

Cost of living: this Government has already embarked on:

- the subsidy of electricity for low income families from the current 75 kilowatts per hour, to 85 kilowatts per hour;
- free water of 91,250 litres for freehold earning less than \$30,000 per year;
- controlled price of some basic food items and place zero VAT on other commodities including medicines;
- free bus fares for all school children and elders over the age of 60 years;
- in January this year, employer contribution to FNPF went up to 10 per cent for all employees;
- the National Minimum Wage has only days ago being increased to \$2.32 and a 2 to 5 per cent wage increase to the ten sectoral industries.

Education, Health and Training: this Government has commenced with free education to pre-school, primary and secondary school students. The provision of 260 millilitres of fresh milk a day to all children enrolled in Class 1 at all primary schools has commenced.

The ratio of teachers to students in both primary and secondary schools will be increased which will result in a better learning environment but also create more jobs for our teacher graduates.

New primary and secondary schools have been built in villages and settlements for ease of attendance for pupils. The Ministry of Health has started in its free medication for all Fijians. New district health centres recently opened its doors for business in Cuvu, Nadroga and Bagasau in Vanua Levu.

The new Ba Hospital project has started with a ground breaking ceremony having been held in May.

Employment: The Ministry has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with both the New Zealand and Australian governments for their seasonal worker programmes and currently have 30 and 4 workers respectively engaged on a trial basis. Hopefully, we will see this scheme extending to other professions that is security personnel, elderly care and sporting attachments to name a few.

Agriculture: this Ministry has already begun running courses in beef and dairy cattle farming with a successful attendees being given to five to ten acres of land and a few heads to

get them started. Likewise, courses are being held for Fijians interested in beef farming, fish, prawn and crab farming as well as vegetables and other root crops.

The Ministry continues to be visited or called upon by interested foreign investors to either assist with or partner with the existing agricultural crop and livestock farmers. The Fiji Crop and Livestock Council has been launched and its office opened in the West. The Ministry continues to support government hatcheries for the production of larval and juvenile fish for the aqua-culture industry to encourage prawn and fish farming. This is provided free and delivered to the farmers.

Land Development and Housing: the Bainimarama Government continues to provide for squatters by sub-dividing State land on which they had been living and offering them 99-year leases. Squatters on *iTaukei* land will be offered 99-year residential leases with the approval of the landowners. This Government continues with other housing initiatives, including our assistance to the Housing Authority, Public Rental Board and Housing Assistance & Relief Trust (HART). This Government has removed most of the import duty on low-cost imported kits.

Infrastructure and Transportation: this Ministry continues to march on with upgrading of roads throughout the nation with sections of the Nabouwalu to Dreketi highway currently being sealed.

The Sigatoka Valley Road upgrade has been completed and opened.

The Votualevu junction roundabout on the proposed Nadi to Lautoka four-lane highway has been completed with the approaches to Nadi International Airport nearing completion.

With the acquisition of Government Shipping Services, two new vessels to its existing fleet, problems of moving passengers and freight to the maritime islands have been significantly minimised. A third vessel will shortly be delivered from Malaysia.

Information Technology: this Government has opened twenty six tele-centres throughout the nation providing more Fijians with access to the Internet, with another six expected to open before the end of the year. The Government continues to deliver on its promise to have all departments digitised, to provide Fijians with online access to all government services of all Ministries.

Environment and Climate Change: The Government is well aware of the effects of climate change, otherwise known as global warming, as the rising sea level and temperatures slowly increases. The change is real and is happening now. It may not be possible to stop it, but we can all help to slow it down. Due to impending rising sea levels and adverse effects of climate change, the Government has already relocated three communities, that is Vunidologoa in Vanua Levu, Narikoso in Kadavu, and Denimanu on Yadua Island in Bua. Another 45 communities have been identified as vulnerable and expected to be relocated in the next 5 to 10 years.

This Government has supported all forms of renewable energy, namely; solar, wind, hydro and biomass and removed all important duties associate with these sources. The Government has supported some commercial companies to sell back their surplus renewable energy to the national grid, and plans to implement and assist the domestic home public to be allowed to do the same if they install their own renewable energy systems. Eventually, these substitution will help lower our dependency on fossil fuel. We can all make a difference by using less carbon-based fuels and increasing renewable energy sources like wind turbines and solar panel systems. Whether it is used by a business or a household, it can only be good for the future of our children and grandchildren.

**Women, Children and Poverty:** This Government continues to improve the skills sets of women in our society through such initiatives as the Women Resource Centres that have been opened across the country. The Ministry continues with empowering women's programmes, organising open days, craft shows and workshops. The foundation for, and dedication of a widow's own training centre to focus on individuals with particular skills has been established on a site in Teidamu, Lautoka. This Government, together with the councils continue to upgrade municipal markets for the comfort of all vendors, and providing accommodation for women vendors from rural and maritime areas. The declaration of villages and settlements advocates for the elimination of violence against women and children has increased dramatically and continues to do so.

Since its introduction, the National Child Helpline has received close to 1,500 calls through its toll-free number, 1325. Madam Speaker, our recognition globally as a truly democratically elected nation is evident by the number of Cabinet Ministers, Members of Parliament, Permanent Secretaries, as well as members of Public Accounts Committees that have made overseas visits in the nine months of us holding office.

Madam Speaker, the phrase, "United We Stand Divided We Fall" is the very essence of what the Bainimarama-led Government is striving for. Fiji and all Fijians have been blessed by Almighty God, and as we continue to pray as a nation, He will continue to bless us as we strive to be as St. John Paul II said of Fiji on the departure of His Papal visit in 1986, "Fiji the Way the World Should Be". May God Bless Fiji. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

(Acclamation)

MADAM SPEAKER.- I thank the honourable Alexander David O'Connor for his maiden speech.

### **MINUTES**

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

That the Minutes of the sitting of Parliament held on Friday, 22nd May, 2015, as previously circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed.

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

Question put.

Motion agreed to.

## COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CHAIR

MADAM SPEAKER.- I take this opportunity to welcome all of you joining us in the public gallery and those watching proceedings on television, the internet and listening in on the radio. We are grateful for your interest in today's proceedings.

I also would like to welcome the honourable O'Connor's family who are joining us also at the gallery.

I wish to inform Members that a Report on the Human Rights Seminar held in Manilla, Philippines on 26-27/2/2015 is available for your information in the library and on the website.

### Ruling on Matter of Privilege

I wish to inform honourable Members that I have a ruling to give this morning on a matter raised in the House in the May sitting. The honourable Karavaki rose on a Matter of Privilege and submitted that the Honourable and learned Attorney-General had interfered in the work of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources. Honourable Karavaki also proposed that the matter be referred to the Privileges Committee.

I will now give my ruling on this matter. I do not believe that the honourable Attorney-General has breached any privilege in this case, and the matter should not be referred to the Privileges Committee. Contempt, as they relate to Parliamentary Committee basically fall into two areas:

- (i) Disclosing confidential committee deliberations; and
- (ii) Tampering or threatening a witness appearing before a Committee.

In my view, the honourable and learned Attorney-General is expressing an opinion about the Committee's powers and processes, and he is entitled to do that. His comments do not affect the operation of the Committee, and therefore have not transgressed any privilege of the Parliament. I therefore rule that I will not be referring the matter to the Privileges Committee.

## PRESENTATION OF PETITION

### Severity of Punishment by LTA

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise to present this petition, signed by about 95 PSV vehicle drivers, mostly taxi drivers in Labasa. The petition, Madam Speaker, is basically to highlight to this House the severity of the punishment meted out by the Land Transport Authority officers, and punishments includes charging of offenders, fining of offenders, awarding demerit points and the offenders' licences and suspending a licence of six months for the same traffic offence, Madam Speaker. This double punishment system in its entirety is unconstitutional and breaches the right of a person, equality and freedom from discrimination under Section 26(1) of the Republic of Fiji 2013 Constitution.

Madam Speaker, as we all know that taxi driving is a source of employment to low income earners and therefore it would be uncalled for to rob them of their opportunities because of their survival and also the survival of their family members. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

(Petition handed to Secretary-General)

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank You. Under Standing Order 37, I refer this Petition to the Standing Committee on Justice, Law and Human Rights.

### **PRESENTATION OF REPORTS**

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, in accordance to Standing Order 38, I present the following Annual Reports to Parliament:

1. Reserve Bank of Fiji – Annual Report 2014 (*Parliamentary Paper No. 7 of 2015*)
2. Fiji Independent Commission Against Corruption -Annual Report 2014 (*Parliamentary Paper No. 23 of 2015*)
3. Office of the Auditor General – Annual Report 2014 (*Parliamentary Paper No. 34 of 2015*).

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. Under Standing Order 38(2), I refer the Reserve Bank of Fiji Annual Report, 2014 to the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs.

I refer the Annual Report 2014 of the Fiji Independent Commission Against Corruption to the Standing Committee on Justice, Law and Human Rights.

I refer the Annual Report of the Office of the Auditor-General - 2014 to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

I now call on the honourable Minister for Education, Heritage and Arts.

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Thank you, Madam Speaker, in accordance with Standing Order 38, I present the following Annual Reports to Parliament:

1. The Fiji Higher Education Commission Annual Report 2013
2. The University of the South Pacific 2013 Annual Report.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. Under Standing Order 38(2), I refer the Fiji Higher Education Commission Annual Report 2013 and the University of the South Pacific 2013 Annual Report to the Standing Committee on Social Affairs.

The Minister for Local Government, Housing, Environment, Infrastructure and Transport.

HON. P.B. KUMAR.- Madam Speaker, in accordance with Standing Order 38, I present the Fiji Electricity Authority (FEA) Annual Report 2014 to Parliament.

*(Annual Report handed to the Secretary General)*

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. Under Standing Order 38(2), I refer the Fiji Electricity Authority Annual Report 2014 to the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs.



## QUESTIONS & REPLIES

### Oral Questions

#### National Development Plan – Consultation Update (Question No. 135/2015)

HON. V. PILLAY asked the Government, upon notice:

Can the honourable and learned Attorney-General and Minister for Finance, Public Enterprises, Public Service and Communications inform the House as to why we need a National Development Plan and give an update of the National Development Plan consultations?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM (Attorney General and Minister for Finance, Public Enterprises, Public Services and Communications).- Thank you, Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the honourable Member, honourable Viam Pillay for his question.

Madam Speaker, a Development Plan is utterly critical for any country. By having a Development Plan in this particular instance, we are looking at short to medium term goals with a five year plan and of course a long term plan with a 20 year Development Plan.

It is critical because we, as a nation, need to know exactly where our development priorities are. As you are aware, Madam Speaker, the Fijian Constitution now has unprecedented rights, in particular socio-economic rights for all Fijians.

These rights are justiciable, in other words, members of the public can actually take the government to Court to put it in simple terms, to be able to have those rights enforced. These rights include the right to education (free education), economic participation, decent wages, housing, health care, water and electricity, social protection and a clean environment.

Madam Speaker, these socio-economic objectives, obviously is applicable to everybody. You will see that these types of open objectives also highlight and give us an opportunity to see which pockets of our population are in fact, deprived from having greater access to these rights.

So, these Development Plans, Madam Speaker, is something that is adopted by many countries. We used to have Development Plans prior to the first *coup* in 1987 but of course, it was then never put in place thereafter. But now of course, we are now talking to a number of multilateral agencies, we are talking to development partners and we have spoken to a number of interest groups within Fiji. And what has actually happened, Madam Speaker, if you will see in the papers, we put out advertisements that go out in the papers and these have highlighted that there will be 664 meetings that will be held throughout Fiji. The Central Division will have 216, Western - 191, Eastern - 108 and the Northern Division - 148 meetings.

This is actually going right down to the grassroots. It is very critical, Madam Speaker, to have these meetings because we are hearing directly from ordinary Fijians as to what their development priorities are, what are the everyday issues that affect them. What do they think they would have as a development priority in five years' time, in 10 years' time? We are not

just simply talking about roads, bridges, water and electricity, but also demographic changes within those areas itself.

So, for example, Madam Speaker, if you look at the last elections that we had, nearly a third of the voters were below the age of 35 at the very least. Probably, a statistics that was lost in the other side of the House. But, Madam Speaker, again we have about 30 per cent of the population that are below the age of 18. So, what does this mean for example, in terms of the health system? The health priorities that the Minister for Education needs to put in place. What does this mean for the Education system? Where will Fiji be in 10 years' time? It is predicted that by 2032, our population will be a million people. So, are we, Madam Speaker, going to be ready for this population outburst? Are we ready for the fact that when we have for example, the small farmer holdings, the sugar cane industry has built on small farmer holdings and passed on from generation to generation? But many of the younger population, our generation do not actually want to farm cane any more. They would rather work in the tourism industry, they want to work as teachers and various other professions. What is the impact in the sugar cane industry?

There are not many people who want to cut cane anymore. So, are we going to introduce more methodologies in terms of techniques, in terms of you know mechanised farming? These are the types of issues that this Development Plan will need to address and this is the type of information that we will try and eke out from the ordinary Fijians.

We are, of course, Madam Speaker, will be subsequently holding meetings with various organised civil society groups, NGOs, of course NGO's and civil society groups are also coming to these meetings to give their submissions also.

This, Madam Speaker, is a apolitical issue. Development for any country must be dealt with a apolitical issue because everybody must want economic development. Everybody must want economic prosperity, everybody must want to eradicate poverty, and everyone must want access to amenities that everybody else enjoys. So, it must be dealt with an apolitical manner.

We have, Madam Speaker, in terms of an update, as I have said, we have organised 664 meetings. There has already been 301 meetings held in 11 days, Madam Speaker. As I have said, this will be dealt with in an apolitical manner and we want people to come to these meetings and make contributions that will be beneficial for Fiji, not some side tracking issue.

Madam Speaker, for example, we have noted that the number of sessions in Kadavu had the most highest number of attendance. So, for example in Kadavu and all these small villages, et cetera, the average attendance has been about 75 people per session and these are considered very large in terms of the small area and the small population of Kadavu.

Just by way of the programme for the next two weeks, Madam Speaker; in the Central Division, from the 6<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> July, meetings will be held in Tailevu, Rewa, Naitasiri and of course, we are going out to the Western Division from 6<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup>. Meetings have been held in Nadi, Yasawa Islands, Lautoka, Ba, Tavua. Northern Division, we are going up to Bua, Macuata and Cakaudrove from the 8<sup>th</sup> of July. In the Eastern Division, a team has already left, in fact the Permanent Secretary for Finance has gone off with them. They have gone off to Lau and they should be there by tomorrow or so and we have got teams going out to Rotuma from 11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> July and the rest of Lomaiviti that will be covered. Some of the issues, Madam Speaker, that have arisen from these consultations, what we do get is, when the team from the

Ministry of Finance ably assisted by the Ministry of Provincial Development and Maritime Development and also the Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs, when they actually do go out, we get each meeting session to have a record. And in the record, we also then provide feedback to the head office and these are collated. So far, we have had 143 Reports that have been submitted to HQ. And some of the issues that have come out have been to do with access to markets, access to amenities and also in terms of things like in some areas, you have complains saying that some of the research officers, agricultural officers from Agriculture, they say need to come more because we need more assistance. This is very, very good feedback for us too. So, the Ministry of Agriculture will also know, okay in this area, we need more of our field workers to be out there, to be able to assist them in those specific areas. So, Madam Speaker, we have of course, embarked on advertising quite extensively and we have received very, very good feedback on it. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. Supplementary question, the honourable Dr. Biman Prasad

HON. DR. B.C. PRASAD.- Supplementary question, Madam Speaker. The National Planning has a tool, it has long been described as a development strategy for countries around the world but nonetheless, let me ask the honourable Minister. The Peoples' Charter for Change had a very comprehensive section on the economy and was a very comprehensive report on the state of the economy. Can I ask the honourable Minister whether we are reinventing the wheel and whether that still forms the basis for the National Development Plan?

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable and learned Attorney General.

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

(Chorus of interjections)

MADAM SPEAKER.- Can we allow the honourable and learned Attorney-General to answer the question.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, the outreach from the other side are music to my ears, they are music to my ears. And I will tell you why; they are endorsing the Peoples' Charter. They are endorsing the Peoples' Charter. They are endorsing the Peoples' Charter. Thank you very much, *vinaka*.

Madam Speaker, they are now asking for the Peoples' Charter, these are the very people who wanted to boycott the Charter process. These are the very people, suddenly we have got millions. Madam Speaker, Madam Speaker, Madam Speaker, if they, in all seriousness ....

MADAM SPEAKER – Order! Can we ask the honourable and learned Attorney General to continue his response to the question.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM – Madam Speaker, if they actually bothered to read the Peoples' Charter, Madam Speaker they would find that a number of the recommendations of the Peoples Charter are in fact in the Constitution. They would know if they read the Charter,

Madam Speaker, that there's a distinction between having a specific detailed development plan that relates to specific areas.

The Peoples' Charter sets out the principles and the values under the different sectors within the economy. We are now giving it lot more flesh – so the Peoples' Charter does provide the basis for this. The State of the Nation Report through the Charter process and that of course, is being taken into consideration too, but we are not caught in a time war. Madam Speaker, we are not caught in a time war. Madam Speaker, we are not caught in a time war. Madam Speaker we are not caught in a time war. And the population is growing very fast, demographic changes even taken place within a span of seven or eight years. Population movements have taken place. These are the types of issues that are being addressed to the development plan specifically. The principles of the Charter, the State of the Nation Report that was attached to the Charter, of course, is all there. Of course, it provides the basis for supplementing the development plan. You cannot simply relying, it will be obtuse, it will be obtuse and coming from somebody who has training in economics, will be obtuse to think that only one document, only one document, only one document, only one document Madam Speaker...that only one document Madam Speaker, that only one document Madam Speaker, only one document Madam Speaker

HON. DR. B.C. PRASAD.- It is a failed process.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Order. We will continue to hear the same sentence if you continue to interject and I have allowed the honourable Minister to complete his answer.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM – Madam Speaker, if I can recap - it would be obtuse to say that only one document like the Charter can be the sole source of information for the development plan. It is not a socialist issue. He needs to Madam Speaker, he needs to also understand the countries in this day and age today that are also doing development plans.

HON. OPPOSITION MEMBER.- You are confusing the public!

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- You are confused, not the public not the public. The public is not confused, Madam Speaker. If the public was confused, people would not be attending this meeting, Madam Speaker. They are coming in droves, they need to get out to the grassroots and understand what people want. This is what this process is trying to do, Madam Speaker, and that assumption that developments plans are debunked as a concept is not true. Some have debunked, some have accepted it and some are still continuing with it but it is critical Madam Speaker, given our history, given our history it is critical that we as a nation, have a vision. I am talking about a development plan, I am not talking about political visions, I am talking about a development plan, economic plan that the ordinary Fijians want to know. Our development partners want to know our priorities so that when they come and assist us, they say 'okay, these people have got this, they want to put more child hospitals'. This is where we will go and assist them, that is what it does, Madam Speaker. It creates a new level of transparency also in infrastructure development. So, people are able to plan, the private sectors are also able to plan, that is what it addresses, Madam Speaker, Thank you very much.

MADAM SPEAKER – I will now give the floor to the honourable Viliame Gavoka.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. In my province, Madam Speaker, a number of occasions, Government delegations have arrived and the villagers have no interest in their visit. It was embarrassing for the *Turaga ni Koro* to go around asking people to come to the meeting because they say all these things have been said in the *Tikina* Council. The *Tikina* Council, Madam Speaker, right now they say they are like talking to the walls since the regime came into power. Can the Government just use the structure that is in place with the *itaukei* community, use the *Tikina* Council and then the Provincial Council and take its guidance from there, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. The honourable and learned Attorney General.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM- Madam Speaker, as I said these meeting actually goes down to the grassroots level. There are many people, for example, who do not necessarily attend all the meetings with the *Tikina* Councils and the Provincial Council meetings. We hear it directly from the people. As you also know, Madam Speaker, as you also know Madam Speaker, as you also know Madam Speaker we hear it directly from villagers, we have gone out to villages Madam Speaker and where ordinary villagers are able to speak directly, directly to the Government officials, not through some third fourth parties.

Madam Speaker, Madam Speaker as I said earlier on, to suggest that there is only one source of information would be silly. We are trying to now ascertain and get as much feedback directly from the people, we are getting from the Provincial Councils, we are getting from the NGO's, we are getting from other various interest groups, we are getting from rural advisory councils, everybody is contributing. And As you know, Madam Speaker, the more information we are able to get and in particular the information that is the best, that is hearing directly from peoples' mouth will actually help us to develop the development plan. And so, there is a sense of ownership and the sense of state-ownership. I accept the honourable Member, he did not say whether it was during this consultation where people are saying they were not heard previously. But I accept the fact that perhaps in the past, where people may have not been heard. Issues may have been sent up but times are changed, the issues will be dealt differently and we hear directly from the people. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER. – Thank you, I will now give the floor to the honourable Moses Bulitavu.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. I thank the honourable and learned Attorney General for his answers this morning in regards to a five year term and a 20-year term Development Plan. I think from his answers this morning, he has failed to reveal although he slightly said that the development partners that these kind of plans are like Business Plans, you take it to banks, International Monetary Fund, World Bank, European Union and other agencies to target their programmes - United Nation Development Plan and other relevant agencies. These are the questions that are coming from the people, where are the money that is to fund this development plan which the consultation team is not really driving to the people. The people are asking, where are you going to get the money from? Is this

something for you to get more loans from somewhere? People need to know this and those people really need to know, it is transparency about the plan.

Certainly, the second issue....

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you, you are only allowed one issue. I will now give the floor to the honourable and learned Attorney-General to reply to that question.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Than you Madam Speaker, I love honourable Bilitavu's questions, they are always cloaked in conspiracy.

(Laughter)

There are always some sinister moves going on behind the scenes, otherwise watching too many movies.

Madam Speaker, Madam Speaker the money – is every year the Budget is presented, which has infrastructure plans, they weren't here here.

HON. LT. COL. I.B.. SERUIRATU.- They do not know.

That's right, thank you Honourable Minister. Thank you, I was just coming to that.

(Laughter)

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- They were not here last year, Madam Speaker, and in that, the Development Plan Madam Speaker helps us to prioritise, helps us to prioritise because if you go and talk to anybody that does not have a tarsealed road leading to where they live, they will say "we want a tarsealed road", but we are also trying to explain to them that "if you build a tarsealed road, it will cost you about \$50 million or \$30 million and is only going to serve, say one village in particular." Maybe their development priority is something more different that could be done in a lot cheaper basis or inexpensive. The development priority may be transportation; may be across the river, we can give boats; maybe the priorities they need access to clean drinking water first. They need electricity first so they can chill their vegetables and fish. This is the type of prioritisation that takes place. When we are talking about development partners, Madam Speaker, we don't talk about only lending institutions. We have AusAID, NZAID, they need to be able to come and work with Government, look at our Development Plans and for example, they may have a parcel of fund, not a loan but a grant that they may want to use for the South Pacific. If they are going to compare a country that actually has set out this development priorities and a country that has not, guess who will they give the money to? The one that has got their development priorities set out in a very clear transparent manner. That is precisely what we are doing. That is precisely the purpose of this Development Plan. That is the answer.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. Since the issue is of national interest, I will allow further questions, and I will now give the floor to the Honourable Semesa Karavaki.

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- Madam Speaker, part of the answer is that, this Development Plan is the basis or the platform to provide, to a major extent to the support of the rights

provided in this Constitution. To me, Madam Speaker, that is like music to the ears of the people. Unfortunately, if the honourable and learned Attorney-General can explain that although the Constitution provides for those rights to be taken care of by the Government, it also provides that if anyone wants to take the Government to court, to enforce those rights, it is simply the Government would go to court, stand up and say “we do not have the resources.” That is a sour note, Madam Speaker. If I may enlighten, Madam Speaker ....

MADAM SPEAKER.- Honourable Member, can you ask the question, please?

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- Is that clear, Madam Speaker, the question that I have asked.

MADAM SPEAKER.- No, it is not clear.

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- For the honourable and learned Attorney-General to explain, how can simple citizens enforce their rights in court for these rights, the rights that are provided in the Constitution; the right to housing and the right to education, when on the other side, the Government has no money and will simply stand up and say “your case cannot proceed because there is no money in the Government.”

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, I invite honourable Karavaki to actually have a conversation with me afterwards, because for me to actually sit here and explain case law regarding the development of jurisprudence pertaining to socio-economic rights is quite vast.

Now Madam Speaker, I hope you listened. Madam Speaker the section that the honourable Karavaki is referring to, is for example right to food and water, it says and the proviso is:

“(2) In applying any right under this section, if the State claims that it does not have the resources to implement the right, it is the responsibility of the State to show that the resources are not available.”

So the burden of proof, the burden of proof Madam Speaker, the burden of proof Madam Speaker, the burden of proof Madam Speaker, the burden of proof Madam Speaker is on the State. So it involves a direct assessment of what the State is claiming is true or not. That is the principle.

There is a case called Subramani there is also a case called Bruton Bomb. You can go to South African jurisprudence and look at that, where people were claiming the right to medical services. They took the State to Court. People were claiming the right to housing and then they took the State to Court. And it would be very interesting reading, honourable and Karavaki that if you can look at how the courts dealt with this particular issue. So, for example, Madam Speaker, so for example if somebody claims that under the right to health, that they need a kidney dialysis machine. So in this particular case, this Subramani lived in a remote part, where in the health care centre, there was no kidney dialysis machine. So he said “that the State is not fulfilling my right by not giving me the kidney dialysis machine.”

The State’s argument was “because the kidney dialysis machine is so expensive, we cannot have a kidney dialysis machine in all the health centres and all the hospitals throughout South Africa.” Because what that will mean, what that will mean because they got limited

resources, we will not be able to provide perhaps medicine. So it's a balancing of rights. Ultimately, what the Court had decided, from memory and I stand to be corrected in terms what the outcome of it, was that the State had an obligation, the State had an obligation to take Mr. Subramani and give him access to a kidney dialysis machine, but not necessarily to have the kidney dialysis machine in every health care centre. That is how it balances the rights. Socio-economic right is about balancing the rights because resources are limited.

Madam Speaker, the fact is that Mr. Subramani needed to have access to kidney dialysis machine, he could be taken to one, but not necessarily the kidney dialysis machine brought to this health care centre where there may be very few people. That could have deprived people of medicine, where there may be lots of other people living. So that is how it is done. It is not simply a question of standing up in court and say "we don't have the money." It is the responsibility of the State to show why it did not put it in there in the first place. So this direct assessment of the allocation of State resources, this is why these rights are so powerful. That's why these rights are so powerful.

In some jurisdictions, these type of rights are uneven justiciable. They basically look good but they are not enforceable. That is the difference, Madam Speaker.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Madam Speaker, I thank the honourable Minister for his explanation on the National Development Plan. I note that he said that there had been....

MADAM SPEAKER.- Please, can you ask the question.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- .... no Development Plan for the past years. If that is the case, then what is the Roadmap for sustainable socio-economic development which Ministries have taken as the National Development Plan in which they had prepared their Annual Corporate Plan and Strategic Plan and that is also reflected in this book which forms the basis of the 2015 Budget?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Thank you Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the honourable Member for that question. The People's Charter led to the creation of the National Strategic Plan that the honourable Prime Minister launched in 2009. The National Strategic Plan, which is what the honourable Member is referring to, did provide the basis for Government's objectives. What we are saying now, Madam Speaker, is that, now we need to get into more direct specifics and hear more directly from the public. We need to have a Development Plan that sets out the roadmap in terms of specific development *per se* regarding infrastructure, et cetera by hearing directly from the people of Fiji.

I think, Madam Speaker, the reality is that, the Members of the Opposition are getting very worried about it, in dealing it in a very political manner, is because they don't like the fact that we are going out and talking to the members of the public. They don't like the fact, Madam Speaker, that we have been having all these meetings and hearing from members of the public. That, I think, is the crux of the issue, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- The last supplementary question, the honourable Ratu Sela Nanovo to ask his question.

HON. RATU S.V. NANOVO.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to thank the honourable Minister for the explanation given so far and for their team that has been



undertaking consultations to the island of Kadavu. As he has mentioned about those meetings in Kadavu, about 75 people attended which they registered in their meeting books, and based on the plans for Kadavu, I could see that they only carried out this exercise in three main centres in Kadavu. If they had done that on those three main centres, surely the numbers should be around 200 people and above ....

MADAM SPEAKER.- Can I have your question, please, honourable Member.

HON. RATU S.V. NANOVO.- .... because one is the number that he quoted which I do not agree with because of the limited area that they convened this meeting at.

Secondly, on the outcomes of those meetings, the people have come back to me and said that they are more frustrated than what they had before because all the same things that had been highlighting at the village meetings, *tikina* meetings, provincial council meeting and the Provincial Development Board Meetings are coming up again. Where do they stand? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. I think the issue has already been addressed. The fact that a lot of information had gone through the *tikina* and I will not allow that question to be answered further. That was the last supplementary question. We had gone beyond the three that is allowable.

Thank you, I will now move on to the second oral question for today and I will give the floor to the honourable Alivereti Nabulivou.

Public Rental Board (PRB) Housing Development  
(Question No. 136/2015)

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

Can the honourable Minister for Local Government, Housing, Environment, Infrastructure and Transport explain to the House the Government Programme that is in place for the Public Rental Board (PRB) Rental Housing Development? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- I call upon the honourable Minister for Local Government, Housing, Environment, Infrastructure and Transport.

HON. P.B. KUMAR (Minister for Local Government, Housing, Environment and Transport).- Madam Speaker, in view of the increase in the demand for rental housing, Government through the Public Rental Board has programme of expansion for the rental housing units throughout the country. To date, Madam Speaker, there are altogether 1,552 rental units throughout the country.

Madam Speaker, the capital projects under the Government's 2014 and 2015 PRB Programme are Kalabu PRB Rental Housing Project with 36 rental housing units funded by the Government for the sum of \$1.8million and will house the 36 families.

Madam Speaker, the construction work is expected to be completed by September 2015. The other capital project, Madam Speaker, is in Savusavu which will have 48 rental

housing units funded by the Government with a sum of \$2.9 million and that will accommodate 48 families. The building construction works, Madam Speaker, is expected to be completed by March 2016. Plans are also underway for the expansion of this programme in 2016 to the Western Division in Simla, Lautoka and Namaka, Nadi.

Madam Speaker, in addition to this, an Annual Rental Subsidiary Programme that is in the form of grant, Government has given \$1million to assist the disadvantaged tenants. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Supplementary question, honourable Prem Singh.

HON. P. SINGH.- Would the honourable Minister inform this House what percentage of PRB flats built at an astronomical costs of \$20 million in Raiwaqa is occupied and what is the rental for a one, two and three bedroom flats?

HON. P.B. KUMAR.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. About 60 per cent has been occupied and I know at the initial stage, there were some issues that has been sorted out when we came in and we have also now because there was a demand from the students we have changed the policy to allow the students to stay there as well. So, in terms of how much is being charged, we are revising the price right now. Madam Speaker, I am informing this House that we are revisiting the prices and I can always come back to this House and let the honourable Member know what is the revise price.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. I will now give the floor to the honourable Mosese Bulitavu.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Madam Speaker, my supplementary question is, people are coming, the rent for Raiwai is about \$111 a week. That is \$440 a month and a month that falls on the five week is \$545 a month. These people are low income earners and they request if the rent could be reviewed to meet their pockets. They have to buy food, pay electricity bill, even the honourable Minister does not know the rates. Can you review that or not?

MADAM SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister?

HON P. B. KUMAR.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. This is the difficulty faced in this House, ...

(Laughter)

... they have answers for all the questions. They know everything . This is the difficulty in this House and I thought that this time around when they come into this House, they will have a different mindset as what has happened recently but their behaviour is still like that and I am sorry for that.

Madam Speaker, they are not saying that there are tenants who are paying \$8 weekly as well. They are not saying anything about that. They are only saying about Raiwai and I have said that we are re-visiting the issue and I will let this august House know. What else?

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now give the floor to the honourable Niko Nawaikula.

HON. N.NAWAIKULA.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am very surprised that you are expanding, you should be decreasing because the very purpose of a Public Rental Board was to stop public hand outs. That was supposed to be done by HART.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, a point of order. The honourable Member needs to ask his question and not give a lecture about what Public Rental Board needs to do or should have done . Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Question, please.

HON. N. NAWAKULA.- Madam Speaker, the Minister does not know. That is the truth.

*(Chorus of interjections from Opposition Members)*

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Madam Speaker, I am telling the truth, this is the truth.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Order. We have heard the truth, let us hear the question.

HON. N. NAWAKULA.- When you should be going down, you expand it. You should have justified that from the beginning, the reason why it was setup.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Can you repeat the question; the question only please?

HON. N. NAWAKULA.- Can you justify to us the reason why you are expanding, when your policy and the very purpose was supposed to go down?

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you, honourable Minister.

HON P.B. KUMAR.- Madam Speaker, I do not need this type of lectures in here.

*(Laughter)*

Let me say these are useless lectures. The whole country knows the behaviour of the Opposition in this country. Madam Speaker, he is telling me that I do not know, let me tell him that they are not coming with the truth. The truth is that, we have got programmes in place whereby we have units and the disadvantaged tenants are paying \$8 and Government is giving subsidy.

With regards to Raiwai, I have just mentioned that, and how many times I have to tell them.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you for the answer. I now give the floor to the honourable Ratu Kiniviliame Kiliraki.

HON. RATU K. KILIRAKI.- Madam Speaker, the construction of houses in Raiwai are for families who need housing and by giving them to students for rental is taking away the opportunity from these families, which is the purpose of that house building project. Can the

honourable Minister, please explain why he has given the rental to students, rather than to the people who really need housing?

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you, honourable Minister.

HON. P.B. KUMAR.- Madam Speaker, I am so surprised that the Opposition Member is suggesting this august House that we should not support the students of this nation.

(Chorus of interjections from Opposition Members)

Madam Speaker, this is the difficulty, half the time I have to explain what is not basically asked in this august House. So let me say on this subject matter, Madam Speaker, as I have said in my initial statement that we have got units throughout the country and they are only pin pointing at the Raiwai housing project. Why are they not talking about other units throughout the country, where Government is also providing assistance to all these tenants?

(Chorus of interjections from Opposition Members)

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you for your answer. I will now give the floor to the honourable Jiosefa Dulakiverata.

HON. J. DULAKIVERATA.- Madam Speaker, I thank the honourable Minister for his explanation on this Public Rental Board accommodation. I just want to ask the question, because this accommodation was targeted at low-income earners, how many of the new tenants in your Public Rental Board housing were from the squatters settlements?

MADAM SPEAKER.- The question is statistical in nature and I will ask the honourable Minister to provide the answer at a later date. I will now give the last supplementary question to the honourable Semesa Karavaki.

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- Madam Speaker, Section 35 of the Constitution says “ The State must take reasonable measures within the available resources to achieve the progressive realisation of the right of every person ...

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Every single person.

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- ... to accessible and adequate housing and sanitation.”

My question, Madam Speaker, because many people are deprived of this and they are looking forward for its sooner realisation; to the honourable Minister to explain to the House, how soon the requirements that are here in the Constitution will be realised?

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. Since the honourable Minister is standing, the onus is on you to answer or not answer that question. With such a broad based question, and if you like, we will ask the honourable Minister to provide it in writing.

We now move on to the next question, and now I will invite the honourable Balmindar Singh to have the floor.

Campuses of Technical College of Fiji  
(Question No. 137/2015)

HON. B. SINGH asked the Government, upon notice:

Can the honourable Minister for Education, Heritage and Arts inform the House on what is the update on the Establishment of the 7 Campuses of Technical College of Fiji?

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. I give the floor to the honourable Minister for Education, Heritage and Arts.

HON. DR. M. REDDY (Minister for Education, Heritage and Arts).- Madam Speaker, I want to thank the honourable Balmindar Singh for asking this question.

Madam Speaker, as you know, we currently have 3 Campuses in operation of the Technical College. The first one is in Nadi; the Dr. Shaukat Ali Sahib Campus; the Nabua Santan Campus in Suva, and in Labasa, the Vanua Levu Arya Campus.

As the honourable Prime Minister promised and announced, we will have 7 other campuses, to ensure that the campuses are accessible to people outside mainstream urban areas in these three areas. We have got plans to start rolling seven other Campuses in January. These are as follows, Madam Speaker.

What we are looking at is converting infrastructure which now no longer serves the original need when it was established then, particularly schools. For example, we are looking at converting schools to Technical College, if the school has got the lowest student number, as well as there is another school within at least five kilometres approximately.

To this effect, we are happy to announce that we looking at Nawaca Primary School in Bua, to be converted to Technical College, subject to all of these being approved by Cabinet. So that will cater for students in the Bua area. I have got approval from the landowners who own the Nawaca land where the primary school is. At the moment, they are trying to get the lease renewed.

Madam Speaker, we also have got approval from the Management of Navua Levu Primary School in Wainikoro, to convert that particular primary school into a Technical College, so that it will serve the Wainikoro area. The students in the Navua Levu Primary School, approximately 60 students, will be moved to Nadogo Secondary School. The vacated vocational will be converted into a primary school and therefore, those students will travel there, which is about two kilometres away from Nawaca Primary School.

Madam Speaker, we have got written approval from the Nadroga/Navosa Council to convert the Nadroga/Navosa District High School into a Technical College. So that is in progress, and as soon as they examine the MOU, that will go to Cabinet.

Madam Speaker, talks are underway to look at a Primary School in the Lautoka area to cover that area. We will not name the school because at the moment we have not got the green light for that. So, Lautoka also will have a Campus there.

Madam Speaker, similarly, talks are underway for school infrastructure beside a school in Rakiraki, to establish a Campus or Technical College there in Rakiraki, to cover the population in that particular area.

Madam Speaker, we have got written approval from the management of Nausori High School, for it to be converted into to a Technical Campus.

Madam Speaker, at the moment we are talking to the management of a Primary School in Tavua, to convert it into a Technical College. That Primary School has got another Primary School within 500 metres away from the Primary School. Both the schools, because of rural, travel and migration have student numbers much less than a hundred. So, that particular school will be targeted to have a Campus.

Madam Speaker, that adds up to the 7 Technical College Campuses that we intend to start in January next year.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Supplementary question, the honourable Niko Nawaikula.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Madam Speaker, in my view this is a sign of inefficiency, and the honourable Minister has a big explanation to the public, to explain why he has not thought this out at the beginning when they formed the Fiji National University ( FNU), because by forming FNU, you deny all these poly techniques students.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Please, can we have the question?

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Just explain to us why are you thinking about this only now and not before, or when FNU started, when you denied all these people - the poly techniques?

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you, honourable Minister.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- It's a sign of ... (inaudible)

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Madam Speaker, I do not know what the honourable Member is saying.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Order. Please, you are using disorderly language in this House. Please refrain from using them.

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Madam Speaker, here we are dealing with technical skill based training. A one year training for students who have dropped out of school, who want to have a skilled pathway after Year 10.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- They are now taken over by FNU.

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- No, Madam Speaker. This is the problem, they do not have information. FNU does not offer Certificate II Level Studies, the honourable Member does not have full information, this is a standard problem with the other side ....

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- FNTC is now FNU.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Excuse me, who is answering the question?

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- There is no FNTC in this country. Madam Speaker, outdated information.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- TPAF, all FNU now. No planning.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Please honourable Nawaikula, allow the honourable Minister to answer the question.

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Madam Speaker, there is no FNTC in this country – outdated information. We have got National Centre for Training and Productivity offered out of FNU, they do not offer Certificate II in Trades Programmes, they offer short courses for in-service. That is the mandate, that is a brief of NTTC. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER.- I will now give the floor to the honourable Balmindar Singh.

HON. B. SINGH.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. A supplementary question to the honourable Minister. How are the current three campuses doing and are you running any short courses at these three campuses?

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Madam Speaker, I thank honourable Singh for asking this question. In Trimester One, we had in Suva 62 students who were enrolled. For the Awards Programme, Certificate II in various programmes – cookery, pastry, automotive, et cetera, Nadi – 377, Labasa – 275; a total of 740 students who went through Trimester One and now they are on attachment.

Madam Speaker, the next lot of students who were enrolled in Trimester Two on campus.

With regard to short courses, out of these three campuses, in Nadi, we had 4 programmes, 93 students completed, 7 short courses are in progress. With respect to Suva, 12 short courses are offered, 284 students completed, 9 programmes are in progress, 208 students are doing the short courses. Madam Speaker, when we talk about the short courses, I am to short courses like tile laying, brick laying, painting; these are the short courses that they have identified that are in need for the industry and therefore within two to three weeks' time, we would be able to get them out into the field to pick up the gaps in the industry. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER.- I now give the floor to the honourable Mikaele Leawere.

HON. M. LEAWERE.- Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the honourable Minister for Education for his so-called reforms. What I would like to ask the honourable Minister, definitely these technical colleges are located in urban centres, what would happen to the students who are going to travel to attend these centres, where will they stay?

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Madam Speaker, Bua - Nacoa Primary is not an urban centre, Navualevu, Daku, Wainikoro are not an urban centres. I will answer the other question. Madam Speaker, there are others like Tagitagi, Tavua, it is not an urban area. The two things we are looking at, one is, with respect to transportation, at the moment, all the students enrolled in technical colleges are eligible to get bus fare vouchers. With respect to students outside these areas, let us say in islands et cetera, we are looking at constructing accommodation facilities next year to deal with students who are way outside.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. Since we are moving outside of the question asked and that is just an update on the establishment of the 7 campuses, in my opinion, the question has been adequately answered. However, since we have the honourable Leader of the Opposition, and being a senior member, I will give the Opposition to ask the last supplementary question.

HON. RO T.V. KEPÄ.- Thank you, honourable Speaker. I thank the honourable Minister for Education for his responses. My question is, how much consultation is taking place on the ground with students and teachers who will very much affected by these changes in the ministerial programme, in terms of the concerns that are coming into the office and upon our visit to the constituencies, in that they really do not have much information before the announcements were made? What is going to be the future for them in terms of the programmes that are already being addressed in the schools and what is the future in terms of the students especially and the parents?

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Madam Speaker, if I heard the question correctly from the honourable Leader of the Opposition, with respect to the teachers, I believe she is talking about the teachers who are engaged in vocational teaching. They are absorbed into the technical colleges. So whenever we close a vocational teaching in a particular school because there is a technical college now, they shift to the technical college.

With respect to students, we are looking at having an open day soon, because once we have the venues of the seven technical college campuses finalised, then it will be better to have an open day. But in the interim, we are using the radio talkback shows as well as advertisements in the dailies to inform students about the programmes and short courses offered at different campuses. So, if I got your question correctly, how are we informing the students about the choices, our staff have gone on radio talkback shows to inform them about ....

(Inaudible interjections)

That information will come later on as we establish them.

HON. OPPOSITION MEMBERS.- We want it now.



MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you very much, honourable Members for your robust exchange of questions and answers that we have shared this morning. I think it is time to break for refreshments and I invite the members of the public in the gallery to join the Members in the sharing of refreshments.

The Parliament adjourned at 11.01 a.m.

The Parliament resumed at 11.35 a.m.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you honourable Members, we will now continue as per the Order Paper and we are now onto the fourth oral question.

Conversion of TELS to Grants  
(Question No. 138/2015)

HON. DR. B.C. PRASAD.- Madam Speaker, I just wanted to add a little bit of music to the honourable and learned Attorney-General's ears as well.

HON. GOVT. MEMBERS.- Ask the question.

HON. DR. B.C. PRASAD.- The People's Charter also said that the 1997 Constitution was supreme.

Will the honourable Minister inform the House if Government will consider converting all loans under the Tertiary Education Scholarship and Loan Scheme (TELS) to grants given scarcity of employment for our graduates and would be graduates.

HON. DR. M. REDDY (Minister for Education, Heritage and Arts).- Madam Speaker, I think it is a bad day for the honourable Leader today. Again he has messed up, but I cannot figure out what has conversion of loans to scholarships to do with creating employment in this scenario.

Madam Speaker, they do not have correct and full information, they are commenting that they do not have jobs, how can they pay? They do not have jobs, they do not have to pay unless and until they get jobs, then they will pay. Let me give full details to the other side so that they will not ask these kinds of questions again.

Madam Speaker, to the contrary, TELS students have more flexibility to move to global labour market because if they wish to migrate without serving the bond period, they only have to pay 150 per cent of their loan, whereas the Toppers have to pay 200 per cent. I will tell you why. Toppers, because they are taking someone else's place, there are a limited number of Toppers scholarships. So they have to pay double if they want to break their bonds and migrate. TELS, anyone can get TELS, as long as they get admission requirements and they meet the entry requirements.

Madam Speaker, to date 3 per cent of TELS students have paid back and migrated. So to the contrary, it is better to be in TELS, if they want to have flexibility in terms of moving to different labour markets. Toppers, not a single student has left because Toppers has been designed to address the employment labour market requirement of Fiji. These are the areas where Toppers are given. For example, survey, planning, valuation, engineering, these are the areas where Toppers are being given in larger numbers because we are addressing Fiji's labour market requirement.

Again on TELS, the reason the tertiary education loan scheme is an initiative undertaken by the Bainimarama Government to ensure that no young person should be left behind even at the tertiary level. No student would be prevented from reaching their dreams

because they cannot afford to. Fiji's implementing this initiative along with other countries, I will tell you, Madam Speaker, who they are, who feel that this opportunity must be provided to remove barriers to higher education. Madam Speaker, the Group of Eight Australia through the Commonwealth Government's Higher Education Loan Programme provides income contingent loans to Australian students enrolling in eligible university courses. These loans remove barriers to participation in higher education and require repayment, only once an individual income reaches an income threshold. HELP aligns the cost of higher education with benefactors. According to the organisation, the alignment of public and private costs with public and private benefits lays the foundation for an efficient and physically prudent high education funding regime. In the absence of a Government supported student loan scheme, students who need to pay tuition fee upfront, these would likely preclude many students from participating in high education. Madam Speaker, similarly the New Zealand Government is also implementing this initiative to student loan scheme under the conjoined efforts of its Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Education and the Inland Revenue. The overall aim of the Student Loan Scheme in New Zealand is to enable a wide range of people to access high quality tertiary education to gain qualifications.

Madam Speaker, according to a study, for the information of the honourable Members on the other side, by Maureen Woodhall titled "Student loans in developing Countries, student loans had been widely advocated as a way of financing private cost of investing in higher education, and more than 50 countries now have Loan Scheme which enables students to borrow from Government Agencies or commercial banks in order to finance tuition fee or living expenses. Let me give the names of these countries: Singapore, Colombia, India, Sweden, Denmark, USA, Netherlands, China, Japan, Hong Kong, Nigeria, Kenya, Ghana, Botswana, Uganda, Zimbabwe, England, Germany, Korea, Malaysia, Lesotho and Malawi.

Madam Speaker, we on the other side of this House do not wish to engage in irresponsible policy making, we exercise fiscal prudence at every point in time.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Supplementary question, honourable Viliame Gavoka.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- I thank the honourable Minister for confusing the House. Madam Speaker, I have here a report from the Ministry of Education replying to the question by the honourable Salote Radrodro saying that in 2014 - 345 Toppers Scholarships were given at the value of \$5.3 million. Madam Speaker, 345 scholarships which is free. Going back to Ratu Mara's Government, Rabuka, Chaudhry and Qarase, they used to give 600; 300 for the iTaukei, 300 for the Others plus the PSC and all that. Is it only 345, Madam Speaker, it used to be 600 or more. Is it only 345?

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you, I take it that your question is relating to the Toppers Programme?

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Toppers Programme, Madam Speaker. They gave 345 last year according to his report in reply to a question by honourable Salote Radrodro. The question is, is that all the Bainimarama Government can do, 345 when it used to be 600 plus?

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you, but the question is addressing the TELS Programme and not the Toppers Programme.

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- I will give the honourable Member full information. In 2014, 345 Toppers Scholarships were given, this year 489 new ones were given plus the 345 who were continuing, a total of 834 Toppers students are continuing. Madam Speaker, for your information, I have more.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you, we will give the floor to the honourable Balmindar Singh.

HON. B. SINGH.- Madam Speaker, how are the students take up rate for TELS and Toppers. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you, honourable Minister for Education.

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague honourable Balmindar Singh for asking that. Let me repeat that Toppers one and then I will go on to the TELS one. Again last year, 345 were given for Toppers, the reason being that these were the ones who applied for designated areas under Toppers. Therefore, we did not want to give in areas where we had excessive number of graduates in town. This year, we got 489 new under Toppers and 345 are continuing, a total of 834 under Toppers.

Madam Speaker, for TELS, last year we had 5,316 students who were under TELS, this year we got 4,545 new under TELS and continuing 5,262, a total of 9,807 under TELS. So a total of 12,806 now undertaking through Toppers and TELS. Madam Speaker, we also have got overseas scholarships, the continuing PSC Scholarship, the continuing *iTaukei* Scholarships, the continuing students under donor, Cuba Scholarship, as well as the Moroccan Government Scholarship. So a total of continuing students, we have got 9,408 and 14,177 new ones, a total of, this year, 23,585 students studying under various Scholarships and Loan Schemes in Fiji. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you, I will give the floor to honourable Prem Singh.

HON. P. SINGH.- Madam Speaker, a supplementary question. An advertisement appeared in the *Fiji Sun* on Saturday, 4th July, 2015 and by way of advertisement, the TELS Board has put conditions of immigration watch list for TELS recipients and the guarantors. I understand from the Minister's previous statement that now guarantors are not required, they can do by way of statutory declaration signed by a JP or a Commissioner of Oath or a Solicitor. Now let me give a background of this.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Question please.

HON. P. SINGH.-The question is, this is for the other side to understand the question Madam Speaker.

(Chorus of interjections)

The advertisement specifically states that there are 6 types of actions which the TELS Board can take, is this not in breach of the Constitution?

MADAM SPEAKER.- Point of order

HON. LT. COL. I. B. SERUIRATU.- Standing Order 44(2) and (3) clearly states that the question not contain more than one subject and it must also not be excessive in length. Can we ask the honourable Member to be specific and raise the question? Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Please honourable Member, just be mindful.

HON. P. SINGH.- Madam Speaker, just following on from that advertisement, is this action not in breach Constitution – Sections 9 and 21?

MADAM SPEAKER.- Can you just repeat the question please? Question in full.

HON. P. SINGH.- I was trying to give a background to this.

MADAM SPEAKER.- No, be specific with the question.

HON. P. SINGH.- The TELS Board has now published an advertisement in the *Fiji Sun* on the Saturday, 4<sup>th</sup> July, 2015 that there are five or six measures that they will take against individuals, recipients and the guarantors. Now, will the Minister explain to this House all these actions that will be taken, whether they are in breach of the Constitution, particularly Section 9 and Section 21 and what will happen to the JP who witnesses, will he also be liable?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, the Standing Orders clearly states that the supplementary question must be related to the subject matter of the substantive question. It is not related to the substantive question, Madam Speaker. It talks about whether it is constitutional or not. Where is the constitution mentioned in the substantive question? It is not mentioned in the substantive question, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- We do agree that the issue that has just been raised is not really in the substantive question as has been highlighted. Please honourable Members just ensure that you focus your question on the issue at hand.

HON. DR. B.C. PRASAD.- Point of order, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Point of order.

HON. DR. B.C. PRASAD.- I think the point of order from the honourable and learned Attorney General is actually out of order because the question talks about whether the loans will be converted to grants if they are not able to get a job, which means payment. And here is an advertisement in the *Fiji Sun* which lays down the condition that if the recipients do not

pay than these are the actions. The question is very relevant Madam Speaker, it is a very relevant question.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you, the point of order has been raised, the onus is now on the honourable Minister if he wants to reply to that question or not.

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Madam Speaker, the question is about the breach of Constitution, the honourable and learned Attorney General will answer that. However, Madam Speaker, I just want to make a comment that the honourable Dr. Biman Prasad is not able to understand the advertisement, the advertisement says that if you migrate without paying the loan....

HON. DR. B.C. PRASAD.- It is about paying

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- No.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Order, please honourable Members.

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Unfortunately, honourable Members on the other side cannot understand advertisements, Madam Speaker. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER.- The next supplementary question, I will give the floor to the honourable Karavaki.

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- Madam Speaker, given that the recipients of TELS would be required to pay the money provided for them for their education, and also given that the Government is not prepared to convert all those loans to grant, will the honourable Minister consider allowing the recipients of TELS, when there is no employment available in Fiji, to remove that policy of restricting their movements and allow them to seek for employment in the employment markets overseas?

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Madam Speaker, the guarantors must undertake that, if should in the case of the student not paying back when the person has migrated, the guarantor will pay. No problem.

MADAM SPEAKER.- I now give the floor to the honourable Niko Nawaikula.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Madam Speaker, as always, the honourable Minister has not answered the question.

MADAM SPEAKER.- So what is your question please, honourable Member?

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- And, he has gone on his diatribe to confuse us. The question is very simple - do not compare us with Korea.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Your question, please.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- The question is this; given that you cannot guarantee employment, can you review this scholarship, the TELS, as a grant? Because those are the countries that can guarantee employment, but you cannot guarantee employment here in Fiji?

(Chorus of interjections from Opposition Members)

MADAM SPEAKER.- The question is clear, I will now give the floor to the honourable Minister.

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Madam Speaker, again, the thing is this: Number 1; when they graduate, until such time they get a job, they do not have to pay. I hope they understand these basics in simple English.

Number 2; if they want to go overseas, to different labour markets, someone has to guarantee that if the person does not honour the deal, then the guarantor will pay, that person can go. Simple! No conversion of loans into grants.

MADAM SPEAKER.- We will now move on to the fifth oral question, and I now give the floor to the honourable Mosese Bulitavu.

Return of Extinct *Mataqali* and *Yavusa* Land  
(Question No. 139/2015)

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

Would the honourable Prime Minister, Minister for *iTaukei* Affairs and Sugar Industry explain what has been the progress of the work done by the Committee dealing with the return of the extinct *mataqali* and *yavusa* land?

MADAM SPEAKER.- I give the floor to the honourable Prime Minister.

HON. REAR ADMIRAL (RET'D) J.V. BAINIMARAMA (Prime Minister and Minister for *iTaukei* Affairs and Sugar Industry).- Thank you Madam Speaker, very briefly, the work on the return of the extinct *mataqali* and *yavusa* land has been moving ahead steadily to-date since 2002, and I just want to give a following update that on Schedule A land, 844 parcels were transferred from the State to iTLTB. Out of that 844; 782 parcels have been allotted to *yavusa* and other claimants, and 62 parcels are currently being processed. It brings about 93 per cent completion on Schedule A land.

On Schedule B land, 260 parcels were transferred from the State to iTLTB; 176 parcels have been allotted to *yavusa* and other claimants. It brings about 68 per cent of completion.

That's the update right now on the extinct *mataqali* and *yavusa* land. Thank you Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Supplementary question – the honourable Jiosefa Dulakiverata.

HON. J. DULAKIVERATA.- Madam Speaker, I thank the honourable Prime Minister for his answer to that question.

(Chorus of interjections from Government Members)

I understand, Madam Speaker, that not all indigenous Fijians have *iTaukei* land, some are landless. Can the honourable Prime Minister confirm to this august House that iTLTB had been distributing some of this land to these landless clans before they were actually returned to the rightful owners?

MADAM SPEAKER.- Honourable Prime Minister.

HON. REAR ADMIRAL (RET'D) J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- Madam Speaker, I really do not know what the question has to do with the initial substantive question. Maybe, he can meet me outside and ask me more of that kind of question and I will be able to answer him.

MADAM SPEAKER.- I ask the honourable Dulakiverata to meet with the honourable Prime Minister later on and discuss that question. I now give the floor to the honourable Niko Nawaikula.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Madam Speaker, so far as I know, the last gazettal of the transfer was in 2002, and the honourable Prime Minister has said that 844 for Schedule A and others for Schedule B. Could the honourable Prime Minister confirm this had happened after 2002; and whether this has been gazetted? Lastly, whether the RNL, for the new allocation, has been changed?

HON. REAR ADMIRAL (RET'D) J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- Madam Speaker, the honourable Niko Nawaikula said that as far as he knows (thank God that he has limited knowledge of these issues with regard to my portfolio), but if he wants more elaboration on this, I can get more facts and pass it across to him. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER.- I will now give the floor to the honourable Mosese Bulitavu.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Madam Speaker, I thank the honourable Prime Minister, from the point that it is coming from the State to iTLTB ...

(Chorus of injections from the Government Members)

HON. J. USAMATE.- Get your facts right.

HON M.D. BULITAVU.- ... and from there it goes to this Committee, and members from the NLC and iTLTB try to work out the amendments. According to the gazette that comes to the Board, it has to reflect what is on the Oath and Affirmation in the Evidence Book at NLC, and most of that are the powers within the Board, it reads "When a *mataqali* is deemed to extinct, the extinct land has to be allotted to the *qali* in which the land was registered on."

MADAM SPEAKER.- So, what is the question?

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- But the Board is saying "deal with that expediently."

The powers of the Board, can that be reviewed so that the Board does not supersede the evidences that are with NLC and they work in consistency because with iTLTB and NLC, the



delay is there. They are trying to amend the gazettes, and it is not consistent. Can we review your powers?

MADAM SPEAKER.- The question is clear, please.

(Laughter)

HON. REAR ADMIRAL (RET'D J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- Madam Speaker, the honourable Bulitavu always confuses everyone when he stands up. But if there is a need to review our powers, we will do it, and we will let him know too.

MADAM SPEAKER.- We will now move on to the next oral question and I invite the honourable Ro Teimumu Kepa to have the floor.

Change in the Fiji Flag – Referendum  
(Question No. 140/2015)

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

Would the honourable Prime Minister and Minister for *iTaukei* Affairs and Sugar Industry inform the House that given the overwhelming negative reaction to his plans to change the Fiji Flag, will he now seriously consider a referendum to ask our people: “Do you want to change our flag, yes or no” and to let their will prevail?

MADAM SPEAKER.- I give the floor to the honourable Prime Minister.

HON. REAR ADMIRAL (RET'D) J.V. BAINIMARAMA (Prime Minister and Minister for *iTaukei* Affairs and Sugar Industry).- Thank you Madam Speaker, the simple answer is no.

(Acclamation)

MADAM SPEAKER.- Supplementary question – the honourable Leader of the Opposition.

HON. RO T.V. KEPA.- Madam Speaker, there was a Tebutt Poll that was published by the *Fiji Times*, and funded by them on 24<sup>th</sup> June, 2015.

What the people have stated in that Tebutt Poll is that they want a say in whether they want the flag retained or changed. That question has not been asked of them, Madam Speaker, and we note that when FijiFirst was out campaigning last year, they loved the flag so much that they had it on their buses, taxis and the honourable Speaker was wearing it.

(Laughter)

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you.

HON. RO T.V. KEPA.- So, 87 per cent, Madam Speaker, wanted a say in whether the flag is to be changed or not.

MADAM SPEAKER.- And, the question?

HON. RO T.V. KEPÄ.- And, 66 per cent want a referendum. So, my question is, why does the honourable Prime Minister not allow the people to have a say in something that is so important to them, especially our youths, Madam Speaker?

The SODELPA Youth have been driving this flag petition, Madam Speaker, because it is so meaningful to them. Their ancestors, their grandfathers and their fathers have fought in the wars, Madam Speaker, and they feel very close to this flag. So, why does the honourable Prime Minister not allow the people to have a voice in whether they want the flag changed or not?

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. I think the question is referring to allegations that there could be a majority of people wanting the flag or not, and that is only an allegation, which cannot be substantiated by just a media alone, and therefore...

(Chorus of interjections)

MADAM SPEAKER.- ...the question or the crux of the matter has already been answered by the honourable Prime Minister. I will therefore now give the floor to the honourable Niko Nawaikula for his supplementary question.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Madam Speaker, if you do not like the flag, then why are you wearing it?

HON. REAR ADMIRAL (RET'D) J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- Where is your flag?

(Chorus of interjections)

MADAM SPEAKER.- Order! Order!

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- If you do not like it, why are you wearing it?

MADAM SPEAKER.- Order! Order! I hear the question has been asked. Please, honourable Prime Minister, you have the floor. The question has been asked, why you are wearing the flag?

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- No, no. That is not the question, Madam Speaker.

(Laughter)

That is not the question, Madam Speaker. I am sorry! The question is this; the public is entitled to know the total cost of this project. Could you tell us the total cost of this project, and whether it is part of the budget?

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. You are now wanting facts to be stated, and the facts....

HON. REAR ADMIRAL (RET'D) J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- Madam Speaker, if those figures are required, we will let the Opposition know of these figures. But, the honourable

Member has been questioning about the flag that we wear, unfortunately for them, their flags have disappeared.

(Laughter)

They are not very patriotic, these group of people, Madam Speaker. Last week, Madam Speaker, about seven days ago, the honourable Leader of the Opposition was seen walking down the street, holding a flag about three times her size and singing, but I never see any of these group of people there with her. None. None of these group of people. None, from this group. So, I don't know what flag are they fighting for. How do they define 'patriotism' on that side of the House? But, if they want those figures, we will let them have it. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. I will now give the floor to the honourable Semesa Karavaki.

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. The honourable Prime Minister has given a very short answer, and that is 'no' to referendum. Madam Speaker, the people of Fiji needs an explanation, especially from the honourable Prime Minister, why he had given that short answer. The question, Madam Speaker, is for the honourable Prime Minister to explain to the people of Fiji, why he has not given an explanation to that answer?

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Prime Minister?

HON. REAR ADMIRAL (RET'D) J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. I was hoping the honourable Member would ask me something on the Constitution, since he was holding up the Constitution. I thank the honourable Member for asking me that question for elaboration on the reason why I said, 'no'.

First of all, Madam Speaker, I would like to say how disappointed I have been with the honourable Leader of the Opposition.

HON. OPPOSITON MEMBERS.- Why?

HON. REAR ADMIRAL (RET'D) J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- For her lack of leadership she is showing on this issue.

When we first embarked, listen you might learn something on the search for a new flag, I hoped we would all do so in a spirit of co-operation and goodwill. I wanted to work closely with the Fijian people to reach a consensus on a more appropriate expression of our nation, and who we are today, rather, what we were at the end of the Colonial era almost half a century ago. I thought that even the Opposition, Madam Speaker, despite the way it constantly looks backwards in almost every issue, would see the value of trying to find a more modern symbol of the Fijian spirit. But, it has become clear that they automatically say 'no' to anything that is progressing ....

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

HON. REAR ADMIRAL (RET'D) J.V. BAINIMARAMA. – I am answering the question.

HON. OPPOSITON MEMBERS.- Point of Order.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Point of Order.

HON. RO T.V. KEPA.- Madam Speaker, under Standing Orders 60, speech must be relevant. That speech is not relevant because the question is, 'why is he not seriously considering a referendum to ask our people, do you want to change our flag. Yes or no? That is the relevant question.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. I think the answer being given is in reply to the supplementary question asked. Please continue.

HON. REAR ADMIRAL (RET'D) J.V. BAINIMARAMA.-And I said Madam Speaker, that I thought even the Opposition despite the way it constantly looked backwards in almost every issue would see the value in trying to find a more modern symbol of the Fijian spirit. They had those flags displayed on their table, not too long ago, only for a day. But it has become clear that they automatically said 'no' to anything that is progressive and forward-looking. Whether it is a flag, the issue of a common identity for every Fijian ....

HON. RO T.V. KEPA.- Madam Speaker, a point of order!

MADAM SPEAKER.- Point of Order! Madam Speaker, you are allowing the honourable Prime Minister to be irrelevant in this House, and that is what he is doing. The honourable Prime Minister has to concentrate on the question.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Point of order, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- I will hear your point of order!

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, a point of order. As you have ruled, Madam Speaker, as you have ruled Madam Speaker the honourable Leader of the Opposition asked a substantive question, the answer was given, and answered in full even though it was one word. That was the answer. And then, subsequently supplementary questions have been asked, and the honourable Prime Minister is addressing the question by honourable Karavaki, he wants to know 'why', and the honourable Prime Minister is giving that answer.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. I did make a ruling, that the...

(Chorus of interjections)

... response by the Prime Minister was on the supplementary question asked. However, we will not delve any further on that supplementary question. I will now give the floor to the honourable Viliame Gavoka.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. I think, Madam, Speaker, we are going all over the place. Let us now do that a bit more.

MADAM SPEAKER.- And, your question please?

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Yes, Madam.

In Papua New Guinea, in the Opening of the South Pacific Games, we had the Duke of York, Prince Andrew there opening the Games, meaning that the House of Windsor is held in highest esteem in the South Pacific, and equally in Fiji, Madam Speaker.

Can the honourable Prime Minister explain, why is FijiFirst and him trying to push away this chiefly house of Great Britain, which is so dear to most of us in Fiji? Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Prime Minister?

HON. REAR ADMIRAL (RET'D) J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- Madam Speaker, I don't think the honourable Member knows what is happening around him. Maybe he should ask that question to the previous Prime Minister, Rabuka who made us a Republic. Does he know what that means? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. Last supplementary question, Dr. Biman Prasad.

HON. DR. B. PRASAD.- Here, I have the flag on, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, first of all, I beg to differ with your comment in response to the honourable Leader of the Opposition's question in relation to ....

MADAM SPEAKER.- Please, do not comment....

(Chorus of interjections)

MADAM SPEAKER.- Order!

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. DR. B. PRASAD.- I am asking the question, let me.....

MADAM SPEAKER.- Order! Order!

HON. DR. B. PRASAD.- I am getting to it. Let me ask the question.

(Chorus of interjections)

MADAM SPEAKER.- Order!

HON. DR. B. PRASAD.- Let me explain! Come on, come on your guys! Listen to me!

(Chorus of interjections)

MADAM SPEAKER.- Order!

HON. DR. B. PRASAD.- Madam Speaker, the honourable Leader of the Opposition....

MADAM SPEAKER.- Honourable Member, you will not comment on any ruling that the Speaker has made. Therefore, please ask your supplementary question.

HON. DR. B. PRASAD.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. A large majority of people in this country, through a very credible opinion poll rejected the change in the flag. The question to the honourable Prime Minister is, is he willing to listen to the will of the people, and go for a Referendum to determine whether people in this country want a change in the flag or not in the first place?

HON. OPPOSITION MEMBER.- Yes or no.

HON. REAR ADMIRAL (RET'D) J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- Madam Speaker, he is talking about receiving some information about the flag. We receiving totally different information about the change of the flag. So, I don't know why we should be listening to him and his cohorts. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you, that brings to the end questions on the programme.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Point of order, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order according to Standing Order 45(3) in regards to written questions and responses and may I highlight that written questions that had been tabled, the written responses are still pending. Request that those responses be forthcoming as soon as possible.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. Your point of order has been noted and we will respond to that. The honourable Anare Vadei, you have the floor.

#### Written Question

#### Public Sector Investment Programmes 2012 - 2014 (Question No. 141/2015)

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

Can the honourable Minister provide the House a list of approved Public Sector Investment Programme (PSIP) for the maritime provinces of Lau, Lomaiviti and Kadavu that was implemented from 2012 to 2014 and of these projects:

- a) Indicate the actual costs of each project; and
- b) Indicate their status i.e. whether they are completed and/or still work in progress.

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU (Minister for Agriculture, Rural and Maritime Development and Natural Disaster Management).- Madam Speaker, I request if I can table the report at a later sitting this week. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. On the second written question I have been advised that the honourable Ratu Isoa Tikoca is not here today and I have allowed that his written question will be included in tomorrow's Order Paper.

Thank you very much and the question time is now over.

### **ESTABLISHMENT OF EMOLUMENTS COMMITTEE**

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

That in accordance with Standing Order 129, and in line with the provisions outlined in the Parliamentary Remunerations Decree 2014, that Parliament establishes an Emoluments Committee to investigate into and report upon the determination of remunerations for the President, Prime Minister, other Ministers and Assistant Ministers, the Leader of the Opposition, the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker and Members of Parliament, Madam Speaker, the Emoluments Committee shall –

- (i) Commission an independent organisation to consider the appropriate level of remunerations for the President, Prime Minister, other Ministers and Assistant Ministers, the Leader of the Opposition, the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker and Members of Parliament;
- (ii) Review the independent considerations and report back to Parliament with recommendations no later than Monday, 24 August 2015.

The membership of the Emoluments Committee shall be —

- (a) Hon. Jone Usamate;
- (b) Hon. Veena Bhatnagar;
- (c) Hon. Sanjit Patel;
- (d) Hon. Roko Tupou Draunidalo; and
- (e) Hon. Salote V. Radrodro.

Thank you Madam Speaker.

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

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

HON. LEADER OF GOVERNMENT IN PARLIAMENT.- Madam Speaker, I just wish to thank the honourable Bulitavu and the honourable Members on the other side of the House. This is history in this Parliament. But I wish to thank the honourable Members and I give the motion before the House.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. The Parliament will now vote. Does any Member oppose the motion by the Leader of the Government in Parliament? As no Member opposes, thank you for making history.

The motion is therefore agreed to unanimously.

### **REFERRAL OF TREATIES**

HON. RATU I. KUBUABOLA.- Thank you Madam Speaker. I move that the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence reviews the following treaties –

1. International Mobile Satellite Organisation 1976.

2. International Convention on Salvage 1989.
3. International Convention for the Control and Management of Ship's Ballast Water and Sediments 2004.
4. International Convention for the Civil Liability for Bunker Oil Pollution Damage (2001).
5. International Convention on the Control of Antifouling Systems on Ships (2001).
6. Protocol Preparedness Response and Cooperation to Pollution Incidents by Hazardous and Noxious Substances (2000).
7. Convention on Facilitation of International Maritime Traffic (1965); and
8. International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from ships (MARPOL 73/78).

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

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

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. The honourable Minister for Foreign Affairs has moved a motion to refer the listed eight treaties to the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence. I will confirm the honourable Minister has provided me with a copy of the treaties and written analysis as required by Standing Order 130(2).

Therefore, as required by Standing Order 130(3) I will now refer the treaties and the analysis to the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence for consideration and review. The Committee may table the Report to Parliament no later than 30 days.

That brings us to the end of today's sitting and I thank you all for your presence.

The Parliament is now adjourned to 9.30 a.m. tomorrow.

The Parliament adjourned at 12.17 p.m.