

THURSDAY, 14TH MAY, 2015

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

MADAM SPEAKER took the Chair and read the Prayer.

PRESENT

All the honourable Members were present, except the honourable Minister for Agriculture, Rural and Maritime Development and National Disaster Management, the honourable Minister for Fisheries and Forests, Assistant Minister for Agriculture, Rural and Maritime Development and National Disaster Management, the honourable Niko Nawaikula and the honourable Viam Pillay.

MINUTES

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

That the Minutes of the sitting of the Parliament held on Wednesday, 13th May, 2015, as previously circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed.

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

Question put.

Motion agreed to.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CHAIR

Acknowledgement of Visitors

MADAM SPEAKER.- At the outset, I warmly welcome the Year 8 students and teachers from International Primary School, who were part of yesterday's sitting. I also welcome students undertaking studies in Politics from the University of the South Pacific, who are observing the Parliamentary sitting as part of their Politics Unit.

I trust that the proceedings today will prove useful and informative to both groups of students, and as I have indicated before, I am truly delighted with the keen interest shown in our Parliament. I wish you all the best in your studies.

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

Population Message

Fiji's fertility transition has been much slower than might have been expected, given an earlier establishment of family planning programmes. The age composition of Fiji's

population reflects fertility decline and high level of immigration. Nine per cent of the total population is aged 60 and over. That will be more than 65,000.

The project suggests that the elderly population will continue to increase, however even if fertility levels has recently declined, proportion of youth fertility can still be high due to past levels of fertility. This is often referred to as the “population momentum., where a population continues to grow, despite low fertility rates because of the relatively high concentration of people in the young age group. Investment must be both in youths and the aging.

PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

Distribution of Native Land Lease

HON. RATU S. MATANITOBUA.- Madam Speaker, I would like to present a public petition to Parliament, for the iTLTB, to review the distribution of lease to personal accounts and the land rent premised on Unimproved Capital Value (UCV).

Madam Speaker, land lease is the main source of income of economic return for the land owning units. The land owning units have managed to build churches, village housing, buy shares, buy properties, develop land subdivision, open new ventures, et cetera. Now with the needed capital equal distributed by iTLTB to individual accounts, the *iTaukei* people will not have the ability to save money, as a unit to carry out development projects, or to have the finance to become entrepreneurs. Those *mataqalis* who have their accounts with financial institutions will not be able to continue with their loan repayments. The Government grant for the *iTaukei* landowners, announced by the Government, will only benefit landowners who have secured a development lease.

Madam Speaker, to get a development lease, *mataqalis* have to pay for a scheme plan, which is about \$7000.00 to \$10,000.00, pay all iTLTB fees and stamp duty, which is about \$5,000, even for a simple residential title and also the premium of \$37,000 to iTLTB.

For those who have not secured a development lease, they will now have no capital to pay for these development expenditures. The equal distribution of lease to personal accounts will prevent the *iTaukei* people investing as a group and to accelerate into the business sector. In addition, the improvement on the land use by the tenant, for instance, a farm in Labasa at Nagigi, comprising of 20 lease blocks which earns \$800,000.00 per annum from sugar cane, compared to landowners only get \$8,000 per annum.

The two policies raised in this petition shows that the *iTaukei* people do not have an equitable share of economic and commercial power with other communities, to fully benefit from the nation’s economic progress. They are only passive land providers and will not be entrepreneurs. Land owners will become poor (no savings), landless (land leased by tenants), jobless (no business to earn money), and the standard of living of the *iTaukei* people will be very low (ability to purchase proper goods and services).

Madam Speaker, all we are asking for in this petition is for the Parliament of Fiji to instruct the iTLTB to stop and review the effects of lease distribution to personal accounts and introduce a new lease structure which reflects the open market rates and prices, based on improvements (development and economic activity) on the land area.

Madam Speaker, I would like to table the petition to the House.

(Petition handed to the Secretary-General)

MADAM SPEAKER.-Under Standing Order 37, I refer this petition to the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs.

Payment on Full Share of Royalty

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Madam Speaker, I rise to present a petition before the House from the landowners and citizens of Fiji, demanding the honourable Prime Minister to fulfil his promises made at Nawailevu in 2011, when he opened the bauxite mine in respect of the payment of full share of royalty.

Madam Speaker, very briefly, the honourable Prime Minister said and I quote:

“I am also pleased to note that benefits to the landowners are being progressively met with the parcel lease, release of lease payments, and construction of infrastructure like roads, mobile telecommunications and ongoing discussion with Aurum Exploration Fiji Ltd, to provide employment and contracts for local trucking and catering businesses. Already Aurum has paid almost FJ\$1 million to the landowning units, with the remaining \$2 million to be paid out within two years.”

That was in 2011, Madam Speaker, and for 2015, I will get to that later.

On Monday, the honourable Minister for Lands, amongst other things, confirmed the following:

Firstly, there is no law in place that limits the quantity of rocks and soil that was to be extracted by Aurum Exploration Fiji Ltd, commonly known in Bua as Zinfer.

The landowners have been paid, according to the honourable Minister, the premium and rent payable for the surface leases. Lease and premium for access to mining, camp and quarries stockpile sites have been paid. The fisheries rights compensation has been paid, and the rock and soil royalties, according to the honourable Minister has already been paid. The payments yet to be assessed by Government are the future generation fund and royalties in relation to the value of the bauxite ore, which is the fair-share payment.

I would also like to acknowledge, Madam Speaker, that a sum of \$600,000.00 was remitted by Aurum Exploration Limited on 3rd November, 2014 to the Department of Lands. But, in discussion with the honourable Minister yesterday, I advised her if she could instruct DLO in the North to explain the breakdown of that \$600,000; whether it was for soil or rock royalty.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Order! You should be providing only an overview statement of the petition, and not a debate. The detailed debate will be done later.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. Coming to the conclusion. Madam Speaker, I would want to state what the landowners have said in relation to this, but given the time constraints, I wish to table their statements and note that a written submission

will also be submitted. However, the facts are, Madam Speaker, the landowners have received the following:

- (i) A goodwill payment of \$570,000.00, which is still in the Trust Account, but have been withdrawn and used by the landowning units.
- (ii) A total of \$32,000.00 for leases; and
- (iii) \$18,000 per annum for the last two years.

The landowners are not aware of any rock royalty payments. They confirm that they have not received any such payments. But, there was a catering business, Madam Speaker....

MADAM SPEAKER.- Order! I think the petition is very clear.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Let me then conclude, Madam Speaker. To reiterate, in 2011 the honourable Prime Minister said in Nawailevu, and I quote:...

MADAM SPEAKER.- Order!

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- I am coming to the conclusion, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- That is right. I think you have made three or four conclusions.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- I am concluding now. Where is this promise? The landowners want the honourable Prime Minister to fulfil this promise.

With that, I present this petition to the House, Madam Speaker, and call this to be directed to the relevant Standing Committee for further deliberations. Thank you, Madam, Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. Under Standing Order 37, I refer this Petition to the Standing Committee on Natural Resources.

(Petition handed to the Secretary-General)

QUESTIONS AND REPLIES

Urgent Oral Question

Permits – Constituency Visits by SODELPA Party
(Question No. 2/2015)

MADAM SPEAKER.- I have accepted an urgent oral question under Standing Order 43 from the honourable Ro Teimumu Kepa, to the honourable Attorney-General and Minister for Finance, Public Enterprises, Public Service and Communication. This question was delivered to the Secretary-General on the timeline required by Standing Order 43. I am satisfied that the question is of an urgent character and relates to a matter of public importance. As required by Standing Order 43, this will be the first oral question for today. As a result, the oral question in the name of honourable Ratu Naiqama Lalabalavu will be omitted.

HON. RO T.V. KEPA.- Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I rise this morning to ask my urgent oral question, which is on constituency visits, having satisfied the requirements of Standing Order 43. Allow me, Madam Speaker, some latitude to explain the basis for my urgent oral question.

Having noted that the honourable Prime Minister and other Ministers, and also Members of the Fiji First Party have visited throughout Fiji, and at the moment there is a group consisting of the honourable Assistant Minister and other civil servants who are on their way back from Rotuma, I believe, this morning.

Madam Speaker, our side of the House have been wanting to meet with our constituents, especially whilst we are sitting here in Parliament, and this is an opportunity for us to do so in the greater Suva area. With that in mind, on Tuesday we placed advertisements in the newspapers, and I hold one such advertisement here, which has been in the *Fiji Times* from Tuesday through to Friday, because our visit is for this evening and tomorrow evening.

When these advertisements were first placed in the *Fiji Times* on Tuesday, our Secretary-General received a call from the police stating and querying about this advertisement in the dailies. So, the long and short of it, Madam Speaker, is that our visit, which is in the Suva area that would include church halls and village halls in Raiwaqa, Lami, Makoi, Nabua and the Fijian Teachers Association over the next two evenings, is to meet with our voters, and to also have constructive consultations on issues that they have brought to our office, and which we would like to address with them. Now, that we have the whole of Fiji as our constituency, we need to be making these visits throughout the country, and we are beginning with the Suva area.

Yesterday, the Opposition officials were with the police, and they were there for four hours, Madam Speaker, in regard to this advertisement that is in the daily newspaper. After 4 p.m. Madam Speaker, with the legal opinion they had sought from the Solicitor-General, our officials were advised that we needed a permit in order to be able to have these constituency visits.

Madam Speaker, this is a matter of concern for us to have permits to carry out our responsibilities to our voters who voted us in, and to hold consultations with them, we need a permit. This is something we are finding very difficult to come to terms with, Madam Speaker, since the honourable Prime Minister, Ministers and other people have been having meetings throughout Fiji. Now, that we have placed an advertisement in the daily newspaper, and people are coming to our office with issues they want us to address at these two meetings, we have a written directive to apply for permits which was sent by email by the Police Department's Director General, that acted upon advice pursuant to the requirements provided under the Public Order Act.

Madam Speaker, can the honourable Attorney-General inform this House, as to whether Members of Parliament need to apply for a permit for constituency visits, and consultations which have been advertised for this evening, 14th May and tomorrow night, 15th May 2015?

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. I give the floor to the honourable Attorney-General, Minister for Finance, Public Enterprises, Public Service and Communications.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM (Attorney-General, Minister for Finance, Public Enterprises, Public Service and Communications).- Madam Speaker, as the honourable Leader of Opposition

has highlighted, a legal opinion was sought by the Police Department from the Solicitor-General's Office. This question was brought to my attention only half an hour ago, and I did speak to him. He did give the advice that for any public meeting to be held, there needs to be a permit that has to be applied for.

There is a distinction, Madam Speaker, between government work and members of a political party going out and holding public meetings. If you are going to call for public meetings, we are inviting all members of the public to discuss your political issues; it is actually a public gathering, and therefore permit is required.

From what I understand, the officials of SODELPA were also informed by the police to simply apply for a permit. I am sure if they went to the police and applied for a permit now, they would be given a permit. The reason why permits are required, Madam Speaker, is because, if for example, as SODELPA claims they have lots of supporters, and they are at the Town Hall or a village hall, you could have a thousand people turning up and there could be traffic issues, and other issues that could emanate from that. So it is generally, any public meeting held by any one. Even last year, when FijiFirst was holding its public meetings, we had to apply for permits. When we had the public gatherings in the parks, we all had to apply for permits, even though the Bainimarama-led Government was in Government at the time; we still had to apply for permits as FijiFirst.

It is very simple, Madam Speaker. It is not hindering anyone. If tomorrow, the Secretariat of the FijiFirst wanted to go and have a public meeting in a village hall as FijiFirst, they would have to apply for permit. The law is very simple and it even applies Madam Speaker, to a judicial review. If they are not happy with that decision they can go to Court and get a judicial review. The law is applied by the Police Force and that is who they need to liaise with.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. Any supplementary questions? Honourable Mosese Bulitavu.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- I thank the honourable Attorney General for his reply this morning to the oral urgent question. I will ask him a straight question, very straight, short and sweet.

MADAM SPEAKER.- The question please.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Can the honourable Attorney General, given that the advertisement is already in the papers and the public are aware of the meeting that is to be held tonight and tomorrow, give an instruction for the Solicitor General to give a legal opinion as a matter of privilege, for us as Members of Parliament and as representatives of the people to be there but not as a party; for us to play our role to represent the people, to hear their concerns and that it is safe, it is not of national threat or security, and that he give an instruction to the police for this meetings to be allowed. Can he give that?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, I can say from that question - thank God we have got the Independent Legal Services Commission to monitor the behaviour of some lawyers.

Madam Speaker, legal opinions do not change because there is some political motivation behind it. Legal opinions don't change. The legal opinion has already been given,

Madam Speaker and that is the legal opinion and the law as it stands. It is not a question of, "I will go and tell the Solicitor General to change the opinion." If he reads the Constitution the Solicitor General is an independent body too. He is appointed by the Judicial Services Commission.

My point is, Madam Speaker, that my learned friend the honourable Member Bulitavu has got the law completely wrong.

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- Supplementary question Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the Attorney General for his reply particularly the part that he says that if we apply now we can get the permit to hold public meetings.

I would like to ask the Attorney General to confirm that because we have been told that it will take seven days. That is the problem and that is why we bring this urgent oral question before this House this morning. Can the Attorney General confirm again, that that is the situation; that if we apply now we will get it now.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, maybe I was misunderstood. What I had said to them was that they can go and apply for a permit now. The police will consider it, Madam Speaker. The reality is there is about four or five lawyers on the other side of the House. If SODELPA is going to have public meetings they need to know what the law is. If they had applied for a permit as the learned honourable Member says that they need seven days lead time into it, they could have applied seven days ago so they could have had the meeting today and we will not be here discussing this

The point is they need to read the law. The problem is they don't read the law, they don't read the Constitution they don't read the relevant laws and they simply come here trying to juxtapose issues regarding that. That is my issue Madam Speaker, they need to apply to the police.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. Point of order.

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- He has already answered the question and that is my point of order. At the same time Madam Speaker, I would like to ask another question.

MADAM SPEAKER.- You can only ask one supplementary question.

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- Madam Speaker, another supplementary question.

MADAM SPEAKER.- You have had your supplementary question and you can only ask one. The same question can be asked by another.

HON. A.T. VADEI.- Supplementary question, Madam Speaker. Is it only for the Opposition to obtain a permit or also other organisations like the churches, the social community groups; do they need to have permits too when they conduct their meeting in Suva or in the villages?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, again they need to read the law. The law says if you have a public meeting you have an open invitation to members of the public, so obviously church groups, religious gatherings are all exempt. If you have a women's club

they have their own membership and they do not need a permit for that. That is not a public meeting and they do not invite all and sundry to come this meeting because it is for a limited group of people. The same way as the Defence Club; the Committee members have their own meetings whatever the case maybe. There is a distinction and they need to understand the difference.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you that brings us to the end of that supplementary question. We will move on to the second oral question for today and I give the floor to the honourable Semesa Karavaki.

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

MADAM SPEAKER.- Point of order.

HON. ROKO T.T. S. DRAUNIDALO.- It is a matter of privilege and I had wanted to raise this under sub-section 134 which required notice, the one hour prior notice and I had given notice or the office had, but that was unresolved because your office required details, rightly so.

So, the point of order comes Madam Speaker, under 134 (3) of the Standing Orders as a matter of privilege and it says:

“The Speaker may interrupt the business of Parliament during a sitting, except during a vote (and we are not in a vote), if a matter of privilege that requires immediate attention arises....”

Under that sub-section Madam Speaker, it is clear from the urgent oral question that has just been asked. the supplementary question and the answers, that they impinge on the privilege of Members of this House because this constituency visits Madam Speaker, are for Members of this House to visit their constituency. And if I may take the definition of ‘privilege’ from the practice of the House in Canada, it says;

“... that any disregard of or attack on the rights, powers and immunities of the House and its members either by an outside person or body or by a Member of the House is referred to as a breach of privilege”.

Madam Speaker, that is the background and Section 8(1) of the Public Order Act which was referred to my colleagues from the SODELPA Party, in restricting or asking them to get a permit, really gives wide discretion to members of the executive to determine whether or not public meetings can occur. And we are saying that because of the privileges of Members of this House, Members of this House, the Government or this side should not be restricted in that way. And we ask you Madam Speaker, it is your power to protect our privileges, all of us, and we ask you to exercise your powers in that regard. The motion that I was going to propose Madam Speaker, if you are going to interrupt this session, was by putting a motion to the floor that;

- a) The Solicitor General appear before Privileges Committee at its first meeting to explain how provisions of the Public Order Act like Section 8 of the Act, may restrict the privileges and or business of constituency visits by Members of this House; and

- b) That the Privileges Committee be convened within 14 days of this sitting (today's sitting).

Madam Speaker, I am asking you under Section 134 (3) to exercise your powers to protect the privileges of this House, your House, our House, as you have correctly said the other day, powers given to you by this House, to protect our privileges and not require that this sitting be interrupted so that the two-pronged motion be put to the House for vote.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you I will table my response to this after morning tea. We will move on the second oral question and I give the floor to the honourable Semesa Karavaki.

Parole – Silatolu, Nata and Others
(Question No. 91/2015)

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI asked the Government, upon notice:

Would the Minister inform the House why Timoci Silatolu, Josefa Nata and others, after having served their life sentences and after having applied for parole, are still being held in jail?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM (Attorney General, Minister for Finance, Public Enterprises, Public Service and Communication).- Madam Speaker, before I give my answer I do not know who the “others” being referred to are but I can certainly speak on Mr. Timoci Silatolu and Mr. Josefa Nata. They have not applied for parole. In fact there is no parole board at the moment so they have not applied for parole.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- The last one was in 2010.

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- A supplementary question, Madam Speaker. The two persons mentioned are Mr. Silatolu and Mr. Nata. According to the sentences given in 2003, they were supposed to serve fixed term of nine years and seven years respectively; nine years for Mr. Silatolu and seven years for Mr. Nata. Those fixed terms have expired in 2012 and 2010 respectively; can the honourable Attorney-General explain why are they still being held in prison up to now, to 2015?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, I thank the honourable Member for his question.

As the honourable Member would know, when certain sentences are imposed, the Courts actually say “a person must serve a particular period,” so it is mandatory. So, in the cases as he has pointed out, of Mr. Nata it was seven years; it is a life sentence but he must serve seven years, for Mr. Silatolu, its life sentence but must serve nine years. It does not mean that automatically, after seven or nine years, they can go out of prison. That is a minimum period that is required but it is a life sentence.

There is a particular process through which they can apply but as I have said, there is no parole board in place. There is also the Prerogative Mercy Commission, and we have received an application from Mr. Nata in respect of the Prerogative Mercy Commission. They have to follow a particular process. The Mercy Commission members, I understand, as in the Constitution, and as the honourable Member would know, the Mercy Commission is now appointed by the Judicial

Services Commission. I understand they are in the process of appointing the four members, the Chair is the Attorney-General and there are four members of the Mercy Commission. Once they appoint that, then any applications made under the Prerogative of Mercy Commission process would then be assessed by that particular Commission.

MADAM SPEAKER. Supplementary question, the honourable Leader of the Opposition.

HON. RO T.V. KEPÄ. A supplementary question, Madam Speaker. In terms of the 'others' mentioned here, I had received a letter from Shane Steven's mother, asking about his particular status. She is now very sick and of old age in Auckland, New Zealand and she has requested her son's status at the moment; if there is any likelihood of him being provided for parole or any other areas that he can serve under the Mercy Commission. That is my question, Madam Speaker.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, again the process is quite clear. Any criminal convict, who is serving a particular sentence needs to follow the particular process, either through the Mercy Commission or through the Parole Board, once it is in place.

HON. RATU N.T. LALABALAVU.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. I thank the honourable and learned Attorney-General for his replies to the questions that were raised. Further to that, I would also like to ask this question regarding Josefa Nata; if the learned Attorney-General would care to explain as to why when Josefa Nata was recently released, but now he is back in jail.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, I see it as a new question altogether. It falls outside the premise of the substantive question. If the honourable Member wants to bring that question at a later stage, I am quite happy to answer because I would then be furnished with all the details.

MADAM SPEAKER.- I think the question has been adequately covered. We will move on to the next question and I invite the honourable Prem Singh to take the floor.

E-Ticketing for Bus Passengers
(Question No. 93/2015)

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

Could the honourable and learned Attorney-General and Minister of Finance, Public Enterprises, Public Service and Communications explain the following:

- (i) Why was e-ticketing for bus passengers halted in March 2013, after it was successfully trialled in 2012, involving students enjoying bus fare subsidies;
- (ii) Why cannot e-ticketing be compulsory in urban areas where bus commuters can recharge their e-tickets at mobile outlets and be optional for rural dwellers using bus services; and
- (iii) With the resumption of e-ticketing, can all mobile operators in Fiji be allowed to provide recharge services for e-ticketing?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM (Attorney-General and Minister of Finance, Public Enterprises, Public Service and Communications).- Thank you, Madam Speaker. I love the way the honourable Prem Singh has one question, but it is always divided into three sub-sections; there was an earlier question last week too.

Madam Speaker, the e-ticketing from the onset is a good concept, I must say, because apart from the fact that it is convenient, it also helps Government to keep track of the revenue of bus companies.

There have been claims of understating of revenues, and claims by bus operators that there is a lot of pilfering that goes on by bus drivers. They say that wherever e-ticketing has been trialled, they will see an increase or jump in their revenue by say, two-thirds. So, overall, it is the concept that is good, but Government is very much concerned, Madam Speaker, when you want to introduce such new technology, it must be user-friendly, it must be consumer-friendly and it must be uniform approach and there must be competition.

The honourable Prem Singh has said that it was successfully tried. When Vodafone brought it in, you would have actually had to pay \$10 at least, in fact they were citing a higher figure for you to just go and get the card, let alone top it up with the actual bus fare amount. So, just to buy the card, you would have to pay \$10. Government stepped in and said, “we subsidise it and we charge \$2.” That is what we did because we were concerned. Sometimes the bus fare is 70 cents and we use it five times in a week, that is \$3.50, and you buy \$10 for the card and you pay \$3.50. Obviously, it is not poor-friendly; that was one particular issue with it.

Secondly, if you only have one supplier of e-ticketing, for example Vodafone in this instance, there are many parts in Fiji where there is no Vodafone network coverage. So when there is no Vodafone network coverage in that area, the shopkeepers, et cetera will not sell the recharge card of Vodafone; they will sell Digicel only. So, if the supplier of e-ticketing for buses is only Vodafone, will they be able to go and recharge their card at a Digicel outlet? Of course, not. That is another issue with that

. What Government did was to put in place a new law to essentially govern this area of e-ticketing and ensure what we call interoperability. We said “we open up the market”. Digicel in fact said they wanted to come into the market, and there was another company that came in called “Bula Mai Fiji” e-ticketing. They wanted to come into the market too; former Fijians living in USA. So we said, you must first of all have interoperability because, for example, some bus companies may choose Vodafone and some may choose Digicel. Does it mean that I need to have both cards? Of course not. I should have one card that operates in all. What we call “frontend users”; frontend and backend. So frontend is when your card must be able to be slotted into all the different machines. The backend is, the software must be able to talk to each other, because at the end of the day, there must be reconciliation. When you put in the card, the money does not go automatically to the bus company. It is within the system and then there is reconciliation, whether it is reconciliation after three days, 24 hours, 48 hours, whatever the case may be. Unfortunately, to-date, the e-ticketing suppliers have not been able to reach

We have been having constant meeting with them through the Government ITC (not ICT).

(Laughter)

ITC has been meeting up with them, and I will tell you who they are. Vodafone is using ZTE from China, Digicel is using Mikroelektronika from Czechoslovakia and *Bula Mai* Fiji is creating their own e-ticketing system. That is the reason why it has not progressed. We obviously wanted it to progress.

The other issue, Madam Speaker, is this, assuming a grandfather comes from Kadavu, visiting his grandchildren in Raiwaqa, there may not be buses in Kadavu but when he comes to Raiwaqa and is going to use the e-ticketing, I would say five times to come into town, we do not want him to pay a lot of money just to get the card. Ultimately, as we find in overseas, the card itself should not have a value. It should only have a value when you load money into it. That is what we are trying to achieve.

Now, the suggestion about having a difference between urban and rural, you cannot do that. Tacirua buses, Princess Road is urban, you go further down to ACS, it becomes rural. So you cannot have that demarcation, it is not as easy as that because now we have urban, peri-urban and rural areas quite closely linked in. So, it does not make sense to say, let us have the demarcation and let us only trial it.

The other point that comes out from the honourable Member's question is, that he is saying that we provide for subsidy for school children, we still have that subsidy. By not having e-ticketing fully implemented does not mean there is no subsidy for school children, the subsidy is still on. Now, I think I have answered all of those questions. Thank you, Madam.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. Supplementary question, the honourable Anare Vadei.

HON. A.T. VADEI.- Madam Speaker, I thank the honourable Minister for his response to this question. I just want to say that this is another failed project just like the bio-diesel that they initiated. I just want to ask the honourable Minister, how much did it cost the Government in the setting up of that project?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, as a former civil servant, the honourable Member should probably know this, as he was in the Ministry of Industry and Trade. E-ticketing, Madam Speaker, was not a government project ...

(Laughter)

... E-ticketing was an initiative by the bus companies themselves with Vodafone. We have not put a single cent in it, apart from the subsidy and the \$2 and we have still not paid Vodafone, I think, the full amount.

(Laughter)

Madam Speaker, as far as we are concerned, it has been no skin of our teeth except the intellectual input. We have had the intellectual input into this process, to ensure all Fijians benefit from it.

HON. P. SINGH.- May I thank the honourable and learned Attorney-General for his very detailed response. The only clarification I have as a supplementary question, Madam

Speaker is, whilst this consultation with the various groups are going on, what is the timeframe we are looking at for some closure?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, in fact the law has already been drafted, has already been gazetted, we have not started the commencement date for that. The reason why that law has been put in place is to ensure that the rules of engagement are always there. So, for example, if we have, say Vodafone and Digicel operating. If one of them pulls out, there is a particular penalty for them because we do not want that obviously to happen. Because you know, sometimes commercial interest overtake what is good for the country. So that is why that law has been put in place. As soon as the interoperability commences, as I have said there has been consultations with them, we are ready to start it, but that interoperability must be there.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- A point of order, Madam Speaker, under Standing Order 45. For the last oral question, we were given three, but I had wanted to ask a question that was very important because it was arising from the Minister's original answer and I did not have a chance. But could you use your discretion, Madam Speaker under Standing Order 45.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- What is your point of order?

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Standing Order 45(2).

Although there is an understanding that there will only be three supplementary questions, but when matters that are very important, when the Minister is raising matters that we can further ask questions, I think you can also use your discretion Madam Speaker, to allow that to be asked.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you very much, I did do that. It is just that the three questions that were asked and answered were dealing with the same issues, it was just a repetition of the same issues, which means that the question was in fact adequately answered. That is why I stopped the supplementary questions as agreed to at three.

Department of Co-operatives and Small Business Enterprises
(Question No. 94/2015)

HON. A. SUDHAKAR.- Madam Speaker, before I ask my question, I just realised from the wall clock that it is 14th of May today, some 28 years since the mini-speeches activity happened in this very Chamber and I thank the honourable Prime Minister for correcting the mistakes of the past and allowing us the privilege of being in this House again.

HON. GOVT. MEMBERS.- Hear! Hear!

HON. A. SUDHAKAR.- Thank you very much, honourable Prime Minister.

My question is, can the honourable Minister for Industry, Trade and Tourism inform this House what is the contribution of the Department of Co-operatives and Small Business Enterprises in Fiji?

HON. F.S. KOYA (Minister for Industry, Trade and Tourism).- Madam Speaker, I rise to answer the question 94 of 2015 raised by the honourable Sudhakar and I thank him for the

question. Madam Speaker, one of the objectives of my Ministry is to improve the livelihoods of the grassroots communities through the formation of co-operatives and encouragement of micro and small enterprises.

As I have said before in this House, Madam Speaker, the micro and small medium enterprises contribute approximately 12 per cent to our GDP, which amounts to roughly \$800 million. The development of the grassroot communities has been one of the core issues of the Bainimarama Government policies. We want to build a strong and resilient economy that is able to sustain external shocks. Most importantly, it is about enabling our grassroots to have a sustainable livelihood and a better standard of living. The co-operatives model of doing business is one that is feasible at the community level, as it allows for pulling of resources and this is where the community works as a team to achieve one goal, which is maintaining a livelihood, creating employment and being able to provide for their families and even specialising in business.

Madam Speaker, the Department of Co-operatives business is part of my Ministry and the Department formulates and implements policies that promote, establish and monitor co-operative businesses. The department also undertakes training and up-skilling of co-operative members on their roles and responsibilities and on preparation of accounts and specialised skills training such as bee keeping.

The contribution of the Department has made towards promoting of micro and small businesses cannot be over-emphasised. In the last 68 years, the Department of Co-operative business has continued to provide the support and assistance in establishing co-operatives throughout the country. Over 2,000 co-operatives have been registered in various different sectors, of which today, there are 426 operating co-operatives. Madam Speaker, these 426 operating co-operatives are in sectors such as agriculture, marketing, consumer, fishing, tourism, handicrafts, manufacturing, transport, thrift, and credit and carbon trading.

The Ministry in 2011 began the restructure of the Department of Co-operatives to revitalise the co-operative sector. The focus of reforms was to bring the Department's work in line with the overall vision of the Fijian Government to utilise natural resources and establish commercially viable businesses that are able to sustain themselves in the long run. Madam Speaker, in the last four years, a total of 71 resource based co-operatives have been registered out of the total 130 new registrations, which has been one of our key focus. A good example of a well thought out co-operative business is one known as *Vueti Au* Co-operative in Ba which is supplying poultry to a major local producer.

This co-operative is actually formed by a church group members, who are facing income problems and unemployment leading to their membership declining. This group took advantage of the services and advice available through the Department of Co-operatives and the integrated human resource development programme and our support did not stop there. We went a step further to assist this co-operative by providing funds for electricity connection which was vital to operate the farm. Today, that very co-operative, Madam Speaker, is earning approximately \$7,000.00 a month and has gone into other businesses such as pineapple farming and cattle farming. This is also with the assistance of the landowning committee in that area. The success of *Vueti Au* Co-operative in such a short space of time has made it a model co-operative that has encouraged other church groups in Ba to file for co-operative registration.

Furthermore, Madam Speaker, the conducive environment created by the Fijian Government, a number of co-operatives have diversified their businesses into other sectors. The Department has given a target to facilitate diversification of at least 10 co-operatives each year, for example, there is a particular co-operative called *Manavure* Co-operative in Savusavu that started with handicrafts, Fijian Virgin Coconut Oil and noni soap, and they have now ventured into the production of honey.

Madam Speaker, my Ministry works closely with other ministries, such as the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Women and Regional Development, in an effort to promote the micro and small medium enterprises.

Moreover, we have taken the services, Madam Speaker, to the doorsteps of clients and in the past two years, we have increased our outreach in communities by making our training and education services mobile.

Madam Speaker, the Ministry wants to take education in co-operatives to another level, which will enable people to consider a career in co-operative business, with the development of the Co-operatives College of Fiji.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- A supplementary question, Madam Speaker.

I would like to thank the honourable Sudhakar for reminding us about May 14. I just want to say here, Madam Speaker, that two days ago, I was euphoric when the honourable Prime Minister tabled the motion to re-join the International Parliamentary Union (IPU), but imagine my disappointment yesterday, when I was told that the Police would stop our meeting around the Suva area.

Madam Speaker, my question is this; many years ago, we used to have these co-operative shops in just about every village in the country. That was more than 40 years ago; most failed, but time has changed. We know more about economics or commerce now in villages. Can the Ministry re-introduce the concept, where every village could have their own co-operative store?

HON. F.S. KOYA.- I did mention earlier that anyone and everyone who wishes to establish a co-operative, the Co-operative Division is there to assist. If they wish to do so, they can apply. It is as simple as that.

HON. B. SINGH.- Madam Speaker, first of all, I would like to applaud the honourable Prime Minister for the initiative to revitalise the co-operative sector.

My question is; what was the purpose of the restructure in 2011, and what has been achieved from it?

HON. F.S. KOYA.- Madam Speaker, the Fijian Government in 2011 decided to action the decision of 2009, to restructure the Department of Co-operatives and provide measures and initiatives to revitalise the co-operative sector.

The co-operative movements were very successful, I understand in the 1970s and 1980s, I think a few Members are quite aware of this. However, in the 1990s and up to 2008,

there was a notable decline in the number of functioning co-operatives, and in 2008, there were only 366-odd functioning co-operatives.

The Government in 2009, Madam Speaker, decided that it was important to breathe some life into the area, into the co-operatives sector, and also look at the manner in which the Department was functioning hence they decided to streamline the actual operation, to make it more effective and efficient.

With the restructure process completed, Madam Speaker, the number of offices was reduced from 15 to 6, and hence the stretch of the limited resources were minimised. Furthermore, the significant amount of resources were channelled into Co-operatives Colleges in Fiji, in terms of refurbishing the building and bringing in the training resources.

The result was that, we had a leaner and simpler structure, making it easier for the Department to take the services to the people, and increasing the ability of the Department to tie in with other key agencies.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Madam Speaker, my question to the honourable Minister is; those co-operative businesses that have failed, are there any measures in the Department of Co-operatives to revive these businesses, and whether any study has been undertaken to review the economic spin within those area, that will enable them the purchasing power to provide the income for those businesses to survive – has any study been done on that?

HON. F.S. KOYA.- Madam Speaker, I am not sure if there is a study done, but as I say, this Government is about encouraging the livelihoods of all people. And if they have fallen by the wayside, they are welcomed to re-apply and we are accommodating, as usual, as this Government is.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Since the issue is of importance, we will allow just one more question from each side of the House, and I am calling the first two that stood up. The first speaker will be the honourable Sanjit Patel, followed by the honourable Vadei.

HON. S. PATEL.- Madam Speaker, this question is directed to the honourable Minister, when will the National Co-operative Federation or the apex body be formed?

HON. F.S. KOYA.- We are currently working on the review of the Co-operatives Act, which was from 1996. The current Act does not clearly define how the National Co-operative Federation should be formed and what role and powers the federation should have. We do not and will not create a body for the sake of it, therefore we are looking at developing a structure, Madam Speaker, that will work well within the Fijian Co-operatives movement and the structure will be embedded in the new Co-operatives Act.

HON. A.T. VADEI.- Madam Speaker, one of the visions of the Ministry of Co-operatives is to promote co-operative movement in the country. Last two years, we found out that they have been closing co-operative offices in the various divisions. This is something contradictory to their visions. How can they enhance and promote co-operative movements as stated in their vision?

HON. F.S. KOYA.- Madam Speaker, I would just like to be specific with this. The trainings that are provided by the Co-operatives, through the Department and through the Co-

operative College, is specifically for co-operative management. We actually give basic Book Keeping for Stages I and II, Start of Business, the Co-operative Certificate in Basic Book Keeping and Financial Literacy training, so they are in readiness for when they are absolutely operational. So the trainings are ongoing and is accessible to all.

Status of Violence Against Women in Fiji
(Question No. 95/2015)

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

Can the honourable Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation explain the status of violence against women in Fiji?

HON. R.S. AKBAR (Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation).- Madam Speaker, I thank the honourable Member for the question on the status of violence against women and children in Fiji.

Madam Speaker, if I may start off with the study report that was conducted by the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre in 2010 and 2011, which led to the publication of a report titled "*Somebody's Life, Everybody's Business Survey*." It revealed that 64 per cent of women are subjected to domestic violence in Fiji, and that is awfully too high. Fiji thus is rated 2nd highest in the region in regards to domestic violence.

Our honourable Prime Minister at the inaugural address at the Pacific Women's Parliamentary Forum said, and I quote:

"At Government level, we have zero tolerance for domestic violence in Fiji, whether it is man beating woman, woman attacking man, parents hitting children, it is not acceptable. We have given instructions to all the instruments of the State that the perpetrators of domestic violence are to be subject to the full force of the law."

Madam Speaker, the Fijian Government views violence against women as everyone's responsibility. In this regard, we need a concerted effort in educating our communities, providing them with appropriate information, guidance on all aspects of life, to increase sense of responsibility and helping build character and strength. Men and boys in particular, need to be educated in responsible fatherhood.

Madam Speaker, Fiji has pioneered a community-based programme called "Zero Tolerance Violence-Free Community". This is a ten-phase programme where a community's progress from being a community that has a high rate of domestic violence to one being declared as "Violence-Free". Within this programme, we have gatekeepers that have been established to ensure that women live in a violence-free community where they are protected and safe. The gatekeepers committees are made of community leaders, faith-based organisation leaders, *turaga ni koro* (village headman), women and youth representatives and advisory councillors. Women and youth representative are community members themselves who are trained and mentored for counselling victims of domestic violence. Currently we have 39 communities that have been declared Violence-Free while we are working with 50 other communities to establish these zones.

Madam Speaker, currently the Ministry is working to strengthening its Memorandum of Agreement with the Fiji Police Force, because we believe that we have perfect laws, but the implementation of these laws is a problem. Our Constitution provides for protection and there are various laws which are relevant to domestic violence, and these are the Domestic Violence Decree, Crimes Decree, Employment and Promulgation Act, Family Law Act, Child Welfare Decree, Sentencing and Penalties Decree, and of course, the Criminal Procedure Decrees.

Madam Speaker, to move forward, what is needed is to build capacity within our stakeholders, to have a sense of urgency when responding to victims of domestic violence. There are still gaps in the full implementation of the Domestic Violence Decree, and we are working in partnership with the Police Department to ensure that the No-Drop Policy is upheld at all times. We are also collaborating with the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre on our Communication Plan towards the elimination of domestic violence, and moves are to set in place a Domestic Violence Helpline, parallel to the National Child Helpline that has already been established.

All in all, Madam Speaker, changing mindsets is very important to ensure that our women and children are not subjected to the ongoing violence. To make the change needed in Fiji, we need to; strengthen our family values and norms, strengthen positive parenting, premarital counselling, goodwill ambassadorship programme and nurturing discipline in our children. This can be done and needs all of us to work in solidarity to battle domestic violence. The Fijian Government has given the boldest political mandate, that it does not tolerate domestic violence in our nation. It is this that will drive us to battle domestic violence now and in future.

HON. ROKO T.T.S. DRAUNIDALO.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. I commend the honourable Minister for what she has just set out, and in the spirit of what my learned friend has talked about. Today is the 28th year anniversary, and in the theme of *wereubiubi* I ask my supplementary question to the honourable Minister, will she consider training programmes by her Ministry, and calling guest lecturers from abroad to talk to the instruments of State which glorify violence in our country? I will not name them, we all know who they are, and how she intends to go about that, because if we do not deal with it at the very high level, nothing happens at the bottom.

HON. OPPOSITION MEMBERS.- Hear! Hear!

MADAM SPEAKER.- Before I ask the honourable Minister to answer that question, can you just interpret that vernacular word that you had just mentioned into English?

HON. ROKO T.T.S. DRAUNIDALO.- Sweeping things under the carpet and doing away with things that are very shallow level.

HON. R.S. AKBAR.- Madam Speaker, if I can come back to the point of 'sweeping things under the carpet', I think we have opened up, women are opening up and talking about the suffering that they have. So basically this issue is definitely not being swept under the carpet. We will deal with it.

In terms of how we are to implement gender mainstreaming and gender sensitization across all institutions, including the Government, that is why we are working with the NGOs who have the capacity, resources and training. I am glad to say that we have developed a very

positive relationship with the NGOs now, especially the Women's Crisis Centre which has the necessary expertise. It is these organisations that will assist the Ministry in ensuring that we have gender-mainstreaming and gender-sensitization from across Government levels to the very basic institution that fall beneath with us. I definitely can assure the House, we will not be shallow in our approach, and we will not sweep things beneath the carpet. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. Supplementary question, the honourable Leader of Opposition?

HON. RO T.V. KEPA.- Madam Speaker, I thank the honourable Minister for her tackling this issue. My question to her is, if there is any provision in the community for safe houses, for either in the villages, communities or squatter settlements, because that is very much needed when these abuses occur, that the safe houses are identified so that the people in that area know exactly know where they go to immediately? Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you.

HON. R.S. AKBAR.- Madam Speaker, I thank the honourable Leader of the Opposition for posing a very important question. Of course, it is a challenge for us to house these women when they are victims of domestic violence.

Currently, we have State-care homes which we at times use for emergency purpose. We do not have a permanent safe-house, but plans are underway. Like I said, we are working closely with the NGOs, and one of the NGOs has come on-board to assist us with this programme, but the safe-house is going to be there. Hopefully, we will have two safe houses in Fiji; it is something the NGOs are planning. But, then of course, there are plans to have at least one for the Government side.

If I can also inform the House, and as I said, we take these issues very seriously, and we have our officers who work 24/7 to ensure that when a report is raised, we provide them instant service. We also have Response Team that works 24 hours to ensure that we provide the best service to these victims.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now give the floor to the honourable Salote Radrodoro.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. I take this opportunity to thank the honourable Minister for highlighting this very important and a problem that continues to rise in our country.

Can the honourable Minister confirm, when will the relevant Reports on Violence Against Women and Children, like the State CEDAW Reports, the latest CEDAW Shadow Report by the Non-Government Organisations, and also the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre Reports be tabled in this august House so that they are channelled to the relevant Standing Committee for scrutiny, and further addressing this issue and I believe with much political will. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister, you have the floor.

HON. R.S. AKBAR.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. In case of the CEDAW Report, it has already been presented to Cabinet, and hopefully soon we will present the report to Parliament. But, in the case of the Women's Crisis Centre Report, I do not see that we will be able to present here. The Women's Crisis Centre Report could be accessed from the Women's Crisis Centre. However, any other report regarding this that has to come through Cabinet to Parliament, will definitely be tabled in Parliament.

MADAM SPEAKER.- One more supplementary question.

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

Madam Speaker, an item that I love watching in all the villages is this billboard saying, "Violence-Free Community". The more I learn about it, the more convinced that, that is the way to go because the certification process takes about 12 months to earn the billboard, which many villages now display with pride.

However, I am a little disappointed, Madam Speaker. I thought there were 70 villages that have qualified to display this board. I hear there is only 39, because if anything, can the Ministry double the work on that one so that the dialogue at the village level, community level can be such that at the end of 12 months, everyone could be speaking the same language in terms of violence against women. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister?

HON. R.S. AKBAR.- Madam Speaker, I thank the honourable Member for bringing up the issue. There are 39 communities that have been declared and we are working with 50 more before we declare them and I think we will hasten our work. We will have many communities in Nadroga very soon declared violence free.

MADAM SPEAKER. – Thank you. We will now move on to the sixth oral question and I give the floor to the honourable Samuela Vunivalu.

Healthy Island Vision
(Question 96/2015)

HON. S. VUNIVALU. – Thank you Madam Speaker. When I looked at the wall clock it states 14th May and I also recall when the first ship, *Leonidas* when our British colony brought our Indian friends to plant sugarcane on the eastern side of Fiji, but there was plenty of water. So they moved to the western side of Fiji, from Sigatoka to Rakiraki when there was plenty of sugar and less water.

Madam Speaker, if you just can allow me to clarify a statement before my question in regards to this technical institute. One of the students called me as he was ashamed because some of the Opposition members seemed to oppose this Institute. What the student or the children of tomorrow wants is a certificate in order to get a job; you can't just go and look for a job without a certificate.

Can the honourable Minister for Health and Medical Services inform the House what is the Government's position for the way forward towards the vision of Healthy Islands that have been endorsed by the Pacific Health Ministers?

MADAM SPEAKER. – Thank you I give the floor to the Minister for Health and Medical Services.

HON. J. USAMATE (Minister for Health and Medical Services).- Thank you Madam Speaker I rise to answer the question. The Healthy Island Vision is something that the Government fully commits to, and then our commitment, it is something that we commit to, not only for ourselves but also for the region and as Fiji is currently chairing the Pacific Health Ministers' Meeting, we have also made a commitment to take up the concerns of the Pacific to the global forum where these issues can be raised. That is one of the things that we will be doing later on this month at the World Health Assembly.

Within Fiji, the Healthy Island Vision has been reflected in the number of programmes that we have. We have taken this concept of healthy islands and in Fiji's concept we talk about wellness; wellness in various settings. There are a number of seven different settings that we look to create this wellness within Fiji. These are the seven settings that we have for community, for settlements, for schools, for cities and towns, for faith-based organisations, for workplaces and sports. So there are various programmes that are targeted at each of these different settings to bring about that healthy island and wellness approach.

In addition to this, one of the major emphasis in the Ministry right now is the screening of our population. We have around 105 nursing stations and 80 health centres all around Fiji and the message to the public is to make sure that you turn up at these nursing stations. You turn up at these health centres so we can get you tested for your NCDs, your blood sugars, your blood pressure, for cancer, for mental health so that people know about their NCD status and then they do something about it. It is not enough just to know about it, you really have to do something about it. This month or the month of July the Ministry has set this month as the Screening Month. We have a target for the number of people that we are going to be screening for NCDs so we encourage people to turn up.

One of the other areas for the villages in particular we have been talking about domestic free villages; violence free villages. One of the projects that has been done for villages has been to encourage them to be tobacco free and when we had the Pacific Health Ministers' Meeting, we were able to take the Pacific Ministers to the village of Nabila in Nadroga which has been tobacco free for 25 years. It is a village that actually won the World No Tobacco Day Award in 2006, and you can actually see the impact of this programme on the villagers themselves. We found that in the village of Nabila there was only 4 per cent of its population has NCDs. Normally in other communities it's much higher. So obviously it is having an impact - tobacco free approach.

The World Health Organisation suggests that the most effective strategies for tobacco control are uniform taxation of tobacco products, a ban on tobacco advertising and smoke-free policies and practices and all of these policies are being practiced by the Government in Fiji; all of them are. In terms of NCDs, the Ministry of Health has also introduced the package of essential NCDs, we are not just talking to people about NCDs, but in these groupings, we have a dietician we have a person who teaches them how to exercise and we demonstrate models of what happens to your lungs when you have tobacco. So people can come to this and they get good counselling on what they need to do in order to change their lifestyle. On one part it is about screening and the other part, it is demonstrating and giving information to people so they can change their lives.

One other area that we are doing a lot of focus on is on the schools. Through a partnership with the Ministry of Education, they have put in place things like, for instance, guidelines, school nutrition policies and canteen guidelines. They have some sort of control on the kind of food that is sold in these canteens.

We also have an association with the Ministry of Education where we have 84 health promoting schools in Fiji, 84 schools that are practicing this concept, they do things like planting their own school gardens, aerobics, zumba in schools, school gardening, they do research projects at class 8 on NCDs and of course the free milk and other things. Those are some of the programmes that are being done in schools.

We would also be looking to work very closely with religious bodies because we know that if we want to change the way people think in this country, if the religious bodies pass on this message, there is more likelihood that that message will be accepted. I think in the next two weeks, the Ministry of Health will be inviting all religious bodies to come and partner with the Ministry in taking out this particular message.

I think there is just two other things that I would like to mention. We believe that for wellness, we need a whole of society approach. That is why in the Ministry of Health, we will work in partnership with other government departments, but we also work very strongly with our CSOs some of them who are very, very active in this area and through that approach we will be able to have an impact on the country.

The last thing that I would like to mention that in terms of our strategic plan for 2016 to 2020, one of the concepts that had come out of the Pacific Health Ministers' Meeting have been converted into indicators and that will be part of our plan for the next five years. The last thing that the Government has been engaged in, to try to help us along is taxation on things like cigarettes, alcohol and we have had excise tax on sugar sweet and beverages to try to move people to more healthy ways of spending their money.

So those Madam Speaker, are some of the initiatives and things that are been targeted through the Ministry of Health to achieve the Healthy Island Vision.

MADAM SPEAKER. – Thank you. Supplementary question, the honourable Anare Vadei.

HON. A.T. VADEI. – Supplementary question Madam Speaker. I thank the honourable Minister for his response to the question. Unfortunately the report gathered was that Fiji had the highest in the Pacific of 77% death rate from NCDs. A lot of measures mentioned are creative measures - just to cure. We hardly cure diseases, we can prevent at an early stage. My question is, since there are a lot of supermarkets and restaurants around Fiji, what are policies to be revised that we target this roadmap to reduce that 77% NCDs in the next few years?

HON. J. USAMATE. – Thank you Madam Chair. I have already pointed out the kinds of things that we are trying to do in order to get people to change what they do with their money and what food to eat. We need to teach our people so that they are aware of what is the best option for them. That is why we talked about screening and the ten model which are actually demonstrating to people. We also realized that it is fairly difficult to teach people in our age group, so there is a stronger focus on our young, so that they can begin to change their habits. There is a focus on them. That is why we have that programme on health promoting schools where the message is being taken to them. I understand the Ministry of Education has other plans, similar along these

lines to push the message to our children. So we try as much as possible to change our own lifestyles as adults, and that is something that all of us have a part to play in. In the long term, the preventative focus will be on our children in the future.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Supplementary question Madam Speaker. I thank the honourable Minister for his great vision and for the plans that the Ministry has. It is very important to the population and in building a healthy society. Even the previous Minister answered to some issues that touch our society. When we talk about consultation, it is only when the patient comes to the hospital, then we can have consultation. Awareness means to tell them what to do. But my question to the honourable Minister, how about putting in place a programme to educate the mind? What measures are there to educate the mind so people can understand? Consultation is for them to come to the hospital and you do consultation, awareness is just to make an awareness, but for them to really participate and understand, they themselves become ambassadors, what programmes are there?

HON. J. USAMATE.- Thank you Madam Speaker. I hope the people of Fiji are listening to me, I am now educating your minds.

(Laughter)

Make sure you make the right choice, I think it is very important. As I have mentioned before, we have programmes with the Ministry of Education to do that. The other thing that we are looking at now, we have been in discussion with the Fiji Broadcasting Corporation if they can give us time so that we can have sessions where we impart more information to the people watching from around Fiji. So there are programmes like that and I think there is a lot of other programmes being done by our civil society organisations. We encourage people to participate in those programmes because the message is being propagated not just by the Ministry itself but by a whole range of different parties. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- Madam Speaker, supplementary question. We thank the honourable Minister for articulating the measures in the approach being taken. Just an explanation, Madam Speaker, the understanding with medical practices, we have the curative health approach and the preventative health approach. Curative is where the medicine is just applied and that is what the doctors always do; we go there and we get the prescriptions for the sickness. Preventative is to prevent the disease from occurring at all and that is what we are looking at.

Madam Speaker, I just read in the paper about a medical doctor ruling out totally the application of alternative remedies. I would like to ask the honourable Minister, whether he agrees and acknowledges the use of alternative remedies to go together with the preventative medical approach?

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. The onus is on the honourable Minister, if the question is clear and if he would like to respond.

HON. J. USAMATE.- I think Madam Speaker, for all of us, we are always interested in finding something that works to benefit our health. Obviously, in the context of the Ministry of Health, a lot of it is based on western education, western research, but if there are alternative remedies that can work, that can be proven to work, that can be shown to work, then I would support those remedies. But it has to be shown that it does work, it does not have a negative

side effect on a person, that has to be shown. If that is the case, then we would definitely support it.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you, that brings the end to our oral questions. I hope that we will have some healthy refreshments waiting for us upstairs.

Thank you we have some bills to be moved. We would like to have these motions that bills to be moved now.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, sorry, no I was not trying to do that. I just wanted, before you went off for morning tea break, as you should, just on the point of order, the issue raised by honourable Draunidalo in respect to privileges. Before you make a ruling Madam Speaker, I just wanted to highlight that privileges pertains to privileges enjoyed by the Members of Parliament within the confines of the House.

HON. OPPOSITION MEMBERS.- Madam Speaker, will make a ruling.

HON. OPPOSITION MEMBERS.- Sit down!

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- I am just trying to add my bit, I am just trying to contribute, only the Madam Speaker can tell me to sit down, not you.

I just wanted to highlight that to you Madam Speaker, the notion of privilege is something that is within the confines of the House. If, for example, I can make certain comments and name people within Parliament, but the moment I step out of that door, I cannot because I lose the privilege. So privilege is always maintained within the House, not outside the House.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you very much honourable Members. We will now suspend the sitting until 11:30 a.m.

The House adjourned at 11.06 a.m.

The House resumed at 11.40 a.m.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you honourable Members, you maybe be seated. Thank you before we continue ...

HON. ROKO T.T.S. DRAUNIDALO.- Madam Speaker, I apologise for interrupting you on the floor, I wish I did not have to. This is in regards to 133 ,privilege issue, Madam Speaker, which the honourable and learned Attorney-General spoke about before we adjourned. I just wanted to say, Madam Speaker, that that's not completely what privilege is, and I know a little bit, only a little bit about it because I argued in the Court of Appeal once or may be twice and privilege is not only what is said in this House but what we, Members of Parliament, say about what is said here in this precinct outside anywhere in the world; that is privilege. But if we go outside and say something that is beyond, we go and report something beyond what is said here, then that is not covered by privilege. I just thought, I would clarify that for you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you very much. I have my ruling and it is really based on what is in the Standing Orders.

First, I would like to clarify how a matter of privilege should be raised. Standing Order 134(3) should only be used as an emergency procedure, for example, where a matter of privilege suddenly arises during the course of debate. There would need to be a sudden occurrence most probably within the House or the precincts of an apparent serious nature and likely to cause immediate disruption, interfere or serious harm to Members or to the House itself. All other points of privilege that have not suddenly arisen and do not directly impact the business currently before the House should be raised through the procedures set out under Standing Order 134(1), which states that Members should raise the matter with the Speaker one hour before the sitting.

However, I did say that I would consider the honourable Member's issue. I therefore, ask the honourable Member, to provide me with further information on this matter in my Chambers, so I that I may consider it. Allegations of breach of privilege are very serious and it is important that I consider them in full. Therefore, I defer my decision to a future sitting day, as permitted under Standing Order 134(2). This will give me time to carefully consider the further information I have requested and, therefore, honourable Members should understand that this question of privilege will not be resolved before the relevant constituency visits are due to take place.

Thank you, we will go on to the next item on the order paper. Secretary- General.

NATIONAL FLAG PROTECTION BILL, 2015

MADAM SPEAKER.- The honourable Attorney General.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Orders 51, I move that the National Flag Protection Bill 2015 be considered without delay and further, Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Orders 51(2), I move the following that:

- (1) This Bill be immediately referred to the Standing Committee on Justice, Law and Human Rights;
- (2) The Standing Committee report on these Bills to Parliament in the July session of Parliament.
- (3) Upon presentation of the report by the Standing Committee, Parliament resolves itself into the Committee of the Whole of Parliament for the consideration of this Bill, in accordance with Standing Orders 87 in the July session; and
- (4) This Bill will be voted upon by Parliament in the July session following the Secretary-General's report on the consideration of the Bill under Standing Order 87(1).

Thank you, Madam Speaker

HON. P. KUMAR: Madam Speaker, I second the motion.

(Hon. A. Sayed-Khaiyum places Bill on the table)

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Thank you. Madam Speaker, this Bill by way of background sets out the specific laws pertaining to the flag of Fiji. We have never had a specific law on the flag of Fiji. We have had a law only on the coat of arms specifically. What this law does, Madam Speaker, and it is different to the design of the new flag, this is specifically the law on a flag; the national flag of Fiji.

The pertinent features of this Bill, Madam Speaker, talks about the protection in summary, the protection and use of the flag, who can use it and when they can use it. We have specifically, for example, provided for school buildings, government buildings, homes, even homes will be able to fly the Fijian flag. There has always been a lot of ambiguity whether homes can actually fly a flag, as you see in America people fly flags. These rules actually set out clearly what Fijian people can do in respect to the flag. It also talks about the declaration of any new flag that may be brought to Parliament. The Minister responsible for the flag will be the honourable Prime Minister, as the honourable Prime Minister has always been responsible for the flag and the coat of arms. This Bill also, Madam Speaker, talks about the flag and how it should not be in anyway desecrated or manipulated as you will see, currently in shops, people having half the flag with the other half being something else, some other symbol. It is a national symbol, so we need to have some rules pertaining to that.

It also sets out, Madam Speaker, the use of the flag for commercial purposes. How it can be used, where the permission must be obtained from. It also talks about how, when the flag should be flown at half mast, when it should be done, the rules pertaining to that. It also has obviously some general penalty clauses also relating to companies. As you have seen companies make money from it, there needs to be some rules surrounding that, and they need to obtain permission from the Minister responsible.

The flag also sets out some consequential amendments that would be necessary in a state of transition if you are moving from one flag to the other flag, what should happen in the interim period, and it also talks about as it will affect the ship registration laws that are in place. What are the colours that need to be established and, how they will be flown and also in respect of, should there be a change in the flag then what happens to the existing stock of flags? What happens to the flags that may be for commercial use, so it takes care of that transitional period. In a nutshell, that is what this Bill is about, Madam Speaker, and I again elaborate, it has got nothing to do with the design of the new flag, it is the law per se, no matter which flag will be in place. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Sorry, Madam Speaker, the reason why we are seeking an expedited process is that, in the event when the new flag is designed and being brought to Parliament, then we need a lead time of two months at least, to be able to prepare for the new flags because we need to do the entire manufacture of the new flags and this is why a lead time is required, and that is why we are having it brought back to Parliament in July. But notwithstanding that, it is being referred directly to the Committee so that the Committee can go and hold its public consultations and get its feedback on the actual Bill itself. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. The House is open to comments, if any. There being no comments, if the honourable and learned Attorney-General wishes to speak in reply.

HON. A. SAYED KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, I think I have captured in essence what needs to be said, and if we can have this expedited process through Standing Orders 51. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER.- The Parliament will now vote for the motion. If anyone opposes the motion? Does anyone oppose?

HON. RATU N.T. LALABALAVU.- Madam Speaker, is it just that they have just delivered some copies of the Bill to us and they have taken it back. We have not had a chance to read it thoroughly, so we can actively participate in the debate.

MADAM SPEAKER.- We will be voting to refer this to the Standing Committee on Justice, Law and Human Rights and the presentation of the report by the Committee will be to the whole House and that is when we will debate the motion. So if no one opposes then the motion is therefore, agreed to unanimously.

COAT OF ARMS BILL, 2015

MADAM SPEAKER.- The Honourable Attorney General.

HON. A. SAYED KHAIYUM: Madam Speaker, I rise again, pursuant to Standing Order 51, and I move:

That the Coat of Arms Bill 2015 be considered by Parliament without delay.

Furthermore, Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 51(2), I move that the Bill be immediately referred to the Standing Committee on Justice Law and Human Rights; that the Standing Committee report on this Bill to Parliament in the July session, but upon presentation of the report by the Standing Committee, Parliament resolves itself into Committee of the Whole of Parliament for consideration of this Bill, in accordance with Standing Order 87 in the July Session, and that this Bill be voted upon by Parliament in the July Session, following the Secretary-General's Report on the Consideration of the Bill under Standing Order 87 (1). Thank you Madam Speaker.

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

MADAM SPEAKER. – Thank you, I give the floor to the honourable and learned Attorney-General.

HON. A. SAYED -KHAIYUM. – Thank you Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, similar to the National Flag Bill, the Coat of Arms, as I mentioned, ... in fact at the moment, as it stands, we have simply a one pager law on the Coat of Arms and that is what is behind you. Many people sort of mistake it, that is actually the Coat of Arms, with the traditional warriors on either side and the shield from the existing flag is between the warriors and with the outrigger canoe on top.

Now what this Coat of Arms Bill does, is again talks about protecting the Coat of Arms. It again talks about the illegal usage of the Coat of Arms and about getting permission from the Minister responsible, who is the Prime Minister. As you know, Madam Speaker, Fiji is actually a good brand name.

We have seen many countries overseas that have stolen the name “Fiji” without paying any royalties to Fiji: perfumes, underarm deodorants, all sorts of things have the name “Fiji” on it. We are obviously pursuing that, in terms of getting royalty payments for them. Some of them have varied the names and what we have seen now, Madam Speaker, is that people are actually using that overseas too. So we need to be able to regulate that because that is something that belongs to Fiji. Nobody goes around, for example, copying the Coat of Arms of Australia and New Zealand, but Fiji because it has got that unique feature, people are trying to use that.

So this Bill proposes to protect the Coat of Arms, and of course, it has the transitional provision should the Coat of Arms change, for example, if the shield is changed, the warriors remain, then there needs to be a transitional provision within that. It has the penalty provisions within the Coat of Arms Bill. In any consequential consequences from the amendment of that will also be carried for under this particular Bill, which is very similar to the protection of the National Flag, Madam Speaker. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER. – Thank you. I invite comments from the House, if any.

HON. M. D. BULITAVU. – Madam Speaker, just a comment, not in relation to argue whether we are in support or not. We will, obviously support to patent both; the flags and the Coat of Arms. The honourable and learned Attorney-General has talked about the protection of that, how about the restriction of use? A protection means, you cannot take away one of the symbols, but to restrict it from being used, will that also affect, say political parties or others who are using the flag, will that be restricted too? The current political parties who are using the flag, do they have to comply with that? It is just a clarification from the honourable and learned Attorney-General.

MADAM SPEAKER. – Thank you. I think the honourable and learned Attorney-General will respond to that as in his right of reply. Any other comments?

HON. A.T. VADEI. – In addition to that, Madam Speaker, yet, there is a different Coat of Arms used for certification and border control. This must be clarified because with the use of Coat of Arms, where we stand to certify that this document is being legally approved in Fiji, to be used for certified for trade, certified for use for border control and other measures. Are they the same Coat of Arms?

MADAM SPEAKER. – I guess I will give the honours to the honourable Minister, if he wants to address these two questions, they are very direct. If he would like to answer these questions now before your right of reply or you prefers to keep it until

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, the direct answer would be that, these are matters pertaining to the Bill which can be discussed with the Standing Committee, but just to highlight the fact that the Coat of Arms, there is only one Coat of Arms in Fiji, that is the Coat of Arms (*pointing to the Coat of Arms in the Chamber*).

Again, in respect of the permission regarding the use of Coat of Arms, it is very restricted. Part of the Coat of Arms is in the flag, that does not make that the flag nor does it make the flag the Coat of Arms. So that distinction needs to be drawn up, but I think these are the issues that can be discussed through the Committee stage, and all these issues can be brought there by the individual Members.

MADAM SPEAKER.- There being no other comments from the House, I will now give the floor to the honourable and learned Attorney-General for his right of reply.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.-Madam Speaker, I think we have elucidated enough on the actual provisions of the Bill, and I put the motion before the House.

Question put.

Motion agreed to.

ROTUMA BILL, 2015

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM. – Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 84, I move:

That the Rotuma Bill, 2015 be now read for the first time.

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

MADAM SPEAKER.- In accordance with Standing Order 84(2), the Bill has been read a first time.

A Bill for an Act to provide for the regulation of Rotuman Affairs and for related matters (Bill No 6/2015).

MADAM SPEAKER. – The Bill will now be listed in the Order Paper for second reading on a future sitting day.

HON. A. SAYED- KHAIYUM. – Madam Speaker, the Bill is for first reading for further consideration for the second reading. The Bill establishes various matters pertaining to Rotuma, in particular the establishment of Council of Rotuma.

Also this Bill has been put into place, following in fact, a couple of years of consultations through the Prime Minister's Office with the people of Rotuma. It has a number of features pertaining to the representation in the Council, and what will be the functions of the forum that will be established through the Council, and how will they be elected. These are all

the matters that had been set in the Bill itself. It also sets aside the promotion of development, welfare and advancement of the Rotuman people. It also addresses issues pertaining to Rotuma, agriculture and industrial loan fund. So these have been in fact, they are quite extensive consultations that had been held, Madam Speaker and this particular Bill seeks to address those issues and we obviously will follow this with a normal process in the Parliamentary system. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

MADAM SPEAKER. – In accordance with Standing Order 84 (2), the Bill has been read the first time.

A Bill for an Act to provide for a Lands Commission in Rotuma, to provide for the registration of Rotumans, to regulate the registration, dealing with and transmission of land and related matters (Bill No. 7 of 2015).

MADAM SPEAKER. – The Bill will now be listed on the Order Paper for second reading on a future sitting day. That brings us to the end of our sitting today.

I beg your indulgence, do we have another Bill?

HON. A. SAYED KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, I think there is a bit of confusion. The Bill I just presented was on the regulation of Rotuman Affairs and for related matters. There is a fourth Bill which is to do with the Lands Bill.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. I'll give the floor to the Honourable Attorney General.

HON. A. SAYED KHAIYUM.- Thank you Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 84, I move:

That the Rotuma Lands Bill be now read for the first time.

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

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. In accordance with Standing Order 84(2) the Bill has been read for the first time.

ROTUMA LANDS BILL 2015

A Bill for an act to provide for a Lands Commission in Rotuma, to provide for the registration of Rotumans to regulate the registration and dealing with and transmission of land and related matters.

MADAM SPEAKER.- The Bill will be now listed on the order paper for the second reading on a future sitting day.

MADAM SPEAKER.- I beg your indulgence, do we have another Bill?

HON. A. SAYED KHAIYUM.- No.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you and that brings us to the end of our sitting day and thank you all for your contributions. Can I request the members of the Business Committee to meet straight after this at the Big Committee Room.

The House is now adjourned to 9.30 tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 12:00 noon.

