

TUESDAY, 7TH JULY, 2015

The Parliament resumed at 9.30 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 Youth and Sports; the Honourable Assistant Minister for Youth and Sports and the Honourable Ruveni N. Nadalo.

MINUTES

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

That the Minutes of the sitting of Parliament held on Monday, 6th July, 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.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

Acknowledgment of Visitors

MADAM SPEAKER.- I warmly welcome a group of students and teachers from Noco Secondary School who visited the Parliament Discovery Centre earlier today, and are now observing today's sitting. It is a great credit to your teachers that they organised today's observation of fundamental institutions such as Parliament, as part of your field trip to the capital city.

On that note, I wish you all the best in your studies.

I also 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. Thank you for taking interest in your Parliament.

QUESTIONS AND REPLIES

Oral Questions

“Black Economy” - Fiji
(Question No. 143/2015)

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

Can the honourable and learned Attorney-General, Minister of Finance, Public Enterprises, Public Service and Communications inform the House whether there is a “black economy” and how extensive is it in Fiji?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM (Attorney-General, Minister of Finance, Public Enterprises, Public Service and Communications).- Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the honourable Patel for asking this question, apart from the fact that he is a member of the Public Accounts Committee, he is also a businessman, it is good that a question like that is coming from him.

Madam Speaker, there was a study carried out by the World Bank that reviewed the period between 1999 in 2007 of about 162 economies in the world, and that Report was subsequently published through the World Bank and also in the *International Economic Journal*, in which it highlighted specifically to Fiji that 32.4 per cent of the official GDP between 1999-2000 was not accounted for. In other words, put simply, that about \$2.8 billion in Fiji was not part of the official economy. So, we have a huge problem in respect of the “black economy” that exists in conjunction with the official economy.

That also translates, Madam Speaker, into approximately, as extrapolated by FIRCA that about \$716.2 million has not been collected through tax revenue. In other words, we lost tax revenue either through direct or indirect taxes of about \$716.2 million.

So, Madam Speaker, the “black economy” is there, so that is the level of extensiveness within the economy itself.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Supplementary question – Honourable Lorna Eden.

HON. L. EDEN.- Madam Speaker, could the honourable Minister please explain what plans he has in place to improve this situation?

MADAM SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, some of the measures have already been implemented in respect of ensuring that there is greater compliance. So, since 2007, a number of laws have been introduced, for example where the fines that were imposed have in fact been increased, directors of companies are now being personally liable. I would also like to inform the House that just last year, a businessman from Nausori was sent to prison for four years, for falsifying VAT documents.

Madam Speaker, for those people who understand taxation, I will give you an example. We have, certain items that are VAT exempt. There are about six or seven items that are VAT exempt. What actually happens, in particular, through supermarkets and grocery stores, because the way the VAT system works is “VAT In”, “VAT Out”, and then you have “Refunds” is that people falsify documents, create false invoices to show, in particular where your VAT Exempt items that used more of it or sold more of it. In other words, its ability to get more exemptions on it.

So that, Madam Speaker, does happen and in that particular case, this gentleman was caught doing that.

The other measures that we have obviously undertaken is that, we now have, for example Declaration of Assets by Politicians. We have Declaration of Assets by political parties, if this is where a lot of money was laundered. It also goes to ensure greater compliance.

The new Companies Act, now also requires a certain level of declaration by companies when they file their Annual Returns. Prior to this Act, which will come into force very soon, we simply just file Annual Returns, and it will show your Directors, Secretaries, et cetera, and that was it, and mortgages et cetera registered, but not in terms of your revenue base. So, this will actually ensure greater compliance, you can verify documents with the Companies Office; what documentation has been lodged with FRCA, so there is the ability to cross-check.

Of course, some of the measures that can be implemented is the simplification of regulations and tax laws, and having a lot more transparency in the decision-making processes, because if these are transparent, then the taxpayer will say “Well, I might as well just comply with it, it is quite simple. Let us not hire an accountant to “cook the books”, because the tax rates are much lower, so there is no point doing that.”

(Inaudible interjections from Opposition Members)

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, I am finding it quite baffling as to why they are objecting to that. I thought that would be in their interest to collect more tax for the country.

Madam Speaker, you may have heard the honourable Minister for Transport who just announced yesterday afternoon the deregulation ...

(Chorus of Interjections)

MADAM SPEAKER.- Order, please maintain decorum in this House.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- The honourable Member does not have the capacity to understand taxation, Madam Speaker. Absolutely no capacity, none whatsoever. The House was a lot better without him yesterday.

(Chorus of Interjections)

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

MADAM SPEAKER.- Point of order, Honourable Bulitavu.

HON. RATU I.D. TIKOCA.- Rubbish!

MADAM SPEAKER.- One moment please, may I ask the honourable Member who said “rubbish” to please withdraw that word, it is unparliamentary.

HON. RATU I. D. TIKOCA.- Madam Speaker, that is an official word that you accepted here, remember.

MADAM SPEAKER.- I am giving my ruling, please withdraw that word.

HON. RATU I.D. TIKOCA.- Remember! When I asked him to withdraw “rubbish” that day, you said no.

MADAM SPEAKER.- For the last time, please withdraw the word “rubbish”.

HON. RATU I.D. TIKOCA.- I withdraw.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. You may continue, honourable Bulitavu.

HON. M. D. BULITAVU.- Madam Speaker, time and again, you have allowed the honourable and learned Attorney-General to take this Parliament for a ride.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Your question please.

HON. M. D. BULITAVU.- Madam, you are the referee in this House. He should be relevant in his answers, we are talking about a “black economy”. He is jumping here and there talking about your options.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Your question, please.

HON.M. D. BULITAVU.- What comes under the scope of the Government he is talking about, outside the black area, black markets. We talk about that, those dealings and activities – be relevant.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister, would you like to respond to that comment?

HON. J. DULAKIVERATA.- Just answer the question.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, I feel for the other side because they are actually missing the point. The supplementary question by honourable Lorna Eden was what measures are you going to take, what measures are you taking to address the black economy?

(Chorus of interjections from the Opposition side)

MADAM SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister, please continue.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, I was addressing that issue. For example, Madam Speaker, and as I was explaining - what measures are we taking?

To give you a simple example, the honourable Minister for Transport just announced yesterday that the rental car business is going to be deregulated. Why that is being done is simply for this reason, there are many people, for example, who may want to start renting out cars. Prior to the honourable Minister not doing so, he actually had to get permission from Land Transport Authority to start up a rental car business. Forget the road worthiness issue of the vehicle, you actually had to get their permission. You also had to get a permission if you already had an existing rental car business, and even more vehicles.

The Report from the World Bank states that when you have over regulation, it lets people slip under the “black economy”. So a person who may have actually made some money, who may have gone overseas to work, comes back and believes that there is a market in his area that he wants to start up two, three car rental car company. He simply should be able to go and pay his business licence, register the vehicles and start his rental car business. When he is not allowed to do that, it goes under the “black economy” because he starts doing it illegally. It does not get reported in our taxation system. So these are some of the measures and some of the mitigating measures being put in place to stop the “black economy”.

We have, for example, Madam Speaker, as you may have heard, a lot of Fijians have moved money offshore. So we have given them amnesty to be able to declare those assets without any penalties, so then they can start paying tax on those properties or any income derived from those properties offshore from the following year. So this is what we are doing in trying to enlarging the net so we have a greater taxation system, captures more people and deregulate the system. We have transfer pricing Madam Speaker, this is precisely what Fiji Water was doing.

Fiji Water which is one of the niche mineral waters is being sold throughout the world including United States of America. Natural Waters of Viti Limited was selling its water to a related company in America. A carton of water was being sold for \$4, when a bottle of water does not even retail for that much. So, Madam Speaker, what the Government has done is that it has included a mineral resource tax on water extraction. It has now included a transfer pricing indexing where Natural Waters Viti Limited pays an additional amount to ensure that there is an arm’s length. Their supermarkets, Madam Speaker, dates back decades now, who were buying houses offshore, in New Zealand and various other places. So

supermarket makes me buy tinned tomatoes, for example, from China but it does not come directly to Fiji. They are buying a buying house in New Zealand, we will buy it probably for 20 cents a can. And then the buying house in New Zealand sells it to Fiji probably for \$1.50 a can, and then they will show a 20 cents mark up. So we have now captured all those areas, and we are putting in measures to make sure that these types of things are addressed. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Point of order, honourable Bultavu.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Madam I forgot my point of order but I just. . . .

(Laughter)

Madam, I do not like....

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you, the point of order has been forgotten. I give the floor to the honourable Dr. Biman Prasad.

HON. DR. B.C. PRASAD.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. I think this is a very important subject and I think it was a very important question to the honourable Minister of Finance. I think he is right when he says that “black economy” is a concern and I agree with that. Can I just ask him, Madam Speaker, through you, whether he is planning to look at within the “black economy”, I think there is a lot of unexplained wealth that people have. Perhaps we need to probably do a study to actually understand within the “black economy”, how much unexplained wealth still exists. I think that could provide a very good indicator to FRCA for us to be able to assess and understand and perhaps, deal with that. So, I would like the Minister to respond to that.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, that is precisely the point. For example, the non-declaration of assets that sit offshore. We are trying to bring that within the taxation regime. So that will help everyone to know exactly how much money is there in Fiji, how much of it has fallen outside Gross Domestic Product. Obviously there needs to be greater compliance and these are some of the steps that we are taking, as I have said through the taxation laws in terms of imposing fines, and of course within FRCA itself, there are special audit teams that are now going out and in fact targeting specific individuals and companies as to how you know perhaps they have unexplained wealth. Of course, the prevention of bribery promulgation, Madam Speaker, I understand from memory Section 10 also imposes, there is a particular law that says that civil servants also must explain unexplained wealth and the burden of truth is on them. So these are the kinds of measures that are being taken.

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

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to thank the honourable and learned Attorney General for the explanation this morning. I think this a very important issue especially for the growing of the economy of this country. Can the honourable Minister can explain whether there exists in the Government where Ministers are receiving salaries that are more than what is officially recorded? Because Madam Speaker, I would understand that the difference that is not recorded would fall into the “black economy” and I would like to ask the honourable and learned Attorney General and Minister of Finance if he could explain, whether that does exist in the Government or not?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, the payment of salaries to his Excellency the President, to you Madam Speaker, to the Prime Minister, the Leader of Opposition, Ministers, Assistant Ministers, Members of this House is actually governed by the law that currently exists which the Leader of the House yesterday said would be within that ambit, reviewed by the Parliamentary Emoluments

Committee. That is what governs it, which of course, honourable Bulitavu had seconded.

(Laughter)

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

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Madam Speaker, just a bit of background, when I read this question, “black economy”, to me it sounded like black hand, underworld, the Mafia and indeed, there are people in Fiji who believe that we are targeting the wrong people with black money. There are other people who are coming through the system, with our border control being so lax, there are people in this country who are part of this black economy. The question from our side, Madam Speaker, is that, we believe we are targeting the wrong people; what are we doing about protecting our borders to ensure that those who engage in underworld activities are the ones that are targeted to clean that black money that they have?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, there is a difference between black economy and specifically money laundering. Money laundering, generally, comes from illegal or criminal activity and generally when we talk about money laundering, we talk about drug money, criminal activities, ill-gotten gains but as part of the underworld or black economy, then how do you clean it? You clean it by way of putting that money through some legitimate business, so a lot of people like for example, overseas, the study will tell you (I am quite happy to give the study to the Members of the Opposition), they may start up say a laundry business or start up a nightclub business where there is a lot of heavy cash involvement – people go and drink there, so they can show a high revenue of sales but, in fact, it is not actual sale *per se*, but it is the dirty money that they are cleaning through the system. That is how you clean it.

Black economy, Madam Speaker, is about the activities, sometimes like I gave the rental car activity, a gentleman who may want to start a two or three car rental car company, he is actually not paying taxes or she is not paying STT because it is too hard for them to go and get a licence or someone will not give them the approval so they start this what is technically an illegal business. So, that money that does not hit the official books, that is the difference.

Madam Speaker, I completely agree with the honourable Member that Fiji has, over a number of decades, had issues at the border in terms of under declaration. So, normally a lot of business houses, for example, if they import some goods, they will under declare the value of the goods. So, if this is worth \$5 million, they will put \$1 million, so the duty on that will be charged for only \$1 million with the view that if we get caught, we will just go to FRCA and say; “Okay, if you say it is for another \$4 million, we will just pay the duty and the \$4 million”. However now, it is not just simply a question of paying duty on the balance, you actually get a penalty imposed on you for making a false declaration. Those are the kinds of steps that have been undertaken and I completely agree that we need to even tighten up even further at the border in terms of the declaration of assets.

MADAM SPEAKER.- And I will give the last supplementary question to the honourable Niko Nawaikula.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Madam Speaker, I wish to raise a point of order first, then followed by a question.

MADAM SPEAKER.- No, just one please.

(Laughter)

Which one will you have - a point of order or question.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- I am being given a question but I am entitled to make a point of order at any time.

HON. RATU I.D. TIKOCA.- Yes.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Let us have your point of order first.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Madam Speaker, the purpose of democracy, the Government is for your side to be accountable to us and the people, not you being accountable to yourself and we have the practice here where an honourable Minister asking him, then followed up by another Member to give him an opportunity to make a statement, a Dorothy Dix kind of issue.

HON. OPPOSITION MEMBER.- Hear! Hear!

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Madam Speaker, I request that you make a ruling and to be aware to take note of that because for too long, we had all this. Yesterday nearly all the questions were Dorothy Dix kind of questions from the other side. So, I am asking you, Madam Speaker, to make a ruling on that, that should be enough. We do not need that. The Government side should be accountable to us and to the people, not to yourself.

HON. M. VUNIWAQA.- I rise on a point of order, Madam Speaker, that does not prohibit the asking of questions from this side as well. The honourable and learned Member should read his Standing Orders.

HON. J.D. DULAKIVERATA.- You should know what your people are doing? Why ask him again!

MADAM SPEAKER.- The purpose of questions is to enable Parliament to clarify issues that may not be too clear on issues that the Government finds it that needs qualification on, and that has been done. Some of the questions are open to both the Government and Opposition Members.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Yes, but that is a ministerial statement and is being abused.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Your supplementary question, please.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Madam Speaker, we agree that \$2.8 billion is a lot of money, \$716.2 uncollected is a lot of money but you have concentrated on the white collar, and you have only explained to us what you will do from here on. Could you explain to us what have you done for the last eight years, limiting yourself to the social aspects? The *marijuana* is increasing, the black market alcohol has never been reduced, they are still selling from many, many years ago which is unconstitutional. What have you done in the last eight years and what have you done to address this?

MADAM SPEAKER.- I give the floor to the honourable and learned Attorney General.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, I think the honourable Member was not listening as to what I had said previously. The honourable Eden did ask me, what measures have been taken and what measures will be taken? I have highlighted a whole plethora of measures to be taken, he needs to listen more.

MADAM SPEAKER.- We will now move on to the second oral question.

Breakdown of Free Grants
(Question No. 144/2015)

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

Can the Honourable Minister for Education, Heritage and Arts explain the breakdown on free grants provided to Kindergarten, Primary and Secondary Schools and how it has to be utilised by School Management?

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

HON. DR. M. REDDY (Minister for Education, Heritage and Arts).- Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague, honourable Dr. Lal, for his question and I will certainly educate honourable Members on the other side as well.

Madam Speaker, Government's vision to create a knowledge based society resulted in Government committing \$1.4 million for Early Childhood Education Centres (ECE) for 2015 - \$35 million for primary schools in Fiji and \$31.4 million for secondary schools in Fiji. The Ministry has given a guideline on how this money will be utilised for ECE Centres, primary schools and secondary schools. This guideline are as follows. For ECE Centres, of the total grant money given out to them which is separate from the teachers' salaries that we are paying:

- 45 per cent goes towards administration, management and office operations;
- 10 per cent goes to the maintenance of the ECE Centre;
- 20 per cent goes towards learning resources and furniture;
- 10 per cent goes towards any nutritional material that the Centre might provide to the children; and
- 15 per cent for outdoor recreational activity and equipment.

This is how the grant money of \$50 per term per child is given to an ECE Centre, the total grant money per ECE Centre, this is how it should be utilised.

Madam Speaker, for primary schools, we have changed the allocation utilised guideline slightly this year. We have raised the:

- office operation component from 12 per cent to 30 per cent;
- building and maintenance is maintained as 20 per cent of the grant money that is given to a particular primary school;
- IT computer and vocational materials – 15 per cent;
- library books – 10 per cent;
- PEMAC and science equipment – 10 per cent;
- stationery for teachers – 15 per cent;

A total of 100 per cent as per guideline of those grant funds.

Madam Speaker, for the secondary schools:

- administration operations – 30 per cent;
- maintenance – 20 per cent;
- IT computer and vocational materials – 15 per cent;
- library books – 10 per cent;

- PEMAC and Science equipment – 10 per cent; and
- Stationery – 15 per cent.

Madam Speaker, you might note that some schools might say; “This year, we do not need any allocation for IT material, because we have enough, as we utilised the grant money last year.” What we have told the schools is that, they can write to us, we will allow virement from one vote code to the other. So, that flexibility is given to the school as long as both parties, the principal and the manager signs off so that the principal or head teacher is aware that the manager is allowing the virement.

Madam Speaker, I am quite pleased to announce that with this fee-free grant that Government is providing, 209,045 students are benefitting and going through our ECE, primary and secondary Schools this year. Of these, 8,115 students are enrolling at the ECE Centres; 138,601 students are enrolled at the primary schools and 62,329 students are enrolled in the secondary schools, again, a total of 209,045 students enjoying free education provided by the Bainimarama-led FijiFirst Government.

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

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- That is an example of a very bad administration.

(Laughter)

Madam Speaker, I have been listening and the most essential thing I did not hear - milk and Weet-Bix. I did not hear Milk and Weet-Bix. Madam Speaker, if I am a parent, I would say; “you are a very, very bad parent.” Milk and Weet-Bix ...

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

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- What is your point of order?

HON. A. SAYED-KAIYUM.- My point of order is that, the honourable Member should ask the supplementary question.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Order!

(Laughter)

I quite agree with the honourable and learned Attorney-General, please ask your question.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Why have you discriminated against the people who most need milk and Weet-Bix?

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

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Madam Speaker, as I have said yesterday, unfortunately, honourable Members on the other side do not have full information. Milk and Weet-Bix are part of a separate grant but the question is about free education grant that is given to the schools and how that grant is utilised. Milk and free Weet-Bix is separate from this one, Madam Speaker.

HON. A.T. VADEL.- A supplementary question, Madam Speaker. I just want to ask the Minister, where is the Technical College classified in this, whether they are secondary schools or tertiary institutions? Most of the parents are asking those questions.

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Madam Speaker, yesterday, we explained about Technical Colleges. It is a separate entity, unlike a high school or primary school. It has a separate funding out of TELS where every student, who are enrolled in the Word Programme, are eligible to fund their studies through the TELS Fund and those students doing short courses. The Government has provided an allocation of \$1 million per year, to pay for all their short courses - free.

Madam Speaker

(Laughter)

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Madam Speaker, I have lost them.

(Laughter)

MADAM SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister, thank you for your answer, but it seems that they already have the answer to the question that they are asking.

(Chorus of interjections from Government and Opposition Members)

HON. M.R. LEAWERE.- Madam Speaker, a supplementary question.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Did I hear point of order?

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS.- No, Madam.

MADAM SPEAKER.- No? Your supplementary question, please.

HON. M.R. LEAWERE.- Madam Speaker, this year, the grants were reduced. There were more grants last year than what was given this year. So, given the honourable Minister's explanation regarding the allocation of grants and its use, can I have an explanation from him on this, Madam Speaker?

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Again, incorrect information, Madam Speaker. The grants have remained the same, except that ECE grants have increased because last year, we were not providing tuition fee to the students enrolling in ECE but that has gone up. The primary and secondary components remain the same. My feeling is that, the honourable Member want to ask something but he cannot understand how to ask that particular question.

(Laughter)

Madam Speaker, he is asking about that we have decided to allocate more money to island and interior schools. He does not know how to frame his question, Madam Speaker, how unfortunate.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Madam Speaker, I thank the honourable Minister this morning for his answers. I went to Vunivutu Primary School

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS.- Question!

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Listen, I am coming to that. This is what will happen to the school management. How will this programme be communicated to them and the process for them to apply for this? Madam Speaker, for them to be aware on what is there because most of the school managements do not know where to take their complaints to and where to seek approval letters from.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. The question is clear.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- I am coming to that. This is what happened on that day. A team from the Prime Ministers' Office that was moving around, and there was a gentleman named Epeli.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS.- Question!

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- They gave a letter to him, asking for a grant for school chairs. The official said; "I cannot take that letter, you take it to the Commissioner's Office." How can the Ministry assure and put in place measures on how this programme can be relayed to school management and for them to apply and ask for these kind of grants?

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you, honourable Minister, you have the floor.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- People would like some directions.

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- For the information of honourable Bulitavu, next month, we are organising a regional conference for all school managements. There will be a Western Regional Conference for school management, there will be one in Suva, one in Northern Division where we will be talking to management about utilising of grants, in particular.

About the relationship with the school heads, the school heads can also inform the management about what the management can access through these grants.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you, I will give the last supplementary question to the honourable Semesa Karavaki.

HON. S D. KARAVAKI.- Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the honourable Minister for Education for his explanation and all the details of the amount being paid for the different sectors of Education. My question, Madam Speaker, is whether the Minister had, first of all consulted with the management and the board of these schools for the way these funds are going to be used before it actually it provides each areas where the funds are going to be used because in the dailies, Madam Speaker, he had quoted that "the funds or the grants given by the Ministry of Education had been misused by the schools".

MADAM SPEAKER.- Order! Please do not use media releases as to validate your issue. Please ask the supplementary question.

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- Madam Speaker, you can say if the media is not correct.

MADAM SPEAKER. – I am saying that. Please, your supplementary question?

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- Definitely, Madam Speaker, he would know the truth, he knows the truth.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Media articles or media releases are not.

HON. S. D KARAVAKI.- And the question, Madam Speaker, is that, because he is known for not consulting, he imposes his views.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. S. D. KARAVAKI.- Whether he should explain, Madam Speaker, if he had consulted the schools before he had finalised the areas where the funds are going to be paid to.

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

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Madam Speaker, when I outlined the grant allocation criteria in the different vote codes, I mentioned that this year, we have changed some allocations. For example, for office administration, we had raised it for primary schools from 12 per cent to 13 percent. The same thing for secondary schools, 12 per cent to 13 percent. Why did we do that? Because we consulted the schools and the schools said “we need more money for office operations.” So, we raised that allocation.

For IT, we reduced from 18 to 15 percent. Why did we do that? After one year of Fiji experience, this year, the principals and the heads of schools came back to us and said; “I think you are doing well with the IT, can you reduce the IT component, so that we can raise the other component? Absolutely, we consulted the heads of schools - the head teachers and principals.

MADAM SPEAKER.- We now move on to the third oral question, and I invite the honourable Alvick Maharaj to have the floor.

Male Advocacy Programmes
(Question No. 145/2015)

HON. A.A. MAHARAJ.- Madam Speaker. Before, I ask my question, I would like to congratulate our Fiji under-20 Soccer Team, for creating history and also creating a world record by scoring 38 goals in any professional match in the world, and in the South Pacific Games in PNG.

(Acclamation)

Going on to my question, Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the honourable Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation.

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

Can the honourable Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation enlighten the House on the Male Advocacy Programmes toward the empowerment of women in Fiji?

HON. R.S. AKBAR (Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation).- Madam Speaker, I thank the honourable Member for the question, I think your question that is rightly asked, given in view that gender-based violence is on top of our national agenda, and if I may mention, media reports continue to be flooded with reports of gender-based violence in the country.

At the outset, I would also like to acknowledge the children in the gallery and I hope they are enjoying this vibrant session this morning.

Madam Speaker, we view that gender violence should be everyone’s responsibility. It therefore, creates a need for a concerted effort in educating communities, providing them with appropriate information and guidance on all aspects of life, thereby increasing a sense of responsibility amongst every member of the community including the male members, the youths, women and children.

The Ministry’s Male Advocacy Programme is a Programme that began this year, with the main objective of strengthening capacities through Gender Sensitisation Trainings of male members of the

Gatekeepers Committees in village; communities and settlements that have declared themselves Violence-Free after undergoing the 10 Phase process of the Zero Tolerance Violence-Free Programme.

Another objective is to build a pool of gender sensitised male community leaders in communities, towns, settlements and villages who will be able to provide the right information to other men within their groups of influence.

Finally, to build a pool of male leaders who can further be trained to provide initial counselling to male perpetrators of violence within their communities, utilising the concept of the Buddy System.

The Gender Sensitization Training is also meant to build on the younger men to be more responsible about their sexual behaviour, and therefore, being responsible towards gender issues. This Programme is a three-day programme, in partnership with the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre, which provides funding and technical expertise towards the Ministry.

So far, since the start of this year, we have completed two Programmes; one in Nadave earlier in June, where we trained 23 men of the Central and Eastern Divisions declared communities, and the second one was conducted in the Northern Division, two weeks ago for the Declared Community Gatekeepers members from three Provinces of Cakaudrove, Bua and Macuata. The other trainings have been scheduled for the Western Division from the 27th and 30th July, 2015. We believe that this Programme will complement our 10 Phase Programme towards declaring communities Zero Tolerance to Violence-Free.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you.

HON. L. EDEN.- Supplementary question.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Supplementary question, the honourable Lorna Eden.

HON. L. EDEN.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. Could the honourable Minister please tell us how long she intends these Programmes to run for?

HON. R.S. AKBAR.- Madam Speaker, I thank the honourable Lorna Eden for the question.

Madam Speaker, we intend to take this Programme as far as we can, to ensure that we reach out and expand our reach to many communities in our bid to combat gender-based violence.

MADAM SPEAKER.- I give the floor to the honourable Salote Radrodro.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. What we hear today from the honourable Minister is nothing new, it has already been in place. What I was expecting to hear, and that is the question, how are you going to involve the male Members of Parliament in your Programmes, if you are to make a real difference in violence against women? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister.

HON. R.S. AKBAR.- Thank you. Madam Speaker, the suggestion by the honourable Member is very pleasing to my ears, and I take this opportunity to invite all the male Members from the other side of the House, please join in my campaign. Let us work together to combat violence.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Point of order!

MADAM SPEAKER.- Point of order!

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Madam Speaker, that response is irrelevant. What I was asking for, how will the Ministry include male Members of Parliament in the Programme, like it has been taken out to the communities? Not an open invitation like that. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. The question was asked and the answer had been given. I will now give the floor to the honourable Niko Nawaikula.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Madam Speaker, in terms of gender violence, one of the most successful areas are the church-based groups. For example, my violence was taken away when I joined the Marriage Encounter. This is the Catholic Church. Do you have any plans to extend that to church-based groups?

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Minister.

HON. R.S. AKBAR.- Thank you, Madam Speaker, and thank you honourable Nawaikula for this question. Yes, we already have a Gatekeeper's Committee within the Zero Tolerance Violence-Free Programmes, where we have members of advisory council, community leaders and we will try to include faith-based organisations, if they are not in there. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now give the floor to the honourable Alvik Maharaj.

HON. A.A. MAHARAJ.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. While the Opposition Members are so much willing to join the Government side in the Male Advocacy Programme...

HON. OPPOSITION MEMBERS.- Ask your question!

HON. A.A. MAHARAJ.- ...can the honourable Minister please explain, how do you select the participants on the Male Advocacy Programme so that they can actually apply or be aware how to join the other side?

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Minister.

HON. R.S. AKBAR.- Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I thank the honourable Member for the question. I see that a lot of interest has been generated.

Yes, when we have community meetings, we invite community leaders, like now we are going to invite more faith-based organisation members, we extend invitations to advisory councils and youth groups who live within that community that is undergoing the 10 Phase Programme. We do not force members of the communities to join, but they become part of our Programme.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. We will move on to the fourth oral question, and I invite the honourable Dr. Biman Prasad to ask his question.

Lowering Entry Marks to Universities for Year 13 (Form 7) Students
(Question No. 146/2015)

HON. DR. B.C. PRASAD sked the Government, upon notice:

Can the honourable Minister for Education, Heritage and Arts inform the House, if he has written to the Vice-Chancellors of the three universities in the country to lower the entry marks for Year 13 or Form 7 students from 250 to 200, based on English and three best subjects? If so, why?

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

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise in response to the two questions in one question posed by the honourable Member. The first question is whether I have written to the three Vice-Chancellors of the three universities - yes.

In response to the second question as to why. Madam Speaker, some three decades ago, there was only one University, the University of the South Pacific which started in 1968. At the time, the entry requirement was 200 marks; English, plus best three subjects for entry to University. In 1979, Fiji Seventh Form Certificate Examination was scaled, and in 1989, the Fiji School Leaving Certificate Examination was also subject to scaling. In 1989, the University of the South Pacific lost confidence in the 200 mark, and raised the entry requirement to 250, after introduction of scaling. It was then that the University decided that they could not trust the 200 pass mark, because the marks were inflated.

Madam Speaker, on 11th April, I wrote to the three Vice-Chancellors, copied to the Chairman of the Higher Education Commission, and the Chairman of the TELS Board, and this is what I wrote to the VCs:

“Greetings to you all,

I am writing this email to request if your Universities could consider considering lowering of entry marks for your Higher Education (HE) Programmes to students originating from Fiji Year 13 Examination in light of the discontinuation of marks scaling. The raise in entry marks were adopted by universities in light of the view that students obtaining a pass in English and three other subjects within an aggregate mark of 200 were not able to perform well in university studies at that time.

In this regard, the aggregate entry mark for all HE studies, except for few science areas were raised to 250. Now, that we have removed mark scaling, the basis for raising the entry mark from 200 to 250 no longer holds.

In this regard, I am requesting if your Universities could discuss this soon, with the view to revert to the Ministry’s set pass mark of 200 in English plus three best subjects in Year 13 Exams.

For your information, I am attaching two studies that were done on these issues. I look forward to your response soon.

Regards,

Dr. Mahendra Reddy
(Minister for Education, Heritage and Arts)”

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. Supplementary question, the honourable Prem Singh.

HON. P. SINGH.- I thank the honourable Minister for his answer. Is the honourable Minister expecting pass rates to decrease this year, therefore necessary to write a letter to the Vice-Chancellor to reduce the entry mark? What will be the Minister’s decision should the universities refuse to decrease the entry mark?

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you, honourable Minister.

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Madam Speaker, there are two questions that he has raised in one question given to him. The first question is, does the Minister expect the pass rate to decrease this year? Madam Speaker, my expectation is that the pass rate using raw marks should increase this year. That is my expectation, that is our goal, that is our target. That is our target, using the raw mark. Last year the pass rate, this year, Madam Speaker, we are working very hard with all stakeholders to ensure that the pass rate using the raw mark will increase significantly this year. Second part of your question....

HON. GOVT. MEMBERS.- Listen!.

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- The second part of the honourable Member's question, Madam Speaker, is that what if the Vice Chancellors (VC) refuse to do so? No, we got a very positive response from them. They asked for some additional data, we are working together, this morning I spoke to one Vice Chancellor, they are saying that maybe in the months' time, they will be able to convert all three universities and come up with a mark for the entry requirement per High education Programme (HE). Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now give the floor to the honourable Jiosefa Dulakiverata.

HON. J. DULAKIVERATA.- Madam Speaker, my question is more related to the last question, but I would like to make a point that the honourable Minister had been making a lot of reforms this year with the urge to improve the results of examination in schools. By lowering the mark from 250 to 200 this year, is the honourable Minister already anticipating a drop in the examination results? Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you, honourable minister.

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Madam Speaker, he still does not get it. What I have said is that, you take the pass rate using last year's original mark, we are saying we will raise the pass rate for the record. Thank you.

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

HON. B. SINGH.- Madam Speaker, the question that I wanted to pose to the honourable Minister has already been asked by honourable Prem Singh which was on the university's response.

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

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. I thank the honourable Minister for his lengthy explanation. My question is, now that you have written to the universities to lower the marks, can you assure this House that the universities will be having sufficient resources to accommodate for the influx in number of students at the universities.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister.

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Madam Speaker, we have got three universities. Our own national university, we have got the regional university as well as the faith-based university. We do not see any problem with regard to space, except for programmes where there is limitation (limited space) for example, medicine and aviation. Other than that, there should not be any issue in any other programme.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. We will move onto our fifth oral question. I now give the floor to the honourable Niko Nawaikula.

Provincial Council – *Yasana* Assets and Properties
(Question No. 147/2015)

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Good morning Prime Minister.

(Laughter)

My question to you Sir, before that, relating to this question. I thank the Government first...

MADAM SPEAKER.- Your question please.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- I wish to thank the Government for something.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. Read the question please.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Okay, I will leave that.

Can the honourable Prime Minister explain why Provincial Council's office is still holding onto *yasana* assets and properties and are not enabling their transfer into *vanua* registered companies?

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. I give the floor to the honourable Prime Minister and Minister for *iTaukei* Affairs and Sugar Industry.

HON REAR ADMIRAL (RET'D) J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- Thank you, Madam Speaker and I thank the honourable Member for his question, but unfortunately for him he has not stated which provincial council he is referring to. Is it the Cakaudrove Provincial Council, it would appear in his usual haste, Madam Speaker, to once again, he missed out the vital details, he has confused himself, a bit like the ITC and ICT.

(Laughter)

As I said, the honourable Member has not stated which provincial council he is referring to.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Would you like to state the provincial council so that the honourable Prime Minister

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- I thank the honourable Prime Minister and the Government for doing this, in the case of Ba Provincial Holdings and Namosi but not others. So could you explain why you are holding onto the others?

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you, honourable Prime Minister.

HON. REAR ADMIRAL (RET'D) J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- Madam Speaker, as everyone knows the provincial councils are created under statutes – the *iTaukei* Affairs Act and the provincial councils are funded through an Annual Budgetary Allocation by Government to the Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs, which then channels these funds to the respective provincial councils through the *iTaukei* Affairs Board, of course. It is seen, Madam Speaker, that over the years, respective provinces have established companies with the theory that the members of the province become shareholders and, of course, the companies get into business to participate in general business activities.

The decision to corporatise, of course, rests with the respective provincial councils. We have seen over the years that many provincial based companies have not necessarily met the test of transparency,

equal distribution of shares, good governance, proper management of finances, to name a few. Many have been run virtually by handful of individuals or families and they tend to be the main beneficiaries of these companies, some of course are run much better than others. Suffice to say, Madam Speaker, provincial councils should not be pressured to transfer assets or properties to private provincial companies that are not financially secure and lack management skills, business acumen and do not adhere to transparency and good corporate governance. Maybe the honourable Nawaikula's provincial council, of course, may be thinking of getting them on board on mine.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Supplementary question, the honourable Bilitavu.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- I will be talking about the Macuata House. Macuata Provincial Council is being holding onto this provincial asset since it started. My question is, we have already set up a Macuata Holdings Limited and all the recent provincial meetings, there are discussions on, even when the honourable Leader of the House was there, but the debt has increased. The House was earning about \$39,000 a month and the debt repayment is about \$38,000; \$1,000 for the maintenance security of the house, and even Native Land Trust Board that used to be there has shifted to a Sangam building, so loss of income of about \$5,000.00 per month. The house or the asset will now be running at a loss because other debts already there, which is about \$6million from loans and collateral loans that were there from previous administrators. The corruption was done by the government official, the provincial council, the *Rokos* and we want transparent practice. We have got a qualified management team in the province to handle it and we are seeking that asset to be transferred to our company. Why? The reason why it is there by the honourable Prime Minister, is for proper management. It has already been abused and mismanaged by the government and we want that to be transferred. What is the holding back of this Macuata Provincial assets - still there when the qualifications are already there. The companies already been registered. When can that transfer be done?

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you.

HON A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, just a point of order and seeking your clarification. The honourable Member has been made a whole range of statements, we do not know whether they are actually correct or not. They are purely his interpretation and it has been a long statement, there are allegations and he used that as a supplementary question, Madam Speaker, and it is not related to the specific substantive question.

Thank you Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- I totally agree with you that they were all just allegations and there is no validity to the allegations that have been made and cannot be accepted in this House.

HON. M. BULITAVU.- Point of order, Madam Speaker. How can you allow that, Madam Speaker? Every time, the honourable Attorney General tries to score points for the other side. You are the referee, you have to be fair, Madam Speaker. The honourable Minister has got some information and I think he is prepared to answer. Give him a chance to do so.

MADAM SPEAKER.- I agree that all the facts that you had mentioned are purely allegations because we do not have valid papers and documents to validate the allegations that you are making. However, I was listening intently to all the figures that you are mentioning and I have never seen it in anywhere else, nor is it available to the public.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, can I please clarify a few points?

HON. OPPOSITION MEMBERS (Chorus of interjections).

MADAM SPEAKER.- No, a point of clarification.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, the Standing Orders does allow anyone to actually stand up and make a point of order and seek clarification. It is not restricted, Madam Speaker, nor does it say a minister cannot do it. Again, there is a tendency of personalising matters in this House, any Member of the House can do that. The Standing Orders is the guide book for us, and we are simply adhering to it. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- A supplementary question, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I am happy to hear that there are now guidelines for the provincial councils to meet. Could the honourable Prime Minister advise this side of the House (for the benefit of the *yasanas*) as to who in the Ministry of the *iTaukei* Affairs should they go and ask to be assessed on these criteria which are transparency, proper management and good corporate governance?

HON. REAR ADMIRAL (RET'D) J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- A very simple answer, Madam Speaker, the *iTaukei* Affairs Board.

MADAM SPEAKER.- The last supplementary question from the honourable Ratu Sela Nanovo.

HON. RATU S.T. NANOVO.- Madam Speaker, I must thank the honourable Prime Minister for the answers that has been given so far, relating to businesses by the provincial councils.

We do understand honourable Prime Minister that many of these provincial holdings buildings are currently being occupied by Government tenants and they do rely on them to pay off these debts during the currency of your role. Right now, we face a move by the Government to move away from these provincial buildings. Can the honourable Prime Minister please confirm to this House whether that move can be on hold until the debt of those provincial councils are paid off?

HON. REAR ADMIRAL (RET'D) J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- Madam Speaker, that question is not related to the question at hand but I have received a letter this morning. We are talking about transparencies, provincial council holdings that are not performing well and some, of course, as I have said, are not managed as well as others. Maybe, honourable Ratu Nanovo can enlighten us regarding the Kadavu Holdings Limited.

I know many people from Kadavu have a lot of stories regarding the manner in which Kadavu Holdings was run a few years ago. Indeed, we can also tell you many stories of how many lawyers and others who have benefited handsomely from large fees being charged to company holdings from provincial companies, such as the one I mentioned.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. We will now move on to the sixth oral question for today and I give the floor to the honourable Viliame Gavoka.

Compensation for Fire Accident Victims – Naevuevu, Nadroga
(Question No. 148/2015)

HON. V. R. GAVOKA.- As you know, Madam Speaker, we learn new things every day. Today, I understand that Dorothy Dicks was a socialite who was very vain, who would go up to people and say; “tell me why I look so beautiful”. Very much like FijiFirst, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, can the honourable Minister for Local Government, Housing and Environment, Infrastructure and Transport inform on what has transpired regarding the compensation of victims of the horrific bus fire accident at Naevuevu village, Nadroga on 29th August 2008 where 12 passengers from the village of Natokalau, Ovalau died?

HON. P. KUMAR (Minister for Local Government, Housing, Environment, Infrastructure and Transport).- Madam Speaker, I thank the honourable Member for his question.

Madam Speaker, the bus fire accident in 2008 at Nadroga was really a tragic event for this nation. Ten passengers died on the spot due to their inability to escape from the burning bus while two died at the hospital.

Madam Speaker, a total of \$240,000 being \$20,000 per family was paid as settlement between LTA and the family members in 2014. Madam Speaker, the investigation was carried out by the LTA, Fiji Police Force, National Fire Authority and the Australian Federal Police.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. A.A. MAHARAJ.- A supplementary question, Madam Speaker. I thank the honourable Minister for his answer. Can the honourable Minister also inform how many passengers were on board at the time of the accident?

HON. P.B. KUMAR.- Madam Speaker, I believe there were around 54 passengers at the time of the accident.

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- Madam Speaker, a supplementary question. I thank the honourable Minister for his explanation that the payment of \$20,000 each has been made to the victims. However, I would like to refer him to a decision by the Court that they were subject to a payment of \$100,000 each, if I am correct. So, the question is; what was the basis of the payment of \$20,000 and why were they not being paid the \$100,000 each?

HON. P.B. KUMAR.- Madam Speaker, there was a deed of settlement between the family members of the passengers and LTA but I can also inform this House that I do not intend to comment because the matter is still before the Court.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Madam Speaker, I am also surprised because I know these families were going through too much and I feel that the Government should take some responsibility. Can the honourable Minister confirm whether that \$240,000 is from the Government? If the Government is giving that, I want to thank them for that. Is that primarily from the Government irrespective of the Court and the insurance?

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

HON. P. KUMAR.- Madam Speaker, \$240,000 was paid by the insurance company on behalf of LTA.

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

MADAM SPEAKER.- You have had one supplementary question and you are entitled to just one supplementary question.

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- Can I have another one, please?

MADAM SPEAKER.- There are three supplementary questions asked already.

HON. OPPOSITION MEMBERS.- One more, one more, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Alright, we will give you one more.

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- Madam Speaker, now that there is more clarity in the payment of that compensation to the victims, the Court has decided that \$100,000 be paid to the victims. So, can the honourable Minister look into the payments that have already been made and pay the balance to the victims for \$80,000 each?

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. I think the question has already been answered.

HON. A. SUDHAKAR.- A point of order, Madam Speaker.

This matter is in the Court of Appeal at the moment, and my firm is handling it. This matter is not appropriate to be discussed in this House and according to the Standing Orders, matters that are in Court should not be discussed and should not be made subject of questions.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you, honourable Member. That brings to the end our session on the Oral Questions.

HON. J. DULAKIVERATA.- A point of order, Madam Speaker.

Yesterday I raised a very important question to the honourable Prime Minister regarding the return of Crown Schedule A and B land from Government to the ITLTB. The question appeared on page 1387 of yesterday's *Daily Hansard* and the reply by the honourable Prime Minister is on page 1388. You allowed, Madam Speaker, that I should meet the honourable Prime Minister to explain to him the question which he said he did not understand outside of this House. I made the courtesy, Madam Speaker, to ask the Prime Minister but he was probably too busy.

The point I want to raise here, Madam Speaker, is that the question is very important because it affects a lot of people and you know the question is not personal to me. The question is meant for the beneficiaries of this exercise. I would ask you, Madam Speaker, to make a ruling that the honourable Prime Minister should seek a written answer from the ITLTB on the question asked.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Honourable Member, we will ask the honourable Prime Minister to provide a written answer to that question.

MADAM SPEAKER.- First written Question, the Honourable Mosese Bulitavu.

Written Questions

Total Credit Card Levies – 2012 - 2015
(Question No. 149/2015)

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

Would the honourable Attorney-General, Minister for Finance, Public Enterprises, Public Service and Communications provide to the House the total credit card levies remitted

per year, that is, from 2012 to 2015, from commercial banks to Government as part of the two per cent Credit Card Levy Policy implemented in 2012?

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

MADAM SPEAKER.- I will give the floor to honourable Aseri Radrodro to ask his written question.

Total Excise Revenue Collected – 2006 - 2014
(Question No. 150/2015)

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

Would the honourable Attorney-General, Minister for Finance, Public Enterprises, Public Service and Communications provide the total excise revenues collected by Government per year, that is, from 2006 to 2014 from alcohol and tobacco excise?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, I will table my answer at a later sitting date as permitted under Standing Order 45(3).

Madam Speaker, before I sit down, I just like to draw to the attention of this Parliament that the third written question as directed by honourable Tikoca, was overlooked at the Business Committee stage. Really that question is for the Minister responsible for FRCA because FRCA is the agency that controls Customs records and border control. So, if that third written question that is directed to the Minister for Defence to be directed to the Minister for Finance.

MADAM SPEAKER.- I invite the honourable Ratu Isoa Tikoca to ask his written question which will be directed to the honourable Minister for Finance.

Smuggling of Undeclared Goods
(Question No. 151/2015)

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

Can the honourable Attorney-General, Minister for Finance, Public Enterprises, Public Service and Communications provide the following:

- (a) The total number of cases involving the smuggling of undeclared goods into Fiji that is recorded by Customs and Border Control from 2006 to 2015;
- (b) Out of those, indicate the entities/individuals involved; and
- (c) Whether any investigation was conducted and prosecution charges made?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM (Attorney-General, Minister for Finance, Public Enterprises, Public Service and Communications).- Madam Speaker, I will table my answer at a later sitting date as permitted under Standing Orders 45(3).

MADAM SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, the Question time is now over which brings us to the end of our sitting day. I would like to thank you all very much for today's deliberations. Before we adjourn, the honourable Leader of Government in Parliament would like to make an announcement.

HON. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Madam Speaker, please allow me to invite all Members of Parliament to a launching for Micro-Enterprises by the honourable Prime Minister at 12.30pm. It is an important exercise for our people, particularly those who live in the low margins of society and are facing social and economic issues. The launching will be just across the park, and you will see the set-up so all Members of Parliament are invited to attend.

MADAM SPEAKER.- I thank you very much for that invitation.

The Parliament is now adjourned until 9.30 tomorrow morning.

The Parliament adjourned at 10.45 a.m.