

PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI



PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

DAILY HANSARD

WEDNESDAY, 19TH JUNE, 2019

[CORRECTED COPY]

CONTENTS

[illegible]

WEDNESDAY, 19TH JUNE, 2019

The Parliament resumed at 9.33 a.m., pursuant to adjournment.

HONOURABLE SPEAKER took the Chair and read the Prayer.

PRESENT

All Members were present.

MINUTES

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

That the Minutes of the sitting of Parliament held on Tuesday, 18th June, 2019, as previously circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed.

HON. A.A. MAHARAJ.- Honourable Speaker, Sir, I second the motion.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, Parliament will now vote on the motion.

The Question is:

That the Minutes of the sitting of Parliament held on Tuesday, 18th June, 2019, as previously circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed.

Does any Member oppose the motion?

(Chorus of 'Noes')

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

Motion agreed to.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CHAIR

Welcome

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, I welcome all Honourable Members to today's sitting. I also welcome members of the public joining us in the gallery, and those watching the live broadcast of the proceedings on television, the internet and listening to the radio. Thank you for taking interest in your Parliament.

CONSIDERATION OF BILLS

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, I now call upon the Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Civil Service and Communications, the honourable Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum to move his motion. You have the floor, Sir.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 51, I move that:

- a. The Companies Budget (Amendment) Bill, 2019 be considered by Parliament without delay;
- b. The Bill must pass through one stage at a single sitting of Parliament;
- c. The Bill must not be referred to a Standing Committee or other Committee of Parliament;
- d. The Bill must be debated and voted upon by Parliament immediately after the vote on the Consequential Bills for the 2019-2020 Budget tabled on 7th June, 2019; and
- e. The time for debate for the Bill to be limited to ensure that the Bill is debated and voted upon during this sitting of Parliament.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir.

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to second the motion.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, I now call upon the honourable Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Civil Service and Communications to speak on this motion. You have the floor, Sir.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I will be very brief in view of the fact that we have to go into Committee of Supply. This is essentially another amendment that seeks to supplement the Budget that has been announced in respect of the digitalisation programme that we do have, to allow for digital registration of companies and existing companies that are not registered digitally for them to give a period of time to be registered digitally. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, the floor is now open for debate on this motion.

As no Member wishes to speak, I now call on the honourable Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Civil Service and Communications to speak in reply. You have the floor, Sir.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir. Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have no further comments, thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, the Parliament will now vote:

The Question is:

Pursuant to Standing Order 51 that:

- a. The Companies Budget (Amendment) Bill, 2019 be considered by Parliament without delay;
- b. The Bill must pass through one stage at a single sitting of Parliament;
- c. The Bill must not be referred to a Standing Committee or other Committee of Parliament;

- d. The Bill must be debated and voted upon by Parliament immediately after the vote on the Consequential Bills for the 2019-2020 Budget tabled on 7th June, 2019; and
- e. That the time for the debate for the Bill be limited to ensure that the Bill is debated and voted upon during this sitting of Parliament.

Does any Member oppose the motion?

(Chorus of 'Noes')

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

Motion agreed to.

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON THE 2019-2020 APPROPRIATION BILL 2019

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, the Parliament will now resolve into Committee of Supply to resume debate on the Heads in the Budget Estimates.

Honourable Members, we will continue from where we left off last evening. We are on Head No.8, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Honourable Attorney-General, you may have the floor.

In Committee:

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Mr. Chair, Sir, if I could just provide a clarification in respect of Head 2, the discussion about the narration that I mentioned, if that is all right with you, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- You have the floor.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Honourable Members, if I could, please, ask you to turn to Page 19, I sought Mr. Chair's permission before this. On Page 19, Head 2 Programme 2, Activity 1, SEG 7, which says "Former Prime Ministers' Benefit", there was some discussion and I just wanted to clarify this.

In fact, I have gone back to the 2000 Budget Estimates and 2005, the narration actually should read "Former Presidents' and Former Prime Ministers' Benefits". This relates to, which I highlighted yesterday, what we call the "ongoing benefits". If you look at the Presidential Pensions Act and the Prime Ministers Pensions Act, this caters for the ongoing expenses which a Prime Minister that served a full term is entitled to. For example, telephones, ministerial-type vehicles, annual budgetary allocation of \$30,000 per annum subject to periodic adjustments, provision of security protection. All of that comes from this particular allocation.

The only two Prime Ministers that are currently receiving benefits are the Honourable Leader of Opposition, in his term as SVT Prime Minister; and Laisenia Qarase who has served a full term under the SDL Government. Of course, the Chair and the Speaker, in his term as a former President, he, of course, is entitled to various benefits. But the pension that they receive is actually in Head 50. I just wanted you to know that, and also I want you to know that we will actually change the narration to include Former Presidents and former Prime Ministers. Just for clarification, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, I allowed that clarification because some Members were looking at me; so that is the clarification and we move on.

Head 8 - Ministry of Foreign Affairs:

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Programme 1 - Policy Administration, Activity 1.

(Chorus of 'Yes' and 'Noes').

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Viliame Gavoka, you have the floor.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- On SEG 6, we have the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission to which we contribute the sum of \$93,357. Can I ask for clarification on where we stand in terms of the Nauru agreements? If we are not a member, are we trying to be given observer status given the importance of tuna to Pacific Fishing Company Limited (PAFCO)? Thank you.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- This is Fisheries Commission - SEG 6.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- SEG 6?

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Yes, SEG 6 has a provision there for Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) of \$93,357. Given our concern about the supply of tuna to Levuka, there is also a body called the Nauru Agreements; Fiji is not a member of that. I am just wondering if there is a chance or the plan by government to at least be part of the Nauru Agreement, maybe as an observer status because they control the vast stock of tuna in their region.

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- Mr. Chairman, Sir, for WCPFC, this is the fees that we pay as a membership fee to that association, which includes Asia and the Pacific region. As for the Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA), it has never been raised within Government, but that could be discussed for the entry of Fiji to PNA as we are member of the Forum Fishing Agency (FFA) already. The discussions that the honourable Member has stated, I have to raise it within Government.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Salote Radrodro.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Thank you, Sir, just a matter of clarification on Head 8, Programme 2, Activity 1, in regards to Overseas Missions.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- No, but that is all right, we are on Programme 1, Activity 1. We just take Programme by Programme.

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- Mr. Chair.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Lynda Tabuya

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- Thank you, on Programme 1, Activity 1, Mr. Chair, a clarification as to why the staff establishment allowance has been reduced?

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Minister, you have the floor.

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Thank you, Mr. Chair, Sir. There is no reduction in staff numbers but there is reduction in the allocation, simply because of the unfilled vacancies that we have and also as alluded to by the Honourable Minister for Economy yesterday, there are unnecessary expenses that we cannot get rid of, what he terms as "fats", and those are the ones that we can manage.

For the information of this honourable House, the reduction is due to the freezing of the four vacant positions and, of course, with this reduction as well, it is about a 5-percent reduction across all ministries. For us, the current status of the staffing at Headquarters is about 90, and we have vacant positions of 17. We have a bit of difficulty in filling positions, particularly for the Headquarters because we, in Fiji, according to our observation from the Ministry, we have most of the international and regional organisations based here. People have preference to join the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), join South Pacific Commission (SPC), join the UNDP, and this is why we have this high number of vacant positions.

But let me assure the honourable House that this is manageable, this is not about working harder but working smarter within the allocated resources that we have, but there is no reduction in staff numbers, it is just because of the vacant positions and the other extras that we can manage. Thank you, Mr. Chair, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you, we will move on. Yes, honourable Leader of the Opposition, you have the floor.

HON. MAJOR GEN. (RET'D) S.L. RABUKA.- Yes, still on Head 8, Programme 1, Activity 1, can the honourable Minister, please, advise why the staff establishment had been reduced? Are these positions ones that were left vacant while the provisions had been made; and whether these positions have now been disestablished? Are the vacant positions still part of the establishment or have they been disestablished? I am concerned about the honourable Minister for Economy, also being Minister for the Civil Service, so just clarification on that, please.

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Sir. As I have alluded to earlier, they are not disestablished, they remain but because it has not been filled for a long time during the budget discussion, we have managed over this period when the vacant positions were not filled and that is why the positions are still there. They are not being disestablished but the allocation has been taken away from us. Of course, when we review the Missions abroad and, of course, the Headquarters as well, but they are still there.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. The honourable Attorney-General.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Mr. Chair, just to clarify to the honourable Leader of the Opposition, when you were in Government, you had established positions. As I mentioned yesterday, you do not have that necessarily anymore.

The Permanent Secretaries have the ability to be able to merge positions and be able to further reduce the number of positions, but the envelope of money given to them has given them the latitude to be able to deal with those requirements because, for example, there may be specialist positions required, there may be a need to multi-skill, so that is how it is done. It is not like, you are given 52, and you must have 52. They can actually have 45, if they want. From the 52, they may actually create 55 that is how it operates, so we have to adjust our minds around that.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Salote Radrodro.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Thank you, Sir. Still on the same subject regarding the removal of the Staff Establishment List from the Budget Estimates as used to be the previous practice, it has taken away the transparency and accountability in regards to staffing.

Also in regards to what the Honourable Minister for Foreign Affairs has just mentioned about staffing, if staff establishment was still part of the Budget Estimates, that would sort of validate what he has just said because as Members of Parliament, we are not privy to the information that he has just mentioned in regards to the envelope for staff establishment given to Ministers and the flexibility they have been given in regards to staff recruitment and filling of positions.

My question is, why has that staff establishment been removed from the Budget Estimates which gives Members of Parliament the opportunity to look at, or give them some kind of insight into the staff establishment of each individual Ministry? Thank you, Sir.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Mr. Chairman, Sir, I have to intervene because the Honourable Member should have been here yesterday, unfortunately, she was not, but I had explained this. She knows this because we have been through other budgets where we no longer have the establishment numbers. She knows this. She is traversing over the ground. There is nothing non-transparent about it.

It is the envelope of money is what we need to be concerned about. Of course, when we get the Annual Reports of the ministries, you know exactly...

(Honourable S.V. Radrodro interjects)

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- It is coming. Please, have the decency to not interrupting. We are not debating now.

(Honourable S.V. Radrodro interjects)

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Listen, please!

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Member, this was explained yesterday and the thing is, I will get the Honourable Minister to explain it again.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Sir. We have the envelope of money.

(Honourable S.V. Radrodro interjects)

MR. CHAIRMAN.- You have the floor.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- You have the envelope of money. It is not the Ministers who decide the positions, under the law it is the Permanent Secretaries.

(Honourable S.V. Radrodro interjects)

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Member, just wait for your turn.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Mr. Chairman, Sir, again, this is like I really have to do 101 HR.

(Honourable Member interjects)

MR. CHAIRMAN.- You have the floor.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- It is the Permanent Secretaries who decide on the positions; it is the Permanent Secretaries who decide on the requirements of the Ministry; it is the Permanent Secretaries who actually advertise the position. They are wholly responsible for the appointment, and once the Panel makes a recommendation, the Permanent Secretary makes a recommendation, then it goes up to the Minister for the Minister's endorsement. Mr. Chairman, Sir, that is what happens.

When you get the Annual Report, in that then you have further elucidation in respect of what positions there were, what people did, et cetera. So in terms of accountability, from a financial perspective, Mr. Chairman, Sir, this is, in fact, a lot more accountable because they have to stick within the parameters of the envelope of money that is given to them.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Leawere, you have the floor.

HON. M.R. LEAWARE.- Mr. Chairman, SEG 7 – MSG and United Nations Human Rights Council, we notice there is a \$400,000 reduction. Can we have a clarification from the Honourable Minister?

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Sorry, Mr. Chairman, can you raise the question again, please?

HON. M.R. LEAWARE.- Yes, through you, Mr. Chairman, the question is, why is the reduction? I mean, your clarification in terms of the \$400,000 reduction from SEG 7 – MSG Meeting and the United Nations Human Rights Council. They are both in SEG 7.

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Thank you, Honourable Chairman, Sir. Again, for our contributions to these organisations, it is also dependent on the expenditure trend. It depends on the number of meetings, MSG, particularly, there is a change in leadership now from Vanuatu to Papua New Guinea which just changed lately and we keep deferring meetings. As a result, because the activities dictate the expenses and there is reduction in activities, therefore the reduction in the expenses that we allocate to these agencies. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Pio Tikoduadua.

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, a point of clarification on SEG 6 - UN Peacekeeping Force (\$200,000). I just need a clarification on that first with regards to what Head 49 will be, what UN Peacekeeping Force is being referred to here, is it for peacekeeping operations, peace support or just peace operations?

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Thank you, Honourable Chairman, Sir. This is about the members' contributions. It is with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

To run peacekeeping operations, it is in a different Head, but this is our contribution to the multilateral organisations. This is for the members' contribution as it is mandatory for Member States of the United Nations and its related bodies.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Before we move on to Programme 2, the Honourable Anare Jale has a motion that PIDF Operating Grant (\$1,200,000) be left out of Head 8-1-1(6). You have the floor.

HON. A. JALE.- Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. The PIDF is really a duplication of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) and there is really no need to have it.

HON. MEMBER.- No, it is not.

HON. A. JALE.- There needs to be a review. I think the reason why it was established at that time was really a political move by the Government, but I think it is just a duplication of the PIFS. We are back in the PIFS now, so there needs to be a review. Therefore, I would say that the grant that we are pouring to PIDF is really not needed anymore, so that is the reason why I am moving a motion, Mr. Chairman, that the grant of \$1,200,000 in the Estimates be removed.

HON. RO F. TUISAWAU.- I second the motion. I would like to add a few comments on what has been mentioned.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- We go through the procedure first - motion, seconder, motion. You have the floor to explain, honourable Anare Jale.

HON. A. JALE.- As I have already mentioned, Mr. Chairman, the reason why we feel that this allocation is no longer required is that, PIDF should have been reviewed. We have got ourselves back into the PIFS and economic issues that are discussed in those two Forums are the same ...

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- No!

HON. A. JALE.- The only difference that I see is that, PIDF has more members because they have NGOs representatives in there. So as I see it, Mr. Chairman, there is really no need for PIDF to exist anymore. It should close down and that money should be utilised in a better way to be decided by this august Forum. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Ro Filipe Tuisawau, you have the floor.

HON. RO F. TUISAWAU.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just to add to what has already been mentioned, PIDF was established after the 2006 *coup* when Fiji was suspended by the PIFS due to that event. In order to gain our support for the Government after that, the then Interim Government or the Military Government, that government established the PIDF as a rival to the PIFS because it was no longer in the Forum at that time.

But now the situation is different. The Australian Prime Minister has visited Fiji, they have discussed the issues with our Honourable Prime Minister and, in fact, Fiji has re-joined the PIFS and we will be attending the Forum, as publicly announced, in September which will be hosted by Tuvalu, the rationale behind PIDF is no longer there.

The other issue in the establishment of PIDF, there were a lot of Governments which supported it financially for one or two meetings but after that, they were no longer funding which is why we have that amount of \$1.2 million there. That is unusual for funding of regional organisations because for them, there is a formula for funding which is based on the percentage of GDP and it is not used in this one. That is applied in the PIFS, the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG), Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), et cetera.

This is why we are suggesting that PIDF, as an organisation, which is an organisation that was established to rival the PIFS, but we are re-joining PIFS, it does not have any rational basis now and it needs to be removed as we have rejoined the Forum.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Honourable Salote Radrodro.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Thank you, Honourable Chairman. Still on that Programme and Activity in regards to Overseas Missions, we have noted in the term of this Government, they had opened new Missions.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Nawaikula?

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Just on the motion, in our Budget response, we emphasised the need for proper spending. Unnecessary, reckless spending is an example of it. We did not want PIFS, we built our own organisation, and now that we are going back, it was unnecessary from the start. Rightfully, we should take this out, we do not need it.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Attorney-General.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Mr. Chairman, if I could just point one particular matter. The Mover of the motion, honourable Anare Jale, he himself has admitted that the fundamental difference between the Forum Secretariat and also the PIDF is that the PIDF, firstly, is not politically-attuned to those people who donate more. Honourable Tuisawau should know this that the largest donors to this Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat rather paradoxically, of course, are Australia and New Zealand.

The fundamental difference, furthermore, is that the NGOs and Civil Society do not actively participate in the Forum's activities. It is a very State-driven Forum whereas PIDF is open to Non-Governmental Organisations and I am sure he knows members of various NGOs who have participated in various forums and have been the beneficiary of the forums that PIDF has managed to actually bring about that the Forum Secretariat has not been able to bring about that PIDF has brought about.

So, I think it is a very significant point of difference and PIDF, in fact, has been leading the charge in respect of the conscious and public awareness raising regarding climate change whereas the Forum Secretariat is a bit slow on the pace compared to PIDF.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, of course, the various organisations and our membership always get constantly reviewed in the same way that we are constantly reviewing, in particular, in the past few years our engagements with the Forum. So, I am sure in years to come, we will be able to look at our relationship with PIDF. We have had a number of other international donors who still have continued to show interest in PIDF, so that is the rationale for it.

HON. MAJOR-GENERAL (RET'D) S.L. RABUKA.- Mr. Chairman, I was going along the same point of argument from Honourable colleagues in the sense that we had to go into PIDF during turbulent times in our international relationships. Now that we have stabilised, now that we have re-established cordial relationships with the Forum Secretariat and the Forum Island countries, I believe it is time to dis-engage and perhaps when we dis-engage, the value we have seen in PIDF, we can try and inculcate into the Forum Secretariat in the participation of Non-Governmental Organisations which will still keep secure, retain the support of international agencies. Thank you, Sir.

HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- Sir, just contrary to the statements being made about our re-joining Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), we re-joined PIFS many years back. I have just not been able to have the time to go and attend meetings. So the Minister for Foreign Affairs or the Minister for Industry and Trade has been attending PIFS on my behalf. We had gone back to re-join PIFS some years back, not just last year as the statement that has been made.

As the Honourable Attorney-General has mentioned, in the PIDF, we had more members than PIFS. The PIDF was not established to counter PIFS. We made a lot of statements along that line. We had NGOs, we had non-State actors that were with PIDF which PIFS did not have. So, there is no reason really for us to rid PIDF and it is also working along the agenda of the Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS). New Zealand and Australia are not members of PIDF, they are invited to be observers to PIDF meetings.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Gavoka.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Honourable Chairman, I support the motion that we wrap up PIDF. It was a creature of the 2006 *coup* and that is long gone.

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- We have progressed and the perception right now, it was there to rival PIFS.

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- No.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- These are perceptions, Honourable Chair, that can be very harmful in the relationships. Perceptions are very dangerous and the perception right there is that it is anti-Australia, anti-New Zealand, and we believe that it is time that we get rid of this body.

We are talking about the economy here also. Australia was one of the few countries in the world that did not suffer from the meltdown in 2008 and 2009. Just about every country in the world suffered except for China and Australia, and it was unfortunate at that time that our relationship with Australia was not what it used to be. So going forward with the way that the Government has crafted the Budget, that we will be facing some difficult times ahead globally, Australia will be one of those countries that can weather the looming meltdown in the world economy, hence the need for us to strengthen that relationship. I know I have been blamed here that I will always lobby for Australia, it is not anything special other than realising the strength of this country and how a small country like Fiji can benefit from that relationship. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- We will move on. We will take a vote on this amendment that PIDF Operating Grant be left out of Head 8 in respect of Programme 1, Activity 1, SEG 6.

Votes cast:

Ayes	:	23
Noes	:	26

Not Voted : 2

Motion is defeated.

Honourable Members, there is another amendment by the Honourable Anare Jale that Head 8 be decreased by \$120,000 in Programme 1, Activity 1, SEG 6 with respect to MSG Contribution (\$1,120,000). Honourable Anare Jale, could you move your motion, have it seconded then you can explain. That is the procedure. You have the floor.

HON. A. JALE.- Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I move that the MSG Contribution of the sum of \$1.120 million be reduced by the sum of \$120,000. The reason for the reduction being that the Melanesian Forum has lost its way and intent.

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- Mr. Chairman, I second the motion.

HON. A. JALE.- Mr. Chairman, I commend the people who had that foresight to establish MSG years ago. I think if they were living at this age or today, they would have regretted what they did. Melanesian Forum was meant to look after the interests of the Melanesians. We have so many other people who are members of MSG now that should not be there.

The complaints or cries of the people of the region, particularly, Melanesians have been neglected by the MSG. MSG was meant to be there to look after the interests of the members of the region, particularly, Melanesians. The West Papua is an example where people have been suffering for years. MSG has been silent about it and they looked the other way. That is the reason why we are questioning the relevancy of MSG these days. The motion to reduce the grant that Fiji gives to MSG is based on that because our initial intent has been lost. We have lost our way, MSG has done what it was tasked to do and that is the reason, Mr. Chairman, the motion has been raised for consideration by this Committee. Thank you, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, the motion is open for discussion. Anyone wishing to take the floor. Honourable Minister?

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.-Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Sir. The MSG has not lost its intent as originally designed for and it is, of course, gaining momentum. Of course, there will always be differences within the MSG. But, Mr. Chairman, we have come a long way since the establishment of MSG. This is the time where we really need to come together. There are some outside parties that, of course, would not want the MSG to be in existence. When you look at the MSG and in terms of its strategic advantage, we are the mass in this region in terms of land mass, in terms of population, in terms of the strength of the economy. We now have our trade agreements, we just need to strengthen the MSG and it is the leadership of the MSG that will make it work. Of course, our leaders, it was the Honourable Leader of the Opposition that made us join MSG, we were never part of MSG. As I have said, Mr. Chairman, Sir, it is the leadership that needs to pick it up and it has a lot of strategic advantages that we have not come to realise. Let us maintain the solidarity and let us maintain MSG.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Niko Nawaikula, you have the floor.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- I think, Mr. Chairman, is that it must be clear that the purpose for which the MSG was set up was to defend and advocate the common interest of the Melanesian Group. One area where it has faulted is in relation to Papua. Papua, remember, was an established nation, a member of the UN and it has been discarded by big powers and it is important for Fiji to standby them. Now that you

have included Indonesia and we have allowed ourselves to be manipulated by Indonesia to a certain extent that it is now impossible to get away from that. There is only one nation in the world ...

HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- ... member of MSG.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- ... Vanuatu, that is standing behind Papua, it is important, they are standing for the truth, for their right of self-determination because it is a nation. As a Melanesian country, Fiji should have supported that but now, Mr. Chairman, the MSG has diverted totally from the common need to protect our common interest as Melanesians, and we should take it away, I support the motion.

HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- Mr. Chairman, let me correct some of the statements that Honourable Nawaikula is making. Indonesia is not a member of MSG. Let me make that quite clear and just because NGOs which is the agenda of Honourable Jale have no satisfaction in bringing West Papua into MSG, does not mean that we scrap MSG. Papua, Mr. Chairman, ...

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- ... was never a nation.

HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- ... is part of Indonesia, it is a sovereign issue. We have made that quite clear and there is also a system in place where they go to the United Nations, that is also being made.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Yes, Honourable Attorney-General.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- I just want to highlight that apart from the political issues that some of the Honourable Members have been only focusing on West Papua which actually was never a sovereign State recognised by the UN, it was not.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- It is.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- You said it was recognised as a sovereign State, it never was.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- It was a State.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Check the history.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Order! Order!

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Mr. Chair, Sir, apart from that, under the Melanesian umbrella, we have the Melanesian Trade Agreement (MTA) that the Minister of Foreign Affairs actually highlighted, currently, as a result of the Melanesian Trade Agreement, Fijian products have duty-free entry into Vanuatu, Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea (PNG).

In PNG, there are three items on the negative list:

- i) Salt;
- ii) Fish; and
- iii) Some other items that I cannot remember.

But all other Fijian products have duty-free access, and have actually helped tremendously for our manufacturers, producers of various goods to gain access into those markets. They, of course, can get duty-free access into the Fijian market but as we know that they have very little actually that they do export to us. From a purely economic perspective, Fijian businesses which actually relate to jobs have

been greatly enhanced because of the fact that we have the Melanesian Trade Agreement. There used to be a very long negative list. Only recently, through the FijiFirst Government, have been able to get rid of the long negative list and there are only three items that are on the negative list from PNG. It is proving to be economically very, very viable for us too.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you, Honourable Members, we will go into vote on this, but just before we do that, it is unusual for the Chair to make an explanation on that.

The things about MSG, we were the “Johnny-come-lately” in the MSG. We should have been there at its initiation, and we were not, we are always being treated as the “Johnny-come-lately” to the MSG. Now it is starting to wear off because we are playing our part. When the Honourable Prime Minister, the former Prime Minister took us in to MSG, we should have been there earlier at its initiation.

We will go into the vote on this amendment - Head 8 to be decreased by \$120,000, Programme 1-1-(6) with respect to MSG Contributions (\$1,120,000).

Votes Cast:

Ayes	:	23
Noes	:	27
Not voted	:	1

Motion is defeated.

Honourable Members, there is another motion on Head 8 to be decreased by \$100,000 in Programme 1 Activity 1 SEG 7, with respect to MSG Meeting (\$200,000).

Honourable Anare Jale, you have the floor to move your motion.

HON. A. JALE.- Mr. Chairman, I move that the MSG Meeting allocation be reduced by the sum of \$100,000.

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- I second the motion.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Anare Jale.

HON. A. JALE.- Mr. Chairman, my reasoning is the same as the one that I have just explained before, that the MSG has lost its intended brief and is irrelevant now. You need to show MSG that Fiji is not happy with the way it has been performing recently, particularly, in respect to West Papua. That is the basis of my motion, Mr. Chairman, thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Minister, you have the floor.

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Mr. Chair, Sir, this has already been reduced from \$400,000 to \$200,000, and we need to maintain this allocation, Mr. Chair. Sir, again, on the MSG, we have discussed it already, let us be strategic. This is about the long-term benefits and let us maintain our commitment to MSG. Of course, we are looking forward to the leadership of the new Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, in fact we have been deferring the meetings for more than six months now.

Honourable Chair, Sir, and now we have set the dates again for July and hopefully the Honourable Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea will set the dates. I mentioned yesterday that we will convene the Police Ministers meeting shortly in Fiji. There are meetings, there has already been a reduction from \$400,000 to \$200,000; let us maintain this. Thank you, Honourable Chair.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- All right, Honourable Members, Parliament will now vote on this amendment, that Head 8 be decreased by \$100,000 in Programme 1, Activity 1, SEG 7 with respect to MSG Meeting (\$200,000).

Votes Cast:

Ayes	:	22
Noes	:	27
Not Voted	:	2

Motion is defeated.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Programme 2, Activity 1, Honourable Biman Prasad, you have the floor.

HON. PROF. B.C. PRASAD.- Mr. Chair, the decision to open our Embassies in South Africa, Brazil and Ethiopia, and now we have made the decision to close it. In fact, Mr. Chair, we were on record saying that the strategic reasons for opening Embassies in the first place was probably not considered, so I am not surprised that the Government has decided to actually close this, but in the process, we would have wasted a lot of money.

I want to ask the Minister for Foreign Affairs to explain why these missions are being closed and what are the lessons that we have learnt and whether we have a very clear guideline now as to how and when we open embassies and close embassies.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Minister, you have the floor.

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Thank you, Honourable Chair, Sir. I wish to clarify the decision to close the mission was taken by Cabinet because the allocation for every financial year, once approved, then it is just Cabinet that makes decisions. The decision to close the mission was something that is a routine activity in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs where we reassess the missions. This was taken in December last year and there was a recommendation by the team and, of course, there was a follow-up visit again to ascertain and make recommendations to Government as well and Government has taken this.

We moved into South Africa initially in 2011, and then we shifted to Ethiopia because of the multi-lateral organisations that I explained yesterday and, of course, the presence of the African Union as well and, of course, we were moving north as we know after 2006, we isolated but we wanted to make friends with everyone.

So politically there were reasons why, but it is not only politics, but we have to look at the other benefits as well, trade being one. We must have returns in investments and that is very very critical because missions cost a lot to establish missions. So, we have achieved a lot politically and our presence has already been established, and as I have stated yesterday, we are reassigning Dubai (just an hour away). Dubai is going to look after our African unions and, of course, the multilateral organisations that are based

in Addis Ababa, and likewise Washington and New York will have responsibility over the Brazil Mission. At the same time, Honourable Chair, Sir, we will continue with that exercise as well during this financial year, looking at the other missions as well. So, we want to not only look at the political gains out of the establishment of missions but, of course, Government has got very safe forward guidelines on the establishment of missions and, of course, once those criteria are met, we deploy and then we just regularly revisit and re-evaluate the missions.

Closing and opening missions is something that is normal for all sovereign States, we are not the first country to close missions. It happens based on the geo-political changes and, of course, other national interests as well that takes priority over other things. Thank you, Honourable Chair.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Leawere, you have the floor.

HON. M.R. LEAWARE.- Thank you, Mr. Chair. I remember in the last Session that the Honourable Professor Biman raised the issue on Embassies in SEG 8, Upgrade of Fiji House in Wellington, and there was a \$1 million allocation. Have they completed the building because there is another \$700,000 tagged? Last year's was \$1 million, now it is \$700,000. But was that \$1 million enough to complete the building?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- If I could, this particular Mission in Wellington, have a few issues:

- We have been given notification by the New Zealand authorities that it lies on the fault line, as you know Wellington is very prone to earthquakes;
- The Wellington Council has raised issues with us, they want us to do geo-tech - save it, in terms of building precautions because Wellington is very susceptible to earthquakes, we are currently looking at the particular property itself. We may actually sell it, we are currently talking to the New Zealand authorities, because it is also a heritage building so we are looking at how we can perhaps talk to the New Zealand Government to be able to maybe sell-off this property (Embassy) and then looking at alternative properties for our Embassy.
- To actually geo-tech, ensure that it does not actually crack or fall after an earthquake will literally cost millions and millions of dollars because the structure you need to build to withstand earthquakes, as you know, it is quite a monumental task.

Therefore that \$1 million was not utilised, we have got \$700,000 this year. That is a contingency, if you like, in respect of any movements to cater for an alternative site, but that is the problem we have.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, Parliament will now vote on Head 8. The question is

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Could I ask about the properties that we have?

MR. CHAIRMAN.- You should be on the ball because I want to move on.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- No, because ...

MR. CHAIRMAN.- You have the floor.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- SEG 4, I know you are given a run-down of what we rent and what we own in the Foreign offices. Can we be given updates on what we own? Do we own the London premises, or do we rent it?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- We own it.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- We have here provisions for rent and for running expenses on what we own. Can you just give us a rundown of what we own and what we rent in all our overseas offices?

MR. CHAIRMAN.- The Honourable Minister, you have the floor.

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Thank you, Mr. Chair, Sir. The only ones that we own are: the one in London; the one in Australia; and the one in New Zealand. Most of what we have in other countries are on rent and, of course, if you will see in the Budget allocation as well, Australia, we need a lot of work, both in the Chancery and, of course, in the residence as well and, of course, in London. We are still working on Papua New Guinea; Papua New Guinea is very expensive, I tell you, therefore we need to sort out the deal quickly with Papua New Guinea, otherwise, it is mostly on rent.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Last speaker on this, honourable Qereqeretabua, you have the floor.

HON. L.S. QEREQERETABUA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, on SEG 1, I would like to ask the honourable Minister to, please, clarify Pool Allowance, Clothing Allowance and Creche Allowance, please.

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Which one?

HON. L.S. QEREQERETABUA.- On SEG 1, after Personal Emoluments, Post Allowance, Education Allowance, but in particular, Pool Allowance, Clothing Allowance and Creche Allowance.

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Just give me a minute, please. On Clothing Allowance, most of our missions, in here, we only have the dry and the wet season, but for those that have served abroad would know that they need winter allowance, so that is for the clothing allowance.

Pool Allowance, that is for those that have swimming pools, that is the allocation. What is the other one?

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Creche Allowance.

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- That is for those that will make babies, because they are not given TV sets. Thank you, Honourable Chairman, Sir.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Mr. Chairman, Sir, just for the honourable Member, this is something that we introduced only about two or three's year ago, because we recognised the fact that you have females who work in our missions. This is obviously women empowerment, because we want them to perform and some of them we do recognise the fact that they are mothers. So, if they have young children, we pay the Creche Allowance, so they can go to work.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Honourable Members, I think we have covered this Head. Parliament will now vote on Head 8.

The Question is:

That the amount of Head 8 - Ministry of Foreign Affairs, be approved.

Does any Member oppose the motion?

(Chorus of "Ayes and "Noes")

Votes Cast:

Ayes	:	28
Noes	:	21
Not Voted	:	2

The motion is, therefore, agreed to.

Head 8 agreed to.

Honourable Members, we will now suspend proceedings for refreshment in the Big Committee Room. Parliament will resume in half an hour.

The Parliament adjourned at 10.38 a.m.

The Parliament resumed at 11.15 a.m.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, this session is called to order.

Head 9 – Independent Bodies:

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, the floor is open for Head 9-1 (Policy Administration); Activity.

HON. MAJOR-GENERAL (Ret'd) S.L. RABUKA.- Mr. Chairman, through you, Sir, I was going to ask the honourable Minister a general question whether he can clarify the rationale behind giving a lump sum of one line under operation of grant and transfer to these Independent Bodies under Head 9.

Previously, these allocations used to be separate and broken down into SEGs for each of the Independent body. It is difficult to evaluate the allocations without the proper breakdown and it sort of frustrates our role as Parliament, when we try to scrutinise and evaluate the budget allocations. Would you, please, clarify which provisions of law authorises the change that we have now seen to present the Estimates for Independent Bodies and Independent Commissions, and what is the purpose of this exercise, as we accept the fact that we are here to scrutinise the Budget before it goes up. Thank you, Sir.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Thank you. Mr. Chairman, Sir, my apologies for the delay. Mr. Chairman, Sir, the honourable Leader of the Opposition should note that under the 2013 Constitution, these Bodies are Independent Bodies. For example, Judiciary also now, unlike previous constitutions, is actually guaranteed also financial independence.

So, all these Bodies in fact, because of the Constitution provisions run their affairs in the way they see it fit. That is the Constitution provision. We have, of course, have discussions with these Bodies and we talk about what their expenses are, et cetera. But because they are Independent Bodies, we cannot go and tell them exactly, nor should this Legislature tell them how they should run their day-to-day affairs.

When we give money to Parliament, the Parliament, for example, comes and makes representations to us and say, “this is what we want, these are the expenses, et cetera”. When we finally agree on a figure, we give that to them, and then it is up to them. They do not come to us for RIEs, they do not come to us saying, “We want to spend this much money here and there.” We have already given them a lump sum of money, it is up to them how they spend it. Then their relationship is between them and the Auditor-General’s Office. They have their own procurement and guidelines in most instances. We do ask them, for example, when there is bulk purchasing, for example, of computers, et cetera, that they have the opportunity to take advantage of the Government Procurement System, but other than that, they are on their own affairs and that is giving them true independence.

In respect of these, if you see some of the expenditures that had been reduced, for example, the Office of the Auditor-General, there has been a reduction, again because in 2018-2019, they had a one-off purchase of accounting software which is now obviously being completed. In respect of the expenditure regarding employment, they have managed to streamline those processes and they have got vacant positions.

The Fijian Elections Office obviously have come out of the Elections. They no longer require the \$20 million. They have a reduction of \$13 million and then, of course, in the meantime, the \$6 million pays for things like the day-to-day expenses. They now actually have full time staff.

In the days when you were Prime Minister, the Elections Office was really an ad hoc body if you like. They used to sort of recruit people just before the Elections. Now they have fulltime staff, and they also manage other elections where by law, for example, they conduct the elections for Trade Unions and any other organisation that want the elections to be conducted by them. They do that and that is what they attend to.

Judiciary, again, with the reduction of \$14 million primarily because of some of the capital projects will be coming to an end. They have also streamlined some of their processes.

Parliament has had a reduction of \$635,000 again. We discussed this with Parliament, there is some fat there that could have been cut off.

The Director of Public Prosecution's (DPP) Office is an independent body and there has been a net reduction of \$443,000 because of the alignment of various positions within the DPP's Office.

Again, the Media Industry Development Authority (MIDA) their expenditure trend has not been great, so we have cut off half of their budget; and that is how the allocations are made.

HON. PROF. B.C. PRASAD.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, just following on from the honourable Leader of the Opposition, I can understand what the honourable Attorney-General is saying with respect to other Independent Bodies or Commission, but I think Parliament, Mr. Chairman, is the supreme oversight institution in the country. In fact, some of the independent commissions or other independent bodies are also in many ways under the scrutiny of the Parliament, this is where we can talk about those Commissions.

I think it would be appropriate for future budgeting purposes that for Parliament, at least, we should have the breakdown. In many Parliaments, Mr. Chairman, you would know that the first item in the Budget process is really approving the budget for the Parliament, because Parliament remains the supreme oversight institution on every other institution. I think it is important because if someone has issues about a particular independent commission, it can be raised in Parliament, we can talk about it.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- It doesn't mean you are oversight of that.

HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- That is the approval of Parliament.

HON. PROF. B.C. PRASAD.- The other point that I want to make because the honourable Attorney-General did mention the other bodies as well, before we get into motions and all that, I want to raise issues. Some of these independent bodies, for example, the Electoral Commission, under the Electoral Act 4G, the Electoral Commission is supposed to provide a Report on the Elections to the President and to the Parliament within three months. It is almost seven months now and we have not seen the Report.

I remember the honourable Attorney-General, I think, in the April session, when questioned about the Annual Reports from MIDA, I think MIDA was set up in June 2010 or somewhere around there; we

have not had any Annual Reports from MIDA. These are important reporting mechanisms. The Parliament sees Annual Reports from these independent institutions and it is referred to the Parliamentary Committees. If these bodies are not able to provide Annual Reports, then really we need to seriously question their role and their effectiveness. How do we know that they are performing their roles in the way that they should be performing when they cannot even produce Annual Reports? I would like us to take this into account when we are moving the motions and bearing in mind the allocations for these Independent Bodies. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- I wish to seek a clarification, Mr. Chairman, in relation to Judiciary. The allocation in the last Budget was \$69.2 million, now it is \$54 million, the cut back of \$14.9 million. The honourable Attorney-General has explained that a big part of that will affect capital projects, but can he clarify whether that will also impact on the recruitment of judges and magistrates next year, more so, when we just passed a law allowing the Chief Justice to engage as many judges as he can. So, the implication of those on those on the recruitment of judges and magistrates next year.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Sir. Absolutely not! As you would have heard in the Budget Address that we have said that with the cuts that have been made, it is not going to affect the operational output of the respective organisations. We made sure of that.

We do see the need and, yes, you are absolutely right that Parliament did approve the augmentation of the number of High Court judges and also magistrates, and that will continue. Some of the capital works are coming to an end, some of those have actually been rolled out into a longer period of time.

I will give you an example: One of costs that was input there, Honourable Nawaikula, is the Lautoka High Court. Geotechnical studies now have shown that the rock bed where the current Court House is, cannot withstand a very tall building, and the idea was to move all the Magistrates Court from the Ba Provincial Council Building which, unfortunately, they are very bad landlords. It was not a very well-maintained building, so the whole idea was to move all the Magistrates Court, the High Court and the Family Court to be under one structure. So, you would have been going much further up.

But the rock there has got some sand soap material, it cannot withstand that, so we must rejig the entire process and go back to ensuring that we have a building that can withstand the foundations and height, and we may need to spread it, these are some of the issues that have come up.

Part of these, of course, Mr. Chairman, Sir, is the completion of the Nasim High Court. Some of the mobilisation costs in this year's Budget, obviously, they will come to an end this year too, so it will not affect the operational cost.

The other point I wish to make, as it was raised by Honourable Professor Prasad is, we should not, from a constitutional perspective, interfere with the day-to-day functioning of these organisations, nor should we have oversight in any way.

In respect of Parliament itself, there is nothing stopping any Member of Parliament from talking to the Secretary-General, to find out how they have done their allocations. There is nothing stopping you.

You can do that, that is your relationship with the Secretary-General to Parliament and the Honourable Speaker. Obviously, we assume that they have done that. When they come to us, then we go through the Budget. It is for these independent bodies to go and do their own consultations.

In the same way, these people do not actually go through, for example, the Government recruitment system. As you know, before in the Judiciary, staff appointments had to go through PSC. So, Registrars, court clerks, all went through PSC. It was not truly an independent body from that perspective. Now, they are given the pool of funds, they go and do their own recruitment, not because someone is tweaking some strings at PSC.

In fact, what we did find before all these changes took place, a lot of the times, some of the people who were appointed to the Judicial system as clerks, non-judicial members of the Bench, were people whom other Ministries did not want, they ended up being there.

Now, the Judicial Services Commission is the body that runs it. For example, for Parliament, for you to go and talk to them, there is nothing stopping you to go and talk to the Chief Registrar. But as far as we are concerned from the financial perspective, they make the representations, we give them one-line budget for them to spend, the Auditor-General comes in, they have their own procurement system and they do as they should.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Aseri Radrodro, you have the floor.

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The allocations that are listed here, can the Honourable Minister also clarify whether it includes the Aid-in-Kind as listed down here, or is it a separate allocation altogether?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- They are separate, obviously. Honourable Member, if you look at Page 56, the total is Total Expenditure, then below that, you have Aid-in-Kind, so it is separate.

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- Excluding those Aid-in-Kind balances?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Yes, and you have that further broken down on the opposite page, as to where it is going to, like DFAT. The workshops you attend is funded through DFAT and you will see that you are getting \$6,413,381 from DFAT.

Then you have some others, EAP Corporate Governance (IFC) (Parliament) (\$152,815); UNDP Parliament Strengthening Project - Phase 2 (NZAID), \$1,079,603, that is another amount.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- A clarification, Mr. Chairman, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Yes, Honourable Bulitavu.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- On SEG 6 - Media Industry Development Authority (MIDA), last year it was \$300,000, now it is dropped to \$150,000. What is the reason for that drop in the budget, even for the other ones that you have explained due to the coming to an end of capital projects.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- There is no capital projects for MIDA, but because of their expenditure trend, they have not been expending those funds. So, we have had discussion with them. We believe they can live with the \$150,000. We have given them office space in the Suvavou House, so they do not pay rent, water bill, I mean expenses like in other Ministries.

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- A clarification, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Member, you have the floor.

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- On the allocations that have been given regarding Head 9 – Independent Bodies, I see a reduction in all these Estimates for 2019-2020. In cases where funds have been allocated but not utilised fully, what happens in those situations since they are given to independent bodies?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- We do not, sort of, say to the Judiciary, “Here is \$54 million.” We give it to them in the quarters, so obviously they make the requisition and we give them the money.

(Honourable A.M. Radrodro interjects)

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Yes, I mean, they are unutilised funds, at the end of the year then we may talk over. For example, Parliament may say that there are certain funds that need to be rolled over. For example, if they want to do a particular project that may have started a bit late, it may roll over into the next period, so that is how we also make the adjustments.

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, we have a motion. The motion is that Head 9 be increased to \$6 million in Programme 6 - Policy and Administration.

I give the floor to the Honourable Leader of the Opposition to move his motion. You have the floor, Sir.

HON. MAJOR-GENERAL (RET'D) S.L. RABUKA.- Sir, we note that in SEG 6 on Judiciary, there has been a decrease. We know that they have been overloaded, there has been delays, and I would like to move that we reconsider that and increase it by \$6 million from that sum - \$54,372,036.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Yes, you can speak on your motion.

HON. MAJOR-GENERAL (RET'D) S.L. RABUKA.-Yes, that is the rationale behind my motion, and I move that.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- I second the motion, Mr. Chairman, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Minister.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Sir, if I can clarify, the increment in that will not improve the turnaround of cases. What will actually improve the turnaround of cases is by having more members on the Bench, and this Budget is adequate enough to cater for new members to the Bench. This is why we brought the amendment to Parliament just a few months ago, to allow the Honourable Chief Justice to increase the numbers to the High Court Bench, and to increase members to the Magistracy.

In fact, the amendment that we did seek, Mr. Speaker, Sir, which was approved by Parliament, that the Honourable Chief Justice no longer actually has to come to Parliament to increase the numbers. The Honourable Chief Justice can do so at will, before it was by stipulated - 24, 10 or whatever.

We have had discussions with them. We are going to recruit new members to the Bench, and that will actually improve the turnaround times. There is also the court circuit on the outer islands and in the rural areas will, in fact, be enhanced. You would have seen an article recently (I understand that was put out), that will also be enhanced, so this Budget takes account of that. So, increasing it by \$6 million is not going to change that ...

(Honourable Member interjects)

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- ... because this caters for that. This budget of \$54 million already caters for the increase to the number of members to the Bench. By giving \$6 million does not necessarily mean that suddenly all the cases will get fast-tracked, but what I am saying is, there is enough money to increase the number of judges and magistrates.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Qionibaravi, you have the floor.

HON. ADI L. QIONIBARAVI.- Thank you, Sir. We note that there has been a reduction of \$14 million in the allocation to the Judiciary. We hear the message from the Honourable Attorney-General that the recent amendment has authorised the Honourable Chief Justice to appoint as many Judges as are needed for the efficient and proper administration of the courts. What are the implications of the reduction of \$14 million for our courts and the administration of justice, given that the Honourable Chief Justice has been authorised to appoint as many Judges as is needed.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- I am sorry, Mr. Chairman, Sir, I completely missed that point.

HON. ADI L. QIONIBARAVI.- Thank you, Honourable Attorney-General. We heard your explanation this morning, the Honourable Chief Justice has been authorised recently to appoint as many judges as is needed. But the reduction in the allocation with the Judiciary is \$14 million. How does that impact on the work of the courts, when the Honourable Chief Justice has now been authorised to appoint as many judges?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- As I was explaining to the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, the \$14 million, a lot of it has to do with the budgetary cost regarding capital expenditure. Some of the

capital works that were in this year's 2018-2019 Budget have come to an end, obviously, you do not carry on with that expenditure.

Some of the capital expenditure that we did have, for example, we have had to re-jig the numbers and the example I gave about Lautoka Court, the new premises, that has come down.

Other areas, for example, the non-Bench staff members where there have been some readjustments regarding, for example, clerks, et cetera, that has brought down those costs.

But the costs pertaining to the salaries of judges and magistrates, the costs pertaining to the court costs of having additional judges and magistrates, in fact, has increased. So, it gives the capacity to the Honourable Chief Justice to appoint more judges and magistrates with the \$54.3 million that has been allocated.

HON. MAJOR-GENERAL (RET'D) S.L. RABUKA.- Will you move them around the facilities that we have outside of Suva, with the facilities there and staff?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Yes, Mr. Chairman, Sir, through you we have also what we call the "Island Court System". We also have the Rural Court System and that, Honourable Leader of Opposition, has been greatly enhanced since during your time. No one said now frequency to those court systems, so we have, in fact, put in quite a lot of money into that area.

We have also, for example, built courts where they never were courts, like Nabouwalu and I think in Seaqaqa, there is a moving court or "circuit court" as they call it, ...

HON. MEMBER.- They are well-behaved in that area ...

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- ... but there are many other issues pertaining to non-behaviour issues such as domestic matters, et cetera.

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- Mr. Chairman, just to contribute to the debate, a question for the Minister: You had presented earlier and passed in this House amendments to that same Judiciary Act and for the very reason you argued was that to increase the number of judges. It is quite difficult to understand if you are cutting the budget, how the Judiciary will realise that, that is the first issue.

Secondly, the suggestion as part of that debate was perhaps, in easing the work of the judges so that the backlog is moved along, is to hire Judges Associates and perhaps, the increase with his motion - the \$6 million can cover for that to improve the services of these judges. Would the Honourable Minister consider that as part of this move to increase? Thank you.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Mr. Chairman, Sir, I think I have elucidated this point three times now as to how it would not. I hope Honourable Tabuya heard me when I said it, let me repeat it hopefully for the final time, that the \$54.3 million that is allocated there will, in fact, pay for the increase in judges and magistrates.

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- How many?

How many is not for you or me to decide. It depends on the Honourable Chief Justice and as the amendment was carried out.

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Sorry, you want to talk to them, I can stop.

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- No.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Order!

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- It is up to the Honourable Chief Justice to decide, but it does cater for increments for new judges and magistrates and obviously that will be done. It also caters for case management also. It also caters for any ancillary staff that may be required to service these members to the bench, that is taken care of. The \$14 million reduction is to do with, for example, some capital costs that were in the 2018-2019 Budget that has either finished off or is about to finish off and therefore the reduction takes place.

There are certain positions within what we call the “support staff” that have not been filled and have not been filled for a long period of time. Therefore, as a result of that budget has come down because of that, but the reduction does not in any way affect the ability of the Honourable Chief Justice to put in more magistrates and judges.

(Honourable L.D. Tabuya interjects)

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- The move to Veiuto is taking place.

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- What?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Yes, slowly, as you know that the idea to move to Veiuto, already some refurbishment has been done. We are moving the Family Court area and the Juvenile Courts because of the salubrious environment, the kids can run around, et cetera, that is being done and eventually also, we expect some of the sessions of the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal to also be there.

The whole point, the Honourable Member should note this, that if we free up space in this Complex, what is known as Government Buildings, then the Members of Parliament can have more space in this premises also.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, we will now vote on this amendment.

Head 9 be increased by \$6 million in Programme : Policy and Administration; Activity : General Administration, with respect to the Judiciary.

Votes cast:

Ayes : 24

Noes : 27

Motion is defeated.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- We move on to the next amendment. Honourable Qereqeretabua, you have the floor.

HON. L.S. QEREQERETABUA.- Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would like to move that Head 9, SEG 6 be increased by \$1.8 million to \$12 million in respect of Parliament (\$10.1 million)

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- I second the motion.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- You have the floor, Honourable Member.

HON. L.S. QEREQERETABUA.- Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair will notice that the allocation for Parliament has been reduced by \$635,000. Sir, I am asking for this increase for Parliament because you know that this allocation is important as the Honourable Minister for Economy has just alluded to. There is a shortage of space but there is also backlog of reports from Ministries, the agencies, the statutory bodies and public enterprises.

As you are aware, Mr. Chair, space is severely limited. Standing Committee schedules are clashing because of the lack of space and it is good to note that the purpose-built complex at Veiuto is being refurbished, but that is why I would like to move the motion, Sir. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Any further comments? Honourable Salote Radrodro.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Thank you, Honourable Chair. Just to add to the debate on that motion. In the last term, when we started off, we (the Opposition side) were promised by the Honourable Attorney-General that we would be having extra space in our office upstairs because they were going to be relocating courts and now we are into this new term, there are more Members now, but we are still all squeezed up in that office space. That is why we are supporting the motion to increase the budgetary allocation for Parliament in view of looking at giving us extra space in the Opposition Office, Honourable Chair. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Tikoduadua, you have the floor.

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- Honourable Chair, it is just to really reinforce the point raised by Honourable Qereqeretabua and Honourable Salote Radrodro. For instance, we, at NFP do not necessarily have an office, we have a room, so it makes good sense also that we look at this increase for Parliament given the necessity surrounding the offices for Members of Parliament. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Attorney-General.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Thank you, Mr. Chair, Sir. Obviously, we all want more space. I can go on about the fact that there were 32 of us last year, cramped up in one small confined area; 32

Members cramped up in Parliament when we come to Parliament. You do not all come to Parliament every day, you only come when Parliament is sitting or when you have committee meetings. So, Mr. Speaker, Sir, we also have suffered cramped up space and, yes, I did say that we will be creating more space and that can only be done once Veiuto gets refurbished. It is being done. Like I said, the domestic courts are going to be moved over very soon, the juvenile courts, so more space can become available and that is what we want. It will take a little bit more time, but it will happen.

I cannot, however, see the logic in allocating an additional \$1 million and suddenly the space will appear from somewhere. How can the space appear just because you have given an additional \$1 million? What does it mean? Are you going to put a second floor with the Opposition Office? No! You need the space in this premises and at the moment, there is no space. By giving \$1 million, you do not create space. Space is a physical feature. So, if there are more rooms free and then you say, “we need more money to refurbish it” - granted. In fact, we would give them the money the moment space becomes available and we hope that very soon some space will be made available. But I cannot see the logic in giving more money and suddenly space will appear.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Member, I think we have covered this. The arguments, back and forth, we will go to a vote on this amendment.

Head 9 to be increased by \$1.8 million, Activity 6 - Parliament.

Votes cast:

Ayes : 24

Noes : 27

Motion is defeated.

Honourable Viliame Gavoka, your motion.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Thank you, Honourable Chair. I move that the allocation of \$150,000 for Media Industry Development Authority (MIDA) be totally removed from this Head.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- I second the motion.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- You have the floor.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Thank you, Honourable Chair. At a time when we are tightening our belts, cutting back on expenses, I do not see why we should put some funds towards this body that I would brand as “a toothless tiger”.

In the way it is described in here, Honourable Chairman, it says: “It ensures that media services in Fiji are maintained at a very high standard in all aspects ...” which is laughable “... including quality, balance and fair judgments.”

We all know the truth, Honourable Chairman, that is not true. There is no balance in the media in Fiji, it is not fair, and someone gets all the kudos on whatever they do. We struggled in a major part of the media in Fiji to even get a foot into the door.

So, Honourable Chairman, let us deactivate this organisation for this time until we are mature enough to ensure that this body can function with the independence and the strength that it should have. Right now, we want to save money, and this is an organisation that I branded as a toothless tiger and really should not be taken up any of our State resources. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Ro Filipe Tuisawau, you have the floor.

HON. RO F. TUISAWAU.- Thank you, Honourable Chairman, just to support the motion, we all know the reasons for submitting Annual Reports, not only from Media Industry Development Authority (MIDA), but other organisations, for example, Electoral Commission.

On the 2014 General Electoral Act, they are supposed to submit a report, but they have not, and including MIDA, they have not submitted any Annual Report so why we should we keep funding entities which do not submit Annual Reports as part of their accountability to the people.

Also, I question the independence of MIDA, who is the Chairman of MIDA? Some of his utterances are just totally biased. He seems to be a mouthpiece of the Government rather than what is mentioned here - Independent Bodies. One of those particular provisions, they are supposed to submit reports for accountability reasons.

They are using public (people's) funds, and they must submit reports. If they do not, let us move them out, including the Chairman. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, we will now vote.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Sorry, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Member.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- There are some issues I feel I need to address, Mr. Chairman, Sir. I remember last year and before last year, even the last term of Parliament, they said MIDA had too much power, now they are saying MIDA is a toothless tiger. Mr. Chairman, Sir, the MIDA actually plays a very pivotal role in ensuring standards.

(Honourable Members interject)

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Order!

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Maybe you did not, but Members of your side did say that and including, I think, NFP. Mr. Chairman, Sir, a lot of the issues actually do get brought to MIDA, it does not hit the public limelight.

There are individuals who do complain to MIDA. A number of these issues are actually resolved between the media organisation and the actual complainant. If the Honourable Gavoka feels very aggrieved, he can actually go to MIDA. There is ...

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- I would not dream to go there

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Well, then you should then support it. Why come and complain about it, then you said, “I would not dream to go there.” The standards that are actually in the Act are standards that existed prior to MIDA actually coming into formation. Those standards are acceptable media standards, and I cannot understand that they seem to be toing and froing from one extreme to the other. They do not know what they want. Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would support this and MIDA has only got a \$150,000 cut.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Last speaker on this, Honourable Biman Prasad.

HON. PROF. B.C. PRASAD.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am kind of surprised, I think the Honourable Attorney-General should hit the nail on the head.

I mean the issue is that this organisation has not been able to produce its Annual Report. If they cannot produce an Annual Report as a reporting mechanism to the Parliament, Mr. Chairman, then we need to look at the people who are running MIDA. This is their level of inefficiency. If they cannot produce an Annual Report since June 2010, they should not be in the position. I think it is the role of this Parliament when we are approving this Budget, it is quite legitimate for us to say that this organisation and the people who are running it are ineffective, inefficient, they should not be there.

(Laughter)

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- I know you love the Chairman, that is why you are saying that.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, we will now vote on this, that Head 9, in respect of Programme 1-1: Media Industry Development Authority (\$150,000) SEG 6.

Votes Cast:

Ayes	:	24
Noes	:	26
Not Voted	:	1

Motion is defeated.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, Parliament will now vote on Head 9. The question is that the amount of Head 9 – Independent Bodies, be approved.

Question put.

Votes Cast:

Ayes : 27
Noes : 21
Not Voted : 3

Head 9 agreed to.

Head 13 – Independent Commissions:

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, the floor is now open for any comments. Honourable Aseri Radrodro.

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just seek clarification on the Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission reduced allocation from the Honourable Minister regarding situations where one-person chairs more than one independent body or independent commissions?

(Honourable Govt. Member interjects)

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- This is a question that needs to be clarified. Is the salary, fees or allowances being paid by both institutions? Like in a particular case, the Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- The Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission's Director you are talking about. The Director is paid by the Human Rights Commission, who is not paid any salary by the Media Industry Development Authority.

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- Mr. Chairman, the allowances from the second

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- No, there is no allowances as such. Wherever you have a substantive appointment, say, for example, if you are the Director of Human Rights Commission, you are fully employed there, and you go and sit on the Board of another entity then any allowances that are paid need to go to the organisation, not to you individually.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Salote Radrodro.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Thank you, Honourable Chairman. May I seek clarification on the Public Service Commission? There is a reduction of \$922,000 which is a huge reduction and how this reduction would affect the role of the Public Service Commission (PSC) in the management of the contracts and salaries of Permanent Secretaries? Thank you, Honourable Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- It will not have any negative impact on the functions of PSC.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Bulitavu?

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Probably it is not here. Just to the Minister, given that we have a Mercy Commission, does the Mercy Commission fall in to this Independent Commission or is it under the Auditor-General's Office?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- No, the Mercy Commission only meets whenever there is a need for it to meet.

The Mercy Commission is appointed by the Judicial Services Commission and when they meet, the Chairperson is the Attorney-General and the only expenses we have for them is any travel costs for members of the Commission which is paid for by the Judicial Services Commission or through the Attorney-General's Office, that is all; and there is a sitting allowance for them. They do not actually have a full-time secretariat or full-time administration staff, they do not need that.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- It is established under the Constitution, Section 121. I thought it was an established Commission.

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- Thank you. My question is on the Fiji Independent Commission Against Corruption (FICAC). Mr. Chairman, can the Minister for Economy and Attorney-General clarify the reduction of \$458,000 from the FICAC? Can the Minister also clarify if this means a reduction in the number of staff in the Commission or a reduction in the allocation for that activity which might include Community Outreach?

It has been eleven years now when the Commission have had a Commissioner, and could the Minister also clarify if there is a plan to recruit a Commissioner? In addition to that, we understand that the Deputy Commissioner has retired on 18th April, could he explain the plan to recruit the Deputy Commissioner bearing in mind the reduction in the allocation, as alluded to earlier, and will the post be advertised? Thank you.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Mr. Chairman, Sir, the reduction in the expenditure will not affect the overall operations or output of FICAC. In respect of the appointment of the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner, the Judicial Services Commission is the organisation that will advertise the position and carry out the appointment.

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- It will be advertised?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- It will be advertised, of course.

HON. M.R. LEAWERE.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, just on the Accountability and Transparency Commission, there is a \$250,000 reduction in the Estimates for this year. What does it do; who is the Head for the Accountability and Transparency Commission establishment?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- As you know, Honourable Member, that this matter is before Parliament and the actual law that we have, so that needs to be approved by Parliament, and once it is, then we will get the Office up and running, the Commissioners will need to be appointed, et cetera.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Adi Litia Qionibaravi, you have the floor. Sorry, I missed you, but the dazzle of the pink was blinding.

(Laughter)

HON. SPEAKER.- You have the floor.

HON. ADI L. QIONIBARAVI.- Thank you, Sir. We note that there are 10 Independent Commissions on Head 13. We would like to seek clarification from the Honourable Minister on whether the Annual Reports for these Independent Commissions are up-to-date for tabling in this august House. We note that through the Parliament Website, only the FICAC's Annual Report 2014 and the Electoral Commission's Report for 2014 have been received.

The other Annual Reports of the other Independent Commissions have not been submitted. Does this simply mean that they are not producing their Annual Reports as required by law, in particular the laws that created these Commissions as well as the Financial Management Act 2004? If this is so, can the Minister for Economy and Attorney-General assure taxpayers that this issue will be rectified with urgency, given that Parliament to whom these Commissions should be reporting to is not being asked again to allocate funds? *Vinaka*.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Thank you, Honourable Member, Mr. Chairman, through you, yes, of course, we want all these Commissions to have their Annual Reports. I do not go and sit in their office and say, "Give me your Annual Report". The onus is on them and I think what you have just done is actually a good method of ensuring that they do that. We need to name and shame them, and I am equally concerned about any organisation that is supposed to table their Annual Report, that they should and on time. That is what we want also, but I do not have the legal mandate to go and direct them to do anything, I do not. Legally, you should know this as a lawyer, I do not have the ability to do that, and the best way to do that, we can, of course, give them gentle reminders to say, "Please, can you do that?", and I have done that.

You will actually see some of these independent bodies, both in Head 9 and Head 13 regarding the Commissions, there will be a whole plethora of reports coming in very soon. You can be rest-assured that their Annual Reports would be coming very soon.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Niko Nawaikula, you have the floor.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- On my motion?

MR. CHAIRMAN.- On your motion.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Sir, I have two motions. In the first motion, I am moving that \$8 million be left out of Head 13-1-1(6) in relation to the allocation to the Fiji Independent Commission Against Corruption (FICAC), (\$8,023,015).

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- I second the motion, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Nawaikula.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The purpose of this motion is to remove totally the Fiji Independent Commission Against Corruption (FICAC) and shift it through to the Police. Initially, it had a very good intention and purpose when it was established. We all hope that it will be used for fighting corruption and doing that role fairly, but it has departed drastically from that role. It is now being used purposely by Government to hunt down, intimidate those who are opposing and there are many examples:

- Prosecutions against Mere Samisoni, prosecution against the Leader of the Opposition. They were hunting him like a dog, rhyming out the hymn, first a charge was made and then another charge for the breach of bail, then while on the campaign trail, another summons was served, and the outcome of this, if you read the decisions, some were re-filed a *nolle prosequi*, which means you do not have enough evidence in the first place when it decided to prosecute, that is where we are looking at.

You ask Honourable Bulitavu what happened to them, and even on the other side, Honourable Dr. Mahendra Reddy, suffered as well.

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- I am of the view that the Government did not even have the guts to face him directly, and he was charged. You can read from that decision that the charge was baseless. It was done basically to intimidate him, that is my information. The Honourable Attorney-General can answer to that but that is what I am saying, not only us, even against his people.

This is useless, the public will know that it has departed totally from its role. We should go back to where it was before, where everything was prosecuted by the Police and it is fairer from all of us. That is basically the reason for this motion.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Any further comments?

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Yes, Mr. Chairman, I have often expressed my concern about the power of this Commission. I know that in Hong Kong, they have a body like this, likewise in Australia and people fear them. But that is all right in a matured democracy.

Fiji is still too young, this type of special body like this with so much power, with the democracy being the way it is, can be subjected to abuse. That unfortunately is the perception in this country today, that FICAC is being used by some powerful people to victimise the people or do their dirty work, creating fear in people which is unfortunate. Government has been known to say that they have succeeded in creating a body that people fear in this country. The idea behind it is all right, like I said, in a mature democracy, but Fiji is still not there. This kind of body, in the wrong hands, is very frightening, and that is why I agree with my colleague here that it should go back to the Police. The Police should do the prosecution work even if it be the special type of prosecution, but under the Police. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Attorney-General, you have the floor.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Sir. Honourable Nawaikula unfortunately just focused on politicians, that is a kind of elitism. He, in fact, is only concerned about honourable Leader of the Opposition, honourable Reddy. These are the sort of well-known individual personalities. But FICAC has had a very successful run in respect of prosecuting a lot of business people who have actually corrupted civil servants. FICAC has prosecuted successfully many civil servants who have been corrupt, and if that prosecution has instilled a sense of fear in people to not be corrupt, not take bribes, not blackmail, then I think it is a good fear.

HON. GOVERNMENT MEMBER.- Hear, hear!

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- In the same way, we want people to be fearful that the law will come hard on them if they engage in domestic violence, if they rape, if they commit sexual assault. We want people to be fearful of the law, that they will face the full brunt of the law. There is nothing wrong in that fear because the law is there to deter people from not doing things they are not supposed to do. That is the fundamental basis of having a criminal justice system.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, the other point about saying “we are not a mature democracy”, “we cannot have this”. Let me take honourable Gavoka back to Singapore. Soon after Independence, when they had the slums in Singapore and all sorts of shenanigans where gangsters fight, you look at the history, it is very colourful; the communist party, when the trade unions were banned, amidst all these uncertainty, Lee Kuan Yew created the Corruption Commission, amidst of all that uncertainty. In fact, they had also some troubled years themselves, but they persevered with it.

Today, Singapore is one of the least corrupt countries in the world and coming along with that is the level of prosperity that Singapore has today, because it has built strong institutions even during phases when it was not very cool to do so, when people thought they were not mature. I think the only sign of maturity is that the immature outlook of how we should build these institutions.

HON. MEMBER.- Then do it.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Mr. Chairman, Sir, we need to have these institutions. Even so-called “mature democracies” like Australia, et cetera, they also have these Corruption Commissions. Hong Kong today has a Corruption Commission even though it was a colonial outpost of the British. In fact, Hong Kong was a very corrupt country. The equivalent of FICAC in Hong Kong came about only in the 1970s and 1980s. They set up a new body to be able to tackle corruption, so it is a good body. Of course, FICAC has its own ambit within which it can operate. It is not to be above the law itself, the very safeguards for it too.

So, Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would urge that honourable Nawaikula who seems to be reasonable since last night, if he could, please, reconsider this because it is not simply say, “Let us give it to the police.” There is a particular specialisation, FICAC, for example, does not go and prosecute in all criminal matters. So, Mr. Chairman, Sir, it is an institution that I think we need to continue with, thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, we will now vote on this amendment.

Votes cast:

Ayes	: 24
Noes	: 27

Motion is defeated.

Honourable Nawaikula, you have the floor for your second motion.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Thank you, in my second motion, I move that Head 18 be decreased by \$1.2 million in Programme 1, Activity 1, SEG 6 in relation to the Human Rights Commission.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- I second the motion, Mr. Chair.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Nawaikula, you have the floor.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Thank you, Mr. Chair. The purpose of the Human Rights Commission and Discrimination Commission as stated is to promote and protect the observance and respect for human rights in all spheres of life, and that has been a worthy role and purpose.

Back to the time when the Directorship was held by Dr. Shaista Shameem, everything was transparent, accountability was there, accounts were reported in time and it was fully audited, but under the present head, the role appears to have changed. Again, like FICAC, the current Commissioner sits safely like a dog and only comes out to bark to protect the Government. Only when Government interest is affected, the Human Rights Commission comes out to explain in public. There are lots and lots of instances where it has failed to stay and protect the rights of ordinary citizens.

One good example is when the military took away Ratu Apenisa from Bau. Anyone who knows human rights, we know that the only person who can make an arrest or deny the personal liberty of someone is the Police, and only if they suspect that he is about to commit a crime. That was a very clear sign where a breach of human rights was effected on an ordinary person, but the Commissioner was silent totally. So, basically there is no more need to have this Commission to be there, when it is not protecting the rights of ordinary citizens, but it is being a tool used by the State, thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Any further comments?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- I am just clarifying, Mr. Chair, Sir, this body is created under the Constitution, it has various constitutional provisions. It also helps us meet the Paris principles in respect of its independence, the funding for that is essential. I think the honourable Nawaikula has mistaken the Director as a Commissioner, he does not understand the difference. I assume he is talking about Mr. Ashwin Raj who is actually a Director, he is not a Commissioner.

Prior to his appointment as the Acting Chief Justice, Justice Kamal Kumar was made the Chair of the Commission. He is now going to relinquish that position very soon because he is now become the Acting Chief Justice, and someone else will be made the Chair. But he has also said that he is finishing off all the annual reports that are outstanding for the Human Rights Commission, and we hope to table that in Parliament very soon.

But I think it will be amiss to say just by using one particular example in which again, honourable Nawaikula has got his facts wrong, the Police actually were there at that particular incident that he is referring to, but not withstanding using one particular example, the reality of the matter is on a day-to-day basis, there are numerous complaints that the Human Rights Commission and the Anti-Discrimination Commission actually deal with, and there are individual complaints that does not come in to the Fiji Times or what have you. Again, they are not to do with elitism, elites, they are individual people from sexual harassment, to complaints about their employers, the way they get treated in shops, in pubs.

Recently, you would have seen that they are also issued a statement and also FCCC regarding advertising and saying you know only one ethnic group need to apply for a flat if you are advertising - all

those sorts of things they deal with on a daily basis. So, they do deal with a lot of daily issues that need to be addressed which are being addressed, I think this is quite amiss by using one example or just looking after the elites that you want to get rid of this institution or cut their funding because it is also constitutionally provided. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, we will now vote on this amendment.

Votes Cast:

Ayes : 24
Noes : 27

Motion is defeated.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, we will now vote on Head 13, the question is that the amount of Head 13 – Independent Commissions, be approved. Does anyone oppose the motion?

(Chorus of “Ayes” and “Noes”)

Votes Cast:

Ayes : 27
Noes : 24

The motion is, therefore, agreed to.

Head 13 agreed to.

Head 14 – Ministry of Disaster, Management and Meteorological Services.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, the floor is now open for any comments. Honourable Ratu Naiqama Lalabalavu, you have the floor.

HON. RATU N. LALABALAVU.- Thank you, Mr. Chair, I seek some clarification, Sir, regarding the core role of the Disaster Management Services given that now it is being amalgamated with the Meteorological Services, both have stand-alone legislations. What really is now the function of the Disaster Management Services, especially to do with rehabilitation? I find in the notes here that rehabilitation is missing. Secondly, Sir, why the core function is being asked here is because the understanding that we have is that, when there is a disaster, a declaration has to be made by the honourable Prime Minister, and then everything else kicks in, including rehabilitation.

On the most recent cyclone in Kadavu, and that of Yaqaga in Bua, I doubt if declarations were being made, yet rehabilitation kicked in and that caused a lot of confusion. That is the crux of my seeking the clarification, Sir, as to the functions now of this Disaster Management Services.

The third point I would like to raise regarding this clarification, Sir, is to do with this insurance cover that is now being promoted by COP 23 for the Region, how will that then be part of this disaster management? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you, Honourable Usamate?

HON. J. USAMATE.- Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. The disaster management component in my Ministry deals with it at the national level. The actual implementation of activities is still with the Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development, in terms of the emergency operational centres out in the various divisions. If Government sees that something happens that needs to be done, we do not have to wait for a declaration of a disaster for rehabilitation to take place.

HON. GOVERNMENT MEMBER.- Hear, hear!

HON. J. USAMATE.- Rehabilitation will take place, it is this Government's role to make sure that that rehabilitation takes place. In this, we can have access to the services of the military, services of my own Department of Works, and the Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development, we do not have to wait for that particular thing.

On the issue of insurance, I think the honourable Attorney-General should address the issue of insurance.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Mr. Chair, Sir, in respect to insurance, honourable Member, as you know that we have been trying to get an insurance product. We have never had an insurance product. We had the budgetary allocation to pay for the premium for low-income families.

We are working together with the World Bank. One of the problems of getting insurance cover for homes, in particular, after *TC Winston*, *TC Keni*, *TC Josie* and *TC Gita*, we talked about Help For Homes and Home Care Initiatives, obviously that kind of funding cannot be done on a sustainable basis year-in, year-out, if you have cyclones every year.

One of the problems of getting insurance cover is, there needs to be a minimum level of compliance in the way that the buildings are built because most of the buildings in the rural areas, in villages and in settlements or wherever it is, people simply put up their own house together and as you would have known in the Help for Homes, when we were giving out the funding through the cards, people were also given the plans as to how to build a proper structure. So, to get insurance companies to provide insurance cover, it becomes very difficult if you do not have minimum compliance standards. This is what we are trying to develop.

There was one product that the World Bank was making available to us but the amount payable was actually very low. We thought it was very low, it was only \$2,500 and they had to have proper data and they said that they will only provide insurance cover to registered farmers.

Obviously, as we know in Fiji, you and I can be a registered *dalo* farmer in one particular area and next to us are many farmers who are not registered farmers, maybe semi-commercial subsistence farmers. We do not want to get an insurance cover where only you and I would be covered and our neighbours will not be covered because that would be grossly unfair. We have gone back to them and this is one of the wonderful things about the COP 23 process that the Honourable Prime Minister was involved in, in some of the ongoing projects. We are currently also talking to some reinsurers because at the back of it all, are the reinsurers, they are the ones who fund it.

We have also been talking to the Insurance Council to see, for example, if they would say, "All right, if there are certain strappings, if every house has this particular strapping then we can provide them

with a cover, irrespective of whether they are registered farmers or not registered farmers.” So that is work-in-progress, and we hope to get some traction in respect of that space.

But just to also highlight to you, Honourable Member, you will see the actual rehabilitation works in Programme 1-1(10), where there is a funding of \$800,000. That is for immediate reaction to a particular disaster. But the rehabilitation proper itself gets assigned to the different Ministries. So, if the Honourable Minister, who is also the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport (MOIT), you will see that under the Department of Energy, he has got a lot of funding there in the 2019-2020 Budget for rehabilitation works for, for example, solar panels that are damaged, cables being damaged.

The Honourable Minister for Waterways and Rural and Provincial Development, you will see that he gets the funding for the rebuilding efforts, whether they be seawalls and other types of projects, so it is not all in here. This is more, as the Honourable Minister said, to deal with the disaster management upon its impact.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Honourable Gavoka, you have the floor to move your motion.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Thank you, Honourable Chairman. I move that:

SEG 10, relating to the Upgrade and Maintenance of Evacuation Centres, be increased by \$9 million to \$10.8 million.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Mr. Chairman, I second the motion.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- You have the floor, Honourable Gavoka.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Thank you, Honourable Chairman.

Honourable Chairman, during the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs scrutiny of the RBF Insurance Annual Report, the insurance underwriters expressed their concern that most of the evacuation centres around Fiji are not compliant. They cannot be insured because they do not meet certain standards, and I am suggesting here that this fund be used to strengthen all these evacuation centres all over Fiji, so that they can attract coverage from insurance and thereby, assure us of the safety of our people during times of cyclones.

Most of us live in very strong structures that can withstand cyclones and hurricanes, but when you are there, comfortable in your home, and the wind blowing with its fury and the roof is about to lift off, think of our people around Fiji in the outlying islands and everywhere, who have to run to a hall within the village or somewhere for shelter.

We remember, Honourable Chairman, some years ago, in the island of Vabea, Ono in Kadavu, I believe, where they ran to a church and the church collapsed and there were a number of fatalities. I, for one, always think of these people during times of cyclones.

Our Honourable Prime Minister has a high profile in climate change globally, and I think it behoves us to make sure that in whatever part of the island and country where people run to for shelter, that that shelter is strong; it can be insured.

It is ironical that a lot of these shelters were community halls built with the initiative of SVT and SDL, which FijiFirst promptly put to a stop. But now, they are relying on these village halls to be shelters during times of cyclones. So, Honourable Chairman, I believe we should all agree that we need to do this. The insurance community is suggesting that you do it and I think we should commit this kind of funds and start on the Programme of strengthening all these shelters across the country. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Minister, you have the floor.

HON. J. USAMATE.- Thank you, Chairman. I think we all agree that all of us felt in our heart for everyone who is affected by a national disaster, the need to look after the places where they go to. There has been a lot of investment on this over the past few years.

In the current Budget, there are four villages that are being addressed - Rokovuaka, Matala, Narikoso and Maumi Villages in Bau. In the next Budget year, there is actually another four projects.

One of the things that we have been doing over the past few years after *TC Winston*, we have been putting in cyclone resistant schools. So, in a lot of places, people actually go to these schools and these schools are built to Category 5 level. So it is not only the Evacuation Centres, it is not only the village halls, but also the schools that people can go to.

In the settlement that I was brought up in, in Wakanisila, there was a hall that was there, and I think it was donated by the Government at that particular time. But that evacuation center or hall if you go to is not safe, but what we need to do over time is make sure that we can invest in schools and in evacuation centres that can stand up to Category 5 cyclones, so we will continue to have the investment in the way that we are doing now.

Four projects will be taking place for the 2018-2019 Budget and there should be another four coming up in the New Year, but overtime, we will gradually get to all of them across Fiji.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, we will go to the vote on this amendment.

Question put.

Votes cast:

Ayes : 23

Noes : 28

Motion is defeated.

Honourable Members, I give the floor to the Honourable Bulitavu to move his motion.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Mr. Chairman, Sir, I move:

That Head 14-1-1(10) - Disaster Relief and Rehabilitation Fund (\$800,000), be increased by \$700,000.

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- I second the motion.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- You have the floor, Honourable Bulitavu.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Sir. The allocation for the previous budget on the same Activity under the same SEG was about \$1 million, but has been reduced by \$200,000, and now sits at \$800,000. Given the changing weather patterns and the various disasters that we face now, not only cyclones but other natural disasters that affect these flood-prone areas, there is poor relief efforts by Government, especially on the immediate help that is needed and assistance. I will give an example, like rations and other things that the victims in these areas would need immediately to secure them, so I think we need to increase this allocation, and that our citizens are safe and secure due to the changing weather patterns that we have. We know that Government is championing climate change and also to be resilient.

I think this is an area which, in the past, has exposed our vulnerability and our efforts in emergency situations where relief efforts had been slow and have affected rehabilitation, psychologically, people are put under trauma, and even they do not have an evacuation centre to run to.

Even Divisional Commissioners and other authorities, such as DISMAC or other bodies that come together during this time, their directions sometimes are quite late in the various schools that will be announced as evacuation centres and where they can get assistance from. This is a major problem and it happens by an act of nature and I think we should all increase this allocation by \$700,000, so that our people are not left behind.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Honourable Nawaikula, you have the floor.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask the question for the Honourable Minister to answer on whether a comprehensive survey or study of all the rural areas has been done to identify evacuation centres that can withstand climate change situations, like floods and cyclones in the whole of Fiji.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you.

HON. J. USAMATE.- I cannot give an answer, probably the former Minister might be able to give a response to that regarding the survey, I am not sure. I am telling you the truth, I am not too sure, but I will find out after this. Perhaps, the former Minister might be aware if there has been such a survey undertaken.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Sorry, what was your question again, may be I can help?

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Whether a comprehensive study has been done on rural areas to identify evacuation centres that can withstand floods and cyclones so that we know how many we need and how many targeted areas.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Generally, I think the way this is dealt with, if you look at the general pattern of cyclones, where it comes from, obviously *TC Winston* was a bit of an aberration, but you generally know the areas that are most vulnerable and those are areas where you put your resources into.

For example, in Navua, there will be schools that are always used as evacuation centres. Safer areas, you know, are used because they are on higher grounds, and that is where you put your efforts in and the Ministry obviously has that kind of data and list because the Ministry knows how or which centres are used for this.

I wanted to also clarify the fact about the Disaster Relief and Rehabilitation Fund (\$800,000). As you know, at the moment, we have a fund that is under the Prime Minister's Office, this has happened throughout all the different Prime Ministers.

We have an existing fund of \$3.8 million that is sitting in the Prime Minister's Disaster Relief Fund. So, because that fund sits there, that is immediately also used for immediate rehabilitation needs whether it is rations, et cetera, but also to inform and remind you as announced in the Budget that the Japanese have also offered us a stand-by arrangement at a 0.01 percent interest rate up to \$25 million for immediate relief funds. Obviously, we hope not to use that because generally we have seen that we do not tap into them but that is also another facility that is available. So, do not just look at the \$800,000 but also look at the \$3.8 million that is sitting in the Trust Fund.

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Mr. Chairman, Sir, through you, can I just add to the explanations given already by the two Ministers in terms of Evacuation Centres in the Act, and I will quote the 1998 Act because that Act is currently under review. We have what we call "Designated Evacuation Centres", those are the ones that are built to standard and mainly those are the ones particularly the secondary schools and Government facilities.

The problem that we have with community evacuation centres, those include those in the villages because under Self-Help Programme, most of the evacuation centres and churches that were built by previous governments, as was quoted by the Honourable Gavoka, that was built by the community. In some instances, I would probably say, in most instances, because the Government gave the two-thirds contribution to the communities, unfortunately some of those, because the carpenters have to provide or seek assistance from Government for the rural carpenters, those that were provided under the one-third, two-thirds Rural Self-Help Programme, unfortunately some were not built to the standard required. The advice that was always given from the Ministry of Rural Development when they go, they need to go and get the plan from the Ministry, because those plans, if the carpenters follow those plans, that is the standard that is required by them. So, that is the difficulty that we have in community evacuation centres which are mainly the churches and the community halls.

Can I just add to the question raised by the Honourable Ratu Lalabalavu on the Declaration, disaster periods are mainly just divided into three main categories; pre, emergency and post. The Declaration is necessary during the emergency period, and the main aim of the Declaration is for the provision of emergency activities, and while the Declaration, particularly, is about resources, the other one is about the passages; land routes, sea passages and air passages as well. That is why the Declaration is always given for the emergency period.

The current practice now, and that is perhaps some are questioning as to why the rehabilitation component is not left with the Ministry of Rural and Development or whichever ministry is responsible for that. The current practice now is, the regulatory role and the national command role is with the Ministry, but the implementation is with the Ministry of Rural Development because we use the Government machinery, but when it comes to post-disaster, and that is because when in an emergency period, we just look at the emergency relief and the initial recovery. The long term recovery is the rehabilitation phase but in most practices now, that role is assigned to the National Planning Office and the Ministry of Economy because that is a long term responsibility and those are the major changes now.

Now when we have disasters, we have the team from the World Bank that comes and does the assessments with us and they will make the recommendations as well. So, the long term recovery is always with National Planning and the Ministry of Economy. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, we will now vote on this amendment.

Votes cast:

Ayes : 24

Noes : 27

Motion is defeated.

Honourable Members, Programme 2 (Meteorological Services), Activity 1?

(Chorus of “Ayes” and “Noes”)

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Activity 2?

(Chorus of “Ayes” and “Noes”)

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Activity 3?

(Chorus of “Ayes” and “Noes”)

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Activity 4?

(Chorus of “Ayes” and “Noes”)

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Activity 5?

(Chorus of “Ayes” and “Noes”)

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, we will now vote on Head 14.

Question put.

The question is:

That the amount of Head 14 - Ministry of Disaster Management and Meteorological Services, be approved.

Does any Member oppose the motion?

(Chorus of “Ayes” and “Noes”)

Votes cast:

Ayes : 28

Noes : 23

The motion is, therefore, agreed to.

Head 14 agreed to.

Honourable Members, we will now suspend proceedings for lunch. Lunch is provided in the Big Committee Room. As being agreed to, we have lunch for an hour. We are adjourned.

The Parliament adjourned at 12.48 p.m.

The Parliament resumed at 2.04 p.m.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, we will continue from where we left off before lunch.

Head 15 – Ministry of Justice:

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, the floor is open for any comments. Programme 1 (Justice), Activity 1 (Administration).

(Chorus of “Ayes” and “Noes”)

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Adi Litia Qionibaravi, you have the floor.

HON. ADI L. QIONIBARAVI.- Thank you, Sir. Just seek a clarification from the Honourable Minister for Justice: Can the Honourable Minister advise whether staff establishment is being reduced by \$300,000 in SEG 1; what are the implications for the level of service offered by the Ministry in its offices around Fiji; What of their welfare and their family’s welfare; Are they prepared for redundancy? Thank you, Sir.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Mr. Chair, Sir, we have already mentioned this, and we have already been over this before, there are no redundancies. As highlighted again, you should have come to the workshop. If you had come to the workshop you would have understood that there are certain vacant positions, certain positions have not been filled and thus the reduction.

HON. ADI L. QIONIBARAVI.- Thank you, Honourable Attorney-General and Minister for Justice. If I had come to the workshop, I would still ask the same questions.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- You could have clarified at the workshop, you could have smoothed the time here.

HON. ADI L. QIONIBARAVI.- No, we had other things to do, Honourable Minister.

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Yes, unfortunately.

HON. ADI L. QIONIBARAVI.- Mr. Chair, can the Honourable Minister clarify why the Ministry of Justice has an allocation for Anti-Corruption Activities in SEG 7 of \$50,000 when this is more appropriately carried out by the Fiji Independent Commission Against Corruption (FICAC).

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Mr. Chair, Sir, this is to do with the policy issues pertaining to Anti-Corruption. It also caters for the National Anti-Money Laundering Council meetings that we have. There is a National Anti-Money Laundering Council Meeting, but Fiji has highlighted previously in Parliament perhaps the Honourable Member maybe we mentioned this in the last term of Parliament, Fiji also does get invited to attend what we call assessments or peer reviews of other countries.

When Fiji ratified United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC), Fiji volunteered to be peer-reviewed by other countries to see a compliance with UNCAC. So, the first two countries that came and peer-reviewed Fiji was USA and Bangladesh. What they normally do is they tie up a developing country with a developed country and we have France and various other countries. So, Fiji now also gets invited to peer review other countries too in terms of their compliance. So, this \$50,000, in fact, which is a reduction from the \$100,000 addresses those issues. For example, in terms of our peer review programme, in terms of our Anti-Money Laundering Council Meetings that are being held or any workshops, et cetera, that we may hold in respect to Anti-Corruption policy issues, it is not prosecution or anything like that, it is to do with policy framework.

HON. ADI L. QIONIBARAVI.- Thank you, Honourable Minister.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Ro Filipe Tuisawau, you have the floor.

HON. RO F. TUISAWAU.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a point of clarification regarding the Honourable Minister for Economy's explanation on the workshop. The workshop is his forum to explain the Budget. Parliament is a forum where we, as Members of the Opposition, representing the people will question the Budget. We do that in front of the people because we are accountable to them, we are not accountable to him or his Government. We are accountable to the people and that is why we have to discuss this openly so that the people can see and hear the explanation and understand the Budget. That is the main purpose of it here.

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. RO F. TUISAWAU.- So the workshop cannot be used as an excuse not to clarify. Thank you.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Mr. Chair, Sir, I do not know why the Honourable Member is always so paranoid, please, get rid of your paranoia. We have been facilitating (Honourable Tabuya, you are not in a position to talk) this workshop for the past couple of years, you were not here previously, Honourable Tuisawau, where some Members of your Party attended those workshops, some of them, where they could ask questions to clarify that, because some of the questions that are being asked here are essentially functional type of questions. You, of course, had questioned the amounts, there is no doubt about that, no one is denying you that.

What I am saying is that, if you attended the workshop, you would understand the rationale for some of the allocations and why certain things are worded in a particular manner. I have had to ask in the previous Head the same question four times. Of course, everything is wrong with that. It means your level of comprehension is not there firstly, and secondly, you would have understood the concept. We are not here to twiddle our thumbs.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, before we move on to Programme 1, Honourable Qionibaravi, you have a motion, you can move your motion now.

HON. ADI L. QIONIBARAVI.- Mr. Chairman, I just have another matter to clarify with the Honourable Minister for Justice, please, before I move my motion.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Member, you have the floor.

HON. ADI L. QIONIBARAVI.- It is regarding the Digitisation Programme, Honourable Minister (\$1.04 million in the 2019-2020 Estimates); can the Minister inform the House as to the progress of the Digitisation Project since it commenced in 2017? With the contractor carrying out this work, what is the progress of the work? We will be interested in the progress of the expenditure in the last year, the allocation of \$1 million and the previous allocation of \$1.7 million. Has there been a performance audit? Thank you.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Mr. Chair, Sir, this digitisation obviously, as the Honourable Member would know, as she is a lawyer that, for example, if you go to the Titles Office

HON. ADI L. QIONIBARAVI.- You do not have to.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- No, if you go to the Titles Office, you know, because a lot of people do not go to Titles Office, but lawyers go to the Titles' Office that you will find all the titles in Fiji dating back to pre-Independence days that were issued are all physically kept. So, they have a title this big or this small, with different variations, they have never been captured digitally. One of the ways to preserve these records because if the building catches fire then the records would go forever, would disappear. One of the processes of digitization is to actually get these documents actually stored, digitally, and preserved digitally, like you go to the Archives to store these things digitally.

So, what we have done with this is that, we have actually hired project officers who work in shifts to be able to digitise these records. We have actually reduced the sum because there is, obviously, quite a lot of it has been digitised but now as you know, we work with the SCE to be able to ensure that it will fit in to a system, so that is what is being worked through.

You will see under the Department of Communications where we have got the Digital Fiji Program where the bulk of the funding is, that is part and parcel of developing all the different portals. This was specifically hiring university students and various other people to work. They are working in two shifts essentially to record this.

Just for your information, some of these documents are so large, they do not even have scanners that big to be able to scan them. That is one of the problem areas we have had to deal with and we are going through that process because as laborious as it is, we have to do this because once it is digitised, then a lawyer from the comfort of their office, will be able to go online and be able to search their documents and, of course, things like caveats; removal of caveats, will be put on instantaneously.

As you know, at the moment, you can, for example, go to court and get an order to put a caveat and by the time you actually might get it lodged two or three days later, a transaction can take place notwithstanding the fact that you have got a court order three days before that. This is to actually enable a system that can be instantaneously kept or caught.

HON. ADI L. QIONIBARAVI.- Thank you very much, Honourable Minister for Justice, for that explanation. My question is: has it been completed?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Obviously not, because we have got to seek some allocation for that.

HON. ADI L. QIONIBARAVI.- Thank you.

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- Sir, just an enquiry regarding SEG 6, Subscription to Asia Pacific Group on Money Laundering, this allocation has increased. Can we just get a detail whether we are now subscribing to that Money Laundering Group?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- No, because the subscription has actually increased.

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- Yes, details of this subscription?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- The Subscription to Asia Pacific Group on Money Laundering (\$20,000): AUD\$12,000 (which we have to pay) which was about \$18,800, then you have the transfer of fees, et cetera, so \$20,000 has been allocated for it.

HON. ADI L. QIONIBARAVI.- Honourable Chair, another question for the Minister regarding the Consumer Tribunal allocation of \$200,000; 2019-2020 Estimates, Programme 1, Activity 1 - SEG 7. Can the Minister, please, inform this House as to the progress of the establishment of the Tribunal given that the funds have been allocated for this purpose over the last few years? Thank you.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Yes, we are obviously very keen to ensure that this Tribunal is put in place and we hope to put that to all the functions of the Tribunal are in place. There are obviously certain laws that need to be adhered to in the framework, but we have to have this up and running in this financial year.

HON. ADI L. QIONIBARAVI.- Mr. Chairman, can I, please, move my motion now?

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Yes, your motion on Activity 1, SEG 7, you have the floor.

HON. ADI L. QIONIBARAVI.- My motion is that, under Head 15, Programme 1, Activity 1, SEG 7, that we leave out or remove the \$50,000 allocated for Anti-Corruption Activities, we left out of Head 2 in respect of Anti-Corruption Activities (\$50,000).

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- I second the motion, Mr. Chair, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- You have the floor, Honourable Qionibaravi.

HON. ADI L. QIONIBARAVI.- Thank you, Sir, I have already explained the reason for this motion (\$50,000) for the Activities that have been described by the Minister. We think that it is appropriate that it be allocated under the FICAC provision. It should be removed from this provision under the Judiciary Department or Ministry to the FICAC budget. Thank you, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, we will vote on this amendment.

Votes Cast.

Ayes : 23
Noes : 27

Motion is defeated.

Programme 2 – Correction Services:

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- Sir, a verification on the Programme 2, Activity 1, the same amount on SEG 5. I just want a clarification from the Minister regarding the expenses for the Parole Board. I do not see it in these expenses, maybe you can give the direction as to where has it now been relocated to – Parole Board Expenses?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- This is SEG 5, is it?

MR. CHAIRMAN.- SEG 5?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- What about SEG 5?

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- There is no Parole Board Expenses listed in there. Last year, there was a Parole Board Expenses, where is it this year?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Well, we have not got it up and running fully completely. We have got some work to do in respect of that and we do not believe that there is any funding required for that. We need to complete some of the preliminary work regarding that and once it is done, then we will be allocating funds for it.

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- So nothing this year?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- No, no money.

HON. SPEAKER.- Activity 2?

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- On Emoluments, for the Minister for Economy, when was the last time the Fiji Correctional Officers got an increment?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- I do not have the exact date for you. But we know that they did go through their Job Evaluation Exercise (JEE), but I can get back to you on the date regarding that.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- We want to move a motion, if you can increase that SEG, Mr. Chairman, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Bulitavu, you have a motion.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Thank you, Mr. Chair, Sir. I move that Head 15 on Programme 2, Activity 2, SEG 1 – Personal Emoluments for Correctional Officers in their various penal institutions that their emoluments and salary be increased by a sum of \$2 million, given that they have been left out.

The Police and the Military and the other civil servants have had their pay increment promised in the last few Budgets and the Fiji Correctional Officers have been left out, as I have said.

Also, the Honourable Minister has assured us just a few minutes ago that he does not have the figures of the last time when they had a pay increase. But given the job that they do and the various duty rosters that they fill in, the start-up salary for a Correctional Officer being about \$11,000 per annum and can go up to the next level at \$14,000 - \$18,000; the hard work that they do and dealing with criminals; also the time spent in the facilities, they do not have enough family time too and also they do not have other benefits like After-Care Fund.

They do not go through any kind of counselling and most of them when they retire, there is nothing, they cannot go into other career paths given that is the only path that they have at the moment, and given the reasons that I have stated, they really need a pay rise. I move this motion on those grounds.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Mr. Chair, Sir, just in case somebody gets misled by Honourable Bulitavu, he does have a tendency of doing that. The JEE was actually carried out for all branches of the Disciplined Forces.

The JEE was for the RFMF, Fiji Police Force and the Fiji Corrections Services, therefore it is untrue of you to say that only the RFMF and the FPF had their JEE, it is untrue. The \$2 million allocation that he is talking about, he is saying will help alleviate them find jobs once they leave the FCS. Well, no, it will not. That is a different matter altogether. Career paths after you retire is a different matter altogether.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the only caution that I would like to give is that, obviously he has the right to move the motion, but he has not said how he is going to distribute that \$2 million; who will get what proportion of that; which rank; what will be the starting rank? He has just plucked a figure out of thin air - \$2 million, without extrapolating it on the number of people employed and what are the different salaries they will get?

The other point that I would also like to make, Mr. Speaker, Sir, we have in recent times also, as you would know, I hope he is not responding to vote-bank that he thinks he has. The Extra Duty Allowance actually has been given; Lodging Allowance, all these allowances for the past number of years have been improved, and the quality of the quarters, et cetera, has also been improved, Mr. Chairman, Sir. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, we will vote on this motion. Is it your motion?

HON. ADI L. QIONIBARAVI.- No, I thought you had asked us to vote for the whole Head, my mistake.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- We will vote on this amendment.

(Chorus of “Ayes” and “Noes”)

Votes cast:

Ayes	:	23
Noes	:	27
Not Voted	:	1

Motion is defeated.

Honourable Members, Activity 2 - Penal Institutions. Honourable Bulitavu, you have the floor, you have the motion.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Sir. I move that Head 15, Programme 2, Activity 2, SEG 5, in terms of Farm Upkeep (\$120,000), to be increased by \$50,000.

HON. ADI L. QIONIBARAVI.- I second the motion, Mr. Chairman.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- The reason to increase that by \$50,000 is that, in the previous allocation it was \$120,000 in the last Budget and still remains. But, this is a very key component of the Fiji Corrections Service, especially the Penal Institutions, where they survive on farmers, and also the upkeep of farms and the farm equipment.

One of the biggest problems that they faced now is the unavailability of farming tools and the various machines, some of which are not in working order, some are still under repair. Various requests that have been coming to the Headquarters, in terms of equipment to enable inmates to participate in those farm activities. I think there needs to be an increase in that for the various activities that are carried out according to the various rehabilitation programs that run together too with the idea of having farms. *Vinaka vakalevu.*

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, we will vote on this amendment.

Question put.

(Chorus of "Ayes" and "Noes")

Votes cast:

Ayes	:	22
Noes	:	28
Not Voted	:	1

Motion is defeated.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Thank you.

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- Mr. Chairman, a point of clarification under Head 15, Programme 2, Activity 2, SEG 7, regarding the Poverty Alleviation Programme (\$100,000). We have received reports from some former female inmates who have been struggling to gain access to this Programme and would love to start-up businesses in Agriculture and the like. The question for the Minister is, what is the full report on the number of inmates that have received help under this Programme. On ensuring gender equality, have the female inmates also given priority like the male inmates, I am just seeking clarification from the Minister? Thank you.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- I can give you some of the core details: the inmates that are on release are entitled to a maximum of \$1,000 for any project which will improve their standard of living and enhance stability in their lives. It is provided only to inmates who have exhibited the desire to change and have expressed good behaviour. They have all undertaken the rehabilitation programme whilst being

incarcerated relevant to their offending behaviour, and they should undergo business training before released under the National Centre for Small and Micro Enterprises Development (NCSMED) Programme, of course, as you know, we have a Bill. The National Centre for Small and Micro Enterprises Development (NCSMED) Programme will now go through the Ministry of Industry and Trade where they specialize in, we have got a Committee in place for that. This is the synergy that is drawn between them. There are some offenders, of course, as it says, we need to show some form of inclination that you will be successful, there are some people who are completely unremorseful of what they have done, and they come out with wrong attitude, et cetera. The idea is to help those who want to be helped and they go through a particular training.

In respect of gender parity, obviously it is to do with on a merit basis. There could be female inmates who may not be interested at all, so we cannot force them to be interest in it, it is up to the individual to make a choice. A lot of people actually whilst incarcerated have shown a lot of interest. As you know that opposite Korovou, we have the Art Gallery also, a lot of prisoners participate in that. They actually earn an income whilst they are incarcerated. We have the tourist boats; the tour trips being taken. The tourist in tour boats they actual purchase them, that money is kept for them when they actually get released and they take that money with them. They may also be, for example, if you have been drawing and being an artist, we give you money to buy material upon your release. So, these are the kind of things that we do to assist. Are you consulting the expert?

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Honourable Members, there is a motion. Honourable Bulitavu you have the floor.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- I just want to ask a clarification first, Sir, before I move that motion regarding SEG 5, Bakery (\$80,000): Is that for the baking materials or bakery maintenance?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- It is the supply of smaller stoves and ovens to smaller institutions to enhance the skilling of inmates in small scale baking, places like Ba, Taveuni and various other places. If there are inmates there, we get smaller ovens, et cetera, where they get the experience. We want them to go around and startup businesses.

But, I have to say, Mr. Chairman, Sir, this has worked well, in particular to the Yellow Ribbon Project. We have a number of people that have actually gone on to become very successful and this is completely indicated through the rate of the recidivism that has dropped dramatically in Fiji. At one point in time, it used to be 50 per cent, now it is in single digit numbers.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Honourable Bulitavu, you have the floor for your motion.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir. I move that Head 15-2-2(5) in terms of ration, it is increased by \$500,000.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- This is for the dogs.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Activity 2(5), the other ration, not the dog ration, the inmate ration (\$2,100,000).

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Mr. Chairman, just to inform the honourable Member, this is actually an increase. This has increased from this year's budget, it was \$1.9 million, we have now

increased it by another \$200,000, that is why it has increased to \$2.1 million. The ration has actually increased to what it was.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- I understand that it has increased from \$1.9 million to \$2.1 million, the issue I would like to raise is that the ration is different from various panel institutions. For example, the Suva Correction Services, they do not have plantations, they only eat bread, dhal and soup, compared to Nasinu or Naboro, they will have cassava, dalo, and greens, they have options.

Also, towards the end of the last quarter of every financial year, I think the last two months, the bakery at Naboro has not been working and the inmates have not been supplied bread. They have been eating cassava in the morning and also at lunch time, probably there is poor planning or there is not enough supply of flour or sharp.

One of the common reasons given to centres like Nasinu, Suva, by the Naboro bakery people is that there is not enough budget to buy the flour, and this normally happens towards the end of the financial year. Probably, the honourable Minister can look at how the inmates are properly kept and properly fed. *Vinaka vakalevu.*

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, we will vote on this amendment.

Question put.

(Chorus of “Ayes” and “Noes”)

Votes Cast:

Ayes	:	22
Noes	:	26
Not voted	:	3

Motion is defeated.

Honourable Members, there is a further motion. The Honourable Mosese Bulitavu, you have the floor.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Thank you, Mr. Chair, Sir. Head 15-2-2(7), Rehabilitation Programme, to be increased by \$100,000.

HON. ADI L. QIONIBARAVI.- I second the motion, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- You have the floor, honourable Bulitavu.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, this is a very important Programme, Rehabilitation Programme for Penal Institutions for Fiji Correction Services, it sits at \$200,000. Last year, it was \$200,000 and again this year. This is a very important allocation because it is the Rehabilitation Programme for inmates, not only on the yellow ribbon part but on various things to reduce recidivism as the honourable Minister had alluded to, and the work that the inmates can come and do after they are

released from prison. Most of the training certification and those types of training can be done while they are still inmates.

We have a school at Nasinu Correction Service. They have been providing training such as musical training and other automotive training but again there is no certification. How will they find jobs when they come out of prison, and the accreditation of the school which will help them come out to set up businesses and to become law-abiding citizens. I think there needs to be more money poured into this particular Programme to enable the Rehabilitation Programmes to open up into other fields and not only limited to tailoring, bakery, screen-writing, engineering or music but to other aspects of musical and other talents that the inmates have. It will allow more research by Fiji Corrections Service to get in the right products for rehabilitation that will suit our inmates and also our industrial needs when they come out of prison. *Vinaka vakalevu.*

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Honourable Members, we will vote on this amendment.

Question put.

(Chorus of “Ayes” and Noes”)

Votes Cast:

Ayes	:	22
Noes	:	27
Not Voted	:	2

Motion is defeated.

Honourable Members, Parliament will now vote on Head 15.

Question put.

The Question is:

That the amount of Head 15 - Ministry of Justice, be approved.

Does any Member oppose?

(Chorus of “Ayes” and “Noes”)

Votes Cast:

Ayes	:	27
Noes	:	22
Not Voted	:	2

The motion is, therefore, agreed to.

Head 15 agreed to.

Head 16 - Ministry of Communications:

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, the floor is now open for any comments on Head 16-1-1.

HON. M.R. LEAWARE.- Mr. Chairman, a clarification on Programme 1-1(5) - Advertising Cost (\$100,000). Can we have clarification from the Honourable Minister, what is that for?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Mr. Chairman, Sir, as you know that the Department of Information within the Ministry of Communications is the key Department that gives out Government messages, so when we advertise whether it is for jobs or various other Government messages, when we have to pay for various costs associated with them, that is where that money comes from, essentially, to pay the media outlets where we advertise through, or magazines or whatever.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Ro Tuisawau, you have the floor.

HON. RO F. TUISAWAU.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a clarification on Programme 1-1(5) - Constitution Day (\$150,000). Could you clarify on the use of that and suggest that that also includes all democratically-formulated Constitution?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member should know when you have a Constitution in place, that is the only Constitution that you have a Constitution Day for. You do not have it for any other Constitution, but the Constitution that is there. So that addresses the second part of the issue. The cost is there obviously for expenses related to Constitution Day. We had it for the first time. As you know, we had independent celebrations and Constitution Day for the first time in Vanua Levu, the main national celebration was held there, of course, this cost here caters for that. We bring a lot of school children in and this year, obviously, it will not be in Labasa but we will find another location to do that.

HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- Korovou.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Gavoka, you have an amendment here, you have the floor.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, I move a motion:

That Head 16-1-1(5) – Qorvis Communications, the allocation of \$1 million be removed.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Mr. Chairman, I second the motion.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- You have the floor, Honourable Member.

HON.V.R. GAVOKA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, Qorvis is an aberration in today's Fiji. It was a creature of the 2006 *coup*, and I think they have overstayed their welcome and it is about time that we send them packing and use the PR companies that are Fiji-based.

We have qualified people to handle public relations for anyone and we are sending the wrong message to our public relations community that we are relying on a company that has a profile that is associated with GASPO all over the world. They prop up some very questionable characters all over the world and they make them look good with their PR, and I do not think there is a place for them in Fiji.

We have three Universities here who are providing trainings on high qualified people and our own people can handle the public relations that we need to keep our populace informed of governmental activities. Mr. Chairman, I think it is about time we say goodbye to Qorvis and remove this \$1 million from the allocation. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Honourable Lynda Tabuya.

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I would just like to add to the debate and ask the Honourable Minister to clarify why Qorvis Communications wrote to him on 1st February, 2017 offering their services for COP 23 Secretariat, even before the COP 23 Bill was enacted on 9th February, 2019 and before the 23rd August, 2017 approval for waiver of the Procurement Regulations for the contract, he then signed with Qorvis in September 2017. Can he provide clarification on that?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Sorry, I

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- If he was listening instead of chatting

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- I wasn't actually, that is why I'm asking you to say it.

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- I have said it, do you need me to repeat?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Whoa, I was not listening to you.

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- I was asking you the clarification.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- I did not hear you.

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- So do you need me to repeat it and you will listen?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Yes.

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- Thank you. Now, can the Honourable Minister clarify why Qorvis Communications wrote to him on 1st February 2017, offering their services for COP 23 Secretariat even before the COP 23 Bill was passed on 9th February 2019, and before the 23rd August 2017 approval for waiver of the Procurement Regulations for the contract he then signed with Qorvis in September of that same year? Thank you.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Mr. Chairman, Sir, I have already been down this path. There was a question asked in respect of this, and I have already addressed this issue previously in the session of Parliament. This \$1 million obviously has got nothing to do with COP 23.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Member, we are talking about SEG 5 - Qorvis Communications on this amount, not what about what happened in 2017. Honourable Pio Tikoduadua, you have the floor.

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to contribute to the motion by Honourable Gavoka to remove Qorvis Communications' allocation of \$1 million. Obviously, Mr. Chairman, the reason I say this is, I would rather that this amount of money goes to the Ministry of Health and fix CWM Hospital. Seriously, Honourable Chairman, because it is no justification to make Government look good under these funds when the reality of that door needs to be fixed. So, I know they are playing it down but that is the reality, they cannot fix it within 16 months.

So, a million dollars for Qorvis will not make that door good, it is the impression. Any amount of making Government look good, these million dollars will not fix. So, I would rather it goes to the Ministry of Health, fix the door at CWM Hospital which cannot be closed, and send them back to America.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, we will vote on this amendment.

Question put.

Votes cast:

Ayes	:	23
Noes	:	27
Not voted	:	1

Motion is defeated.

Honourable Members, there is another motion. The Honourable Qionibaravi, you have the floor to move your motion.

HON. ADI L. QIONIBARAVI.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Sir. My motion is on Head 16-1-1(6). I would like to move:

That Head 16 be decreased by \$17,000 for the Contribution to Asia Pacific Institute of Broadcasting and Development.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- I second, Mr. Chairman, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- You have the floor, Honourable Qionibaravi.

HON. ADI L. QIONIBARAVI.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Sir. There is an allocation at SEG 6 - Contribution to Asia Pacific Institute of Broadcasting and Development (\$17,000). From past events, the APIBD, and local lead is usually FBC and not so much CFL or Fiji Village.

Can the Honourable Minister, please, clarify because this is surely an expense that FBC can absorb on its own accord and not the taxpayers? This is why I am moving that SEG 6, under that allocation, be decreased by \$17,000.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Mr. Chairman, Sir, so we will be speaking on the motion?

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Yes.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- The Honourable Member's rationale for removing this is apparent that this is only benefitted by FBC. This is actually a contribution by the Fijian Government to be a member as a subscription to the APIBD.

Now, Fiji TV also participates in this. Other organisations can participate in that, it is their choice, but I can tell you, Fiji TV, the CEO of Fijian Holdings has been going and attending this. So, I do not know where you get your information from.

This organisation, Mr. Chairman, Sir, last year we had a meeting on climate change regarding broadcasting and we are currently positioning ourselves to have one of the largest gatherings of this organisation by 2021-2022. So, there is a lot of benefits also to the other media organisations if they want to participate, and it is up to them and they pay their own cost.

This is simply the Fijian Government's subscription to this particular organisation which gives a lot of benefit, a lot of training, there is a lot of connectivity and synergies that develop with other broadcasters in the Asia Pacific Region.

HON. ADI L. QIONIBARAVI.- Through you, Mr. Chairman, are you saying then that the Fiji Government is also providing the similar amount to Fiji TV?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- This money is not for FBC or Fiji TV. This is a subscription to the Asia Pacific Institute of Broadcasting and Development - a subscription to the organisation. When we pay the subscription, then other media organisations can also take advantage of that.

HON. ADI L. QIONIBARAVI.- Yes, we are not sure whether other media organisations are taking advantage of that or if they know about it.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- I have been telling you that Fiji Television has been going. It is up to the other media organisations whether they want to take advantage of it. We cannot force them to go.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, we will vote on this motion.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- No, come on!

Votes cast:

Ayes : 23

Noes : 26
Not Voted : 2

Motion is defeated.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Qionibaravi, you have the floor on a motion.

HON. ADI L. QIONIBARAVI.- Mr. Chairperson, I would like to move a motion to remove the \$39.1 million for the Digital Government Transformation which is that initiative by Singapore Enterprise Corporation.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- I second, Mr. Chair, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Member, we do not have that motion.

HON. ADI L. QIONIBARAVI.- But I have handed in two motions, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- I only have one here – Head 16.

HON. ADI L. QIONIBARAVI.- I will write another one but I had handed in two motions.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Programme 3, Activity 1. Honourable Gavoka, you have the floor on an amendment.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Thank you, Honourable Chair. Honourable Chair, I move that the Support for Local Movie and Literary Production amounting to \$150,000 be taken away.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- I support the motion, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- You have the floor, Honourable Gavoka.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Thank you, Honourable Chair. This is an item that I always highlighted over the years that we should have our own production of local movies, with our television stations.

I am part of the Economic Affairs Committee and the Annual Reports on the FBC will be coming to Parliament soon. I have always tried to prevail on the leadership of FBC to start producing local contents to the same degree as *Shortland Street*, *Archana* which are very popular with our people. We should have local productions. We have always been told that it is too costly that we still do not have the resources, but I think with Fiji Audio Visual Commission (FAVC)) now attracting a lot of production in this country, we can secure that know-how and I believe that there is also a department in FNU now that is on Creative Arts which can take in and train our local people in creating TV programmes with local contents. We can include in those programmes local issues in such a way to address social issues like teenage pregnancy, drug addiction, bullying in schools. It can all be woven into a storyline that can run consistently.

I think the time has come to do that and with Fiji Broadcasting Corporation (FBC), Honourable Chair, the Public Service Broadcast Fee is about \$11 million. In the 2017 Annual Report, they reported a profit of \$6.9 million. In the operation of FBC, the total income they make every year is about \$22 million, of that \$11 million comes from the Public Service Broadcast from which they made a profit of \$6.7

million. So, while they have built a very strong organisation, I think the organisation is now equipped to start producing local television programmes that could rival or the equal of *Shortland Street* or *Archana* and all that. They will be very popular and at the same time, addressing some of the key issues that are affecting the country.

I was in this House, Honourable Chair, I brought out the example of the *Bill Cosby Show*. You will remember that the *Bill Cosby Show* that ran in the '90s or '80s in America. I know Bill Cosby is in prison because of certain things and I was ridiculed for that. Why would a Parliamentarian would be bringing up Bill Cosby but that show ran for almost 20 years in the United States and Black Americans have been known to say that they went to university because they wanted to be like Dr. Huxtable and his wife, the lawyer. That programme made an impact on the lives of many black people and they are going to university because of that, I am thinking about something similar that can be done here and I believe FBC is up to the task, together with the local university and FAVC. Therefore, I am saying they are now fully equipped to do it and we do not need

This \$150,000 is a pittance, and I think it is wrongly placed. It should be in the court of FBC. Thank you, Chair.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Nawaikula.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- I wish to make a brief comment to support the motion because I see the need to empower local talents. I think we have much better actors and comedians here than there are in *Shortland Street*.

(Laughter)

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- ... comedy, comedians, and I am disappointed that television has been with us for nearly 20 years now and not a single station (FBC and TV One included), has been able to produce totally new local content using local production and local artists.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Honourable Adi Teimumu Kepa.

HON. RO T.V. KEPA.- Yes, Honourable Chair, before I ask my question on the same SEG, I would like to also support that motion and also factor in how students in schools are looking at local productions of movies and maybe this can be factored into that because some of them have very great talent which probably will not go anywhere without any assistance in allocations like this. So, I would like to support also that motion before I go on to my question. Thank you, Honourable Chair.

Can I ask the question now?

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Yes, you have the floor.

HON. RO T.V. KEPA.- Thank you, Honourable Chair. This is also on SEG 7 - Internet Connectivity for Schools, if there can be a clarification on that \$200,000 allocation, whether it is going to

be trialled first before it is taken Fiji-wide or how is it going to be allocated and addressed? Thank you, Honourable Chair.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Mr. Chair, Sir, to answer the question, Honourable Kepa, please, know that this started about five years ago. The first one I remember, there were three schools launched simultaneously on the same day, the Honourable Prime Minister went to Suva Sangam School; it was launched simultaneously in Levuka; and then in Ra on the same day. This is an ongoing programme where we go to the schools and do the following:

- identify the schools;
- buy them computers;
- give them scanners;
- give webcams;
- connect them to the internet; and
- pay for the internet connectivity. (The condition though is that when the schools use it during the school hours, they have to leave it open for the community that lives around the school.)

In many of the rural areas, farming areas, village settings, et cetera, they have to live it open till a particular period of time. In fact, in some of the schools have said to us, “We will only leave it open if you provide a security guard”, and in fact we have also done that. Farmers, et cetera, or people living in that area can come and use it, so we are now seeing a huge influx of people who previously did not use computers, even some people of your ilk in the same vintage as yours, Honourable Kepa, who never have used a computer before, are now using those computers because they know that they can make a free phone call, for example, on Skype and speak to someone, so that is what we have done, it has been trialled for the past four or five years.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Member, you have the floor.

HON. RATU T.N. NAVURELEVU.- Programme 3, Activity 1, SEG 7, just one clarification from the Minister, Honourable Chairman, regarding Internet Connectivity for Schools. Does this allocation include the bills with the set which has been centrally installed in the rural schools?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- No, that is a separate allocation. If you look in that SEG, you see there are two connections, one is called, “Tele-centers” (which I spoke about earlier on) and then you have “Internet Connectivity for Schools”, so this is something that we are in fact essentially expanding on.

The Internet Connectivity for Schools essentially are for many rural schools that actually do not have any internet connectivity at all. We are getting them to have internet connectivity. In some of those areas we are using the *Walesi* platform, we have to use satellite technology to connect them. So, you could have some village in some cove in Kadavu somewhere, where there is no frequency. So, we use satellite technology to connect the school to the platform and then they can get connectivity. You have then the Tele-centers which focus on schools where there would be already connectivity frequency in that area, but we give internet connectivity specifically for the schools with the equipment.

HON. RATU T.N. NAVURELEVU.- Is there any initiative in terms of supplementing the bills for the *Very Small Aperture Terminals* (VSATs)? I understand that through the generosity of the Prime Minister during his last visit, several schools in the Northern Division were being installed with VSATs and only a few months, the operation closed down because of the bills incurring almost \$2,000. The operation is now not working.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- What we are trying to do, Honourable Member, is through this platform that we are using now in particular, the *Walesi* platform, that will be an issue of the past. We are trying to get this to be able to replace that.

HON. RATU T.N. NAVURELEVU.- All right.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- So we will progressively be able to implement this across all the schools in Fiji.

HON. RATU T.N. NAVURELEVU.- *Vinaka*.

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- Clarification.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Lynda Tabuya, you have the floor.

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- Mr. Chairman, thank you. Honourable Minister, just a clarification on the same point about Internet Connectivity for Schools.

On my recent visit to my village in Kadavu, there is only coverage for Digicel in most of the areas in Kadavu and the schools nearby do not have access to this connectivity because of Digicel not having this benefit here. What are the plans for Digicel also, especially for these rural areas that only have Digicel and not Vodafone to be able to also have this service for them because they do not have them at the schools in my village?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- So you are saying what - the school in the village does not get connectivity because?

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- They can only access Digicel ...

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Yes.

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- ... and because they are not getting connectivity, as a result that they have other schools that can connect to Vodafone and they can get Vodafone connectivity, but not through Digicel. It is currently a problem for the school, especially Tiliva District School and Kadavu Provincial Secondary School. They have only Digicel access and it is intermittent because they are relying on the tower in Vabea in Ono, but they do not have access to Vodafone and they find that they are not being able to asking clarification whether they are also going to be entitled to this connectivity service for the schools.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- All right, let me just give two ways where you can get connected to the internet:

1. Obviously through mobile broadband. These things, we have what we call “mobile broadband”, you can get connected through data, through a mobile broadband. Generally, of course, if you get connectivity to 4G, the speed is a lot faster, your upload time, download, et cetera, it is a lot faster, so that is through mobile broadband.
2. The other one, of course, is that we can get internet connectivity through satellite connectivity - that is the other way of dealing with it.

You may have heard that in other times in Parliament, we have also mentioned that there is what we call a “Universal Service Access Fund”. Mobile phone companies have to give a certain percentage of their profit to Telecommunication Authority of Fiji (TAF). By law, those funds are then used to identify what we call “brown spots”, what you were saying “intermittent connectivity”, which we call “brown spot areas”, then you have what we call the “black spot areas” where you get no connectivity at all.

So, what we do, we sit down with the mobile phone companies and say to them, “Look, there is no connectivity here, we are going to use part of this trust funds to put towers in different places, so people can get connectivity”. Because as you would know, from a commercial perspective, a lot of mobile phone companies what they do is they cherry-pick. They only put towers where there is a lot of traffic or a lot of people, so they get a quick return on their investment.

If you have a village with only 50 people in it, and you have to spend \$2 million to put up a tower, they would genuinely be very reluctant to do so, because they do not get a return on their investment, they are running a business. That is where this universal service access fund comes in as we have already identified those areas.

One of the issues that we have had in the past is that, different mobile phone companies put up their own individual towers. What we are saying to them now is, in order to defray the upfront capital cost, let us put up one tower and you can all have your own little dishes on it - you have one tower, one hill, one tower, Digicel, Vodafone, TFL, whoever else wants to put a tower, they can do that.

That requires a re-engineering standard of the towers because the weight is much heavier, that is the process we are going through. You will again see a lot of transformation in that respect. Regarding the particular school about no connectivity, please, understand you do not necessarily have to have mobile phone connectivity vis-à-vis voice on any of the mobile phone companies to actually get internet connectivity because that can also come through the satellite where you do not have terrestrial coverage.

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- I just seek a very simple clarification: will Vodafone provide coverage in those areas, so they can access better connectivity? Because right now, it is just Digicel and they are not connecting. Yes, I understand the technology, put the dishes and all that but there is no commitment from Government to put up a Vodafone tower and we need that in Kadavu so that they can have access to this internet connectivity.

Government is the shareholder, Vodafone is locally-owned compared to Digicel, that is just a simple clarification that Vodafone will provide this service in the area. Thank you.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Mr. Chairman, Sir, Government is not a shareholder of Vodafone, FNPF is a shareholder. In fact, TFL and ATH are shareholders of Vodafone, and the shareholders of ATH are FNPF predominant share, we are minority shareholders in ATH. We do not have a direct shareholding in Vodafone, we do not even sit on the Board of Vodafone, please, understand that, we cannot answer for Vodafone.

All I was trying to explain in very simple terms, it may be a bit complex for her, these are technical issues and we are trying to explain to her that in order to get connectivity, these are the ways in which you can get connectivity.

HON. L.S. QEREQERETABUA.- Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just to follow up on the question from Honourable Tabuya, the Honourable Minister for Economy and Communications, so for my village in Kadavu, we have the same problem. How would we be able to access the Universal Access Fund, Sir?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- You do not access the funds.

HON. L.S. QEREQERETABUA.- Or how can we get around to having such service?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- No, the village does not access the fund.

HON. L.S. QEREQERETABUA.- We understand that.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- What actually happens, which I have explained is that, those black spot areas are identified, then we sit down with the mobile phone companies and then we work out where we can put up towers, et cetera. In fact, just recently, there has been one area where *Vodafone* wanted to put up a tower - it was in Nadi, there is a black spot area. They identified the land, but the landowners did not want them to put a tower on their land.

You have to also make sure that the land is also available, it is a fairly long process, we obviously have to compensate the landowners, et cetera but some people you have to lease the land, we do not actually want a situation where you go ahead and then there is investment made but there is no proper lease title.

The other issue which is what we are trying to do is through, what we call, “shared infrastructure process”. Many counties in the world, what they have done through Universal Service Fund, you know what I am saying to put up one tower (this hill that I name, I always forget, the one up here outside Suva), the Nakobalevu Hill - Suva, if you go to that hill, you will find about four or five towers.

There is one hill (the name I always forget, up in Vanua Levu near Labasa) the lease is held by Telecommunications Fiji Limited (TFL). They have put a gate and a padlock, when *Fiji TV* or *FBC* or someone from *Digicel*, Vodafone who want that hill also, they have put up their towers there, sometimes when they want to go and do repairs, actually the gate is padlocked, they cannot access it. So, what we

are saying to all these mobile phone companies, television companies and everyone else that use this kind of technology, we need to have what we call a “shared infrastructure”.

When we lease the land, we can have one holding company that all can be all shareholders. They put up one tower, everyone gets connected to it. So, in terms of answering your question, this is the process we go through so the government then sits down with these telecommunication providers and say, “Look, these are the areas that we do not have connectivity, let’s identify the land, let’s give it priority, obviously we will not come to your village immediately, it could take some time like two years to get connectivity there in terms of voice.”

In the meantime, what we are trying to do is internet connectivity, we are trying to use the *Walesi* platform to get internet connectivity, in particular to schools through satellite.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, we will now vote on this amendment.

Question put.

Votes Cast:

Ayes	:	22
Noes	:	27
Not voted	:	2

Motion is defeated.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Qionibaravi, you have a motion, you have the floor.

HON. ADI L. QIONIBARAVI.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Head 16-3-1(5). I would like to move, Sir, that the allocation of \$50,000 under Public Awareness - Media Relations allocation, be removed.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Member, your amendment is out of order here because you have got Activity 1-(9) here.

HON. ADI L. QIONIBARAVI.- That is second to my list. If you prefer that I move SEG 9, I will do that now, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- No, no that is not the way you do this, you know the procedures very well. Get your amendments in order and then hand it in in easy writing so that we can read it. At the moment, the figures are wrong completely. Honourable Tuisawau, you have the floor on your amendment.

HON. RO F. TUISAWAU.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Programme 3-1(9). I move a motion to remove \$39.1 million from the Digital Government Transformation (\$39,133,329), which is the initiative by Singapore Enterprise Corporation. Thank you.

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- Mr. Chairman, I second the motion.

HON. RO F. TUISAWAU.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As a group, we are not convinced that this huge amount of funds (which is in this Budget), we understand the move towards digitalisation, but given the current situation regarding the financial situation being faced, and also the needs of high priority departments which touch on the lives of the people, in particular the Ministry of Agriculture and Waterways, and we are approaching the cyclone season, there are a lot of drains to be cleared, especially in the delta areas like Rewa. The Ministry of Health, we know the situation there, we need to fix ...

HON. MEMBERS.- Doors.

HON. RO F. TUISAWAU.- ... everything, including the doors. We know the cost of living is high in terms of particular foods. So, may be this would be useful in subsidies for the 50 percent of the population.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- No.

HON. RO F. TUISAWAU.- I did not say under the poverty level. Before I said that, you already reacted, so the 50 percent who are facing hardship. If this \$39.1 million is re-distributed that way, it is going to go a long way.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- The following year?

HON. RO F. TUISAWAU.- For this Budget, let us move this, re-distribute it to those areas, may be you need to continue with some contracts, I do not know, but this is a huge amount which needs to be used wisely for the benefit of our struggling people. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, we will vote on this amendment.

Question put.

(Chorus of “Ayes” and “Noes”)

Votes Casts:

Ayes	:	22
Noes	:	27
Not Voted	:	2

Motion is defeated.

Honourable Tuisawau, you have the second motion, you have the floor.

HON. RO F. TUISAWAU.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just on Programme 3-1(10): I wish to move a motion to remove \$8 million from Grant to Walesi (\$10,294,731).

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- I second the motion, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- You have the floor, Honourable Tuisawau.

HON. MEMBER.- We have had Walesi since 2015.

HON. RO F. TUISAWAU.- No, we still have some money there, we are not removing everything, it is still there. Mr. Chairman, Walesi, again is one of those entities which we are not convinced about providing services up to expectations. Last year, it was allocated \$19 million, however, in the 2017 Auditor-General's Report for General Administration Sector on Section 16, Page 4, it stated, "The Department of Communications utilised a sum of \$23,671,568 (\$23.6 million) from the main trust fund account during the financial year 2016-2017 for the Digital Television Infrastructure project which includes a grant of \$21,300,024 (\$21.3 million) paid to Walesi Limited."

There is no actual allocation for Walesi in the 2016-2017 Budget documents.

This entity, Walesi Limited, has continued to take liberties from public funds but is not reporting back to this Parliament or to the Committees of this Parliament. They cannot be allowed to take another \$10.29 million this year, and \$2 million is enough for them until they can be accountable to Parliament and the Committees of Parliament.

HON. GOVERNMENT MEMBER.- Who wrote it?

HON. RO. F. TUISAWAU.- The other issues with Walesi it seems to be filled with boys who are given jobs and closely connected to the

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, we will

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Can I contribute to the debate, Sir?

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, we will vote on this motion.

Question put.

Votes cast:

Ayes	:	22
Noes	:	27
Not Voted	:	2

Motion is defeated.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, Programme 4, Activity 1.

(Chorus of "Ayes" and "Noes")

HON. S.R. RASOVA.- Mr. Chair, on Head 16, Programme 4, Activity 1, SEG 5, there is a \$120,000 allocation for Licence Renewal - Ministry of Lands and Mineral Resources, and Software Licence (\$3,800,000). There seems to be an inconsistent approach to IT and continuing software purchases or licence renewal across Government. Some software and updates and associated costs are absorbed by different Ministries, while like for this instance, the Government's ITC Department is managing it. Can the honourable Minister, please, provide some clarification because surely it is more

cost-effective that one agency handles it on behalf of all ministries because there is a concession when negotiated by one agency who can build up a relationship over time. Thank you.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Mr. Chair, Sir, just to explain it very simply, for example, the Software Licence - there are various software that you use across Government, all offices have Microsoft; we have to pay an annual licence fee for that, Forcepoint Web, and we have other email security features which we have to pay, the Oracle licences, micro focus, SmartDraw, et cetera, which is used by, for example, MOIT - all the software licences need to be paid.

There are certain specialised IT Programmes or software that are negotiated or bought by the ITC Department itself. In this particular case, we have the one for the Ministry of Lands and Mineral Resources, that is why it is put separately. For example, the other ones, like if you look at the Ministry of Economy, there is a specific licence fee because when it was negotiated at that point in time, the agreement was signed between that particular Ministry and whoever is providing the software, so that is why you have got it reflected in those specific Ministries themselves.

HON. S.R. RASOVA.- Thank you. Mr. Chair, on Head 16, Programme 4, Activity 1, SEG 9, there are a few very expensive allocations there, all under “R” – Data Centre Infrastructure Upgrade (\$400,000), Storage System Capacity (\$250,000), Government Fibre Network Project (\$400,000) and Disaster Recovery Site (\$2,000,000). The question: is Yalamanchili still involved with Government ITC (the Disaster Recovery Site (\$2,000,000) looks very steep)? Can I get some clarification on that? *Vinaka*.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Sorry, what is your question?

HON. S.R. RASOVA.- Is Yalamanchili still involved with the Government ITC, the \$2 million Disaster Recovery Sites look very steep.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- The Disaster Recovery Site has got nothing to do with Yalamanchili. It is what you call a “DRP” which caters for Disaster Recovery Secondary Site at the Government Data Centre that allow ITC to recover critical IT systems. If one falls essentially the other one then needs to be built up, so there is a backup system like most good IT departments or organisations have.

HON. S. RASOVA.- *Vinaka*.

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- I seek clarification, Mr. Chair, Programme 1, Activity 1, SEG 1, Personal Emoluments of \$3.042 million.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- We are not going back. We are on Programme 4, Activity 1.

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- I am on Page 79.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- But you said the wrong programme.

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- Programme 4, Activity 1, SEG 1.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- You said Programme 1.

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- My apologies, Mr. Chair.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- That is all right.

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- On Page 79, Personal Emoluments, can we get some clarification on how many staff are involved in this allocation on Personal Emoluments, especially the position of the Director, ITC.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAYUM.- The Director's salary is not paid by Government. The person you are referring to is the Director.

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- The Head of the ITC now, is he a Director?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- You do not have a substantive position of a Director. You have through the Pacific Technologies where you have the person helping them out.

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- Who?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- But this allocation on Personal Emoluments is for people who are Established staff members.

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- And where are they now?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- At the moment, there are 35 established staff members within this particular Department.

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- Where are they operating from since the old ITC building is no longer in operation?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- They have been in the old American Embassy building for the past three or four years, where have you been?

HON. MEMBER.- Who's the Head?

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- What is that building at

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Berkley Crescent?

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- Yes.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Then, we are going to have another facility to have the Disaster Recovery next to it.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, we will now vote on Head 16.

Question put.

Votes cast:

Ayes : 27

Noes : 23
Not voted : 1

The motion is, therefore, agreed to.

Head 16 agreed to.

Head 17- Ministry of Civil Service:

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, the floor is now open for any comments. Honourable Salote Radrodro, you have the floor.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Thank you, Mr. Chair. I know I have a motion there, but before I move my motion, I first seek clarification on this Head. We will recall that in previous Budget Debate, I had questioned the inclusion of the doctor's salary and FNPF in this Head and had suggested that it be moved to the Ministry of Health. In this Budget, it has moved to the Ministry of Health, so my question of clarification is: why is this being moved now to the Ministry of Health?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Mr. Chair, Sir, the Honourable Member should really recall that when we moved it from the Ministry of Health to the Ministry of Civil Service, we gave a reason why. We have not moved it because of what she said. We, at that point in time, said because of the reforms that were taking place and because there was a need to carry out and ensure that the reforms in particular you may recall, Mr. Chair, Sir, the first group of civil servants that received substantial pay rises were the doctors themselves, and because of the reforms and the various adjustments that needed to be made in the HR Department, in the Ministry of Health, there were a lot of allegations of all sorts of shenanigans going on, this is why it was brought outside the Ministry of Health, put in the Ministry of Civil Service, we said we will be there for a period of time. When we feel that the systems are all in place and we are comfortable about it, we will then move it across to the Ministry of Health, which is precisely the reason why we have done so.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Honourable Salote Radrodro, you have the floor for your motion.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Thank you, Mr. Chair. In this Budget, we note the new inclusion of the graduate trainee (salaries) and graduate trainee (FNPF). I am moving the motion that this be reduced, be taken away from this Head because ministries and departments have their own specific roles and they have their specific personal emoluments, and they have been given, as we have heard before from the honourable Minister for Economy, that they have an envelope determined what level of human resources they need, specifically for their ministries and departments. Therefore, Mr. Chairman, there is no need for this graduate trainee, which is not a new programme at all, to be here in this Ministry of Civil Service Head, and be removed from here. It will be better handled by the Ministries themselves. Thank you, Honourable Chair.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Any further comments, Honourable Anare Jale, you have the floor.

HON. A. JALE.- Chair, thank you very much. The only question is on that SEG on Graduate Trainee. I am just enquiring how many graduate trainees are going to be catered for under the allocation.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Mr. Chair, Sir, of course, we do not have any specific numbers yet. This is a new programme we are going to build. Whilst people have said that it is not a new thing, of course, it was done many years ago, it has stopped and we want to bring that in but, of course, with the higher calibre of people, we want the Civil Service to be an employer of choice, so this will apply in the New Year. This is why, obviously, for the next few months, there will not be anything paid out as such, so we will attract people who graduate.

The whole purpose of this Graduate Trainee Programme, Mr. Chair, Sir, is to select very high achievers and then move them around in the different ministries so they get a feel of some of the key ministries. They will be asked to select four or five ministries they want to work in to get experience, like they do, for example, overseas when you go to top notch law firms, they move you around in different practice areas, and then eventually, the ministries give their feedback, they themselves then will probably know after a period of a year or 18 months or so, which ministry they want to actually further their careers in, so that is how it is going to work out. We will start doing that in the New Year, we will be rolling out more details, advertisements will be put out, et cetera.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Leawere, you have the floor.

HON. M.R. LEAWARE.- Yes, Mr. Chair, just a question under Graduate Trainee, do they come through NEC?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Who?

HON. M.R. LEAWARE.- These Graduate Trainees as in this SEG.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- No, they could but these are high performing students; they are university graduates that we want to attract. There could be a very high achiever who may have registered with NEC, I do not know, but not specifically only from NEC. It could be anyone that could apply for these positions and so there will be various exams they have to sit, pass a threshold so that we get the best of the best.

HON. M.R. LEAWARE.- So that is for Toppers.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Anyone can apply, honourable Member, if they meet the minimum criteria.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Salote Radrodro?

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Thank you, Mr. Chair. My point is that, we are not against the Programme but it could be worked out in a better way that it remains with the Ministry, and even the policy could be there that the ministries can work with other ministries and move them around rather than having a specific allocation under the Ministry of Civil Service, which in my view, is unnecessary expenditure. That is why the motion has been put on the floor that it be removed from the Ministry of Civil Service and let it be with the ministries, they are in a better position to select their own graduate trainee. What the Public Service Commission (PSC) could do with the Civil Service is have a policy in place that would allow these graduate trainees to move from Ministry to Ministry according to that Ministry's particular need on HR and their training programme. Thank you, Honourable Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, we will now vote on this amendment.

Question put.

Votes cast:

Ayes	:	22
Noes	:	27
Not voted	:	2

Motion is defeated.

Honourable Members, Parliament will now vote on Head 17.

Question put

The Question is:

That the amount of Head 17 – Ministry of Civil Service, be approved.

Does any Member oppose the motion?

(Chorus of ‘Ayes’ and ‘Noes’)

Votes cast:

Ayes	:	27
Noes	:	22
Not voted	:	2

The motion is, therefore, agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Head 17 agreed to.

Head 18 – Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development:

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, Head 18-1-1 and the floor is open. Honourable Saukuru, you have the floor.

HON. J. SAUKURU.- I seek clarification, Sir, on Programme 1-1(7) - Community Capacity Building (\$20,000). Can the Honourable Minister clarify that allocation?

DR. M. REDDY.- Yes, Mr. Chairman, the allocation caters for training and awareness programmes on Government services. These are remote communities that we are dealing with, so from time to time they would go and raise awareness amongst the communities, conduct small workshops so this allocation of small amount is for those kind of trainings.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Matanitobua, you have the floor.

HON. RATU S. MATANITOBUA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On SEG 5 - Volunteer Expenses (\$10,000).

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- This allocation caters for engagement of senior volunteers and also NEC attachés so they are engaged in areas of short-term staffing needs in collaboration with the Ministry of Employment, so payment for those as well as other volunteers and senior volunteers, they make payment from this.

Do you know who a NEC attaché is? NEC is acronym for National Employment Centre and we have to give some allowance to their attachés as stipulated, it comes from this. NEC attachés payments are shared - the host Ministry gives an amount and National Employment Centre gives an amount.

(Honourable Member interjects)

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Mr. Chairman, the short-term attachments of NEC attachés, as well as other volunteers who would want to be attached with the Ministry in specialised areas of the Ministry's needs, so this money is utilised to give them an allowance.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Programme 2-1.

HON. RO T.V. KEPÄ.- Mr. Chairman, the first one is on SEG 7.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- We are in Programme 2, Activity 1.

HON. RO T.V. KEPÄ.- We were just about to ask, when you were talking to the Honourable Minister.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Programme 2, Activity 1. Honourable Viliame Gavoka, you have the floor.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Yes, Honourable Chairman, can I ask the Honourable Minister to explain how SEG 10 - Project Preparatory Works (\$150,000), work?

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- This allocation caters for the PSIP projects or the capital projects that are within the Ministry.

There is a Divisional Development Board and whenever they have their Board Meetings and consultations are held with the Board to decide on a project that needs to be taken up to the Budget Committee, that money is utilised. It is under "R", so that allocation is for that particular work.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Where did the projects originate from?

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- From local communities, so whenever the Ministry would go and then hold consultations with them, there will be meetings, et cetera, that need to be undertaken.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Yes, Honourable Ro Teimumu Kepa.

HON. RO T.V. KEPA.- On SEG 9 - Institutional Strengthening for Divisional and Provincial Offices (\$40,000). Can the Honourable Minister, please, clarify where this Training is going to be done for the institutional strengthening, who will be involved and whether it will be done locally or overseas? For institutional strengthening, obviously, you will need some type of training.

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- No, this institutional strengthening is in terms of resourcing the office, that is, purchasing of personal computers (PCs), resourcing small works.

HON. RO T.V. KEPA.- So this will be all Provincial Offices?

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- No, not Provincial Offices but Commissioners Office, District Officers' (DOs) Offices.

HON. RO T.V. KEPA.- Can you explain them?

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Yes, Mr. Chairman, this allocation caters for office refurbishment, small works like purchase of chairs, tables, computers or laptops, et cetera.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Mr. Chairman, Sir, SEG 7 - Community Capacity Building (\$20,000).

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Mr. Chairman, this allocation is for training of Income-Generation Programme (IGP) recipients and meetings held in the five Provinces to carry out empowerment in the community, and at the same time to develop a plan for the people through an action plan to be closely followed and implemented over time. So, these are community meetings in the five Provinces, this amount is utilised to do that.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Tikoduadua, you have the floor.

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- Mr. Chairman, Programme 2-2(4) - Upkeep of Burial Grounds (\$2,500); can the Honourable Minister elaborate a little bit on which burial grounds are being referred to here? I hope it covers the one from Korovou, because it is always bushy.

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- No, these are all community burial grounds, Sir. It is a small amount and it is for the Central Division.

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- Yes, but how many are there?

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Sir, all burial grounds in the Central Division. When they raise a particular request, then we will consider and give a small amount. The community will provide bridging funding, \$200 or \$300 given to some kind of upkeep of burial grounds.

HON. M.R. LEAWERE.- Mr. Chairman, is that different from the one in Korovou?

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- No, that is different. This is for all requests from the communities.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Mr. Chairman, can I comment on this?

It appears consistent in all the Divisions, perhaps you can also rope-in the other Divisions here because if you look at the next one, the Western Division has a similar amount. The Western Division is from Sigatoka to Rakiraki, how is \$5,000 sufficient for the upkeep of all burial grounds?

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Forget about Western Division. We are on Activity 1, that is on Activity 2.

(Laughter)

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- There is a similar provision in all the Divisions.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Forget about the similarity, speak on Activity 1.

(Laughter)

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Well, the Central Division is a huge area, \$5,000 is not enough.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- That is the question, you answer, Activity 1, Honourable Minister. After we have finished, then he can ask the question on Activity 2.

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Mr. Chair, it is a community activity, but there is a little bit of support that is pegged here. Otherwise, all the cemeteries are run by the communities.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- We have got that, we now move to Activity 2. You can ask your question now.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.-Yes, Sir, like I said, the provision here is \$5,500 - Upkeep of Burial Grounds, the Western Division is quite a huge area. This is very insignificant to the economy. You cannot do justice to all the burial grounds from Sigatoka to Rakiraki.

As you know, in Nadi, there is some huge issues there at the Enamanu Cemetery. People are now taking their loved ones to be buried in Lautoka, it is not only an upkeep issue, it is also lack of space for centres like Nadi, and maybe, other areas in the Western Division.

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Mr. Chairman, when the budget was prepared at the Ministry level, the way these amounts are pegged are based on what they have seen in the submissions. So, I do not recall staff presenting, saying, “Minister, this amount is too low because we have got 50 requests last year.”

If that is the case, then maybe next year we can look forward to that in the next Budget, but at the moment, when I was meeting with the staff who were presenting to me before I presented to the Honourable Minister for Economy, I did not see any data presented by the Permanent Secretary and his team saying that, “Minister, we had 50 to 60 requests from the Western Division and this amount is not sufficient.”

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- The consultation for this budget was touted to be very inclusive. We were told that the consultation went in for months when he spoke with a great cross-section of people. Now, we hear that he does not seem to know where there will be samples

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- No! Honourable Chairman, what I said was, what he is saying is not matching with the submissions we received, that is what I am saying. He did not make any submissions on this.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- When you put a figure in your budget, you are answerable for that figure.

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Honourable Chairman, all I am saying is, he did not make a submission or he did not see any submission from anyone that was made to this Office.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.-You cannot have Ministers coming in here presenting a figure they cannot support, Honourable Chairman.

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Something is wrong there.

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- All I am saying is that, what the Honourable Member is saying is not supported by the submissions we have.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.-Then tell me!

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Member, we have covered this sufficiently.

Honourable Saukuru, you have an amendment, so you can move your amendment.

HON. J. SAUKURU.- Thank you, Sir. Mr. Chairman, I move that Head 18-2-2(10) ...

(Laughter)

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Programme 2-2(10) - Programme Preparatory Works, that is what you have here.

HON. J. SAUKURU.- Yes. I have got both. This is to be increased with another \$150,000.

HON. M. BULANAUCA.- I second the motion

HON. J. SAUKURU.- Mr. Chairman, I mentioned this in my Budget response. I have sat in quite a few district meetings (*Bose ni Tikina*) and it is sad to note that in most of those *Tikina* meetings, the resolutions of the meetings are never being actioned by Government. It would be appropriate that we increase this vote as explained by the Minister, it is related to the village communities as well. If this can be increased with a further \$150,000. Thank you, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Minister, you have the floor.

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Mr. Chairman, if I may just clarify that the *Tikina* meetings are handled by the Ministry of iTaukei Affairs. So, the *Tikina* meeting issues must have been with the Ministry of iTaukei Affairs. Now, if you want to buy a computer, if you go to a vegetable market, you would not be able to buy a computer from a vegetable market.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, we will vote on this amendment.

Question put.

Votes cast:

Ayes	:	21
Noes	:	27
Not voted	:	3

Motion is defeated.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, Programme 2, Activity 3. Honourable Member, you have the floor.

HON. RATU T.N. NAVURELEVU.- Programme 2, Activity 3, SEG 7. I need to seek a clarification from the Minister regarding Community Capacity Building which almost applies to all the divisions in Macuata. The Northern Division almost has the same budget of \$20,000. Can we have clarification from the Minister as to how many have been employed to do this responsibility and his allocation is for what - allowance? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Mr. Chairman, I just explained in the other similar question that the Community Capacity Building workshop is where our staff goes down and runs workshops and trainings. It is to meet expenses: for staff travelling expenses, workshops, refreshments and any resources that are utilised like files, stationeries, et cetera.

HON. M.R. LEAWERE.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, just on SEG 5 - Volunteers Expenses. How many volunteers qualify for that \$750 allocation?

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- No, I do not think I have the number of volunteers who qualify. That is a different data that he is asking. That I can find out and let him know.

HON. M.R. LEAWERE.- Mr. Chairman, how much is actually given for each volunteer?

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- I do not know the exact amount.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- These are the NEC Volunteers and you have already been told the rates by the Honourable Minister for Employment. The NEC rates are paid according to their level of qualification.

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Diploma is \$120, Mr. Chairman, and \$100 is Certificate.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, Activity 4?

(Chorus of “Noes”)

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Programme 3 – Rural Infrastructure, Activity 1?

(Chorus of “Ayes and “Noes”)

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Ro Filipe Tuisawau, you have the floor.

HON. RO F. TUISAWAU.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Programme 3, Activity 1, SEG 8: Community Access Roads, Footpaths and Footbridges (\$2,000,000). This is the critical area in our rural communities, particularly in low lying areas where bridges and footpaths are critical, not only the comfort but also the health of the village population. Given also the issue of climate change we are facing, rising sea levels, that is a huge issue with a lot of our communities residing near coastal areas and rivers which is why I think it is critical that we relook at this.

The other issue here, just talking to the Provincial Administrator, some of these funds, especially for the Access Roads, they have indicated that it is now not within the budget of FRA but under “R”, I suppose. It has to go through the Ministry of Economy.

I am requesting for ease for the communities that this be re-allocated back to FRA and decisions can be made at that level through the Provincial Administrator rather than going through the bureaucracy and through the Ministry of Economy. I am proposing that this be increased by \$2 million to \$4 million. I was anticipating that this would come from the savings with the reduction in *Walesi*. But since there is no reduction there, I will ask the other Honourable Ministers to volunteer to that \$2 million. Thank you.

HON. I. KURIDRANI.- I second the motion.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- You have the floor, Honourable Gavoka.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Mr. Chairman, I support this motion to increase this allocation. Mr. Chairman, I believe we need to build footpaths in all the densely populated areas. In the villages now, we see humps which are helping keep our people safe, but when you have a village now that is densely populated, I think you need to build footpaths because our people have a tendency to walk on the road. This is a phenomenon that some of my overseas colleagues have always observed while in Fiji. They say, “Why do you people walk on the road?”, I tell them, “It is something that we do”, but by building footpaths in the villages or in the densely populated areas, they will walk on the side of the road and keep the road free to help with the free flow of traffic.

(Honourable Member interjects)

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Yes, I know. But we also need to consider building footpaths on the main roads in the villages. I think we should have that dialogue, Mr. Chair, something that I believe is needful.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Member, this is contributing to infrastructure and it is for footpaths, not the footpaths on the main roads. It is very clear here that is why he is concerned about the state of Rewa.

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Mr. Chair, if I may

MR. CHAIRMAN.- That is the reason for this amendment.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Mr. Chair, please.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Ro Teimumu Kepa, you have the floor.

HON. RO T.V. KEPA.- Mr. Chair, can I support that motion, particularly in the rural areas where there are mangroves because most of the time it is very soggy and mushy so to have footpaths will make a difference, especially for the elderly and young children. So, I would support that motion, Mr. Chair.

(Honourable Members interject)

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Order!

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Mr. Chair, if I may.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, we will vote on this amendment.

Votes cast:

Ayes	:	20
Noes	:	27
Not Voted	:	4

Motion is defeated.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, we will now vote on Head 18.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Seeking clarification, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Parliament will vote on Head 18.

The question is that the amount for Head 18, Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development be approved. Does any Member oppose?

(Chorus of “Ayes” and “Noes”)

Votes cast:

Ayes	:	27
Noes	:	22
Not Voted	:	2

The motion is, therefore, agreed to.

Head 18 agreed to.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, we will now suspend proceedings for refreshments in the Big Committee Room. Parliament will resume in half an hour. Thank you, Honourable Members.

The Parliament adjourned at 4.08 p.m.

The Parliament resumed at 4.47 p.m.

Head No. 19 – Republic of Fiji Military Forces:

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, the floor is open for any comments. We are on Head No. 19 for the Republic of Fiji Military Forces, Programme 1, Activity 1 - Policy and Administration. Honourable Tikoduadua, you have the floor.

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- Mr. Chair, thank you. Just a matter of clarification from the Honourable Minister with regards to the Annual Report by the Republic of Fiji Military Forces. This issue I had raised previously and personally also with the Commander when we met him in Nadi for the Foreign Affairs and Defence Standing Committee meeting.

It is critical to raise this now at this juncture, particularly when Parliament is going to look at the Budget of the RFMF in light of their functions and roles under the Constitution. Perhaps the clarification in that regard would be the Minister to confirm how soon Parliament can expect RFMF to submit Annual Reports which the last one, I believe, was in 2013, it has been so many years now from 2014, *vinaka*.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you, Honourable Minister.

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Thank you, Mr. Chair, Sir. Like the initial response that we have made to similar questions raised, I can only talk to the Commander about these Annual Reports and they will be presented in Parliament once they are available.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Thank you, just a clarification, Mr. Chair, to the Honourable Minister on SEG 1, with regards to the decrease of emoluments and the officers in other ranks, probably that is also Salary. What is the reason: Is it because of the vacancy that is still there - empty post, and why is this happening?

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Thank you, Honourable Chair, Sir. The Forces, particularly the Police, the RFMF are two of the Institutes that I would say, have been allocated funds to the ceiling of the positions. I will give an example; a Lieutenant Colonel in the RFMF, over 2, over 4, over 6, when they made their submissions in the previous budgets, they go for the maximum, it has been the trend over the years, they have a lot of savings on SEG 1.

For the Police alone in the last financial year, it was around \$9 million or may be \$11 million probably, the savings from SEG 1 because it is pegged at

And then promotions as well, we very well understand this, some are not promoted to the rank but acting in the senior rank below, so this is where most of this

This is for savings purposes and economising as well. This is why you will see a reduction in this area and it is consistent with the Fiji Police Force as well when we go into the next Head. Thank you.

HON. MAJOR-GENERAL (RET'D) S.L. RABUKA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, just a point of interest, we changed the retiring age for the serving soldiers. I remember when I came away, there were different retiring ages for ranks and they had asked me before I left if they can all be retired at 55 and whether there had been a survey of the ages of those that have died while in the Service apart from active service deaths and their ages. *Vinaka*.

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Sir, through you, the retirement age is at 55, and there are like for civil servants as well, any request for engagement beyond retirement age, still goes through the normal process. You still meet the normal standards - health, RFL, et cetera, and particularly for senior ranks as well, it is the same but retirement age for all ranks is at 55, and on special conditions for those that re-apply.

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. By way of clarification as well in terms of Emoluments, Mr. Chairman, could the Honourable Minister just inform the House at this stage for our knowledge, how many flagged officers are on the active list right now, so as to have a better understanding in terms of this reduction for SEG 1 allocations? Thank you.

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Mr. Chairman, I only have the overall strength, I do not have the rank breakdowns, but I can, perhaps, provide that, if need be. I only have the overall summary of the whole Forces. We have about 3,597 Regular Forces - all ranks and, of course, on deployment, we have about 400 plus, and we have about 3,000, including the Naval component. I just have the breakdown for the strength of the Forces rather than by ranks, but I am happy to provide, if needed.

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, on SEG 8, the Expenditures here has gone down by \$2.6 million, but the work that has been listed there - the Upgrade of Sukanaivalu Barracks and the likes, seems to be a continuing allocation being given. Last year, it was given a huge amount but this year, it has been given a \$200,000 allocation for the Sukanaivalu Barracks.

Can we just get clarification whether what was given last year was fully utilised, and then this is another new allocation for this year of \$200,000, say for Upgrade of Sukanaivalu Barracks, because last year, it was given a huge amount as compared to now this year, \$500,000.

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Thank you, Honourable Chair, Sir. There has been major works completed. That includes the re-roofing of the Strategic Headquarters Administration Block that has been completed. The renovation of the Military Police (MP)'s Office that has been completed as well. The Tuvasu Hall that has been completed as well and the renovation of Commander RFMF's Office, that project has been completed and, of course, the dental clinics in the George Maiden Medical Centre have been completed as well, Honourable Speaker, Sir, but there is still work continuing in the other barracks.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Ro Filipe Tuisawau, you have the floor.

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Sorry, Mr. Chair. On Sukanaivalu, can I just provide the update that on the allocation that was given in the last financial year, which was about \$400,000, what was it used for - one was the extension of the guardhouse that has been completed; the renovation of the

Senior NCO's Mess, that is still continuing but hopefully, it will be completed by August and, of course, the renovation of the OC's Quarters as well, that has been completed as well.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Ro Filipe Tuisawau, you have the floor.

HON. RO F. TUISAWAU.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just on SEG 5 - Visiting Dignitaries (\$100,000), and SEG 7 – Dress Code Review (\$100,000): If that could be clarified as to approximately how much would be spent per Dignitary or per Mission and the Dress Code Review which is \$100,000; is that for a review of uniform because it sounds expensive to me for a Dress Code Review. Thank you.

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Thank you. Mr. Chair, Sir, on the visits of the Visiting Dignitaries, the Commander, RFMF does provide host to a lot of visiting dignitaries and, of course, provide ceremonial duties as well - the 100 men guard, et cetera, this is all part of the Visiting Dignitaries and Guests.

On the Dress Code, the RFMF has a lot of different kinds of dress under the Dress Code: Ceremonial Dress, Field Dress, Battle Gears, et cetera, but this is why this needs to be reviewed so that probably we can have something that is more modern and, of course, economical as well. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Matanitobua.

HON. RATU S. MATANITOBUA.- Mr. Chair, on SEG 5, Battle Equipment (\$104,000): Just looking at the last Budget and we have another one in this Budget, same amount. Are we buying our equipment every year?

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Thank you. Mr. Chair, Sir, for Battle Equipment, one is the replacement of aging equipment, but at the same time the maintenance as well which is costly as well, and that is why you will see that

Sorry, Mr. Chairman, on the question raised by the honourable Radrodro on how the \$200,000 will be utilised for the Sukanaivalu Barracks, this will be for the completion of the Senior Non-Commissioned Officers' (NCOs) Mess, which would cost about \$66,000, and of course, the renovation of the Officer-in-Charge's (OC's) Administration Office, which will cost about \$133,000, that is the budgeted amount for this year.

HON. DR. RATU A.R. LALABALAVU.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Through you can I seek clarification with regards to SEG 9, Specialised Medical Equipment of \$200,000?

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Sir, we have our own medical facilities, and you know that the RFMF is responsible for conducting medical boards for personnel for deployment, but also as part of their re-engagement, that is a key requirement. We have to have state-of-the-art equipment, that is why the RFMF is working with

In two weeks' time, we will have a meeting with the Honourable Minister for Health and the Commander, RFMF about how they can share facilities and expertise. Also, for Black Rock, the future of the facilities in Black Rock, that will be part of the discussions that we will have as well. Thank you, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Leawere, you have the floor.

HON. M.R. LEAWARE.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, on SEG 8, Upgrade and Renovation of Armoury, which is \$150,000. Last year, the allocation was a bit more - about \$350,000, is this a new item or just a continuation of what was budgeted for in 2018?

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Sir, the \$150,000 was allocated in the previous Budget and this is more of rolled-over because the one in Lautoka is what we are focusing on, and for Queen Elizabeth Barracks (QEB), it is just the security shutters that is also being part of this. But for the \$150,000 allocated, it is for the renovation, as I have said, about the QEB Armoury as well, completion of Lautoka and the QEB Armoury.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Bulitavu, you have the floor.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Sir, on SEG 5, Band Equipment, that is \$104,000. Given that this was the same amount last year, it gives an indication whether we are buying Band equipment every year or whether it was given last year but nothing was bought. It is just a rollover.

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- I have already answered this question.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- I thought he has answered that question already.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- On SEG 9, we have the activities there. They are all repeated activities, the same as last year, like purchase of kitchen equipment - \$200,000. Are we purchasing every year or the purchase is done annually or was it listed last year but still not purchased?

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Sir, for the 2018-2019 period, \$300,000 was budgeted for and this was allocated for the procurement of kitchen equipment to equip the Other Ranks Mess at QEB and Lautoka Camps.

For the current Budget, Mr. Chairman, \$200,000 is for the procurement of kitchen equipment for the other messes within the RFMF. This include *Togalevu*, Sukanaivalu Camp in Labasa, the Officers' Mess and Nadi Camp and Force Training Group (FTG).

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Tikoduadua.

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a matter for clarification as well: First of all, I would like to say, I am very grateful for the work that the RFMF Engineers are doing for Fiji at this time. My concern is that there may be a lesser regard for the soldiers' personal welfare, I know some of them get deployed in places and stay there for months on end.

So, in terms of this perhaps location allowance or field allowance here under SEG 1, Activity 1, Programme 1, whether that is covering the deployment of the engineers, particularly for those who have to remain in their workplaces away from their family after a very long time.

Also, by the same token, Mr. Chairman, for the honourable Minister's information as well, in terms of RFMF participating in traditional welcome ceremonies, I know they do it very well, and during my time with 3FIR we did that too. But it just appears to me that it might be a digress if we use them too much from their functions under the Constitutions, would it be a good idea also to maybe consider others for this particular work, particularly the *veiqaravi vakavanua*; the guards and all that to be done by them?

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Very quickly, on RFMF Engineers, I suggest to the honourable Member to look at the allowances on Programme 1-Activity 4, that is the Engineers, and then probably we will come to that question later on. But this allocation here for the allowance in Programme 1, Activity 1, this is one that is administered at the strategic headquarters, particularly the other units but the engineers has been specified specifically in Activity 4. With the distribution of responsibilities, that is something that we have discussed with the Commander, but there are times that Suva is needed but, of course, in some of the recent visits, Nadi is very much involved and, of course, Sukanaivalu Barracks as well.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Activity 2 - Logistic Support Unit.

(Chorus of "Noes")

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Activity 3 – 3 FIR.

(Chorus of "Noes")

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Activity 4 - RFMF Engineers.

(Chorus of "Noes")

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Activity 5 - Naval Division

(Chorus of "Ayes" and "Noes")

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Tikoduadua, you have the floor.

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- Are we on Activity 5, Mr. Chairman?

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Yes, that is why I have given you the floor.

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- Mr. Chairman, I have a motion that is before the Committee, perhaps when that is ready then I would talk to that. Thank you.

HON. RATU S. MATANITOBUA.- Mr. Chairman, I second the motion.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- You have the floor.

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This motion, pursuant to Standing Order 102, moving without notice that Head 9, Programme 1, Activity 5 of SEG 7 be increased by \$50,000 in respect of the Maritime Surveillance Centre.

Mr. Chairman, during the 3rd visit down to the Stanley Brown, I was rather impressed with what the Commander Navy had put in for the Maritime Surveillance Centre and what he has done with it with the little money. In fact, to be quite honest, Mr. Chairman, I was so impressed, and I think, perhaps the honourable Ministers should take their Permanent Secretaries down there and have a look if they have not done already. What struck me when he briefed us was that he had a small allocation and he was able to get off the internet these “apps. and software”, whatever they call it, to be able to give an impression of just short of real time, in terms of maritime surveillance and the functions of that office can be used for disaster management, and I am sure they are doing that also. It deserves the support of this House, primarily to build it up because I can say it is nothing short of impressive, and I am very supportive of that. I would like to move that we increase that allocation that has been granted under that SEG for that particular Activity by \$50,000, to give the Commander Navy an extra resource to build that Centre. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Any comments on this?

HON. MAJOR-GENERAL (RET'D) S.L.RABUKA.- Thank you, Sir. I would support that motion from the honourable Tikoduadua. I also would like to ask the question whether we are still cooperating with Australia and New Zealand in the maritime surveillance, and whether we have asked our local airline, Fiji Airways, to be able to participate being equipped with what is needed so that they can communicate back, not only security information, but also EEZ protection or surveillance?

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Let me just clarify on the allocation of the \$50,000, operations these days with the use of technology are more efficient and cost-effective. It is more what we call “precise operations” because before we go onto areas with the use of satellite images and scanners, et cetera, instead of going all over the place, we go straight into the area where we are interested in.

The Honourable Tikoduadua raised during his Budget Debate address the other day about the allocation of fuel, and this is one of the reasons too why you will see that there is a reduction in the fuel allocation because when we are doing patrols now,

There is a lot of sharing of information as well with the other centres, including FFA in the Solomon Islands. So, the operations these days with the use of technology are more precise, and that is why we are grateful, and you will see the allocations as such.

Definitely, to the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, we still maintain those arrangements that we have under the arrangements with France, Australia and New Zealand. Now, we have even gone into the extent with the Americans on their vessels when they do come in and, of course, the aircrafts as well. You would note, Honourable Jese, that just a month back, I launched the Search and Rescue Coordination launching of the Manual in Lautoka, and because previously when it comes to aerial search, it is Airports Fiji Limited and CAAF who have that responsibility under their own law, likewise for land search, we have the other agencies and for sea area, we have the Navy and, of course, the other maritime users as well. We have now established a joint handbook for search and rescue operations. This came as a result of the aircraft incident that we had in Vanua Levu last year, because it was air incident - Airports Fiji Limited and CAAF, we are also finalising now the laws that will bring these agencies together. That is another new development in as far as Search and Rescue is concerned.

On the question by the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, we utilise local aircrafts, particularly Fixed Wings and Rotary Wings as well, for our search and rescue operations but the purchasing of specific equipment, that is something that we can only ask them to do and hopefully with the new arrangement and the laws, they will also ensure that they have the necessary equipment, that will be compatible and allow inter-operability as well. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, we will now vote on this amendment.

Question put.

Votes cast:

Ayes	:	22
Noes	:	25
Not Voted	:	4

Motion is defeated.

We move to Programme 1-7, Honourable Bulitavu, you have the floor.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Mr. Chairman, on Programme 1-7(8) - Upgrade of FTG Infrastructure (\$200,000); when will this upgrade work be completed, Honourable Minister?

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the 2018-2019 Budget, \$398,738 was allocated for this project and was expended for the electrical upgrading work at the Territorial Force (TF) Camp and, of course, the renovation of other facilities within the FTG Camp. I hope that the Honourable Member is familiar with the TF Camp, close to the old Charman's All Races Club. That is where the new TF Camp Headquarters is now located.

For this allocation, Mr. Chairman, Sir, for the current Budget, this has been allocated for the renovation of the Administration Block and the re-definition of the FTG land boundary because there is Correction Services, Forestry Department and, of course, the Housing up to the other Makoi end. The demarcation of the boundary is how the funds will be utilized. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Programme 1-8, Honourable Qereqeretabua, you have the floor.

HON. L.S. QEREQERETABUA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Through you, can I, please, ask the Honourable Minister to explain Programme 1-8(9) - Purchase of Specialised Equipment (\$180,000) for Land Force Command?

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is a new allocation and this has been requested for the procurement of specialised equipment for the Military Police at QEB Nabua, to assist the Military Police (MP) to undertake its core roles within the RFMF in terms of internal investigation, disciplinary of personnel and protection of the personnel, this will be for Military Police

(MPs). I have got the details in here. That include protection accessories, medical supplies, tactical gear and armour, the protection gear as well. That is how this will be allocated and utilised.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Gavoka, you have the floor.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Yes, under that Head, are we paid for the bushmaster that we purchased a few years back? Were they on loan from someone? You are talking about specialised equipment here. We bought the bushmaster, are we going to buy some more or is that all that we will acquire?

HON. LT. COL. I. SERUIRATU.- Mr. Chairman, Sir, I did mention during my Budget address that the environment in the peacekeeping arena has changed significantly and one of the critical requirements under our standby arrangement is the protection of our personnel. Definitely, we will need proper protection equipment but that will be dependent on our future Missions if we have to deploy to

But, of course, under the United Nations systems, we have what we call the ‘dry lease’ and the ‘wet lease’ and that is how payments are made for equipment; equipment that are contingent-owned and equipment that we lease, if we own these equipment, we will be paid for it by the United Nations and there are special rates for this. It is covered under the lease arrangements - wet lease and dry lease. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Pio Tikoduadua.

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is a further clarification on the question raised earlier by Honourable Qereqeretabua on Programme 1-8(9) - Purchase of Specialised Equipment. The Honourable Minister explained that part of this specialised equipment is armour also included in it, is it armoured vehicle or armoured protection for Police?

HON. LT. COL. I. SERUIRATU.- It is for crime control and the

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- But it baffles me, Mr. Chairman, because the functions of the Military Police are primarily for military personnel. The assumption would be to quickly to equate that to riot control for civilian Police, to be able to say, “yes” to that, is the Military Police using armor protection against Military people as well? Are they expecting threat? I have never seen that being done before.

HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- Well, it is being done now.

HON. LT. COL. I. SERUIRATU.- Mr. Chairman, Sir, let me clarify, one is the role of the Military Police and, of course, the change in scenarios as well: Why special equipment for the Military Police?

We have been in the UN list for a long time because of the delay in our investigations because of the lack of specialist equipment to help the Military Police in making that. I have just closed about seven cases in our recent trip to New York and all these cases go all the way back to 2013, and we paid the price for that, Mr. Chairman, but at the same time when we are looking at the future deployment, particularly in terms of our standby arrangement, it is not the old conventional way of doing peacekeeping. We can,

I mean, I will come up with a paper later but I know that the commitments have already been made by the Honourable Prime Minister.

Based on the High-Level Independent Panel Report (HLIP) that was submitted to the Secretary-General in 2016, there is a big demand now for women peacekeepers, just women peacekeepers. We might have to reconsider that as part of our standby arrangement. We will just have a certain number of troops in the Police Force. There is also a need for civilians now because it is not only about going and create the environment. Peacekeeping now is more to go into the sustainability which includes governance. So, may be in the future of peacekeeping, we will also deploy civil servants, this is the way forward.

We acknowledge the Honourable Minister for Health. We have health capability in the Golan Heights now which is doing very well, previously, you know very well, Honourable Chairman, Sir, it is just infantry men and a bit of engineers, but now we have a lot of options and even now, Military Police personnel, so this is all part of a bigger plan that we have and they need to be properly equipped and trained.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Activity 9.

HON. M.R. LEAWERE.- Mr. Chairman, Programme 1-9(1) in terms of established staff, there is an increase. Can we have some clarification from the Honourable Minister, please? In 2018, it is \$1.85 million and the estimate for this year is \$1.525 million.

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Sir. At the end of the year, we will get two extra vessels - probably one at the end of the year and one mid into the next financial year. One will be donated by Korea, and one will be the first of the Pacific Guardian class boats that will be provided by Australia. So, they will join the naval fleet. So, we will need personnel to man the boats when they come on board and, of course, that has been factored into this, so a number of personnel and the cost that comes with it.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Ro Tuisawau.

HON. RO F. TUSAWAU.- Just a quick question, Mr. Chairman. I was wondering why Activity 9 - Hydrographic Unit is separate from the Naval Division.

HON. GOVERNMENT MEMBER.- Their roles are different.

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Hydrographic Unit, I think I have stated this in this Honourable House a few times, it was at one stage with the Government Shipping Services and, of course, it is now back into the Fiji Navy, but it is put separately as an activity because of the role that it plays.

It is very, very, technical and, of course, I think I have stated earlier in one of my Ministerial Statements that I made that we are fortunate that we have one of the highly qualified Naval Officers, who

graduated from the UK with us. He is the one that is running the Unit now, a very young officer but with very high level qualification.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, we will now vote on Head 19.

The Question is:

That the amount of Head 19 - Republic of Fiji Military Forces, be approved?

(Chorus of 'Ayes' and 'Noes')

We will vote for this Head.

Question put.

Votes cast:

Ayes	:	28
Noes	:	21
Not Voted	:	2

Head 19 agreed to.

Head 20 - Fiji Police Force:

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, the floor is open for any comments on Head 20, Programme 1, Activity 1.

(Chorus of "Ayes" and "Noes")

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- Just a clarification, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Nawaikula, you have the floor.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Thank you. In relation to Programme 1, Activity 1, SEGs 1 and 2, instructions were out that you cut these two by 5 percent, but here actually, there is an increase. Instead of decreasing everywhere, there is an increase here, possibly with the Health Department, from \$49.9 million in 2018 to \$51 million, there is a difference there of \$8.4 million. Could the Honourable Minister explain why the increase here and its impact on the recruitment, promotion and staffing for next year? Why is it different from other ministries? Why have you not cut it here? That is basically the question.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Minister, you have the floor.

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the additional funding will meet the expenditure for the regularisation of 995 Special Constables to become regular police constables. This is under Phase 2 of the restructure and the reform that the police are already undertaking. I said that

this year, they were to take in about 600 and for the next financial year, about 995, and that is why you have that.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Ro Teimumu Kepa, you have the floor.

HON. RO T.V. KEPA.- Programme 1, Activity 1, SEG 7 – Women in Policing (\$20,000). My question to the Honourable Minister is: what data is available and this would include sub-regional women's advisory network as more women are joining the Police Force? Thank you, Honourable Minister.

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Thank you, Honourable Chair, Sir. Let me assure the Honourable Member that we are doing our best to improve the working capacities and, of course, the supporting capabilities for our women police officers. Very briefly, the Women in Policing initiative and Women in Policing network was established to encourage and improve our women in the Police Force, and at the same time encourage equal employment opportunity within the organisation to enhance effective and efficient policing.

Under the South Pacific Defence Ministers' Meeting, this is one separate meeting where we have the senior police officers from all the member states that come together. I think the most recent one, if I remember correctly, was held in Port Moresby lately and through the senior women police officers they are working on their databases, but we in the Fiji Police Force we have our own database as well.

HON. RO T.V. KEPA.- Just for interest's sake, please, Honourable Minister, what is the percentage of women against the percentage of men in the Police Force in total? We are looking at gender parity.

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- I hope I have it here. Mr. Chair, let me just confirm and then I will get back, probably later because I have some figures here about the police.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Tabuya, you have the floor.

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- Honourable Chair, I actually have a motion that I would like to move in terms of Programme 1, Activity 1, SEG 9 for the Purchase of Police Boats and Outboard Engines. I move for this amount to be left out altogether. I do not see really the need for this to be under Police Headquarters, especially here in Suva or even Viti Levu because this would be better-needed in the maritime and outer islands, especially Kadavu, knowing that the naval boats are much closer to the islands in Viti Levu and not much patrol out in the maritime. So, removing that item altogether, Honourable Chair, will be better used elsewhere in other Heads.

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Mr. Chair, can I clarify.

HON. I. KURIDRANI.- I second the motion.

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Sorry!

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- You should have come to the workshop.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Do not indicate “second” by just looking, say something so I can hear you, then you should explain what your motion is. Honourable Minister, you have the floor.

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Mr. Chair, let me clarify to the Honourable Member, when you are purchasing new and critical capabilities, it is the responsibility of the Force’s Headquarters, then they will distribute these to the operational arms of the Force, that will be the case but the purchasing cannot be given to Kadavu because no one supplies these boats in Kadavu, that is why.

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- Silverwaters Company.

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- When we talk about capabilities, that is the responsibility of the Defence Ministry and the Headquarters of the respective Forces and then it will be distributed to them. Thank you, Chair.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Mr. Chair, if I could, please, clarify: Just from a budget perspective, if you look at all the ministries, like if you look at the Ministry of Health, you will see the Hospital in Navosa is actually in the Headquarters’ allocation. It does not mean that Navosa Hospital is going to build their headquarters in Toorak. What it means is that the headquarters is the one that calls for the tenders, that is where all the main purchases are done from, you see that in all the ministries. Do not think, as the Minister said, just because the boat is there, the boat will be kept by the people in headquarters in 3 Miles. The boat will go to wherever the boat is and there is water, that is where it will go to, but it is here because it is centralised, it is a major purchase. You will see that in all the ministries.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Yes, Honourable Tikoduadua, that is the last.

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- Thank you, Honourable Chair. A question with regards to SEG 8, Programme 1, Activity 1: It speaks of Construction of New Police Stations in Nakasi, Nadi, Lautoka and Nalawa, and upgrade of Nasese Garage Transport also. But just by way of query to the Minister, the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence was quite concerned about the security of the Force Headquarters in Nabua. I know it is not here, but is there any plans at all with regards to relocating, securing it better because it is definitely, I think, a security concern where it is.

HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- Who made that assessment that you are talking about?

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- Police or whoever put the Headquarters there in the first place.

HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- Who made that assessment that the security is not ...

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- The Chair is there. If you address the Chair, then I will answer.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- He is going through the Chair.

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- No, he is not, he is asking me.

(Honourable Member interjects)

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- I do not know, you should know.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- You are the one making the claim.

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- No, what I am saying is, when we look at where the Headquarters of the Police is, there is definitely a security issue with regards to that building. I have been there.

HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- And I am asking, who made that assessment?

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- I made the assessment. It is not safe. So, I am just saying, is there any thinking right now from the Ministry with regards to the Police HQ being relocated or not?

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Minister.

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Mr. Chairman, Sir, the police plan that we have goes until 2052 or 2053, if I remember correctly, Honourable Chairman, Sir. A new Police Headquarters is already in that, but it is a question of resources and timings. Right now we have immediate priorities, we still have Lautoka that needs to be fixed, we still have Nakasaleka, sorry, the one in Kadavu was destroyed. It is in the plan, but we will look at that later on. But these are the priorities, according to the Fiji Police Force for now, so that they can continue with their role. But, there are ways in which we can address the security issues if there are any and that will be the responsibility of the Commissioner. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, we will vote on the amendment by Honourable Tabuya.

Question put.

(Chorus of "Ayes" and "Noes")

Votes cast:

Ayes	:	23
Noes	:	27
Not Voted	:	1

Motion is defeated.

Activity 2?

(Chorus of "Noes")

HON. RO T.V. KEPA.- Activity 2, Honourable Chairman, this is on SEG 7 – Transnational Crime Unit (\$50,000). This is a very important allocation for a very important unit and this came up in the Police Report on the data collection.

I think for the Honourable Minister just to be aware that what it is saying is that there is disparity between what is actually happening on the ground and what was written up in that report. So, I am just wondering if this is enough to look at the strengths of Transnational Crime Unit or not in terms of your data collection, what is happening on the ground and what the police are saying is really happening or not happening? Thank you, Honourable Chairman.

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Sir. If I may just quickly answer the first question by the Honourable Member on the percentage of women in the Force. We have about 24 percent in the Regular Forces and we have about 31 percent as Special Constables, that is a huge increase from previous years, Honourable Chair.

On the Transnational Crime Unit, I think I have stated already. This is one unit that does not work in isolation and most of the costs are borne by the other agencies that we are a party to and, of course, we operate with. We just need to contribute our, whatever little that is required of us. But in terms of cost, it is shared between most of the agencies and that allocation is sufficient for the work that they do.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Activity 3?

(Chorus of "Noes")

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Clarification.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Niko Nawaikula.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Mr. Chairman, in relation to SEG 1 – Re-Engagement Bonus. What kind of bonus is this?

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Mr. Chairman, Sir, it is in the RFMF as well. It is in the Acts of both the Police and the RFMF. After a certain number of years of service serving as a Regular Force, you have to be re-engaged and there are benefits that come with that, so that is why you have that allocation.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Activity 4?

(Chorus of "Ayes" and "Noes")

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Leawere, you have the floor.

HON. M.R. LEAWERE.- Honourable Chairman, in terms of SEG 1 – Lodging Allowance, can I have an explanation from the honourable Minister as to who qualifies for this lodging allowance?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Those who do not get a quarters. As you know Police Officers get quarters, but those who cannot get quarters, they get a lodging allowance.

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- If I might just add, they are within the rank allocation as well. Certain ranks, because of their pay, they can find their own and, of course, there are special consideration for appointments.

If you are a Station Officer, you are entitled to a house within the police barracks, if there is none available in the police for them, then there will be government rent. It goes with appointments and, of course, ranking brackets as well. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Activity 5.

(Chorus of “Ayes” and “Noes”)

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Lynda Tabuya, you have the floor.

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- Thank you, Honourable Chairman. Programme 1, Activity 5, Eastern Division which concerns Kadavu, I am proposing, Honourable Chairman, that two new SEGs be created.

(Honourable Members interject)

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Order! order!

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- Honourable Chairman, the Capital Construction for the entire budget of the Fiji Police Force lies, of course, under Police Headquarters but it only covers Construction of New Police Stations in Nakasi, Nadi, Lautoka and Nalawa, which is \$6.7 million. I am proposing, Honourable Chairman, that there be an upgrade to Vunisea Police Station, which is in an appalling state.

It is literally falling apart, and I hope the Police Commissioner visited it more often. He would see what a bad state it is in, under the new SEG 6, Honourable Chairman, which I am proposing that the deduction from the Police boats in Activity 1 Programme 1, that I had proposed, that it would be used to upgrade Vunisea Police Station in the amount of \$627,178, because it is servicing 10,000 people on Kadavu - the whole island, and a new SEG 7 for the Purchase of the Police Boats and Outboard Engines (\$100,000) which is equivalent to about 8 outboard motors to service the entire island. That is what I am proposing also in the form of motions. It is only just and fair, Honourable Chairman, that this is provided for Kadavu.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Member, it does not work that way, that is the simple explanation to it, you cannot substitute one thing for another here.

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- Honourable Chairman, I am not doing that, Sir, I am sorry.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Member, you have got here - Head 20, Programme 1, Activity 5(6). There is no SEG 6.

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- Honourable Chairman, there is no provision for that, which is the proposal to do so in the Budget.

(Honourable Members interject)

MR. CHAIRMAN.- So it is not part of the discussion, what you should do is discuss what is here, that can come up in another time and you can see the Minister.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- She should have come to the workshop.

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- In that case, Honourable Chairman, I do withdraw these motions, but I would like to ask our Ministers and the Government to, please, consider upgrading Vunisea Police Station along with providing more boats for our police officers in Vunisea and all of Kadavu. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Member, your other motion is out of order too. Honourable Rasova, you have the floor.

HON. S.R. RASOVA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, on Head 20-1-5-(5) – Crime Prevention Strategy (\$20,000), whereby in real life here in Suva, there is a lot of court cases amongst youth of Kadavu on *marijuana*, it is almost every week. I think we do not have a Crime Prevention Strategy to go and do awareness around Kadavu to tell them. If the Minister can put some clarification on that \$20,000 because I would like to move a motion after you clarify? *Vinaka*.

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Thank you, Mr. Chair, Sir, reliable information for Kadavu comes from the Honourable Prime Minister, ...

HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- Hey.

(Laughter)

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- ... and he has just told me that there is Crime Prevention Workshops going on in Kadavu but you are not attending, through you, Mr. Chair, Sir.

But this is mainly with the Duavata Community and why minimal cost, because most of these, the responsibility is more with the *Vanua* and the Police is just facilitating this Duavata Community Initiative. That is why you will see minimal cost in this, but sufficient for Kadavu. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, Parliament will now vote on Head 20. The question is that the amount of Head No. 20 – Fiji Police Force, be approved, does any Member oppose the motion?

Votes Cast:

Ayes : 27

Noes : 24

The motion is, therefore, agreed to.

Head 20 agreed to.

Head 21 - Ministry of Education, Heritage and Arts:

MR. CHAIRMAN.- The floor is now open for any comments on Programme 1-1.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- A question to the Honourable Minister in relation to Head 21, Programme 1, Activity 1, SEGs (1) and (2): This applies to all Activities under SEGs 1 and 2, in relation to the allocation for Staff and Wage Earners. The reduction is about \$26 million, and I want to ask the Honourable Minister to clarify what will be the implication of this reduction, especially to the recruitment, hopefully next year for teachers from Natabua, FNU and USP, whether that allocation can accommodate that and how many teachers can that accommodate?

HON. R.S. AKBAR.- Mr. Chairman, Sir, through you, we are looking at Policy and Administration in Programme 1-1 which talks about General Administration. In this SEG 1 and SEG 2, we are looking at 190 Administration staff, we are not looking at teachers as we go to the other Programmes and Activities, we will be looking at other teachers' salaries and numbers. But the decrease here should not affect the number of staff currently employed as the operational staff based at Headquarters, we have 190 as I said. We are going through a restructure to confirm the exact number of the staff establishment later on. But I can assure you that there are no salary deductions and no staff reductions in this SEG.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- You did not answer my question.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- If I could help? Honourable Nawaikula, the allocation that has been given, so far there is still an under-utilisation of it. There is about a little less than 90 percent utilisation of SEG 1. As the Honourable Minister for Foreign Affairs highlighted earlier on, sometimes salaries are plugged at a higher rate when they are actually receiving the lower rate in the band. But as you also know that people do retire on a daily basis too, that is why recruitments are also made. It does not affect the intake because people are leaving, and the calculations have been made on that basis, so therefore the recruitment will not be affected.

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a further clarification on this SEG 1 questions to the Honourable Minister to clarify about the needs of their students in some respective subject areas? How has the Ministry going forward, going to address the needs of the students in terms of subject areas that are in demand or probably in need, in terms of the overall education system in Fiji?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- No, no he is just asking a general question, teacher requirements you know science, maths.

HON. R.S. AKBAR.- Mr. Chairman, through you, if we are looking at the shortages in the subject areas, yes, we are re-engaging retirees in those areas where we have shortages and as and when graduates graduate from the tertiary institutions, they are given teaching positions within the Ministry.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- We also have the Scholarship Scheme that we announced last year for teachers who are already engaged for them to specialise in areas and we give scholarships for

them. We pay them to, for example, become specialists in Science or Maths or Physics and English, which is where the shortages are.

HON. M.R. LEAWERE.- Mr. Chairman, Programme 1-1(6), there is a reduction in Transport Assistance (\$20,000,000) compared to last year's Budget. Can we have some clarification from the Honourable Minister?

HON. R.S. AKBAR.- Yes, Mr. Chairman, through you, the decrease is implying the review of the initiative that we are going to conduct in ensuring that assistance is targeted to the right group of people. I did mention that there are abuses to it. We found out that the programme is currently being abused by some parents who are using their student's bus fare cards and even through the screening process, we found out that some schools are not giving us the correct information about those that actually need this assistance. We are going to meet up with stakeholders and ensure that we prevent this fraud and, of course, that will enable us to work within the decrease that we have been given.

At the moment, as of Term 1, 2019, we have been assisting more than 100,000 students under this Bus Fare Assistance Scheme but we seriously believe that these numbers could be reduced if we actually review this programme and provide assistance to the targeted group who really deserve the assistance.

HON. M.R. LEAWERE.- Mr. Chairman, in terms of this assistance, what about schools where the students cross the rivers, are they also eligible for this assistance? For example, Mavua where students cross the river to get across to the school on the other side. We have children from Naimasimasi crossing over to Nuku on the other side, and this is why clarification is being sought. Can we have some explanations from the Honourable Minister?

HON. R.S. AKBAR.- Yes, these students are assisted through the vouchers that we give to RSL (Rural Service Licence) service providers, and those who provide assistance to students who travel on boats. Of course, that is the priority area for us and there is no cut backs into that.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- I give the floor to the honourable Ro Teimumu Kepa, you have the floor on the first of your seven motions. No comments regarding this.

HON. RO T.V. KEPA.- Mr. Chair, I would like to bring up a motion on Programme 1, Activity 1, SEGs 1 and 2.

I would like to move a motion to increase both allocations to what you have for the Estimates in 2018-2019. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

HON. RATU N.T. LALABALAVU.- I second the motion, Mr. Chair.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- You have the floor, honourable Ro Teimumu Kepa.

HON. RO T.V. KEPA.- Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would like to increase the allocations because whilst I want to be reassured by the words of the honourable Attorney-General and also the honourable Minister for Education in that there is more than enough in this allocation, I am reaffirmed by the honourable Attorney-General that no civil servant will lose their job or be set aside; that is the first thing.

The other, more importantly, Mr. Chair, is that in the previous Auditor-General's Report, and I think it goes back to 2015 and five years before that, it says there that there has not been enough in that allocation for SEGs 1 and 2 in which they have always overspent.

So if this allocation is reduced and do they have those numbers in the Headquarters and with the other offices, I am not sure how that is going to be done, Mr. Chair. Those are the concerns that I bring forward and also from the civil servants that are working in that Ministry, in terms of the Budget cuts and also the question that they are asking is where are the salary increments from 2018-2019? Where is it here, that is another question that they are asking, in terms of the allocations for SEGs 1 and 2. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Mr. Chair, Sir, just to clarify the Honourable Ro Teimumu Kepa, she quoted 2015 Audit Report. But if she looks at Page 116, 2017-2018, SEG 1 had \$3.4 million. Look at 2018-2019, it doubled, almost doubled. So obviously that took care of the fact that there was you know, previously under allocation to that particular SEG.

Now that you have the right amount and given the experience of the past one year and the fact that we are able to then rationalise, given vacancies, given the fact or under-utilisation, we now come up with this figure. So by quoting 2015, outdated figure, you can see yourself that it went up from \$3.4 million to \$6.3 million. Now we are proposing at \$4.5 million, so therefore we are comfortable.

HON. RO T.V. KEPa.- Mr. Chair, the Auditor-General's Report also states in the 2016 Report that they also overspent, and that was the last report looking at the Ministry of Education's Report. That is why we are asking you to update your reports so we can keep up to the mark with the actual happenings on the ground and it is reflected too in the Auditor-General's Report. Thank you.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Just look at the Estimates, it is there in the Estimates, I think I have made my point.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Bulitavu.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- I speak in support of the motion on the increase of SEGs 1 and 2. Time and again we hear the explanation given by the honourable Attorney-General to see the figures on the paper here. But the reality, most of the rural teachers and teachers when they see their bank statement even though they have already done their assessment from the job evaluation exercise, and also the new contracts, MyAPA, et cetera, but they are not receiving the increment as promised. I want to say this and ask the honourable Minister for Education, what is really wrong, whether it is still on paper or whether we are just saying it, just lip-service; but the teachers are not receiving it.

Not only that, the expiry of contract and the offer letter not arriving on time. It is also affecting their loan applications, as most of them want to go to the bank they cannot access because of this. I am talking on rural teachers - the locality allowances, allowances in rural areas given that they are very far from urban areas, whether this is really happening or it is just shown here to have increased but in reality, teachers talk to us, they do bring their salary slips to us and it is not reflected, there is no pay increase. Please, honourable Minister, if you can throw some light on that.

HON. R.S. AKBAR.- Thank you, Mr. Chair, through you, we constantly hear in the House of generalised statements and if I can ask the Honourable Member, when you have cases like that, please, do

refer to us. Please, refrain from making general statements because I also go out in the public and I talk to my teachers, the story I get is different. Yes, I understand their issues. I am not saying we are perfect. I am saying, yes, but when there are cases, please, bring it to us. I receive emails on a daily basis and we address that.

In terms of MyAPA, we finalised the MyAPA assessments and you have got to understand that MyAPA payments will be based on performance. Those that have performed, yes, I can assure the teachers that we have completed that and that MyAPA payment will come from this year's Budget, not next year's Budget. They will be paid. Those who have qualified will be paid.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Biman Prasad, you have the floor.

HON. R.S. AKBAR.- I can assure that teachers who have performed will be paid in this financial year.

HON. PROF. B.C. PRASAD.- Thank you, Mr. Chair. I hear the honourable Minister for Education and her assurance that teachers would be getting their fair share. What I am concerned, if what honourable Kepa said the other day I think she quoted a figure where she said that we have a vacancy rate of about 300 to 400 teachers. If that is the case then there will obviously be a case to have a better allocation for salaries and wages.

I know the honourable Attorney-General also talked about teachers leaving. So, I think one of the critical issues would be for relieving teachers in the case of vacancies. But I think we need to also look at how many people are training for teachers in tertiary institutions, and whether there is going to be some kind of match between what we need in the schools and what we are training. I think it would be very prudent to plan for these contingencies for the next two or three years by having a reasonable allocation, not only for training, but I think when we talk about TELS, for specific scholarships for people to go into teacher training.

I know in countries where they have had issues about people going into teaching, they actually promote special scholarships for those who want to go into the teaching professions. I am just linking the vacancies and the fact that you might need relieving teachers, the fact that you might have to encourage teachers to go into rural schools with further allowances, et cetera. I think those are real issues that the honourable Minister would confront within your own teaching profession.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, we will now vote

Votes Cast:

Ayes	:	22
Noes	:	26
Not Voted	:	3

Motion is defeated.

Honourable Members, I give the floor to the honourable Ro Teimumu Kepa.

HON. RO T.V. KEPA.- Thank you, Honourable Chair. I am looking at Transport Assistance, Mr. Chair, which is Programme 1, Activity 1, SEG 6. My motion is to increase the Transport Assistance from \$20 million to \$25 million, which was the original allocation. Thank you, Honourable Chair.

HON. OPPOSITION MEMBER.- I second the motion.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- You have the floor, honourable Kepa.

HON. RO T.V. KEPa.- Thank you, Mr. Chair, they are laughing over there but the people are not laughing, honourable Chair, and especially the honourable Prime Minister.

(Honourable Members interject)

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Member, you do not worry about this side, I look after this side.

(Laughter)

HON. RO T.V. KEPa.- *Sega o koya ga e dau dredre tiko vakalevu. O Turaga Naita ga e dau dredre tiko vakalevu.* In English, it is the honourable Prime Minister who is always laughing at me; but I can take it because he is *Turaga Naita*.

Honourable Chair, because of the transport assistance from \$25million to \$20 million, it was articulated by the Honourable Attorney General in his Budget Address, some of the issues that come up in regards to this assistance which is an initiative by FijiFirst. Now, this one is a very good initiative, however, it has to be (how can I put it) well-regulated or implemented, everything that needs to be done, as many of these students come from poor families and when you are depriving them of something that you had already given them, ...

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- We are not depriving them.

HON. RO T.V. KEPa.- You are depriving them, ...

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- We are depriving them.

HON. RO T.V. KEPa.- ... and these are the ones who are travelling by bus and also travelling by boat as Honourable Leawere had brought up. In Rewa, they use the river a lot, so this is a boat assistance too. I would ask for this increase from \$20 million to \$25 million, and they need to put some means testing or something on board if they want to cut it back to whatever it is that they are saying that they are going to cut it back too.

In this instance, it is from \$25 to \$20 which should not be done. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Yes, Honourable Minister.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Thank you. Mr. Chairman Sir, we are not cutting back the initiative. We are simply taking out the fraud from it. We are not cutting back the transport assistance for those travelling by boats, we are not cutting back the assistance for those travelling by RSL, we are simply cutting back on the people who are abusing the system. We know that fully regarding the e-ticketing process, we just received data again some more data where we have seen that e-ticketing for school children that we subsidise or we pay the full amount is being used between 10.00 a.m. and 2.00 p.m.

This is the time when the students are in the schools so it is obviously not the students who are using it, it is the parents who are using it. As a result of that happening, it went up to \$25 million. It is not our fault. The next thing you are going to say that if someone commits an offence under the Criminal Act, you will say it is my fault too. Of course, not. The fact of it, it is not different. If we give someone a particular assistance for a particular purpose, that is what it needs to be used for. No other government, Mr. Chairman, Sir, has given so much money and resources to get our school children to schools.

HON. GOVERNMENT MEMBERS.- Hear, hear!!

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM. No other government has paid for punts, boats, RSLs and buses, and to actually provide that level of funding is never being done. So, Mr. Chairman, Sir, please, I urge the Honourable Kepa to put it into perspective.

The reality is, the initiative is not being taken away. The reality is that, there are some people who are abusing the system and what we are saying is that, we have identified the areas and because if we take away that abuse, we will only need to fund \$20 million.

Let me give you an example: A few years ago when we started this, we actually had the paper voucher system. We found that there were senior students in cahoots with some teachers, photocopying the vouchers and then selling that. Now, obviously, they cannot do that because we have the actual e-ticketing card.

Now, some parents are abusing it because they take it off their children and use it themselves. So we are now going to curtail those times when they can travel because that will ensure that the school children continue to get that funding and it will be done on a sustainable basis.

An Honourable Member from the other side, I think it was Honourable Tuisawau, earlier on said, "Take this money from there and subsidise food because this year we can save enough money." Once you start a programme, you must let it continue, there needs to be sustainability.

We want sustainability for this. There will be a lot more children coming through the system. We want all of them to get the assistance, who deserve it. That is the reason why it has been done. We are not curtailing the assistance.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Niko Nawaikula.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wish to talk briefly on the motion and support it.

It is asking to increase this assistance by \$5 million so that it is \$25 million, I think it is justified, especially because there are a lot of gaps in this transport system. There needs to be a total review, and it is totally unfair for the Honourable Minister for Economy to come here and criticise the children and their parents when ...

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- I'm not criticizing the children

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- ... Government itself has not set up a proper system, so use that money to review the whole system, that is an example, again.

Students do not always travel by buses. There are some instances where they need to travel by boat and then travel by bus. There is a situation in Tavua where the buses go up only to a spot, and they were forced to walk when they should not be, it is better use this much more, \$5 million, to review the whole system and look at the gaps and mend it, it is totally justified, and I support the motion.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, we will vote on this motion.

Votes cast:

Ayes	:	23
Noes	:	27
Not voted	:	1

Motion is defeated.

Honourable Members, I give the floor to the Honourable Ro Teimumu Kepa to move her motion. You have the floor, Madam.

HON. RO T.V. KEPa.- Honourable Chairman, have we finished with Programme 1-1?

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- I beg your pardon, Honourable Adi Litia Qionibaravi, you have the floor.

HON. ADI L. QIONIBARAVI.- Thank you, Sir. I would like to move a motion on Head 21-1-1(8). I would like to move: That the allocation to upgrade and maintain Government schools, construction of new facilities for Government Schools and Teachers Quarters for Government Schools, totalling \$2 million at the moment to be increased to \$5 million, Sir.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- I second the motion, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Qionibaravi, you have the floor.

HON. ADI L. QIONIBARAVI.- Thank you, Sir. These schools were established and classified as Government schools for good reasons. The status of the schools todate warrant an injection of a huge sum of money to upgrade the schools and ultimately, we hope that Government can modernise the facilities at these schools.

The schools are also overcrowded when we look at the number of students and the facilities that are present in these schools. This is why I am moving that consideration be given to increasing the \$2 million allocation to \$5 million, Sir, an increase by \$3 million to, at least, ensure that there are some improvements in the status of these schools. I am looking at SEG 8.

(Honourable Government Member interjects)

HON. ADI L. QIONIBARAVI.- No, I am seeking an increase by \$1.5 million the Upgrade and Maintenance of Government Schools (\$300,000); Construction of New Facilities for Government Schools, an increase by \$300,000; and Teachers Quarters for Government Schools (\$200,000) - that is \$2 million.

(Hon. A. Sayed-Khaiyum interjects)

HON. ADI L. QIONIBARAVI.- Yes, I am looking at the totality of that amount. If I am required to take each allocation individually then to Upgrade the Maintenance of the Government Schools from \$300,000 to a total of \$1 million; Construction of New Facilities, a total of \$2.5 million; and Teachers and Quarters, a total of \$1 million.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, we will now vote on this motion.

Votes cast:

Ayes	:	22
Noes	:	27
Not Voted	:	2

Motion is defeated.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, I give the floor to the Honourable Ro Teimumu Kepa for her motion.

HON. RO T.V. KEPA.- Honourable Chairman, my next motion is on Programme 2-1(5), that is on the Free Milk Programme, for an increase from \$400,000 to what it was in 2018-2019 which was \$3.1 million.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Programme 1 on Wages.

HON. RO T.V. KEPA.- I think, I put it together, Honourable Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Are you withdrawing this?

HON. RO T.V. KEPA.- Yes, SEGs 1 and 2. Thank you.

HON. A. JALE.- I second the motion, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- You have the floor.

HON. RO T.V. KEPA.- On?

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Head 21, increase by \$50,000 in Programme 2, Activity 2, SEG 5 - Boarding Schools - Materials and Stores (\$50,000).

HON. RO T.V. KEPÄ.- Can I just speak on the Free Milk Programme, Honourable Chairman, which is Programme 2-Activity 1 on Free Milk. On that, my motion is to increase it from \$400,000 to \$3.1 million which it was originally, before they decreased the allocation to \$400,000, because in that decrease, they were planning to just offer milk to the rural and maritime students.

My motion is because children, especially at that age - 5 years old, 6 years old, 7 years old, their bones and teeth are still being formed, they need the calcium, so they probably need it more than the rural students. The Honourable Prime Minister who is laughing there, his grandchildren also need this milk. So that is my motion.

Thank you, Honourable Chairman.

(Laughter)

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Professor Prasad, you have the floor.

HON. PROF. B.C. PRASAD.- Thank you, Honourable Chairman. Let me just say, I think when Government puts out a particular programme, there is always a need to review the effectiveness and whether the programme itself is successful and is delivering the outcome, I have no issues when Government goes back and looks at it.

But I am actually a bit puzzled, like the bus fare as well. I am not sure whether there has been a specific study to determine, of course, Honourable Chairman, there will always be a certain level of abuse. No matter what you do, there will always be a certain amount of abuse. We do not tolerate those, but the reality is that they happen.

I think what we need to know is, if we are saying that children in the urban areas do not milk and is based on the abuse of whatever crime, then we need to know what percentage of schools or students in that category are not using or getting the milk, unless we have that kind of statistics or analysis, there are a lot of poor students also in urban schools. In fact, if you look at their number, as opposed to what you have in the rural areas, the numbers in the rural areas are declining day by day. I do not know on what basis the Government has made the decision to say, "We are taking away milk from urban kids."

Similarly, when we had the discussion on the bus fare, we always want to say, "People should not abuse the system. Those who are meant to benefit from the scheme should benefit." But the reality is, there will always be a certain level of abuse and if they abuse, it is not high. If 5 percent of students are misusing their cards, it would not be right to penalise 90 per cent of those who might be doing the right thing and using their cards or benefiting from the free milk in the urban areas as well. I would like to know, what kind of review study the Government did on these policies before announcing this reduction?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Sir.

Mr. Chairman, again, if I could reiterate, the bus fare is not being taken away. The transport assistance is not being taken away. Those children will continue to

(Honourable Professor Biman Prasad interjects)

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- You just said that in the same vein, that it has been taken away, it is not being taken away. This is the beauty about e-ticketing which all of you have debunked and have that it is for the rich and all those kind of things. The beauty of e-ticketing is that, it gives you exactly when people are travelling, what routes they are taking - that is exactly the details it gives you. Do not shake your head, that is what it does. We can get the data from knowing which card travel where.

HON. PROF. B.C. PRASAD.- Have you got the data?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- What we have said, Mr. Chairman, Sir, that we have found the travel patterns indicate that these e-ticketing cards have been used by those people who are not actually students and if you factor in those times and the travel cost, it actually gives us that ability to reduce the funding by \$5 million, that is what we are saying.

HON. PROF. B.C. PRASAD.- How did you determine that?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Mr. Chairman, Sir, I have already said this. When you are able to extract the data, you are also able to extract the fare levels. That is what we have said.

No. 2, regarding milk, it is very interesting that suddenly now they have all become advocates of Free Milk Programme. I remember the Honourable Lalabalavu who is sitting now, when Honourable Karavaki used to be here, when he used to move motions getting rid of the milk altogether from the budgetary allocations, all of them voted for it, including Honourable Kepa; they all voted for it. They said get rid of it, this is for CJ Patel, this is not needed. Honourable Rasova now is saying that one year olds still breastfeed, all of that.

(Hon. S.R. Rasova interjects)

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Our Class 1 students too still breastfeed.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, the reality, of course, is that we have said that we are going to roll it back because we are saying that those students in deep rural areas and maritime areas have a lot more problems getting access to products like milk and obviously the Ministry of Education, together with the Desk Officer at the Ministry of Economy, has been monitoring this.

It has been in place for the past four, five years which you have constantly rejected and obviously four, five years is enough time to be able to ascertain ...

HON. PROF. B.C. PRASAD.- Where is the data?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- ... the patterns which is obviously done by the Ministry of Education. Based on that, the policy call which is a prerogative of the Government of the day is that this is how we will go forward with this policy, based on that. Because this was the prerogative of the Government to put this policy in the first place and now after four, five years of this particular facility, we have decided that this is what we are going to do based on the intelligence gathering with the Ministry of Education has come up with.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, we will vote on this motion. We have discussed it sufficiently.

Votes cast:

Ayes	:	23
Noes	:	27
Not voted	:	1

Motion is defeated.

Programme 2, Activity 2?

(Chorus of “Noes”)

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Programme 2, Activity 3?

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Mr. Chairman, Sir, Programme 2, Activity 3. This is in relation to Primary Schools, SEG 1, I assume that the amount there is in relation to the salaries for the Primary School teachers in non-Government Primary Schools. Government is very insignificant so that is the bulk of where teachers are employed. The allotment for Established Staff has been slashed by \$13 million. So, I want to ask the Minister whether taking that into account, that salary deduction, taking into account also that there will be retirements. How many new primary school teachers can the Ministry expect to employ next year, especially the graduates from USP and Natabua?

HON. R.S. AKBAR.- Mr. Chairman, how many new primary school graduates will the Ministry be able to absorb?

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Yes.

HON. R.S. AKBAR.- At the moment, we have a total of 5,784 teachers in both the Government and Non-Government Primary Schools. Over the past four, five years, if you look at the data of the number of primary school graduates who have emerged from the training institutions, we have been able to absorb all. This is based on the fact that, as the honourable Minister for Economy mentioned about teachers retiring, and in many cases, yes, we do have teachers resigning to opt for other options; teachers migrate, these are the issues that we look at. At present, I do not know how many teachers are going to graduate from the institutions this year, but based on the previous trends, we are able to absorb all primary school teachers, because we still have primary school teacher shortage in Fiji.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Activity 4? Honourable Leawere?

HON. M.R. LEAWERE.- Yes, Mr. Chairman. Programme 2, Activity 4, SEG 1 – Personal Emoluments. In terms of the staff that are there in this section, how many staff members are entitled or eligible for this amount allocated in SEG 1?

HON. R.S. AKBAR.- Mr. Chairman, through you, for Programme 2, Activity 4, I do not have exact staff numbers for Special Education Teachers.

HON. M.R. LEAWERE.- ... but you have the amount?

HON. R.S. AKBAR.- Yes, but we have the amount that we have been given to work with.

HON. M.R. LEAWERE.- Mr. Chairman, further to that, is that the grant that is given to these Special Schools?

HON. R.S. AKBAR.- Grants to Special Schools, yes. These grants are disbursed to Special Schools as a grant to support the delivery of the programme and that is normally to meet the costs associated with the recruitment of specialised teachers, procurement and special aids. The current number of students assisted through this is 1,226 and we have a total of 17 Special Schools across the country.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, I give the floor to the Honourable Ro Teimumu Kepa.

HON. RO T.V. KEPA.- Mr. Chairman, are we still on Programme 2-5?

MR. CHAIRMAN.- No, we are on Programme 2, Activity 4. You have a motion on Special Education.

HON. RO T.V. KEPA.- On Special Education, Honourable Chair, on SEG 6.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- You are withdrawing the motion?

HON. RO T.V. KEPA.- I think so. I think I got it mixed up.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Activity 5?

(Chorus of “Noes”)

HON. PROF. B.C. PRASAD.- Mr. Chairman, I just want an additional clarification on the allocation for Special Education, I notice there is a reduction of \$159,000. If I heard the Honourable Minister correctly, I think you implied that there would be an increase in the number of students but you are facing a reduction of \$159,000. How are you going to cope with that?

HON. R.S. AKBAR.- Through you, Mr. Chairman, yes, I am not saying “increase”, I said the current number of students assisted currently are 1,226. A point to note here is that these Special Schools are assisted by a lot of NGOs and the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation (which also has the grant for these schools).

MR. CHAIRMAN.- You have the floor, Honourable Ro Teimumu Kepa.

HON. RO T.V. KEPA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is on Programme 2, Activity 5, SEG 8: Construction of New Facilities for ECCE Centres and Infant Schools (\$300,000). The honourable Attorney-General had stated that all new constructions will be up to Category 4 standard. So I just want to be reassured by him that this will be the case in the construction of these schools, particularly because they will be housing children, particularly the young ones in the infant schools. So can he reassure us that they will be able to withstand Category 4 winds as he has stated? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

HON. RATU N.T. LALABALAVU.- I second the motion.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Mr. Chair, we had said that all the rebuilds that we have done for schools, obviously we need to be up to a particular standard. In this particular specific construction, we are targeting Nailou Infant School which is in Cakaudrove. It includes 1 x 3 classroom, two teacher’s quarters, seven ablution blocks and that is the total cost for that. That is the target for us in this particular budget allocation.

HON. RO T.V. KEPA.- Can I speak to the motion, Mr. Chair?

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Yes.

HON. RO T.V. KEPA.- I thank the Honourable Attorney-General for his reassurance there because some of these schools will be in cyclone-prone areas and that is why we need this reassurance that nothing is going to happen like it did for *Tropical Cyclone Winston*. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. We will vote.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- What is the motion, Sir?

MR. CHAIRMAN.- The motion is that Head 21 be increased by \$500,000 in Programme 2, Activity 5, SEG 8 with respect to ECCE Centres and Infant schools.

HON. A.SAYED-KHAIYUM.- I think I have already responded to that.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Yes, you have. Honourable Lynda Tabuya, you have the floor.

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would like to contribute to the debate on the motion to ask of the Honourable Minister as to how many ECCE Schools are being planned for Kadavu? Thank you.

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. R.S. AKBAR.- Mr. Chair, through you, I am not able to provide the answer as to how many ECCE Centres have been planned for Kadavu. But “yes”, ECCE Centres are normally built in consultation with the community and it is based on their needs, and based on the data we have, I can assure you that we have 18,699 students currently enrolled in 875 registered ECCE Centres. A base grant for standalone centres categorised as remote or very remote is that \$500 and \$1,000 respectively, 158 ECCE Centres identified in these two categories for which 85 as remote and 73 very remote.

In terms of new facilities, I can get back to you later but the numbers I have is for those that we currently have.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, we will vote on this motion.

Votes cast:

Ayes	:	23
Noes	:	27
Not Voted	:	1

Motion is defeated.

Programme 3, Activity 1.

(Chorus of “Noes”)

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Programme 3, Activity 2.

(Chorus of “Ayes” and “Noes”)

MR. CHAIRMAN.- There is a motion by the Honourable Adi Litia Qionibaravi. Honourable Member, you have the floor to move your motion.

HON. ADI L. QIONIBARAVI.- Thank you, Sir. I would like to move a motion: Programme 3, Activity 2, SEG 5 - Boarding School Food and Supplies (\$2,800,000) - currently sitting at \$2.8 million, to be increased to \$4 million.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- I second the motion, Mr. Chair.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- You have the floor, Honourable Adi Litia Qionibaravi.

HON. ADI L. QIONIBARAVI.- Sir, it is normal that in all of these boarding schools, before the end of the school year, there is always insufficient food left in the school, and organisations, including old scholars, parents and teachers put in money to ensure that the children are able to have something to eat before the end of the school year. I am asking that the allocation be increased by \$1.2 million to take it up to \$4 million, Sir. Mr. Chair, I also have another motion - same SEG, Sir.

HON. R.S. AKBAR.- Mr. Chair, through you, can I respond: I do not recall when the last increase was made for Boarding School Food and Supplies, and we have already increased it by \$1.3 million. This \$4 (per boarder) is for those schools that have land because we want to encourage parents, children and

teachers to get into gardening and providing basic food supplies. I am sure there are many Government schools that have a lot of land available.

Our survey has shown that this land is not utilised so we want to get our children into being self-sufficient. We have allocated \$6 (per boarder) for those schools that have no land for gardening. At the moment, this funding is allocated for Government boarding schools to procure food and supplies for boarders and we have close to 3,225 students in our boarding schools, I believe the increase is sufficient.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Lynda Tabuya, you have the floor.

HON. L. TABUYA.- Thank you, just a point of clarification on the same discussion from the Minister: How does she intend to see that we will be manning the farms and teaching them how to farm, the children and schools, the teachers are supposed to be teaching so who is there because as far as staffing for farm managers and farm hands, is that amount of \$4 sufficient because this increase would also look at staff that need to look after the farms. I remember I was in boarding school during those days that we had a farm manager and we have several farm hands, they are not there anymore, they have been removed from the schools. We do not have farms any more so how do you intend to cover that?

HON. R.S. AKBAR.- Mr. Chair, through you, one of the things we have done is we have started an audit for our Government schools. It has brought to our attention that at one time, these schools, children and the community were actively engaged in farming. That is one thing that we want to bring back. The schools have an operational grant under that SEG that we will encourage them to use to employ farm hands. Of course, after school we want our children to be engaged in that. I think this was very well-linked up with our schools' gardening competition that we want to encourage, and I am sure with the Ministry of Agriculture, we can work with providing seedlings and advice and other farm machinery that they need. I think we all should agree to that, getting our children more engaged after school and, of course, the teachers who are in boarding schools to supervise - a good way to involve the community and the parents as well.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Bulitavu, you have the floor.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Thank you, Sir, I will speak in favour of the motion in regards to boarding schools and food supplies, and also in the same program, you have farm and ground machinery. If you look into that Honourable Minister, the point that has been raised by the mover of the motion, the Honourable Qionibaravi is totally correct - the lack of food supply for Government schools and this is really bad for Government schools. We have several government schools in Fiji and this is a very common issue towards the end of the term where old scholars will have to provide some assistance to the school.

Also on the farming equipment, I think you have to do proper auditing in most of these government schools, most of their tractors are not working. Even recently in one of the boarding schools, inmates have also come in to plant cassava and help in their farms and even after being given the farm managers' requests, through the Principal to the Ministry, nothing has been done by the Ministry.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Which school?

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- I think RKS, QVS and even ACS. I have even sent an email to the Honourable Minister and the Honourable Minister knows very well I think last two months in regards to the boarding facilities at ACS.

She is now signalling that she will be attending to that, thank you for receiving that email, but again the same thing for government schools and also the repair of these government schools and also the boarding facilities. I think most of them are condemned and the recent fire at ACS is just another signal of the properties that we have, that government should deploy plenty money to improve those facilities. Not only that, also I agree with the Honourable Professor Biman Prasad for a proper research to be done.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- On what?

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- On the various programmes targeted for these schools and to give you some assessment on where we are heading.

When we were talking about the Free Transport Scheme, it is not only the fraud element of that allocation. If you look at the RSL payment,

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- He is no longer talking about the motion, he is just meandering.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Member, just talk about Activity 2-(5) with respect to Boarding School Food and Supplies, that is it.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Thank you. I agree with the motion that we should provide more for government schools because they reflect the status of the government. If the government cannot provide for its own school then it is a poor government, a poor reflection on the government and that is something that we should all support this motion for, not only for education but also supporting government schools and how they treat students who are in boarding schools.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Tuisawau, you have the floor.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- No, ladies first.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Ro Filipe Tuisawau

HON. RO F. TUISAWAU.- I just wanted to clarify that I am not a lady.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Are you sure? You should be

HON. RO F. TUISAWAU.- A full-blooded male, you know. Sir, I speak in support of the motion and also commend Honourable Minister regarding the increase. I am commending both of them, I think just on the point raised by Honourable Prasad - the research part. My children are also in the boarding schools, and one of the main problems is the type of food, and when we go there, they are saying, "We are fed up of eating dhal, every day is dhal."

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. RO F. TUISAWAU.- No, no, that is the reality here. We need proper research on the dietary needs of the specific age group of the students there and then align the food budget to that dietary need, especially these are growing teenagers, I think that will be a good ...

(Honourable Member interjects)

HON. RO F. TUISAWAU.- Could you, please, listen.

... strategy going into the future just to supplement what Honourable Akbar has initiated. *Vinaka.*

HON. R.S. AKBAR.- Mr. Chair, if I can just make a final comment: I have sat in this House for the last four years and never, never have I heard anyone talk about meal allowance for our students in boarding schools, it never came from the Opposition. Today, when there is an increase in this area, suddenly everybody has started coming up: where was your concern all these years?

Like I said, we do not know when the last increase was and, Honourable Bulitavu, there is a lot of things that we can do. The Honourable Member said he is a parent. We really want to involve parents in the children's education as well, so this is a very good initiative. The amount of allocation that we have got, I think, is enough. Let us, our children, engage community involvement in this. I think, Honourable Attorney-General would remember, the first thing I asked the Honourable Attorney-General, "Can we increase the food allowances for our children?" We have been given an increase and I am happy with that and obviously as we progress, we will seek further increases.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, we have discussed this item enough and we will go to the vote.

Votes cast:

Ayes	:	22
Noes	:	27
Not voted	:	2

Motion is defeated.

Honourable Members, we will now suspend proceedings for dinner and this is provided in the Big Committee Room. Parliament will resume in an hour. We adjourn for dinner. *Vinaka.*

The Parliament adjourned at 6.57 p.m.

The Parliament resumed at 8.01 p.m.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, I give the floor to the Honourable Adi Litia Qionibaravi to move an amendment to Head 21, Programme 3, Activity 2, SEG 5. You have the floor.

HON. ADI L. QIONIBARAVI.- Thank you, Sir. I move that the allocation under Programme 3, Activity 2, SEG 5 - Boarding School Materials and Stores (\$25,000), for Government Schools be increased by \$75,000 to take it up to \$100,000, Sir.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- I second the motion, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Qionibaravi, you have the floor.

HON. ADI L. QIONIBARAVI.- Thank you, Sir, the justification for that increase is to ensure that the needs of all the Government Boarding Schools are catered for, and \$25,000 for the ten or so Government Schools is not sufficient. We need to put it up to \$100,000 in order to make sure that all the school materials and stores are catered for. Thank you, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Any further comments?

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Yes, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Bulitavu.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- I support the motion by the honourable Adi Litia Qionibaravi on Boarding School Materials and Stores be increased to a sum of \$100,000 - increase by \$75,000.

Boarding School Materials and Stores in terms also of farming materials: knives, spades, forks and other items regarding boarding like mattresses, mosquito nets and everything should be in humane conditions. Given the cold weather too that they be given warm sleeping materials that are suitable, given the changing weather patterns and everything that will be required for the stores, also their dining halls and other things that will change the life of the students in the environment that they are in before they go to classes in the morning. *Vinaka vakalevu.*

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, we will proceed to the vote on this motion.

Votes Cast:

Ayes	:	22
Noes	:	25
Not Voted	:	4

Motion is defeated.

Programme 4 - Activity 1; Activity 2, Activity 3, Programme 5:

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Mr. Chairman, SEGs 8 and 10: what are the criteria for non-Government schools to obtain this grant on construction?

MR. CHAIRMAN.- This is in Programme 4, Activity 3 we are on.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- I thought we were in Programme 3, Honourable Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- We have gone through Programme 3, we are in Programme 4 now, and we have gone through Activities 1, 2 and 3.

HON. M.R. LEAWERE.- Programme 4, Activity 3, School Broadcast Unit - an allocation of \$30,000, can we have some clarification from the honourable Minister, what is that used for? Is it just for talking on the radio or is that allocation used for printing materials for schools?

HON. R.S. AKBAR.- Mr. Chairman, through you, the allocation of \$30,000 for 2019-2020, this will be used for funding the production of educational programmes for broadcast nationwide on radio in partnership with FBC. The School Broadcast Unit produces three (3) educational programmes for broadcast nationwide, five (5) days a week on Radio Fiji One.

One of the programmes includes *Teacher's world*, which is targeted at providing continuing education for primary school teachers. The other two (2) are designed for Primary School students as a supplement to the regular courses known as the *World we live in*, which is for Years 4 to 6, and the *World around Us* for Years 7 to 8, in addition to other programmes that are being broadcasted.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Programme 5 - Activity 1.

(Chorus of "Noes")

Programme 5 - Activity 2.

(Chorus of "Noes")

Programme 6 - Activity 1.

(Chorus of "Noes")

Programme 7 - Activity 1.

(Chorus of "Noes")

Programme 8 - Activity 1.

(Chorus of "Noes")

Programme 9 - Activity 1.

(Chorus of "Ayes" and "Noes")

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Ro Filipe Tuisawau, you have the floor.

HON. RO F. TUISAWAU.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Programme 9, Activity 1, SEG (7), Levuka World Heritage Listing: Could you, please, provide an update on that process? I understand it has gone to UNESCO, but there are other outstanding issues in Levuka regarding maintenance of heritage buildings except the one which is located within the PAFCO compound. Thank you.

HON. R.S. AKBAR.- SEG 7, Mr. Chairman, through you, this is funding for carrying out small projects and initiatives to maintain and capitalise on Levuka's World Heritage Listing. This includes supporting the Levuka community in maintaining sites, training for the community to capitalise on tourism opportunities, creating literature and pamphlets on the various world heritage buildings in Levuka, and of course, creating awareness in our schools and amongst the community to protect key sites.

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Honourable Minister, on the same Programme 9, Activity 1, SEG (6) - the provision on the National Trust of Fiji Board. Can you, please, update us, who were members of this Board; also the allocation of \$150,000 for Multi-Ethnic Cultural Activities; again, can you shed some light on these allocations? Thank you.

HON. R.S. AKBAR.- Mr. Chairman, through you, I do not have the names of the Board members with me at present but I can forward it to the honourable Member. Just a short description, these Boards are, of course, appointed by the Minister responsible and this fund of \$30,000 that we have been given will be used to pay the members quarterly sitting allowances.

For Fiji Museum and Fiji Arts Council, the annual allowance of the Chairperson is \$5,379.84, and for Board members is \$4,667. For the National Trust of Fiji, the Chairman receives \$6,240.84, and the Board members, \$5,414. As I said, I will be able to provide the names of the sitting Board at a later date.

HON. P.W. VOSANIBOLA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, may I seek clarification from the honourable Minister on SEG 10, regarding the Rehabilitation of Levuka World Heritage Structures. Please, can you confirm whether this will also include those residential buildings which were affected during the *Tropical Cyclone Winston* which have not been rehabilitated? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

HON. R.S. AKBAR.- Mr. Chairman, through you, in terms of the Rehabilitation of Levuka World Heritage Sites, this will cover the consultancy and rehabilitation works for the restoration and strengthening of the Levuka Community Centre Complex, Saint John's Church, ensuring these World Heritage structures retain their historical integrity.

HON. M.R. LEAWERE.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, on SEG 7, can the honourable Minister enlighten the House on what Fiji Heritage Foundation Secretariat is, and also what Fiji National Heritage Register is? They each have different allocations of \$60,000 and \$30,000. Thank you.

HON. R.S. AKBAR.- Mr. Chairman, through you, the Fiji Heritage Foundation Secretariat is to meet the operational expenses of the Fiji Heritage Foundation Secretariat. The Fiji Heritage Foundation is a trust fund initiative, invested to facilitate assistance towards built heritage in the country that needs to be conserved and maintained. The Trust Fund provides partial assistance to conservation projects, and the Secretariat was established in 2012 and is based with the National Trust of Fiji, and the register?

(Honourable Member interjects)

HON. R.S. AKBAR.- The Fiji National Heritage Register which has been allocated \$30,000 in the next financial year, the Department had established its GIS Unit in 2014 to map, plot and document built heritages and cultural infrastructure in the country, including cultural initiatives undertaken.

HON. RATU N. LALABALAVU.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I seek clarification from the honourable Minister regarding SEG 6 - Fiji Arts Council, and I understand the amount that we have here is \$350,000, but given the statement made by the honourable Minister of Economy in his Budget Speech that there was going to be some establishment or upgrading of a new art gallery at the old Suva Boys Grammar School building. Could I get some explanation on that, please?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Sorry, Mr. Chairman, through you, no, that funding is not in here, it is actually in Head 50. We are working with the British Council, they are helping us with that. So there is a lot of work going on behind the scenes and there is actually an allocation made for it which is in Head 50. That is separate to this.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Bulitavu, you have the floor.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Through you, Mr. Chairman, just a clarification on Programme 9-1(6) on the various grants: Fiji Arts Council Grant (\$350,000); National Trust of Fiji (\$500,000); the Multi-Ethnic Cultural Activities (\$150,000). Why has there been a decrease in all these grants?

HON. R.S. AKBAR.- Mr. Chairman, through you, these grants have been decreased, keeping in view their utilisation rates over the previous years and the Department of Heritage and Arts is all right to work with these budgets.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Programme 9-2?

(Chorus of 'Noes')

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, Parliament will now vote on Head 21 - Ministry of Education, Heritage and Arts.

The Question is:

That the amount of Head 21 - Ministry of Education, Heritage and Arts, be approved.

(Chorus of 'Ayes' and 'Noes')

Votes cast:

Ayes	:	27
Noes	:	22
Not Voted	:	2

The motion is, therefore, agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Head 21 agreed to.

Head 22 - Ministry of Health and Medical Services

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, the floor is now open for any comments. On Programme 1, Activity 1, Honourable Dr. Ratu Atonio Lalabalavu, you have the floor.

HON. DR. RATU A.R. LALABALAVU.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Through you, Mr. Chairman, can I seek clarification and thereafter, I will seek to move a motion on Programme 1-1(5) - Acute Kidney Injury Treatment (\$100,000), there is a reduction from \$300,000 to \$100,000. I seek clarification from the Honourable Minister on that.

HON. DR. I. WAQAINABETE.- Thank you. The reduction has, Honourable Chair, through you, been made, taking into account the utilisation trend assessment and this allocation is utilised when the need arises. This does not also take into account the normal purchases we have been utilising through Programme 4 which is Fiji Pharmaceutical and Biomedical Services through our normal provisions because we are also buying consumables that we use for acute kidney injury. Yes, it has been covered in other areas.

HON. DR. RATU A.R. LALABALAVU.- Just a follow up on that clarification, does the Acute Kidney Injury Treatment Dialysis for Acute Injury included in this?

HON. DR. I. WAQAINABETE.- Yes, through you, again Honourable Chair, this is just an explanation, this is for people who have a need - acute dialysis, and they are admitted into Intensive Care Units in CWM Hospital and Labasa Hospital. So, Government provides dialysis for them until they get over the acute kidney injury and become normal again and then they do not actually need chronic dialysis.

For those who actually need chronic dialysis, they then go on to the Chronic Dialysis Programme. So this sum of money is not talking about those who have regular dialysis. This is those who are sick, those who have trauma and they need dialysis to get them more off intensive care, so that they can be better, and a significant number of these patients do not actually need dialysis long term, so that is where the money budgeted is small. But as I have alluded to earlier, some of the consumables and equipment needed for this is purchased through the other programmes that are in place.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Ro Teimumu Kepa, you have the floor.

HON. RO T.V. KEPa.- Mr. Chairman, the question to the Honourable Minister, if he can update us where he has stated somewhere that there is a shortage of 159 doctors; can you update us on whether there is a still a shortage of doctors?

HON. DR. I. WAQAINABETE.- Thank you. We will discuss this once we come to the appropriate SEG.

HON. RO T.V. KEPÄ.- On Personal Emoluments, or you want to discuss it later?

HON. DR. I. WAQAINABETE.- Yes.

HON. RO T.V. KEPÄ.- All right.

HON. DR. I. WAQAINABETE.- Through you again, Mr. Chairman, as we have discussed over the past few days, the doctors have been now move from Ministry of Civil Service to the Ministry of Health. We have provisions for the employment of 110 new interns or doctors as they graduate towards the end of the year. This does not take into account the continuous recruitment that the Ministry is undergoing at the moment to fill in vacancies. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Niko Nawaikula.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Yes, maybe a follow-up to that. This is the only Ministry that has not escaped the axe, apart from the Police in relation to Personal Emoluments. Right across the board, you will see that actually there is an increase in the allocation for Established Staff by \$9 million, up from \$182 million in the past years. So taking that into account and taking the fact that there will be retirements, as the Honourable Minister has said - 110 new doctors. Could you quantify for us how many new doctors, new nurses, and new Public Health Officers do you expect to absorb in the Ministry next year?

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Minister.

HON. DR. I. WAQAINABETE.- Thank you, through you again, Mr. Chairman, it is a general question but I will answer it. We are planning, at least, 110 new doctors out of medical schools, not including those in the specialised areas that have gone through recruitment.

The Ministry of Civil Service by coming across to the Ministry of Health have actually had their recruitment process in place, so we inherit that. Those who they have been seen, have been vouched for, have gone through the process of Open Merit Recruitment System (OMRS) and they will be brought into the Ministry of Health.

With the nurses, we have provisions to take in about 100 new nursing graduates, plus another 70 to 80 nurses whom we need to be able to beef up the system. That is not including recently we noticed that there was a shortage of midwives and Government, through its provisions, have made and we have now opened it so that we can absorb recently retired midwives above 55 years, because there is a shortage in that appropriate cadre. So we are taking 15 midwives who have recently retired to be able to beef up that area.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Pio Tikoduadua.

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question is on Programme 1-1(8), an allocation of \$1.2 million for Upgrade and Maintenance of Urban Hospitals and Institutional Quarters. Can the Honourable Minister assure the House that as part of this allocation that this famous door is going to be fixed after all, 16 months? Perhaps, more importantly, to stop the leakage of sewerage

on SOPD from sewerage line running across the bottom of the floor of the first floor. It has happened twice and the Ward has been closed off, just an assurance from the Honourable Minister and then we can leave it at that.

HON. DR. I. WAQAINABETE.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I give my assurance that the focus of the Ministry of Health is actually on ensuring that the facilities are up to par, renovations as per se. The famous door has been looked at and hopefully, by the end of the week or beginning of next week, the Honourable Member will be able to see a change.

Can I just summarise the sewerage issue. It is a complex issue involving issues just at the main sewage coming through into the Ministry of Health. It is blocked and I am sorry to say that the blockage is not necessarily from the Ministry of Health, there are some other issues around there, and we are working with the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Water and Sewerage Department to be able to clear that. It is not necessarily just within the Ministry of Health, there is a complex issue going on there, but the whole system has been looked into and has been flushed out.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Ro Teimumu Kepa.

HON. RO T.V. KEPa.- SEG 8, Mr. Chairman. On the works that had to be done with Nausori Sub-Divisional Hospital - \$150,000, can you just clarify for us what are the preliminary works that are going to be done there because they serve three provinces - Tailevu, Naitasiri and Rewa? Thank you, Honourable Dr. Waqainabete.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Minister, you have the floor.

HON. DR. I. WAQAINABETE.- Through you, Mr. Chairman, just a brief background: there were initial consultations done before on a Nausori Hospital. The place that it was thought to go on was found to be unacceptable.

We have relooked at options and the money is to look at the consultation to look at options. The options are to use:

- i) the current site;
- ii) a different site within town; or
- iii) a different site that may be available within the next one to two years (which I cannot say at this time).

But certainly Government is very interested in making that Nausori Hospital.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Ro Filipe Tuisawau, you have the floor.

HON. RO F. TUISAWAI.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Still on SEG 8 - Construction of Kidney Dialysis Treatment Centre - Suva and Nadi (\$250,000): this has been an ongoing concern amongst the population. A lot of those who have been suffering from kidney ailments have expressed the need for

these two centres to be operational as soon as possible. I know that the Honourable Minister is working on it. Maybe an update so that those are looking forward to these two centres can be informed, thank you.

HON. DR. I. WAQAINABETE.- Through you, Mr. Chairman, I would like share that the Government of Fiji is probably one of the only Governments in the Pacific that really looks after each kidney dialysis patients.

With those who have chronic End-Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) where the kidneys do not function anymore, the options for Renal Replacement Therapy (RRT) is either kidney dialysis or Haemodialysis, Peritoneal Dialysis and I have talked about this over here in our last Parliamentary Sitting saying that we both have it within the Ministry of Health facilities; and the third is transplant. Those are all forms of what we say RRT. Both renal dialysis and Peritoneal Dialysis are available in our centres.

The decrease that we see in the funding is because the Nadera, Suva Dialysis Unit, that significant amount of money was used to be able to create that Unit and buy the consumables. The equipment have yet to arrive in the country. I heard that the equipment may be arriving within the next month or two.

Once it is all set up, the consumable come through our normal Fiji Pharmaceutical Procurement. If you will see, as we go towards the end of Programme 4, you will see that there is a slight increase in the budget of the consumables in Programme 4 for Fiji Pharmaceutical and Biomedical Services. That is to account for the consumables needed for kidney dialysis.

The Nadi one is going to be based out of a Grade 4 Quarters right beside Nadi Hospital. Nadi Hospital, through the Government, has just completed a \$3.5 million renovation, which has actually seen a turnaround. It has been air-conditioned, the big General Out-Patients Department (GOPD); the theatres, the emergency room, the wards; they have all been completely overhauled.

The Grade IV quarters in front of it is going to be converted. That \$200,000 will be predominantly for the conversion of that Grade IV quarters into the Nadi Dialysis Unit. Those are haemodialysis. That does not account for peritoneal dialysis which is another option which used to be used back about 15 years ago which is now coming back as another option, so we have two options of renal replacement therapy. The third option is renal transplant which people go overseas to have. Those are all options, so a person who is at the End-Stage Renal Disease, the options are:

- i) Renal transplant;
- ii) Renal dialysis or haemodialysis; and
- iii) Peritoneal dialysis.

We have two out of three, we are not too bad, and we are very very good.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. I will give the floor to the Honourable Qereqeretabua, you have the floor.

HON. L.S. QEREQERETABUA.- Thank you, Honourable Chairman. Through you, Honourable Chairman, I just like to ask the Minister if the Minister could just tell us if there is any help going towards the Blood Bank, in particular, the CWM Hospital Blood Bank which I frequent. Two, if I may, if he could

just update us on the STI testing machines. I believe the one at CWM has broken down and they are having to use test kits.

HON. P.K. BALA.- Which programme? Which SEG?

HON. L.S. QEREQERETABUA.- Sorry, Programme 1, Activity 1, SEG 8. I am just checking because it is not mentioned here and I am just wondering where it would come in.

HON. P.K. BALA.- That is what we are saying, begin with that. Where are you getting all those from?

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Member, it is mentioned in SEG 5: the National Blood Service (\$200,000).

HON. L.S. QEREQERETABUA.- Thank you, Sir, I did not catch that.

May I ask then, Honourable Minister, through you, Mr. Chair, what is this \$200,000 going to go towards with the National Blood Services?

HON. DR. I. WAQAINABETE.- Thank you. The National Blood Service is run under the Ministry of Health Central Office. We have branches in Lautoka and Labasa which cover for the Northern Division and the Western Division.

Initially this was supported through a funding programme called “external agency”. The Ministry of Health and the Government have actually begun to inherit this more and more. We need about 17,000 blood units a year to look after Fijians; technically about 50 units a day. They are doing a very awesome service in being able to do this.

We have vehicles that have been purchased over the last few years. They have a blood drive bus. We are utilising communities, we work closely with the services; Corrections Service, Police and also the Army. We also work with the schools. It might be interesting to know that the University of the South Pacific is a tertiary institution which gives the most blood, followed by FNU, et cetera.

We also work with high schools; Bhawani Dayal High School in Nasinu is the school that gives the most blood. This is not limited to schools also, but also communities and as I was alluding to in my speech yesterday that the community health worker from Macuata was able to bring her villagers and the surrounding settlements to be able to donate blood. That is what we want to do in terms of the blood service.

So initially it was funded by an external agency which I cannot remember offhand at the top of my head, but Government has now taken it on board and they are doing an awesome service. Remember, we need 17,000 blood units a year.

HON. L.S. QEREQERETABUA.- Just a follow up question, Honourable Minister, in terms of the CWM Blood Bank itself. The mixers do not work, the seats as you probably know are years and years

old. The second last time I was there, they were using needles instead of lancets. Can we possibly be assured that there will be an upgrade in equipment?

HON. DR. I. WAQAINABETE.- Certainly, I gave blood two weeks ago, it was all right.

HON. L.S. QEREQERETABUA.- The mixers?

HON. DR. I. WAQAINABETE.- Yes.

HON. L.S. QEREQERETABUA.- Great.

HON. DR. I. WAQAINABETE.- I was there two weeks ago, I gave blood.

HON. L.S. QEREQERETABUA.- Great, thank you, *vinaka*.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Salote Radrodro, you have the floor.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Thank you, Honourable Chairman. On SEG 8 in regards to Maintenance of Sub-Divisional Hospitals, Health Centres and Nursing Stations, if the Honourable Minister could advise us, does this include the completion of the Nabouwalu Sub-Divisional Hospital which had started in July last year and I was advised that it was supposed to finish in December, but by the look of things, it might just carry on to even beyond July this year. What confirmation can we get from the Honourable Minister in regards to that and if this allocation is enough to cover all sub-divisional hospitals nation-wide or how many are we looking at in this allocation and how many health centres and nursing stations because they cover our rural areas and our rural communities. They need to be up to par with services because they are members of the community, this is the only way they access health care, Honourable Chair. Thank you.

HON. DR. I. WAQAINABETE.- Thank you, Honourable Member. Through the Chair, Nabouwalu will be completed on the existing budget that we have for 2018/2019. The reason why there was a bit of a delay because there was a variation in the project and part of the variation, I must admit, I caused it because when I went to see, I noticed that there was an area that we needed to actually ensure that it was more comfortable than what was planned, so that was part of the variation. We took it through the Ministry of Economy and like the normal process, that has been agreed to. The cheques were signed about two weeks ago with our Asset Management Unit together with the Construction and Implementation Unit (CIU). So that will be completed under the current budget.

With the new budget, that is looking at those other health centres. We have 207 facilities. Certainly there are areas that we will need to do some small works, there are areas that we need to do some big works. What we are intending to do is actually continue to make sure that we work on a regular basis. Over the last two or three years, we have been limited because we had to put most of our attention on the areas damaged by *TC Winston*. Majority of the repair works were around Rakiraki, Tailevu, heading to the West and Nabouwalu because obviously it was in the path of the cyclone and supporting the work done in Koro, Nausori and Vanuabalavu.

But now that we have been freed up from that, we are now being able to look at other areas including a part of this which may not be seen here is that in the individual divisions, they have budget

for doing minor repairs, those are actually not captured in this. When you look at a division like the Northern, Central, Eastern and Western, they have their own budgets for doing works. The hospitals in their own budgets, have provisions for their own works, that does not capture that.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, I give the floor to the Honourable Ratu Atonio Lalabalavu to move his motion on Head 22, Programme 1, Activity 1, SEG 5. You have the floor, Sir.

HON. DR. RATU A.R. LALABALAVU.- Thank you, Mr. Chair, Sir. I move that Head 22 be increased by \$200,000 in Programme 1, Activity 1, SEG 5 with respect to Acute Kidney Injury Treatment.

HON. S.R. RASOVA.- I second the motion, Mr. Chair.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Ratu Atonio Lalabalavu, you have the floor.

HON. DR. RATU A.R. LALABALAVU.- Thank you, Mr. Chair, Sir. I move this motion because Acute Kidney Injury Treatment, like the Honourable Minister has mentioned, in my view, is a lifesaving treatment and it is for that reason and that reason alone that I want that to be moved up to the original allocation that was in last year's budget because on a personal level, I have some friends who have survived, benefitted from this treatment in the kidney injury acute phase. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Any further comments. We will go to the vote on this motion.

Votes cast:

Ayes	:	20
Noes	:	27
Not Voted	:	4

Motion is defeated.

Honourable Members, I give the floor to the Honourable Bulitavu to move his motion on Head 22, Programme 1, Activity 1, SEG 8. You have the floor, Sir.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Mr. Chairman, Sir, I move that Head 22, Programme 1, Activity 1, SEG 8 with regards to Extension of CWM Hospital Maternity Unit (\$4,000,000), be increased by \$4 million.

HON. S.R. RASOVA.- Mr. Chairman, I second the motion.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- You have the floor, Honourable Bulitavu.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Sir, and I think this is a very important allocation. It was \$11 million last time, now it has gone down to \$4 million and probably the Minister will be saying that most of the scope capital works has come to an end. But, if you look at the Maternity Unit and the photos that are coming out in the social media in terms of crowding, the lack of beds, and also the hygiene and the old facilities that they have, this is where we keep our newborns. Given that Government too is introducing the new born grant and everything, but, it starts on the first day when the baby comes

to the living world. We need to upgrade not only our Maternity Unit, but also the Labour Ward where our mothers and wives wait before they start having labour, that it be a good environment and atmosphere. Most of the time when mothers give birth, they wait until the beds are available, and the place they wait with beddings and the sheets, sometimes they lie on the floor - waiting.

These are some of the things that we should look into when we are looking into this and also if the Honourable Minister can throw some light into the recent development, and what has been done given that this is a public issue and it came up in the public space not long ago. *Vinaka vakalevu.*

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Lynda Tabuya, you have the floor.

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to support the motion and add to the debate. Just recently having a baby at the CWM Hospital Maternity myself, I first-hand experienced the overcrowding at the Hospital.

There were actually five of us in the same room delivering - having babies, and also there were those who were lying on the passage, Mr. Chairman, on both sides as we were wheeled from one room to another to receive the service. The same issue about the doors.

HON. GOVERNMENT MEMBER.- Which year?

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- I have an infant. The same issue about the doors is that they are also not working very well and so we had to take a bucket to fill the water in order to shower. So it is very real and we really got to look at this and allocate more funds, especially at such a vulnerable time for both mother and child. We also have issues of infant mortality resulting from poor care. So I would like to just support this motion and ask the Honourable Minister to look into these issues. Thank you.

HON. OPPOSITION MEMBERS.- Hear, hear!

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Prime Minister, you have the floor.

HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- Yes, Sir, I just want to make a very quick comment on this. This is not an old Maternity Unit that we are talking about. There are a lot of confused people around here, this is a new Maternity Hospital, we are building it. So you cannot just put in \$4 million and give the contractor \$4 million, and tell them, "You've got an additional \$4 million, what are you going to do with it?"

HON. MEMBER.- Extension.

HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- He has already got \$4 million, that is the allocated amount that he needs to complete the building, so what are you talking about? You are talking about an old existing building, it is not. This is not an old existing building, this is a new Maternity Hospital.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Please, do not get into semantics. You know this project, it was introduced last year. The reason why ...

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Just listen.

The reason why it is said “an extension” is because it is an extension to an existing building, because there were other things that have been done to that building. When the new building is built, you will get the full maternity hospital - a 200-bed hospital, built to international standards, et cetera, that is what is being done. Because, if you, for example, going to add a New Wing to CWM, you will say it is an extension of CWM Hospital, but it is a New Wing altogether, understand that.

All of the things you have said, obviously it has been happening. This is why the Government took the initiative. The Honourable Prime Minister did the ground-breaking ceremony last year, the work has already started. You should know this Honourable Tabuya, you come from a contracting background.

Just because you throw money at the contracting company, does not suddenly mean that building will completely get built up very quickly. You have limited number of people, limited capacity, they cannot work 24 hours in a day.

So this money has been allocated on the basis of the ability for the contractor to spend the funds, that is what is being done. What you really should be actually commenting on is that, this is great. We are getting a modern international hospital that will actually be designed by people who have actually designed hospitals. The problems that the Honourable Tikoduadua has been going on about (I do not want to delve in this), there have been issues.

Many parts of the CWM Hospital, if you go to a bathroom (my wife gave birth there too last year), they have wooden benches. Now this is built by PWD which he wants to bring back. You do not put a wooden bench in a wet environment. You actually put stainless steel. You do not put wood where there is wetness. This is how hospitals were built in Fiji.

When they were designed, they were not designed for the bed to actually turn around corners. It is going to be built and designed by people who know how to build hospitals and this is going to give us a new level of service altogether with all the amenities built to international standard. The reason why this funding has been allocated is because that is the level of spending in the next financial year. Work has already started, please, go and visit it.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Minister for Health, you have the floor.

HON. DR. I. WAQAINABETE.- Thank you. I completely agree with what the Honourable Prime Minister and the Honourable Attorney-General have just said earlier on, Honourable Chairman, I just want to add by going back to what the Honourable Tabuya said:

1. In the wards of a Maternity Unit, the beds allocation is for 5 beds, it is supposed to be 5 beds, it is not crowded - 5 beds;
2. We have a very low infant mortality rate. I have just presented on it yesterday when I delivered my speech in Parliament yesterday, where I said that our infant mortality rate is one of the lowest. There are targets to be achieved by 2030, we have already achieved it now;
3. The toilets that you have alluded to were repaired last year. I invite you, tomorrow morning, we go and see them, they are nice.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, we will now vote on this motion.

Vote Cast:

Ayes	:	22
Noes	:	27
Not Voted	:	2

Motion is defeated.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, I give the floor to the Honourable Ratu Atonio Lalabalavu to move his motion on Head 22, Programme 1, Activity 1, SEG 10. You have the floor, Sir.

HON. DR. RATU A.R. LALABALAVU.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that Head 22 be increased by \$1.8 million in Programme 1, Activity 1, SEG 10 with respect to Kidney Dialysis Treatment Subsidy.

HON. S.R. RASOVA.- I second the motion, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- You have the floor, Honourable Ratu Atonio Lalabalavu.

HON. DR. RATU A.R. LALABALAVU.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Sir. This issue has been a topic of debate in the last Parliament up until now, and I am grateful for the Honourable Minister for Health when he presented with regards to the kidney disease and what is being done about it with regards to dialysis that the government is providing subsidy for. I believe the drastic drop from \$3.5 million to \$200,000 is too much and that is why I am raising the motion before the House, Mr. Chairman, Sir. *Vinaka*.

HON. DR. I. WAQAINABETE.- Mr. Chairman, the allocation of \$200,000 is specifically for the Northern Division because the Central Division has been incorporated into the Central Division normal budgetary works, and I have also said earlier, Mr. Chairman, that the consumables are also being boosted into Programme 4 under Fiji Pharmaceutical and Bio-Medical Services. Remember we were subsidising before because we did not have the facilities, we did not have control of the consumables, we now have and we have put it into our own provisions within our normal purchasing. That is why it has dropped, so that \$200,000 is the allocation specifically to support Fijians in the Northern Division. The Central Division is captured under the Central Division budget.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, we will now vote on this motion.

Votes cast:

Ayes	:	21
Noes	:	27
Not voted	:	3

Motion is defeated.

Honourable Members, I give the floor to the Honourable Salote Radrodoro to move a motion on Head 22, Programme 1, Activity 1, SEG 6. You have the floor, Madam.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move the motion that Programme 1, Activity 1, SEG 6 under Grants to NGOs be increased by \$200,000.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- I second the motion, Mr. Chairman.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I move this motion in recognition of the work that the NGOs undertake in the various health programmes in our communities. For example, we have Project Heaven and Empower Pacific and these various organisations really go down to the community level, even to village by village, and they become very accessible to the members of the communities and having an additional \$200,000 into their budget would ensure that these NGOs that carry out medical services are able to cover more pockets of our communities, particularly those that are in the maritime and in the very rural areas that may be far away from existing established health facilities under the Ministry. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

HON. RO F. TUISAWAU.- Just a clarification, Mr. Chairman, from the Honourable Minister: Does this Grant to NGOs include those for Suicide Prevention, or is that covered under Programme 2, Activity 1, SEG 5?

HON. DR. I. WAQAINABETE.- Mr. Chairman, what we have done, through you, Sir, is that before we used to have budget given to specific NGOs, Empower Pacific, Suicidal Prevention, St. John, to name a few. We used to give them allocation that was given to them like \$100,000, \$24,000, et cetera. What we have done is, instead of doing that, we have created a lump sum of \$500,000, which we will now ask them to bid for it through expressions of interest because we understand that may be some of them actually may need more or may be some may actually need less, and there is also accountability that needs to be taken into account.

These monies have been fixed over a long period of time. For example, a particular NGO would every year receive a certain amount of money, like \$24,000. What we have done now is actually boost it up to \$500,000 as a kitty and we are going to ask them to actually bid for it and make sure they have the proper project proposals that they have in place. They have brought up project mechanisms and we come to an agreement on what are the key outcomes that we would like to achieve because this is taxpayers' money, and when we have agreed on it, then we give the appropriate money. We are hopeful as the years go on, that we will slowly build up on that kitty, but that is the new way we want to do it, because we believe there will be a lot more accountability with this process.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Tuisawau, you have the floor.

HON. RO F. TUISAWAU.- The reason why I am raising Suicide Prevention is because it is a very critical issue now. There is a study by *Lifeline Fiji* that there is an average of 124 suicide deaths per year in Fiji. Every 36 hours, a Fijian tries to take his or her life and they have received 200 calls, et cetera, in the first quarter. I think it is very important that the suicide problem we are facing be taken into consideration for various reasons. *Vinaka*.

HON. DR. I. WAQAINABETE.- Mr. Chairman, through you, back to Project Heaven: Project Heaven receives \$100,000 normally, as we speak, but to Suicide Prevention at the moment, we give them an allocation, I think, it is about \$24,000 at the moment with the ability to be able to bid, they could potentially bid for a higher amount of money to be able to support their work.

We also must remember there are also many mechanisms in place in terms of working around suicide, which is a Mental Health Unit that we run which includes psychiatrists, nurses who have been trained in mental health, peer educators, these all work indirectly around suicide, apart from the *Lifeline Fiji* which actually offers a telephone that they can talk to. Suicide Prevention in Fiji is not limited to that amount of money and to that particular organisation. There is a comprehensive, collaborative effort behind it, which is actually much more than what is being said in the Budget.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you, Honourable Members, we will vote on this motion.

Vote casts:

Ayes	:	22
Noes	:	26
Not Voted	:	3

Motion is defeated.

Honourable Bulitavu, you have the floor to move the motion on Head 22, Programme 1, Activity 1, SEG 8.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I move that Head 22, Programme 1, Activity 1, SEG 8, with regard to Labasa Sub-Divisional Hospital, a sum of \$1 million is provided, even last year it was \$1.5 million. I want to increase it by \$500,000.

HON. DR. RATU A.R. LALABALAVU.- Mr. Chairman, Sir, I beg to second the motion.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- You have the floor, Honourable Bulitavu.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Sir. The reason I want to increase that is that Labasa Hospital serves the whole of the Northern Division with other Sub-Divisional Hospitals but most cases from the Health Centres and all other Divisional Hospitals are brought to Labasa.

It serves a bigger population and the conditions of the Labasa Hospital, even though it had been upgraded, the allocation last year was the upgrade of the Labasa Hospital. We have noted some upgrade work but I think the standard needs to be raised in terms of the capacity of the hospital and also the various Wards, especially the Labour Ward, given the high number of NCD cases and also the people who are admitted there awaiting assessment before they are flown to Suva. I think the hospital too is quite hot in those Wards due to lack of space, and that is one of the reasons.

As alluded to by the Honourable Minister for Economy on the reasons for the upgrade, considering those situations as being the reason for the increase in that allocation, but again, to me, it is caused by the neglect of the last 10 years that nothing was seriously done. I think we have been changing the Minister of Health since 2014 and even before that, now it is headed by a doctor, he will understand the operational needs for this Hospital, it serves the whole of the Northern Division. That is why we need to upgrade this Hospital, given those reasons that I have stated.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Honourable Minister for Health.

HON. DR. I. WAQAINABETE.- Through you, Mr. Speaker and Chair, I would like to thank the Honourable Member for the motion. I would just like to share with you that that monies include the consultation work for the interior renovations of Labasa and the extension that we want to do in the next two to three years to extend the Theatre Complex and a small Mental Health Unit. That will be the consultation work around that area.

In terms of space, Labasa Hospital as compared to CWM Hospital, Lautoka Hospital is slightly better off. They have a new wing. We note that there is some work that needs to be done in the next financial year on the GOPD.

I can also assure us that we are working on Savusavu. I have shared with us in this august House in the last Parliamentary sitting that we want to see a lot more work done around Savusavu. There has been the appointment of a new Sub-Divisional Medical Officer in Savusavu, who is from Headquarters. She carries the mandate to be able to work around Savusavu because we believe that we need to share some of the work in Labasa down to Savusavu, and also on to Taveuni because Vanua Levu is just a very big area, and people should not be coming all the way from Cakaudrove to come all the way down to Labasa.

We are also doing some work around Wainikoro and also around Seaqaqa so that a great number of population that go up to Labasa from Dreketi and Naduri and also Southern Macuata, can be captured in Seaqaqa. By doing all that, I believe that we are able to offset a lot of the patients crowding in Labasa.

The other thing that we are working on is that, Nasea Health Centre in Labasa Town is taking on more responsibility. Initially, there was no health centre but now there is a health centre, then we are looking at mechanisms to actually increase the working time of the health centre, similar to what we have in the Lami-Nausori corridor. That will also reduce the patient-burden in Labasa. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, we will now vote on this motion.

Votes cast:

Ayes	:	21
Noes	:	27
Not voted	:	3

Motion is defeated.

Honourable Members, I give the floor to the Honourable Niko Nawaikula to move his motion on Head 22, Programme 2, Activity 1, SEG 5. You have the floor, Sir.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In this motion, I am proposing to increase Head 22 by \$1 million because this is very important too in relation to Programme 2-1(5) - Non-Communicable Disease Prevention and Control (\$600,000).

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Mr. Chairman, I second the motion.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- You have the floor, Honourable Nawaikula.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Non-Communicable Disease is very important for all of us now. If I had had my way, I would have passed a legislation to regulate how we eat, that we eat right and punish us also if we eat wrongly and criminalise those who sell unhealthy food.

But the problem is that, we cannot do that, may be not now, in the future may be but we are left to exercise on how we try our choice, and it is very hard even for all of us may be younger people. So, it is that, possibly at the moment for education. I hope that by increasing this, the current way that education is being undertaken now, I hope they review it because I sincerely feel that it is not taking any effect, and I hope that it will be used correctly, even to the extent of teaching this in the schools when our children are very young, possibly too late for those of us who are old.

So, that is the basic reason and I hope both sides of the House will agree to this so that we can increase that money, and at the same time, I wish to acknowledge the good works that are being done already but I sincerely feel it is not enough.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you, Honourable Dr. Ratu Antonio Lalabalavu, you have the floor.

HON. DR. RATU A.R. LALABALAVU.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, through you, I would like to seek clarification on two issues with regards to Activity 1, SEG 1 on Personal Emoluments, the reduction by \$3 million

MR. CHAIRMAN.- We are looking at the motion at the moment. You have the floor, Lynda Tabuya.

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to contribute to the debate and support the motion to increase the budget on Prevention and Control of NCDs. In fact, I would like to commend the Honourable Minister who, he himself I know is quite an advocate on this.

But there is currently only one Doctor that is committed to this programme, who is quite an advocate on it but I know he himself will admit that he needs help and he needs more doctors, he needs more of this programme to go right throughout Fiji, throughout our hospitals, and for the doctors to advocate On this.

Also our NCD Champion - spokesperson, His Excellency the President of Fiji, I believe needs to be more involved and more visible because it is going to take behavioural change to fight NCDs which is clearly becoming a crisis in Fiji. We have the highest rates of deaths caused by diabetes. Fiji has topped the world, so we need to look at those statistics and take this very seriously by committing the funds needed to fight NCDs. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Minister for Health, you have the floor.

HON. DR. I. WAQAINABETE.- Honourable Chairman, through you, first of all, I would like to share that, again, there are many, many projects that are happening within the Ministry of Health targeting NCD. This is directly towards the Diabetes Hubs, the support of NCD intervention and NCD prevention in our clinics - Ante-Natal, Pre-Natal, et cetera.

We must remember that we have \$350,000 for the National Centre for Health Promotion, we have \$200,000 through the National Food and Nutrition Security Programmes, we also have the Outreach Visits that have their own budgets, so these all come indirectly and they support the NCD Programme.

Also, again, all the doctors that are in the call phase, they are NCD champions. In the Health Centres and the Sub-divisions, we follow a WHO guideline which is called the PEN (Package of Essential Non-Communicable) Model, and we champion the PEN Model and there are Sub-Divisions within Fiji that have done very well with the PEN Model, one of it is Savusavu. Another Health Centre that is doing very well around NCD and research around NCD is Vuda-Viseisei Sai Health Centre, which is a collaboration between the Ministry of Health and the Sai Foundation.

I would like to share that all doctors champion NCD and all doctors champion Communicable Disease, it is mandated in their work. Even though this specific budget is \$600,000, but all the other budgets that indirectly support the work around NCD will actually show that this is actually much more than that. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Honourable Kuridrani, you have the floor.

HON. I. KURIDRANI.- Mr. Chairman, Sir, can I just ask the Honourable Minister, while still on Programme 2-1(5), whether any of those programmes include the development and promotion of traditional medicine because I believe that is very important for fighting NCDs, especially for the rural areas. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Honourable Minister, you have the floor.

HON. DR. I. WAQAINABETE.- Thank you, it is not registered here. There were discussions two years ago around traditional medicine. We know there is a lot of work that needs to be done around this. Part of it is the fact that we also have to ensure that there is protection around the certain Acts and Bills to be able to also protect the community at large.

Traditional medicine, if it works well, it works well. There are also instances, just like conventional medicine where traditional medicine does not work well. The instances where our people have been utilising traditional medicine and have not opted also for conventional medicine, so there needs to be a bit of work and consultancy done around this.

There was a bit of work done about two or three years ago, that needs to be picked up late and worked on, but at this moment in time, our focus is on conventional medicine. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Honourable Adi Teimumu Kepa.

HON. RO T.V. KEPa.- I would like to speak on the motion on NCDs in support of it, Mr. Chairman. We all know that this is a huge problem here in Fiji, particularly for the indigenous population. I know that you do not want us to talk about race, but this is a big problem with us.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Everyone!

HON. RO T.V. KEPa.- Mr. Chairman, 80 percent of all deaths in Fiji are from NCDs and we see this in the village, that so many of the deaths there are from NCDs.

In speaking in support of this motion, I just like to point out to the Honourable Minister for Communications that there was an allocation approved earlier on (\$150,000) in support of local movie and literary production. This is something that they can do because all the doctors are coming around and speaking to us, but many times we are deaf. We have heard it so often.

I am sure many of us here have seen those short clips on the 'Laughing Samoans'. I mean, they are able to put that together on a very, very small budget. I am sure the Ministry of Health can put together some of these clips, we all love watching our movies, watching whatever on television, *YouTube* and on our mobiles, that is just a suggestion to the Honourable Minister.

I know the Honourable Prime Minister too loves watching *YouTube* and all these clips and he likes to laugh with the *Laughing Samoans*. So that is just my suggestion to the Honourable Minister. Thank you, Honourable Chair.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Honourable Minister, you have the floor.

HON. DR. I. WAQAINABETE.- Thank you, Honourable Chair. Thank you, Honourable Ro Teimumu for the suggestion. You have actually just told us what we have been talking about over the last few months because we have noticed that we need to change in the area of our health promotion. We have budgeted \$350,000 this year for the National Centre for Health Promotion. We are looking at new innovative ways to be able to reach the Fijian people. We are looking at mechanisms such as, as exactly that you alluded to, in terms of better utilisation of audio-visual, maybe looking at safe use of social media but more modern forms.

We also realised that NCD begins in the young. When we are older, then the effects come. So our target is the youth. That is our next target. We are going to target the youth for NCD prevention so we have to make it youth-friendly and youth fancy.

Honourable Nawaikula has actually said it correctly. When we are old and we get NCDs, all we are doing there is just preventing the complication. So we have re-looked at how we are going to do it and those suggestions that you said is exactly some of the areas that we have been working on and thinking about as we do this.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you, Honourable Minister. Honourable Tikoduadua.

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- Thank you, Mr. Chair. Very briefly, I thank the Honourable Minister for the ideas and suggestions of intervention with youth, in particular on NCD, what this motion is trying get more funding for. Specifically, I would like to maybe raise here for discussion in terms of the contribution by smoking, anti-smoking.

I think many laws have been put in place but not quite effective enough because if you walk down to the main bus station today where the carts are, there are some vendors there still selling cigarettes by the rolls. There is something that really needs to be done because if you go to the community, you see all the young kids smoking. Those of us who have been affected by early smoking as well, sort of realised this. It will be a good idea if this allocation is raised because trying to intervene on smoking with youth is a big issue everywhere and *marijuana* is another problem.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Honourable Minister for Health.

HON. DR. I. WAQAINABETE.- Honourable Chair, through you, to the Honourable Member, we have allocated \$200,000 for Tobacco Control Enforcement. There is no change for what was allocated last year. With the enforcement of tobacco, we have officers who have to be trained in prosecution. So they undergo the prosecution training that is offered through the Government processes. We have had recently some graduates from that training, it is about a month-long training where they have to come out of their work and go and have it through the Ministry of Civil Service.

The enforcement officers are predominantly through the Health Protection Unit and the health inspectors. Unfortunately, we had less numbers of enforcement officers but now with the prosecution training, about two sets of prosecution trainings have happened at the end of the last year and also the beginning of this year, we have a greater number. I have been informed that they have begun to do spot-checks with the selling of rolls and also in those areas and they have begun prosecuting those who have been caught to be acting against the Act that is in place. As more numbers come through, then they will become more efficient. But our officers have to go through the prosecution training and that is something we are trying to get more and more through that process. *Vinaka*.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, we will now vote on this motion.

Votes cast:

Ayes	:	22
Noes	:	27
Not Voted	:	2

Motion is defeated.

Honourable Members, I give the floor to Honourable Ro Teimumu Kepa to move a motion on Head 22, Programme 2, Activity 1, SEG 7. You have the floor, Madam.

HON. RO T.V. KEPa.- Thank you, Honourable Chairman. SEG 7 - Cervical Cancer (\$50,000) and the motion is to increase it to \$100,000. Thank you, Honourable Chairman.

HON. RATU N.T. LALABALAVU.- I second the motion, Mr. Chairman, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Ro Teimumu Kepa, you have the floor.

HON. RO T.V. KEPa.- Thank you, Honourable Chairman. This motion comes through because of the information that is coming through from the Ministry of Health and that was early this year in that the women who are mostly the ones who are affected by this cervical cancer, the women who were getting screened were only about 20 percent and 80 percent were falling through the cracks. I do not know how they were falling through the cracks, but only 20 percent were getting screened.

Mostly the women who are affected by this are young professional women who have young families. We have seen that in the papers every week, young women who have died who have young families; they are either lawyers, teachers, accountants, even doctors and nurses.

My motion is to increase this to \$100,000 so that the others who are not getting screened for whatever reason, will be able to get screened and the medical facilities might be able to ensure that they could be cured from this disease, and we do not have so many deaths, leaving young families behind with no mothers. So that is my motion on this one, to increase it to \$100,000 so that we can have more women screened under this allocation. Thank you, Honourable Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Honourable Minister for Health.

HON. DR. I. WAQAINABETE.- Honourable Chairman, the allocation that we have at the moment is for training, meetings and policy and guideline review. The screening programme, Honourable Chairman, is done at institutions closer to where the women are.

In terms of cervical cancer prevention, we have a HPV vaccination that we offer our young girls at about 12 or 13 years. That is going to make a significant change in the number of cervical cancer patients in Fiji, because that immunisation will prevent the bacteria which is then known to initiate the cancer change. For cervical cancer, we know that there will be a decrease. So there is prevention in terms of the immunisation that we have in place. This amount of money is for training and policy making, but, the actual screening and treatment is available in the individual institutions. *Vinaka*.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Honourable Members, we will now vote on this motion.

(Chorus of "Ayes" and "Noes")

Votes cast:

Ayes	:	20
Noes	:	25
Not Voted	:	6

Motion is defeated.

Honourable Members, Activity 2?

(Chorus of "Noes")

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Activity 3?

(Chorus of "Noes")

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Activity 4?

(Chorus of "Noes")

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Activity 5?

(Chorus of “Noes”)

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Activity 6?

(Chorus of “Noes”)

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Programme 3: Divisional Health Services - Activity 1.

(Chorus of “Noes”)

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Activity 2?

(Chorus of “Noes”)

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Activity 3?

(Chorus of “Noes”)

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Activity 4? Honourable Salote Radrodro.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Thank you, Honourable Chairman, Sir. In Activity 4, SEG 4 in regards to General Stores and Incidentals (\$100,000). It says here, “Northern Division”. Does this also include the sub-divisional hospitals in the Northern Division? If so, if the Honourable Minister can explain the reasons for shortage or maybe if this includes things like high blood pressure machines and basic stores supplies, like soap, et cetera, in sub-divisional hospitals or they go to the drugs under pharmacy or is it in this allocation? Thank you, Honourable Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Honourable Minister, you have the floor.

HON. DR. I. WAQAINABETE.- Thank you. Some of the purchases are done through this, some of the purchases are done for the individual sub-divisions. One of the issues that we found and that I have alluded to in my budget speech yesterday is the need for all Fijians to actually respect the health such as crutches, wheelchairs, towels, and so forth.

Of course, we have to keep on purchasing, that is expected. But it will be helpful if this equipment stay behind and actually last for at least a year, because then we do not have to actually keep on purchasing on a regular basis. We also want to strengthen our processes around how we purchase food and other perishables to keep within our sub-divisional hospitals.

As we know, the further that we are from Suva, it will be a little bit more expensive so we are looking at mechanisms to see how we can be able to save costs. Also, we have found that in some areas, the processes were not very good in terms of the tally cards that were being used, so that is something that we want to tighten.

So, yes we have to work around our processes, we have to work around the mechanisms and as I had alluded to in my budget speech yesterday, we also need the support of our people in maintaining our facilities, the consumables and also the goods that we prepare for our people to use. *Vinaka.*

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Programme 4: Medical Supplies and Equipment. Honourable Kuridrani, you have the floor.

HON. I. KURIDRANI.- Mr. Chairman, Sir, can I ask the Honourable Minister regarding Programme 4, Activity 1 SEG 5 if there is any control measure for the purchase of cheaper drugs that are currently on the markets at the moment. There are cheap drugs in the market at the moment that does not provide treatment for the sick, especially drugs which can worsen sick patients again. I bought a drug from Australia that costs about AUS\$86 but when I came to buy a drug here in Namaka in Nadi, the price was about FJ\$13, from India. I wonder if there is any measure in place to ensure that quality drugs are on the market for our people.

HON. DR. I. WAQAINABETE.- Mr. Chairman, through you, can I ask the Honourable Member, did you buy it from a shop?

HON. I. KURIDRANI.- Yes, from a chemist.

HON. DR. I. WAQAINABETE.- With the Fiji Pharmaceutical Biomedical Services, we buy drugs to be used in our hospitals - the public institutions. There are a few drugs that Chemists buy of us. All the drugs that are purchased through the Fiji Pharmaceutical and Biomedical Services go through a very stringent vetting process in which they go through the Government Tenders Board.

Through the Government Tenders Board, there is a technical working group which includes very senior doctors who utilise the medicines and now includes our pharmacists who are very well-trained in this and they also have to make sure that they meet certain requirements which they need FDA (Federal Drug from America) requirements.

The drugs that we utilise through our government institutions come through that programme and if there are some drugs that are being bought from the chemist outside through Fiji Pharmaceuticals and Biomedical Services (FPBS), we can be assured that those are the drugs bought through us that have been vetted through that process. Some of the pharmacies in general actually do their own purchases but I can only speak on the drugs that we purchase through our process. Thank you very much.

HON. RO F. TUISAWAU.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, just on the same Activity, Programme SEG 9 - Biomedical Equipment - Urban and Sub-Divisional Hospitals (\$5.5 million). Could you provide a bit more detail on that regarding our equipment and which hospitals? *Vinaka*.

HON. DR. I. WAQAINABETE.- Mr. Chairman, I thank the Honourable Member for that question. Government is very keen on the replacement of Biomedical Equipment. Our Biomedical Equipment are relatively fussy equipment, as you know times are changing. Normally, within seven to ten years, we need to replace Biomedical Equipment. Before this, Biomedical Equipment used to be worked on until they do not work anymore which would be about ten, fifteen years but we have a replacement programme now in place, that within seven to ten years, we actually replace our Biomedical Equipment.

The reason why we need to replace them at that certain time is because these Biomedical Equipment alone cannot work without the appropriate consumable reagents that work with it. So the hardware changes, the software changes, the chemicals change, so they will have to change at that particular time. Thank you.

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, this is similarly related to the question by the Honourable Tuisawau on SEG 9 of Programme 4, Activity 1 on the Biomedical Equipment - Urban and Sub-Divisional Hospitals (\$5,500,000).

Mr. Chairman, I have been looking through from the beginning for the Ministry of Health. I do not see any mention and I thought I might use this to ask about Aspen, if it comes online so there is no mention whatsoever of the Ministry's involvement if it does come online end of this year or next year. So, this \$5,500,000 for Biomedical Equipment, does it cover Aspen Hospital as well or is this only for the other urban and sub-divisional hospitals around the country? Thank you.

HON. DR. I. WAQAINABETE.- Mr. Chairman, if I may, through you to the Honourable Member, I will begin and then I will hand over to the Honourable Minister for Economy. The budget specifically for the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) comes from the Ministry of Economy directly to PPP. If the Honourable Member will later look at Activity 3, which is Lautoka Hospital - Programme 1-1(8), you will see that a significant number of the SEGs have transition funding for PPP, which actually means that we fund until the PPP comes into place, and then PPP takes it all from there.

The PPP is a collaboration between the PPP, which is the company Health Care Fiji, the Ministry of Economy and the Ministry of Health and we have had rigorous discussions over the last few months. They are going through a transitory period where they have their officers on the ground in Lautoka as we speak, but I will leave it at there at the moment, and I hope when you will see then you may be able to understand where we are.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, Parliament will now vote on Head 22. The question is: That the amount for Head 22 - Ministry of Health and Medical Services, be approved.

Does any Member oppose?

Votes Cast:

Ayes	:	27
Noes	:	21
Not Voted	:	3

The motion is, therefore, agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Head 22 agreed to.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, I see a lot of anxious faces about, and I know several people might be suffering from TB, and we will take a 10-minute mobility adjournment.

The Parliament adjourned at 9.37 p.m.

The Parliament resumed at 9.50 p.m.

Head 23 – Ministry of Housing and Community Development:

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, the floor is now open for any comments. Programme 1 - Policy Administration, Activity 1 - General Administration. Honourable Tabuya.

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- Thank you, Mr. Chair. Programme 1, Activity 1, SEG 5, a question to the Honourable Minister about the Training for Rural Carpenters (\$100,000), and this has been a staple feature too in the previous Budgets, can you just, please, explain what kinds of programmes have happened under this allocation? Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Minister, you have the floor.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- Mr. Chair, Sir, I would like to start off by saying that the Ministry of Housing is now a standalone Ministry, and this particular Activity comes under Social Housing Assistance Programme. So under Social Housing Assistance Programme, we have got transport of building materials as well as training of carpenters.

This programme is based on cost-sharing basis where one-third is paid by the applicant and two-thirds is paid by the Government. When it comes to the first part of the programme (which is training of carpenters), there is a Rural Housing Team within the Ministry that goes out and assists people to build their houses after a cyclone or when there is a referral that is made by the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty. When such referrals come, then this team goes out, when they go out into the rural or maritime areas, they identify people who want training in that area.

The Rural Housing Team partner with FNU and then they actually build the house where these people from the rural areas are trained. At the end of it, they are given a Certificate. But let me just say that this particular programme is under review at this stage. We are reviewing this programme because we feel that our team should not be actually involved in training and if FNU can actually take that up and train the team or if we do train the team then we should be able to use them on a regular basis.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Honourable Niko Nawaikula, you have the floor.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- *Aid-in-kind*: Fiji Affordable Housing PPP (IFC) (\$699,926): Could you just explain what that is; and what that is for?

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- All right. This is one of our important programmes that we would like to roll out and we have signed an Agreement with International Finance Corporation (IFC) and the idea is for the Government to really understand how to roll out the strata title apartments that we are talking about. So IFC was taken on board to conduct this initial scoping work just to develop the business case for PPP, because we have to look at the financing aspect as well as the legal aspect when we talk about strata titles; what are the rights of the people who hold a strata title? Also to see and explore the private partners out there who can partner with the Government or if there is any other mechanism for financing, because generally when we talk about low-cost housing, low-cost housing is built with simply cement and steel and these days, the price of these items are high, we are looking at other technologies that can be used to reduce the cost of low-cost housing.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Honourable Lynda Tabuya, you have the floor.

HON. L. TABUYA.- Under the same Programme 1-1(7), a question about the National Housing Policy. This allocation was under 'R' last year, is this plan completed and can you elaborate more on the intention of how to develop this plan?

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- This is to do with the National Housing Policy Implementation Plan (NHPIP). In 2011, a National Housing Policy was developed. A number of activities in this particular Plan had been rolled out but for the next financial year, there are three things that we would like to do and money is actually set aside for these three activities.

The activities would be to:

1. Formulate the National Housing Act;
2. Institutional strengthening of the Squatter Resettlement Unit within the Ministry; and
3. Merger of the PRB and Housing Authority.

Those are the three main three activities from this National Housing Policy that we want to roll out.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Honourable Niko Nawaikula.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Can the Honourable Minister explain this *Aid-in-kind*: Enhanced Water Security in Rural Villages (NZMAT), an allocation of \$333,809?

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- Sir, this is a New Zealand Government-funded activity and in this particular activity, water and sanitation infrastructure will be looked at in 20 vulnerable communities and 10 schools in rural Cakaudrove and Naitasiri. It will be an integrated approach that will be used.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Honourable Ratu Naiqama Lalabalavu.

HON. RATU N.T. LALABALAVU.- Mr. Chairman, I seek clarification from the Honourable Minister for Housing on what you have just stated a while ago regarding bringing together or merger of the Housing Authority and the Public Rental Board. On the same token, if you bring the two together, how does that affect your core function under the Housing Authority Act and that is defined under the Public Enterprises Act.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- Mr. Chairman, Sir, in 1982, PRB was part of Housing Authority. It was after the major scandal that took place in 1982 that PRB was separated. Now, we see, it is just duplication. We have got a whole administration team looking after PRB, then we have got a whole management team looking after HA.

Again, when the Housing Authority (HA) lots are being built, HA sets some land for PRB to develop the rental properties. So, it is better if the two are combined and we are going to look at how it will be done. What will be the most cost-effective way of doing it? How can we do some more savings so that the money can be channeled into making low-cost housing?

MR. CHAIRMAN.- You have the floor, Honourable Ratu Lalabalavu.

HON. RATU N.T. LALABALAVU.- Subject to what you have just stated, Honourable Minister, I thank you for that. But the way the core function is defined under the Public Enterprises Act is quite different from what is spelt out under the Housing Authority Act: one is to be profit-oriented whilst HA is to provide cheap housing.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- Both come under social housing. It simply means that we will have to produce housing which is affordable.

Currently, HA is using different mix to produce houses, in other words, it is not just all low cost, they sell certain lots at a higher price for high-end, then the middle and the low-end, so that the money is generated from the high-end is channelled into the low-end, that is how the mix is. At the end of the day, it is for the social affordability and for the social housing.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Aseri Radrodro, you have the floor.

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- Thank you, Honourable Chairman, just further to that mix that the Honourable Minister has just described, what about the lending policy of Housing Authority, does it have a limit or does it go with the mix?

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- What I know, even from the Housing Authority, their blocks are sold at the market rate, then they seek funding wherever they want to go.

(Hon. A.M. Radrodro interjects)

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- Housing Authority, yes.

(Hon. A.M. Radrodro interjects)

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- It can go with the mix.

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- There is no limit?

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- There is no limit, because at the end of the day, obviously, the blocks are not extremely expensive, it is still affordable, cheaper than other blocks that are available in the market.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Lynda Tabuya, you have the floor.

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- Just a follow up, Honourable Minister, about what you were saying about affordable housing, but all we are hearing is that, you are trying to provide affordable land lots and not houses on them. Has your Ministry considered to actually doing the house and land package, as I have suggested yesterday about providing these affordable so that the burden is not on the person that you need to provide the home for. They will have both house and land together handed to them so it makes it easier.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- At this stage, the Housing Authority is only focusing on making the land available and there are plans also available within the Housing Authority that people can take and then they can build their own house. But the project which I just mentioned about IFC which is actually looking at these apartments which will be built on Housing Authority development sites - the six sites that I mentioned the other day.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Programme 2-1, Honourable Nawaikula, you have the floor.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- I seek clarification, Mr. Chairman, in relation to SEG 7 and SEG 8: There is one Regularisation of Informal Settlements (\$50,000); and the other one is Formalisation of Informal Settlements (\$2,000,000), could you just clarify the difference?

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- For the first one, Regularisation of Informal Settlements, this is where the survey of the informal settlements were undertaken previously where we were hiring the surveyors to do the survey work. What we have done now, we have included the survey work in the capital works. So when we get into the capital works, the whole design, we include survey works. That is why we had reduced the money.

For the second one - Formalisation of Informal Settlements, this is where the actual construction starts with the subdivision work - the roads, the drain, the sewer line, et cetera, take place.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Ratu Filipe Tuisawau, you have the floor. On SEG 10, there is quite a number of programmes there targeting our supposed lower income or those facing hardship which is commendable. However, I note under SEG 10 - Capital Grants and Transfers, under the budgeted amounts there; actual estimate 2028-2019 - \$26 million and then 2019-2020, it is \$11 million. At first glance, it is a huge reduction - 56 percent. Maybe an explanation on that but it looks like a huge reduction which could impact on the population facing hardships, and I am not sure how that impacts on SEG 10. Maybe, an explanation from the Honourable Minister for clarification. *Vinaka!*

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- We had looked at the utilisation of these funds and based on the utilization of these funds, some adjustments were made. For example, the Housing Authority (HA) Debt Relief Scheme. This is the case where retired people or any individual who is genuinely facing financial difficulty and they have already paid the principal amount, can seek waiver on the rest of the money that they owe to Housing Authority.

We have seen that the usage has been very low because that means people are not making that application and that application needs to be made at Housing Authority, where they have to come up with evidence to prove that they are genuinely very sick and they need assistance, so we have seen a drop in that.

Again, for interest subsidy for home loans, this is the discounted interest rate individuals can get and you can get it through Housing Authority, as well as from HFC Bank and they have the arrangement with Reserve Bank of Fiji (RBF). So, again, when it comes to looking at the figures, there were not many applications for that. Yes, so that is why it has been revised.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Nawaikula, you have the floor.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Mr. Chairman, can I?

Have you determined why your uptake is low on this First Home facilities? It is an RBF thing and available through all the banks and it is quite commendable. But I am a bit surprised that the uptake is low, hence the reduction in the allocations. Do we know why the uptake is low?

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- The RBF is already providing that facility to other banks, HA is a separate one. For HA, when you look at their interest rate, the first 12 months is 3.95 percent then four years is

some other figure, which is about 4.95 percent. So there are different mix that is available in different markets.

We have also seen when applications come in, certain applications under some of these programmes, like the First Home Subsidy that we give, people put in flats. In other words, they lodge an application with three flats. Now, we do not fund three flats. It has to be your basic home, so this is where they do not qualify.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Mr. Chairman, just to provide further clarification, the interest subsidy for home loans was a new initiative we brought about to further reduce the already reduced interest rates that RBF gives to banks. So the RBF already has a facility that HFC and HA can pick up on. But if there is a low income person who actually comes and applies for a home loan, RBF lends to them at 1 percent and then those banks must not lend at an interest rate that is more than 5 percent.

In this one here, the interest subsidy for home loans, we added this additional one to say, "If you are already eligible for that, we can give you a further discount which we will pay on top of that." For example, if I get the RBF-funded interest rate loan which maybe say, at 5 percent or 4.9 percent, if you apply for this, then you can get it reduced by another 1 percent. That is what this one is for. The RBF one is an independent one. The uptake for that is quite high. People for that are not applying for this one here, so that is the difference.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Kuridrani, you have the floor.

HON. I. KURIDRANI.- Mr. Chairman, Sir, may I ask the Minister on Programme 2, Activity 1, SEG 8. I have noticed there is a substantial reduction in the allocation for the Formalisation of Informal Settlements. It has been reduced from \$8.52 million to \$2 million. Can the Minister just identify one or two subdivisions that are currently being completely formalised?

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- For that particular activity, in the past, what we have seen that the money we allocated, but then there was a difficulty in completing the projects. Difficulties are faced for a number of reasons:

- 1) The skilled people are not there, it is very hard to get the contractors on board; and
- 2) The whole arrangement from planning (That is from the Scheme Plan to the Engineering Plan) and then the bidding - it all takes time.

So this time around, what we have done is, we have reduced the funding, it is the project that we can manage and deliver.

HON. I. KURIDRANI.- My question, Mr. Chairman, if you can just tell us as to how many have been completed or almost completed?

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- Completed is Ledrusasa in Cuvu where the leases will be issued and if you are talking about the past ones, then I can say, we have completed Omkar, Badrau, Lakena Hill, Vatoa and Bangladesh.

What are we going to do in the next financial year: Two projects will be under construction which are Waidamudamu and Caubati Stage I (which will be on the verge of completion). But, there are other five projects which will be in the planning stages which means that we will be doing the survey, the scheme plans, the engineering plans and also putting out the bid for the contractors; it is going to take time. So in the next financial year, we will be ready to roll out these projects.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Honourable Lynda Tabuya, you have two motions, and I will give you the floor to move your first motion.

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My motion is pre-texted around the same issues of the informal settlements and formalising them.

Now this has been, again I have heard from the Minister that it is going to take time. This has been the election promise since 2014 and it continues to be something that has not happened and has not been finalised. There are issues faced by those living in informal settlements, I know because my mum lives in an informal settlement and so does my brother.

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- He is unable to obtain a loan because he still has that notice of approval of lease. It is all very well to have the loan facilities available, the subsidised interest rate from HFC, et cetera, it is still useless and inaccessible without having the leases actually given out, that is my first point. The other one is, by reducing the budget now again, this shows that this is not a priority for Government, to deal with 80,000 of our people

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Member, you have to move your motion first, to be seconded and then explain.

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- Thank you. Well, I do move the motion that Programme 2, Activity 1 be increased by \$250,000 regarding the Regularisation of Informal Settlements which is SEG 7 to go back to the \$3 million that was allocated previously, so that this programme is actually realised.

HON. I. KURIDRANI.- I second the motion.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- You have the floor, Honourable Lynda Tabuya.

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- Thank you. I believe I have said enough to explain that, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Minister, you have the floor.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- I think the Honourable Member is not listening. I know it is pretty late, I had just mentioned the areas and some of the projects that we have completed, and my question to you is, where does your brother live; or your mother live?

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- They live in Wakanisila, which you have not visited yet.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- All right, this is the project, Mr. Chairman. Wakanisila, Field Four, Sakoca, Tavela, Tore and Qauia - these are the projects that we are working on, just be rest-assured that your brother and your mother will get a land.

Also I would like to say, it is not just your family who came from an informal settlement. I have also come from an informal settlement. We have to treat everyone the same, not just because you are an Honourable Member of a Parliament, you are going to push your agenda.

(Honourable Member interjects)

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- A Point of Order! Mr. Chairman, there is no need to get personal. My mother does not afford

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- I am giving an example of someone that is facing that issue. My mother cannot afford the time, she is getting on in years and she cannot have a will if she does not have a title; it is as simple as that. There is no need to personalise. Thank you.

(Honourable Members interject)

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Any further comments on this motion? Honourable Adi Litia Qionibaravi. You have the floor.

HON. ADI L. QIONIBARAVI.- I am asking the Honourable Minister, if you can advise all these SEGs 6 to 10, do these appear in the Housing Authority's website; whether each form of assistance is translated at least in the two main languages - Hindi and Fijian?

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Which SEG?

HON. ADI L. QIONIBARAVI.- All the assistance in Head 23, Programme 2, Activity 1, SEGs 6 to 10 - All those assistances for Housing, do they appear in some website; and are they translated at least in the two main languages?

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- Yes, pamphlets are there, brochures are there. We put out advertisements in the newspapers as well advising people that they can put in their applications.

HON. ADI L. QIONIBARAVI.- Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, we will now vote on this motion - Head 23, Programme 2, Activity 1 SEG 7.

Votes cast:

Ayes	:	18
Noes	:	26
Not Voted	:	7

Motion is defeated.

Honourable Members, I give the floor to the Honourable Lynda Tabuya for her second motion. You have the floor, Madam.

HON. L.D. TABUYA.-Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

(Honourable Members interject)

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Order! order!

HON. L.D. TABUYA.-Under Head 3, Programme 2, Activity 1 SEG 8 which is related again to the Formalising of Informal Settlements: I would like an increase by \$6.5 million to go back to what was allocated - \$8.52 million, and again this is the motion I am moving, Mr. Chairman.

HON. I. KURIDRANI.- I second the motion.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. You have the floor, Honourable Tabuya.

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would just like to straight-out apologise if our Honourable Minister is getting flustered about what I am presenting. It really is the predicament of many of our people who live in informal settlements.

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- I am speaking to my motion, thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Yes, you have the floor.

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- Thank you. Now, Mr. Chairman, of course, I am not asserting I am the only one, I am speaking for others, and so I look forward to the Honourable Minister visiting Wakanisila and my mother will be happy to host her at home and tell her what she is going through. But really, Mr. Chairman, it is prioritising our people who live in informal settlements and squatter settlements who face these issues every day and would like some security of tenure and this is important for our people. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- Mr. Chairman, the problem here is that the Member does not understand the whole process. When a squatter is created, it simply means the person goes and occupies the land illegally. Sometimes that land is not a State land, that land is TLTB land which means that we have to negotiate for a Development Lease. For that, 60 per cent of the people must agree, that is why previously I mentioned that it is so hard to get Development Lease. So far we only secured 43 Development Leases and we are trying our level best to get more.

I just ask the Honourable Member that we know the problem and we know how the problem was created. To destroy a house it takes a few hours, that is what happened but to build a house, you know very well how long it takes. Here we are trying to formalise the informal settlements which means the houses are already there. We have to walk in, create that road, build that place and again there is a huge problem within the community as well. They do not want the road to be on this side, they do not want the drain to be on the other side, so it is a huge problem. It is not easy that you walk in and you can just develop that area and walk out, we can only do that with a green field but not in a settlement where people are living; that is the difficulty.

HON. RATU N.T. LALABALAVU.- In supporting this motion, I would like to pose a question to the Honourable Minister and that is, in trying to formalise informal settlements, has the Ministry considered the relaxing of stringent town planning conditions like instead of tarseal and curb roading, just have gravel. This would make the blocks cheaper and available because you have electricity and water.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Minister, you have the floor.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- Sir, we want to treat everyone equally, that is the point. Why should we, just because it is an informal settlement, we deprive them of a proper drain, we deprive them of a proper road, footpaths, streetlights? That is not how we do things.

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- I support the motion and I would like to suggest to the Honourable Minister to consider that in the past, the Director of Lands also addressed the formalisation and regularisation in this way - make them all move to an area and wait there, then do it properly, because otherwise you will be sacrificing standards. There will be a house here and your road will be going like this, like this and your poles will be going like this and like this. You will be sacrificing standards and you ask yourself the question - what is the point of passing laws to set town planning standards?

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- Mr. Chairman, I think it is a session where I should be doing some education and awareness. I would like to say that it is not easy because in certain settlements, people have already built their cement houses. We are not going to just shift their houses.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Do not listen to them.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- No, we do consultation, thank you. We talk to people, we discuss things and that is how we do it.

(Honourable Members interject)

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Order! Order

Honourable Members, we have had sufficient discussion on this motion. We will now vote on this motion.

Votes cast:

Ayes : 19
Noes : 27
Not voted : 5

Motion is defeated.

Honourable Members, we will now vote on Head 23 – Ministry of Housing and Community Development.

Does any Member oppose the motion?

(Chorus of “Ayes” and “Noes”)

Votes cast:

Ayes : 27
Noes : 19
Not voted : 5

The motion is, therefore, agreed to.

Head 23 agreed to.

Head 24 - Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation:

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, the floor is now open on Programme 1-1. Honourable Salote Radrodro, you have the floor.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Mr. Chairman, I believe I have a motion on Programme 1, Activity 1, SEG 6.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Yes, you have.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Mr. Chairman, I move a motion on Head 24, Programme 1, Activity 1, SEG 6, on the Fiji National Council for Disabled Persons (\$500,000), for that to be increased by \$1 million.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- I second the motion, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Salote Radrodro, you have the floor.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that motion for the following reasons:

- i. Upon the presentation of the latest Annual Reports, the FNCDP had clearly made their request that they need extra funding for them to be able to implement or for the enforcement of the Act on people living with disabilities, for example, on the establishment of a database;
- ii. Due to the high incidence of amputations through NCDs, there is an increased number of people living with disabilities; and
- iii. It will increase the responsibilities of the FNCDP.

So those are the reasons I am moving the motion, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you, Honourable Minister, you have the floor.

HON. M.R. VUNIWAQA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The budget allocation that is there is in accordance with the plans that FNCDP through the Ministry has for the new budget year. As I had stated in my speech yesterday, Mr. Chairman, the network in relation to taking care of persons with disabilities is spread across Government. There are budgets in other Ministries to look after that aspect, in particular, in relation to NCDs and the need for mobility aid for elderly persons and those living with disabilities, the Ministry works very closely with the Spinal Injuries Association and that Association actually provides mobility aid and mobility devices for persons living with disabilities and elderly as well. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Any further comments on this motion? We will go to the vote on this motion.

Votes Cast:

Ayes	:	15
Noes	:	27
Not Voted	:	9

Motion is defeated.

Honourable Members, I give the floor to the Honourable Salote Radrodro for her second motion. You have the floor, Madam.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move the motion on the same Head, Programme 1, Activity 1, SEG 10 on assistance given to fire victims for the allocation to be increased by \$50,000. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- I second the motion, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- You have the floor, Madam.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The reasons for the increase in that allocation is based on the increased cost of living. I believe the current practice now that they are given \$1,000 for assistance and also there is high incidence of fire and a lot of our people that are victims of fire

go to the Ministry for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation and in the absence of that assistance, they have problems of having to help themselves in regards to rebuilding their lives and rebuilding their house. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Minister, you have the floor.

HON. M.R. VUNIWAQA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That particular budget is sufficient for the purposes that are there for. We need to keep in mind, Mr. Chairman, that there is now insurance for majority of the people who used to access this before. All beneficiaries of the Social Protection Scheme are now covered under Fiji Care Insurance, and one of the benefits out of that insurance package is assistance if their homes catch fire. A lot of clients that come to us for assistance in regards to this would be caught under the Fiji Care Insurance Scheme. This is more than sufficient for that purpose.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Are there any further comments?

(Chorus of “Noes”)

MR. CHAIRMAN.- We will go to the vote on this motion.

Votes cast:

Ayes	:	19
Noes	:	27
Not Voted	:	5

Motion is defeated.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Activity 2 - Poverty Monitoring Unit:

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- I need to ask a question on Activity 1, Mr. Chairman, all we have are the Motions. There will be no time for questions, can I just ask one question, please?

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Member, what I did earlier was asked for comments then gave the floor for motions.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- I think you went straight to the motion, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- You are normally very fast but you are a bit slow tonight.

(Laughter)

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, we will move on. Activity 2 - Poverty Alleviation Monitoring Unit.

(Chorus of “Noes”)

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Programme 2 - Social Welfare, Activity 1.

(Chorus of “Noes”)

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Activity 2.

(Chorus of “Noes”)

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Activity 3.

(Chorus of “Noes”)

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Programme 3 - Women and Gender Development.

(Chorus of “Noes”)

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Activity 1.

(Chorus of “Noes”)

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, I give the floor to the Honourable Salote Radrodro, who has a motion on Head 24, Programme 3, Activity 1, SEG 6. You have the floor, Madam.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On that same Head, Activity, SEG 6 on the Women’s Plan of Action, I move that the allocation be increased by \$5 million. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

(Honourable Government Members interject)

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- I second the motion.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Salote Radrodro, you have the floor.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that motion based on the reasons that the Women’s Plan of Action is the main plan of action that will ensure that the National Gender Policy is carried out and targets are being achieved.

In that way, Mr. Chairman, the Ministry will be in a better position resource-wise to be able to deliver the targets that are in the Women’s Plan of Action, and I know we have heard and we can appreciate that, that there are other Ministries that do have women programmes but, for example, Mr. Chairman, I believe just on Monday, the Honourable Minister for Forestry had commented on women in forestry in some kind of activities. But then, Mr. Chairman, going through the Estimates for the Ministry of Forestry, there is no specific allocation to say that “this Programme is for women”. That it is why, Honourable Minister for Forestry, well, you can show us which particular Programme, Activity and SEG under your Ministry, and that is why, Mr. Chairman, it is important for this plan of action because this is specifically under the Ministry of Women and it is specifically for programmes that will ensure the empowerment and development of women.

Likewise, Mr. Chairman, other Ministries like the Ministry for Fisheries, we have heard about women in fishery but we if we look at that Ministry allocation, there is no specific programme to say that “this particular Programme or Activity is for women”. Likewise for the Ministry of Agriculture, we have heard that the cottage industry is for women but how much allocation for the cottage industry is specifically being put aside for women?

The Ministers can go to town and say, “There are programmes in our Ministries that women could access” but the very fact that there is no specific allocation under their Ministry identified under women, that is just a lot of words. That is what I continuously highlight that there is just a lot of lip service, so that is why, Mr. Chairman, the importance of having to increase the allocation for the Women’s Plan of Action because this is the plan of action that would ensure the various programmes under gender equality. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you, Honourable Member. Honourable Minister, you have the floor.

HON. M.R. VUNIWAQA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have the National Gender Policy, we have a plan for the year in relation to that policy and what we will prioritise for the year and the allocation of \$900,000 is sufficient for that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

HON. GOVERNMENT MEMBERS.- *Vinaka.*

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Lynda Tabuya, you have the floor.

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just like to support the motion by just adding to that - Women’s Plan of Action. Honourable Reddy, would you like to speak or I can wait. Thank you.

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- Mr. Chairman, that Plan of Action was for 25 years, and is actually due next year and we need to report on what we have achieved. What the Honourable Salote Radrodro has brought up is very important about gender mainstreaming within the Government programmes and we do need the Budget allocation for those in each Ministry, and this increase to \$5.9 million so we can meet the targets in time for next year to report back and show what we have done, especially in the 50th Anniversary of our beloved country.

(Honourable Government Members interject)

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- Honourable Reddy, would you like to speak again? Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Order, order!

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and this would be a really great show of achieving this gender mainstreaming within our Government programmes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you, Honourable Minister.

HON. M.R. VUNIWAQA.- Mr. Chairman, gender mainstreaming is part of the plan for the Ministry. It is a continuous plan and there is already a mechanism in place and we have already been working every year in relation to that and this \$900,000 will cover that, including the review of the National Gender Policy that the Honourable Member is talking about, that is ongoing as we speak. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

HON. GOVERNMENT MEMBER.- The Honourable Minister has assured.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Honourable Members, we will therefore vote on this motion.

Votes Cast:

Ayes	:	19
Noes	:	27
Not Voted	:	5

Motion is defeated.

Honourable Members, I give the floor to the Honourable Salote Radrodoro to move a motion on Head 24-3-1(8). You have the floor, Madam.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Thank you, Honourable Chairman. I would like to move a motion on SEG 8 - Construction of Barefoot College, and to increase the allocation by \$1 million.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- I second the motion.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- You have the floor, Honourable Radrodoro.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Thank you, Honourable Chairman.

I had raised this motion just quite recently in the House. The Honourable Madam Minister had raised this issue and spoke about it with passion and commitment and I share that passion and commitment, Honourable Chairman. That is why I am requesting that this construction of Barefoot College really does take place. It has been in the previous Budget and I am also making this motion in view of the popularity that solar energy is gaining.

For example, right now, I am not sure whether the Honourable Minister for Health is aware that in the Lekutu Health Centre, their solar power is actually not working right now and if this construction of Barefoot College really actualise, then these are activities or programmes that these women solar engineers could be looking into in regards to solar energy.

Honourable Chairman, that is why I am moving this motion, if the Ministry could fast-track the establishment of the Barefoot College.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Honourable Minister, you have the floor.

HON. M.R. VUNIWAQA.- Thank you, Honourable Chairman. In my speech yesterday I had shown where we are in relation to the Barefoot College construction. We have a plan in place and for the next financial year, this is the money we need in relation to the construction programme. Thank you, Honourable Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Any further comments on this? Honourable Minister Jone Usamate.

HON. J. USAMATE.- Mr. Chairman, Sir, I request the Honourable Salote Radrodro who seems to have so many millions of dollars, maybe she can donate some to my Ministry.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, we will now vote on this motion.

Votes Cast:

Ayes	:	18
Noes	:	27
Not Voted	:	6

Motion is defeated.

Honourable Members, Parliament will now vote on Head 24.

The Question is:

That the amount of Head 24 - Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, be approved.

(Chorus of 'Ayes' and 'Noes')

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Parliament will vote.

Votes cast:

Ayes	:	27
Noes	:	17
Not Voted	:	7

The motion is, therefore, agreed to.

Head 24 agreed to.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, we have now concluded voting on Heads 8 to 24. We will now adjourn the Committee of Supply until tomorrow.

Honourable Members, I will now resume the Speaker's Chair in order to adjourn the House.

The House resumed:

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, I thank you for your forbearance and your co-operation. We have had a long but a fruitful day and we are adjourned until tomorrow morning at 9.30.

The Parliament adjourned at 10.47 p.m.