

PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI



PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

DAILY HANSARD

THURSDAY, 30TH JULY, 2020

[CORRECTED COPY]

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THURSDAY, 30TH JULY, 2020

The Parliament met at 9.50 a.m. pursuant to adjournment.

HONOURABLE SPEAKER took the Chair and read the Prayer.

PRESENT

All Honourable Members were present except the Honourable Niko Nawaikula.

MINUTES

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

That the Minutes of the sitting of Parliament held on Wednesday, 29th July, 2020, as previously circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed.

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

Question put.

Motion agreed to.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CHAIR

HON. SPEAKER.- I welcome all Honourable Members to today's sitting of Parliament. I also welcome all those watching the live broadcast and the live streaming of today's proceedings. Thank you for taking an interest in the workings of your Parliament.

Deferment on the Tabling of Reports

Honourable Members, I have received a request from the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence requesting for an extension of time to complete deliberations on the three Treaties that were referred to the Standing Committee. For the information of all Honourable Members, the Standing Committee needs further clarification on some of the provisional findings.

On a similar note, I have noted the need by the Standing Committee on Justice, Law and Human Rights to undertake further consultations on the Cyber Crime Bill 2020.

Therefore in that regard, the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence and the Standing Committee on Justice, Law and Human Rights will table their reports at a later sitting of Parliament.

Written Responses

For the information of Honourable Members, the Secretariat has received:

- (a) Written Response from the Office of the Prime Minister with the Consolidated Report on the Review of the Ministry of Sugar's industry's 2012 to 2016 Annual Report. This would be conveyed to the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs.

- (b) Response to Written Question No. 64/2020 by the Honourable Minister for Forestry. This has been conveyed to the Honourable Jese Saukuru.
- (c) Response to Written Question No. 90/2020 by the Honourable Minister for Local Government, Housing and Community Development. This has been conveyed to the Honourable Lt. Col. Pio Tikoduadua.

Thank you, Honourable Members. We will now move on to the next item on the Order Paper.

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

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON THE 2020-2021 APPROPRIATION BILL 2020

In Committee:

Head 23 – Ministry of Housing and Community Development

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Head 23-1-1. Honourable Tabuya?

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The clarification sought from the Honourable Minister is a general one under that Programme and Activity, seeing that although the entire Ministry is almost under “R” (86 percent of the Ministry), I think it is the highest percentage of allocation of the budget under “R” is for housing.

Mr. Chairman, I seek clarification on the emoluments and amounts that are in Programme 1-1 which has shown that while those remain, the activities following later have been reduced. So I question the Ministry for Housing in terms of service delivery to the people.

Mr. Chairman, I seek clarification from the Honourable Minister on Programme 1-1 in terms of their annual reports which have not been filed to show the performance of the Ministry since 2015. This has not been accounted for to the people or here in Parliament.

I reiterate my concern on the non-submission of the annual reports, including independent bodies and commissions that are commissioned by the Ministry of Housing to do the work as taxpayers’ funds are going to them. Mr. Chairman, there needs to be a look at the checks and balances for these bodies, commissions and agencies who receive taxpayers’ funds and they make recommendations to Government regarding their funding and operations. But this is not usually allocated or seen here in the Committee of Supply.

I just want clarification from the Honourable Minister before I move my motion which is now before you about their annual reports and about the performance of the Ministry of Housing, given that:

- (1) most of your budget now is under “R”; and
- (2) that you fail to give Annual Reports since 2015 to see the performance of your staff and your housing under this Head.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Member, just stick to the Programme and the Activity as they are being

(Honourable Members interject)

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Order, order!

When the Speaker is addressing the House, everyone listens, whether this side of the House or that side. Just stick to the Programme and Activity.

We will let you move your motion and you can bring the points that you raised in when you move your motion, but do not cut across, just stick to Activity 1 and Programme 1. We will continue.

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- Thank you, Honourable Speaker, I will then wait for my motion which is in the next Activity.

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- Mr. Chairman, just a clarification regarding Programme 1-1(7), there is a reduction in the allocation from \$280,000 to \$80,000, which is for a National Housing Policy Implementation Plan. Can we get an assurance and clarification from the Honourable Minister in terms of this reduction in allocation from last year, which Divisions have had their offices established under this allocation from last year and the intentions of this National Housing Implementation Plan, whether it will be done throughout the Divisions or just from one central division?

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

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- Mr. Chairman, Sir, regarding the National Housing Policy, it is national, so it means throughout Fiji. We need to do consultations to understand the housing stock and also to verify through research how many houses we need to build, for example, every year, to meet the housing needs of this country.

In terms of a divisional office, we have been strategizing with Public Rental Board, Housing Authority and the Ministry of Housing (all three institutions), where the staff can sit in one building. So when the public visit this particular office, they can access information related to all the three institutions. That will reduce the cost, as well as the services will become much more efficient, and we have already done that with the Ministry of Housing now relocated to Gorrie Street, where Housing Authority staff also sit in the Ministry of Housing.

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

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, just an issue for clarification from the Honourable Minister under SEG 5. There is an allocation for Transportation of Building Materials which has been increased to \$130,000. Can we get some clarification on that? Thank you.

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

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- Mr. Chairman, Sir, under Rural Housing, we have got two programmes - Scheme 1 is where people living in rural and maritime areas have the money but the only thing they need is for the Ministry to source material at Government tender prices and then they do the shipment of these material. So we have seen there is request from the community and for that reason, we have increased the allocation amount.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Honourable Ratu Naiqama Lalabalavu, you have the floor.

HON. RATU N.T. LALABALAVU.- Thank you, Honourable Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I seek some clarification as well on SEG 7 - National Housing Policy Implementation Plan. The clarification sought is regarding this National Policy. Is the Housing Authority still under Public Enterprises as well?

The reason I am raising this, Sir, is because the Public Enterprises as well as the Housing Authority Act tend to conflict each other. Will this policy be still part of that, or is it now Housing Authority alone?

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

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- Mr. Chairman, Sir, Housing Authority is a statutory organisation. It is appointed by the Honourable Minister for Economy because a lot of money is involved there, as well as Government guarantees involved. But when it comes to the implementation of the work of Housing Authority, it falls under the Ministry of Housing, so I deal with work-related matters.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Honourable Ratu Naiqama Lalabalavu?

HON. RATU N.T. LALABALAVU.- Sir, I only sought clarification whether the Housing Authority still comes under Public Enterprises, or is it no longer?

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- It is still under Public Enterprises.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Programme 2-1. Honourable Kuridrani, you have the floor.

HON. I. KURIDRANI.- Mr. Chairman, on Programme 2-1(10), I just need clarification from the Honourable Minister on the logic of trying to revitalise informal settlements wherein in SEG 8, they formalise informal settlements. So what is the logic in trying to revitalise informal settlements?

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Minister?

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- In revitalising an informal settlement, we were actually providing certain facilities in that informal settlement, for example, the streetlights, the footpath, et cetera, or culverts for that matter, if they urgently needed those services and we knew that development of that particular site will take longer, so that is what it meant. But we will discontinue that particular vote moving forward because that can now be included in the upgrading of informal settlement.

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

HON. L.S. QEREQERETABUA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a question for the Honourable Minister on Programme 2-1(10) - Housing Assistance for Persons Living with Disabilities of \$100,000 which, as we all know, used to be \$500,000 going towards Habitat for Humanity. I just want to get assurance from the Honourable Minister on:

- (1) why the drop; and
- (2) whilst doing the modifications for the homes, would they be following the same criteria that Habitat for Humanity builds because as you know, it is not just a ramp for someone in that wheelchair but there is a lot more than that.

My question is, why that drop by \$400,000? Thank you.

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

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- Mr. Chairman, Sir, before we submit our budget to the Ministry of Economy, there was consultation with each and every agency that we work with, and we had a discussion with UN Habitat as well.

Previously, UN Habitat was the institution that was delivering this service but do note that when institutions like this are involved, there is administration cost as well. So to reduce administration cost and to provide value for money, this particular programme is now under the Ministry of Housing where we will be using our own carpenters to provide this service (these are rural housing carpenters that we have), as well as PRB carpenters. So in that way, we will be able to deliver more with less.

In terms of standard, obviously as a Ministry of Housing, we cannot just go around doing the retrofit without following the standard, we have to set the standard for other institutions. So, obviously, we will be following the standard and we are following the standard.

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

HON. J. SAUKURU.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to seek clarification and confirmation from the Honourable Minister with regard to formalisation of informal settlements. Is Lovu Settlement included in the Formalisation of Informal Settlements?

We have received complaints from settlers in Lovu Settlement that nothing has been done on the development of their settlement, the Lovu Seaside. That is in Programme 2-1(10)

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- Yes, for Lovu Seaside, we have the development lease. Is that what you are asking?

HON. J. SAUKURU.- Yes.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- We have the development lease for Lovu Seaside and as I mentioned previously, we have development lease for 44 different informal sites and this year, we acquired another five development leases.

Obviously, what we do is try and finish off some of the programmes that started earlier on, for example, Ledrusasa, Cuvu and Waidamudamu. The other projects which are new projects where paperwork, Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), et cetera, had been done, we can roll it out and for Lovu Seaside, again, we had consultation and we have with some preparatory work.

HON. J. SAUKURU.- Thank you.

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

HON. M. BULANAUCA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I seek clarification on SEG 10 - Koroipita Model Town (\$500,000). Also under Aid-in-Kind, Model Towns Charitable Trust – Koroipita Phase IV Funding (NZMAT) of \$190,736. What is the purpose and the progress in various stages now?

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

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- Mr. Chairman, Sir, the only thing that I heard was Koroipita, so is that what your question is? Is it on Koroipita?

HON. M. BULANAUCA.- Yes.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- Again, as I mentioned earlier on, when \$2 million is allocated initially for any project, obviously that money is used and the needs of the organisation decreases. So, for Koroipita, they requested for \$2 million, we have already given them \$1 million and that was used for the completion of their Stage 3 Housing which was for 23 households. That project is completed.

There was a delay in the completion of Stage 4 because they could not acquire the land on time. So, we are only giving them \$500,000 because that is what they had requested and with that money, they will be acquiring the land and they will be doing all the preparatory work, for example, the Scheme Plan, Engineering Plan and the civil work that they need to do on the site.

HON. M. BULANAUCA.- I am not quite clear about the Model Town, what is the purpose of that?

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- It is a social housing project. This is for vulnerable people in our community and it is run by Peter Drysdale. That is why it is called Koroipita. This is generally for single mothers. Does that answer your question?

HON. M. BULANAUCA.- Yes, thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Yes, he does. He knows very well about Koroipita. Honourable Tuisawau, you have the floor.

HON. RO F. TUISAWAU.- Thank you. Honourable Minister, my apologies, on SEG 10 - Housing Assistance for Persons Living with Disability. The Fiji Council of Social Services (FCOSS) Lami Branch had been assisting some widows there (one was a blind widow) with their housing, assisted in partnership with Basic Homes, the private sector. Is that included in this allocation as one of the organisations assisted? Also, are there any plans to work with the private sector in that regard? Thank you.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- Specifically, in your first part of the question, the answer is, no. The second part of your question, yes, we work with each and every different stakeholder group; NGOs, such as Koroipita; we work with the private sector, such as International Finance Corporation (IFC); the development partners, et cetera.

You may have also heard in the current Budget there was this announcement about the subdivision of lots where we are encouraging the private sector to come on board. And even in last year's Budget, the announcement was that if anyone builds a multiple storey building and they set aside certain percentage for strata titles, they also get some form of subsidy and incentives. So, yes, we do work with the private sector.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Honourable Bulitavu?

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- *Vinaka*, Mr. Chairman, good morning.

Honourable Minister, on SEG 10 - Housing Assistance for Persons Living with Disability (\$100,000), whether this will assist those improving their current dwelling, or people with disability building new homes? What is the quotation that they need to raise - the maximum if they are going

to build a new house because a lean-to could cost about \$18,000? How many applicants are you looking at?

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- This is assistance for persons living with disability, am I right?

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Yes.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- Yes, this is only for retrofits, for example, if they want to move around in the wheelchair, what are the ramps that need to be put in, or the bathroom features that need to be put in place, so it is only the improvement - retrofitting.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Honourable Professor Prasad?

HON. PROFESSOR B.C. PRASAD.- Honourable Minister, a quick question; there is an allocation of \$1.6 million for Public Rental Board (PRB). I understand you recently announced or said that PRB will be made into housing. Can you give us some more information on whether this is this being done or does it require some legislative changes before it is done, and what will be the implications for the Public Rental Board Subsidy?

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Sir. I would like to start with the last question first, what is the implication? I think it is the best thing that we can ever do.

At the moment, we have got Housing Authority of Fiji and Public Rental Board and if you go back to the 1980s, these two institutions were one. It was after the corruption in Housing Authority when PRB was separated.

Again, if you analyse the cost, if we continue to keep PRB separately, it chews a lot of money because, again, they are occupying prime properties around the country for nothing because those properties can be then used for rental purposes. So PRB, once it goes into Housing Authority, the overhead cost of operation will come down. That is one reason.

Secondly, the legislative changes. Yes, this is where we are working on the National Housing Plan where we will be looking at the various legislation that require changes and also the rights and responsibilities of those institutions that are providing the services and those individuals who are receiving the services. What are their responsibility? So, there is going to be an overall change that we want to bring about in the Housing Sector.

For PRB, through a Cabinet decision, we are making some minor changes. For example, we are moving the PRB staff into Housing Authority building and we are undertaking a job evaluation, and we are also looking at staffing needs. Let me just share this.

I had done the analysis on Housing Authority. Their only job is to do the subdivision of land. Once the subdivision of land is done, then they sell that land. This is what they are doing currently.

Again, who does the subdivision of land? Not the Housing Authority staff, but it is outsourced and yet, when you analyse the number of staff at Housing Authority, it is 220. What are they doing? It is a cost to the taxpayers and we need to tidy up all these with such institutions that are here to look after the needs of our people.

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

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to pose a question on informal settlements. I know the question has been answered regarding Lovu but the amount is \$2 million and \$2 million seems to have not been moved or utilised from last year. Can we get a list of the informal settlements that will be attended to in this process, especially informal settlements along the Suva-Nausori corridor, who have been under this programme or may be in the pipeline? I wanted to know whether Muslim League, Vatuwaqa, and all those other settlements along the Suva-Nausori corridor are included in this?

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- For the formalisation of informal settlements, we have utilised the \$2 million that was allocated in the 2019-2020 Budget.

For the 2020-2021 Budget, we will be working on a new project that we announced in the last Budget. Those projects were in the preparatory phase and the projects were Tavela, Tore, Sakoca and Wakanisila. Those projects will now be put into the construction phase.

Again, there are a few things still left, for example, the EIA, et cetera, simply because of the COVID-19 lockdown and this work was not completed. We will complete all these work and we will put it into the construction phase.

We know that when we start off with the upgrading of an informal settlement, it is not like a green field where you walk in and you can complete the work within, say, 36 months or 12 months. It does not work that way because there are real people living in that settlement, and sometimes there is so much of dispute that it takes a much longer time to complete.

Now, coming back to your question of exactly whether we are doing upgrading in Vatuwaqa and Nasinu area, for Vatuwaqa, there are a number of informal settlements that have been taken care of by, I would say, private individuals like Bhindi Brothers. They have come on board to relocate some of those settlements to 8 miles. There are some individuals in our community who are coming on board to assist but, of course, we cannot just do upgrading of all the 250 informal settlements at once.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Honourable Tikoduadua.

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under SEG 10, I would just like to ask the Honourable Minister for clarification on the Lagilagi Housing. I do not see any allocation on that. What is the progress on Lagilagi Housing? I know there have been some legal issues over it and that, is there still a relationship there with Government in terms of the rest of the informal community there?

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- Mr. Chairman, Sir, Lagilagi Housing is not a Ministry of Housing's project, that is why it is not here. The Lagilagi Housing comes under People's Community Network (PCN), and that is why it is not shown here.

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

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move a motion:

For an increase in the allocation under Programme 2-1(10) - First Home Purchase [Income Threshold - \$50,000 and below] (3,000,000), an increase by \$2 million to \$5 million.

HON. T.N. NIUMATAIWALU.- I second the motion.

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

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As I have alluded to earlier, the Honourable Minister had mentioned, I think, the other day in her speech that about 543 applicants had benefitted from the First Home Purchase allocations the last year but I think they ran out of money or funding before the year ended. She mentioned in the news too that she had not been given the breakdown on the number of those recipients that earn \$50,000 and below.

The issue that is faced by those who are entitled to this money is that, most of them live in informal and squatter settlements, so it ties into the formalisation of informal and squatter settlements. What concerns me is that, they are unable to access funding or borrow because they have not received the formalisation of their leases. The question is, how many people under \$50,000 and below are receiving this assistance? Where is the subdivision that they can build in?

According to the Housing Authority, the Honourable Minister has mentioned, “build subdivisions and sell”, after spending millions of dollars, they have yet to hand over those subdivisions to now, what the Honourable Attorney-General has mentioned, a partnership with IFC, even though they have spent millions of dollars of revenue.

I will give an example of a subdivision that is under them now that may possibly be handed over to IFC. There is the Nepani Subdivision which members of the public have enlisted for but are unable to access assistance for that, so there is hold-up in the entire system.

What I am saying is, they are falling through the cracks, those who earn \$50,000 and below because there are no subdivisions or homes that they can purchase, that has not been provided by the Government. So, an increase in the allocation for this will hopefully see the Government move faster on these subdivisions, whether they partner with IFC, Housing Authority or Habitat for Humanity Fiji, to have these homes be realised.

Also for the formalisation of these settlements, they are still waiting for their leases. The Honourable Attorney-General has mentioned about partnering with IFC but we want to know the location and the sizes of these projects and what will be an individual pay for this.

Are we targeting these below \$50,000 consumers because they are not accessing these funds when most of them live in informal and squatter settlements? They do not have title, so how can they borrow and access these funds? By increasing this allocation, would see hopefully that Government will move quicker to build these homes for them. That is why the motion is before the House, to increase this amount which is particularly for our vulnerable and our needy, who earn below \$50,000. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Sir.

HON. MAJOR-GENERAL (RET'D) S.L. RABUKA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Sir. I was going to speak on one of the SEGs but I will now speak on the motion. I support the motion and I am just wondering what has happened in Housing Authority. Well, what happened in our relations with New Zealand, is it coming to an end?

A lot has been done and a lot can still be done by Housing Authority, and I am very appreciative of their efforts in the past. My father and I borrowed to build, that one was one of the kind of loans they gave out at that time and we had to do it in the first year of my service in the Army, before I got promoted or got commissioned, and we would have gone over the salary limit or threshold for Housing Authority loans. I believe we should increase the allocation, but what has happened to the New Zealand Aid in-kind? Have we declared war on New Zealand or why is it coming to an end?

I support the motion, Mr. Chairman, Sir.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Sir, just a couple of points I want to clarify and one is in respect of the Honourable Member who keeps on going about 'R' (Under Requisition). I want to reiterate, and she said that 50 percent of housing or more than that is under R.

If you look at Programme 1-1, the entire is not under R because it is your normal operations. If you look at Programme 2-1, the reason why it is under R is when you actually have contracts so there are contractual obligations. If someone has been given a project to build and they have to build it in stages, then there are various documentations, the engineer's certificate needs to be signed, all of that needs to be done, so it goes through particular documenting process.

When it is under R, the Desk Officer at the Ministry of Economy needs to check off on it, and it does not even come to the Minister if the R amount is \$1 million or less. I do not even see it, so this is why you people are coming from personalised perspective. The Permanent Secretary for Economy signs off on it.

For example, Tourism Fiji, there is a contract, an MOU, quarterly so every quarter they give them their money. So you have to have the acquittals. They check off on it and then they release the funds. It is a check off system. You go on about our accountability and making sure the money is being disbursed properly, this is the best form of accountability, we 'nip it at the bud', not after the fact. That is the issue why it is under R.

So if you look at all of SEG 10, these are projects specifically that require documentary evidence and that is why. Please, you really need to understand this. I do not know whether you have an understanding of this or not.

Honourable Ratu Lalabalavu raised the issue about Housing Authority. The operations, of course, is done by the Ministry of Housing - policies, et cetera. We come from the governance perspective - Board Members' accountability and those types of things where it comes under Public Enterprises.

In respect of the IFC issue, Mr. Chairman, Sir, the IFC matter is where the Government is working with IFC so we have identified about six sites throughout Fiji, predominantly in Viti Levu, where land stock on these sites that are being held by Housing Authority has not been utilised. The idea is to bring the private sector to get subdivisions done quickly but also to build homes.

As we have said previously in so many instances, the model in Fiji for housing, in particular for what used to be called 'low cost housing' and now 'affordable housing', is we do not condemn certain areas to be forever low cost housing areas. People, for example, who bought an apartment or rent an apartment in Nabua, have not progressed socially. The value of their property has not increased. Some of the people living in Raiwaqa, the value of their property has not increased.

What we want to do is, we have a type of housing and get people to start owning homes at an early age. Just because you are 24 years and 25 years old, working as a civil servant, does not mean you wait for the next 15 years to buy your own home. So we want to have strata titling, what we call "duplex housing" also, so the cost of that is much lower.

If you have a three-storey building with one, two or three different apartments, flats or different number of bedrooms, the cost structure will be different. You could have on one floor, someone who may be working as a cleaner. The next door neighbour could be someone working as

a bank manager, who is paying a bit more. The next one could be someone who is working, for example, in Suva City Council, or wherever. So when you have people of different economic strata living in the same building, the value of the property will always increase, but if you have all low cost housing, the value of that area will not increase.

I started off as a junior civil servant and I bought a \$80,000 flat. Now, I got married, my wife and I both earn income and we now want to buy a two-bedroom flat. So I should be able to sell my first apartment at a price higher than what I bought it for. That is how I get social mobility in society. Then I buy a bigger place. Maybe, I will do well, get a promotion, I might buy a house on its own with a land on it.

We need to increase the rate of home ownership, and that is critically important. That is what IFC is driving towards and we need to build these buildings really quickly and buy it at affordable pricing.

The other thing is, please, understand the technology and the methodology of construction in Fiji is still very archaic, compared to many other countries. People overseas actually build new technology, greener technology and they build things much faster, and that is what we are also trying to do too. This is why it is critically important to get partners, like IFC. Now, the overseas construction companies are cooperating with ours, to be able to get that level of stockpile of homes.

The other point, of course, is in respect of what Honourable Kuridrani raised on the issue about the supposed contradiction about revitalising informal settlements and their formalisation. There is no contradiction. As the Honourable Minister highlighted, please, understand that the New Zealand Government is also providing funding for this, together with Monash University.

There are certain informal settlements where people cannot be moved overnight, but you have raw sewage going in, you have water issues, drainage issues, footpath issues and electricity for some of them, where we have got the approvals, but basic sanitation, water accessibility and the drainage of it. Sewage is a big problem. So we are trying in the meantime, before we move them on to other sites or formalise those areas, we have to make sure they live in hygienic conditions, otherwise, we have got a public health issue. So that is what it is. It is not actually a contradiction in itself. Thank you, Sir.

HON. RATU N.T. LALABALAVU.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also would like to speak in support of the motion but more importantly, on the statement just provided to us by the Honourable Attorney-General. The issue that I was raising and I seek clarification on is the Housing Authority.

Under the Housing Authority Act, the core function is to provide affordable housing. Under the Public Enterprises Act, the bottom line is profit.

HON. GOVERNMENT MEMBER.- No!

HON. RATU N.T. LALABALAVU.- Yes, under the Public Enterprises Act, under the National Housing Policy which is in SEG 7, Sir, and that was why I raised that point. I sought clarification on that point.

They tend to conflict each other. When you provide affordable housing, meaning to a layman, it is cheap housing but, again, under the Public Enterprises Act, that same statutory organisation is going for profit. The cost then escalates and, therefore, it would not be affordable. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- I would like to correct the Honourable Member; no, you may not have read the new Public Enterprises Act. Remember, we had a Public Enterprises (Amendment) Act and certain provisions of the Act were repealed.

This is simply the listing of that organisation as a public enterprise. It does not necessarily mean, therefore, that there is a contradiction or conflict between the objectives of it being listed in the Public Enterprises Act and it being a housing authority organisation created under statute, and you are driven by the statute. So, there is no contradiction and I think, unfortunately, there is probably a lack of understanding. I can explain that to you later.

Honourable Tabuya, I am just getting back to your motion. Mr. Speaker, Sir, the reason why (we also have the “R’s” in place is and as you said, it can it be used on informal settlements. No, it cannot be, because this is taxpayers’ funds, specifically for people to own their own homes.

When you actually fund people to build homes on informal settlements or *vakavanua* arrangements, they have essentially no possessory rights. So today if I am paying a landowner \$30 a month as an informal arrangement, the next month the landowner can come and say, “move” and everything that I have got there is gone. That is why FNPF, for example, will not allow you to withdraw your funds - your housing eligibility, to build on *vakavanua* arrangements or informal settlements.

However, this Government has amended the law and we now allow members of landowning units. If I am a member of a landowning unit and have a right to a particular land (possessory rights), FNPF will allow me to withdraw my FNPF funds to build my home on my *mataqali* land. There is a difference, because no one can boot me out from the land where I have customary rights, which gives me the legal right to actually own that land. So FNPF says, “Okay, your money is secure.”

If you are going to allow people or give them access to funds, whether it is their own money from FNPF or taxpayers’ fund, you give them the money, they build something, tomorrow it is gone, the money is gone as well. But if you allow FNPF withdrawal for a land on which you own as a member of the landowning unit, no one can boot you out. That is your right. It is recognised under the Constitution and that is your investment.

In the same way, if you are going to use taxpayers’ fund and someone comes along and says, “Yippee, I am worth \$30,000 now, I will go on to the bank”, firstly, the bank will not give you a mortgage because the bank will not actually have secured a collateral. You should know that.

Therefore, if we still give them \$30,000 as you are proposing, tomorrow they can be booted out and the \$30,000 is gone. It could be an Auditor-General query; why did you give someone \$30,000, they are supposed to have their own home but tomorrow they do not have it. That, unfortunately, is an irrationality in your proposal because you want to cover that area.

If you are saying purely to increase the funding but under the current policy, that is a different matter. But if your objective is to increase the allocation to cover informal settlements, then you are actually throwing good money down the drain, because those people then have absolutely no collateral. The point is this, one of the reasons why we want people to own their own homes is because then they have an asset, then they can go to the bank and use that as a collateral.

There are so many people today in Fiji who go to moneylenders because they do not have any assets they can give as collateral to borrow money. So tomorrow my daughter is getting married, I

need \$5,000, there is a funeral in the family and I need additional \$10,000 or whatever. Now, I go running off to the bank and the bank says; “Well, hang on. You borrowed only this much money because of your salary, but can you give us some asset we can use as security.” No, they do not have it. So they go running off to the moneylenders, paying 20 percent or 25 percent interest rate.

What we are saying is, the moment that you own your own home whether strata title, duplex or individual home, you can then use that as collateral. Go to the bank, they will recognise that. So that is the difference, and that is why we want to ensure that when we give this \$30,000, it is their own, whether it is on a 99-year lease, or whether it is freehold land, iTaukei land, Crown land or State land. It is a 99-year lease which is recognised as collateral.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- We have had enough discussions on this motion, we will now vote on the motion.

(Honourable Member interjects)

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Do you still want to go ahead with the motion?

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- With the right of reply

MR. CHAIRMAN.- There is no right of reply.

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- Mr. Chairman, I may withdraw so please, be patient with me.

Mr. Chairman, I just want to acknowledge what the Honourable Attorney-General has said. Basically, it is a bit of a contradiction because here, the Government is trying to formalise informal settlements so that our people can get security, and that has been a promise from 2014 and todate, it still has not happened.

(Honourable Government Members interject)

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Order, order!

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- It still has not happened or been completed so, Mr. Chairman, there are still 80,000 people living in informal and squatter settlements, who will not be entitled to this grant because he is talking about insecurity and that is the Government’s issue. They should be solving the security of tenure.

Mr. Chairman, the other point he has made is that, only people who are on *mataqali* land can access FNPF now for their housing. What about those in informal settlements? What is their solution? We have not heard that? What is their solution, now that they can access the FNPF so that they can also access this fund and build a home?

(Honourable Government Members interject)

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Order, order!

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- Mr. Chairman, I think the honourable Minister should just admit that they do not have money to focus on the 80,000 people in informal and squatter settlements, to give them security of tenure. So on that point, Mr. Chairman, I withdraw my motion. Thank you.

HON. P.K. KUMAR.- Mr. Chairman, Sir, I need to correct what she has just said.

HON. LD. TABUYA.- The motion is withdrawn.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- No, but you have made a statement saying that nothing was done. You cannot get away with that.

(Honourable Members interject)

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Order, order!

You have withdrawn your motion, that is it. We will move on.

The Parliament will now vote on Head 23 - Ministry of Housing and Community Development.

Question put.

Head 23 agreed to.

MR CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, on that note we will suspend proceedings for refreshments in the Big Committee Room. Parliament will resume in half an hour so make sure you are on time in half an hour because I will not be waiting, remember that.

The Parliament adjourned at 10.46 a.m.

The Parliament resumed at 11.15 a.m.

Head 24 - Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Programme 1-1? 'Nays' 'Nays' Honourable Salote Radrodro.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have, without notice, tabled motions and if I could be just guided on which one I could move now, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- You just hold that for the time being.

Programme 1-1, is there anyone else wanting to contribute to that?

(Chorus of 'Nays')

MR. CHAIRMAN. You have the floor to move your motion - Programme 1-1(6).

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move a motion without notice on the increase of the Fiji National Council for Disabled Persons of another \$500,000. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

HON. RATU T. NAVURELEVU.- 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 in regards to the contribution to the Fiji National Council for Disabled Persons (FNCDP) which, at one time, was pegged at \$1 million and I believe it was in the 2018-2019 Budget. I move the motion for increase, Mr. Chairman, because of the mandate that has been given to the Fiji National Council for Disabled Persons under the Act.

Also I note, Mr. Chairman, that under Programme 1-1 (SEGs 6 and 7), there are other contributions aligned to people living with disability, for example, Grants to Organisations for Persons with Disability (\$400,000); Economic Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (\$20,000); Implementation of Rights of Persons with Disability Act 2018 (\$50,000). In total, Mr. Chairman, if we look at activities in regards to the Protection of the Rights of People Living with Disabilities, under that Programme, we have \$470,000 plus the \$500,000, that is about \$970,000 only, Mr. Chairman.

For us to be able to look after the rights of people living with disabilities, in regards to their employment and other rights, under the Act, the FNCDP is the mandated Authority for the effective implementation of the Act which we have assigned to. I believe it is important that they are resourced appropriately so that they could be effective in their mandate in having to look after the whole of the Programmes and Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) that undertake work in the protection of the rights of people living with disability, Mr. Chairman.

So along those lines, I am moving that the current allocation for FNCDP be increased by \$500,000 to bring it to a million dollars. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Honourable Navurelevu?

HON. RATU T. NAVURELEVU.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can I ask the Honourable Minister to update this House with regards to the Construction of Barefoot College (\$3,000,000), will they be able to complete the Project? Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- We are on the motion at the moment. Honourable Minister, you have the floor.

HON. M.R. VUNIWAQA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- I thought were wanting to participate in the motion. Honourable Minister, you have the floor.

HON. M.R. VUNIWAQA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I had referred to this during my response to the Budget Address.

When we talk about the rights of people living with disabilities, I ask that we not only look at the budget for the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation. Yes, we have the policy mandate for people living with disabilities, but this is only a portion of what Government gives for services relating to persons living with disabilities. I will give you a few examples.

If you look at the Ministry of Economy's budget, they have, for example, the Construction of the Western Disabled Centre so even though that will follow under the management of the Ministry of Women, that budget is allocated to Ministry of Economy to oversee the construction of that building.

Then we talk about the Grant to Hilton Special School – Early Intervention (\$700,000), again, that is under the Ministry of Economy. Scholarship Scheme for Special Needs Students (\$478,000), that is the Ministry of Economy.

Ministry of Housing accessibility which the Honourable Minister for Housing spoke about (\$100,000); Ministry of Youth and Sports - Sports Grant for Persons with Disabilities (\$50,000); Ministry of Education - Grant to Special Schools (\$3.1 million); Community Rehabilitation Assistance Programme (\$5,000) under the Ministry of Health; Mental Health Awareness (\$60,000); and the list goes on. In total, we are looking at \$21.8 million across six Ministries of Government that specifically deal with the Rights of Persons Living with Disabilities.

To the Honourable Member, what is provided for under the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation has basically to do with the policy mandate, plus a bit for grants to organisations that provide services. But we are not the only Ministry that has the budget for them.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Are there any further contributions to this debate? Honourable Adi Litia Qionibaravi.

HON. ADI L. QIONIBARAVI.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Programme 1-1(6) - Grant to Girls Home (\$100,000). I am sorry, Sir.

(Chorus of interjections)

MR. CHAIRMAN.- We have dealt with that. We will move on to the next motion.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.-Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also move without notice a motion to increase the budgetary allocation under Domestic Violence Support which, right now, is pegged at \$30,000. I move that it be increased by \$70,000 to bring it to \$100,000.

Mr. Chairman, the reason being that Fiji is one of the countries in the world with the highest incidence of domestic violence. As we hear in the news and read in the media that with these COVID-19 restrictions, there has been a marked increase in domestic violence and the contributing factors to these are various. So it is important that the Ministry plays that lead role in regards to addressing effectively or eliminating violence against women.

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

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

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I apologise for that so I will just continue. It is the current situation that we are in right now because of the economic challenges and also social challenges that we are faced to it, so it is important that the Ministry be resourced appropriately with, at least, another \$70,000 to be able to spearhead the various work that other organisations are undertaking, for example, Fiji Women Crisis Centre and other organisations that do undertake work to combat violence against women.

On that note, Mr. Chairman, I am moving the motion:

That \$70,000 be allocated to bring the current amount of \$30,000 to \$100,000 for that particular SEG on Domestic Violence Support.

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

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I support the motion and just wish to commend the Ministry for Women for the telephone lines that the women were able to call into. I understand it is gone up by about 500 plus the number of calls received and just to have that avenue.

So, this increase, Mr. Chairman, would help more in facilitating a way for women, children and anyone experiencing domestic violence to be able to call in and get that assistance. Perhaps, to add to that in terms of counselling or safe houses and other things that could be added. I know that there are churches and organisations that have safe houses but clearly, not enough at this time.

So, I do support the motion and just visiting also single mums in informal land squatter settlements where they have experienced a lot of domestic violence. It is a very tough situation where they have to remove themselves from the homes. It will be good to have this budget increase so that the Ministry for Women can continue with their good work and be more ably to cope with the complaints and the need that comes through. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. M.R. VUNIWAQA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think there is a misunderstanding on what this budget item is for. The \$30,000 allocation to Domestic Violence Support Fund will actually cater for just the administration costs of putting together a mechanism to establish a fund. I think they are thinking that this is going to contribute directly to survivors of violence, no.

We heard about the Domestic Violence Helpline, for example, that Honourable Tabuya referred to. There is budget item for that, that is funded separately by Government and, again, the

safe houses, that is separately funded as well. So, when we are talking about domestic violence, it is a holistic thing and this is just one part of the entire mechanism for addressing domestic violence.

Apart from this, we will come through the other activities as well where there is a donor funding for domestic violence aided projects. So, this is just the administration cost, Honourable Member, to establish a mechanism for a Domestic Violence Support Fund.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Honourable Member, you may move your third motion.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move a motion without notice that the construction of Fiji Barefoot College be removed from Programme 1-1(SEG 8).

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

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

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Actually, this has been one of my pet projects too that I had been trying to push the Honourable Minister for Women for its implementation but for this time, I am, sort of, gladly surprised that it is tagged at \$3 million. Maybe in her response, the Honourable Minister for Women would then enlighten us on the progress of the construction of the Barefoot College and whether this \$3 million would be able to complete it for the year. Otherwise, Mr. Chairman, Sir, I believe the timing is not right, it is not a priority right now and there are people struggling right now with their daily lives in regards to food on the table and other family needs.

I am moving the motion that this particular item be taken out, not taken out of the budget but be reassessed and reviewed to contribute to other SEGs that do contribute to the economic empowerment of families and particularly, women in the informal sector, who may have also lost their small business in regards to the onslaught that has been brought about by COVID-19. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Sir.

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

HON. M.R. VUNIWAQA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, I had referred to this in my Budget response that construction has actually started. The Barefoot College is a phased project.

For the current financial year, the money that has been paid to the contractor is around \$800,000 in accordance with the phases of the project. For this current year, it is \$3 million. I believe after that, there will be a balance of about \$600,000 or something for the following financial year, in accordance with the construction plan.

The Honourable Member has referred to why this is not the right time for this project. In her response, she spoke about, when you give a person fish, you feed that person for a day. You teach that person how to fish, you feed that person, the family for a year. This is it. This is teaching women how to fish and it is especially during a time like this, during COVID-19. The project, such as Barefoot College, is going to teach rural women livelihood programmes. It is going to teach them how to come up with projects within the communities that they live in. Apart from solar engineering, there will be other livelihood projects in that centre.

Beekeeping, for example, other projects that women, especially rural women can use within the communities that they live in. So in such a time like this, we need projects, like Barefoot, it is teaching women how to fish. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Are there any further contributions to Programme 1-1? Honourable Adi Litia Qionibaravi.

HON. ADI L. QIONIBARAVI.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There is an allocation that appears both at SEG 6 and SEG10. It is Grants to Voluntary Organisations under SEG 6 (\$200,000), all under R, and there is another one with similar name at SEG 10 (\$100,000). I would like to speak on that allocation, Sir.

The question to the Honourable Minister for Women is, what criteria is sought for from organisations that would want to be assisted under this grant to voluntary organisations? I am proposing consideration for the Soqosoqo Vakamarama iTaukei, a body that was established in 1924, well over 96 years old. They carry out a lot of activities to assist women, empowering women in socio-economic programmes in the villages. I am wondering whether they could be assisted under this scheme, and what would be the criteria that they should submit, if they are to be assisted by Government?

I know that previous Governments used make a grant to the Soqosoqo Vakamarama iTaukei. Thank you, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Minister for Women, you have the floor.

HON. M.R. VUNIWAQA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The grants to Voluntary Organisations in SEGS 6 and 10, that is not for women's organisations. These are for the eight children's homes around the country that take care of children that fall under the Director of Social Welfare.

For SEG 6, that is for operational costs. The Government normally gives them a grant every year for taking care of the children and the SEG 10 allocation is for capital. If they need repairs, for example, they can ask for that money as well. It is for the eight children's homes.

HON. ADI L. QIONIBARAVI.- Mr. Chairman, is there any other allocation in your Ministry that could assist other women organisations, such as the Soqosoqo Vakamarama iTaukei?

HON. M.R. VUNIWAQA.- That is coming up in another Activity, Madam.

HON. ADI L. QIONIBARAVI.- *Vinaka.*

HON. M.R. VUNIWAQA.- Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Dr. Ratu Atonio Lalabalavu, you have the floor.

HON. DR. RATU A.R. LALABALAVU.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just need clarification from the Honourable Minister with regards to SEG 8 – Construction of Aged Care Home (\$3,228,761). As a Member of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs, we had visited Labasa and I think they were planning for the construction of a new home. Does that come under this?

HON. M.R. VUNIWAQA.- Yes, that budget item is specifically to finish off the Labasa project.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- We move on. Activity 2.

(Chorus of 'Nays')

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Programme 2-1.

(Chorus of 'Nays')

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Programme 2-2. Honourable Leawere?

HON. M.R. LEAWERE.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I seek clarification from the Honourable Minister on Programme 2-2(5) in terms of Commission Charges. What are these? Can we have some clarification on that item, please?

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

HON. M.R. VUNIWAQA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is the commission that Government pays to banks for the beneficiaries' accounts, the social welfare beneficiaries who receive assistance from Government. There is a bank fee involved, and Government pays for that.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Professor Prasad, you have the floor.

HON. PROFESSOR B.C. PRASAD.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On Programme 2-1 (6) - Poverty Benefit Scheme, there would be a lot more people, I think, who would be, or if not already, fallen below poverty line but there would be a lot more falling into that category and the demand on your Ministry, particularly for the Poverty Benefit Scheme allocation is going to be more than what it was before.

I am just wondering whether your Ministry is doing some assessments and whether this allocation of \$38 million will be sufficient to look at or meet those demands. Also, whether your Ministry is looking at supporting some of the other organisations which are actually involved on the ground, such as providing food for people and helping people to make ends meet? So, some clarification from you would be useful and whether the Ministry is engaged in any surveys to deal with it. Thank you.

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

HON. M.R. VUNIWAQA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Poverty Benefit Scheme that is reflected in the budget for the Ministry, as you would know is an ongoing thing. It has got its own standard operating procedures. I think you are asking your question in the context of COVID-19-related unemployment and I would ask the Honourable Minister for Economy to answer that as that would fall outside the mandate of the Ministry and is taken care of through packages that have been announced by the Ministry of Economy.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Honourable Minister for Economy.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Sir. Just to elaborate on that, this is why we call it the Unemployment Benefit Scheme so obviously, that is for those people who have lost their jobs or work on reduced hours. We are now supplementing their income, as opposed to getting them onto the permanent Poverty Benefit Scheme. It is quite psychological too.

A lot of people are quite happy about that because we are churning it through the FNPF, those people who have had formal employment, so that is how we managed to separate it. Currently, the allocation that we have given to the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, in fact, is sufficient to cater for that.

The one other point I wanted to make was in respect of the commission charges and Honourable Leawere asked the question. The commission charge paid is about \$3 to Westpac for every transaction. We have now negotiated with BSP and they now are charging us \$2.80. We are hoping to get all the social welfare recipients moved from Westpac account to BSP account.

For BSP also, you will see in Head 50 that we have paid them additional funding for caring out rural banking services to the postal offices. So, it ties in well to get BSP to be the deliverer of services for social welfare recipients and providing rural banking facilities too.

Some of the recipients also receive their amounts through the post offices, so we also pay an 8 percent to the Fiji Post for the redemption of those vouchers, et cetera, in respect of the vouchers that are being given or money being transferred to them through the Post Offices. That is what it covers.

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

HON. M. BULANAUCA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a clarification in Programme 2-2(6) - Bus Fare Programme for Old/Disabled Persons. How successful has it been?

There has been a lot of complaints about topping up their bus fare cards, but there is no money there, particularly in Wainunu, when they travel to Labasa and that is where they can only top up their bus cards. It cost them \$36 (\$18 to Labasa and \$18 return), just to get a \$40 top up. Is there any solution or any other area where they can easily access or top up their bus fare cards?

HON. M.R. VUNIWAQA.- I did not get the question. Was there a question? What was the question?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- How successful is it?

HON. M.R. VUNIWAQA.- Very successful, thank you.

HON. M. BULANAUCA.- There has been complaints about when they go and top up their cards as there is no money there and they have to go back another day. The cost, particularly when we have to go all the way from Wainunu to Labasa is \$18 return which is \$36 altogether for a \$40 top up.

HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- Mr. Chairman, Sir, only the people from Wainunu would spend \$36 to go and top up a \$40 card.

HON. M. BULANAUCA.- That is the complaint. They should be able to top-up at Nabouwalu or somewhere else cheaper, as compared to going right to Labasa to have their bus cards topped up. That is the service that he needs to do.

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

HON. RO F. TUISAWAU.- Honourable Minister, thank you. On the same SEG - Food Voucher for Rural Pregnant Mothers, how successful has that been? Maybe an update on the usage.

The other issue, Honourable Minister, is the monitoring and evaluation regarding all those Programmes. Perhaps, if you could just give a general update on how that is done, what mechanism or framework are in place to ensure that those are utilised as mandated?

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

HON. M.R. VUNIWAQA.- Thank you. In relation to the Food Voucher for Rural Pregnant Mothers, again, I had said this in my speech as well that for the current financial year, over 3,000 women were assisted in this and the budget has actually increased, just judging from the trend over the years.

HON. RO F. TUISAWAU.- The other question was on the general monitoring and evaluation of the Programmes. I am sure this is....

HON. M.R. VUNIWAQA.- We do have a unit within the Ministry under the Department of Poverty which is the Monitoring Unit that carries out monitoring and evaluation of Government's programmes in relation to the ones under the Ministry. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Salote Radrodro, you can move your motion on Activity 2(6).

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Sir. I move a motion without notice on the increase to the Poverty Benefit Scheme by \$10 million.

HON. DR. RATU A.R. LALABALAVU.- I second the motion.

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

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Sir. That motion is being moved in recognition of the \$38 million that is currently being allocated. But as I have mentioned before, the current situation we are faced in right now, and I am bringing this up with particular focus to women in the informal sector, who will be affected by this economic downturn, for example, those women in the Flea Market and women with other businesses in the informal sector, such as market vendors, who may not be included in the FNPF.

I recognise the contribution from the Honourable Minister for Economy on that particular allocation. That, I applaud, but my concern and why I am moving for this particular allocation to be increased is for those who may not benefit from that one under the FNPF Scheme and may fall into the gap. So the increase in this allocation, I am sure, will cater for the increase in applications that are forthcoming in regards to the economic downturn that we are faced with right now. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Just to provide also some clarification, yes, to us the focus has been on FNPF. Honourable Member, you may recall that in the 2019-2021 COVID-19 Response Budget, we had also specifically stated that those people who worked in the informal sector, when there was a lockdown, they had the ability to come and access funds through the Government itself. So obviously, if there is an appetite for that, we get a lot of requests and that \$100 million can obviously cater for that. Also, because as we have seen and you will see, the \$100 million line item in Head 50 says, "Unemployment Benefits - \$100 million."

You may also recall that in the Budget announcement, we had said, "We have earmarked \$5 million for upskilling or reskilling people from within that particular scheme." So if there is a need for supplementing the income of those few people in the informal sector who we have left out or have been left or who need assistance, we can also cater for them.

The Ministry of Labour, as the Honourable Minister highlighted, is also carrying out a survey. The Honourable Ministers have also highlighted that their survey is being carried out by their Ministries. The Ministry of Commerce, Trade, Tourism and Transport currently has also been carrying out its survey and if you will recall, I think the Honourable Minister has also mentioned in Parliament that from the survey, they found out that nearly 70 percent of the people who actually responded were from the informal sector. I cannot remember the exact percentage, but they have said that their revenue or their income on a daily basis has fallen. They actually have the data.

We can also work with them through that particular set of series of data that we have to be able to target and assist people. One of the reasons why we did not put them in the social welfare recipient area is the psychology of it also because we want people to be able to know that for a period of time they are being assisted, as soon as businesses get up and I have used the example of the lady who sells boiled *ivi* outside Fiji Airways Office who is no longer able to get any business because there is no one working at Fiji Airways but once the offices start filling up, flight attendants and cars start coming through, she will get her business up and running and she will not be a social welfare recipient.

The criteria for social welfare recipient, obviously there are few things or checks offs that they have to do, they also do an asset test, et cetera. These people who already have assets will not necessarily qualify under those requirements. So we have kept it fairly flexible to be able to respond with that \$100 million, so that is the reason. And that is why, so you see that we have put that one-line item there specifically. We did not say, “unemployment benefit only for FNPF recipients or formal or informal sector,” we have kept that flexible, as opposed to what we did in the 2019-2020 Response Budget.

I hope that addresses your concern. Obviously, it is our interest to make sure that those people do not get on the streets, that they actually do have an income and are able to live.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Honourable Tabuya?

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- Mr. Chairman, just following on from that, Honourable Attorney-General, exactly how does one from the informal sector now access that fund if it is not through FNPF?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- We had already announced it. In fact, a lot of people have already applied for this in the 2019-2020 through the Ministry of Economy where different agencies distributed the forms for us and people went and applied. People from Lautoka, for example, those people in the lockdown areas, have been given sums of money which we had processed. At that point in time, they were given (from memory) \$300 one-off because of the lockdown, so obviously we can then fine-tune that based on the data that we will get.

Please, try and understand that there are also people who may try and fleece the system also. Suddenly people will say, “I had a business, I was informally selling *ivi* or selling *mithai* there”, or whatever it is, but they were probably sitting at home and someone else was earning money. So we have to make sure that the criteria of the check officer done, and with the data that we currently are getting in, there is flexibility in the budget to be able to respond to those kind of needs.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Salote Radrodro, you can move your other motion.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move a motion without notice that there be an increase of \$7 million to the Bus Fare Programme for Old/Disabled Persons.

HON. DR. RATU A.R. LALABALAVU.- I second the motion.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That motion is being moved in acknowledging and recognising the problems that this particular category of our population are faced with right now. Previously, the allocation was pegged at about \$13 million and the request is for that \$7 million, just to take us back to that previous level so that we go back to the initial allocation of \$40 which has been reduced to \$10 now.

Furthermore, Mr. Chairman, with the current situation we are in right now, if we really are concerned about our senior citizens, then they really need this kind of allocation so that they can, at least, get out of their homes, take a breather to visit families and friends or just take a bus ride, to be able to wind out their frustration and whatever psychological problems that they might be faced with. Having to shut people in their homes at that age and a lot of us are moving into that age, we would agree that we do not want to be contained in our home (I am speaking for myself, Mr. Chairman) and just to give them a quality of life until that day. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

HON. M.R. VUNIWAQA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Honourable Member has asked for an increase in bus fares. We need to remember that we are not living in normal times and if you are looking at the beneficiaries of these bus fares, the elderly and the disabled, most of them are already receiving an allowance from Government every month - the Social Pension Scheme and the Disability Allowance. So, Government has to do this exercise and re-prioritise.

We have not left them out of the budget books, they are there. We remember them, but what we are trying to say is, it is time to re-think, everything is COVID-19.

We are talking about bus fares. Livelihoods are very important for the disabled and the elderly, which is why we have not touched those allowances. In fact, for the disability, there is a top-up for them coming up with the support of DFAT. We need to remember that in the context of COVID-19, this is a budget that is in the context of COVID-19.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Programme 3-1. Honourable Adi Litia Qionibaravi?

HON. ADI L. QIIONIBARAVI.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think the question I had raised earlier, I see in SEG 6 - Women Institutions. I will not repeat the question but can the Honourable Minister identify the criteria that the Soqosoqo Vakamarama i Taukei can comply with in order to get the grant from Government?

HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- If I can just make a quick statement here, Mr. Chairman, I was at a funeral last Saturday and the lady representing the Soqosoqo Vakamarama informed all of us at the funeral that they do not need money from Government.

HON. ADI L. QIIONIBARAVI.- Oh, they do! I think there must be some miscommunication, Mr. Chairman, Sir. Can the Honourable Minister

HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- You have the floor, Honourable Minister.

HON. M.R. VUNIWAQA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For SEG 6, we can see there is NGO Grant. That grant is available for women's organisations that work to empower women. They apply for it and the Department of Women will assess on how those organisations have assisted women in the empowerment sector.

For the women's institutions, this is specifically targetted at a number of institutions – the Ba Women's Forum, the Makoi Vocational Centre, Homes of Hope and Lifebread - Almanah Hope Centre and women shelter as well. We have a safe house, Honourable Tabuya, that is coming up. That budget is specifically targetted at these organisations.

Government has been giving them grants over the years because of the number of women that they have been empowering in the programmes that they carry out. If you take the Makoi Vocational Centre, for example, it empowers single mothers or women living in situations of poverty to learn livelihood programmes. The Ba Women's Forum does the same, Almanah Hope Centre looks at widows, so those are the things that the Department of Women looks at in determining whether an organisation will get a grant and how much. So women's organisations are free to apply for it. It will depend on what they do in the empowerment of women, in order to get the grant, if they wish.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Honourable Members, we will now go into the process of voting on the motions and I will explain the process. It is not in the order that they are presented, it is in the order of the sums that are involved. So the highest amount in the motion is first, followed by the lesser amounts, so do not be surprised.

The motion is:

That Head 24 be increased by \$10 million in Programme 2-2(6) – Poverty Benefit Scheme.

Question on amendment put.

Motion lost.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, the next motion is:

That Head 24 be increased by \$7 million in Programme 2-2(6) – Bus Fare Programme for Old/Disabled Persons.

Question on amendment put.

Motion lost.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- The third motion is:

That Head 24 be increased by \$500,000 in Programme 1-1(6) - Fiji National Council for Disabled Persons.

Question on amendment put.

Motion lost.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- The next motion is:

That Head 24 be increased by \$70,000 in Programme 1-1(7) – Domestic Violence Support.

Question on amendment put.

Motion lost.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- The next motion is:

That \$3 million be left out of Head 24 in Programme 1-1(8) – Construction of Fiji Barefoot College.

Question on amendment put.

Motion lost.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, Parliament will now vote on Head 24 - Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation.

Question put.

Motion agreed to.

Head 24 agreed to.

Head 25 – Ministry of Youth and Sports

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Programme 1-1. Honourable Ratu Suliano Matanitobua?

HON. RATU S. MATANITOBUA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I seek clarification from the Honourable Minister; can he clarify to the House the purpose of allocation of \$25,000 in SEG 5 – National Youth Band Curriculum Review. What is the review for?

HON. P.K. BALA.- Mr. Chairman, last year the House will recall that there was fund allocated to review the National Youth Band and that review has been completed with recommendations. One of the recommendation is to review the curriculum of the Band and that is why we have been allocated \$25,000 to work with the Fiji National University to do the curriculum.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Ro Filipe Tuisawau?

HON. RO F. TUISAWAU.- Mr. Chairman, regarding the Upgrade of Youth Training Centres, could the Honourable Minister explain what this is, the status and locations? Thank you.

HON. P.K. BALA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The funding will assist the Ministry to continue to improve the upgrading of our Naleba Youth Training Centre, Naqere Youth Training Centre and Nasau Training Centre. There will also be some upgrading works at the Valelevu Youth Training Centre and that is what that money is allocated for. Thank you.

HON. RO F. TUISAWAU.- *Vinaka.*

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Activity 2? Honourable Ratu Suliano Matanitobua.

HON. RATU S. MATANITOBUA.- Mr. Chairman, this is in regards to the \$30,000 allocation for Youth and Sports Development in SEG 7. Can the Honourable Minister explain to the House, who will qualify to access the grant?

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Obviously not you and I.

(Laughter)

Honourable Minister, you have the floor.

HON. P.K. BALA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was just about to say that definitely not him, but you have said it.

Mr. Chairman, this allocation is for the Youth Leadership Training, Youth Camp and Sports Training and those who will qualify, ranging from ages 15 years to 35 years. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Activity 3. Honourable Qionibaravi, you have the floor.

HON. ADI L. QIONIBARAVI.- Mr. Chairman, the Social Media Management for \$44,500, can the Honourable Minister justify this sum of \$44,500. Thank you.

HON. P.K. BALA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, early last year the Ministry decided to invest in building up the Ministry's information system, one of which was definitely the social media. The Ministry went ahead to do the proper process and that is in terms of advertisement to find out the reputable supplier.

Mr. Chairman, I can tell you that the Ministry's *Facebook* page now, for example, reaches and engages hundreds of thousands of Fijians every month, so it has really worked for the Ministry and we are now directly in touch with our stakeholders. It has done 50 to 60 times more than what the Ministry used to do before by engaging this supplier. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Programme 2-1? Honourable Lynda Tabuya, you have the floor.

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Programme 2-1-4; I would just like to point out a correction - there is an error in the total amount for that SEG (\$21,000), whereas it shows under the figures that it is \$26,000, so could that be corrected by the Ministry for Economy. SEG 4 - Vehicle, Fuel and Oil, et cetera, do not add up to \$26,000 as listed in the Budget Estimates on the left.

The other point that I wanted to make, Mr. Chairman, under SEG 6 which is the Netball Youth World Cup. As I understand, it has been postponed because of the COVID-19 but Fiji was supposed to host it next year in June, 2021.

As we know there are a lot of young girls that aspire for netball and it is still the biggest sport for girls in Fiji. What is the Ministry or the Government's commitment for this tournament, Honourable Minister; if you could just clarify that? Thank you.

HON. P.K. BALA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Fiji Government is committed to the Netball Fiji, in the preparation and hosting when the time is right. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Ro Filipe Tuisawau, you have floor. We will take the young person first.

HON. RO F. TUISAWAU.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On overseas sports tournaments, given the COVID-19, this morning the Sevens Tournaments in Dubai and South Africa were also cancelled. Is there any amendment to that?

My second question is on SEG 10, Rural Sports Complex. I note Kadavu is there. Is there any allocation for other rural sports grants?

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you, Honourable Minister.

HON. P.K. BALA.- Thank you, Mr. Chair. Overseas Sporting Tournaments - this fund of \$1 million will be given to the Fiji National Sports Commission to be given to the National Sporting Organisation to prepare for the Tokyo Olympics. That is what that fund is for.

And on the Rural Grounds, you will see that construction of the Rural Sports Complex, Vunisea has been included in it. Just last week I had a meeting with the RFMF Engineers and the engineers from Ministry of Works to see how we can approach this project and complete it. They have given us the assurance that they will start work once we have a site visit and see the scope of work that needs to be done. So, that is in regards to the Rural Sporting Ground, thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Yes, Honourable Qereqeretabua.

HON. L.S QEREQERETABUA.- Thank you, Mr. Chair. Under Programme 2, Activity 1, SEG 6, there is an allocation of \$2 million to the Fiji Sports Council. It had been allocated \$850,000 in the COVID-19 Budget. Just one question in fact, when will Parliament get the Fiji Sports Council Annual Report?

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Minister.

HON. P.K. BALA.- You want to know what is this allocation for or are you are interested in the Annual Report Annual Report?

HON. OPPOSITION MEMBERS.- Both.

HON. P.K. BALA.- Alright. You want to know about Fiji National Sports Commission or Fiji Sports Council?

HON. L.S QEREQERETABUA.- The Sport Council.

HON. P.K. BALA.- Alright. The Budget allocation for Fiji National Sports Council to cater for its operational cost and mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on the revenue collection as you are all aware, their facilities have not been used. There have been some commitment in terms of repayment and that is why you can see there is an increase in that as well. Also, the Property Insurance and bills for electricity, water and operational costs, that is what it is allocated for.

The Annual Report, as soon as it is ready we will table it in the House, thank you.

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

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Sir.

My apologies, I would like to thank the Honourable Tabuya for picking this up. In fact, the Team had notified us about this. If you look at SEG 4, she is correct. If you add the current figures in SEG 4 it adds up to \$21,000 not \$26,000 as it is in the column in the Estimates. Incidentals actually should have been \$10,000, so if we put Incidentals to \$10,000 instead of \$5,000, it will add up to \$26,000. That was the typsetting error.

(Honourable Opposition Member interjects)

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- What else is incorrect, nothing else unless you pick it up, of course.

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- I am getting to that.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, Parliament will now vote on Head 25 - Ministry of Youth and Sports.

Question put.

Motion agreed to.

Head 25 agreed to.

Head 26 – Higher Education Institutions

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Programme 1-1. Honourable Leawere, you have the floor.

HON. M.R. LEAWERE.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a clarification on the Technical College of Fiji, there is no allocation in the Budget for this year. Can we have some clarification on that?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Honourable Member, you may recall, it is with the Fiji National University (FNU) now. Remember, it moved across to FNU?

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Ro Filipe Tuisawau?

HON. RO F. TUISAWAU.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. SEG-6 on University of the South Pacific (USP), could you please provide an update on the grants to USP regarding the last financial year and the next one, which we are discussing now? Thank you.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- I do not have the figures now regarding previous year but I can get that for you in question time. But we are very concerned about USP, I can tell you that much. We are very concerned about the financial management at USP and the manner in which the administration is currently running the University. We, of course, will need to also understand how our monies are being spent.

For the information of everyone else, Fiji contributes over 80 percent or close to 80 percent of the total grant funding that all the other Pacific Island countries give. Over here, we have \$27 million. The next highest grant country is, I think, Solomon Islands, from memory with \$2 million. That is the point of difference between the amount of grant we give and what the next country gives, and there are a lot of anomalies as the Pro-Chancellor and the Audit and Risk Community Chairperson have raised and we will work through the University regarding that.

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

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- Thank you. Can I get clarification under SEG 6 on Montfort Boys Town and Montfort Technical Institute? I note there is a reduction in their budgetary allocation; these are technical vocational skills investment. I just want a clarification from the Honourable

Minister on why this is the case, when at this time we need to upskill and improve trade amongst the young people?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- There is no reduction from the previous year; 2019-2020. You can see, for example, Montfort Boy's Town (\$572,579) and this year they will be getting (\$572,579). Montfort Technical College (372,892) and they will be getting (\$372,892), so there is no reduction.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, we will now vote on Head 26 - Higher Education Institutions.

Question put.

Motion agreed to.

Head 26 agreed to.

Head 30 – Ministry of Agriculture

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Programme 1-1? Honourable Tikoduadua?

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On Programme 1-1(10) in respect of the allocation for Agriculture Marketing Authority – Capital Grant and Committee on Better Utilisation of Land, in the COVID-19 Response Budget, AMA was allocated \$5.6 million and CBUL \$6.183 million. This Budget has seen the AMA Grant reduced to \$2 million and CBUL has increased to \$6.9 million.

This is a substantial reduction for AMA and we believe that a time when our cash crop producers need every assistance to ensure ease of access for their produce, particularly when a grant can be a saving for the economy and at the same time, the CBUL grant has been increased, what we would like to know is, if the utilisation of land is for agricultural purposes because that is what the increase suggests - for more land to be utilised, some clarification from the Honourable Minister will be good. Thank you.

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

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Mr. Chairman, on the AMA Capital Grant, that is a capital grant not an operating grant. The capital component, we have some reserves at Agricultural Marketing Authority (AMA) and we are very comfortable in terms of using the reserves for capital purchases.

The capital purchases that we are looking at is basically to establish new pickup points in the Western Division as well as in Vanua Levu. In Vanua Levu, we are looking at Wainikoro and expanding to Dama and establishing in Bua in terms of processing. At the moment, we have got only one cold storage facility in Vanua Levu so when we expand our pickup points in the Western Division and in Wainikoro, we will need transport as well so we worked out that we will be alright with that and we will also be using our reserved funds.

With regards to the Committee on Better Utilisation of Land (CBUL) money, the increase is basically to reflect the additional land that we will be looking at utilising, therefore, paying the four percent over the six percent paid by the tenant. Four percent is to be paid by Government which is the CBUL payment, so 10 percent of Unimproved Capital Value (UCV).

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

HON. I. KURIDRANI.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Sir. Sir, I have several motions to move. My first motion is on Head 30-1-1(6) - Tutu Training Centre, to increase to \$385,949.

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

MR. CHAIRMAN.- You can speak on your motion now.

HON. I. KURIDRANI.- Yes, I think we are facing a hard time right now where we have to rely on agriculture. According to the programme of agriculture, we need to focus on the transition from subsistence farming to semi-commercial and then to commercial farming.

People that need to be trained to implement this programme so that is why I am moving a motion to improve the Tutu Training Centre which has been successful for quite some time now. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Honourable Minister?

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- It is not only at Tutu that we are supporting and which is producing hands-on students, we are supporting Tutu Agriculture Programme, we are supporting Navuso Agriculture Programme, we have got the entire FNU Agriculture College which also has a component on Certificates I and II on Commercial Agriculture that we are supporting.

We have also established a joint MOU with Navuso Agriculture College and FNU College of Agriculture where all the students who come out of this commercial agriculture programme will be provided with a package. Six months before they graduate, they will give us a worksheet of where they are from, how much land area they have, consent from their village *mataqali* that they are allowed to use this land. Six months before we get that data, we will prepare the land and organise planting materials.

On the day the student graduates and goes back to the village, the planting materials will be ready for the student. Land preparation will begin and we will also do drainage. That is the package we are giving to all the students who are graduating out of Navuso and those graduating with Certificate I and Certificate II Programme in Commercial Agriculture at FNU. So for this Programme we have to get in young graduates who are trained and skilled to get into agriculture and deal with the issue of aging farmers.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Kuridrani, you can move your second motion.

HON. I. KURIDRANI.- My second motion, Mr. Chairman, is regarding Head 30-1-1(6) for the Navuso Agriculture School. We will also need to increase the budgetary allocation for the Navuso Agriculture School by \$334,000.

HON. M.R. LEAWERE.- I second the motion.

HON. I. KURIDRANI.- Mr. Speaker, Sir, why I propose for this increase is because we need to expand that institution. We need to get more students to participate in this Programme.

As I have already said, we are facing hard times now where we will only rely on agriculture to help us drive this economy, so we need to put more programmes, provide the facilities, the

infrastructure that suits the students to be developed so that they can grasp the idea of this transitional programmes from commercial farming to fully commercial. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Sir.

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Mr. Chairman, Sir, just to add on to what I mentioned earlier, apart from the grant that we provide to Tutu Training Centre and Navuso Agriculture College, we have also provided capital equipment to them.

For example, recently for the Tutu Training Centre, we have provided them with a large commercial industrial dryer to convert dried fruits into candies. For Navuso Agriculture College, the last time we gave them a tractor, so every now and then upon request, we do provide them with capital support. Last year, we established fruit orchards at the Navuso Agriculture College so this is not the only cash grant that we are providing them with, but we also provide them with other support as and when needed.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Also to probably request the Honourable Minister in terms of not only focusing on those who are already in Certificate I and Certificate II in FNU, Navuso Agriculture and Tutu Training Centre, but to also focus on those in the informal sector, who can be brought in or recruited into those institutions so that they could be trained in terms of getting a certificate in agriculture, given that agriculture has now changed.

We are moving commercially and we have mechanised systems and also the knowledge of things that are coming, fertilizers are changing. We can also widen the net and try to get those in our villages to be enrolled into those streams so that they come back and become agents of change in terms of the revolution of agriculture.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Activity 2?

(Chorus of 'Nays')

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Activity 3?

(Chorus of 'Nays')

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Activity 4? Honourable Kuridrani, your motion?

HON. I. KURIDRANI.- Mr. Chairman, Sir, I move:

That Head 30-1-4(7) for Agriculture Show be increased from \$100,000 to \$500,000.

HON. M.R. LEAWERE.- I second the motion

HON. I. KURIDRANI.- Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Agriculture Show is very important in the dissemination of agriculture technologies and programmes for the public to know and understand, which will create employment for the public, food security and also alleviate poverty. That is why I suggest that we need to increase this allocation, so that the Ministry of Agriculture can provide agriculture shows to other Divisions, such as the Western Division, Northern Division, Central Division, Southern Division and also Rotuma. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Bulitavu?

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- I would like to speak in support of the motion by Honourable Kuridrani, given that the Agriculture Show becomes a platform for the Ministry of Agriculture to

bring in different species, various products, seeds and also livestock that they have. Most of us in the rural areas benefit from buying products at a very good price during the Agriculture Show, especially the different breeds of livestock that are available.

Again, if that could be done continuously at a large scale, given that most of the time, only a limited stock is brought to the Agriculture Show and not everyone gets a chance to buy the products that are on show. I agree that this could be done not only in Divisions but also in provinces and it will be very easy for us to link up to the Ministry of Agriculture, given that most of the time some of our Agriculture Stations do not have the equipment and we end up at the main office at divisional level.

The divisional level sometimes has limited resources. For example, in the Labasa Office, there are only about three tractors that cater for both, rice and cassava farmers. So when a request comes in from the cassava farmers, they are put on the waiting list, given that the tractors are being used by the rice farmers during the season. But it is good and the price is cheap at \$28 an hour.

However, if we use a private tractor operator for one acre (1 or 2 chains), it will cost about \$300 or \$400. For one acre, \$115 is for the hangar, ploughing is another \$70 and \$80 for the *dhari*, those are all the costs involved so the subsidy provided by the Ministry of Agriculture is good, about \$28 per hour, but it is not available all the time. This kind of help could be there and through the Agriculture Show, people can also be aware of the things that are available and the policies and programmes on how they can use their land and also become active participants in agriculture.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Minister?

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Mr. Chairman, when you suggest or put a motion to raise a figure, I thought they would state the additional amount they would require for the Agriculture Show. Let me just give you an example.

For the Agriculture Show, our existing staff who are already on payroll are there, our transport is being utilised, a little bit of additional fuel is required, we move in all our livestock, crops, seedlings, et cetera. What do they need more than \$100,000 for? In fact, the only good thing I have heard from them and which we are planning at the moment is, to decentralise and have smaller shows in the Western Division, Northern Division and then probably have the larger one, as we are doing now, in the Central Division, or probably have the larger one this year in the Western Division or Northern Division. I really did not get the rationale on why they are saying that we need more than \$100,000. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Tikoduadua?

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to contribute to the motion before the House on the Agriculture Show.

The Agriculture Show, I believe, is an important event because it gives farmers the opportunity to showcase their stuff. I remember because some years back, I actually won a prize for having the best native breed *dalo* bundle. I am baffled also by the fact that there is an Agriculture Show but on crops, cattle and livestock, et cetera, but there has been a reduction in the crop extension activity in the same budget, so I am a little bit confused here. Maybe, some clarification later on by the Honourable Minister would be good, thank you.

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

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- When it comes to that particular line item, I am happy to explain.

But I just want to respond to Honourable Bilitavu, who mentioned about the tractor availability, there is no such issue now. From last year in November, we have decided to outsource. When they request for tractor utilisation, if our tractor is booked, then we outsource it. We hire from the private sector and send the tractor over within 14 days, so that is the policy. So, that is a non-issue and it has nothing to do with this particular allocation.

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

(Chorus of 'Nays')

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Programme 2-2. Honourable Kuridrani, you have the floor, to move your motion.

HON. I. KURIDRANI.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that Head 30-2-2(8), the individual budgetary allocation for each of these high value crops, such as *dalo*, *yaqona*, vanilla, cocoa and ginger, be increased by \$300,000. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

HON. M.R. LEAWARE.- I second the motion, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. I. KURIDRANI.- Mr. Chairman, I think is one of the important areas that the Ministry need to focus on is these high value crops, to help resolve our economy. We understand that *yaqona*, *dalo*, ginger, cocoa and even vanilla, are the most important crops that are pushing the GDP on agriculture. I agree that we need to focus more on these crops as they will help improve our economy at this time of crisis. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to speak in support of the motion.

Mr. Chairman, there are various allocations in SEGS 8, 9 and 10 under the same Programme, and those are various assistance to farmers. Now in the previous budget, we have been raising concerns about how this assistance to farmers were shared fairly amongst the farmers when they are given out. In particular, I raised concerns in this House a number of times by Nabitu farmers of Sigatoka.

We visited them in June and the same complaints still came up, particularly the unfairness in which the allocation of this assistance was given to farmers, so we met about 90 odd farmers on the day. These assistance are great for farmers but when farmers get left out, it becomes an issue. So when determinations are made about who gets to be assisted, we would like to implore on the Honourable Minister and his staff or those who will determine who gets what, that everyone is considered fairly and not according to some preferences of the Honourable Minister's choice. Thank you.

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

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Mr. Chairman, this is the first time I am hearing from the Honourable Member about issues with assistance given to the farmers in the Nabitu area that he is referring to. What he raised last time was ...

(Honourable Lt. Col. Tikoduadua interjects)

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- This is my time now.

What he raised last time was the issue about fertiliser and I said to them that we are promoting organic fertiliser. There are a couple of reasons, the:

- (1) environment dimension;
- (2) massive cost that we are incurring by importing organic chemical fertilizer; and
- (3) high unit cost at the farm level.

Unfortunately, the Honourable Member probably does not understand those issues. That was the only issue he raised in Parliament the last time.

This is the first time he is raising this. He should have brought this issue to me, that on this particular day and date, something that was distributed to the farmers, some farmers were discriminated and some were favoured. I did not receive that from him until now. What are we distributing there?

(Honourable Member interjects)

HON. DR. M. REDDY.-We are dealing with budget allocation and not complaints. If you have a complaint, bring it to us and we will deal with that.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Bulitavu?

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I speak in support of the motion, given the various different activities in that SEG that the Honourable Kuridrani has moved for an increase by \$300,000.

On *yaqona*, *dalo* and ginger, probably something that the Honourable Minister to improve is on the availability of *kasa* for farmers, especially when they come to the Ministry of Agriculture for *yaqona* plants, or *biya* in *Hindi* and also the *dalo* or *suliwai*.

I think these are also some of the issues that people are facing – the running around. When they come to the Ministry of Agriculture, they normally link up with individual farmers so they can call each other and buy on customer basis. But just on how those industries can be improved through those allocations, the availability of things that those in that particular industry can develop. Also, the securing of their plantations, given there is also a problem of stealing *yaqona* in those areas, especially when the price of *yaqona* has gone up.

Also, there is an issue of middlemen. They do not come directly to the market and that links up with AMA, arriving on time and also the price is a contributing factor for those farmers in that particular sector.

However, first things first, and that is the availability of land in those areas for and people who are going into farming and things should be available to them, such as the '*kasa*. That needs to be in stock at Extension Offices.

In addition, fertilizer or organic materials should be available so that we can support them and they can have production in the end when it is harvest time, as well as looking after their plantation.

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

HON. M. BULANAUCA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My motion is on Programme 2-2(8) - Farm Access Roads (\$800,000), to be increased by \$400,000.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- I second the motion.

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

HON. M. BULANAUCA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is very important, particularly to help our farmers who are already there. Most of them are already producing, contributing to exports, such as *dalo*, *yaqona* and other crops. We need to boost that, so we have to provide access, particularly when this had been earmarked for access for the last two years but they have not been done. It is important that we provide proper access for them. They are still carrying things on their back or on horseback. Very soon they are going to break their back or the horses back as well. We need trucks to go right down to their farms.

The two examples, particularly from Nasolo to Driti areas, we need farm access roads there, and also in Wainunu, Nasadrou and Korotiki where the Honourable Assistant Minister for Agriculture and Maritime Development comes from. Thank you, Sir.

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

HON. RO F. TUISAWAU.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In support of that motion, Farm Access Roads (\$800,000), that is really a small figure, compared to what was given for Cane Access Roads. In terms of what we are producing and you look at all those crops and where they are located, the need is more in terms of diversification away from sugar to these other crops.

We have \$800,000 in sugar from 2016 to 2020 for Cane Access Roads, total has been \$16 million per annum - \$3 million, \$7.2 million, \$6.3 million over those years. So, I believe that needs to be looked at seriously - Cane Access Roads, so the need to develop farms and, of course, lead them to markets, not only locally but internationally. *Vinaka*.

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

HON. RATU T.N. NAVURELEVU.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to speak in support of the motion where that amount is very less due to people having changed their mindset once the *sasalu* and beachdemer have been banned, and they have shifted to utilising land in farming.

There is a demand of access roads, in order to get the produce to the market. If you distribute the amount to the four Divisions, in the North, there are three provinces. You have to distribute \$66,000 that will cater only for one farm access road. That is why we support the motion to increase the amount. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Honourable Bulanauca, you can move your second motion.

HON. M. BULANAUCA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My second motion is on Activity 2(9) – Farm Mechanisation (\$500,000), to be increased by \$500,000 to \$1 million.

HON. RO F. TUISAWAU.- I second the motion.

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

HON. M. BULANAUCA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is important that we quickly introduce mechanisation to this, even though you have already been there. I need to double it, because you need to double production for mechanisation on tractors or whatever that you have here in the Central Division. You can take it up there, so that you can help them dig their drains and plough their land quickly.

It is important to give mechanisation to these farmers to produce more, and more, and contribute to our export. There are various commodities that we have in agriculture.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you, Honourable Minister, I give you the floor to address both motions.

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- The Honourable Prime Minister would make a contribution and then I will come in.

HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- Yes, Mr. Chairman, in all the places I have been to, they always request for farm roads and we can understand that. But there is a limit, we will try and fix up all the farm roads that we can in the next financial year.

Unfortunately, we do not have enough to fix up all the farm roads that people want to be fixed, people like Honourable Tikoduadua, who is lucky because his farm road was fixed when he was the Minister for Infrastructure.

(Laughter)

That is all right but some people are unfortunate, they do not have money to have their farm roads fixed. *Vinaka*, Sir.

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

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Mr. Chairman, as alluded to by the Honourable Prime Minister, with that amount of \$800,000, we are looking at doing about 133 kilometres of farm road. How will we do it?

We will do it with our own machinery. There is enormous amount of requests, I understand, the issue is not about resources, the issue is about time. We may not be able to meet all the requests within the upcoming financial year but I want to say that there is a commitment from us to do farm roads using our machinery and gravel from that particular area.

We have got consent from the *mataqali* for most of the places, so we will be announcing the first set of farm roads that we will doing in two weeks' time. We will give an update to this House as well as the public, on the farm roads that we have done over the last three months and you will be surprised to see the number of kilometres of farm roads we have done in the Western Division, Northern Division and the Central Division using our own machine, smartly and more efficiently.

With this allocation, if you are looking at \$40,000 per kilometre and that is what you will be able to do, no, we will be doing about 133 kilometres of farm roads with \$800,000; that is a lot of farm road.

Farm mechanisation, someone said that they want to increase the allocation. What are we going to do with the allocation that we have for individual crops? It is for farm roads, it is for farm mechanisation, it is for planting materials that Honourable Bulitavu was saying. That is the kind of support we are giving and we also need to remember that these are not new crops that we are establishing, these crops have been there. Every year, there have been allocations for those particular crops so that allocation is there to provide them with planting materials and mechanisation support that Honourable Bulitavu alluded to - \$28 an hour for land clearing, \$28 an hour for land preparation.

Honourable Bulitavu complained that planting materials were not there. There are three types of planting materials; dry seeds, cutting and suckers and seedlings. For seedlings, they will have to order two to three months in advance. For suckers and cuttings, for example, cassava cuttings, these are green materials, we do not and we cannot keep it. It takes time. You need to tell us two weeks in advance or so and we will provide that.

We now have this scheme where we provide the farmers free planting material which they will then be required to return to us in three years' time. That is there and you tell me if anyone was turned around over the last six months. Not a single farmer has been turned away saying, "We do not have planting materials." We must have said, "Come back in two weeks' time."

Honourable Qionibaravi is there, who contacted us and she was provided with planting material. So you cannot point out to me that someone was turned away. Dry seeds, yes, there is limited amount. The farmers have to tell us what dry seeds they need and we will organise it. We do not carry large stocks but we procure it and pass it on to the farmers.

This allocation of farm mechanisation, it is over and above the allocation for individual crops that we have. For example, for those vegetable farmers, you do not have that in the list, so that is what this farm mechanisation will pick up from for those vegetable farmers, cabbage, et cetera, in Valley Road. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Programme 2-3. Honourable Gavoka?

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Mr. Chairman, Head 30-2-3(8), there is an allocation there for Agriculture Research Services - Root Crops (\$350,000). Can I just get from the Honourable Minister if this includes the variety of cassava which he told us in a Ministerial Statement, that has a huge market for export into Australia? What is the status of that?

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Honourable Gavoka pointed out the yellow cassava, the Beqa yellow cassava, that we are expanding. There is massive demand in Australia.

The Indonesians prefer yellow cassava because when we ship it frozen and when you defrost and cook it, it is nice. So, these are the kinds of allocations that we have there which assist in research stations, expand the planting material. Also, seed purification is number one on our agenda in research stations because over time, seeds do get mixed up. So, every now and then, we need to provide new seeds to the farmers.

For rice, if you provide them with *sitara* or bold grain seed, over time the bold grain seed gets mixed up with the other varieties, so seed purification is also happening in research stations. Planting material, we now are dedicating research stations for particular crops so that they will then provide multiplication of seeds provision to farmers for planting material.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Programme 3-1?

(Chorus of 'Nays')

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Programme 3-2?

(Chorus of 'Nays')

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Programme 3-3?

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Sir. Under SEG 8, there is an allocation in the budget for Goat Breeding, Sheep Breeding Programme, Beef Breeding, Poultry Breeding, et cetera. There were some issues years ago with regards to bovine brucellosis, as well as the development of genetic F1 cross sheep cross-breed sector. Can we get some clarification from the Honourable Minister on the status of that now?

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Mr. Chairman, Sir, he has raised two issues about TB and brucellosis and the new genetic material which was started by the former Minister (Hon. Lt. Col. I. Seruiratu).

Now, on brucellosis and TB, we are very fortunate that brucellosis is pretty much under control. The recent tests have shown brucellosis is well under control but we do not want to put our guards down and say that there is no brucellosis in Fiji. Tuberculosis is an issue, we are continuing our testing and culling in the farms and then enabling these farm to be TB-free, and this will be ongoing. It will take about 20 years or so. In Australia, it took them 40 years to declare Australia free from TB.

The second issue that Honourable Tikoduadua raised was about providing the beef farms with this new breed that we have - the *brown swiss* for dairy and *senepol* for beef cattle. We are now ready to provide this new genetic material to the farms but this is a very expensive programme.

We just do not want to send them out to the farms that are not clean. We have decided that there will be about 10 breeder bulls per each *senepol* and *brown swiss* that will be given out to large commercial farms, and that is it. We will give it to them, of course, we will sell it at a very low rate. They would not come back to us because we do not want that in case they get contaminated when they come back to us.

In addition to that, we are looking at a really much more safer and efficient method which is Artificial Insemination (AI) and Embryo Transfer (ET). These things are happening:

- (1) We are now selecting farms where we will give breeder bulls for *brown swiss* and *senepol*.
- (2) We want to get experts to do Artificial Insemination and Embryo Transfer here.
- (3) We want multiplication within our research stations to increase the number of breeder bulls that we will give out that we are now establishing in Yaqara and Davuilevu.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Programme 6-1?

(Chorus of 'Nays')

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, we will now move on to the motions.

The first motion is by the Honourable Bulanauca:

That Head 30 be increased by \$500,000 in Programme 2-2(9) in respect of Farm Mechanisation.

Question on amendment put.

Motion lost.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- The second motion by the Honourable Bulanauca:

That Head 30 be increased by \$400,000 in Programme 2-2(8) with respect to Farm Access Roads.

Question on amendment put.

Motion lost.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- The third motion by the Honourable Kuridrani:

That Head 30 be increased by \$400,000 in Programme 1-4(7) with respect to Agriculture Show.

Question on amendment put.

Motion lost.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- The next motion by the Honourable Kuridrani:

That Head 30 be increased by \$385,949 in Programme 1-1(6) with respect to Tutu Training Centre.

Question on amendment put.

Motion lost.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- The Honourable Kuridrani's next motion is:

That Head 30 be increased by \$334,730 in Programme 1-1(6) with respect to Navuso Agricultural Technical Institute.

Question on amendment put.

Motion lost.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- The next motion by the Honourable Kuridrani is:

That Head 30 be increased by \$300,00 in Programme 2-2(8) with respect to high value, low volume crops – *yaqona*, vanilla, cocoa, ginger, *dalo*.

Question on amendment put.

Motion lost.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, Parliament will now vote on Head 30 - Ministry of Agriculture.

Question put.

Motion agreed to.

Head 30 agreed to.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, time moves on, we will now suspend proceedings for lunch. Parliament will resume in an hour's time. We adjourn for lunch.

The Parliament adjourned at 1.03 p.m.

The Parliament resumed at 2.07 p.m.

Head 31 – Ministry of Fisheries

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Programme 1-1. Honourable Anare Jale, you have the floor.

HON. A. JALE.- Can the Honourable Minister responsible elaborate on SEG 7 - National Employment Centre (NEC) Volunteers. What is this budget item about?

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Minister?

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- Mr. Chairman, Sir, this SEG is basically when we take in students from the University of the South of Pacific and FNU to do their practical experience with us. So when they come in to do their practical, the Ministry of Fisheries pay them an allowance of \$60 and we have negotiated with the Ministry of Employment for them to pay another \$60. So we give them \$120 allowance while they are doing their practical within the Ministry of Fisheries.

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

HON. S.R. RASOVA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Programme 1-1(5) on Public Awareness, I see here that you have \$20,000. Is that allocation sufficient to do public awareness all over Fiji?

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Minister?

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- Yes, Mr. Chairman, Sir, that is basically to review the existing expenditure programme and scale by spending on training and public awareness. So the public awareness is basically on the Ministry's targeted audiences around the country.

HON. S.R. RASOVA.- *Vinaka.*

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Activity 2. Honourable Rasova?

HON. S.R. RASOVA.- I would like to seek clarification, Mr. Chairman, from the Honourable Minister responsible for Fisheries. Programme 1-2(7) - Fisheries Stakeholders Consultation of \$50,000. Is it Fiji-wide?

Oh, my apologies, whilst we are on Activity 1, I would just like to....

MR. CHAIRMAN.- We are on Activity 2, we have finished with that.

HON. S.R. RASOVA.- SEG 7, Sir. *Vinaka.*

MR. CHAIRMAN.- SEG 7, yes, what about it?

HON. S.R. RASOVA.- I would like the Honourable Minister to give clarification on the Fisheries Stakeholders Consultation of \$50,000 is it enough to cover Fiji-wide? .

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

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- Mr. Chairman, Sir, this is basically for rural fishermen's scheme and *qoliqoli* owners, and fishing industry consultations around Fiji, including

the maritime islands. This amount is sufficient enough, looking at the previous years that we have carried out consultations.

HON. S.R. RASOVA.- Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Adi Litia Qionibaravi?

HON. ADI L. QIONIBARAVI.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Activity 2(4) - Data Ink Rental (91,500). I note, Sir, that was the same amount that was provided last year. The question is, whether this is going to be a continuous allocation for the word “rental”, or what is this allocation for? Can the Honourable Minister just clarify, please?

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

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- Yes, this is a continuation, so the amount is approximately the same amount as last year because this is a fixed cost.

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

HON. RO T.V. KEPA.- Mr. Chairman, Activity 2(7) on Trade Shows. Can the Honourable Minister clarify, what the Trade Shows are about? And if students are involved, other than the ones from USP and FNU and where would these Trade Shows be held?

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Honourable Minister?

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- Mr. Chairman, Sir, this is done in coordination with other Ministries. For example, if the Ministry of Agriculture conducts their show, we go along with them, so the fisheries sector is represented in that show.

HON. RO T.V. KEPA.- If they be, Mr. Chairman, where in Fiji?

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- All around Fiji.

HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- Mr. Chairman, the shows are held all over Fiji and the Ministry of Fisheries is part of that show.

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

HON. S.R. RASOVA.- Programme 1-2(6) - Annual Infofish Subscription (\$10,000), what is this for?

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.-Through you, Mr. Chairman, this is an international organisation that is based in Bangkok, Thailand, under the United Nations. It is an organisation for marketing information and provide technical advisory services for fisheries production in the Asian and Pacific Region.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Programme 2-1. Honourable Tikoduadua?

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under SEG 7 - Feasibility Study – Compliance and Enforcement, there is an allocation of \$180,000. There was \$200,000 allocation for the same activity in the COVID-19 Budget. Could the Honourable Minister, please, clarify how this works in terms of feasibility studies and the same is done annually and whether the

Honourable Minister would also table some findings of this Feasibility Study – Compliance and Enforcement in the House at some point in time?

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- Mr. Chairman, I will answer the first question, this is the payment basically on administration of this exercise. This is salaries and FNPF for seven project officers engaged in the Ministry to monitor and enforce fisheries legislation and administration cost.

The studies will come in the National Fisheries Report that will come through Cabinet and later to Parliament.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Simone Rasova, you have the floor to move your motion.

HON. S.R. RASOVA.- Mr. Speaker, Sir, I take it that the Honourable Minister has answered the question, so I withdraw my motion.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Activity 2, Honourable Lenora Qereqeretabua, you have the floor.

HON. L.S. QEREQERETABUA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask the Honourable Minister under SEG 1, the allocation for Observers. The National and Regional Observer Programme last year, I had raised the issues in regards to insurance and compensation for the Observers and I also tabled a motion. The allocations have not changed much, Mr. Chairman, so I just want to ask the Honourable Minister as to who now handles that, is it the Accident Compensation Commission or is it the Ministry of Employment?

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Minister?

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Observers Programme allocation is basically what we pay the Observers under the contract that they signed between the Ministry of Fisheries and individuals. If there is any issues such as been raised by the Honourable Member, it will have to go through the normal Government agencies that deal with those complaints.

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

HON. RO F. TUISAWAU.- In SEG 7, Honourable Minister, there have been increasing reports of Chinese Fishing Fleet covering Pacific Islands, Pacific Ocean and other areas recently in the last two months or few weeks. Concerns have been expressed not only in the international media but also through various mediums regarding their intentions and the amount of plundering which has been going on.

So, under SEG 7 - Electronic Monitoring System (EMS), is there any role of that for the nation in monitoring that and taking remedial action, not only nationally but also regionally through the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA)?

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

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- This EMS system is basically fitted on large ships that are licensed to fish within our Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). The overall responsibility of monitoring is under FFA, which basically monitors all vessels. So, if they send a fishing vessel within Fiji, we will automatically know that the fishing vessel is in Fiji because we will be informed we also have a working relationship with the Navy which has a monitoring system. So we have two check

systems; one is based at the Honiara and one is with the Navy. So we know every vessel that enters and leaves Fiji.

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

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- SEG 7 - Electronic Monitoring Systems (EMS) seems like a new SEG, a new allocation under Activity 2 - Offshore Fisheries.

Just to follow on from the earlier question in terms of the workings of this EMS and how different will it be from the Observers Programme that is in SEG 1, are they doing the same thing or are they doing different work?

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Minister?

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- Mr. Chairman, Sir, EMS was basically funded by the United Nations through the FAO. This basically means that every vessel that we have, has a monitor on board the ship. That monitor basically watches every activity that is carried on the ship, from when the fish is caught until it is processed and put in freezers.

The monitoring by our Observers is basically on board to make sure that no one on board that ship tries and diverts the attention of those electronic monitors that are positioned on our ships.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Activity 3, Honourable Gavoka, you have the floor.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Mr. Chairman, SEG-8 - Fisheries Research and Conservation Programme, I spoke about the need to lift the ban on the *beche-de-mer* (BDM) and I know it is happening and the Honourable Minister has indicated to me that there will be some consultations with the *qoliqoli* owners before the harvest starts.

Can the Honourable Minister give us a timeline on when harvest can really start, given the times we live under, the need of the people to harvest this, Honourable Minister?

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- I had given the Honourable Prime Minister the programme. Maybe, he can answer that, I do not have a copy at the moment.

HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- There is work in progress, Mr. Chairman. We really do not know what time we are going to come up with this.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Mr. Chairman, that is very disappointing for many people.

HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- That is not disappointing, there have been no harvesting of *beche-de-mer* for the last so many years. They can wait another month.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Times are different now. People need money, people need something on the table.

HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- That is why we are lifting the ban.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- So give us an idea on when it is going to happen?

HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- We will let you know when we are ready.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Is there an Assistant Minister who can answer that? The Honourable Prime Minister does not seem to have any idea of what is happening.

HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- Being the Prime Minister, I am telling you.

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

HON. J. SAUKURU.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under SEG 8, I just want to ask the Honourable Minister if he can update the House on the status of Makogai Mariculture Development Centre, the maintenance work that was supposed to be carried out at Makogai, including the jetty. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Minister.

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- Mr. Chairman, Sir, the development at Makogai is basically after the whole station was devastated by *TC Winston*. It cost the Government round about \$6 million to rebuild the whole station. So the ongoing work is basically to improve on the infrastructure around Makogai, including the wharf, et cetera. That was also included in the damage.

We are developing Makogai so that we can develop new fisheries development in feed fish or the coral fish that we can try and rehabilitate and put them back into the wild.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Bulanauca, you can move your motion.

HON. M. BULANAUCA.- Yes, thank you, Honourable Chairman. My motion really is in two parts. Activity 3 and 4 on Naduruloulou Freshwater Research Centre, Makogai Research Station and Galoa Research Stations and 10 on Agricultural Development. I move the motion to double the expenses.

HON. RATU T. NAVURELEVU.- I second.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- You have the floor.

HON. M. BULANAUCA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is important that these researches are carried out properly and we need to uplift the standard of research, particularly for fisheries here. It is important that we provide purely the funding to upgrade all those research areas in Naduruloulou, Galoa, Makogai, et cetera. It is important that we upgrade our research stations here and find various things for export so that we can have competitive advantage. Thank you, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Minister?

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- Mr. Chairman, Sir, there is so much we can absorb into the existing infrastructure and the way we work now. The research that we are carrying out now covers a wide range of commodities, including culture of trochus, giant clams, research of species such as turtles, lobsters and expansion into culture of new commodities including; beche-de-mer, gropers and *kawakawa* to sustainably grow and maintain biodiversity.

Increasing the amount will not change the result on the ground because otherwise, if you will give us another \$50 million, then we will be able to increase the capacity. The figures basically mean that we have forces on the ground and that is the activity that we can carry out.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Activity 5. You have the floor, Honourable Rasova.

HON. S.R. RASOVA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Programme 2-5(8), I would like the Honourable Minister responsible for fisheries to explain Coastal Fisheries Development where you have about \$772,000. *Vinaka*.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Minister?

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- Sir, this \$772,000 is basically for developing a new department or a new initiative that Fiji had worked with the New Zealand Government in developing. There was no coastal and inshore fisheries until about 2017, so we are carrying out this research on development within our coastal areas and maritime islands in trying to develop a system both, in managing and sustainably cultivating all the resources within our coastal fisheries.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Kepa?

HON. RO T.V. KEPÄ.- Mr. Chairman on SEG 8 – Completion of Wainibokasi Staff Quarters, could the Honourable Minister give us an update on that one?

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Minister?

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- Mr. Chairman, Sir, this is completed and it has been opened last month. The amount that is outstanding is just to pay off the balance of that building.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Bulitavu?

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Thank you. Mr. Chairman, Sir, on SEG 8 - Preparatory Works for Ice Plants (Wainigadru and Koro) - \$50,000. When will this preparatory work start or what stages have you reached?

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- Mr. Chairman, Sir, this is a development within three years, to establish a fisheries station or an ice plant. It involves a lot of work, including the landowners consent, the environmental impact assessment, the survey, negotiations that surrounds the establishment of a station to install an ice plant, so it is not an easy exercise. For us to install an ice plant, it would cost about \$800,000 and we have to construct offices and people to maintain the station. So, in total, we are looking at about \$1.2 million for each station that we establish in Fiji.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Activity 6?

HON. A. JALE.- SEG 8 - Seaweed Development Programme. Can the Honourable Minister brief us on what you intend to do with that allocation?

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- Thank you. Mr. Chairman, Sir, with that amount, we will be looking at the existing farmers. Some of them have dropped off the line, damaged during the cyclones and we need to re-establish and assist them.

It is opening new farms that we can develop. This covers the four Divisions within Fiji. We have carried out extensive work for seaweed farms so basically, we will continue in the next financial year.

HON. ADI L. QIONIBARAVI.- Thank you, Sir. SEG 8 - On-going Construction of Multi-Species Hatchery in Ra (\$417,766); can the Honourable Minister, please, advise the House as to whether this will be the last allocation to complete the construction of the Hatchery? What types of species are being considered for this Hatchery? Thank you Sir.

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Multi-Species Hatchery in Caboni was totally destroyed by *TC Winston*. We have not been able to rebuild the station but we have been able to rebuild the activities within the station.

Basically, the money that we have been getting, we have carried out extensive groundwork on the fisheries development. At the moment we have four fin species that are being developed there, plus shrimps, *donu*, groper, milkfish, rabbit fish or *nuqa* and *kanace*. So, basically, that is now actively being grown in Caboni.

Caboni was actually developed to be used as a training centre for our local aquaculture farmers so they can learn how to grow those species but at the moment, we are basically trying to revive the activities within the station itself.

HON. ADI L. QIONIBARAVI.- I thank the Honourable Minister, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members we will now vote on the motion:

That Head 31 be increased by \$995.70 in Programme 2-3(4) and (8)

Question on amendment put.

Motion lost.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, Parliament will now vote on Head 31 – Ministry of Fisheries.

Question put

Motion agreed to.

Head 31 agreed to.

Head 32 – Ministry of Forests

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Head 32-1-1. Honourable Anare Jale?

HON. A. JALE.- Can the Honourable Minister clarify SEG 7 - Information Technology Operation Support. Will this be outsourced or is it going to be carried out by a Government Department?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Do you mind repeating the question, please?

HON. A. JALE.- On SEG 7 on Information Technology Operation Support, will this be outsourced to the providers from outside or is it going to be carried out by a Government Department?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Honourable Member, this is essentially for the IT needs of the whole Ministry itself. So they have a PBX System, a phone system, upgrading the network cabling, et cetera, so all those, of course, are outsourced but you need the funding to be able to carry out those works for the hardware, et cetera. That is what it is for. Overall, all of these works are overseen by ITC to ensure that there is uniformity in the material and cabling, et cetera.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Vosanibola?

HON. P.W. VOSANIBOLA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will go to the next Activity. I withdraw.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Programme 2-1. I give the floor to Honourable Bulanauca.

HON. M. BULANAUCA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On Programme 2-1-6 - Forest Subsidy on Value Adding Machines (\$50,000), I am proposing for an additional \$150,000.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Is there a seconder? Honourable Bulanauca you have the floor.

HON. M. BULANAUCA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The rationale behind this is that, you need to increase production in furniture making, et cetera, through these small machines and we need to provide an incentive or motivation for them, particularly in the financial area to enable people to go into small business, particularly for pine industry, mahogany industry and also in the timber industry. We need to improve and adding more machines into that. Thank you, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Activity 2, Honourable Qereqeretabua, you have the floor.

HON. L.S. QEREQERETABUA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask the Honourable Minister, in SEG 7, there is an allocation of \$500,000 under Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (World Bank). This has been reduced by \$1 million from the COVID-19 Budget. Could the Honourable Minister, please, update us on this reduction and what is it? Thank you.

HON. O. NAIQAMU.- Which Programme?

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Programme 2-2(7) - Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation.

HON. O. NAIQAMU.- For REDD Plus?

HON. MEMBER.- No, before that, SEG 7.

HON. O. NAIQAMU.- This is the cash grant commitment by World Bank, Mr. Chairman, on the REDD Plus Programme.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Activity 3?

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Yes, Honourable Tikoduadua.

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, under SEG 7, it looks like a new initiative which is the Upgrade of National Tree Seed Centre that has been allocated with \$50,000. Can we just get an update from the Honourable Minister on this initiative? Thank you.

HON. O. NAIQAMU.- Mr. Chairman, this allocation is for the upgrade of the current laboratory facilities with the installation of the correct machinery and equipment to enable the Unit to meet its target of 37.5 million seeds. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Activity 5, I will give the floor to Honourable Bulanauca to move his motion.

HON. M. BULANAUCA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just before I move my motion, I have not heard an explanation on my first motion. Perhaps, the Honourable Minister can do both at the same time.

My motion is to increase Activity 5(8) - Research and Development of Wood and Non-Wood Species from \$150,000 to \$300,000, an increase of \$150,000.

HON. P.W. VOSANIBOLA.- Mr. Chairman, I second the motion.

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

HON. M. BULANAUCA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Sir. It is important that they properly carry out the research and find other commodities or anything within the forestry that we can develop ourselves into and sell abroad, not locally but also abroad. It is important to have this research and development in those areas in not only wood but non-wood areas as well. Thank you, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Activity 6?

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Ro Filipe Tuisawau.

HON. RO F. TUISAWAU.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Sir. SEG 6 - Reforestation of Degraded Forests with Indigenous and Other Species of \$2 million. As we all understand regarding the situation of COVID-19, increased unemployment, under employment or people working part-time, it would be good for the Government side to just consider this idea. Not only this but also other programmes of public works where those affected could do cash for work, so that \$2 million could be increased to maybe \$4 million and it can also used for cash for work for those workers who are currently affected and unemployed in not only this but also across other areas, for example, public services or other public works.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Activity 7, Honourable Anare Jale?

HON. A. JALE.- Can the Honourable Minister explain what type of equipment is he intending to purchase in SEG 9 in respect of the Lakeba Pine Scheme, out of the amount allocated?

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Programme 2-7(9).

HON. A. JALE.- You said the purchase of equipment, I want to know what equipment do you mean to purchase out of this?

HON. O. NAIQAMU.- Logging equipment and treatment plant for processing timber in Lakeba.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Ratu Naiqama Lalabalavu?

HON. RATU N.T. LALABALABU.- I thought you are going to do that and jump on to the next SEG, but I will wait for the next SEG.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- I thought, you are going to say that on my behalf.

(Laughter)

Activity 8?

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under SEG 5, there is an allocation of \$60,000 for Compensation for Forest Reserves. In the COVID-19 Budget, it was given an allocation of \$34,000. The clarification sought from the Honourable Minister is, what does this activity involve and could he update the House on it?

HON. O. NAIQAMU.- Mr. Chairman, this is for compensation on itaukei leases that were used as reserves as water source catchment areas.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Ratu Naiqama Lalabalavu?

HON. RATU N.T. LALABALAVU.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On the same SEG 5 - Boundary Delineation for Nature and Forest Reserves, I was going to ask the second question regarding the compensation but that has been answered by the Honourable Minister.

However, on the first one, Sir, I declare my interest as well regarding forest reserves in Taveuni. Will there be a redefinition of the reserves in Taveuni since part of it has been taken up by water catchment for the hydro?

HON. O. NAIQAMU.- Mr. Chairman, this is for forest reserve boundary monitoring and evaluation operation which includes awareness and forest resource owners consultations.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Bulanauca, you can have the floor to move your motion.

HON. M. BULANAUCA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On Programme 2-7(9) - Purchase of Harvesting Machines - \$220,000, I am proposing for an extra \$220,000.

HON. S.R. RASOVA.- Mr. Chairman, I second the motion.

HON. M. BULANAUCA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Sir. The \$220,000 for the purchasing of harvesting machines for logs need to be doubled, so that it gets more capacity to do business in the pine industry, mahogany industry and timber industry. So, the total of \$220,000 is not enough, we need to double it.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Honourable Members, we will now vote on the motions. The first motion by the Honourable Bulanauca is:

That Head 32 be increased to \$220,000 in Programme 2-7(9) in respect of the Purchase of Harvesting Machines.

Question on amendment put.

Motion lost.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, the Parliament will now vote on the second motion by the Honourable Bulanauca:

That Head 32-2-1(6) be increased by \$150,000 with respect to Forest Subsidy on Value Adding Machines.

Question on amendment put.

Motion lost.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- It is the motion again by the Honourable Bulanauca:

That Head 32 be increased by \$150,000 in Programme 2-5(8) with respect to Reserve and Development of Wood and Non-Wood Species.

Question on amendment put

Motion lost.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Parliament will now vote on Head 32 - Ministry of Forests.

Question put.

Motion agreed to.

Head 32 agreed to.

Head 33 – Ministry for Lands and Mineral Resources

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Programme 1-1?

(Chorus of ‘Nays’)

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Programme 2-1. Honourable Gavoka?

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Mr. Chairman, on Programme 2-1(8) under Mineral Investigation, I believe that would be exploration, Honourable Minister?

HON. J. USAMATE.- Yes.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Exploration, under Mineral Investigation of \$250,000?

HON. J. USAMATE.- Yes, evaluating the potential of current and known prospects.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- I will just question or make an observation, Mr. Chairman, that is Tuvatu, that had been idle for quite some time which is now being revived, it has very good potential. Is there some intensity in the way that you are scoring now, given the needs of the time?

HON. J. USAMATE.- Can you repeat that?

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- I am saying that Tuvatu was idle for a number of years but is now being revived and with some very good potential. In the general area around Fiji, how intense is exploration, given what we are facing today that we need to look at other sources of income for the country? Is this sufficient to meet the urgency of the times?

HON. J. USAMATE.- There are quite a number of investigations and explorations already taking place. This particular project here for mineral investigation, this was initiated back in 2008 and it is now its 11th year of operation.

As part of this, what they tend to do in the industry, they look at prospects, produce some reports on it and then offer it out to those who wish to look at it further, so that sort of work has

already been undertaken in the Ministry. I will be able to give you more information, I think on the next Activity on the actual prospects and where the explorations have been taking place. But mining in general, where the mining has already been taking place, we are seeing the importance for it in holding on to employment when it does take place.

Tuvatu, I am glad to say, they are moving full steam ahead now and I am hopeful that in the not too distant future, once we rectify the issues to do with roading and access to power which is something that they need to get to grips with, they should be able to start extracting.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Thank you.

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

HON. M.R. LEAWERE.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could I have a clarification from the Honourable Minister in terms of SEG 8 - Groundwater Assessment and Development - Small Islands (\$500,000) and Groundwater Assessment and Development - Large Islands (\$1,200,000), are these to do with the natural water or anything to do in identifying water?

HON. J. USAMATE.- Water to drink. We pull out water from the ground so people can drink, the boreholes.

HON. M.R. LEAWERE.- Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Ro Filipe Tuisawau?

HON. RO F. TUISAWAU.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On SEG 6 - Contribution to SOPAC (\$32,100), there is also an allocation under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC). My understanding is SOPAC was absorbed, amalgamated with SPC, I think two or three years ago. Why is a separate contribution for SOPAC still there? Thank you.

HON. J. USAMATE.- There is an annual conference that takes place, a science and technology and research conference that is normally co-hosted by the Ministry and SOPAC or the SPC now. It is called the SPC Geoscience, Energy and Maritime (GEM) Division but it used to be called SOPAC. I think the title is still there but it is co-jointly hosted by my Ministry and SOPAC or what is now known as SPC GEM Division for that particular conference.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Activity 2, Honourable Qereqeretabua, you have the floor.

HON. L.S. QEREQERETABUA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question to the Honourable Minister under SEG 7, there a new activity with \$60,000 allocation for Core Management. Could the Honourable Minister, please, advise us what this is about?

HON. J. USAMATE.- When companies go and in one stage of exploration, they actually start drilling down and they pull out the core samples, those samples they pull out are called “core samples”. The geologists have a look at those core samples and they are required to maintain and it becomes the property of the State, so managing those cores.

That is a valuable asset because it gives you an indication of what is under the ground. So managing those samples, we want to have them in the Central Division, Northern Division and in the Western Division. If a company does exploration and it decides not to proceed, at least, the cores are still there. Another company wants to take over the prospect, they can come and have a look at it.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Programme 3-1. Honourable Adi Litia Qionibaravi, you have the floor.

HON. ADI L. QIONIBARAVI.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. SEG 4 - Reversion of Government Lands Schedule 'A' and 'B' (\$220,000). Could the Honourable Minister, please, inform the House more information on this reversion of land? Is it being reverted to State land or reverted to Native land?

HON. J. USAMATE.- Yes, it is being reverted to *iTaukei* land. Some of these lots of land, however, when they have a mixture of State land in *iTaukei* land, before you revert it, you have to do the survey so you can cut it up. So if there is one lot here and a part of it is *iTaukei*, the other part of State land, you only want to revert the *iTaukei* bit back to their original owners, the *yavusa*. So these surveys have to be done to identify out of those lots which bit is going to be reverted and which one is not.

HON. ADI L. QIONIBARAVI.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Activity 2?

HON. ADI L. QIONIBARAVI.- I apologise, Sir, I have another question on Activity 1(7) - Crown Land A Rental of \$50,000. Could the Honourable Minister advise the House as to how many leases are being issued for rental income and what is the total land area that was being leased out for this \$50,000?

HON. J. USAMATE.- This is Schedule 'A' Rentals?

HON. ADI L. QIONIBARAVI.- Yes.

HON. J. USAMATE.- This is just the money that is being set aside for the operational works when you are looking to revert those Schedule 'A' land, maybe all the works that the Ministry or officers do in carrying out that reversion of those Schedule 'A' land.

MR. SPEAKER.- Honourable Ratu Naiqama Lalabalavu, you have the floor.

HON. RATU N.T. LALABALAVU.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Sir, SEG 7 - Lease Arrears Task Force (\$80,000), I seek some clarification from the Honourable Minister regarding this particular issue. It is very costly to service arrears, these are contractual obligations and now it is going to cost Government another \$80,000 to service it. Can we have some clarification on that particular task, Sir?

HON. J. USAMATE.- Collection of the lease money has always been a challenge for this Ministry over time, so in order to address this, rather than just wait for people to pay, they have yet to set up a taskforce to actually go out and try to collect our money. This money that is being set aside here, there are KPI targets that are set aside for all our Divisional Offices to assist in the collection of the arrears - money from many years back or previous years that need to be collected.

This provision caters for all the activities involved in the collection of arrears from previous years, such as engagement of projects officers, sometimes you have to engage specific project officers; payment of allowances; accommodation; and even travelling costs. The allocation has been reduced but we are looking to be smart in the way that we do it so we can collect more of those arrears so that money can come into Government and be used for the various projects that Government needs to undertake.

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. J. USAMATE.- I think the money that is collected is more than the expenditure that is being used here.

HON. GOVERNMENT MEMBER.- Arrears in million.

HON. J. USAMATE.- Yes, arrears are in the millions.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Activity 2?

(Chorus of 'Nays')

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Activity 3?

(Chorus of 'Nays')

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Activity 4? Honourable Bulanauca you have the floor for your motion.

HON. M. BULANAUCA.- Mr. Chairman, Sir, on Programme 3-4(8) on Development of State Land (\$300,000), I am proposing for an extra \$300,000. Thank you, Sir.

HON. M.R. LEAWERE.- I second the motion.

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

HON. M. BULANAUCA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is important that all State land need to be developed and put out into the market as it will help in the development of our nation, particularly in the Western Division as there are plenty State land there that are still vacant, that you need to develop quickly and open it up in the market. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Activity 5?

HON. I. KURIDRANI.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Sir. On Activity 5(10), can the Honourable Minister elaborate to this House on the development of *iTaukei* land. What sort of development? How can the *iTaukei* access this fund?

HON. J. USAMATE.- Mr. Chairman, Sir, for this particular land, if there are landowners and it is an idle land, then it is land that is not earning any revenue and they can deposit it into the Land Bank. Sir, 60 percent of the landowners agree to that and this money is made available to develop that land so that the landowners can reap the benefit of selling the land or selling the lots, et cetera.

In the past someone used to come and take the land, develop it and that person would pay some rental or lease to the landowners but the developers themselves would get the benefits or the profits from developing the land. However, this allows the landowners to get the benefits for themselves.

One of the projects here is the Legalega Subdivision in Nadi, a very good location. The landowners have given it, this money will then be used to make the roads, electricity and water and then the landowner will get the benefit of selling those lots. We do not take the poundage off, like iTLTB does, all that money goes back to the landowners.

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

HON. M. BULANAUCA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On the same SEG - Development of iTaukei Land (\$150,000), I just need a clarification on this one. I understand there was a \$10 million allocation here which dropped to \$1.9 million and now to \$150,000. Why the sudden drop from \$10 million to \$150,000, particularly in 2018-2019 where it was \$1.9 million and all of a sudden it dropped to \$150,000?

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

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Just to clarify, that is a different one, Honourable Member. That is in Head 50 where different *mataqali* come straight to Government and they do the subdivision. This is where the land is put into the Land Bank. That one that we are doing, it does not have to be in the Land Bank. That can also come through iTLTB, but we pay for the subdivision. This is when the land comes to the Land Bank.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Activity 5 and I give the floor to the Honourable Bulanauca for your motion. You have the floor.

HON. M. BULANAUCA.- I withdraw my motion as it has been explained. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Your second motion, Honourable Bulanauca? I hope you can find it.

HON. M. BULANAUCA.- I withdraw, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Activity 6?

(Chorus of 'Nays')

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Activity 7?

(Chorus of 'Nays')

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Activity 8?

(Chorus of 'Nays')

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, we will now vote on Honourable Bulanauca's motion:

That Head 33 be increased by \$500,000 in Programme 3-4(8) with respect to Development of State Land.

Question on amendment put.

Motion lost.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, Parliament will now vote on Head 33 – Ministry of Lands and Mineral Resources.

Question put.

Motion agreed to.

Head 33 agreed to.

Head 34 - Ministry of Commerce, Trade, Tourism and Transport

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Programme 1-1. Honourable Ro Filipe Tuisawau?

HON. RO F. TUISAWAU.- Programme 1-1 (5) - Board and Committee Expenses (\$15,000); I understand this was about \$40,000 and it has decreased now to \$50,000. If you could provide some clarification on that, please?

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Programme 1-1(5).

HON. F.S. KOYA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There is a variance of \$4,270. This provision is obviously used to pay for Departmental, Committees and Board meeting expenses for the Ministry. Let me just put again controllable measures to administer the expenses.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Programme 2-1. Honourable Filipe Tuisawau?

HON. RO F. TUISAWAU.- On Programme 2-1(6) - Consumer Council of Fiji, we note the Government's initiatives on duty tariff reductions on a thousand so items and the Honourable Minister for Economy had stated that in the past when they did that, the positive effects had not really come down to the consumers or probably was not really obvious. So it is suggested that within that allocated amount that there be a study on the impact of duty tariff reductions on consumers. I am not asking for an increase, I am just suggesting if that could be included. It is just an idea for the Honourable Minister for Trade.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Mr. Chairman, Sir, just to provide clarification, as we had announced in the Budget the power is going to FCCC. And you will see that there is a Bill whether they are actually giving legislative teeth to be able to have that enforced. So they will be through FCCC, not the Consumer Council.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Programme 3-1? Honourable Tikoduadua, you have the floor.

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- My apologies, Mr. Chairman, the question that I have was for the previous Programme 2, but we have moved forward.

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

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- Previous, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Programme 4-1.

(Chorus of 'Nays')

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Programme 4-2.

(Chorus of 'Nays')

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Programme 4-3.

(Chorus of 'Nays')

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Programme 5-1? Honourable Gavoka, you have the floor.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Mr. Chairman, SEG 10 – Tourism Fiji Marketing Grant, this allocation is normally for the whole world - Europe, United Kingdom, et cetera.

The allocation is \$25 million which is normally a figure that comes out from the regions. They build up their marketing and it comes to \$25 million. I am just wondering how we will progress with this with the way the borders are closed and if it reopens in October or November and the worst probably will just be our neighbours Australia and New Zealand, if it comes to that. You may need to spend the bulk of this in these two areas our two geographical sources.

Where I am coming from is that flexibility element that we need to have in terms of our budgeting because in terms of crisis like this, I even question whether the whole budget is the way to go. If we had a combined effort like a joint Cabinet, we could have done this on a quarterly basis, to roll with the times. But we have decided to go this way. It is just that in tourism with the uncertainty, you may end up not using any of this. So I am just asking; what is the plan in there on how to utilise this, given the uncertainty that surrounds tourism? It is not meant to be a political question, I really need some clarity on this one.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- You have asked the question. Now, the Minister has the floor.

HON. F.S. KOYA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you Honourable Member. The words of my two left and right friends, it is a very dynamic question actually.

The reduction of \$4.7 odd million is actually due to Tourism Fiji realigning its marketing strategies. I actually spelt this out quite quickly in my Budget speech. Mr. Chairman, a portion of the budget for Northern America, China, UK, Europe, Japan, Singapore and India are actually being redirected to Australia and New Zealand, and that is where the focus is at the moment. And we have also shifted focus with respect to our domestic market, as I have said earlier in my speech about 'Love our Locals Programme'. So what you are saying is what we have already done and this Budget is realigned to that.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Sir, the bulk of this is likely to be spent within the region, within our neighbours - Australia and New Zealand.

You will also be promoting the \$400 per person that is part of the incentives in the immediate future and again, that would also be Australia and New Zealand, I suppose.

HON. F.S. KOYA.- Yes.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- 150,000 visitors. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I think it is a very fluid situation, Honourable Minister. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Programme 6-1. Honourable Bulitavu?

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- On SEG 10 - Young Entrepreneurship Scheme (YES) (\$120,000). How many applicants do you anticipate from this amount and how has this progressed, whether a performance review or whether it is attractive, given that we have seen the COVID-19 Response Budget and as you have said, this crisis we need to develop opportunities but this is opportunities for young people who want to become entrepreneurs. Probably this is an area we should focus on.

HON. F.S. KOYA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Honourable Member, I will not be able to give you the number now because this is for the Budget. Once it is passed, obviously there are applicants, et cetera, who come through.

The decrease of \$20,000 in the provision, so basically \$120,000 is sufficient to assist the number of young entrepreneurs who have already applied for the Scheme and are yet to be assisted. The current utilisation for the Board is around \$120,000 a year. You must remember not everyone gets the same amount, so there could be a variance in the number of people. It varies.

Apart from this, there is the MSME concessional loan facility that is also open. And, yes, I have just been reminded, it is also for innovation and bankable projects. So, it is a good initiative and you should apply.

HON. RO F. TUISAWAU.- Thank you, Honourable Minister. On SEG 7 – Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Training and Mentoring, just a question, previously in the Budget we used to have MSME Grants of \$1,000, will that be brought back soon or may be in the near future?

HON. F.S. KOYA.- That is not budgeted for. The only remainder part of that is the monitoring that goes on with the current recipients.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Programme 7-1. Honourable Lenora Qereqeretabua?

HON. L.S. QEREQERETABUA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question to the Honourable Minister is in regards to SEG 6 - Shipping Services Subsidy. We know that this Government subsidies for the servicing of the uneconomical routes to the islands or uneconomical routes. Just because of the public concern about safety, cleanliness and timeliness, could the Honourable Minister please, explain the transparency of how the subsidised routes are tendered for and awarded and also, just to ensure the public that their money is being put to good use as far as reliable shipping services? Thank you.

HON. F.S. KOYA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This allocation caters for 10 uneconomical routes which includes; Upper Southern Lau, Yasayasa Moala, Northern Lau, Yasawa, Kadavu, North-East Vanua Levu, Rotuma, Lower Southern Lau, Lomaiviti, including we are about to do a new (and I had mentioned this earlier) route which is Beqa, Yanuca and Vatulele.

The increased amount will actually cover frequency of services from nine trips to 14 trips per month. We will also cater for 15 trips every second month for Beqa, Yanuca, Vatulele. The actual process of getting this is actually very transparent.

Unfortunately, there are still lot of issues, but we are looking to the future and I mentioned this yesterday in a conversation with Honourable Jale, that we will eventually bundle the routes together for uneconomical and economical routes. We are working through the paper at the moment. If anyone is going to apply, then they have to not just service the economical routes, they will have to take a bundle which will include uneconomical routes.

It is a bit of ways to go ahead but that is the way to actually deal with this so that the provision of services to our people is actually at the level that we want it to be.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Aseri Radrodro?

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- Thank you Mr. Chairman, just a clarification from the Honourable Minister regarding consultation for implementation of maritime travel schedule and

fares, there is a reduction in SEG-5. Can we just be advised on the stages of this consultation and when will this schedule on scheduled fares be implemented?

HON. F.S. KOYA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The funding is obviously provided to accommodate the public consultations and focussing on the way forward for the maritime travelling public. We are in the middle of just a policy which we are actually formulating on protecting people's rights in terms of fares, cancellations, schedules, et cetera. Everyone knows maritime rights consist of passenger rights and seafarer rights and these funds will cater for the consultations on those passenger rights. So we are in the process of actually doing all that at the moment.

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

HON. RO F. TUISAWAU.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Honourable Minister, thank you. SEG-10 - Grant to LTA on Capital Grant. We all know that LTA is a major revenue generator. I do not have the figures but I understand it is in the vicinity of \$40 plus million per annum. How much of that is used for operations and other costs? I questioned the need of this, given the revenue they generate. Can they not fund their own capital projects? Also, probably an explanation on what that \$1.4 million is for? Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Minister?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- As we do with most of the other statutory organisations, LTA collects quite a lot of fees, so all the fees they collect, we actually get it into Government's Consolidated Fund. Then we allocate the funds to them for operational cost, and then we give them for any capital works. For example, the grant to LTA, there is a policy decision, obviously, as we have discussed about overloading on the roads. There are two ways of dealing it; one is that we have these permanent weighing bridges, and the other one we are doing is the weigh-in-motion.

Essentially, they put this motion thing underneath the road when you build a road, then it picks the speed, it picks up the load, then they have to pull you up in a permanent weighing bridge area. So this is what is going to be built and the workers have already started one in Karavi, and there will be the other ones built around Fiji for these permanent weighing bridges. So that is how we allocate the funding.

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

HON. L.S. QEREQERETABUA.- Thank you Mr. Chairman, just still staying on SEG-10, Honourable Minister, the Capital Grant to Maritime Safety Authority (\$597,000). Since we have not received an annual report from MSAF, what is this for, please?

HON. F.S. KOYA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The provision of \$597,778 is actually utilised in a couple of things as a construction of the Suva Harbour North-East End Lighthouse which comprises of about \$554,728, the HF radio base station setup which was about \$18,000, procurement of desktop, laptop, computers of about \$10,000 and the Sage upgrade normally to assist accounting in VAT monitoring system software purchase was about \$15,000. That is what is comprised, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Tabuya?

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- Thank you. Mr. Chairman, under SEG 6 - Operating Grant to Land Transport Authority (\$20,101,025), I just want to clarify if that includes the pay for the CEO of LTA which is about over \$500,000. If so, has he generated enough revenue in the last year to justify that, noting that there has not been any Annual Reports from LTA that are up-to-date? Thank you.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Mr. Chairman, Sir, can I clarify the issue of annual reports and then let us all talk about the others. Maritime Safety Authority of Fiji (MSAF) was raised by Honourable Qereqeretabua and the Authority has completed its Annual Reports up to 2014. It is going to be tabled in Parliament very soon. It is going to go through Cabinet.

MSAF accounts have been audited up to 2016 and now they are working on their 2017-2018 Accounts, which is with the Office of the Auditor-General (OAG). Please, also understand that sometimes, there is delays with the OAG, with a lot of accounts to deal with. Sometimes, the OAG do not do it themselves, they outsource it to private accounting firms and then they write back to them. So the 2019-2020 Accounts will be audited with the whole of Government accounts so that is in play, the MSAF one.

Regarding the LTA, their 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017 Annual Reports have already been submitted to the Ministry, who will then submit it to Cabinet and it should be tabled in Parliament very soon. The 2017-2018 financials are still being audited by the OAG and should be finalised by October 2020 and then submitted, of course, to the Ministry, Cabinet and then to Parliament. So that is the situation of the Annual Reports.

The other point that I want to make, just talking about Annual Reports, Honourable Professor Prasad talked about the Audit Department in the Ministry and we talked about, who is responsible for the Annual Reports from the Ministries. The Permanent Secretaries are responsible so, for example, if you take any Ministry, Economy, for example, the Permanent Secretary is responsible for that, Ministry of Lands, the Permanent Secretary for Lands is responsible for that.

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- Mr. Chairman, we still have not answered the question about the pay for the LTA CEO whether it comes out of the Operating Grant and if so, his performances should justify that from the revenue of LTA. People have a right to know.

HON. F.S. KOYA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is actually quite simple. He would not be paid from anywhere else. He is actually an employee of LTA so the funding for his salary is actually in there. So he would be paid and, of course, he is paid by LTA.

HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- He was appointed on merit, he is not a con artist and is not a bankrupt man.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Programme 8-1, Honourable Tikoduadua.

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. An issue for clarification by the Honourable Minister and this is on SEG 8 – Upgrade of Government Shipping Vessels, an allocation of \$250,000.

Mr. Chairman, after the Budget last year, the Honourable Minister for Transport announced a target to acquire a number of shipping vessels - a fleet of 13 by 2021. He also said that this fleet was part of the Ministry's five-year and 20-year National Development Plan for shipping services in Fiji. He also announced that there was a procurement of a new vessel planned to be delivered in October this year, given that there was a \$3 million allocation in last year's Budget. With that in mind, this is just a question whether that is a sufficient allocation or has it changed now in light of the COVID-19 situation. Thank you.

HON. F.S. KOYA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think the entire Budget just changed in light of the COVID-19 situation but with respect to SEG 8 - the \$250,000 that has actually been given is really for procurement of spare parts and quick remedial response and operational with respect to

four particular Vessels; *MLC Vunilagi*, *MLC Sigavou*, *MV Cagivou* and *MV Veivueti*. That is what it is for. There is nothing new coming in at the moment. There is one, but it is on hold.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Honourable Members, Parliament will now vote on Head 34 – Ministry of Commerce, Trade, Tourism and Transport.

Question put

Motion agreed to.

Head 34 agreed to.

Honourable Members on that note, we will now suspend proceedings, for refreshments in the Big Committee Room and we will resume in half-an-hour.

The Parliament adjourned at 3.31 p.m.

The Parliament resumed at 4.01 p.m.

Head 35 - Ministry of Sugar Industry

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Programme 1-1?

HON. PROFESSOR B.C. PRASAD.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Sir. I have a motion here but before I move that, I just want to raise an issue on SEG 10 which is in relation to my concern with respect to the Sugarcane Development Fund given to the Fiji Sugar Corporation (FSC) worth \$500,000 and New Farmers Assistance - \$250,000. I know this SEG used to have a substantive allocation, I think, in 2018 and 2019.

If I recall, Mr. Chairman, Sir, it was \$15 million, then it was reduced and I remember the Honourable Prime Minister's Permanent Secretary had said that these grants were ineffective in increasing the cane production.

I also remember asking the Honourable Prime Minister in February about the number of active cane growers which are now about 12,000, and the Honourable Prime Minister quite rightly and correctly responded and said that the land lease issue which continues to be a major challenge for the sugar industry as a result of the non-renewal of leases which was very important. He also highlighted that instead of 73,000 hectares in 1996, 55,000 hectares in 2006, now it is only about 39,000 hectares in 2016.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, in relation to that, I want to raise this issue because a good example of the lease issue that would arise very soon and, in fact, it is already there, is the land around the Seaqaqa Cane Development Scheme. Mr. Chairman, if you remember, this was a Scheme started by the late Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara. Before ALTA in 1976, those leases in Seaqaqa had an automatic extension provision of 30 years.

Now, most of those leases are going to begin to expire around 2024, 2025, 2026 and I have heard a lot of response from farmers around Seaqaqa, Mr. Chairman, that the iTLTB is now offering new lease offers but what is happening is the premium is quite high, and that is understandable. For example, we had one farmer who sent me some documents, it is about \$40,000 for new leases. Of course, the Honourable Prime Minister is also the Chairman of the ITLTB and Ministry of iTaukei Affairs.

My question to the Honourable Prime Minister is, what are the plans in place to deal with those leases, Honourable Prime Minister, when it starts expiring? In fact, the leases are being offered now but the actual leases are going to expire around 2024, 2025, 2026 because from 1974 right up to 1976 when ALTA was done, those leases were already offered. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Prime Minister?

HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On our recent visit to Vanua Levu, we had received a lot of complaints about those new leases that Honourable Professor Prasad is talking about. So we called in the CEO of iTLTB and his Officials, we had a chat and we have recommended that he goes and talks to his Officials in all the sectors, not only in Labasa but in Lautoka and Nadi, to put in motion progress to bring down all those leases that Honourable Professor Prasad is talking about. So he is working on that right now. *Vinaka.*

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Saukuru?

HON. J. SAUKURU.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I seek clarification from the Honourable Prime Minister on the New Farmers Assistance of \$250,000. What is all in that New Farmers' Assistance? Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- SEG 10 - New Farmers Assistance (\$250,000).

HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This allocation is to support the new farmers who have an interest in sugarcane farming. Government support includes the acquisition of land lease and efficient facilitation of agro-inputs for the commencement of farming.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- I give the floor to the Honourable Professor Prasad to move your motion.

HON. PROFESSOR B.C. PRASAD.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Pursuant to Standing Order 102, I move without notice:

That Head 35 be increased by \$20 million for the Sugar Stabilisation Fund in SEG 10.

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

MR. CHAIRMAN.- You have the floor, Honourable Professor Prasad.

HON. PROFESSOR B.C. PRASAD.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Despite numerous public and parliamentary pronouncements that the Government will adhere to their pre-2018 Election promise of granting a price of \$85 a tonne, there has been a lot of confusion and scepticism from the growers, after a somewhat very clear announcement by the Honourable Minister for Economy to reduce the price to \$70 per tonne in his Budget Address on 17th July.

What I am going to say, Mr. Chairman, perhaps, will clarify as to why we were concerned about it and why the farmers were concerned about it. If I may say so, there are, in fact, public justifications by the Honourable Minister himself when we raised the issue. And it was only after six days, Mr. Chairman, after the Honourable Minister for Economy's announcement, the Permanent Secretary in the Prime Minister's Office then said that growers will be paid \$85 per tonne, and that the \$70 is a guarantee on the first three cane payments, with Government ensuring the guaranteed price in the last payment or fourth payment in October 2021, for the current season.

What concerned us, Mr. Chairman, firstly, as per the Master Award, there are five payments, not four. I think this is where the confusion is.

First, if I may just give you a bit of a detail; first, there is a delivery payment, paid three weeks after each harvesting, minus all harvesting and transportation expenses. This is actually paid to each grower three weeks after his crop is delivered to the mill, at the same time that the cane cutters are also paid, and this is once or twice or at the most, three times in a season, depending on how frequent one's crop is harvested and delivered.

Actually, the first payment is 60 percent of forecast price, Mr. Chairman, and Government is saying that \$70 price announced is to guarantee the first three payments. Was the delivery payment then of \$39.50 per tonne or 60 percent of forecast price guaranteed or topped up? That is the first question.

It is a mandatory requirement and here I go back to the COVID-19 Supplementary Budget where \$50 million was given to FSC and \$30 million for Stabilisation Fund. I remember the Honourable Minister for Economy stating that \$50 million was to guarantee FSC's delivery payment.

So, Mr. Chairman, even if this was done for argument sake, then how come the allocation in the current Budget will guarantee the first three payments when the Budget is not even legislated? What about the stabilisation fund allocation of \$30 million, what would that be for?

Mr. Chairman, \$80 million (\$50 million plus \$30 million) in my view, is a lot of money. At the current rate of production, this amount can guarantee payments for two seasons, so that is where the confusion arises again. Then another \$30 million has been allocated in the current Budget, bringing it to almost \$110 million. So what is the rationale for those allocations and why it might be disregarded?

Therefore, Mr. Chairman, the explanation given both, in and outside of Parliament that the current allocation is to guarantee the first three payments is seriously flawed, in my view, illogical and is basically in some way shows the lack of understanding of the workings of the industry and the provisions in the Master Award.

So, how can the current allocation, not even approved or even if approved will come into force on 1st August, guarantee the delivery payment paid to those growers whose crop was crushed three weeks later? And to make matters worse and more confusing, Mr. Chairman, you have \$50 million in the COVID-19 Response Budget to guarantee FSC's ability to make the delivery payment. It does not clearly explain what it is.

The second payment is paid in six weeks after closure of the mill, usually in mid or late December, to significantly low tonnage. Third payment is paid before 31st March of the ensuing year, fourth payment is made on 31st May of the ensuing year or just before start of crush. The fifth and final payment, what we call the "wash-up payment" is actually made (the Honourable Minister for Employment, Productivity, industrial Relations and Youth and Sports would know) in October which is like 16 months after the start of the season. So, Mr. Chairman, with those three payments, is this Government supposedly guaranteeing with the current allocation?

Let me, once again, say why the confusion was there because the address by the Honourable Minister said the following, and I quote from Page 1115 of the *Daily Hansard* of 17th July, 2020:

"For two straight seasons, Mr. Speaker, Sir, we have paid our cane growers \$85 per tonne, even though the world price has been \$60, a value far above the world market price. The last season's guaranteed price will be paid at \$85 but in the final third season of the arrangement we are reducing the guaranteed price for cane from \$85 to \$70..."

Then further on, the Honourable Minister also said that the Parenthood Assistance Payment has been temporarily put on hold pending further review, and the guaranteed cane price for sugar has been reduced from \$85 to \$70 per tonne.

Mr. Chairman, these pronouncements clearly cause confusion and the message was very clear that the price reduced from \$85 to \$70 as outlined in the Budget. The important thing is, we need to be very clear on the five payments, not the three or four payments. That is why, Mr. Chairman, I am moving that we increase the allocation so that the Government's promise before in the 2017-2018 Budget of guaranteeing a minimum price of \$85 is maintained and included in the budgetary provision. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- Mr. Chairman, let me, first of all, say that the forecast price is \$65.89. As per the Master Award, delivery payment is based on the forecast price and not based on the guaranteed price.

But as I have said, Honourable Professor Prasad, if you want to find out what we are doing with the \$30 million, Government will pay the \$85 per tonne of cane to growers. The budgetary allocation of \$30 million is a testimony that Government will top up that in the first, second and third payment where growers will receive to provide a buffer in their income.

The Sugar Stabilisation Fund, Mr. Chairman, is being set aside to support payment of the guaranteed price of \$85 per tonne to farmers.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Attorney-General and Minister for Economy?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Just to clarify and re-echo the sentiments of the Honourable Prime Minister, Honourable Professor Prasad, like Mr. Mahendra Chaudhary, both of you jumped on the bandwagon. The Master Award is based on the forecast price, it is not based on the guaranteed price. The guaranteed price is something over and above the world market price that the Government itself put in place.

Now, if you look at the history and, in fact, I am just trying to pull out the figures I have with me, if you look at the price that was paid by tonne to cane farmers since 1987, they have never received so much. In fact the highest that was paid, remember the Bainimarama-led Government paid \$88 a tonne.

Obviously, this \$85 was to essentially give a particular level of security to cane farmers for them to invest, knowing that they will get \$85, they will not be subject to market fluctuations - \$63. Previously, it was \$61, so we paid the difference. The example that you have used about the \$1,000 per child is suspended for this year. In the same way we wanted to be

(Honourable Professor Prasad interjects)

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Yes, I know, but it does not mean there is a correlation, but there is a correlation from the perspective of allocation of funds. So, we wanted to be transparent and to be able to say, "Look guys, we need to actually take a breather, everyone else is taking a breather; the civil servants are getting paid overtime in lieu; they are not giving maritime allowance, there are cuts everywhere.

You will actually, for the next one year in this financial year (2020-2021) instead of it being based on \$85, it will be based on \$70. That is still above the world market price which is \$63, so we will be paying \$7 more.

In the wash-up, we will pay the \$85, in other words those farmers in the 2021-2022 will get the entire \$85 being given to them. We cannot pay it now because we have financial constraints. That is fundamentally the reason for it, and that is what we have clarified. We have also been, as you know, if you look at the level of assistance that has been given to cane farmers, we never had this type of assistance before. You know that, Honourable Professor Prasad, if we are being frank about it.

HON. PROFESSOR B.C. PRASAD.- CRP in 1998.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM- No, but not as much, you know that! And the amount of money has been put in to FSC.

Recently, FSC actually defaulted in some of its long term loans, we actually had to step in, and it was Government guaranteed. We stepped in and paid the loan for FNPF. We are stepping in to pay other loans exposure to FDB, which we have to do.

HON. PROFESSOR B.C. PRASAD.- That is a serious issue.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Obviously the mills need to operate. So, my point being is that, the announcement in the Budget was for this financial year.

In the same way, if you want to do a linkage in the same sentence, if I mentioned about the \$1,000 per child, it may be re-instituted next year. But most certainly with the farmers what we are saying is that, we are temporarily suspending our promise about the \$85 to \$70 for this financial year, but we will make up for it in the next financial year when the money will be allocated because we believe, we will be in a better financial position then.

The first season is finished when we offered the guarantee. The second season, the wash-up will be in this financial year, so the \$85 is here for them to be paid. They will receive the \$85 and then subsequently the payments that are due in this financial year for the next season which is the third season, they will be paid \$70, and there will not be a shortfall because we have done the calculations.

HON. PROFESSOR B.C. PRASAD.- Let me get this clarified again. So, you are saying that the guaranteed price is not the difference between the forecast price and \$85, it is the world market price that you are talking about.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- *Nahi yaar!*

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. PROFESSOR B.C. PRASAD.- No, no, what I am saying is, you were saying that they will get \$85, that is fine. But you are saying that it is not the difference between the forecast price and the \$85. So it is not based on forecast price?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- See, the forecast price as the Honourable Prime Minister had said, is \$65. The next payment for the next season, what we are paying is apart from the \$65, the \$5 difference, Government will pay from this allocation. And then, obviously, if it was normal times, we would have paid the difference between \$65 and \$85.

HON. PROFESSOR B.C. PRASAD.- That is what I said.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- So what we are saying is that, we will pay \$65 to \$70 and then in the wash-up, we will pay the entire difference.

HON. PROFESSOR B.C. PRASAD.- That is now clear.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Thank you. Please, tell Mr. Mahendra Chaudhary that, too, when you talk to him.

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

HON. I. KURIDRANI.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I note the additional \$50 million that was allocated in the COVID-19 Response Budget in SEG 10 as support to FSC. Can the Honourable Prime Minister and Minister for Sugar clarify how that \$50 million was utilised?

HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, that was a one-off payment that was budgeted in the COVID-19 Budget. Government in the revised 2019-2020 Budget allocated funding of \$50 million as support to FSC. The Government through FSC aims to cover the difference between the cane price of \$11 per tonne and the \$85 per tonne price fall to be paid to the sugarcane farmers.

HON. I. KURIDRANI.- Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Yes, Honourable Kuridrani?

HON. I. KURIDRANI.- Mr. Chairman, still on SEG 10, I note that all the allocations are under “R”, with a few changes from previous allocations. Can the Honourable Minister clarify if the funds allocated for those activities were fully utilised? If not, how much was utilised and the balance of the allocation from last year; the Sugar Development Fund, Farmer’s Assistance, Cane Cartage to Penang and Rarawai, Weedicide Subsidy?

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. I. KURIDRANI.- This is last year.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Order, order!

HON. I. KURIDRANI.- I am trying to ask the Honourable Prime Minister, whether all those funds were utilised and if not, then what was the balance?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Honourable Member, if you are talking about 2019-2020, the year has not ended, it actually ends tomorrow, the last day. If you go to all the Ministries now, there are certain funds that they have under “R”, there are certain funds that are actually not under “R”, so we do not know the expenditures they have incurred. It takes the next few weeks to know the actuals, as opposed to the Budget. So, we can tell you the actual and the utilisation or under-utilisation or over-utilisation because sometimes they also vire funds, so that will take place in the next few weeks’ time.

HON. I. KURIDRANI.- Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Ro Filipe Tuisawau?

HON. RO F. TUISAWAU.- Thank you, Chairman. As a lead on from that question, given the substantial amount used referring to SEG 10, whether under SEG 1 – Personal Emoluments there is a need for monitoring and evaluation and whether there is someone there who is conducting some form of monitoring and evaluation or there are frameworks in place which could also give feedback on how those funds are used, whether they have been utilised fully and the impacts of that as a contribution to our sugar production. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Minister for Economy?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Honourable Member, if you see the staff emoluments, the Ministry of Sugar is actually quite small because there is collaborative effort between the Fiji Sugar

Corporation (FSC) and the Ministry of Sugar. So, yes, they do monitor, they do evaluate in conjunction with FSC. That is part of their job, so you do not have to have a separate allocation for that.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you.

HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- Just for the information, Mr. Chairman, there are only 16 staff in the Ministry and we are working together with FSC on this. For the information of Honourable Kuridrani, 99 percent of the previous Budget was spent, the 2018-2019, not this time around.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. We will now go on to voting for the motion by the Honourable Professor Prasad that Head 35....

HON. PROFESSOR B.C. PRASAD.- Mr. Chairman, I have also talked about the reduction in cane development. I am saying that the increase in \$20 million will take that into account as well, apart from any shortfall in the price.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, we will now vote on the motion by Honourable Professor Prasad:

That Head 35 be increased by \$20 million in Programme 1-1(10) with respect to Sugar Stabilisation Fund.

Question on amendment put.

Motion lost.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, Parliament will now vote on Head 35 - Ministry of Sugar Industry.

Question put.

Motion agreed to.

Head 35 agreed to.

Head 37 – Ministry of Local Government

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Programme 1-1.

(Chorus of 'Nays')

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Programme 1-2. Honourable Aseri Radrodoro, you have the floor.

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- Just a clarification regarding SEG 6 - Rural Local Authorities (\$300,000), could we just be advised whether rural local authorities still exist?

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- As you know, the Rural Local Authority is now under Municipal Council, so Municipal Council is not charging them any rates. Government is subsidising Municipal Council to provide that service, so this is where this money is used for things such as managing the market or any building plan that needs assessment, et cetera.

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

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Sir. I move a motion that Programme 1-2-(6) be increased by \$7,455,000 to do with the Rural Local Authorities and Waste Collection Subsidy - Municipal Councils. I have lumped them together, Mr. Chairman, Sir, so in that total amount. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Is there a seconder? Honourable Tabuya you have the floor.

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As has been indicated by the Honourable Minister in terms of the Rural Local Authorities which have now come under the Municipal Councils, which she has clarified which is good. The issue here, and we hear over and over again, is being expressed in the media is the issue of waste collection from informal and squatter settlements, as well as the Municipal Councils themselves.

I feel that there is not enough allocation, I keep hearing the Honourable Minister would shout out from across the way, “pay the garbage fee”, “pay the garbage fee”. That is correct for ratepayers, but as she just mentioned, they are not paying rates, however the Government is subsidising. We still have this problem of waste collection and waste building up in each of our Municipalities, as well as Local Authorities and informal squatter settlements.

Also, just this issue we are currently having in terms of no Municipal Council elections so that ratepayers can self-determine. We are still depending on the Councils. I feel there is a lot of burden on the Ministry of Local Government to be running the Municipal Councils, as well as informal squatter settlements.

The increase in the budgetary allocation would help her and her Ministry to be able to aptly handle the waste collection, especially from those areas. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Sir.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- Can I respond to that.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Yes, you may, Honourable Minister.

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- Rural Local Authority is not informal settlement, to begin with. Rural Local Authorities are places such as, Kadavu, Korovou, Seaqaqa, Taveuni, Nabouwalu, Navua. So, these are the Rural Local Authorities that the Municipal Councils are looking after.

In terms of informal settlements that you are talking about and I know where you are coming from, you only want to talk about Nasinu because that is where the garbage is. So, for Nasinu, again, the Government has set aside \$2.5 million but the problem here is (if you really want to hear what is happening in informal settlements and other areas), again, I will say it is all about civic duties. Are we paying our rates? Are we paying our garbage fees?

If you compare Nasinu with Suva, Nasinu has got 11,200 ratepayers and Suva has got 11,400 ratepayers. Suva collects \$15 million in rates, Nasinu is invoiced \$3 million and we barely collect \$1.5 million. How can you provide service with \$1.5 million? Government has been subsidising.

Recently, we have come across a situation which was a Clean up Campaign after *TC Harold* where various Ministries had to step in to clean up and that has cost a lot of money, even JICA came on board.

I would encourage you to also go out to the communities and ask them not to put out their rubbish on the date it is not collected. As soon as the clean-up is done, the very next day all rubbish is out again. This is the problem. In fact, the communities are talking about it, it has been reported in the paper, so this is the issue that we have.

Now, if you want to know how we are going to deal with this issue, we are going to go into a shared services with Suva City Council. So, in other words, rather than paying Nasinu Town Council to manage garbage, we will give it out to the Suva City Council, under section 88 of Local Government Act. I hope that explains.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Ro Teimumu Kepa, you have the floor to move your motion.

HON. RO T.V. KEPA.- My motion, Mr. Chairman, is on Programme 1-2(7) - Special Administrators.

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

MR. CHAIRMAN.- You have the floor.

HON. RO T.V. KEPA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My motion is on SEG 7 where we remove the Special Administrators to be replaced by Municipal Councillors.

Why I am bringing that up, Mr. Chairman, is for the sake of democracy, which the Honourable Prime Minister and the Government is always telling us we should live by. So we are looking at it in terms of democracy so that the ratepayers (I am a ratepayer), Mr. Chairman, are represented by our Councillors who can voice our issues in Municipal Councils, so we have better services, garbage, water, fire and even the construction of buildings.

Had the Suva City Council been there, we would not have this monstrosity of a building that is going up at McGregor Road, that people who live around there and even the Holy Trinity School next door, look at it fearfully everyday. And we wonder how in the first place it was able to be constructed on that particular site.

Had there been a City Council in place, with City Councillors responsible for those areas, that would not have been able to be constructed because they would have had structural engineers and all other engineers, who would have looked at it and would not have allowed it to go up. So people now are fearful that one day, an earthquake or whatever will collapse that building and people around it, those who use the roads, the residential areas, we do not know what will happen to them, Mr. Chairman. So that is my motion today.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Professor Prasad, you have the floor.

HON. PROFESSOR B.C. PRASAD.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In support of the motion, I just wanted to also raise this question because I remember this very, very clearly since 2014 when the Honourable Minister for Employment, Productivity, Industrial Relations and Youth and Sports had promised that the first thing on his agenda at that time would be the Town Council Election. Then subsequently that was changed and we were told that the Town Council Act was being reviewed.

Then, we have a new Honourable Minister, who also promised a review of the Act and we have had this argument, Mr. Chairman, before that all elected Councillors were corrupt. I mean, we see corruption even in the unelected Councillors now. So I do not think that is a sole argument.

I think the question is, when are we going to going to review the Act and when do we plan to have an election? I do not see any allocation for review of the Act in the Budget at all. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Minister?

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To start off with, there was corruption with the Councillors and that was my first Ministerial Statement that I made. I shared a number of examples, where the money was wasted, we have lost properties, we have lost car parks and we have lost many things.

Here, a number of properties under this Government we have built assets for Municipal Councils. Rakiraki never owned a single property, nothing! They were renting a place. Today, they have got Rakiraki Market, an asset upon which they can raise loan and they can build more assets.

Coming to the no allocation for the review of the Local Government Act or review of any other Act, what I had said in my Ministerial Statement that we will review the Town and Country Planning Act and Sub-Division Act. That is more important because it features into the Local Government review, so that process has already started. Where is the allocation? The allocation is under Urban Policy Action Plan. That is where the allocation is.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Programme 2-1. Honourable Qereqeretabua, you have the floor.

HON. L.S. QEREQERETABUA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On Programme 2-1(7) under Town and Country Planning- General Administration and Planning, I just wanted to ask the Honourable Minister about the Urban Policy Action Plan Implementation that has allocated \$170,000, an increase from \$50,000 allocated in the last proper Budget. Also in SEG 7, Digitalisation E-Service Platform Project - \$160,000. Could you tell us what is that for? Also SEG 10 – Municipalities Master Plan - Singapore Corporation Enterprise (\$800,000)? Thank you.

HON. P.D.KUMAR.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are three questions actually.

The first one is the Urban Policy Action Plan; as I mentioned just a while ago, this particular allocation will be used for the nationwide consultation on the draft town and country planning legislation. We also want to revise the Town Planning Scheme Plans so this is where the money will be used up.

The next question or clarification or more information you wanted was on digitisation. As you have heard, Government is planning to move construction permits online and for that, we need to do an in-house audit. IT audit needs to be undertaken in all Municipal Councils, as well as town and country planning so that we will be able to link up with one another when the construction permits come online. So that linkage is very important with Town and Country Planning Office. It is an audit of all the digital infrastructure we have or we may need to go online.

The other was the Singapore Corporation Enterprise. This is the master plan that I mentioned earlier on. We have completed Phase 3 of this master plan and the other three phases are left. The spatial master plan is completed and we are looking at the concept master plan.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. We will move on. We will now vote on the motion by the Honourable Tabuya.

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Minister has explained in terms of the plans to partner with Suva City Council and certainly Nasinu looks forward to that. I hope there are other plans for the other Municipalities to have partnership with the surrounding areas. So on that note at this point in time, I withdraw the motion. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. We now look at the second motion by Honourable Ro Kepa that Head 37-1-2(7) be removed with respect of Special Administrators.

Question on amendment put.

Motion lost.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, Parliament will now vote on Head 37 – Ministry of Local Government.

Question put.

Motion agreed to.

Head 37 agreed to.

Head 40 – Ministry of Infrastructure and Meteorological Services

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Programme 1-1. Honourable Aseri Radrodro?

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- Thank you, very much, Mr. Chairman. Just a clarification in terms of SEG 1, an increase has been provided from \$477,000 to \$659,000. Can we get clarification from the Honourable Minister on whether this will be relating to additional staff being engaged at the Ministry level?

HON. J. USAMATE.- Mr. Chairman, this is not for new staff. It is just the allocation of the funds so it is now sufficient to accommodate all the serving staff in this particular area.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Programme 2-1.

(Chorus of ‘Nays’)

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Programme 2-2. Honourable Saukuru, you have the floor.

HON. J. SAUKURU.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just need clarification from the Honourable Minister on Activity 2(8) - Upgrade of Outer Island Stations. What is the status of the upgrade at Viwa and Udu Point and when are those two projects commencing?

HON. J. USAMATE.- I do not have the exact dates with me but you can be rest assured that given that it is for this financial year, it will be completed in this financial year.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you, Activity 3?

(Chorus of ‘Nays’)

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Activity 4?

(Chorus of 'Nays')

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Activity 5?

(Chorus of 'Nays')

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

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- Yes, Mr. Chairman, thank you. Just on the Water Resource Investigation, an amount of \$10,000 has been provided there under SEG 7. Can we just get details of this allocation, what is it relating to?

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Activity 5(7).

HON. J. USAMATE.- \$10,000?

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Yes.

HON. J. USAMATE.- These are funds to cater for research into future locations for additional installation of telemetry and rainfall equipment. Under hydrology, they measure rainfall so they have those stations all around the country. This will be to cater for researches into future locations where we need to put these instruments into.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Programme 3-1.

(Chorus of 'Nays')

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Programme 3-2. You have the floor, Honourable Radrodro.

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In SEG 2, there is a huge reduction in terms of the Government Wage Earners (GWE). Can we just get a clarification on whether this is related to workers who have been laid off or what is this huge reduction about?

HON. J. USAMATE.- No one is being laid off, it is just the readjustment of this money so it is for the Person to Post (P2P). It meets the amount of money that is needed for the workers who are there.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Activity 2?

(Chorus of 'Nays')

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Activity 3?

(Chorus of 'Nays')

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Programme 4-1. Honourable Tikoduadua?

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to get some clarification from the Honourable Minister on SEG 10 - Housewiring for Grid Extension Projects (\$7,894,652), whether he has information in terms of the Grid Extension that were left over from *TC Winston* that are covered under this particular expenditure. That is my question, thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you, Honourable Minister.

HON. J. USAMATE.- There are no new projects coming on line but all the ones that are there and needs to be completed will be addressed.

About \$3 million of it has been allocated to install proper wirings in homes that will reconnect households to EFL. Another \$4 million is roll-over for house wiring, so this is in line with our target to access electricity to all the households in Fiji by 2021.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you.

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- Mr. Chairman, I am sorry, just now we heard the clarification. Does the Honourable Minister have a list with him in terms those projects that are covered under the explanation?

HON. J. USAMATE.- I will have it, I think that is something that you can ask for me to provide that information in the question session.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Honourable Bulitavu?

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Just to help the Honourable Member, probably if the Honourable Minister can provide the Budget kit which will list all those projects. We can just see where those allocations are going.

HON. J. USAMATE.- Honourable Members are free to send me questions, email or any other way to get that information.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Honourable Navurelevu?

HON. RATU T.N. NAVURELEVU.- Activity 1(10), in regards to Housewiring and Grid Extension Project which amounts to \$7,894,632? Does this cover the project at Mali Island, Mr. Chairman?

HON. J. USAMATE.- Ask again, what is that?

HON. RATU T. NAVURELEVU.- Does that project cover the project at Mali Island which they have been promised?

HON. J. USAMATE.- I did not understand.

HON. RATU T.N. NAVURELEVU.- The island of Mali.

HON. J. USAMATE.- This is Grid Extension, so I am not too sure if Mali is included in the Grid Extension. I think for Mali, they are supposed to take the electricity under water, but if it is coming from EFL, then it would be included. But I would have to clarify that.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Honourable Ratu Atonio Lalabalavu?

HON. DR. RATU A.R. LALABALAVU.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a clarification on the Climate Change Resilient Renewable Energy Development Project in Taveuni. Does that go together with the SEG 8 – Construction of Mua Access Road?

HON. J. USAMATE.- For Mua Access Road, that is a solar project to be funded by KOICA in Mua, so Government's role will be to pay off the VAT component of the investment by the Koreans and also provide a road. That is why you have the Mua Access Road into the area where the Koreans will build their small solar farm that will complement a hydro and provide renewable energy all along that part of Taveuni.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Programme 5-11?

(Chorus of 'Nays')

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, the Parliament will now vote on Head 40 - Ministry of Infrastructure and Meteorological Services.

Question put.

Motion agreed to.

Head 40 agreed to.

Head 41 - Water Authority of Fiji

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Programme 1-1. Honourable Qereqeretabua?

HON. L.S. QEREQERETABUA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to ask the Honourable Minister for a clarification on this Head because of the importance of details and also because the Water Authority of Fiji (WAF) uses so much of public money and has not been able to table annual reports on time.

I know that compared to the COVID-19 Budget, the Operational Grant has reduced by about \$7 million but the Capital Grant has increased by \$10 million. So could the Honourable Minister, please, update us on some on the situation at WAF right now in light of the contract situations of the hundreds of workers last year, and how WAF can expect to carry through with increased capital expenditure and less staff?

HON. J. USAMATE.- A lot of positions that you are talking about were project posts and in terms of the substantive staff in WAF, they are still in place. Now, they are looking to re-orient staffing, moving away from corporate service and try to put more people into the more operational parts.

In terms of the annual accounts, they are just about to finish their 2017 and they are looking to finish off 2018 and 2019 is now before the Auditor-General's Office. As the Honourable Attorney-General has pointed out, sometimes the holdup in some of these annual reports is also because of the large number of annual accounts that have to be addressed by the Auditor-General's Office, so it is a concern. It is something that has been relayed to the Board and they are working on getting their annual reports up to date.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Honourable Members, we will now vote on Head 41 – Water Authority of Fiji.

Question put.

Motion agreed to.

Head 41 agreed to.

Head 42 – Ministry of Waterways and Environment

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Programme 1-1. Honourable Qereqeretabua?

HON. L.S. QEREQERETABUA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A question to the Honourable Minister on SEG 5 with an allocation of \$45,000 for Software Licence. It was the same amount in the COVID-19 Budget but it costs about \$100,000 in the real 2019-2020 Budget and it was about \$83,000 in the 2018-2019 Budget. Could the Honourable Minister, please, clarify what this software licence is for and why it has cost so much every year?

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

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Mr. Chairman, we have a number of software within the Ministry of Waterways and Environment, for example, AutoCAD for drawing and design of seawalls. There are a few others for Environment that they are using for mapping of foreshore, and also undertaking the mapping of the forest cover, et cetera, so that is the licence fee.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. Programme 2-1. Honourable Ratu Matanitobua?

HON. RATU S. MATANITOBUA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. SEG 8 on Coastal Erosion Protection Works, this is involving seawalls. Since 2014, I have been asking the Honourable Minister for Lands and now we have Honourable Dr. Reddy, for the seawall in Veivatuloa, a chiefly village in Namosi. Could the Honourable Minister clarify whether Veivatuloa is included in the list?

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- No, the only two that are included here is Kadavu Island Seawall Project which is a rollover of \$800,000 and the Bau Island Seawall Project, Government Tender Board (GTB) has approved it so we got ...

MR. CHAIRMAN.- That is good.

(Laughter)

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- \$0.9 million is for that. *Vinaka*.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Leader of the Opposition?

HON. MAJOR-GENERAL (RET'D) S.L. RABUKA.- SEG 8 - Drainage for Rural Residential Areas; does that include villages in the delta areas?

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Yes, precisely it is for that.

HON. MAJOR-GENERAL (RET'D) S.L. RABUKA.- Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- I give the floor to the Honourable Ro Kepa to move her motion.

HON. RO T.V. KEPa.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My motion is on Programme 2-1(8) and it is on that particular item that the Honourable Leader of Opposition has just mentioned - Drainage

for Rural Residential Areas (\$800,000). My motion is to increase this particular allocation by \$100,000, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you. You have the floor Honourable Kepa.

HON. RO T.V. KEPa.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is heartening to hear from the Honourable Minister that this includes village areas too because with the changing weather patterns and global warming, more and more rain and with the poor drainage and more frequent rainfall, we have clogged drains and there is frequent flooding in our villages. This impacts the children who are going to school and also the workers to catch their transport, so this means that villages in the low-lying delta areas like Waivou, Nadoi, Nukutubu, as well as villages in Noco, Dreketi and Tokatoka are impacted by this.

My motion is to increase this amount because I do not think that this amount is sufficient to look at all the villages that are likely to be flooded during heavy rain. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Sir.

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Mr. Chairman, Sir, does that mean she has estimated the entire Fiji's drainage requirement and it will be done by \$0.9 million and we have an allocation of \$800,000 and that is why she is saying that she needs \$100,000 more? What is this \$100,000 for?

HON. RO T.V. KEPa.- Mr. Chairman, Sir, I know that he can work magic.

(Laughter)

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Now, Honourable Minister, we all got that on paper. You can work magic, we got someone up there who can do it too. Thank you. Programme 3-1.

HON. PROFESSOR B.C. PRASAD.- Mr. Chairman, Sir, this is a general question to the Honourable Minister on environmental management. I remember during the Interim Government's term, there was a natural resource inventory work that we did. In fact, I left that work and one of the objectives of the natural resources inventory commissioned by the Ministry at that time was to ensure that the Government had a good sense of what this talk of natural resources is in the country and it was left as a "work in progress" because we could not get all the data.

However, I think there was a commitment to also do the value of those natural resources. So, I am keen whether the Honourable Minister has seen that Report and is there any progress in looking at the actual value of the natural resources stock because if you are talking about environmental management, Mr. Chairman, Sir, and if you want to have an effective programme, you actually need to understand what is there and where they are. Thank you.

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Mr. Chairman, Sir, what Honourable Professor Prasad is talking about is the state of the environment report.

HON. PROFESSOR B.C. PRASAD.- No, no! Actually, Mr. Chairman, Sir, the state of the environment report is different. I am talking about a Natural Resource Inventory which was done, in other words, the stock of natural resources in the country, including biodiversity and the next stage would be to do some valuation and put a value. That is a big work and I am not suggesting that he does that, all I am asking is whether there was some progress in that.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- My understanding, Mr. Chairman, Sir, is that, you did not give the inventory though.

HON. PROFESSOR B.C. PRASAD.- No, no, the inventory was there. We collated...

(Honourable A. Sayed-Khaiyum interjects)

HON. PROFESSOR B.C. PRASAD.- In time

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- The entire inventory and you value the inventory?

HON. PROFESSOR B.C. PRASAD.- No, no, the valuation part was another exercise and that was what the Ministry was supposed to undertake further. So, I was just asking whether there was any progress made on it.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- How much was your consultancy fee?

(Laughter)

HON. PROFESSOR B.C. PRASAD.- It was a very small amount, I can tell you that.

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Mr. Chairman, Sir, there are two things. The stock of natural resources had been done by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment. The state of the Environment Report is in a draft stage now. The Ministry of Environment had engaged the TEWFI Institute of India and hopefully, we get it out by the end of this year.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Sir. SEG 6 and SEG 8 is about Naboro Landfill. Can I ask the Honourable Minister to give us an update on how the Landfills are being developed around Fiji?

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Mr. Chairman, Sir, around Fiji, the only Landfill we have is Naboro Landfill, the others are all dump sites. So, we are extending the Naboro Landfill. There is an allocation to complete that work and it is near completion, to have another pit, so the allocation that we have in the budget is to complete that work.

HON. RO T.V. KEPA.- Mr. Chairman, my question is on Programme 3-1(8) - the completion of Construction of Naboro Landfill. My question to the Honourable Minister, if he can clarify this allocation because last year, there was talk of a tax free zone going up in that area. If he can update us as to what consultations with the landowners have been taken place so far in terms of this allocation for SEG 8? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- There are two components; one is extending the Naboro Stage 2 and that is what I just alluded to. The second part of your question is about the tax free zone there to attract a possible investor to invest into recycling of the waste material. That tender was out, there were submissions and the Tender Committee met.

I think the Tender Committee has now selected and recommended the name of the investor, a massive investment if that gets through to convert the waste into energy pallets and sell it to the grid. I think there was also discussion with EFL by the investor with regards to a potential tariff rate that they will get. That is where it is at the moment.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you.

HON. RO T.V. KEPHA.- If he can just consider at some point having consultations with the landowners, just bringing them up-to-date as to what the plans are for that particular stage in the Landfill?

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- What is the *locus standi* for landowners in this?

HON. RO T.V. KEPHA.- I think it is only proper that you do that.

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- What is the *locus standi*?

HON. RO T.V. KEPHA.- It is only proper that you consult, and just bring them up-to-date with what is happening. I think you need to do that.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Honourable Member, with any changes to the landfill, should there be new stages as part of the EIA assessment, all stakeholders are consulted. We should include everyone in that area, anyone that has a stake in it, are invited to attend and can attend and will be consulted, all stakeholders. Everyone is included through the EIA process.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, we will now vote on the motion by the Honourable Ro Kepha that Head 42-2-1(8) be increased by \$100,000 with respect to drainage for rural residential areas.

Question on amendment put.

Motion lost.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, Parliament will now vote on Head 42 - Ministry of Waterways and Environment.

Question put

Motion agreed to.

Head 42 agreed to.

Head 43 - Fiji Roads Authority

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Programme 1-1. Parliament will now vote on Head 43 - Fiji Roads Authority.

Question put.

Motion agreed to.

Head 43 agreed to.

Head 49 – Peacekeeping Missions

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Programme 1-1.

HON. RO F. TUISAWAU.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a general question on peacekeeping regarding expenditure and income, and the extent of refunds from the UN regarding the expenditure on this item. If some clarification could be explained to the House? Thank you.

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Mr. Chairman, I do not have that figure but can be provided at a later sitting. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Leader of the Opposition?

HON. MAJOR-GENERAL (RET'D) S.L. RABUKA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a question on SEG 5 - Winter Clothing. Are these Fiji-based personnel?

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have now established in Strategic Headquarters a Peace Support Operations.

HON. MAJOR-GENERAL (RET'D) S.L. RABUKA.- In Fiji?

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Yes.

HON. MAJOR-GENERAL (RET'D) S.L. RABUKA.- And they need winter clothing?

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- No, because every now and then they travel to the Mission areas and that is why they are being allocated because whoever travels to the Mission areas, depending on the season, they have to be provided with winter clothing.

HON. MAJOR-GENERAL (RET'D) S.L. RABUKA.- Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Programme 1-2. Honourable Qereqeretabua?

HON. L.S. QEREQERETABUA.- Mr. Chairman, I have a question still on that same Programme 1-1.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Activity 1.

HON. L.S. QEREQERETABUA.- Yes, please, thank you. Very quickly on SEG 5 as well, Honourable Minister, the allocation for Warlike Stores dropped from \$1.14 million in the COVID-19 Response Budget, and is now being allocated \$100,000. Could you clarify, please, Honourable Minister?

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For Warlike Stores, we have been in the Missions for quite a while and every now and then, it is just those that are worn out, that are damaged. When we talk about Warlike Stores, these are sensors, like jerry cans, hot boxes, webbings, et cetera. So not every year we need to purchase those stores, so it is probably just replacement. Of course, they do a lot of local exercises before deployment, and this is where this funding is utilised for.

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

(Chorus of 'Nays')

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Programme 1-3.

(Chorus of 'Nays')

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Programme 2-1.

(Chorus of 'Nays')

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Parliament will now vote on Head 49 - Peacekeeping Missions.

Question put.

Motion agreed to.

Head 49 agreed to.

Head 50 - Miscellaneous Services

MR. CHAIRMAN.- SEG 1?

(Chorus of 'Nays')

MR. CHAIRMAN.- SEG 3?

(Chorus of 'Nays')

MR. CHAIRMAN.- SEG 5?

(Chorus of 'Nays')

MR. CHAIRMAN.- SEG 6?

(Chorus of 'Nays')

MR. CHAIRMAN.- SEG 7?

(Chorus of 'Nays')

MR. CHAIRMAN.- SEG 8. Honourable Tabuya?

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Pursuant to Standing Order 102, I move without notice:

That Head 50 be decreased by \$7 million in respect of the Construction of the Prime Minister's Office Building.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- You have the floor.

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is a peculiar allocation as mentioned in our Budget Addresses, especially given the financial climate we are in. As legislators in the highest court of the land, we must not be seen to be endorsing something for our leaders when our people are suffering, our unemployed with reduced wages and struggling to maintain their livelihood. Already, \$13.35 million was allocated in the last three Budgets; \$5 million, \$8 million and \$350,000 last year.

Our priority right now, Mr. Chairman, is to support our people socially and economically, not further our own lives through luxury and the new office. Therefore, I present this motion to the House, Mr. Chairman.

(Honourable Members interject)

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Thank you.

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- I apologise, Mr. Chairman, I moved a motion without notice under Standing Order 100(2).

(Honourable Members interject)

MR. CHAIRMAN.- SEG 9?

(Chorus of 'Nays')

MR. CHAIRMAN.- SEG 10?

(Chorus of 'Nays')

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, we will now vote on the motion by Honourable Tabuya that \$7 million be left out of Head 50 in respect of SEG 8.

Question on amendment put.

Motion lost.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, we will now vote on Head 50 – Miscellaneous Services.

Question put.

Head 50 agreed to.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, Head 51 and Head 52 and Standing Appropriations are also called “Below the Line Appropriations”.

Head 51 lists all the pensions that are payable. These are a charge on the Government’s finances.

Head 52 are the charges on account of public debt. These numerous pages lists all the information on interest and loans by the State. Neither head is voted upon because they must be paid and are, therefore, already catered for.

Honourable Members that brings us to the end of the Estimates. We shall now move to considering the Schedules and Clauses of the 2020-2021 Appropriation Bill 2020 (Bill No. 13 of 2020), as required by Standing Order 101.

Honourable Members, since we have not amended the Estimates, Standing Order 101 prevents any amendments being moved and made at this stage. Standing Order 101(3) also prevents any debate on these questions.

Schedule 1

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

Question put.

Motion agreed to.

Schedule 1 stands as part of the Bill

Schedule 2

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

Question put.

Motion agreed to.

Schedule 2 stands as part of the Bill.

Clause 1

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

Question put.

Motion agreed to.

Clause 1 stands as part of the Bill.

Clause 2

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

Question put.

Motion agreed to.

Clause 2 stands as part of the Bill.

Clause 3

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

Question put.

Motion agreed to.

Clause 3 stands as part of the Bill.

MR. CHAIRMAN.- Honourable Members, that brings us to the end of the Committee of Supply. We have now concluded voting on Heads 1 to 50, as well as the Schedules and Clauses of the 2020-2021 Appropriation Bill 2020 (Bill No. 13 of 2020).

I will now resume the Speaker's Chair.

The House resumed:

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, the Committee of Supply has agreed to the 2020-2021 Appropriation Bill 2020 without amendment.

On that note, I call upon the Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Civil Service and Communications to move the third reading of the Appropriation Bill. You have the floor, Sir.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I move:

That the 2020-2021 Appropriation Bill 2020 (Bill No. 13 of 2020) be read a third time and be passed.

Question put.

Motion agreed to.

Bill reported without amendments, read a third time and passed.

[A Bill for an Act to appropriate a sum of Three Billion, Two Hundred and Eleven Million, Nineteen Thousand, One Hundred and Twenty One Dollars for the ordinary services of Government for the year ending 31st July, 2021 (Bill No. 13 of 2020) enacted by the Parliament of the Republic of Fiji . (Act No. of 2020)]

(Acclamation)

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, Parliament has now passed the 2020-2021 National Budget. As I had alluded to earlier, the weeklong Budget process is essential and vital for Parliament to fulfil its constitutional obligation.

On that note, I take this opportunity to thank all Honourable Members for your contributions during this integral process. I also congratulate the Honourable Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Civil Service and Communications on the successful passing of the 2020-2021 National Budget. Thank you, Honourable Members.

FIJI COMPETITION AND CONSUMER COMMISSION (BUDGET AMENDMENT) BILL 2020

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

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

That the –

- (a) Fijian Competition and Consumer Commission (Budget Amendment) Bill 2020 be considered by Parliament without delay;
- (b) Bill must pass through one stage at a single sitting of Parliament;
- (c) Bill must not be referred to a Standing Committee or other Committee of Parliament;
- (d) Bill must be debated and voted upon by Parliament immediately after the vote (which we have just done) on the Consequential Bills for the 2020-2021 Budget tabled on 17th July, 2020 and the Bills tabled on 29th July, 2020; and
- (e) time for the debate for the Bill be limited to ensure that the Bill is debated and voted upon during this sitting of Parliament.

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

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

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Mr. Speaker, Sir, again, this amendment is sought in line with the Budget announcement that was made on 17th July, 2020, essentially for ensuring the monitoring and, indeed, enforcement and the passing of the reduction of duties, including excise duties, of over 1,600 goods that had been reduced, and the ability for Fijian Competition and Consumer Commission (FCCC) to be able to enforce that. We can debate this Bill tomorrow. Thank you, Sir.

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

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

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have no further comments until we debate this. I would just like to bring to the attention of your goodself, Sir, which you are also aware, as well other Honourable Members of Parliament that there were a number Consequential Bills that were actually tabled on 17th July, 2020, and in about four of them, we picked up a couple of typographical errors which we have now circulated to Honourable Members and you will see the marked up copies.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is one in particular that is more to do with the finalisation of the actual tariff codes where a number of matters had to be addressed to the industry which we have also addressed, and you will see it is all marked up and you can compare it to what was tabled on 17th July, 2020. There are about four of them which were also circulated. Thank you, Sir.

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

Question put.

Motion agreed to.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, I thank you for your cooperation during the session on this Agenda Item that we have been considering over the last couple of days, and I now adjourn Parliament until tomorrow at 9.30 a.m.

The Parliament adjourned at 5.33 p.m.