



PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI

MINUTES

of Proceedings of Parliament at Suva on Tuesday, Twenty-fifth Day of May, 2021

1. The House met at 9.30 a.m. pursuant to adjournment.
2. Hon. Speaker took the Chair and read the Prayer.
3. BUSINESS COMMITTEE DECISION

The Hon. Speaker relayed the decision of the Business Committee with respect to how business would be conducted taking into account the legal, procedural and technical considerations. The decision is as follows –

- (a) Parliament will continue to meet in order to carry out its oversight, supply and law-making functions;
- (b) For the foreseeable future, the Fijian Parliament will meet virtually and this is to ensure adherence to the health and safety protocols in place nationwide. In addition, only Members in the Suva containment zone and who do not reside in the areas of interest as announced by the Ministry of Health and Medical Services, may either attend the Parliament sitting in-person or virtually – Members residing in the areas of interest within the Suva containment zone can only attend virtually. All remaining Members outside the Suva containment zone will attend virtually;
- (c) For the purposes of the Standing Orders a Member is regarded as present, including for a quorum and voting, when participating virtually/remotely in the parliamentary proceedings by using the virtual means made available by the Parliament;
- (d) Like in all Parliamentary proceedings voting will be required, and in taking account of the legal, procedural and technical considerations, the Parliament will continue with the vote by acclamation, as has been the case since March of 2020;
- (e) Given the changeable nature of the pandemic, the Business Committee will continue to review these measures and decide accordingly; and

- (f) Finally, a sitting guide for the virtual meetings had been shared with all Honourable Members to peruse thoroughly to assist Honourable Members during the meetings.

4. MEMBERS PRESENT

All Honourable Members were present except for Hon. Pio Tikoduadua and Hon. Ratu Tevita Navurelevu.

5. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The Leader of the Government in Parliament the Hon. Inia Seruiratu, moved that the Minutes of the sitting of Parliament held on Friday, 26 March 2021 as previously circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed.

Motion seconded.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

6. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CHAIR

Hon. Speaker welcomed all Honourable Members to the first virtual sitting of Parliament as well as those watching the live broadcast and the live streaming of the proceedings.

The Hon. Speaker informed Honourable Members that the virtual sitting was another milestone achievement for the Fijian Parliament which has ensured that that the Parliament continued with its oversight and law-making functions. Hon. Speaker acknowledged the ongoing support rendered by the UNDP Fiji Parliament Support Project with the generous funding of the Governments of New Zealand, Australia and Japan.

Hon. Speaker also acknowledged the valuable assistance from the Ministry of Communications, ITC and the Fijian Broadcasting Corporation Limited which would be provided during the trial stages.

7. PRESENTATION OF REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The Hon. Speaker informed that there were no Committee reports for tabling.

8. MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

The Hon. Speaker informed that there were no Ministerial Statements.

9. CONSIDERATION OF BILLS

The Hon. Speaker informed that there were no Bills for consideration.

10. MOTION BY THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts the Hon. Alvick Maharaj moved that Parliament debates the 'Review on the Audit Report of Municipal Councils for 2013' which was tabled on 15 May 2019.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

11. MOTION BY THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE, LAW AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Justice, Law and Human Rights the Hon. Alvick Maharaj moved that Parliament debates the 'Review of the Public Service Commission Annual Report 2014' which was tabled on 16 May 2019.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

12. SUSPENSION MOTION BY THE LEADER OF THE GOVERNMENT IN PARLIAMENT

The Leader of the Government in Parliament the Hon. Inia Seruiratu moved under Standing Order 6 that so much of Standing Order 23(1) be suspended to allow the House to sit beyond 4.30 p.m. to complete the remaining items listed on the Order Paper.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

13. QUESTIONS

- 90/2021 Hon. Anare Jale asked the Minister for Infrastructure, Meteorological Services, Lands and Mineral Resources – Can the Minister update Parliament on the progress of the targets for 100% access to clean and safe water in urban areas by 2021 as outlined in the 20-year National Development Plan.
- 91/2021 Hon. Alexander O'Connor asked the Minister for Commerce, Trade, Tourism and Transport – Can the Minister update Parliament on the Northern Development Programme.
- 92/2021 Hon. Lynda Tabuya asked the Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Civil Service and Communications – Can the Minister update Parliament on the COVID-19 Response (Home Loan Assistance) Act 2020.
- 93/2021 Hon. Dr Salik Govind asked the Minister for Agriculture, Waterways and Environment – Can the Minister update Parliament on what the Ministry has undertaken to reduce the use of chemical fertilisers and to promote organic agriculture.
- 94/2021 Hon. Inosi Kuridrani asked the Minister for Agriculture, Waterways and Environment – Can the Minister update Parliament on the progress of the Partnership to Establish Goat Meat Industry that was provided for in the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 budgets.
- 95/2021 Hon. Rohit Sharma to ask the Minister for Education, Heritage and Arts – Can the Minister update Parliament on the actions undertaken by the Ministry to ensure that bullying and brawling involving school students are not repeated.
- 96/2021 Hon. Simione Rasova to ask the Minister for Infrastructure, Meteorological Services, Lands and Mineral Resources – Can the Minister update Parliament on the status of mineral exploration in our Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).
- 97/2021 Hon. Veena Bhatnagar asked the Minister for Employment, Productivity, Industrial Relations, Youth and Sports – Can the Minister inform Parliament on how many empowerment and mobile skills trainings has the Ministry conducted since 2019.

Written Question

- 98/2021 Hon. Mosese Bilitavu to ask the Prime Minister and Minister for iTaukei Affairs, Sugar Industry and Foreign Affairs – Can the Prime Minister update Parliament on the number of people granted

citizenship by naturalisation or registration during the period 2018 to 2020 and their countries of origin.

The responses to the Oral and Supplementary Questions were given by the respective Ministers. The Hon. Speaker allowed Hon. Virendra Lal to ask Oral Question 95/2021 and Hon. Lynda Tabua to ask Written Question 98/2021. The response to the Written Question would be tabled at a later sitting date as permitted under Standing Order 45(3).

Due to some technical glitches, Oral Question 96/2021 was not disposed of and the Hon. Speaker informed that the question would be carried forward to another sitting day.

14. ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Speaker thanked all Honourable Members for their contributions and adjourned Parliament until Wednesday, 26 May 2021 at 9.30 a.m.

Parliament adjourned at 5.31 p.m.

Speaker of Parliament

Secretary-General to Parliament

25th May, 2021.