



PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI

MINUTES

of Proceedings of Parliament at Suva on Thursday, Twenty-seventh 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. MEMBERS PRESENT

All Honourable Members were present except for Hon. Ratu Tevita Navurelevu, Hon. Inosi Kuridrani and Hon. Mitieli Bulanauca.

4. 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 Wednesday, 26 May 2021 as previously circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed.

Motion seconded.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

5. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CHAIR

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

Hon. Speaker addressed a number of concerns raised by some Members of Parliament and the members of the public regarding Parliament's priorities amidst the national COVID-19 outbreak of the public. He further advised that the matters currently on the Parliament's agenda have been agreed to by the Business

Committee He further advised that he was thankful to the Ministry of Health and Medical Services and other Government agencies for continuing to inform all citizens and the members of the public daily on the pandemic.

Hon. Speaker reminded the Honourable Members connecting virtually on some house-keeping matters. Hon. Speaker also advised that the *Hansard* report for Wednesday's sitting would be circulated as soon as it was finalised.

6. PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND CERTAIN DOCUMENTS

The following reports were tabled in Parliament and referred by the Hon. Speaker to the relevant Standing Committees for their deliberation –

(a) Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs

- (i) Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2017 to 2018 Annual Report; and.
- (ii) Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2018 to 2019 Annual Report

(b) Standing Committee on Natural Resources

- (i) Ministry of Agriculture Annual Report 2016 (January to July).

7. PRESENTATION OF REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Justice, Law and Human Rights the Hon. Alvick Maharaj tabled the Committee's Report on the Review of the Investment Bill 2020 (Bill No. 49 of 2020).

Hon. Speaker informed the Honourable Members that pursuant to the resolution of Parliament on 11 December 2020 –

- (a) the Investment Bill 2020 was to have been tabled in the April sitting but with the deferment, the Standing Committee had now tabled accordingly; and
- (b) the Investment Bill 2020 should have been debated and voted upon by Parliament in the course of the April sitting week, but that one hour be given to debate the Bill.

In light of the above, the Hon. Speaker sought leave of the House to approve that the Investment Bill 2020 be debated and voted upon by Parliament at a later sitting date and this was agreed to unanimously.

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 IN THE NAME OF THE HONOURABLE ATTORNEY-GENERAL PURSUANT TO SECTION 145(1) OF THE FIJIAN CONSTITUTION AND STANDING ORDER 131

The Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Civil Service and Communications the Hon. Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum moved a motion for the purposes of section 145(1) of the Constitution and pursuant to Standing Order 131 that Parliament approve –

- (a) to amend the Parliamentary approval dated 25 May 2020 for the FJ\$455 million Government guarantee to Air Pacific Limited trading as Fiji Airways (**'Fiji Airways'**) to read as follows 'Parliament approves that the Government of the Republic of Fiji guarantee Fiji Airways borrowings consisting of a mix of domestic borrowings up to FJ\$191.1 million and offshore borrowings up to US\$117.1 million with a total limit of approximately FJ\$455 million valid until the guaranteed facilities are discharged by the lender or fully settled'; and
- (b) that Fiji Airways pay a one off fee of 15% on the FJ\$455 million government guarantee.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Motion agreed to.

11. 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.

12. MOTION BY THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs the Hon. Vijay Nath moved that Parliament debates the 'Review of Fiji Broadcasting Corporation 2016 and 2017 Consolidated Annual Report' which was tabled on 7 August 2019.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

13. 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 of Audit Reports on the Management of Duty Concession Scheme and Management of Prisoners, Employees and Assets Management System' which was tabled on 3 September 2019.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

14. MOTION IN THE NAME OF THE HON. INOSI KURIDRANI

The motion had been withdrawn.

15. QUESTIONS

108/2021 Hon. Mikaele Leawere asked the Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Civil Service and Communications – Can the Minister inform Parliament whether there are plans to review the Open Merit Recruitment and Selection (OMRS) policy.

109/2021 Hon. Alexander O'Connor asked the Minister for Commerce, Trade, Tourism and Transport – Can the Minister inform Parliament on Maritime Travellers Rights.

- 110/2021 Hon. Dr Ratu Atonio Lalabalavu asked the Minister for Health and Medical Services – Can the Minister inform Parliament on the measures in place to protect the confidentiality of COVID-19 vaccine registration information.
- 111/2021 Hon. George Vegnathan asked the Minister for Agriculture, Waterways and Environment – Can the Minister update Parliament on the progress of expanding mushroom production and supply in Fiji.
- 112/2021 Hon. Ratu Suliano Matanitobua asked the Minister for Local Government, Housing and Community Development – Can the Minister inform Parliament on the current status of the Navua Fire Station.
- 113/2021 Hon. Viam Pillay asked the Minister for Local Government, Housing and Community Development – Can the Minister inform Parliament on the criteria and the number of Fijians who have benefitted from the Housing Authority’s Debt Relief Assistance Programme.
- 114/2021 Hon. Adi Litia Qionibaravi asked the Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Civil Services and Communications – Can the Minister update Parliament on the Government and EFL’s Electricity Subsidy Scheme for households with combined Income of \$30,000 or less.
- 115/2021 Hon. Sanjay Kirpal to asked Minister for Defence, National Security and Policing, Rural and Maritime Development and Disaster Management – Can the Minister inform Parliament on the measures taken by the Fiji Police Force to curb road accidents.

Written Questions

- 116/2021 Hon. Lenora Qereqeretabua asked the Minister for Infrastructure, Meteorological Services, Lands and Mineral Resources – Can the Minister inform Parliament on the number of individuals or companies holding licences to extract gravel from the Wainadoi River.
- 117/2021 Hon. Mikaele Leawere asked the Minister for Education, Heritage and Arts – Can the Minister update Parliament on the transport subsidy and how many schools have been assisted through this subsidy, by Division.
- 118/2021 Hon. Ro Teimumu Kepa asked the Minister for Education, Heritage and Arts – Can the Minister update Parliament on the number of school dropouts from 2018 to 2020 –
- (a) in primary schools in urban and rural areas and by age and gender; and
 - (b) in high schools in urban and rural areas and by age and gender.

The responses to the Oral and Supplementary Questions were given by the respective Ministers. The responses to the Written Questions would be tabled at a later sitting date as permitted under Standing Order 45(3).

16. ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Speaker thanked all Honourable Members for their contributions and adjourned Parliament until Friday, 28 May 2021 at 9.30 a.m.

Parliament adjourned at 8.10 p.m.

Speaker of Parliament

Secretary-General to Parliament

27th May, 2021.