

FRIDAY, 12TH DECEMBER, 2014

The Parliament resumed at 9.40 a.m. pursuant to adjournment.

MADAM SPEAKER took the Chair and read the Prayer.

PRESENT

All Members were present, except the honourable Dr. B.C. Prasad and the honourable Dr. N.P. Sharma.

MINUTES

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

That the Minutes of the sitting of Parliament held on Thursday 11th December, 2014 as previously circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed.

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- Madam Speaker, I beg to second the motion.

Question put.

Motion agreed to.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

Acknowledgment of Visitors

MADAM SPEAKER.- At the outset, I would like to welcome the honourable Prime Minister back to the country, and I also want to welcome guests that we have in the public gallery. Thank you for being here and you are invited to join us during refreshments later in the day.

Honourable Members, as there are two motions for debate in the *Order Paper* today, the Whips have agreed that we will allocate 40 minutes to each motion. However, at 11.30 a.m., we will move to the weekly adjournment motion.

Urgent Oral Question

I have accepted an urgent oral question under Standing Order 43 from the honourable Nawaikula to the honourable Minister of Finance. This question was delivered to the Secretary-General under the timelines required by Standing Order 43. As required by the Standing Order, I am satisfied that the question is of an urgent character and relates to a matter of public importance, and this will be the only urgent question for today.

URGENT ORAL QUESTION

Establishment of a Parliamentary Committee for Public Consultation
(Question No. 3/2014)

HON. N. NAWAIKULA asked the Government, upon notice:

Could the honourable Minister of Finance, please consider supporting the establishment of a Parliamentary Committee under Standing Order 129 on freehold and State land leases as related to the Land Sales Act of 2014, and for the Committee to undertake public consultations and table their recommendations in Parliament no later than 30th June, 2015?

Madam Speaker, this question is about Bill No. 28. It is necessary, for the reason that with Standing Order 51 coming into effect, it in a way denies public consultation. Therefore, I am asking the honourable Minister now, and that can be done as well under Standing Order 129, and you can still go back to consult the people that are affected.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister of Finance, Public Enterprises, Public Service and Communications).- Madam Speaker, as you know, this matter has, of course, being in the public domain for a number of weeks. In fact, a number of these issues pertaining to freehold land, or any restrictions to it, and including crown land has been discussed also. For example, after the Budget at the post Budget Forum that was held at the GPH, organised by the Fiji Chamber of Commerce, a number of people from the private sector, including lawyers were present there.

Madam Speaker, subsequent to that, some of the matters that were raised, in fact there were meetings held by the Solicitor-General with about four or five lawyers, which included people like Peter Knight, Wally Clark, Walter Morgan and a few others, whose names escape me for the time being, and of course, we received a number of emails, making queries about it.

Indeed, I see over here, although it is not a subject for discussion at the moment, a petition that the honourable Nawaikula has sent us and we just received the copy about 20 minutes ago, or so regarding that. If you read the emails that are attached to this petition, they are outdated, because if you read the content of the emails also, it assumes that all freehold land anywhere in Fiji will be subject to restrictions.

The Bill that was presented to Parliament is subsequently made into an Act of Parliament yesterday, in fact confines the sale of land to foreigners and by foreigners only within the municipality areas, not land outside.

Most of the people who are, for example, in this petition are from Savusavu. Most of the land they are referring to are outside the town boundary area. It does not relate to them at all; it does not relate to the people in Pacific Harbour; it does not relate to the people who are living in integrated tourism development projects; it does not relate to hotels or guest houses; and it does not relate to commercial industrial areas.

So, the law, in fact, Madam Speaker, the Bill that was presented to Parliament takes cognisance of all these issues that were petitioned on and people had raised and I am sure that if the honourable Member went back to them and showed them the Act of Parliament now, they will not find any problems with it whatsoever. So, based on that, Madam Speaker, we do not agree that a special committee be set up.

HON. V. R. GAVOKA.- A supplementary question, Madam Speaker. There is still this concern in the community about how this Bill affects foreign investors. I just want to ask Government; not long ago, the welcome mat was out there for the investors, when did they pull back this mat?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, the welcome mat, in fact, has been extended, and is now being double layered. It is so comfortable because the processing of foreigners now in terms of the applications have significantly improved. You would have heard, Madam Speaker, in my Budget Address that we are about to launch the online application for foreign investors. They do not have to run from pillar to post getting approvals from first-year agencies.

In respect of foreign direct investments, if you see that, Madam Speaker, it has also increased over the past few years, where there is a lot of confidence. The confidence does not come about just because we have put a restriction to save foreigners who have made millions, tens of millions of dollars from selling Fijian soil and speculating on it to the detriment of the Fijian people and sometimes, they do not even declare the income that is made. They are not affected. You can go and buy blocks of land in Savusavu in US dollars, Australian dollars, New Zealand dollars, down Korotogo, and places like that. They are still not affected,

Madam Speaker, so we have been very cautious in our approach but at the same time, the consistency in the Bainimarama-Government policies in the past eight years, which is now being carried on by the FijiFirst Government...

(Chorus of interjections)

...taxation, personal income tax rates that have significantly decreased. The fact that you now have 10 per cent only in corporate tax if you are listed in the South Pacific Stock Exchange, Madam Speaker, all these go towards building foreign investor confidence and this is why private sector investment in Fiji has increased over the past number of years.

HON. J. DULAKIVERATA.- A supplementary question, Madam Speaker. Before I ask my question, we can see the public uproar on this Bill in the last couple of days, which means that they are concerned. The Bill that was given to us a few days ago was changed overnight to accommodate the wishes of the people who had written complaints, and expressed their concerns on the implication of the Bill. What I want to ask the honourable Minister, if they can be gentlemen enough to accommodate another public consultation.

Madam Speaker, you will realise that people have been living in the political environment that we had, and did not have the opportunity to speak their minds to come up with all these issues. Now, the time is right for them to express their wishes and worries which means that they are concerned, Madam Speaker.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, the honourable Member has just done what we call an "oxymoron." An oxymoron is when it is somewhat said as "paradoxical." Now, on the one hand he said that we are not consulted then on the other he is condemning us for consulting people and then making those amendments as presented. Which one is it, Madam Speaker?

The fact is, the public that he is talking about are predominantly foreigners they are not Fijian people. If you read this petition, one of the key people who had written this petition is a real estate agent in Savusavu, who has made millions of dollars by selling Fijian land. What is his interest? Is he concerned about the ordinary Fijian person, who can no longer afford a home in the Suva peninsula? Is he concerned about the Fijian people, who can no longer afford land in Nadi and Lautoka? That is the objective of the law, Madam Speaker.

(Chorus of interjections)

Yet on the other hand, the law is very liberal where it says, “any foreign owned land outside the bounds of the towns and cities (I am repeating this now for the third time) is not subject to any restriction whatsoever.” It is only within towns and city boundary areas. The only condition that we have put, Madam Speaker, and I am sure everyone in this Chamber and any right thinking person would agree, that they should put a premise on the land. It leads to construction; it leads to jobs; it goes to show a certain commitment to the country and not using the country as money making venture but just using Fijian soil. There needs to be a certain level of commitment, they need to pay VAT and taxes because they are making money from Fiji and the ordinary Fijian people will be employed to make those homes, and it is not peculiar to Fiji. A similar restriction or condition is in Australia, Madam Speaker, again this is an attempt by the Opposition to grasp at straws because we know that in the public arena, that will flog quite a lot and now this is an attempt to try and make some grounds they have lost.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Madam Speaker, it does not impose limitation outside of towns and boundaries, no! This law allows it to extend. In fact, it punches them, it imposes on them a time restriction of only 24 months to build and then we are asking. There are other people there who inherit these people by inheritance. They are forced to take this. So, it is wrong to say that this is limited only to towns. It is very, very wrong because the Act says otherwise.

The object of this is to avoid speculation. Now you can, as it is normally done, address that through amendments in the Immigration laws or in the Taxation laws to make it difficult.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Sir, what is the question?

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- The question is, were these options considered? And if yes, why were they not considered or taken as opposed to attacking the most fundamental thing, the property rights of a person?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, I thank the honourable Member for the question. I find it really ironical. The honourable Member is well known for protecting and fighting for the rights for *iTaukei* people and today, he is standing here and trying to fight for the rights of the foreigners owning land in Fiji.

It is very ironical, Madam Speaker, with such passion, he is arguing it. I did not say “restrictions”, I said “there were certain conditions that were placed on foreigners who own land outside towns and city areas.” Indeed, even within, they have to build within 24 months. Of course, other options were considered, Madam Speaker, but it is alright to just stand up and say, “Oh! There could be restrictions on immigration, on tax”, but how?” It does not give a solution.

The reality is that, if we put a restriction on immigration, is that not stopping foreigners from coming into Fiji and then defeats that purpose? Is that not a restriction? Again, on the same type taxation, how do you actually avoid or what do we do? Do we put more corporate tax for them or do we increase personal income tax for them? What do we do?

The realities, Madam Speaker, in what we are saying is that, yes, there is obviously a demand for freehold land in Fiji. There is a demand for crown land in Fiji. The least of all that is demanded by foreigners is *iTaukei* land. In fact, Madam Speaker, when we were at the public consultations, through the post-Budget forum at the GPH, one of the lawyers had the audacity to stand up and say “Foreigners will never take *iTaukei* leased land because they do not trust the *iTaukei* people in being able to enforce the contracts.”

In fact, Madam Speaker, I pointed out to him that most of Nadi Town is *iTaukei* land, all the buildings and land are mortgaged to the banks and despite the events of, for example 2000 or 2006, no landowner walked in and took over the shops. That is what the honourable Member should be talking about, not me. I told him about Lautoka and Sigatoka Towns. I was there, telling them about the merits of leasing *iTaukei* land and how those contracts can be enforced, and this is just as secure as leasing crown land.

This, Madam Speaker, is what we are driving at. He had the audacity to also say, “Well, you know the locals do not want to buy all these nice land. They cannot afford it in any case.” These are the kind of comments we have been getting, nonetheless, we have been very accommodating. We have said (again I repeat) that all land outside town and city boundary areas are not subject to control. There are certain conditions in terms of building premises. Surely, no one would disagree that construction will lead to economic growth, even create jobs, but there are restrictions in terms of foreign ownership of land within towns and city areas because we want our own people to be able to benefit from having accessible housing, affordable housing and that can only come through by having affordable land.

MADAM SPEAKER.- In my opinion, the question has been adequately answered. Thank you very much.

QUESTIONS AND REPLIES

Government Delivery of the 2015 Budget (Question No: 36/2014)

HON. B. SINGH.- Madam Speaker, before I ask my question, I would like to commend, acknowledge and thank the honourable Prime Minister for his initiative to strengthen our bilateral and multilateral relations.

I rise to ask the question standing under my name, as follows:

Would the honourable Prime Minister and Minister for *iTaukei* Affairs explain, given that the 2015 Budget has been approved, how do you intend to ensure that your Government will deliver on it?

HON. REAR ADMIRAL (Ret'd) J.V. BAINIMARAMA (Prime Minister and Minister for *iTaukei* Affairs and Sugar).- Madam Speaker, if I may, before I answer that question, I would like to pass on to you and the honourable Members of this august Parliament, the well wishes of the Fijian community in the United Kingdom and England, in Sydney, Dubai and, of course, our troops in the Golan Heights.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you.

HON. REAR ADMIRAL (Ret'd) J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- Madam Speaker, if I could just answer very briefly the question raised by the honourable Member. The answer is, just look at my record. Madam Speaker, I have said in the past that my Government, in the last six to seven years, has done more in terms of development than any other government, at the widest range of development.

HON. GOVT. MEMBERS.– Hear, hear!

HON. REAR ADMIRAL (Ret'd) J.V. BAINIMARAMA.-We have made good use of our budgets in the last six to seven years. I was the chief enforcer, pushing everyone to deliver our

programmes, and I say, Madam Speaker, that service delivery to the Fijian people and believe me, we have done the best we can with the budget that we have had.

As you have heard, the World Bank has come on board with assistance to the Government in terms of Civil Service Reform. There will be advertisements for Permanent Secretaries in the *dailies*, and we hope to invite good and competent civil servants into the Public Service as Permanent Secretaries, even foreigners. However, Madam Speaker we have done a lot in the six to seven years, and we hope to continue with the reforms that we have done in those years.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA. – A supplementary question, Madam Speaker, and I welcome back the honourable Prime Minister. We have just finished with the Budget (not finished with it), it was in such shambles that we did not take any part in it ...

(Chorus of interjections))

... but it has been passed, honourable Prime Minister.

My question to the Government is to give us a review of this Budget: a First Quarterly Review ending March, to be in May; and the Second Quarterly review ending in June, to be in August. Huge dollars are involved, and I think this Chamber will want to be given an update on a quarterly basis.

HON. REAR ADMIRAL (Ret'd) J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- Madam Speaker, I thank him for that question. I would just like to inform you that I maybe out of this desk for the last two weeks, but I have been listening in and watching all the funny bits...

(Laughter)

...especially the walk out, viewed by those cameras up there. Can every honourable Member turn around and say hello to the people!

(Laughter)

However, when the time comes and if you want to have a look at the Budget, please you may do so during Question time. However, honourable Gavoka, with that line of question, I forgot to say that the honourable and learned Attorney-General is having another baby (not him) but his wife is. I can see a good smile from the honourable Gavoka, who will be a happy grand-parent again.

(Laughter)

HON. M.D BULITAVU. – A supplementary question, Madam Speaker. The bottom line of the question is if Government intends to ensure to deliver its promises, it would need money. My question then is, if the revenue of Government collected next year does not come in time as listed in the Estimates, plus the divestment of shares in public companies that were generating investment receipts, what are the ways and means in which Government will ensure that it will deliver promises to the people?

HON. M. VUNIWAQA. – A point of order, Madam Speaker. The question is hypothetical. He is asking about hypothetical things that might or might not happen next year.

(Chorus of interjections)

Moreover, it is a subject of debate that has happened in the Chamber, and that is not allowed as a question.

MADAM SPEAKER. – Thank you I do agree, because the question states “if the revenue was not forthcoming.” So, it is really not based on facts, it is hypothetical.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO. – *Ni sa bula vinaka na turaga na* Prime Minister. For any implementation of any budget, you need a good plan. So, may I ask the honourable Prime Minister whether the Strategic Development Plan for the Government is in place, Strategic Plans for Ministries and Departments, as well as the Annual Corporate Plans for Ministries and Departments are all in place? If they are, may I request the honourable Prime Minister to supply us, on this side of the Chamber, with copies of those documents?

HON. REAR ADMIRAL (Ret'd) J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- Madam Speaker, I was a bit worried that the honourable member may come up with another line of question on strategic plan for sewerage ...

(Laughter)

... and for that, I will ask the honourable Minister for Infrastructure and Transport to reply to your question. However, we have Annual Corporate Plans that are going to be put in place, and they will come to you in due course.

MADAM SPEAKER. – We have had three supplementary questions...

HON. N. NAWAIKULA. – Madam Speaker, this is the third supplementary question, one was disqualified.

(Laughter)

MADAM SPEAKER. – My apologies, I ruled out one question.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA. – Madam Speaker, if the honourable Prime Minister would have been listening as he said he was, he would have seen that there were a lot of mistakes. In total, there were 15 Heads, and I had asked the honourable Minister to please sack these people. The question is, will you reprimand the people who were responsible for all of those mistakes? Will they will be taken to task or will they be terminated?

HON. M. VUNIWAQA. – A point of order Madam Speaker. Again, the question relates to a debate that has already happened in the Chamber, and that is not allowed for the six months period.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA. – What do you propose to do about those mistakes, or the people responsible for those mistakes?

MADAM SPEAKER.- I do agree with the point of order. It is an issue that had been under discussion in less than six months.

We will now move on to the next item.

RAISING MATTERS OF PRIVILEGE

MADAM SPEAKER. – An honourable Member had raised a matter of privilege with me yesterday under Standing Order 134, as required by the Standing Order. I now call on the honourable Roko Tupou Draunidalo to make a brief statement of the facts that she wishes to draw to Parliament's attention.

I also asked the honourable Member to state the result in grounds on which the honourable Member believes that there has been a breach of the privileges of Parliament.

HON. ROKO T.T.S. DRAUNIDALO. – Madam Speaker, I rise under Standing Order 134, and I have provided a written notice to the Secretary General as required under the Standing Order.

Madam Speaker, you have ruled last week that honourable Members are not to mislead the Chamber and this came really after an avalanche from the other side, led by the honourable and learned Attorney General that, the honourable shadow Minister of Finance (spokesperson for Finance) not to mislead Parliament. It was on the back of that, that you, Madam Speaker, ruled that no honourable Member is to mislead the Chamber, to do our best not to.

In the course of proceedings this week, the honourable and learned Attorney General made a Ministerial Statement with regards to the World Rugby saga that is continuing, and in that course of the Ministerial Statement, Madam Speaker, the Attorney General, I think assured the Chamber that the World Rugby had given its consent to the sharing of its content for Gold Coast Sevens which was aired under Decree No. 19 of 2014 - "Cross-Carriage of Designated Events Decree". Upon reading the *Uncorrected Copy of the Daily Hansard*, it confirmed to us that that reassurance appeared to continue and that was also the case with FIFA in the FIFA World Cup, and the words used by the honourable and learned Attorney General was, "It all worked out beautifully". We, on this side of the Chamber took that to mean that consent was not granted by both FIFA for the FIFA World Cup coverage and, of course, the Gold Coast Sevens.

Madam Speaker, I wish to hand out before Parliament, correspondence between World Rugby and the Government that may show something else and needs this side of the Chamber to believe that privilege may have been breached, and that the honourable and learned Attorney-General may have misled the Parliament. That is the issue, Madam Speaker, that we wish to bring up under this Standing Order.

Madam Speaker, we did this (the issue of privilege) so that we get the information right and once and for all, the honourable and learned Attorney-General can let us know, whether indeed FIFA had granted consent and everything had worked out beautifully as he says, with FIFA's consent for the cross-carriage of the event that are now on national television, and whether that was the case, World Rugby also consented to the coverage of the Gold Coast Sevens. That will also assure this Parliament that World Rugby is, indeed, very unreasonable on this occasion, by denying what it owns to *Fiji TV* on this occasion.

Those are the issues we wish to bring up under this Standing Order, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, as this point, privilege refers to another Member of this Parliament, in the interest of natural justice, I will allow the Member to briefly speak on the matter raised. However, this is not a debate, and I will not accept interjections by any other Members.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, the statement made by honourable Draunidalo covers a number of issues, it is not just pertaining to privilege.

Madam Speaker, when an issue regarding privilege is raised, that matter is to be discussed on its own, nether was it related to how another person was treated, nor is it related to or “that person apologised, so this person should apologise as well”. However, if you look at the submission we received yesterday, dated 11th December and signed by honourable Draunidalo, it talks about a lot of “maybes” and “may haves”, as honourable Draunidalo has done it again. It also talks about issues pertaining to ownership rights, private contracts, so one cannot really be sure as to what is the point honourable Draunidalo is driving at.

Normally, when a privilege is raised and a Member has breached the privilege issue, you need to be focussed on that privilege issue itself, not about whether private contracts can be enforced or not, et cetera. It is about the content of what the honourable Member, in this particular case, may have said or in this case, what the honourable Member may have heard or, indeed, interpreted.

The reason why I said, “it worked out beautifully”, is because *Mai TV* was able to give access to *Fiji TV* and *FBC TV* to the FIFA World Cup. The reason it worked out more beautifully, is because both *Fiji TV* and *FBC TV* agreed that they would not poach the sponsorship deals that *Mai TV* had already signed up for. In fact, it worked out even more beautifully because they said, “We’ll play the advertisements that you already have for your sponsors. Anything over and above that, we will pay”. That was how it worked out beautifully.

If FIFA, by imputation, have objected to it because *Mai TV* would have told the company that it got the rights from Papua New Guinea, would have then told the people in Oceania Football, which is based in New Zealand where Dr. Sahu Khan is now (I understand), and then would have gone to FIFA, they would have known about it beforehand. If they had said, “No”, we would not have seen FIFA World Cup. So, by imputation, they obviously did not object to the sharing of it, and in compliance with the existing laws.

Similarly, the Gold Coast Sevens was shown by *Fiji TV*, *FBC TV* and *Mai TV* where obviously, World Rugby did not stop it, as they stopped the Dubai Sevens. If they had stopped it, it would not have been able to show the Gold Coast Sevens as well. So, where is the misleading in all of these? They said that for the Dubai leg, we do not want it shared, so we cannot share it. Gold Coast Sevens, they did not share it, and as I have said to honourable Draunidalo in our informal discussions after the Business Committee meeting and also during morning tea, I did tell her all that. As honourable Members, I would assume that she would have taken those discussions into account honourably, before putting this matter before the Parliament. The reason why we are all called “honourable” is because we are supposed to act honourably...

HON. GOVT. MEMBERS.- Hear! Hear!

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- ... and not do things by stealth or sabotage. If honourable Draunidalo’s objective is that, all Fijians get to watch rugby, then let us have those discussions.

Madam Speaker, I did show her this folder (*holding up the folder and showing to Members*). I have emails in this file that can verify what I have said. I have a letter here that was written to World Rugby, and also for your information, Madam Speaker, we had a very fruitful discussion yesterday evening at 7 p.m., a teleconference with Dublin, where the Chairman of Fijian Holdings Limited, Mr. Iowane Naiveli; the CEO, who is also in the Board of Fiji Television, Mr. Nazhat Fareed; Mr. Tevita Gonelevu, the CEO of Fiji Television were all present, together with the Solicitor General, Director of

Communications and myself. Then they also went off and had a teleconference with *Fiji TV* on their own, and just before coming over here this morning, we also signed a letter, and we are hoping that with the fruitful discussions we had, we will reach an amicable path in terms of showing the George Sevens, as well as the other Series, and indeed, the World Cup Rugby.

Madam Speaker, the objective is, as some of the media carried out yesterday stories on the fact that people, for example, in Rakiraki were saying, “this is a good thing because we don’t get to see it”. So we like the idea of cross-carriage. Cross-carriage, Madam Speaker, is about holding the hand and in this case, holding the hand of the service providers until we get a 100 per cent coverage, and then, we open it to the market. At the moment, neither of the television companies have a 100 per cent coverage. So, the point is, Madam Speaker, regarding the actual issue of misleading, it is a “may be”, “may have”, “we have read this, so therefore, it could mean this”.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

MADAM SPEAKER.- There are no interjections, as I had already mentioned. Can we hear the honourable Member’s response first?

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Yes, Madam Speaker.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM- Madam Speaker, the point is that, as far as misleading is concerned, we have not misled and if they really want to know exactly what is happening, I have a folder with me where they can go through all the information and we had absolutely no interest in misleading or giving misinformation.

I think they seem to be obsessed with this idea that somehow or the other, the Members on this side of the Chamber are cooking up something, that we are trying to favour someone or a television company. They forget that *FBC TV* is owned by the Fijian people, it is a State-owned enterprise. They forget because they have this obsession with *FBC TV* because the CEO is my brother. Let us be frank about it. That is what it is, so they keep on going on about it, without any merit.

Madam Speaker, the reality is that, the Government has put in place a law to ensure that all Fijians get access to these very important significant events, including the proceedings of this Parliament.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- It is a bit too late now, Madam Speaker, but I will raise it though.

According to your ruling, the issue was privilege, limited to whether or not there was misrepresentation, and I had wanted to ask the honourable Member to limit his answer to that.

MADAM SPEAKER.- I will now make a ruling on this because this is a very serious matter, and will set an important precedent for our Parliament.

I will defer my decision until a future sitting date, as permitted under Standing Order 134(2) and I will report back to Parliament then.

WITHDRAWAL OF MOTION BY GOVERNMENT

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- Madam Speaker, I seek your leave to withdraw the motion. We have a motion but we are withdrawing it now.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you.

DIVESTMENT OF SHARES IN NATIONAL STRATEGIC ASSETS

HON. RATU N.T. LALABALAVU.- Madam Speaker, I beg to move:

That the Minister responsible for *iTaukei* Affairs ensure that the divestment of shares in national strategic assets like Fiji Ports, Fiji Electricity Authority and Fiji Water Authority be divested only to Fijian persons and/or companies that have been in existence in Fiji for the last 20 years, and for example, a consortium to be led by Fijian Holdings Limited.

HON. RATU S. MATANITOBUA.- Madam Speaker, I beg to second the motion.

HON. RATU N.T. LALABALAVU.- Madam Speaker, the honourable Prime Minister, *ni sa bula vinaka mai*, Members of your Cabinet, the honourable Leader of the Opposition and honourable Members of this august Chamber, first of all, I said my welcome to the honourable Prime Minister and I think, he is very, very fit and is ready to stand on the floor to defend whatever he is going to be defending. That is a good sign.

Madam Speaker, the motion that I bring before this august Chamber is one that is based on Government's policy on divestment of shares. The Budget has been passed and is behind us now. This side of Parliament have been led to believe that whatever was put in the 2013 Budget for 2014 is now also included in the 2014 proposed Budget for 2015, and this is the divestment of shares, where the Government of the day is hoping to balance its book by selling off shares. The honourable Minister of Finance went further to say it is divestment of shares.

This side of the Chamber, Madam Speaker, notes the good performance of these companies that I have mentioned from 2012 to 2014, and they have contributed possibly to the performance of the transport and infrastructure sector. They have also paid dividends to Government.

Madam Speaker, when we look at the Chinese Government's model, one can see that what previous governments, and what we are trying to do here in Fiji only reflects what is there and how the Chinese Government performs by way of resurrecting the private sector, by performing in the private sector as well through the various companies and entities that it owns.

We all understand that to get economic growth, one of the main players is the private sector and then you have policies that try and boost the private sector by way of whatever help they could be provided with by the Government of the day - whether it is by tax concessions, et cetera.

So the motion is to see how actively we can be involved locally in this policy by the Government to divest shares in Government entities that have been performing very, very well. At the same time, there should be cause for alarm as well; where do you want to sell off these shares? What companies do we want to divest our shares in; our local companies or some companies outside Fiji?

Madam Speaker, the concern that we have on this side of the Chamber is that, if we bring in companies from abroad, we will also be inviting elements of human trafficking, hard drugs, terrorists, et cetera. Why do we not look at ourselves first?

HON. OPPOSITION MEMBER.- Hear, hear!

HON. RATU N.T. LALABALAVU.- Do we have the capacity and the ability....

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Yes.

HON. RATU N.T. LALABALAVU.-to take up these shares? We, on this side of the Chamber would like to inform the Government of the day, “yes, we do have the ability and the capacity as well”.

Our local people have both intensive and extensive training to take up the leadership of these Government entities. Why do we not give them a chance to manage the reforms and take up leadership positions in these companies?

What we are trying to say here, Madam Speaker, one of our flagship companies is Fijian Holdings. It is a flag bearer for *iTaukei*, in terms of seeing that we are involved in the commercial business sector. We are involved in taking up training, so we can actively participate in proper decision making processes of how a business is run.

Madam Speaker, in saying that, we, on this side of the Chamber, have never forgotten the input of the various companies that have participated very well with Fijian Holdings. Most of these companies belong to other ethnic groups. For example, our Fijian Holdings participation with R.B. Patel, the cement factory, joint venture with Vinod Patel, and there are about more than 15 subsidiary companies that have shown to us, Madam Speaker, that we can co-exist and actively participate together, and at the same time, we can do it in Fiji.

HON. V.R.GAVOKA.- Yes.

HON. OPPOSITION MEMBERS.- Hear, hear!

HON. RATU N.T. LALABALAVU.- Madam Speaker, all we want is, whatever shares that are going to be divested be left in the hands of our people – the local people. We can even extend the ownership, or participation to the various *vanuas*, *tikinas* and *koros*, to take up shares in these companies, so as to ensure collectively as a race, we can also participate in these kinds of business ventures.

The consortium can be led by Fijian Holdings or any other that the honourable Prime Minister, through his office, the Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs can come up or maybe propose some other business ventures, where we actively activate in, Madam Speaker.

As a group, this is our best bet for native Fijians. Individually, success rate is very, very minimal. It is new to us. We are only 200 years old in the way we have seen things through modernisation and civilisation for that matter. So, we cannot ask things. Maybe, this is the best way forward, and I challenge the Government of the day if they could only lend an ear to this side of the Chamber, to this proposal as there is no better way to help in the business world than participating together with other races.

Madam Speaker, for a start, the range soon would become Crown Schedules A and B land that have been maintained by the *iTaukei* Affairs Board can be utilised as a base fund for the purchase of these shares. Again, that is something that is there, that we collectively own, all it needs is something to spur them by way of “this is the best way forward for us, to actively participate with other races in the business world”. And most importantly, in taking up the shares that is going to be divested by these Government entities.

To conclude, it is our fervent hope and prayer, given that we are not protected by league of rights, but as a race, this is something that we want to stand up and say to the Government, “take us in, give

us that opportunity the flagship company, Fijian Holdings has performed very, very well over the years.”

I also hope the honourable Members on this side that the motion, as presented, will be seen in that light, and not so much as something coming from this side of Parliament to that side.

I understand, I also have my right of reply on this particular motion. At this juncture, I would also like to recommend that should this motion be carried, that it be directed to the relevant Committee of Parliament, the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs, to further deliberate and digest on the motion that is before this Parliament.

HON. REAR ADMIRAL (Ret'd) J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- Madam Speaker, this side of Parliament also hope and pray that we think of everyone in Fiji as Fijians. I am a bit confused that on one hand, they now do not want any foreign investors, but they have been talking and harping about foreign investments and align foreign investments into this issue of freehold land.

This initial line of questioning, Madam Speaker, I know, in the early days of the Budget debate and the honourable Minister for Public Enterprises was asked of this about the divestment of shares. Now it is being directed to me, and for the life of me, I do not know why this is not being directed to me as Minister for *iTaukei* Affairs, which is about divesting shares in public enterprises, which is supposed to be asked to the Minister for Public Enterprises, but why this basic lack of understanding of how Government works? I will tell you why, Madam Speaker, because when the honourable Member talks about Fijians, he is limiting it to the *iTaukeis*. When this side of Parliament talks about Fijians, we talk about all Fijians in Fiji.

HON. GOVERNMENT MEMBERS.- Hear, hear!

HON. REAR ADMIRAL (Ret'd) J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- And that comes out clearly in the Constitution and that is why we are here. But within the last couple of days, I have been watching through that screen of how confused some people are. I have said during the days leading up to Elections, if no one comes up with any constructive ideas, to take it to the Elections, they will have none to give to you in Parliament. If they lie through their teeth to get into Parliament, they will also lie through their teeth in Parliament.

However, Madam Speaker, I think one of the reasons why he is also directing it to me is that, Members of the other side do not seem to understand that the Government works for the people of Fiji.

HON. RATU I.D. TIKOCA.- We all work for the people of Fiji. So we are here.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- That is why you are there.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Order.

HON. REAR ADMIRAL (Ret'd) J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- I find it quite ironic that the honourable Member who came up with this motion was the same one who had drafted the Cabinet Paper for the previous government to sell the land at Momi. Here, we are talking about divestment of shares. We will do it, for the interest of the nation, and we all know about Fijian Holdings. I am the Minister for *iTaukei* Affairs and I know what has been happening in Fijian Holdings, and we all know what happened in Fijian Holdings. The honourable Member of Parliament has been talking about how well the Fijian Holdings has performed in the last few years. Thanks to this side of the Chamber that, that has happened.

HON. GOVT. MEMBERS. – Hear, hear!

HON. REAR ADMIRAL (RET'D) J.V. BAINIMARAMA. – We also know how Fijian Holdings came about. We do not have to remind everyone about the different classes of shares - the Class A shares for the Elite and the Class B shares for the Provincial Councils ...

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM. – Shame, shame!

HON. REAR ADMIRAL (RET'D) J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- ...and the difference in shares. All of a sudden, foreign investors are not welcomed and foreign investors is about the economy that is around us now.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA. – That is not the point!

HON. REAR ADMIRAL (RET'D) J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- We now know the difference between one per cent and 3.8 per cent, but we have been talking about this foreign investment - the confused group of people that do not know what they really want. On one hand they want foreign investors on the other they do not want foreign investors.

HON. RATU. I.D.TIKOCA. – We want to bridge the economic disparity.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- This will bridge the economic disparity.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. REAR ADMIRAL (RET'D) J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- There is an interjection by the honourable Member who does not have a vision for anything that happened

(Laughter)

HON. REAR ADMIRAL (RET'D) J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- This side of the Chamber, Madam Speaker, has a wonderful vision, that is why we are here. The people of Fiji spoke during the Elections for that vision...

HON. GOVT. MEMBERS. – Hear, hear!

HON. REAR ADMIRAL (RET'D) J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- ... That is why they there because they do not have a vision. If you listen to the honourable Member who has been interjecting, he does not have a vision. His vision is of the *iTaukei* and the canoe.

(Laughter)

So Madam Speaker, I speak on behalf of this side of the Chamber, and say that we should get rid of this motion. Thank you.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA. – Madam Speaker, can I contribute to this motion. I think we are missing the point here the honourable Prime Minister. These are Strategic Assets and should be viewed under different lenses. All we are asking is that, put it into a Committee, let us have a look at it, they are strategic and are very critical to us and let us look at another formula for this. Sure, we understand the principles of equality and all of that. We applaud them, Madam Speaker...

HON. OPPOSITION MEMBER. – Hear, hear!

HON. V.R. GAVOKA. – ...but, strategic assets, let us just put it on the table, get a Committee to have a look at it, and we are proposing Fijian Holding as a vehicle, because this is one company that is rated amongst the “top five” in Fiji - a proud achievement, one that we are proud of.

The attempts since independence Madam Speaker, was for the *iTaukeis* to advance into commerce. A lot of it was on individual basis and failed, which is fine, it is the goal of the people. You stand up, you walk, you run, you fall and you start again, but Fijian Holdings was a success story right from day one.

Madam Speaker, I speak as a former Director of Fijian Holdings and a few other subsidiaries. It is one of the best run companies in Fiji today.

HON. OPPOSITION MEMBERS. – Hear, hear!

HON. V.R. GAVOKA. –They have about 16 or 17 subsidiaries, everyone is performing well. However, Fijian Holdings Madam Speaker, epitomises the kind of community we want in Fiji; a community of partnership. It has partnership with Punjas in Fiji TV. It has partnership with Vinod Patel, Standard Concrete and Pacific Cements. It has partnership with RB Patel on the RB chain. It is a passive investor on New World and many other companies. It was also a partnership with C.J Patel on *Fiji Sun*. So we know, Fiji Holdings knows how to pull in together a consortium and make a bid for something strategic like this.

Madam Speaker, let us forget about the rhetoric of the Elections, we are now here moving forward. Let us give it a shot, let us give it a chance. When I used to be in the Board, Madam Speaker, there used to be the dream, to become the first billion dollar Company in Fiji. I think it is about \$500 million now. We can make it, this Parliament can make this happen, not exclusively for the *iTaukeis* but combining the resources, the energy, the drive of other communities and make Fiji Holdings and these assets remain in Fijian hands. That is all we are trying to ask and I would wish the other side of the Chamber to relook at their position and accommodate something like this. Thank you Madam Speaker.

HON. REAR ADMIRAL (RET'D) J.V. BAINIMARAMA.-. – Madam Speaker, I have heard a lot from the honourable Gavoka about the previous Chair of CEO of Fiji Rugby, Director of Tourism, Director of Fijian Holdings. I hope in the next four years after the Elections, he would not speaking from outside, as a former Parliamentarian...

(Laughter)

We are not going to get rid of Fijian Holdings from the list of interested players. We will take everyone on board, they will have to bid like everyone else. Thank you.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA. – A point of order. The honourable Prime Minister has had his share of time. He is not entitled to two bites of the cherry.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM. – Thank you Madam Speaker. Just picking up on the point as the honourable Prime Minister said. In the Budget announcement, we said the divestment of Government shares, we never said it will all go to foreigners, we never said that. We never said that there will be one particular company that will be given a preference.

The point is, Madam Speaker, if the other side as usual, have come into this Chamber, half baked. They have not done their research. If they found out some of the companies where we have divested shares for example, Ports Terminal Limited which I had specifically mentioned in the Budget Address, there were expressions of interests call as international bidding, the same thing with Airports Fiji Limited (AFL) on international bidding. How do they know that AFL, at the moment, the negotiations were carried out is not with the Fijian in the country of Fiji, as in the Fijian sense? How do they know that? There are assuming that. They are assuming it will all go to foreigners because they have very limited view in terms of how the commercial and financial roles function. So this motion is built all upon again, on a maybe, on could be, and if assumptions, that is all it is built upon. However, let me, Madam Speaker, go to the crux of the rationale behind this motion in what it will do to the economy, if you are going to get jaded bidding for the divestment of Government shares. You cannot give preference to a particular company, because it distorts the market.

(Chorus of interjections)

If someone is bidding in an open transparent basis, they would not bring such a motion to say “give preference to a particular company.” They would have not brought this motion. Yes, they should bring about a motion if the bidding is secured and the bidding is not even started yet. I would love the other side to come and tell us “well actually in the tender process or in the bidding process is being secured.”

Madam Speaker, let me just remind the other side, as to what was the state of affairs of State-owned enterprises previously. Fiji Hardwood Corporation Limited, for example, Madam Speaker, did not make any substantial money until the Bainimarama-Government came in.

(Chorus of interjections)

It had a dead stock in excess of \$15 to \$19 million secured and unsecured creditors, guaranteed by the Government. It had the largest planted mahogany plantation in the world. What happened? How come it did not make money? They talked about Fiji Electricity Authority (FEA) making money. Yes, FEA made money about \$63 million last year, year before last. Have they thought about when was the last time the previous Government did rehabilitation of the Monasavu Dam? When was the last time they built redundancies in FEA? You simply do not put up a building and not look after it? You need money to look after your assets. If the price of fuel goes up tomorrow and if the Bainimarama-Government had not invested in Nadarivatu (the hydro scheme), we would have been more dependent on diesel fuel. What does that mean? It drives the price of electricity generation. It means that it affects the bottom line.

Madam Speaker, they do not understand commerce, they do not understand finance.

(Chorus of interjections)

Where will it go, because they think one year later on, “My God, \$60 million”. They do not think about the next year. If they had thought about that, the SDL Government would have been very successful, and they would have been on this side, we would have been on the other side of the Chamber.

HON. OPPOSITION MEMBERS.- In the next four years.

HON. A, SAYED-KHAIYUM.- That is the difference, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, again, there are many contradictions, as have been pointed out by the honourable Prime Minister and also by honourable Members in the course of our debate on the Budget. In order to create a modern economy in Fiji, we must have a transparent divestment process, and we must get the best people. It is not just a question of capital it is also the question of human resource capacity. FHL is a good investor company, but it does not necessarily have the capacity within its own company to know about electricity generation, nor have the capacity to know how to run air traffic management systems in an airport.

Madam Speaker, the point is that, the divestments opportunity is available to everyone. You have people who bid in for companies and State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) as an investor company or as a management group or as a company that may have both, so it is open.

Madam Speaker, the motion is premised on the wrong foundation, and I speak against the motion.

HON. RATU N.T. LALABALAVU.- Madam Speaker, first of all, I must say that given the comments made by the honourable Prime Minister, and we fully understand that he had just returned from a long journey...

(Laughter)

... he just got in...

HON. REAR ADMIRAL (Ret'd) J.V. Bainimarama.- While you were out!

(Laughter)

HON. RATU N.T. LALABALAVU.- ... so he may be suffering from jetlag or something. He is confused, totally confused ...

HON. OPPOSITION MEMBERS.- Yes! Yes!

HON. RATU N.T. LALABALAVU.- ... as to the motion that is before Parliament, and the reply that came from him.

HON. GOVT. MEMBER.- *O iko vakarau tiko!*

HON. RATU N.T. LALABALAVU.- Why is it being addressed to the honourable Minister for *iTaukei* Affairs? It is simply because he answered that later on in his reply that it is to do with Fijian participation, *iTaukei* participation and the participation of FHL, as he has rightly said, that 60 per cent of the shares are owned by Government. That is why it is being addressed to the honourable Prime Minister.

HON. GOVT. MEMBER.- That's exactly why you should not be here!

HON. RATU N.T. LALABALAVU.- Now, his Attorney-General went on to say, "Why are they asking questions about the tendering, the divestment of shares, the bidding, et cetera?" No, I never touched on that! All I was saying and all that we were reacting to, Madam Speaker is what the honourable and learned Attorney General said in this Chambers in replying to questions that were raised during the Budget debate. He said, "We are divesting shares, we have not sold the shares". It is still there. No wonder it just appeared twice in the Budget paper.

(Laughter)

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- We're getting first price!

HON. RATU N.T. LALABALAVU.- Madam Speaker, the gist of the motion is that, we are not going to be sitting here idly waiting for what is going to be happening out there. We are not privy to all the tendering processes, et cetera, it is the Government's duty. All we are trying to raise as a matter of concern is that, this is another better way forward where Fijians will actively participate

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- All Fijians.

HON. RATU N.T. LALABALAVU.- ... in this kind of business venture whether they be commercial or whatever. That is all we are trying to push here, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- I will now ask Parliament to vote on honourable Ratu Lalabalavu's motion.

Question put.

Votes Cast:		
Ayes	-	16
Noes	-	31
Abstain	-	3

Motion lost.

Honourable Members, we will now break for tea and we will resume again at 11.30 a.m.

The Parliament adjourned at 10.57 a.m.

The Parliament resumed at 11.35 a.m.

**MOTION FOR A BILL TO REPEAL THE TELEVISION
(CROSS CARRIAGE OF DESIGNATED EVENTS) DECREE NO. 19 OF 2014**

HON. ROKO T.T.S. DRAUNIDALO.- Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order under Standing Order 34(2)(c). I wish to ask Parliament for leave that the business of Parliament today be transacted in a different order, so as to allow me to bring an urgent motion that we had given notice of to your office. However, we understand that it arrived a few minutes late before I got here, and I am asking for leave so that the motion could come by way of Standing Order 46(1) after Standing Order 34(2)(c).

Madam Speaker, before I request Parliament for leave, I probably have to lay out the grounds for seeking leave before Parliament votes on whether or not to grant me leave. I will refer to the letter that I wrote to the Secretary-General this morning, with regards to this urgent motion. I will start at paragraph two, the matter relates to ministerial responsibility, as it then did in the next paragraph, and I will quote from the paragraph:

“It has become apparent in the last few days that the people of Fiji will not be watching the George Sevens Tournament on the national free-to-air television or paid television this weekend, as World Rugby will not provide their content up to this moment. That is their stand, I believe, unless the honourable Minister has something else to say. The World Rugby will not provide their contents to the exclusive licensee, Fiji Television.”

MADAM SPEAKER.- Honourable Member, I will request that I speak on this first. We will not allow you to read because everyone has a copy, but we will address it.

Honourable Members, on that note, as we have passed the time for Motions on the Order Paper, we must ask leave of Parliament under Standing Order 34(2)(c) and also Standing Order 46(1), to see if Parliament allows this motion to be debated.

We need to adjourn at 12.30 p.m., therefore, I will allow only one speaker from each side of the Chamber. May I remind you, honourable Members that your contributions should be on whether this motion should be discussed and not on content of the submission.

We already have the motion paper with us and I will now invite just two speakers, one each from both sides of the Chamber before we vote on the motion. Honourable Members, only five minutes is allowed on that motion.

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- Madam Speaker, thank you for allowing me the opportunity. It continues to amaze me, Madam Speaker, that we have discussed this matter in so many ways, I think five times since last Friday. We are definitely not going to support it. We already have the business for today and there is unnecessary interjection on the part of the Member and we have already discussed this matter in detail.

HON. ROKO T.T.S. DRAUNIDALO.- Madam Speaker, I believe there was another motion that was moved earlier in the week to repeal the Decree. This is a different motion because the honourable Minister responsible said that we need to get our “ducks in line”, so to speak. Now, the motion is that the Parliament requests you, the Speaker, to adjourn to a day next week so that a Bill may be introduced to repeal the Decree. The whole purpose is to allow Fiji to watch the Sevens. That is all, Madam Speaker.

HON OPPOSITION MEMBERS.-Hear, hear.

HON. ROKO T.T.S. DRAUNIDALO.- But I note from the back page of the *Fiji Times* today and as confirmed by the honourable Minister in Chambers this morning, that there are ongoing negotiations. If they wish to amend the motion to suspend certain parts of the Decree, they can do it then, just for the weekend to allow the George Sevens. It is up to the Government and then continue with negotiations. But it is up to the Government whether they want the people of Fiji to watch the Sevens or not.

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- We want to watch it too, everyone in the country.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Say “yes” for once.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, the motion is very clear and as I had said before, we will vote on this motion and I am now opening the vote.

HON. ROKO T.T.S. DRAUNIDALO.- Is it the motion to adjourn to next week, Madam Speaker?

MADAM SPEAKER.- The motion is whether to discuss this motion, not the content.

Question put.

Votes Cast:

Ayes	-	16
Noes	-	31
Not Voted	-	3

Motion lost.

There will be no further discussions on that motion.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

Weekly Adjournment Motions

MADAM SPEAKER.- Before I call on the Leader of Government in Parliament, I will give a brief explanation to honourable Members of how the weekly adjournment motion works, as set out under Standing Order 35. First, the Leader of Government in Parliament will move that the Parliament adjourns to next year. Then, there will be an opportunity for three Members to raise one issue each, and the responsible Ministers to respond. Members have already given notice of those matters in accordance with the Standing Order.

Honourable Members, I will just need to go back to what I said earlier, and carry on from there. I will call the first honourable Member to raise her matter, and no seconder is required. I am merely describing what is going to take place in the next two minutes or so, with respect to the Adjournment Motions.

The honourable Member will then speak for 10 minutes – there are three members already on our list. Then I will call the relevant Minister to respond, he will have 10 minutes to respond and no other Members may speak on the matter.

Then, we will move on to the second matter and then the third. At the end of the Minister's response to the third matter, the Parliament will vote. The vote is not on the weekly adjournment matter as raised by the honourable Members, instead we will vote on the motion moved by the Leader of Government in Parliament that is, that the Parliament is adjourned to 9.30am on Monday, 9th February, 2015.

We will now begin the Weekly Adjournment Motion, and I will call on the honourable Leader of Government in Parliament.

ADJOURNMENT

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

That Parliament be adjourned until 9.30 a.m. on Monday 9th February, 2015.

HON. CDR S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- Madam Speaker, I beg to second the motion.

Rural Electrification Scheme

HON. J. DULAKIVERATA.- Madam Speaker, I beg to move:

That in view of the importance of having electricity available to all communities, this Chamber notes with concern that the area from Dreketi Road on the King Roads to Naiyala Secondary School in Tailevu and Navuniivi Village in Nakorotubu, Ra have not had their electricity connected, despite community contributions being paid. This Parliament therefore, calls on the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport to inform this Chamber when electricity will be connected.

I would like to speak briefly on this motion. This electrification, Madam Speaker, were promised to these people during the Elections campaign, unfortunately, these have not been done. They were promised that these would be done before the Elections, now the Elections is over and they are still waiting for this electrification to come through.

Madam Speaker, on the first scheme, the people of Vuniivi Village in Nakorotubu, Ra have already paid their deposits and houses had been wired. Unfortunately, the electricity has not been connected to the village. Christmas is around the corner and it will still be a dark Christmas for them.

Madam Speaker, you can fool some people sometimes but you cannot fool them all the time.

(Chorus of interjections)

Madam Speaker, if something that they have learnt through this experience, it has made them wiser. Come the next Elections, they know what to do.

The second promise Madam Speaker is the electrification of all the villages, from John Mar's Shop in Waimicia ...

HON. MEMBER.- Who is John Mar?

HON. J. DULAKIVERATA.- You will know later.

... to Naiyala Secondary School in Wainibuka, Natokalau Village.

I will touch on the first part, Madam Speaker. This is up to Navesau Secondary School. This is an electrification scheme, and I must first of all thank the honourable Minister for Infrastructure and Transport because he had touched briefly on these issues in one of the questions during the week. However, I would like to give more details.

This scheme involves 473 household and the total electrification fees for the wiring of the home is \$106,073 or \$250 per household. The last payment was done on 2/4/2014 because they were promised during the Elections campaign that the electricity will be connected before the Elections is over. Now the Elections is over, Madam Speaker, they are still without electricity.

Madam Speaker, all these people voted for the FijiFirst Party. Again, Madam Speaker, if something they have learnt through this experience, it has made them wiser. Come the next Elections, they know who to vote for.

Madam Speaker, for ease of reference, maybe the honourable Minister will take note, the FEA Scheme reference number is FRA/02/205 and the contact person is Jo Savua whose mobile number is 9830687.

For Navuniivi Village in Nakorotubu, Ra, you can contact the *Turaga ni Koro*, Mr. Sisa Macedru on Mobile Number 9656728.

Madam Speaker, the third scheme is Nayavu Village in Wainibuka, Tailevu. Again, they were promised electricity that would be connected to their village before the Elections. They were told to contribute \$100 per household. Later, it was increased to \$200, then again increased to \$240, but last week, they have been told to pay \$320.10. Madam Speaker, the delay in the project is not their fault, if the prices had risen because of the delay, it is not their fault, but the Authority's. I think they can reconsider that.

The fourth project, Madam Speaker, is for the *Tikina* of Nasautoka, Naloto and the *Tikina* of Wailevu in Wainibuka.

Madam Speaker, the people on the ground informed me that they were told that they will be the last one in Fiji to receive electricity. I just want the honourable Minister responsible to assure this Parliament that this is not going to happen.

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA. – Madam Speaker, I rise to make my contribution to the motion that has been raised in this Chamber by the honourable Member, with regards to the electrification project that is happening between the areas of Naiyala Secondary School, all the way down to Waimicia, and the ensuing areas including the issue with regards to Navuniivi, which is the additional area of concern that has been raised by way of motion before the Chamber.

Madam Speaker, I find it very, very surprising that the honourable Member is using this particular project which has been an initiative of the Bainimarama-Government.

HON. GOVT. MEMBERS. – Hear, hear!

I think, Fiji should know, particularly the people of Northland, that it was the Prime Minister that gave \$28 million to provide electrification from Naiyala, all the way to Waimicia and it is unfortunate that the honourable Member is from the wrong side of Northland. Obviously, that is why he would not know.

(Laughter)

MADAM SPEAKER. – Order, order!

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA. – Madam Speaker, I would like to invite the honourable Member, immediately after this, to accompany me there. He will see that this electrification project is going to be the best Christmas present for the people of Wainibuka, and we are giving it to them

(Laughter)

I am reliably sure why the people of Wainibuka, particularly down to Dawasamu have been neglected for so long. Madam Speaker, we brought them the light.

HON. GOVT. MEMBERS. – Hear, hear!

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.– I am sure he has given us some contacts of very, very controversial people...

(Laughter)

...who have made a sacrilege of one of our parliaments as being contact people to look after the people.

HON. J. DULAKIVERATA.- He is not here, do not talk about him.

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- You made references to him. You told me about him.

Nevertheless Madam Speaker, I want to ensure this honourable Parliament, particularly the people between Wailotua and Nayavu that the team is there. You can see them on the ground, they are working very hard and their intent is to give you light to the front of your doorstep before the new year comes.

HON. OPPOSITION MEMBERS. – Before Christmas!

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA. –...Absolutely! That includes Christmas.

(Laughter)

And it is a Christmas present, Madam Speaker.

Now, if I would just like to add a little bit further with regards to electrification that is coming down from the other end, that it is taking some time to put together, only because we need to purchase transformers that will boost the power, to allow it to come all the way down to Nayavu. So, in between now and then, from Wailotua all the way to Nayavu, the lines will be energised by Christmas, but unfortunately, it is Nasautoka who has not paid. For some reason, I am not really sure that this particular *tikina* of Nasautoka has not paid.

HON. OPPOSITION MEMBER. – Pay for it!

Maybe the honourable Member, because you got rewarded from them, perhaps, you should pay for their contribution.

(Laughter)

Madam Speaker, as you know, the community has to give five per cent, Government is giving 95 per cent. Government has given the total share of 95 per cent on all of these projects.

The communities in Wailotua and Nayavu will get the power, and a few other communities. In fact I will just read you the names of those that will get the electrification:

- a) Natokalau;
- b) Waivou Settlement;
- c) Wailotua Village No. 1;
- d) Namasi Settlement;
- e) Wailotua District School;
- f) Wailotua Village No. 2;
- g) Vunivesi Settlement;
- h) Nakoronitovi Settlement;
- i) Nayavu Village;
- j) Viti Levu Settlement; and
- k) Nabuikau Settlement

Those are the communities that will be receiving power just before Christmas.

Unfortunately, not all of them are going to get it because everyone, as the honourable Member knows as well as Parliament, that we need to have our own contributions to this as part of the arrangement, that is with everyone else and once they do that do that, obviously we will connect them to the grid. However, from Rakiraki down to Nayavu in 2016, by September everyone is going to get power, including Navuniivi because it is dependent upon that grid that is coming down from Rakiraki, and then we will take it down to the coast. We have noted the numbers that have been given. Let me reassure you again Madam Speaker, the Parliament and the people, as I have already said earlier, this is the commitment of the Bainimarama-Government.

HON. GOVT. MEMBERS. – Hear, hear!

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA. – It has been in the forefront of our services, we want to bring lights to the people as well as power. Obviously with light comes knowledge and with knowledge comes knowledgeable people and it is good for our nation. Thank you.

Non-functional Jetty - Lomaloma, Vanua Balavu

HON. S.V. RADRDRO.- Madam Speaker, I beg to move:

That this Chamber notes with concern the problem with the non-functional jetty in Lomaloma, Vanua Balavu. This Parliament therefore, calls on the honourable Minister for Infrastructure and Transport to explain when the Lomaloma Jetty will be repaired.

Madam Speaker, by way of introduction, the Lomaloma Jetty, which is in Vanua Balavu hosts all the Government stations in the Northern Lau, and that includes the Junior Secondary School, Adi Maopa; the Lomaloma Sub-divisional Hospital; the Post Office; the Ministry of Agriculture ;and all other Government Departments Madam Speaker. The jetty is a source of livelihood to the people, not only to the locals, but also to the Government officials who live there, to ensure that Government programmes are implemented effectively.

The Lomaloma Jetty is in Vanuabalavu, with about 18 to 20 villages in there and it caters for the surrounding islands like Avea, Cikobia, Mago and Tuvuca.

Madam Speaker, right now, the Jetty or the wharf in Lomaloma is not in operation and it has been like that for almost four months now. It had been highlighted already in the newspaper, and I believe it is also in the *Fiji Times* today. The great concern is that, it also hosts the hospital and the Junior Secondary School. Also, during this time of the year, this is the only opportunity where children can go back to the islands, as well as nearby islands to visit their parents during school break.

Right now, the jetty as highlighted in the dailies this morning that it is almost broken half so that being the case, we will go back to the former days (people from the islands can attest to this) where this is very dangerous when there is no jetty. For those of us in this Chamber who are from the islands, the jetty or wharf is a source of livelihood. It is a sign of life because it brings in cargo, people and also take us to mainland Viti Levu where most the island children go to school and also for medical evacuation. Also, for Government Ministries and Departments officials who visit the islands for Government initiatives and programmes that needed to be implemented with the people.

Madam Speaker, with the jetty that is not functioning right now, we go back to the very early days, even before (I think) some of us honourable Members were even born, in what we call, "*Na waqa sa na kele ciri ga*". This means that the vessel may be, if we are here on mainland of Lomaloma in Vanua Balavu where the jetty is, the vessel will have to anchor (I believe) right there in Botanical Gardens. In that way, the only way to mainland is by small boats.

Madam Speaker, for those of us who come from the islands, it is a dangerous trip. If we are blessed with good weather, then it is good, but if it is not, then by the time you reach the mainland, you are wet from your hair right down to your toes. It is not only you who will be soaked wet but also the goods, so for perishable items, particularly hospital supplies and school supplies, by the time they reach the mainland, they are almost beyond use.

The impact of the damaged Lomaloma Jetty to the people of Vanua Balavu and the surrounding islands right now is enormous, not only to the local people but also the Government Ministries and Departments because all Government Ministries in the Northern Lau are stationed in Vanua Balavu. The jetty has been non-functional for almost four months now.

Madam Speaker, during this time of the year, it is the only opportune time for children who come from that side of Fiji to go back and visit their parents for mentoring which they need, before they come and stay with relatives in Suva. So, the implication of the non-functional jetty is huge. This is in terms of the economic life in Vanua Balavu, in terms of the store supplies, when there is no boat, there is no light because there is no kerosene. When there is no boat, there is no food. However, we are blessed with the sea and vegetation that we have but the implications of the jetty not being functional is great to the people and also to all of us. I believe it is also for the Government that without the jetty, their targets for next year, will be very problematic in terms of its implementation.

Therefore, Madam Speaker, I request this august Chamber to quickly look at the Lomaloma Jetty. If it is not repaired, maybe we need a new one because words on the ground that it may be beyond repair for now. So, I am asking the honourable Minister responsible, “What is the plan of action in the very near future?” The reason is because it not only affects the people, but it also affects Government’s implementation of its programmes. So, if the Government is serious about turning its promises into deeds, then it needs to seriously look at the repair for the Lomaloma Jetty very, very soon. I also note that it is highlighted in the *Dailies* today, and it is almost four months now that the jetty has been out of order.

I also note in today’s *Dailies* that they are highlighting again because those of us who come from the islands, particularly the small islands can attest to this and may be the honourable Member from Rotuma, our only way of livelihood in the islands is the boat and the jetty. There are people out there who are waiting to go to the islands for Christmas and it is an opportune time, I am requesting the Government and the honourable Minister that they speedily and seriously look into this issue, otherwise it will affect the hospital services, education and the movement of people on the whole.

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- Madam Speaker, I thank the honourable Member for her motion regarding the Lomaloma Jetty.

Madam Speaker, right now, the company that is repairing the jetty for temporary solution is working on it. Obviously, we are chasing a “before Christmas” deadline because that is when the people would like to come. I think that may be sooner, from the information that I am receiving from them now.

HON. A.T. VADEI.- *Vinaka!*

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- Nevertheless, Madam Speaker, I want to assure the honourable Member that we are doing something about this problem. Even now, we have people that are doing it. We have the interest of the people, particularly those from Vanua Balavu, who use the Jetty and everyone else who depend on it, that we will try to fix it in no time, to allow the vessels to berth on the wharf.

We also have a plan that after this temporary solution to actually build a much better structure. As you know, Madam Speaker, not every island in the Lau Group, so as in Kadavu, as well as in the Lomaiviti Group, have jetties. So, it is quite fortunate for Lomaloma to have one because I think other islanders also struggle in that light as well. People from Yasawa, I also believe, they are struggling. *Era vodo ena velovelo* (they get into punts) and then they go on to the shore. I am glad I am from mainland Viti Levu, I do not have to go through that but I have already experienced it. It is not a very good experience, obviously we all want jetties but the point that I am trying to make here is that, this is Government’s commitment. The problem has arisen, we have responded to it effectively as much as we can. A team is there in Lomaloma and it is going to be a temporary solution in no time, and that will allow them to enjoy Christmas. We have a good plan that will bring that up so that when the vessels berth on these structures, they do not break them. So we are going to try and make all the best engineering solutions to take care of that.

We are doing many other things as well, Madam Speaker, particularly for the comfort of our people who are travelling to the islands, particularly from the Marine Jetty and GSS Jetty, to try and give our people extra comfort when waiting for the boat and make sure that they do not get wet from head to toe. So, we are spending a significant amount of resources to build these capacities within the ports here in Suva, particularly for the benefit of our Fijians from the islands.

Madam Speaker, yes, we have a broken Jetty, it is not the end of the world. We have a team that will bring it up in no time. The island of Vanua Balavu will have its people travel there for Christmas and we will be using this temporary jetty. We will have a new jetty for you, honourable Member in no time

Tragedy at Lautoka Hospital

HON. P. SINGH.- Madam Speaker, I beg to move:

That this Parliament seeks to ascertain the details of the medical tragedy that occurred at Lautoka Hospital last weekend where the delivery of a newborn baby was botched resulting to its death. This Parliament therefore, calls upon the honourable Minister for Health to institute an mediate and urgent inquiry into the matter.

Madam Speaker, I rise to move an adjournment motion which deals with a medical tragedy, where a baby died a few minutes after delivery. In the process of delivering the baby, the medical personnel broke her shoulder. This is yet another case of sad state of affairs in our public health system.

I will very briefly go through the incident. It involves a young couple from Yalalevu in Ba, who were looking forward to the birth of their first child. Jasvir and Pritika Lal's joy of parenthood was brutally cut short by what appeared to be negligence on the part of medical personnel.

Madam Speaker, this incident happened on 30th and 31st November, 2014. Mrs. Lal was routinely checked at the Ba Mission Hospital, where the progress of the baby was monitored through her pregnancy. Mr. Lal informed me that on Saturday 30th November, as usual in the delivery of babies, the baby water bag burst and Mrs Lal was rushed to the Ba Mission Hospital. She was seen by the nurse on duty who observed that she was discharging fluid, normally associated with the bursting of water bag but she did not have labour pains. She was advised during her routine check-up that night that the baby was healthy and could possibly be weighing more than four kilograms.

Mr. Lal then requested that his wife be transferred to Lautoka Hospital and this was done at 2.00 a.m. She was put on Intravenous Fluid (IV) and transferred to Lautoka Hospital in an ambulance. The nurse on duty at the Lautoka Hospital checked Mrs. Lal and advised her that she will remain on IV and the delivery will be done once she starts experiencing labour pains.

Mrs Lal said that she informed the staff on duty on Sunday morning to look at the folder and furthermore, Mr. Lal decided to transfer his wife to Lautoka Hospital only because the caesarean procedure was not being performed at the Ba Mission Hospital. They advised them to perform this procedure.

Madam Speaker, around 4.00 p.m. on Sunday, Mrs. Lal was transferred to the Labour Ward, where she started getting pains and medical personnel on duty said that they would assist in delivering the baby and the pain intensified. Madam Speaker, this process went on for about four hours and Mr. Lal saw his wife was struggling to give birth through normal delivery. She then requested that they should perform caesarean procedure and that her husband would sign the necessary documents, and of course, Mr. Lal concurred with her. However, the doctor on duty insisted that she gives birth normally, through normal delivery.

Madam Speaker, Mr. Lal informed me that neither the doctor on duty nor the medical personnel checked his wife's folder to look at the clinical notes, which should have been a healthy baby, over four kilogrammes, thereby necessitating a caesarean procedure.

Madam Speaker, no one should undergo the ordeal that Mrs Lal was subjected to due to the negligence of the doctor on duty and the medical personnel. They gave her injection, held her shoulder and forcefully pulled the baby legs up to her shoulders so that she keeps pushing. But clearly, she was medically unable to do so. When they saw that the head of the baby was coming out, they pressed Mrs Lal's stomach to push out the baby. When she became helpless and told them that she could not push anymore, the head of the baby was pulled hard, and in the process the baby's shoulder was broken. In the process, Mrs Lal also suffered a bump on her head against the bed, leaving a lump on her head.

Madam Speaker, the baby died seconds later, after her shoulder was broken. Mr. Lal said the baby started to suffocate and that was where the emergency alarm was rung and Mr. Lal was asked to remain outside.

This incident is neither the first of the alleged negligence at the Lautoka Hospital, nor is it the first in any public hospital. I know cases of deaths, near deaths, bungle surgeries, surgical operations, wrong diagnosis and prognosis.

Madam Speaker, this sad case goes to the heart of the rot in the delivery of public health service in a timely and safe manner. This requires a full scale investigation. I said in my maiden speech that the state of our health services is deteriorating and sadly, I have been proven correct. The joy of parenthood for Jasvir and Pritika Lal has turned into tragedy. No stones must be left unturned to get to the bottom of this matter so that the tragic episode is not repeated in the future.

Madam Speaker, the medical personnel and Mrs. Lal were correct that this was a healthy and big baby. The baby weighed around 4.8 kilogrammes and this delivery could have only happened safely through a caesarean procedure.

Madam Speaker, this is what the baby look like (shown to Members). The death certificate listed it as "still birth", as the cause of death. My layman's understanding of still birth is that the baby is dead in the uterus. This is absolutely not correct in this case. The death certificate goes on to say "due to shoulder dystocia" which means "distorted shoulder caused by difficult birth typically caused by a large or awkwardly positioned foetus by smallness of the maternal pelvis or by failure of the uterus and the cervix to contract and expand normally." This is also wrong or distortion of facts.

The parents have requested for a full medical report, but this has not been given by the authority. Madam Speaker, this week, Mr. Lal met the doctor at the Lautoka Hospital and he had asked him what has happened since then. An emotional Mr. Lal had exchange of words with them and the doctors failed to provide him with any answers. Apart from telling him they thought the baby's weight was 3.2 kilogramme and this was guess work, as no scan was done. They also told him that he would not get a report for some time. Mrs. Lal has not been provided with after care, all that the doctor told her was to go to the Ba Mission Hospital after six weeks. This process of review happens in normal circumstances, not in an emergency like this.

I beg to lay on the table the death certificate and pictures of the baby, as evidence of what I just outlines. I urge the honourable Minister for Health who I am told, has been informed of this incident by Mr. Lal, to institute a full scale investigation into the matter.

(Baby's death certificate and pictures tendered to the Secretary-General)

MR. J. USAMATE (Minister for Health and Medical Services).- Madam Speaker, I rise to address the motion moved by the honourable Prem Singh. I think there can be nothing more tragic in life in the loss of a newly born baby. I think everyone in this Chamber, as parents, as grandfathers

and grandmothers, when something like this happens, we feel it dearly. I for one, as the Minister for Health, I feel it every time when someone raises a complaint or something is wrong in the system. Ultimately, Section 38 of the Constitution states we have the right to life and the right for everyone in this country to expect the progressive realisation of their right to life. So it is something that is of great concern to all of us.

The Government and I personally, we have a lot of concerns for cases like this and I would like tell the people of Fiji who are listening to know that we share in their distress at the time of their sorrow and at the time of their sad loss that they face. This is something that has happened, some cases like this, obviously are preventable, others they will know that life is something that you cannot always control. Sometimes, things do go wrong, if things do go wrong, then they need to be addressed.

I think over the past week or so since we have to learn of this particular incident, Madam Speaker, there has been an exchange of emails and correspondences between myself and the father of this unfortunate child that has passed away and right at the outset, I have instructed the staff at the Lautoka Hospital to carry out an initial investigation into this matter. That has been undertaken by the staff at the Lautoka Hospital to carry out an initial investigation into this matter. That has been undertaken by the staff within the hospital.

Since yesterday, however, we have decreed that there will be an investigation into this matter, to carry out also by third parties, from medical profession outside of the normal government system, to be able to look into this matter and to understand why it happened, to see if there is anything that went wrong, if there are instances of negligence, then those instances will have to be dealt with.

So the long and short of it, Madam Speaker, at this moment, we have decreed that that investigation be undertaken so that the full truth, or the root cause of the problem needs to be dealt with. At the same time, from the information that has been given to me, in cases like this, one of the things that the Bainimarama Government has made a lot of emphasis on, is the importance of looking after expectant mothers and making sure that they are looked after when they are about to give birth.

There is always a necessity to try to identify upfront babies who are potential high risks, and as a result of this, there have been some proactive measures put in place, such as the establishment of the Mother Safe Hospital initiative, that is something that has been worked together with the Fiji Health sector support programme, which includes establishing standards by which all the hospitals that we have in Fiji should be using when they are dealing with the delivery of babies.

That is a programme that is being undertaken in the recent past, and also in the hospitals. We have established emergency neo-natal and obstetric care training for everyone that is involved in the delivery of babies. This includes obstetric doctors and nurses. That is being an ongoing programme to try to identify or prevent problems from happening.

Madam Speaker, where it is found that there are babies at risk, one of the programmes that is being put in place is to try to get these expectant mothers to come to the major hospitals, where we have better facilities. That is why you will recall the honourable Prime Minister in 2013 had decreed that all mothers who have to be referred to the major hospitals in Suva, their airfares will be paid for by Government. That is something that has been in place since 2013.

One of the things that we tried to do, is to encourage mothers to come to the health centres and clinics, so that high risk babies can be identified, that is the reason for the food voucher programme that was put in place. If they come for their checks, then the food vouchers will be provided to them as an incentive for them to come and get their checks done.

In looking at this particular matter, while I am not a medical expert, I have listened to the explanation given by the honourable Singh, the reason that has been given to me for the death that did take place is the medical condition is “dystocia”, where the baby’s shoulder gets stuck on the bony part of the baby passage after the baby’s head was delivered.

I have been told that this is a rare event, it occurs in about one in a thousand deliveries, and it is a complication that neither can it be predicted, nor prevented.

I have also been informed that in the process of dealing with this, the clinical service network for the obstetrics, have conducted their drills on this. It has been carried out four times this year, but at the end of the day, the investigation that needs to be undertaken will need to see whether the processes, including the drills that are already in place are adequate, whether people were at fault or not, and that process will be undertaken, Madam Speaker.

I would just like to add that we are in the health system and already, there is a Complaint Management System and a programme that every time there is a mortality in the hospital, they have a process to follow, where all those involved will discuss the issue, so that they can learn from them and the knowledge can be passed on. That particular exercise has been undertaken.

Madam Speaker, within the health fraternity also, we now have the Risk Managers placed in the various hospitals, in the major divisions, one of their important roles is to organise a team of senior doctors, nurses and the medical superintendents, who will look at problems like this.

It is unfortunate that this has happened. I think what we will have to do is to investigate, to get to the root cause of the matter, but at the same time, we must learn from instances like this.

The team will undertake a root cause analysis which will come up with recommendations on how to address this in the future.

As the honourable Singh has pointed out, there has been a meeting also with the family and I also asked the Medical Superintendent to go down to Ba, to meet the parents, to try to explain the situation, but at the end of the day, the investigation will be carried out, Madam Speaker, and at the end of that, we hope to be able to identify exactly what happened and if need be, appropriate action will need to be taken. We hope that in the future, that those who do come to our hospitals, as much as possible, will not face the same problems.

Over the past few years, I have noticed from the Strategic Plans of my Ministry that they have a target, to be able to reduce infant mortalities, down to about 5.5 for every thousand live births. That is a target that will eventually be moving towards and hopefully, over the next two years or this year, we will see a massive investment put into the health sector. The massive increase in the budget, together with the reforms, we hope that we will be able to minimise the occurrences of this kind of problem.

MADAM SPEAKER.- We will now vote on the motion to adjourn Parliament. I remind honourable Members that this vote is to decide whether to adjourn Parliament to Monday, 9th February, 2015.

Question put.

Motion agreed to.

Before I formally adjourn Parliament, I would like to take this opportunity to inform honourable Members that I will be writing to all honourable Members next week, to confirm the membership of the remaining Standing Committees and Select Committees.

As per Standing Order 115(4), the names of honourable Members who have been appointed to Committees shall then be published in the Minutes of Proceedings when Parliament sits in February.

I would also like to wish all honourable Members a very Merry Christmas and to thank all of you for the important role you have played over the last few months in making this Parliament function. I am sure you will agree with me that we have had robust but respectful debates, and this has ensured that the Parliament is now firmly established as our forum for national debate.

The Parliament is now adjourned.

The Parliament adjourned at 12.32 p.m.