

FRIDAY, 20TH MARCH, 2015

The Parliament resumed at 9.30 a.m. pursuant to adjournment.

MADAM SPEAKER took the Chair and read the Prayer.

PRESENT

All Members were present, except the honourable Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation; the honourable Minister for Foreign Affairs; the honourable Attorney-General & Minister for Justice, Minister of Finance, Public Enterprises, Public Service and Communications; the honourable Assistant Minister for Youth and Sports; the honourable Assistant Minister for Agriculture, Rural and Maritime Development and National Disaster Management; and the honourable Dr. Biman C. Prasad.

POINT OF ORDER

HON. RO T.V. KEPA.- Point of Order, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Point of Order!

HON. RO T.V. KEPA.- In regards to Standing Order 7, Madam Speaker, just before the "Confirmation of Minutes" Standing Order 7 says about the 'Swearing-in of Members'. I seek clarification, Madam Speaker, in regard to the swearing-in of our new Member, as was communicated to us from the Chair on Monday, 16th March, 2015, that the Fiji Electoral Commission had stated that the new Member would be Mikaele Leawere and his voters, of which they are over 2000, some of them have asked us as to when he is going to be sworn-in, as was communicated from the Chair that the Electoral Commission has stated that he is the Member that is in the ranking order? We seek clarification from the Chair as to when that can be done as we would like him to come in and be sworn-in as it is now two weeks since that seat has been vacant. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you, honourable Leader of the Opposition for that Point of Order. I had informed the House in my communication on Monday, 16th March, 2015 that the Fiji Electoral Commission had advised that Mr. Mikaele Leawere had been awarded the vacant seat, and that he will be sworn-in as soon as practicable.

I now wish to inform the House that I have received written notification from the Fijian Electoral Commission that it is waiting for a legal opinion on certain provisions of the Electoral Decree and the Constitution. Until the Fijian Electoral Commission has met and deliberated, we will not be able to confirm the swearing-in of the new Member. I thank you.

Secretary-General.

SECRETARY-GENERAL.- Confirmation of Minutes.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Leader of Government in Parliament.

MINUTES

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

That the Minutes of the sitting of the Parliament held on Thursday, 19th March, 2015, as previously circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you, is there a seconder?

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

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you.

The Parliament will now vote on the motion. Does any Member oppose the motion?

As no Member opposes, the motion is agreed to unanimously. Secretary-General.

SECRETARY-GENERAL.- Communications from the Chair.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CHAIR

MADAM SPEAKER.- I welcome you all to today's sitting and also extend the welcome to those joining us, watching through television, the internet and listening to the radio.

A special welcome to the students of USP, who are enrolled in the PL100 Course. I hope you will learn something from your study tour to Parliament.

I also thank the ladies and gentlemen who are here in the gallery. Thank you for your presence in this Parliament this morning. You are most welcomed to join in the light refreshment when the House breaks for morning tea.

Secretary General.

SECRETARY-GENERAL.- Questions.

MADAM SPEAKER.- I now give the floor to the honourable Dr. Brij Lal to ask Question No. 62 of 2015.

QUESTIONS AND REPLIES

Status of Small and Micro-Enterprises Grant
(Question No. 62/2015)

HON. DR. B. LAL.- Madam Speaker, I rise to ask Question No. 62 standing in my name, which is for the honourable Minister for Industry, Trade and Tourism.

Can the honourable Minister inform on the status of Small and Micro Enterprise Grant?

Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. The honourable Minister for Industry, Trade and Tourism?

HON. F.S. KOYA (Minister for Industry, Trade and Tourism).- Madam Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to respond to the question by the honourable Brij Lal, and I wish to thank the honourable Member for the question.

Madam Speaker, by way of background, the SMEs are actually the drivers of economic growth and contribute quite significantly to the creation of employment and reduction of poverty in Fiji. Approximately, 4,200 SMEs in the Agriculture, Fishing, Manufacturing, Retailing and Tourism Sectors, Madam Speaker. The Reserve Bank of Fiji actually estimates the SME Sector, actually accounts for about 12 per cent of the Fijian GDP in 2013, which is valued at roughly around \$800 million.

Madam Speaker, it has been the vision of the Bainimarama-led Government that the growth of the SMEs will generate wealth at the actual grassroots level, and germinate new technology and innovation. They will create a resilient economy, Madam Speaker. And most importantly, Madam Speaker, these businesses do not always remain as Small to Medium Enterprises. Many actually grow and become bigger businesses.

Over the past eight years, Madam Speaker, the Government has continued its support for this sector, through the provision of Credit Guarantee Schemes under the Reserve Bank of Fiji Income Tax Exemption for SMEs with the maximum annual turnover of less than \$500,000, and the removal of burden of fees, licenses for small businesses and the provision of training and advisory support through the Department of Cooperative business and National Centre for Small and Medium Enterprises.

Madam Speaker, the most recent support came by the Small Business Grant, which the FijiFirst Government allocated \$1 million. Now, this Scheme will provide start-up capital or assistance to existing SMEs of up to \$1,000. So, that roughly calculates to \$1,000 to 1,000 recipients.

The grant is basically to encourage the micro and small-scale business activities and will be targeted at individuals who have particular skill sets, Madam Speaker. The assistance will basically allow the micro and small businesses to boost their income capacity and improve the standards and quality of the products and services that they supply.

Madam Speaker, with this Scheme, we are trying to inculcate a culture of entrepreneurship, and for them to aim for long term sustainability. That will, in future enable them to access further business finance, plus establishing a platform for equal business opportunities for all.

Madam Speaker, the process for the SME Grant began on 6th December, 2014, with the call for applications and that closed on the 31st of January, 2015. We have received an overwhelming response. The total number of applications received was 25,597 which included, from the Western Division - 11,483, Northern Division – 6,606, and from the Central/Eastern Division – 7,509 applications. Business ventures ranging from canteens, poultry farming, bee keeping, fishing, livestock farming, market vendors, bakeries, sewing, roadside fruit and vegetables, stores, tailoring and dairy, these were the areas that are covered. Madam Speaker, this demonstrates the existence of

innovative and budding young entrepreneurs in our communities and the need to take and nurture this demand through such interventions.

The Ministry is actually working with the FDB (Fiji Development Bank) to facilitate the disbursement of these grant. Madam Speaker, the FDB was the logical partner for Government because of the extensive outreach in the communities, especially in rural Fiji.

Madam Speaker, in order to get the maximum exposure for this scheme, the application forms were distributed to all the FDB officers and the provincial offices throughout the country and the Ministry's divisional offices. Prior to these consultations and awareness on the grant of the facility, it was conducted with senior officers of the Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development.

Madam Speaker, as I speak, my Ministry together with the FDB, is actually finalising the list of applicants to be funded. The assessment will be completed by the 31st of March, 2015, following which the Ministry's assessment committee will finalise the recipients. This is a fair and transparent process, which would ensure that the grant is distributed proportionately throughout the country, based on the number of applications received and approved Madam Speaker, and taking into account the importance of minimising concentration of similar activities in one particular area.

The funds approved will not actually just be handed to the applicant as a hand-out, but it will be paid directly for the activity that they have applied for. Furthermore, the Ministry with the assistance from FDB, will undertake periodic monitoring of the progress of the projects.

Madam Speaker, to conclude my response to the honourable Brij Lal's question, I have instructed officials to work around the clock to complete all the necessary assessments by the 31st of March, and publish the names of the successful applicants in the newspapers by the 13th of April, 2015, and to begin disbursements of the funds by the 17th of April 2015. I thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. CDR S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- A supplementary question. Could the Minister just give an estimate on the budget allocation for this, for the benefit of the Members?

HON. F.S. KOYA.- Madam Speaker, it's actually \$1 million, and as I said, we have got 25,000 odd applications so currently it is a million dollars maybe at a later stage because we have had such an overwhelming response maybe the Minister of Finance will be a little more nice about handing out some more.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Madam Speaker, there is a need to properly regulate this very important part of our economy so to speak, and at the moment., there is no provision and currently there is no Act to regulate the issue of licenses -the monitoring. I am involved in a specific case with Handy Finance....

HON. GOVERNMENT MEMBERS.- Question! Question!

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- ...this will explain, it otherwise it will not assist the honourable Minister. I am involved, and we wrote to the Reserve Bank and they said "no, we don't issue license, go to the Ministry." So could the honourable Minister please explain to this House if there will be measures to put all of these to be properly regulated under an Act, especially to allow for the issue of licence and especially to allow other interested parties, like Handy Finance for example, private individuals not just the government who want to participate into this high risk but very, very important.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Minister.

HON. F.S. KOYA.- Madam Speaker, I am not sure how Handy Finance would be involved in it. I think the honourable Member is trying to suggest that maybe they are actually an institution that wants to assist in the handing out but it is for them to decide whether to or not. But in terms of the SMEs, currently as I said Madam Speaker, we have 4,200 registered people. There is a process for them to get registered, but in terms of whether there is going to be a law, that would be a question appropriately answered by the honourable Attorney General when he is present.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Vadei?

HON. A.T. VADEI.- Thank you, Madam Speaker, it is good to hear from the Minister regarding the implementation and the facilitation of the SMEs in our country. My question is, since there are no legislation, what sort of support? We have the financial and technical support, in terms of sustaining those developments, and also what sort of recovery mode if the funds are not fully recovered from the recipients? Thank you Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you for that last supplementary question. Honourable Minister.

HON. F.S. KOYA.- Madam Speaker, I think in terms of recovery mode, there is no recovery mode, we are not actually asking for the money back, it is a grant to them. So in giving that and FDB has a processes in place to ensure when the money is given, it is undertaken in what they have applied for. In terms of recovery, no, there is no recovery from this, once it is given to them it's theirs. The monitor issue is with the FDB.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you, I now give the floor to the honourable Ashneel Sudhakar.

Investments and Enforcement Strategies by LTA
(Question No. 63/2015)

HON. A. SUDHAKAR.- Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I rise this morning to ask Question No. 63 of 2015, as listed under my name in Schedule 1 in today's Order Paper and the question is directed to the Minister for Infrastructure.

Can the Minister inform this august House what capital investments and enforcement strategies is LTA undertaking to reduce the damage on our roads by overloaded commercial and private vehicles?

Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Minister for Infrastructure.

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA (Minister for Infrastructure and Transport).- Thank you, Madam Speaker. I thank the honourable Member for his question. Essentially, Madam Speaker, the question relates to supposedly the Action Plan that the LTA is taking to try and curb this overloading that is happening on our roads.

Madam Speaker and Members of the House, for the last three years we invested a lot of money and time on a very critical asset of our nation - critical to our economic and social life, and that is the

network of our roads, both in urban, peri-urban and in the rural areas. And there are many factors that threaten these roads, not including the weather and so many other factors but perhaps, one of the more critical ones and that is the matter that is before the House today is the issue of overloading.

Overloading essentially is when there is an excess amount of weight on the axels of the vehicle or there is an excess gross weight allowable for that particular vehicle that is allowed on to the road, and then that particular weight as it is already in excess is damaging the surface of the road that we are travelling on. So, this is a matter that the LTA has been under its laws is the proper authority that enforces this. In addition to LTA, there are other stakeholders that are assisting them to enforce the law some of who are carrying of excess weight on the road that is primarily the Fiji Police Force and to a certain extent the Fiji Roads Authority.

There are many stakeholders that the Land Transport Authority and the Fiji Roads Authority and also the Police speak to and dialogue with, with regards to this matter. And they include the Fiji Sugar Corporation, with regards to cane trucks and cane lorries, Fiji Pine Limited, Fiji Hardwood Limited, Tropic Woods, and also shipping agents Truck Haulers Association. These are some of the people that we speak to and on occasionally, other people who tend heavy loads on the back of trucks using the roading networks. So, we have the authorities and we also have our stakeholders that we confront and dialogue with every once in a while because of this problem.

Yes, we have put in certain measures to be able to ensure that we keep our trucks as compliant as possible to the weight limitations that we should be carrying on our roads and some of these measures include and this is by LTA the establishment of permanent weighbridges at certain strategic locations such as port of entries and in the industrial areas. In terms of manning the LTA has scheduled weekly operations at the Lautoka and Valelevu Weighbridges.

There are 4 permanent weighbridges around the country which are located in Savusavu, Lautoka, Lami and in Valelevu. There are three sets of portable wheel weighers around the country, one in each of the regions - Central, Eastern, Northern and also in the West.

Going forward, Madam Speaker, LTA is embarking on increasing its portable wheel weighers by investing in another three, and the total cost of procurement to-date is \$864,000, and it costs us about \$70,000 a year to maintain this particular weighbridge.

For the permanent weighbridges, LTA, in collaboration with Fiji Roads Authority, are pooling in resources to increase the number of permanent weighbridges around the country, and the focus of this, Madam Speaker, is on loading sites in the whole areas of Viti Levu, in particular in the areas of Nadi and Sigatoka corridor, Bua to Seaqaqa, Nausori to Nayavu, and also Nausori to Navua.

Also, the mandatory weighing is conducted at our port of entries, as I have alluded to earlier, so this is the Kings Wharf in Suva and Lautoka. We have other permanent arrangements with Fiji Ports Authority.

LTA has also implemented at 24/7, overloading operation on permanent weighbridges, which is actually being earmarked to commence here in 2015. The intention here is for these sites to become mandatory inspection areas for heavy goods vehicles that transit the weighbridge site. The intent is to place surveillance cameras in these locations too.

LTA is also into the empowerment and training of Road Marshals, and you see them on the roads with reflector jackets and the concept is to be able to deter people from trying to take over overloads on the road.

With regards to overloading, if these Road Marshals sight a vehicle and they believe that these vehicles are being over laden, they will call up the proper authority (the enforcements) to and inspect them.

I have alluded to earlier in terms of talking with Truck Holders Association, in trying to get them within the normal weights. Also, we have asked them to carry on board their own vehicles weighting scales, to make sure that they are compliant, particularly when they get into their loading areas.

LTA is embarking also on an awareness programme with the Wholesalers Association, for companies to invest in such an equipment, and hoping we can include this also within the LTA legislation.

At the moment, we have an MOU with Fiji Sugar Corporation with regards to long-term intention for cane trucks to comply on the roads, so that they can stay within the limits.

LTA has a certain level of difficulties, particularly in dealing with these cane trucks, and you can see tractors on the road that take up over three-quarters of the road as they take their cane to the mill, but this is something that obviously, I think over the years, people have got used to it, but we hope to try and make some determination in terms on how to make this size of trucks and the loads they carry a bit safer, given the width of our roads and every other user.

Also, we are talking to Fiji Pine and Fiji Hardwood on trying to negotiate the loads that they need to carry, given that we understand the economical weights that these trucks can carry, given the purchases they have already made. However, this is a process that we are continuing to dialogue with them, but we realise that any attempt to increase the weight from these trucks will have serious impact on the roads that we have just constructed.

We also note that LTA, with the Police are conducting snap operations in the areas along our roads to try and prevent people from taking advantage of the actions of compliance on the road. Every once in a while, we see them stopping these heavy trucks and causing them to have their weights taken.

We have very, very heavy fines for trucks that are non-compliant, actually it is \$1,000 per vehicle, it is a fine on the support. So it is not a light fine, and this is essentially done to at least force people to be compliant.

We also ask the general public that if they see overladen vehicles on the road, if they believe that the vehicles are overloaded, then it will have a significant impact on the road, so please call up the Land Transport Authority. There is a short code line of 5298 and 5299, reporting these vehicles that are overladen.

These are some of the measures, Madam Speaker, that we have taken, particularly at the Land Transport Authority, to try and keep our roads safe and also keep the weights on the back of the trucks legal on the roads so that we can have the best benefits from the roads and investments that we have made on it. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you, honourable Minister.

HON. A.T. VADEI.- For the last 30 years, the growing demand in trade have increased the sizes of containers, also the weigh in capacities on our roads. The question is, do they plan for these changes over the next 10 years and what road specification they are using from the last 30 years til to-date? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister.

HN. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- Madam Speaker, can you ask the honourable Minister to repeat his question, I did not quite get the first part of it.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Please repeat the question.

HON. A.T. VADEI.- In the last 30 years, there was a growing increase in trade and the demand for the use of vehicles and containers unloading in our shores. What was the plan in the last 30 years to the next 10 years, and the road specification that they are using from the last 30 years? Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Minister.

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA,- Madam Speaker, I had to ask that clarification because I thought when the honourable Member mentioned “trade”, I thought he actually said “train”, so I thought it was a transition on the area of transportation.

Madam Speaker, one of the beauty perhaps, of the reform that we did with the Fiji Roads Authority is to bring in some perspective, in terms of the maintenance of this big asset that we have, an asset that is worth close to \$10 billion, and the honourable Member made reference to a period of 10 years ago and the 10 years going forward. We are definitely planning in going forward. What we inherit today has been the outcome of road construction, not only in the last decade, but also in the years previous to that.

Our records, when they are constructed primarily like our major highways, this is to allow for these expansions. You will notice that we construct roads to international standards, in terms of the standard width for one particular lane, and then you also see that we are attempting the best we can to try and build all these four lane carriage way between our centres. We are starting with Suva-Nausori, and then in due course, we are doing to a certain degree from Nadi Airport, all the way to Nadi Town, and also from Denarau we are moving also in the direction to continue the four lanes between Nadi and Lautoka. These are the main centres where many of the businesses are done. In widening the road and in keeping with international standards, we cannot do much about the roads that have already been built. We naturally have to ask people to give up the land when their houses are in certain places, to allow us to widen these roads, to allow for expansion on trade.

These last few weeks, I have been saying; “We have a 10-year plan, we have a 20-year plan on certain things, but in places where there are virtually no hindrance in terms of the use of the road, we build it to the side that is required under the law, and also the best fact for international practice. But in places where it is too restrictive, we can only do so much, and we try and make the best of what there is already within the space that is allowable.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Aseri Radrodro?

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. I thank the honourable Minister for the comprehensive explanation and also that the strategies in place in terms of existing weighbridges have been implemented or installed to address the road damages. The question is, Madam Speaker, how do you address the heavy trucks that continue to use our roads outside the manning hours of the weighbridges?

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Minister.

HON. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- Madam Speaker, I noted that we have snap operations. Most of these overladen trucks as they come out of port areas are manned. We have presence on the road also, snap, that are working late into the nights, the LTA in particular and the Police. If you are driving along the King's Road sometimes, you see three or four trucks on the road, heavy laden going up the hill and we have our vehicles running after them and questioning them and they find out that they are using the cover of dark to go. So we do have our presence at night in certain places but as I have already said that part of the initiative is asking the public to take part in looking after our roads. If they see these vehicles wondering around without being detected, please call the numbers that I have already given in the House. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you and the number is 5298. The last supplementary question will be from the honourable Nawaikula.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Madam Speaker, in the rural areas, the time that they dared the most is the time of the logging activities. When they finish, they also finish the bridges, the culverts and everything. During the operation, you need caterpillars on either side, so could the honourable Minister at least undertake to put up signs on the bridges, put maximum weight to assist the enforcers and the travelling public, as well as, could he direct his enforcers to note of areas where logging operations are taking place.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you for the third and last supplementary question. Honourable Minister.

HON. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. As I alluded to earlier, in the logging areas, there are a number of initiatives that we put to strengthen the bridges, to cause the vehicles to be compliant in weight. I recognise the issue that has been raised by the honourable Member and we are very concerned, particularly in the rural areas where over time, the state of these bridges that we have are in no state to carry this additional overloads. Where we have determined that these bridges can only take certain loads, we have made certain attempts to note that so that overladen vehicles do not travel on it, but I am asking the public in general and also logging companies to keep the weights on their trucks limited, particularly in the rural areas where these vehicles are being loaded up where trees are being cut and logged to the mills. To exercise caution in places so that they do not damage the bridges more than they already are because there is a very significant number of our bridges in the rural that we are looking into, in terms of this 10-year and 20-year plan for FRA in bridge reconstructions are already in a very, very grey area in terms of safety. We do not want them to actually cause these bridges to collapse. But when we note certain bridges that do actually need a certain signage for weight limitation, we will do that and we thank the honourable Member for the suggestion that has been made to the House today.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you, honourable Minister. I now give the floor to the honourable Balmindar Singh to table his question.

Poor Quality of Service – Ministry of Health
(Question No. 64 of 2015)

HON. B. SINGH.- I rise this morning to ask Question 64 of 2015 under my name to the Minister for Health and Medical Services.

Customer Service continues to be an issue for the Ministry of Health and Medical Services,...

HON. OPPOSITION MEMBERS.- Hear, hear!

HON. B. SINGH.- With the staff of the Ministry being identified as complacent, have integrity issues, are not responsive to the patients' needs when required and considered unfaithful towards their work. They have been criticised for providing poor quality of service.

Could the honourable Minister inform the House what is the Ministry's view on these issues and how are these issues being addressed?

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you, I give the floor to the Minister for Health and Medical Services.

HON. J. USAMATE (Minister for Health and Medical Services).- Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to thank the honourable Member for his question. I think the question is something that is important to everyone in this country. Customer service and customer focus is an issue for all organisations and is something that I believe very strongly that we need to address. In the Ministry of Health and Medical Services, we have examples of both, we have examples of very good customer focus and examples of very poor customer service. Of course, it is the examples of poor customer service that come out in the Press a lot of times.

I must inform this House that I get a lot of messages from people that mainly talking about examples of good service. Those ones never come out in the Press. That notwithstanding, if we are talking about customer service and customer focus, we need to be looking at things that impact on customer service and customer focus. Obviously, there are a lot of things that impact on how people react in the work situation. How they are brought up, whether they had a good day, they had a good breakfast, the way that people talk to them, all kinds of things. And it can also be a function of the volume of work that people are expected to do. I have mentioned in this House before that we have doctors who will deal with up to 120 patients a day. Some of them work 24 hours and if you have that sort of situation, obviously it is going to have an impact on the way that they interact with others.

I believe very strongly and this is something that I have stressed since I have taken up that role in the Ministry is that customer service, customer focus is something that is important for everyone who works in Government. It is important for all of us in Parliament, we serve the people of this country. We need to be focussed on all of the people. That is a message also that is being passed along to the people in the Ministry of Health. The message that has been passed on to them that we need to focus on the values that we have in the Ministry. The number one value is customer focus aside from other values that we have like integrity, quality and so forth.

I have tried to identify some of the reasons why we have this problem. One, there has been a culture that has been there, that will need to be fixed. One of the issues that we have had, I noticed

that in the initial training of people that become professionals in the medical field and the health field, customer service is not part of the initial training. It is something they pick up along the way. So that is something that we need to rectify. We need to put in capacity building programmes to try to create a customer focus culture, changing the culture of an organisation or ministry or a sector is a big task, it is a huge task.

So with this in mind, there are a number of things that I am hoping to focus on in order to try to initiate the customer culture change. But first is a mechanism that we already have in Government, it is called the Service Excellence Awards Process. I believe that this mechanism, if the principles are absorbed by everyone in the Ministry, it becomes their principles, the values becomes their values, the values becomes the values of the leaders of everyone in the Ministry then it will begin to have an impact on everyone in the organisation.

Another thing that affects customer focus of service is the processes that we have in an organisation. Anyone that is working in the organisation is restricted by what they can do by what the processes allow them to. So if you want to improve the way that they interact with customers, you have to address the processes and this is one of the things that we are focusing on in this Ministry.

The second thing that we hope to change the way that people focus on their customers is to bring the values into the way we manage performance. In the Performance Management System that we have had thus far in the Ministry, it is focussed on the clinical things - the number of patients that you see and so forth. What we need to do is to take the values that we have in the Ministry and bring it into the targets that people have. So we have an exercise going on right now where the Annual Performance Assessment Report Systems are being modified, so that we are taking the values, for instance that value of customer focus, and we are asking ourselves, this value of customer focus, looking at the different job categories that we have in the health sector, what are the specific behaviours that you need to be able to see that shows that a person has this value of customer focus. Because value is something that you cannot see, the only thing that you can see is behaviour and we are taking those values and building it into the requirements of each person. That will then be assessed and monitored over time. As a result of this, if we identify gaps, of course, we then can address it through training, counselling, transferring. If we also identify issues where people are excelling, we need to show our appreciation. We need to give rewards.

The fourth thing that I believe that I am hoping to be able to develop, to enhance customer focus in the Ministry of Health services is to develop strong leaders. Strong leaders who demonstrate these values. I believe that the most important thing in any organisation is leadership. You get good leaders in, they will change the organisation. That is my hope going forward. Changing the work culture of any organisation or a ministry such as the Ministry of Health is going to be a huge challenge, but I also take my hat off (even though I am not wearing one now) to those who have been able to demonstrate an excellent customer focus despite the difficulties that they face. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Supplementary question.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Supplementary question, honourable Bilitavu.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- I thank the honourable Minister for his response this morning from a human resource perspective in regards to the capacity building in our health services. Is the honourable Minister aware that a few of the contributors to the poor service delivery in our hospitals is due to the 32 hours shift by our doctors - 24 hours plus another eight hours for their ward rounds?

Secondly, the technical part of medical services, bio-medical – the breakdown of machines. In Labasa Hospital during the dengue outbreak, the blood tester was down so they had to take all the samples to Seaqaqa and Nabouwalu. In addition to that, Madam Speaker, the lack of medicine. At Labasa Hospital, there is a shortage of medicine and medicine has been loaned from health centres. Is the honourable Minister aware of that and what actions will the Minister take to address those issues?

HON. J. USAMATE.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. I thank the honourable Member for his questions on the issues of medicines and the need for the bio-medical equipment working. Yes, those problems are there. We are very well aware of the problems and it is something that is constantly being discussed within the Ministry, with the senior staff, and we are constantly developing processes to try to address the problems. So, the short answer, Madam Speaker, yes, I am aware of the problem and we are discussing it with the senior staff to see the best ways that we can alleviate these problems.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you, I call on the honourable Salote Radrodro.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. I thank the honourable Minister for Health for his explanation on customer service and which I fully agree with. But my question is, how that customer service is going to be taken down to the staff, particularly in terms of systems and process improvement. If I may just enlighten him on that, for example, I came across a case of a woman who wanted to re-book her appointment at a Special Clinic at the Colonial War Memorial (CWM) Hospital but was told that she had to go back to her own health centre, which is maybe Valelevu. In Valelevu she was again told to return to CWM to get a report so that the Valelevu medical officers can then attend to her. So my question is based on that process and system improvement - to take away the burden on the patients in terms of financial and also emotional, which might at the end of the day, the patient might just give up and not go for treatment. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. J. USAMATE.- Madam Speaker, I thank the honourable Member for the question. Yes, I do agree. As I mentioned before, one of the issues that affects our ability to focus on customers is our processes and systems. That is why I have emphasised in the Ministry the need to look very clearly at the Service Excellence Awards process because it focusses on this area. This is an area that we have not given enough attention on, and it is something that I have asked the Ministry officials to identify what are the most critical processes that we have, so that we can work to address the requirements of our customers/patients that come to us. Over the next few years, we hope to be able to build an internal capacity to measure processes, manage them, to remove the non-value adding components of processes, enhance them so we can deliver greater customer value and patient value.

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- Supplementary question.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Supplementary question, honourable Radrodro.

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- On the last pay of 2014, most of the staff at the Ministry had their contracts expired, but they were told to continue to come to work until February when their contracts would be renewed. What I would like to ask the honourable Minister is, is he aware and what actions has the Ministry taken so that this issue is not repeated?

MADAM SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister.

HON. J. USAMATE.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. I thank the honourable Member for the question. I think the question is relating to the same thing. It is relating to the need for processes to be reviewed and I must inform the honourable Member, I am aware. I have raised my concern with the Acting Permanent Secretary and his staff and the need for them to review all of those processes to identify what is causing the problem, and to remove non-value adding components and make sure that we can fix that particular process.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you, I now give the floor to the honourable Mosese Bulitavu.

Free School Text Books
(Question No. 65/2015)

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Madam Speaker, I rise on Question No. 65 of 2015 under my name to the honourable Minister for Education.

Can the honourable Minister explain to the House why school text books, as promised by the Government during the Elections, still has not reached the schools in Fiji.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Minister for Education.

HON. DR. M. REDDY (Minister for Education, Heritage and Arts).- Madam Speaker, unfortunately as the tradition demands, I cannot thank the honourable Minister for asking that question because it is factually incorrect.

Madam Speaker, there are two components to that question, one is why school textbooks, as promised by the Government during the Elections is the first component. The second component is, the textbooks still has not reached the schools in Fiji. Both are factually incorrect, Madam Speaker. Let me explain.

This is our Manifesto. Nowhere in the Manifesto did the FijiFirst Party promise that we will provide free textbooks – nowhere.

Madam Speaker, let me go to a second part which says that how did this idea come across. The honourable Member should thank the honourable Prime Minister, in January when the school started, prior to that week, the honourable Prime Minister called our office and said, “Dr. Reddy, can we provide text books”, because at the moment, Madam Speaker, what was happening was that those children coming out of well off households were able to buy textbooks. Those in the interior, outer islands and the squatter settlements were not able to get textbooks. We decided that we will provided textbooks to all students in Fiji.

Madam Speaker, as the honourable Member has incorrectly stated that the textbooks has not reached the schools in Fiji, that is not true. From years 1 to 13, we need a total of 87 textbooks. So far, Madam Speaker, over the last eight weeks, we have produced 199,632 copies of textbooks ...

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Where are they?

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- ... a total of 16.8 million pages. As of last week, 49 books have been distributed.

HON. OPPOSITION MEMBER.- How many schools in Fiji?

HON. DR. M. REDDY.-Madam Speaker, they want answers, but they don't want to listen because it is difficult for them to digest the truth.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Why did you promise, when you can't deliver?

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- They do not want to listen to the truth.

HON. OPPOSITION MEMBER.- Spending a lot of time on the flag.

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Of the 87 textbooks, 49 textbooks have been distributed to all schools in Fiji, the remaining 38 textbooks, we have outsourced the printing to two other printers. So a total of three printers are operating at the moment. The Government one - Education Resource Centre (ERC) and two private printers are there. By the end of next month, we will finish the distribution of all textbooks throughout Fiji. Madam Speaker, that does not mean schools don't have textbooks, every teacher has a copy of the textbook, every school have limited copies in the library for students to refer, therefore classes are going as normal, there is no question about it. It's just that, some students do not have their own copy to take home. So, what we are doing this year is, every student will have their own copy to take home. They will work on those workbooks, they will write on them, they don't have to return them which will be provided again next year.

The time is, Madam Speaker, at the end of next month, all schools in Fiji will have a copy of textbook for every child from Years 1 – 13. Thank you.

HON. GOVT. MEMBERS.- *Vinaka!*

HON. M. BULITAVU.- Supplementary question, Madam Speaker. I thank the honourable Minister for his answers this morning in regard to a principle question.

In Labasa, Madam Speaker, only 3 textbooks have come online; Basic Science, Health Science and Social Science. For Mathematics and English, no textbook has arrived in Labasa Town.

HON. RATU N.T. LALABALAVU.- The problem is, they don't know!

HON. M. BULITAVU.- In the rural areas, forget about internet!

According to the reform, the teacher has to cover all the syllabus for 1st Term and 2nd Term. It's already the 8th week into the 1st Term, and 3rd Term is revision and remedial. How will the students prepare for the external exams, if the performance of the teachers, their contracts will be renewed according to the results when the students cannot comprehend the subject and understand the questions, therefore they cannot meet that after you've removed the scaling system?

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Minister?

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Madam Speaker, unfortunately, the honourable Member has asked too many questions in that one question he's allowed.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- The honourable Member should have attended last night's Open Forum at Suva Grammar School, he would have got answers to a number of things about how they'll

finish in two terms, the syllabus and what will happen in Term 3, etc., but let me get back to him, Madam Speaker.

The resources are there. Every teacher has their own copy of the textbooks which they use to prepare their lecture notes and materials for teaching in class. It's just that free textbooks means, for students to use. At the moment, those schools who do not have, every child does not have a textbook, there are materials in the library for them to refer to. On all those materials, Madam Speaker, the soft copies are uploaded on the home page of the Ministry of Education website. So, those in Labasa College can access. Those students can go to their libraries, go to their computer laboratories in the school and access, but we don't expect them to download and print them. That's why we're printing and distributing to the schools at their doorstep. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you.

HON. RO T.V. KEPA.- Supplementary question, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

HON. RO T.V. KEPA.- In regards to rural, remote and maritime schools, they do not have internet. It is very difficult for them to download and get soft copies. So when they do come into Suva and they're advised that there is a directive that they cannot purchase textbooks because the Minister has stated that no textbooks are to be purchased by parents, how can they cope with the textbooks that they need to buy? This is now week 9? Of course, I'm just repeating what the honourable Bilitavu had said, that all the book-teachings have to be done in Terms 1 and 2, and teachers are finding it very difficult to get this book-teaching done. And then they have the exams coming up and then in Term 3, they're required to do remedial and revision, so it is very difficult without textbooks. I'm just asking the honourable Minister; how can he give that kind of directive when they need to have textbooks in schools?

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Minister.

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Madam Speaker, I just said that we have outsourced the printing of textbooks to speed up the distribution. We intend to finish the distribution by the end of next month. As I have said, the teaching of classes from Years 1 to 13 are not affected at all because the teachers have resources, the library has limited copies of reference materials for the textbooks and there are also limited copies that students have their own from past year students.

What I'm saying is that, classes are not affected, classes are being taken as normal. It's just that every child may not have their own copy of the textbook and I do understand that. We don't expect them to download and print, it's expensive for them. That is why, we are printing and we'll deliver it to their doorstep. In fact, in the urban areas, it has been delivered door to door.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. You have the floor.

HON. RATU K. KILIRAKI.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. Supplementary question; whilst we hear two sides of the story – one from the Ministry which sounds very good but in fact, the actual position that we hear from the rural schools is quite different. My question is; having all these disadvantages to the schools that they may have been affected because of the delay in the delivery of

textbooks, what consideration will the Ministry have in terms of the examination results for this year, especially when they have changed the examinations for this year?

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- I thank the honourable Kiliraki for his question. Honourable Minister?

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Madam Speaker, last year, there was no textbook supplied by the Ministry. The students had their own copies. They were using the limited number of copies in the library and basically relying on the lecture notes provided by the teachers, in maritime and in the interior schools. So, why should the results be different this year? In fact, the results should be better this year because we are providing it.

HON. GOVT. MEMBERS.- Hear! Hear!

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- The questions, Madam Speaker, asked by the other side of the House have no logic. Thank you.

HON. GOVT. MEMBERS.- *Vinaka!*

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. I will now give the floor to the honourable Prem Singh.

List of Medication – Free Medicine Scheme
(Question No. 66/2015)

HON. P. SINGH.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise to ask Question No. 66/2015 standing in my name. The question is directed to the Minister for Health and Medical Services.

What is the complete list of medication that is available for dispensation by pharmacies to Fijians accessing the Free Medicine Scheme?

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Minister for Health and Medical Services?

HON. J. USAMATE (Minister for Health and Medical Services).- Madam Speaker, I thank the honourable Member for his question, requesting the complete list of medication that is available for dispensation. I don't think that he'd want me to read the complete list of the individual items but I just like to say that in the list that was provided as was advertised some time ago in the papers, it had the list of a total of 72 items which are medicines that are regarded as "essential medicines", and an additional 10 which are "over-the-counter" products.

The 62 essential items are carefully selected medicines which satisfy the priority health needs of the population, and have been selected based on disease prevalence, evidence on efficacy, safety and comparative cost-effectiveness. As I speak right now, out of this list of 72, a total of 50 items have been distributed to all the designated private pharmacies nationwide that answered in the affirmative to the Expressions of Interest that was sent out some time ago, inviting them to participate in this Programme. So, 50 of the items have been distributed, another 12 items will be distributed by mid-April, 2015, and the remainder items which are not usually stored at our Fiji Pharmaceutical Services are currently being procured by the National Steering Committee that is running this particular programme.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you, honourable Minister. Supplementary question?

HON. P. SINGH.- Does the list only contain generic medications and medications under price control or all prescribed medicines?

HON. J. USAMATE.- As I had mentioned before, Madam Speaker, the list contains the 62 “essential medicines” that have been decided upon by this specialist group at the Fiji Pharmaceutical Services, and the 10 additional items. It does not cover all medicines but only those that have been identified by the technical experts in this area, to be the most essential that we require. So, it’s not going to cover a 1,000 different medicines that are required, but those that are seen and proven by the experts in this area to be the ones most necessary for our people.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. There being no other supplementary question, we’ll move on to the last question. I give the floor to the honourable Ratu Sela Nanovo, to table his question.

Minimum Price Guarantee – Per Tonne of Cane
(Question No. 67/2015)

HON. RATU S.V. NANOVO.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise to ask the question under my name which is Question No. 67/2015, and the question is directed to the honourable Prime Minister, who is also the Minister for the *iTaukei* Affairs and Sugar. The question is mostly geared towards the sugar industry and the question is:

Given the rising cost of production and declining price of sugar on the world market, will the Government implement a minimum guaranteed price of \$85 per tonne of cane for the next four years as price paid to cane farmers? If not, why not?

MADAM SPEAKER.- Honourable Prime Minister and Minister for Sugar Industry.

HON. REAR ADMIRAL (RET’D) J.V. BAINIMARAMA (Prime Minister and Minister for iTaukei Affairs and Sugar).- Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise to respond to the question posed by the honourable Member.

Madam Speaker, under my Government’s leadership, the Sugarcane Industry has made significant gains for all the stakeholders in the Industry, including the farmers.

One only needs to reflect the price paid to sugarcane farmers over the last few years compared to that, which was especially paid prior to 2006. I wonder if the honourable Member would have then asked the same question or indeed was he even interested in the Sugar Industry then.

Madam Speaker, the question is not to pay an arbitrarily derived guaranteed price to the farmers, but to ensure that we pay a price to our farmers that is fair and reasonable, so that they continue to remain in the Industry and make a reasonable living from farming.

I am sure that the honourable Member is aware that sugar is a commodity and is exposed to the world market price for commodities. Although our sugar may be receiving a premium due to the quota access into the EU, which is to come to an end soon, and everyone knows about that, Madam Speaker, this premium tends to vary and based on the world market price for sugar.

The farmers are presently paid as per the outdated Master Award and as such, is exposed to the risk of the world market prices.

However, my Government, Madam Speaker, continuously reduce the cost of farming, as well as the price paid to farmers for their sugarcane. This means ensuring that the cost such as fertilizer, harvesting and transportation are appropriate for the Industry. As part of the continuous improvement initiatives of my Government, we are investigating the establishment of the Price Stabilisation Fund to reduce the volatility of sugarcane prices to the farmers.

In ensuring that we continue to pay a reasonable price for the sugarcane, the Industry will also be embarking upon a number of capital projects, such as cogeneration, ethanol, retail packing and sugar refinery, to ensure that there is sufficient revenue that will be shared with the sugarcane farmers.

In summary, yes, Madam Speaker, the Industry will continue to pay a reasonable price for sugarcane, and this will be based on proper analysis of all associated costs rather than just plugging an arbitrary value, as proposed by the honourable Member. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you, honourable Prime Minister. Supplementary question?

HON. J. DULAKIVERATA.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. I thank the Prime Minister for his explanation. We all know that sugar cane farming is a business, and for any business the most important thing is the Return. If the Return is declining, what has the Government got in place for the future? We know that the sugar contract will be up in 2017, is there any other alternative plan for an alternative crop that will replace sugar cane farming? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you, honourable Dulakiverata. Honourable Prime Minister?

HON. REAR ADMIRAL (RET'D) J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- I am sorry, Madam Speaker. Can he repeat the question? What is the question? He is taking too long to get to the question.

HON. J. DULAKIVERATA.- The question, Madam Speaker, is, does the Government has a plan in place to utilise the land currently used for sugarcane planting when the sugarcane prices were eventually dropped after the contract in 2017? Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you.

HON. REAR ADMIRAL (RET'D) J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- Madam Speaker, if I understand the question, what are we doing here in Fiji to ensure? Is that correct?

Well, we have been talking with the Minister for Agriculture and his officials, Madam Speaker, on overseas pricing, you will have heard that the team went out not too long ago, to check on the sugar prices on what we can get out of sugar when the EU quota finishes. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Member?

HON. V. PILLAY.- Madam Speaker, can the honourable Prime Minister inform when farmers will receive their third cane payment, and how much it will be?

MADAM SPEAKER.- I thank honourable Viam Pillay for his question. Honourable Prime Minister.

HON. REAR ADMIRAL (RET'D) J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- That is from a farmer, Madam Speaker. Thank you, Madam Speaker, based on the present 70:30 payment formula in the Master Award, the payment to farmers for their 2014 crop will be \$73 per metric tonne. To date, FSC has paid out the delivery payment and of course, the second payment. The third payment in March 2015 will be \$15.30 and of course, the fourth payment, Madam Speaker, in May, I cannot provide the dollar value yet. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Prem Singh.

HON. P. SINGH.- Supplementary question, Madam. In view of the withdrawal of the duty-free access to the EU market in 2017, will the price of sugar be reduced by a further 30 per cent as stated by the Chairman of the Fiji Sugar Corporation recently?

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Prime Minister.

HON. REAR ADMIRAL (RET'D) J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- Madam Speaker, I really do not know what the FSC Chairman has come up with, but the honourable Member will know that after EU pricing is finished in 2017, of course, we will go back to the ordinary prices that we have never come with before. So, we really do not know what the figure will be. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. That brings us to the end of question time, being the third supplementary question. We will now move on to item 5 in the Order Paper. Secretary-General.

SECRETARY-GENERAL – Motions for which notice has been given.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. I wish to bring to the honourable Members' attention that the Business Committee has agreed to allow two Members from Government and two Members from Opposition to debate each Motion before the House today. I will be very strict with timing, the warning bell will ring at four minutes and the final bell will ring at six minutes for the end of the speech.

I now call on the honourable Semesa Karavaki to move his motion.

ACQUISITION OF NATIVE LAND BY STATE – REVIEW OF

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise to move the motion that appears under my name:

“That in view of the acquisition of native lands by the State before the effective date in the 2013 Constitution, that this House direct the relevant Standing Committee to review the manner in which native lands have been acquired by the State before this said date, and whether the said lands are treated differently from native lands acquired by the State after the effective date as expressed under section 28(2) of the 2013 Constitution.”

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. Do you have a seconder?

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Madam Speaker, I second the motion.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Semesa Kavaki.

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The motion particularly refers to Section 28 (2) of the Constitution and it deals with the *iTaukei* land acquired by the State after the effective date of this Constitution. We know that the effective date of the Constitution was from September 2013. Under this provision, Madam Speaker, it says that, “any *iTaukei* land acquired by the State for the public purpose after the commencement of this Constitution under Section 27 or under any written law shall revert to the customary owners, if the land is no longer required by the State”.

I agree, as the Government has previously stated, that this is the first time it has appeared in the Constitution. It is the first time and it is also, Madam Speaker, the first time that it had left out native lands that were acquired from the Colonial Governments through successive governments until now, to leave it out from any consideration after those lands that have been used to revert back to the customary owners. And I said again, Madam Speaker, it is the first time it had left out that. So, the provision itself appears to differentiate the same land anyway, Madam Speaker, native lands happen to be owned by natives not by way of accident.

HON. OPPOSITION MEMBER.- Hear! Hear!

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- They are there as the concept of predestination it was predestined for them to own native lands and that, Madam Speaker, the issue that we see here that although Section 28 (1) says that “native lands cannot be permanently alienated” but sub-section 2 it can be treated as a statutory caveat, to prevent all those native lands that were acquired up to September 2013, not to be reverted to the customary owners.

We see this, Madam Speaker, as a deprivation of many benefits that would have gone to the native landowners. I had raised before, Madam Speaker, an example of this situation. Lands from the bridge from Naikava, where the Rewa Dairy is and onwards - Caubati, Kinoya those lands were acquired to settle those labourers who came on the boat. And those lands belonged to *Mataqali Nawavatu* of Kalabu. Over the past, this land, this is a classic example only, Madam Speaker, this land remains with the State with Government and it has been subdivided the purpose it was acquired for is no longer there, no longer there. And the proceeds of rents now being collected from those lands are still with the State and the customary owners have been deprived from participating in the economic development of this nation from having these proceeds of rents being given to them because they are the rightful owners. The purpose it was acquired for is no longer there.

Madam Speaker, this is why I am moving this motion, for this to be referred to the appropriate Standing Committee to look into this. Because obviously, this Section states “that any land acquired from the effective date of this Constitution which is no longer used for that purpose it will be reverted,” but it doesn’t say anything about those lands that were acquired in the past. This is why, Madam Speaker, I rise this morning to move that it be referred to the appropriate Standing Committee. That it will be looked at because I understand the SDL Government was in the process of reverting those lands....

HON. RATU N.T. LALABALAVU.- It is reverted NG1

....in 2006. To be returned to the landowners the native land owners and it didn’t complete that because of what happened in 2006. And this is why I am bringing this up, although the Government can say that it is the first time they have stated over here it will happen from the effect of this

Constitution but at the same time, Madam Speaker, it has prevented those lands, same kind of land - native land to be reverted, those that were acquired before the effective date of this Constitution.

Thank you Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Minister for Lands.

HON. M.VUNIWAQA.- Madam Speaker, prior to the commencement of our Constitution on 7th September, 2013, there was the State Lands Act . Section 8 of that Act states, and I quote:

“When any *iTaukei* land which has been acquired by the State for public purpose under the provisions of the State acquisition of Lands Act or any other written law is no longer required for such purposes, the Minister after consultation with the Cabinet may by order declare such land to be *iTaukei* land and such declaration shall be recorded in the name of the Unit from which it was acquired in the Register of *iTaukei* lands kept under the provisions of Section 8 of the *iTaukei* Lands Act”.

That is the State Lands Act, Madam Speaker, it existed prior to the commencement of our Constitution on 7th September, 2013 and it was there all the time for previous governments to consider in dealing with the *iTaukei* land which was acquired by the State for public purpose.

What the Constitution did on 7th September, 2013 was to remove the discretion which Section 8 of the State Lands Act gave to the Minister for Lands. Section 8 of the State Lands Act empowered the Minister for Lands to take that step. As with all discretion, the Minister could make a call not to declare such land. To repair the defect, this Government in the 2013 Constitution removed the element of discretion such that the Minister for Lands does not have any say any longer whether to or not to revert that land to the customary owners, he must do it, the Government must do it.

The acquisition of land for public purposes is done for building of schools, of roads of things that is needed by the Fijian people at large. It is governed by the State Acquisition of Lands Act and that sets out a mechanism, a legal mechanism for the acquisition. A critical component of that acquisition is compensation, how is that compensation arrived at. Another feature of our Constitution is that, it mandates this compensation under Section 27 of the Constitution and sets out the relevant factors that must be taken into account when compensation is being calculated. Again a first.

Another first we are hearing about *iTaukei* land being compulsorily acquired and yes, the State Lands Act only referred to *iTaukei* Lands. Another defect that was fixed by our Constitution. In Section 28 of the Constitution, it goes beyond *iTaukei* land, it also talks about *Rotuman* land and *Banaban* land. Those two elements were not there in previous laws and were not accounted for in relation to Section 8 of State Lands Act for Reversion. What the Constitution did was remove the divisive character in relation to the treatment of customary land and brought them in, *Rotuman* land and *Banaban* land also to be on the same par as *iTaukei* land, which may be acquired by the State for a public purpose. So the motion, Madam Speaker, is asking for this august House to refer this matter to a Standing Committee, a matter that we already know the answer to. The principles are different. That is a fact - from prior to 7th September, 2013 and after 7th September, 2013.

We must also remember that those lands that were acquired prior to 7th September, 2013, beneficial interests in those land (which are recognised by our law, by the laws that govern property in Fiji), they recognised the sanctity of those interests. It makes it a legal challenge to revert this land, in light of the beneficial interests in those land that exist now. Thus, the non- retrospective effect of

Section 28 of the Constitution, a principle that would be well known to lawyers in this country, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you, Minister for Lands.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- I thank you, Madam Speaker, for giving me the leave to make my brief contribution.

First and foremost (this is not the first, and I will come to that later) but the problem is, as I have said yesterday, this Government have been improperly advised. The problem we have here is wrong advice, and we had that same problem yesterday – the NLTB giving distribution to individuals when their owners are the *Mataqali*. We had that same problem the other day, the honourable Prime Minister saying that the ILO Convention does not apply, when the directive from the Human Rights Commission says, “even like Guatemala, like Bolivia, you must recognise...”. In those province, the indigenous people are the majority, they recognise indigenous rights, they recognise the rights of the other communities, they recognise fundamental right, and the challenge for you is to make sure none topples the other.

HON. J. USAMATE.- Recognising the Constitution.

HON. RATU N.T. LALABALAVU.- Tell them.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- The problem here, even in this Constitution, is because the whole framework of this Government, including the 2013 Constitution is based on a singular view, and the document namely, that this is by the honourable and learned Attorney-General (I am sorry he is not here but this will be in the *Hansard*, and he can come back and provide an answer to me) which is called the *Cultural Autonomy in a National State*, please go and read this and you will see that that is the Blueprint for your Government, for your Constitution. The Peoples Charter was created to fulfil that; the termination of the Great Council of Chiefs was done to fulfil that. Section 28 (which was based on wrong advice is made to fulfil that).

Another point - what he said is, “remove indigenous rights, increase fundamental rights” and that is why Section 28 comes there, and therein you will solve or come about with equal citizenry, which is totally wrong, and the people who are experts in writing Constitution pointed that out and the same error – Section 28 should not be there. Section 28 concerns group rights, as well as the rights of people with disability, it concerns a group. Individual right is fundamental right or the Bill of Rights, those should be there. That is the same problem, but the gist of that decision is that (I should come back to that), you will achieve equal citizenry once you terminate the cultural institutions of indigenous people, and this is what you are doing. That is what Section 28 is about; that is why you have terminated the Great Council of Chiefs, that is why you are removing and that is what you are doing.

HON. RATU .N.T. LALABALAVU.- Systematically.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Madam Speaker, I am asking the people who advised the honourable Prime Minister to advise him correctly. In relation to the distribution of native land, did the NLTB management; the NLTB Board; the Fijian Affairs people; the 17 solicitors or the Attorney-General – did they advise him correctly, or did they advise him in the way that he wants it? You should say your advice correctly and it would be up to him what he decides, otherwise we will all be looking foolish here.

HON. RATU N.T. LALABALAVU.- They are afraid.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Now let me come to Section 28, Madam Speaker. You have this harp for the first time. It is not for the first time, it was always there and the honourable Minister for Lands has correctly stated. Section 8 was there before that allows for this, but it was never ever used and the indigenous people have been crying and crying. The people of Nawavatu, that my learned friend, the honourable Semesa Karavaki has referred to, for the last 100 years have been going to the Government under Section 8 “please return to us that portion of land that goes from Rewa Dairy to Nausori”, and that never happened. The whole gist of today’s motion is that, the Constitution kills off that opportunity for the owners to use Section 8 to beg the Government, even though the Government has not used it, it kills it off.

HON. RATU N.T. LALABALAVU.- Tell them!

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- And let me quote to you what Section 28(2) says:

“Any *iTaukei* land acquired by the State for the public purpose after the commencement of this Constitution ...”

What about before? They can no longer use Section 8 because this one has cut it off, and that is the whole problem and we need to look into that.

If you look ILO 169, (I’m sorry if you do not agree with me) it says that whatever you stole, whatever you took from the indigenous people, you return to them and the challenge for you is how to use that to benefit indigenous people, indo-Fijians, and everyone who lives here. That is the challenge that you must do – first things first: return to them their land, the NLTB is there, it is for all of us. it is for us, it is for the indo-Fijian, it is for all those who live here, but first things first and Section 28 has killed that.

For that reason, Madam Speaker, I fully support the need to set up a committee, to make sure that the opportunity for indigenous people to get back their land as is their right should continue. I thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER.- I thank the honourable Nawaikula. I give the floor to the honourable Koya.

HON. F.S. KOYA.- Madam Speaker, I thank you for allowing me speak. Before I even commence with the technical specifications on this, I must point out a correction with respect to what is being said in the House by the honourable Member who just spoke.

It is not good to read a half a portion of the Constitution. The entire provision that he referred to, I will read to this august House, Madam Speaker. It refers to “Rights of ownership and protection of *iTaukei*, Rotuman and Banabana lands.”. The specific section that was read out by the honourable Member was Section 28 (2) and he read:

“Any *iTaukei* land acquired by the State for a public purpose after the commencement of this Constitution” (is what he specified under Section 27). And he did not read the rest, Madam Speaker. I will read the whole thing so that the House may understand.

“Any *iTaukei* land acquired by the State for a public purpose after the commencement of this Constitution under section 27 or under any written law shall revert to the customary owners if the land is no longer required by the State.”

Madam Speaker, this allows for previous stuff to be dealt with. So it is not right to read a half of the actual sub section.

Madam Speaker, I think what has happened here is always already referred to everything as “half a glass empty”, it is always in the negative. But please I ask this august House, when doing such things as reading out the Constitution so that the people of Fiji know that you read it in its full context.

Madam Speaker, the State can acquire land for public purposes. This is for electricity, building bridges, reservoir, et cetera, all of that it can do. That is understood, Madam Speaker. This is being done since the colonial era.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- But has it been returned?

HON. F.S. KOYA.- Please listen.

The law pertaining to the acquisition of *iTaukei* land by the State, before and after the promulgation of the Constitution, is really the same, Madam Speaker. There is absolutely no need for a Standing Committee to look into how land was acquitted before the Constitution and how land is being acquired now.

Madam Speaker, I will explain. Within the State acquisition of Lands Act, and the Crown Acquisition of Lands Act, 1978, which is now called the State Acquisition of Lands Act. It expressly states in Section 3 that the State can acquire land under the provisions of the Constitution or this Act, for any kind of public purpose for a term of years as it may think proper, paying such consideration or compensation as may be agreed or determined under the provisions of the Act.

Let me explain further, Madam Speaker. Let me highlight another important section of this particular Act. Section 61 also states that the acquiring authority shall not compulsorily acquire any land unless he has applied to the Court and has obtained therefrom an order authorising such acquisition. There is a process that has to be followed before this happens.

Madam Speaker, Section 6(3) further states that the Court shall not grant an order unless it is satisfied that the taking of possession or acquisition is necessary or expedient in the interest of defence, public safety, public order, public morality, public health, town and country planning or utilisation of any property in such a manner as to promote the public benefit.

Madam Speaker, this is another check and balance before it happens. Interestingly, Madam Speaker, the law also says under Section 7(2) of the Act that adequate compensation for taking your possession or of the property, where an order has been granted must be paid to the person entitled within 30 days.

Madam Speaker, I will move on to Section 8 of the States Land Act which provides for *iTaukei* land. Madam Speaker, Section 8 of the Lands Act provides that when *iTaukei* land has been acquired by the State for public purposes under the State Acquisition of Lands Act or any other written law and is no longer required, the Minister after consultation with Cabinet may by order declare such land to

be *iTaukei* land and such declaration shall be recorded in the same, as earlier alluded to by the honourable Minister.

An amendment, Madam Speaker, through Section 6 of the State Lands Act by the Bainimarama-led Government ensures that any *iTaukei* land acquired by the State can never be converted into freehold land. This has been fortified by Section 28(2) of our Constitution. This blue book, maybe we should all read, which ensures that any *iTaukei* land acquirable for a public purpose shall revert to the customary owners if the land is no longer required by the State.

Madam Speaker, this legislation made by the Bainimarama-led Government were necessary to ensure that unlike previous governments and the previous Ministers (some who are sitting on the other side) that no Government in shoddy deals like the Momi Deal, where the *iTaukei* land was first converted to crown land and at the flick of a finger on the same day, that was converted into freehold land.

Madam Speaker, some of the Members of this House on the other side were part of that. I thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you, honourable Minister. I beg your indulgence but the last question would be the second question from the Opposition. There being no other input from the Opposition, I will now request the honourable Karavaki to do his right of reply.

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- Thank you, Madam Speaker, It is very sad that we can discuss the native land in this way where there has been a lot of misleading interpretation of the law in this House. Rightfully, the landowners have been coming to the Government, pleading for the land to be returned to them. Not only that, there have been very early hours in the morning, kneeling and getting down to their knees to pray for the Government to realise that they are holding the land wrongly in their possession which should be returned to the native owners.

Now, we hear, Madam Speaker, the interpretation of Section 28(2), it seems that the Government is saying that all the lands that were acquired in the past, even before the effective date if they can still return. Why are they not returning it?

HON. OPPOSTION MEMBER.- Hear, hear.

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- Because they did not want to return it and that is exactly what subsection (2) of Section 28 says.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- They are no longer referred for public use.

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- Because, they are only referring, Madam Speaker, to any other law made after the effective date of this Constitution from September 2013. And they are misleading this House in their interpretation. Any acquirement of land and native land, all those from the other side should understand that this is a very important issue and....

HON. RATU N.T. LALABALAVU.- Tell them.

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- we must not talk about it in trying to invent some kind of interpretation to distort the truth because the commandment of God says “Do not steal”.

(Chorus of interjections)

That is commandment eight. Exodus 20, verse 15, Madam Speaker. Verse 17 says “Do not covert thy neighbour’s property”. That is injustice. When is not theirs, return it because it’s not yours.

Madam Speaker, maybe I just say and elaborate, just to make him understand this issue better. If I come to a friend’s house, Madam Speaker, I will have a meal and after the meal, they will put some leftover in a container and they will say “take that home”. We will take that home but that container is not ours.

(Laughter)

We will take it home and enjoy the meal. Immediately after that, we will take the container back but there are a lot of us in their cupboards, there are walls of containers that belong to others stack up there because they use them and do not return them. I just elaborate so that we understand it better.

Madam Speaker, they can laugh and I do plead with the Government, do take time and allow this motion to go through so that the Committee can look at this. It does not harm anyone but in fact we are doing the things that the landowners are praying for, landowners are crying for. By doing that, we are all doing the right thing and let justice prevail in our bits. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- The Parliament will now vote on the honourable Karavaki’s motion which states that in view of the acquisition of native lands by the State before the effective date in the 2013 Constitution, that this House direct the relevant Standing Committee to review the manner in which native lands have been acquired by the State before this said date and whether the said lands are treated differently from native lands acquired by the State after the effective date, as expressed under section 28(2) of the 2013 Constitution.

Does any Member oppose the Motion? We will now put the motion to vote. The vote is now open. Close the vote. Secretary-General.

SECRETARY-GENERAL.- The results are as follows:

<u>Votes Cast</u>		
Ayes	-	16
Noes	-	26
Not Voted	-	7

MADAM SPEAKER.- There are 26 noes and the motion is in the negative.

Thank you, we have now come to the time for refreshment. We will break now and resume at 11.30 a.m.

The Parliament adjourned at 11.10 a.m.

The Parliament resumed at 11.35 a.m.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, we will continue with the motions for debate. I now call on the honourable Salote Radrodro to move her motion.

NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES AND FREE MEDICINE BY GOVERNMENT

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Madam Speaker, I rise to move the motion tabled under my name this morning. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Madam Speaker, I rise to table a motion:

“That in view of the rise of non-communicable diseases (such as diabetes, heart related illness, hypertension) and in relation to the free medicine programme by Government, that this House directs the relevant Standing Committee to:

- (a) review the current procurement and supply process of medicines under this programme to address medicine shortages and to alleviate the additional cost burden incurred to citizens; and
- (b) consider expanding the current free list to include medicine for patients under special clinics like diabetic, heart, hypertension patients, etc.”

Madam Speaker, at the outset, let me just say that in addition to those diseases that had been mentioned, Non-Communicable Diseases or NCDs as it is widely known, it also includes diseases like cancer, asthma and even obesity or overweight. In Fiji, Madam Speaker, according to statistics from the NCD Centre, the death rate to NCD-related diseases is very alarming. According to those statistics, about 80 per cent to 82 per cent death every year is attributed to NCD-related causes. That 80 per cent to 82 per cent would equate something like 4,000 out of the 6,000 deaths every year. That death rate or mortality rate is alarming and should be a concern in this august House.

Madam Speaker, the 3 medicine list include 72 items and also 50 private pharmacies that have been identified by Government to dispense the medicines under the free list, and as alluded to by the honourable Minister for Health, it is called Essential Items.

Madam Speaker, I would like this honourable House to note that this list of 72 items does not include all the medicines that would address NCD patients – diabetes, hypertension, heart-related, cancer, asthma and even obesity. Furthermore, Madam Speaker, with a brief telephone survey conducted with Government pharmacies and also private pharmacies, problems were being identified in regards to this free medicine distribution, as promised in the last Elections.

May I highlight 3 prominent problems, one is the shortage of supplies both in Government and private pharmacies. Secondly, the medicines have expired and are still sitting with the private pharmacies and also they (private pharmacies) are still waiting for computer and printing machines

that had been promised by the Ministry to be able to undertake their work of dispensing medicine to the general public. Thirdly, Madam Speaker, there is a general lack of awareness.

The people have been coming with the view or with the belief that they should be given free medicine. Madam Speaker, those belonging to the NCD criteria, once you are diagnosed with diabetes or hypertension or whatever the disease, it is a lifelong disease. Right now patients with this kind of medication, they go to hospitals but the pharmacies in the hospitals don't have them and they have been asked to go to the private pharmacies where they will have to pay. For example, if a diabetic patient lives in Korovou and goes to Korovou Subdivisional Hospital and is being told that the medication is not available, goes to the pharmacy and also is being told in the pharmacy in Korovou (if there is one), that there is no medication there, the patient then will have to come right to Nausori. Bearing in mind that the criteria for eligibility is those below the \$20,000 earning capacity, which means a lot of these people will be disheartened. They do not have the resources. They don't have the money to buy the medicine, they don't have the money to come to Nausori to buy their medications. So in that regard, I sincerely urge this august House to seriously consider the expansion of the medicine list so that all medications for NCD patients are included in that list, bearing in mind that it is a killer diseases in Fiji. So if it kills 4,000 people out of the 6,000 in one year, it will kill 20,000 people in 5 years.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- I will now open the floor for debate.

HON. J. USAMATE.- Madam Speaker, I do agree whole-heartedly with the fact that Non-Communicable Diseases is one of the biggest challenges that we face in this country. It is not a new challenge, I have been reading the *Hansard Reports* in Parliament back in the 1980s, there was already a realisation that that was a problem. I think the challenge for all of us right now is to decide what we do now to prevent this from happening, to prevent it from escalating and exacerbating. I must add that from the outset the realisation that NCD is a crisis, that it is a tsunami that is about to engulf us is something that is realised in the Ministry of Health. There have been programmes put in place; there has been an NCD Strategic Plan 2010-2014 that was put in place to address this, but the parts of this Plan, the attack on NCDS has to be dual-focus.

A lot of the attention that we've been discussing today is what we do with those who have already had NCDs. A lot more of the efforts need to be focused on preventing it from happening in the first place – from preventing people, from making sure that people are aware of the things that causes NCDS, to come up with strategies so that people make the right choices for their lifestyles, and this is something that the Ministry of Health has been emphasising very strongly.

It has been a key component of the Strategic Plan for NCDs that ran from 2010 to 2014, and is again, a key component of the Strategic Plan specifically for NCDs that will be running from 2015 to 2019. It has been a key component in the review of the Public Health Act, the establishment of the Wellness Framework which has now been a key part of everything that happens in the Ministry. It has also led to the drive to revitalise the community health workers, the *nasi ni koro* that we have in all our villages, so that they can also begin to talk the message of preventing NCDs from rising, and has also led to the establishment of the Diabetic Foot Care and a whole host of other programmes.

We, in the Ministry, know that we cannot fight NCDs alone. We really need to change the perception of what a great lifestyle is. Today in our society, people's image of what a great lifestyle is, to a large extent, dictated by what they see on television and their perception of what great lifestyle is. I think, for us as leaders, that is something that we need to adopt. We, perhaps, need to start here, in Parliament, and see what kind of food that we feed ourselves with on a daily basis. We need to make sure that we have food that helps people to live a healthy lifestyle.

Within the Ministry, we intend to continue the implementation of the 2015-2019 Strategic Plan. The Plan has been developed and it will target actions at various levels – at primary level, tertiary level and secondary level. Since NCDs are associated with lifestyle and behaviour, interventions have to be targeted at a multi-sectoral approach. Overall, right now, there are five areas of action that we are focussing on:

- 1) Wellness Fiji at the community health worker level, there's a lot of programmes taking place at the ground level;
- 2) Wellness Fiji plus the NCD Tool Kit at nursing stations and health centre level;
- 3) Wellness Fiji plus the NCD Tool Kit and the PEN Package at the Special Outpatients Department level;
- 4) Complication Management at SOPD level; and
- 5) Rehabilitation Services.

Those are some of the things that are happening, Madam Speaker, in terms of trying to change people's perception of what they need to do.

In terms of the medicines that have been highlighted, I've already pointed out that out of the list of 72 medicines that will be part of the Free Medicine Package, 50 of these have been distributed. The others will be coming on-stream shortly. By the end of this month, there will be an additional 12, and the rest will follow after that. Included in that list are some of the essential medicines that we have for NCDs. So given the fact that there's always been a lot of work currently taking place within the Ministry of Health and there are plans to take this to another level, I do not see a reason, Madam Speaker, why this needs to be taken to the relevant standing committee as it has already been adequately dealt with within the Ministry itself. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you, honourable Minister, I will now call on the Leader of the Opposition to take the floor.

HON. RO T.V. KEPA.- Thank you, honourable Speaker.

I rise in support of this motion and I very much support what the Minister for Health has said, that we need to look at this as a preventative measure rather than waiting for the right medicine of which, he had stated this morning that there are 72 free and essential medicines that will be provided in total, from the Ministry of Health.

My point, Madam Speaker, is that, we need to look at the lifestyle because this is what is causing NCDs. Our lifestyle, whether we are exercising or whether we are eating fresh fruits and vegetables, which the Ministry of Health has been advocating and encouraging us to do. We see from the ads, especially on TV, how it looks so tempting and attractive, the fruits and vegetables that are shown on TV ads. But they're very expensive, Madam Speaker, especially if the fruits are from overseas and the vegetables are off-season, and that, you would have to spend a lot of money trying to create healthy dishes for your family on any given day, to try and prevent this high number of NCDs that we have in Fiji.

Honourable Salote has said that there's between 80-82% of NCDs in this country and I see it in the village, honourable Speaker. Really, upto 83% of deaths in the village are dying before the age of 70 and many of them are dying from NCDs. So, this is very much a problem, not only in the urban areas but also in the rural, remote and maritime areas where we, through the attractive ads that we see on TV and also in the newspapers, want to go for noodles and other types of food that are fast cooking but unhealthy and not nutritious.

So, I would ask in terms of this particular motion, if the Government could look at some tax exemption for fruits and vegetables, that are preventative in terms of NCDs because there's a lot of money that is being spent on free medication. I mean, that is very good, honourable Speaker, but we need to also look at how we can prevent these, if we are encouraged to be eating 5 fruits and vegetables a day, when these fruits and vegetables, especially in the city are very expensive. So, I would ask the Ministry of Health through the Ministry of Finance, to look at some tax exemptions on some of these fruits that the family can be fed with on a daily basis.

On another note, honourable Speaker, I am looking at the Ministry of Education as to how they can help in terms of this preventative measure. There are tuck shops, Madam Speaker, and we've often heard that the food that are sold in tuck shops are not conducive to good health. We have many children who are beginning to be showing signs of obesity. So, we would look at how the tuck shops can have some tax exemptions also, right from pre-school which is being advocated by the Government and has been alluded to by the Minister for Health, how they can have some tax exemptions in the tuck shops.

Also, that there be more activities in the school whereby they encourage gardening, they encourage physical education, they encourage the children to be sports-minded and also, they can join the service organisations like the Girl Guides, Boys Scouts, St. John Ambulance where there are a lot of activities that are involved with this type of service organisations in terms of trying to be active, trying to be conscious of their health and in terms of just trying to discourage this killer disease that we have here in Fiji. In looking around the room, honourable Speaker, I was just looking and thinking, because the Ministry of Health says that there's between 80-82% and I'm thinking that if we continue with this trend, 40/50 MPs will die from NCDs if we don't make a change in our lifestyle.

Thank you, honourable Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you, honourable Leader of the Opposition.

The honourable Leader of Government in Parliament, you have the floor.

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I rise to make my contribution to the motion that's before the House at the moment, with regards to NCDs and I respond with all passion, being a sufferer of cancer myself. It is not a very good condition for anyone to go through. It's something that you deal with every day and I support the initiatives that are before the House today, particularly the initiatives that have been put forward by the Minister for Health, which is particularly on the aspect of prevention. So, I think it is good for the House to encourage people to live healthy life, particularly eating fresh food is good for everyone.

HON. N. NWAIKULA.- Hear, hear!

HON. RO T.V. KEPHA.- Everyday!

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- I heard during yesterday's lunch session with the Business Committee, the honourable Gavoka relating to the issue of what we eat everyday - *rourou*, which is not quite a delicacy in the Western Division.

HON. OPPOSITION MEMBER.- *Libu!*

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- *Libu*, there you go, but that is from Wainibuka.

But my point here is that, I think there is an abundance of fresh fruits, fresh vegetables and also in the words of honourable Gavoka, the market in Suva is full of local fresh fruits. If one goes there today, it is full and they come very reasonably priced. We do not necessarily have to eat apples or pear or something that the big shops advertise on TV, there is an abundance of local fruits that are free and good for our health, and hopefully this will give additional years to my life given the condition that I already have. But, I think at the moment, Madam Speaker, as pointed out by the honourable Minister for Health, Government has the initiative to address these initiatives that we have already put in place, and also in the future, there are plans to deal with NCD in many ways. I think there is enough initiative already to deal with it now and also in the future, particularly to prevent the diseases before they occur, and before they kill all of us in this House or at least 40 per cent of us. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER.- I thank the honourable Leader of Government in Parliament. The honourable Prem Singh.

HON. P. SINGH.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise to contribute to the motion and I wholeheartedly agree with response from the honourable Minister for Health. He has very aptly presented to this House the undertaking that the Ministry is taking to address the issues of Non-Communicable Diseases, and I thank you, Minister.

Madam Speaker, let me just come back to the motion that is before the House. It states:

“That in view of the rise of non-communicable diseases (such as diabetes, heart-related illnesses and hypertension) and in relation to the free-medicine programme by Government, that this House directs the relevant Standing Committee to –

- (a) review the current procurement and supply process of medicines under this programme to address medicine shortages and to alleviate the additional cost burden incurred to citizens...”

Madam Speaker, we all agree that NCDs are prevalent across the board, whether you are rich or poor, and I also take note that to address this, we need to improve our lifestyles and add value to our life. In good health, there is nothing short of a good life.

Madam Speaker, in view of the motion, it seeks to review the current supply of medicine, and this motion, I feel, is very interesting because it relates to the Government's programme on free-medicine - an initiative for the people of Fiji, and on the other hand, how we can improve the supply of medicine. At the end of 2014, all Fijians were receiving free medicine in the public system regardless of their financial status, and with the proviso that all medicines were available in the bulk purchase system with the Fiji Pharmaceutical Services. So, with the new programmes in place, the current status is that the Ministry of Health and Medical Services and its National Therapeutic and Drug Committee have yet to upgrade the list of items on the 72 essential items to be made available. It's sort of being dysfunctional and not proactive. In watching signs of changing patterns of global prescribing, movement of the patency period and high quality generic readily available.

Madam Speaker, may I further add that out of the 72 items, 5 are already deleted as archaic and replaced, and 3 over the counter items are not recommended for paediatric use. Three items of insulin are indeed of rationalisation prior to be considered to be placed on the distribution list. In view of this, the Commerce Commission is going to review in conjunction with the health team, the 72 items which was due quarterly for review, and it has been pending for more than a year now. That includes the changing patterns of prescribing world pricing following the movement of the patency and generic production which needs to be monitored for sound economic gains to all concerned, particularly the taxpayers fork out the money.

Madam, without the industry consultation, without needs analysis of public and private systems and a population dynamic review, the free medicine scheme could result in a greater medication shortages for inpatients in public hospitals. The answer to that is, strengthening the bulk purchase scheme and right-sizing the needs in light of the communicable and non-communicable disease trends, and onslaught needs greater stakeholder input to succeed.

Madam Speaker, I further go on to say that whilst the initiative is appreciated, the procurement of supply of drugs in bulk, the system needs to be relooked at, and this is where the Committee can expand its knowledge and research to come to a solution where it will assist the existing programme. Thank you, Madam.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you, honourable Prem Singh. We will now invite the honourable Salote Radrodoro for her Right of Reply.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. Firstly, I would like to express my disappointment over the honourable Minister for Health's response. I support the proactive measures in terms of preventative health, but I believe he has deliberately sidestepped the issue, the heartbeat of my motion, and that is to review as being alluded to by honourable Prem Singh, the procurement system, and also to expand on the free-medicine list to be able to address the needs of those suffering from all those diseases under the NCD criteria.

HON. OPPOSITION MEMBERS.- Hear, hear!

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- If indeed this disease is a killer in Fiji, only political will, Madam Speaker, only political will in this august House will be able to make that change, nothing else. And, if that is what we are hearing from the honourable Minister for Health, I am very concerned.

Furthermore, Madam Speaker, in February, we were nominated to attend a Workshop on Human Rights whereby four Members of this august House attended. May I remind this august House that life is a human right. We have a right to life, so what is the Ministry going to be doing to all those patients under the NCD clinic right now? Aren't they going to expand the medicine list to include all those, so they don't have to go from Korovou to Nausori, or they don't have to go from Nabouwalu Subdivisional Hospital and go to Labasa just to purchase their medicine? They don't have the money.

Furthermore, Madam Speaker, may I read to you, to enhance us, that NCD breaches a right to life, and in that Workshop whereby the four Members attended, we signed and agreed that we were going to bring it up in Parliament, and that is why it has been moved as a motion that a Standing Committee be established to look into this issue. May I read one of the outcomes from that Human Rights Workshop which we were sent to attend, and it is our responsibility to bring it into this august House, and I quote:

“Non-Communicable Diseases are a crisis in the Pacific, and that includes Fiji, and warrant a whole of Government approach to arrest the unfolding epidemic.”

It is an epidemic.

We urge Parliamentarians to develop conducive legislation, policies and practices that address key NCDs behavioural risk factors like harmful use of alcohol, unhealthy diet, physical inactivity and tobacco use. And yet Madam Speaker, we still see in the TV advertisements that promotes all these food items that is not healthy to our diet. What is the Ministry of Health doing with that kind of advertisement?

If we are talking about proactive, if we are talking about preventative health measures then take out all those advertisements from the TV and the advertisements even uses children. As responsible leaders of this nation, we must, we must take concern and request the House that a Standing Committee be established so that the legislations can be looked into. Because it is not only the health legislations, it's also the companies, the business people, the legislations that we need to synchronise so that we indeed will be able to do something constructive about this disease. Therefore, Madam Speaker, may I once again request this august House that a Standing Committee be established if indeed the Government is serious ...

HON. GOVERNMENT MEMBERS.- We are serious.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- ... about the promises on free medicine to be able to address the

HON. GOVERNMENT MEMBERS.- Already addressed.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- We have to take it a step further, Madam Speaker, we have to step up our efforts. The list in this medicine list is not enough and I request, Madam Speaker, that the Standing Committee be established....

HON. GOVERNMENT MEMBERS.- Not necessary.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- We hear the voices of the people who are suffering and if we don't do anything constructive, we are indeed putting our hand into increasing that mortality rate of 4,000 Fijian people a year - dying of NCD diseases.

Thank you Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- I thank the honourable Radrodro. The Parliament will now vote on the honourable Salote Radrodro's motion. Does any honourable Member oppose the motion?

We will now put the motion to vote.

Secretary General.

SECRETARY GENERAL.- The result of the votes are as follows:

Votes Cast:

Ayes	-	14
Noes	-	25
Not voted	-	10

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. There being 25 Noes, the motion is defeated.

Thank you honourable Members we will move on to the third motion and I now call on the honourable Viliame Gavoka to move the motion.

HOLISTIC COMPENSATION – CURRENT AND FORMER PEACEKEEPERS

HON. V. R. GAVOKA.- Thank you Madam Speaker. I beg to move the motion under my name in today's Order Paper.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. Is there a Seconder?

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Madam Speaker, this is also a very important motion and I second it.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you.

I now call on the honourable Gavoka to table his motion.

HON. V. R. GAVOKA.- Thank you Madam Speaker. I move:

“That in light of the heightened level of risk/risk situations faced by Fijian peacekeeping soldiers on overseas missions and the consequential risk to body injury that could result in their death and permanent disability, and given the lack of an adequate compensation cover, that this House be requested to direct the relevant Standing Committee to -

- a) examine the manner in which compensation covers are drawn up with a view to recommending a holistic compensation cover for current peacekeepers; and
- b) review past cases of compensation for former peacekeepers who have suffered some form of injury or loss of life whilst on peacekeeping abroad and to recommend an appropriate compensation for the same.”

Madam Speaker, peacekeeping started in 1978, and for most of my generation, it was like yesterday when our young men, the finest of the nation went to Lebanon.

Over the years, Madam Speaker, reading through an economist report, some 25,000 of our people have served in peacekeeping duties. This is, Madam Speaker, to me was quite an illuminating figure and it was compared to Nepal and Bangladesh who are also very big in peacekeeping duties, but those countries have densely populated areas or very big in their population. Fiji under one million have contributed that much.

So, peacekeeping, Madam Speaker, the element of it touches a huge segment of our community. We compared it, when we say that tourism benefits a 100,000 people or more, Suva 200,000 people or more but peacekeeping duties. Madam Speaker, is also touching the lives of a vast majority of our people. If every 25,000 of those people have 4 in their family, that's already 100,000 people.

It behoves us then Madam Speaker, as we progress as a peacekeeping nation and in the words of my colleague the Minister of Defence that we have got a "super power" it behoves us to make sure that our troops are well trained, well equipped, well led and well looked after.

Madam Speaker, whatever is there in terms of insurance globally, whatever any troop in the world enjoys must be enjoyed by our troops. When they are under the United Nations, they must be equal to any troop anywhere in the world.

Madam Speaker, who pays for this? I believe the UN pays for some of it or pays for it but I think we can do further and have them contribute to a group policy during their term to the military. When they finish, Madam Speaker, there could be the maturity that can accrue to them. We have to look at this, Madam Speaker, we don't know what it is. Like I said, it's a huge industry now, I use the term "industry" because we are building Blackrock in Nadi we are going to be big in peacekeeping. We want to make sure that all our people are well looked after in the best possible way.

Madam Speaker, we must address this now as the country gears up for the next phase of peacekeeping, we need to make sure that today we address this now. That is why I am recommending very strongly that we have a Standing Committee. Let the dialogue be free, let the dialogue be transparent, let us just make sure that our people are well looked after.

In January 2015, Madam Speaker, a trooper Malakai Naika died in Sinai only a couple months ago. I would like to believe, Madam Speaker, that he got a \$100,000 insurance and \$10,000 for his funeral expenses. I would like to believe that. I don't know the full story, but I would like to believe that. As a father, as a Fijian, as a parliamentarian, I would like our troops to get something like that.

Madam Speaker, I have served in Boards in this country where I would have gotten that \$100,000 just like that. The only danger to me is driving from Sigatoka to Suva, our boys who are exposed to some of the most volatile areas in the world need this kind of insurance. I would like to urge the House to look after them and also the 58 who have died over the last 30 odd years almost 40 years. We looked after our Christmas Island veterans, we appreciated and applauded the action by the honourable Prime Minister. Let's also revisit the 58 who passed away over the years and let's see what they got. We should not be afraid to bring this up. We are now going into peacekeeping, like I said, let us be transparent. They are all ours, it becomes a national issue - every village, and every family in Fiji has a peacekeeper. So let us do it collectively. Let's make sure that our people are well looked after.

Madam Speaker, after peacekeeping the trauma, I believe some of our people have been exposed to some horrific scenes. Some have had to attend to gruesome task like picking up body pieces, what happened to them afterwards? They have to be also covered in that sense, Madam Speaker, the post trauma and the injuries afterwards.

Madam Speaker, let me ask the House as leaders, as fathers, as grandfathers, as brothers, as cousins or sisters, let's look after our troops, let's put this to our Standing Committee, let's do it collectively as one people be transparent and do the best for our troops.

Thank you Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you honourable Gavoka. The House is now open for debate on the motion.

HON. CAPT. T.L. NATUVA.- Madam Speaker, I thank honourable Gavoka for his motion but I want to reiterate is his favourite comment "that I am confused about his motion." Since the opening of Parliament, everything about RFMF has been shot down by the other side, for nearly everything that we put up. Now, what is the special reason for this motion?

Madam Speaker, to be a member of the RFMF, you volunteer, knowing the risk of death. If you die in the theatre, you make an ultimate sacrifice for peace to the world. We do not bring in a *kamunaga* for you to join the RFMF, knowing the risks involved.

Under the Bainimarama Government, the condition of service of the RFMF has been lifted to another level. The pay now is compatible to any other Government department.

For peacekeepers in Iraq, their allowance yearly is \$47,000.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- We are not talking about allowance.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Insurance scheme.

HON. CAPT. T.L. NATUVA.- I will get to that.

To answer the question, compensation is processed through the United Nation Advisory Board on compensation claims, who are appointed by the UN General Secretary to assess such claims.

Some of the criteria that must be satisfied are:

- (i) injury, illness, disability or death must occur in the mission area;
- (ii) it must occur while performing the mandate of the UN Mission;
- (iii) it must occur while travelling on behalf of the UN, transportation to be arranged or paid for by the UN;
- (iv) compensation is not paid for injuries; and
- (v) illness or death that is caused by wilful misconduct of the soldier or police officer.

In the event that the UN does not pay compensation, the Government intends to extend the application of the Workmen's Compensation laws, to cover illness, injury or death of servicemen or peacekeepers. The payout is determined by the outcome of any investigation into the injury, illness or death of the service person.

Madam Speaker, based on our promise to all Fijians under our Manifesto amply benefits the Civil Service, one of our promise was to double the amount payable under the Workmen's Compensation claims. This leads to the proposed review of the current Workmen's Compensation Act, Cap 94, which was submitted by the honourable Minister for Employment in Cabinet on 20th January of this year. Cabinet then endorsed the proposed amendments to the current Act, one of which is to double compensation for death from current \$24,000 to \$48,000. This proposal is currently before the Office of the Solicitor-General for his advice.

Madam Speaker, for the second part of the question, members of the disciplinary force are covered under the Workmen's Compensation Act, Cap. 94, from 1st February, 1997. Prior to this, there was no coverage for the military personnel.

The honourable Minister for Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment submitted a paper to Cabinet on 16th November, 2009, recommending compensation to our military personnel or their dependents during the tour of duty for the period 1978 to January 1997.

The Cabinet decision No. 339 dated 16th November, 2009 approved the Workmen's Compensation payouts to 29 deaths and 120 serious injury cases, recorded for those who served in Lebanon and Sinai, between 1978 to January 1997. A funding of \$3 million was approved by Government in 2010 and paid out accordingly. Now, all servicemen in the peacekeepers are covered under the After-Care Fund, which was approved under the Bainimarama Government. It was not done before but it was only in World War I and World II veterans.

Madam Speaker, current compensation that cover our peacekeepers who are out in the mission are the:

- (i) Workmen's Compensation Act, under Chapter 94, \$24,000 of death, injuries are calculated in accordance with the percentage in capacity that is assessed by a medical doctor;
- (ii) Army Medical Scheme, is based on the amount of insurance cover, which is the Group Scheme as was mentioned by the honourable Member; and
- (iii) UN compensation of US\$50,000 for work-related death cases.

Madam Speaker, not all injuries or death are compensated. An example was in the fatal shooting of the late Private Waqavonovono by a member of his guard, whilst on duty in Lebanon in 1994, the UN investigation determined that the incident was "wilful misconduct by a member of the same battalion", therefore, compensation was not payable.

Madam Speaker, our soldiers are well covered under the UN system of compensation and our domestic legislation.

Madam Speaker, for the motion, the current status of compensation is sufficient funding and the RFMF and the Ministry of Defence are under the current review of defence, and we are also considering the compensation to be part of review.

MADAM SPEAKER.- I thank the honourable Minister for Defence.

HON. RATU N.T. LALABALAVU.- Madam Speaker, I also rise to contribute to the motion that is before this House, and that is to do with the setting up of a Standing Committee to review, and to give

a holistic compensation cover review of our people doing peacekeeping duties, not only in the Army, Police but to members of the rehabilitation Ministry as well, in the Prisons.

Madam Speaker, as I stand before you to air my view, I stand also with the support and concurrence of the *Marama Bale na Roko Tui Dreketi*, the honourable Leader of the Opposition in saying our bit. Maybe at the outset, I hope it could be taken in the vein which I am about to explain, and that I do not differ with the position the honourable Draunidalo holds regarding the Military, but I am looking at it as a military institution.

This institution has produced great links, and it is one of the foremost in terms of educating and providing employment for native Fijians and on that, I have also had the opportunity to visit the operation areas in Lebanon, when Fiji peacekeepers were there and also in Sinai, which we still continue with that area of operation. What struck me, Madam Speaker, is the difference in the way the different armies of the different nations had served in peacekeeping duties are being compensated and taken care of. For example, those from the European countries, Nepal, India, et cetera and we can only look at the United States, their veterans are well taken care of and well looked after, even to the very basic things of going to the hospital, they have a special card. Also in the United Kingdom, the British Army, if you are a member of that army, you are also accessible for the Union Jack that caters for the people who have joined the British Army. But for us here, the good thing about this motion is that all we are trying to do is get another holistic compensation cover review, and not only that, I would like to recommend that we extend it to the allowances as well.

Our soldiers in Sinai, I pity them because they are doing exactly the same duties, maybe we are doing much better, but in terms of the allowances we are getting, it is very small, compared to what they are getting. For the last eight years, this is what we have been getting when we were last in Government through the SDL Government. The Peacekeepers Association keep on knocking on our doors and harping about these things because the compensation should be increased and the allowances should be increased, but for the last eight years, they have been in government. They are still running the Government now and all we are trying to say here, Madam Speaker, is can we get another Parliamentary Standing Committee to have a look at this in a holistic way. Not only in terms of what the soldiers are currently getting now, workmen's compensation, that is good but it does not help. The injuries that they get, the trauma that they go through is beyond explanation, Madam Speaker. They need special treatment, they need special attention. That is why I fully support this motion of having a Standing Committee to look into this – go to the people ask for their views so at least that is something coming from Parliament regarding our soldiers.

I am not talking about what happen with some poor decision making by some of the leaders or past leaders of the Military. I am talking about the Military institution. That institution has been there for us all these years. Training getting people to be better leaders of our country and I fully support the motion that is before the House. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- I thank the honourable Ratu Lalabalavu. The honourable Leader of Government in Parliament.

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- Madam Speaker, I rise to make my contribution to the current motion that is before the floor and I thank all the honourable Members that have made their contributions to this particular motion. Of course, it deals with a very important area with regards to the security of our soldiers and also their families and security during their term when they are in operations with regards to developing the capacities for force protection. That is the most important thing and making sure that they are properly trained.

Madam Speaker, the issue of compensation is always the issue with the whole lot of sensitivity because the question that normally arises, how much is enough. Obviously, any soldier would tell you or any military commander would say, if someone working as commander in an operational area, looking after the lives of men who are dealing in a mission would tell you that force protection is the best form of security that they would be given. Second only, in addition to that is training which is done in their own different forces from the countries that they have come from. So best training and force protection on the ground, making sure that the soldiers are safe, so that they do not get injured and if they do get injured, that it is mitigated and if there is an area where potentially risk is involved that the chances of fatality gets to be reduced as much as possible. So the areas of expenditure really should be in the forefront and giving our soldiers the protection.

Now, we have been discussing whole morning the issue of compensation, which is after the events of accidents has happened or death unfortunately has occurred to a peacekeeper. With regards to the Government's position, Madam Speaker, I think a lot has been done and this issue of compensation that is alluded to by the honourable Member has been something that has started I think from the time of Ratu Mara when he actually came up with this idea of deploying our troops. It has been a very good idea for the reasons that it benefitted the nation, but coming with that are also those other matters that are also attached to it, which has always been the subject of debate ever since.

I said earlier, Madam Speaker, is how much is enough because that is something that no one could ever put a finger into. There are guidelines that are in place internationally by the UN that guides the way compensation should be provided. We have just debated the Montreal Convention which gives a guide obviously to what can be paid for accidents and losses through aircraft accidents. In this case, losses, injuries and death sustained through peacekeeping operation. I am saying, Madam Speaker, that what is important here is the issue of the preparation of the soldiers when they go to peacekeeping. The amount of force protection that is granted to them in all the security in the areas where they are serving. That is the best compensation that we could give to them to make sure that they come home alive.

Government has done a lot during its term to look after this and making sure that our soldiers are well protected and well compensated when something does happen. But if you have another Committee to....

MADAM SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister, you do have two minutes, we will give you the two minutes but I think you have a motion....

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- I was just concluding, Madam Speaker. I was going to say that the measures are already in place that gives benefit to the issues that are before the House and there is no need really for any additional Committee to sit and talk about it again.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you very much. I believe you have a motion to table, given the time that we have. We have reached 12.30 p.m. Are we seeking leave of Parliament to continue to finish today's Order? We will ask the leave of Parliament to continue the Order for today. If the Leader of Government can move a motion to that effect.

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- Madam, the motion before the House is the motion of the other side. If they intend to move the House beyond the time specified then I think it is at their liberty to do that. I mean we have been given enough time for debate and as such, we have used the time allocated.

In that event, Madam Speaker, with all due respect, I move that the House completes the procedure for the day.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Do we have a seconder?

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

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you, the motion is before the House. We are seeking leave of Parliament to extend our sitting time so that we can complete today's Order Paper. Do we have anyone against the motion? In the absence of that, thank you so much, we will continue with the debate. Would you like to take your additional two Minutes, Leader of Government in Parliament?

HON. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- I have completed, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you very much. There being no other input to this debate. I will now put the motion to vote. Sorry, I will now give the floor to the honourable Gavoka for the right of reply.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Thank you, Madam Speaker, thank you for the contributions from the honourable Members. I just one to place this question before Government. Trooper Malakai Naika did he get \$100,000 insurance? And did he get \$10,000 funeral expenses? I would benchmark that whenever we have dialogue on this, Madam Speaker. That is why I would ask that we conduct this dialogue openly. As Government is keen of saying this is a new dawn, the new dawn of peacekeeping, the new dawn of involving everyone in Fiji like we do with the Tourism Industry, with the Sugar Industry. Let us not be afraid to put this before the people and have a dialogue as people who care for our troopers. I agree that training, equipment and all that, as outlined by my colleague there is important, so as the Americans, so as the Australians, so as everyone else doing that, Madam Speaker. But we need to assure ourselves that our boys and our women are well protected when they are in uniforms.

Madam Speaker, I just want to relate a story to the House. In Australia, a trooper died in combat and he got "x" amount of dollars. During the same period, a politician while cycling and exercising, fell of his bike and injured himself. He got more for his injuries than the trooper who died on the field and it caused an uproar in Australia. I just want to make sure that we in Fiji, are careful that whatever we do, there is relativity in how we do things. Our people must be well paid and well protected.

Madam Speaker, let me ask the House, please as a bi-partisan, these are our people, it is now a big part of our lives touching everyone in the 14 provinces, let us not be afraid to come together, managed by a Parliamentary committee from here and hear them, assure them that their sacrifice, what they do for this country, what they do to keep peace is appreciated and then we look after them as a people.

Thank you, Madam Speaker. It is critical to this, and I will ask the House to please support this motion, and let a Standing Committee look into this very important matter. Madam Speaker, the 58 who have passed away from 1979 and 1980, what about them, can we also revisit that, that is part of the exercise. Make sure that we look at what happened, compensate them where we fell short, and just bring everyone into the whole system and support our peacekeeping people in their endeavours abroad.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now put the motion to vote. Does any honourable Member oppose the motion?

There being an opposition, we will now put the motion to vote.

Votes Cast:

Ayes	-	12
Noes	-	25
Not Voted	-	10
Abstained	-	2

There being 25 Noes, the motion is defeated.

We will now move onto the last item on the Agenda – the Weekly Adjournment Motions.

ADJOURNMENT

LEADER OF GOVERNMENT IN PARLIAMENT.- Madam Speaker, I move that the Parliament be adjourned until 9.30 a.m. on Monday, 11th May, 2015.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. Do we have a seconder?

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

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Madam Speaker, point of order. They had agreed to finish the order of today.

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- It is part of the process.

MADAM SPEAKER.- I will now give the floor to the honourable Dulakiverata for his motion.

Weekly Adjournment Motions

State Land Leases

HON. J. DULAKIVERATA.- Madam Speaker, I rise to move the Weekly Adjournment Motion No. 1 of 2015 that this House:

- (a) examines the manner in which State land lease approvals are granted (for development purposes to both foreign and local developers); and
- (b) undertakes public consultations on the matter.

Madam Speaker, with your permission, I would like to also touch on some of the issues regarding native land and the engagement of CBUL in the exercise.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you.

HON. J. DULAKIVERATA.- Madam Speaker, I would like to bring about this issue as we are extremely disturbed at the manner in which some of our prime land had been leased out to foreign developers, especially when this land was also being sought for by local developers, but were denied the opportunity to do so. In leasing out to foreign developers, we examined that the normal process as required under the Native Land Trust Act or the Crown Lands Act had not been properly followed. I would like, Madam Speaker, to bring two examples which will accurately reflect the issue that I would like to inform the House about.

One of these cases, Madam Speaker, was the leasing of this land at Bayview Heights to an overseas developer. The land in question, Madam Speaker, was sold as civic and it was earmarked as a hospital site for the Fiji Military Forces. In fact, a sign board is still there today depicting that this land belongs to the military. I think the people that pass through this street would think that the building standing there is actually a military hospital.

The normal process, Madam Speaker, when dealing with State land, if a land had been earmarked for a specific department, before it is leased to another person or company, the normal process is to seek the advice of that particular Ministry, if they still require that land for the purpose it was reserved for. In that case, Madam Speaker, I would ask the honourable Minister for Defence if they (military) had gone through that process to advise the Ministry of Lands if they no longer require that site for the military hospital. If that site is no longer required for a military hospital, where is the new site now?

The most disturbing factor, Madam Speaker, is when we inquired about this land, we could not get much information because most of the civil servants were scared of giving information about this land. The site, Madam Speaker, now we see a two-storey building already on the site and the site next to it is being developed as a site for storing equipment and there is a building at the back which is still under construction. When we last spoke with Suva City Council, they advised us that since February, they went again to this supposed lessee because they had been doing illegal construction on the site without the approval of the relevant local authority, and there was no specific answer, Madam Speaker. The question I would like to ask the Minister for Local Government is, why did they allow this development to continue, if there was no approval from the relevant authority to build this building?

The building was not built overnight, Madam Speaker, it had been built over a certain period. It took quite some time to complete this double-storey building and the Building Engineer from the Suva City Council advised that there was no approval for the building plans nor had they given any occupancy licences to these buildings. The Lands Department, in allowing this development to take place, did not put up an advertisement for this site so that people who have the interest on this site can also apply for the use of this land. So, Madam Speaker, there are a lot of questions to be asked. If this type of development continues and people disregard the law, then they must be getting their instructions from somewhere else because they are so confident of what they're doing.

The second issue, Madam Speaker, is the leasing of this proposed China Town Development in Raiwai which had seen the destruction of about 17 acres of mangrove swamp. This is, Madam Speaker, to allow a much wanted \$500 million project planned for this area. The company that is developing this site is the Golden Century Real Estate Company. The information we got, Madam Speaker, was that, this Company had collapsed in August last year and it appeared that proper procedures were not followed in the leasing of this site. We have checked that no proper Environmental Impact Assessment was carried out, the people of Suvavou had not been paid their full fishing rights compensation over this area, and also, Madam Speaker, the developer of this site had

been under investigation in China. I wonder if the Ministry of Lands had carried out due diligence before they gave this land to this Company.

The Lands Department recently carried out a public consultation, Madam Speaker, which, I think, was too late because this should have been undertaken before the project started. They were met with a lot of objections from the people living around the area, that this development has caused a lot of problems within the adjoining residential area because they have blocked out a natural waterway there, which has caused a lot of flooding during normal heavy pours, Madam Speaker. So, to conclude, Madam Speaker, I think that the leasing of this State land should be transparently conducted, to allow

MADAM SPEAKER.- I thank the honourable Dulakiverata.

HON. J. DULAKIVERATA.- Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- I now give the floor to the Minister for Lands.

HON. M. VUNIWAQA.- Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It is rather unfortunate that the honourable Member has used a weekly adjournment motion to discuss two specific cases in relation to State land leases. If he was trying to achieve some positive outcome, some facts to be brought out in relation to those State land leases, he would have done well to bring them up during question time so that the Ministry of Lands could provide him with the necessary answers that he is after.

It is just a correction of fact in relation to the leasing of land along Grantham Road, Madam Speaker. He indicated that the Ministry of Lands recently carried out a public consultation exercise in relation to that development, which is factually incorrect. I understand it was the Department of Town and Country Planning, in its usual exercise of public consultations in relation to such developments, carried out that public consultation - it was not the Ministry of Lands. The Ministry of Lands' role stops once it grants a lease. It did that for the Bayview Heights, it did that in relation to the site at Grantham Road.

I'd like to go back to the motion that is before this House, where the honourable Member is moving that the House examines the manner in which State land lease approvals are granted, and undertake public consultations on the matter. I would not ask this House, to waste its time doing this because Government has done it.

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- Tell them! Tell them!

HON. M. VUNIWAQA.- Government has done public consultations all around the country for this very purpose, to hear from ordinary Fijians who are customers, who lease land from the State, about the issues they're facing in relation to their interaction with the Ministry of Lands, and also ongoing issues in relation to their leasing of State land. Out of those public consultations, we were able to:

- 1) resolve the individual issues; and
- 2) look at the greater policy procedural issues relating to the leasing of State land leases in Fiji.

Madam Speaker, I must thank the honourable Prime Minister for his vision in 2013. Under his leadership, they started to consolidate, for the first time in the Ministry of Lands, the processes and procedures in relation to the leasing of State land in Fiji. Previously, it was done in an *ad hoc* basis and it is, therefore, of no surprise that there were so many complaints about corruption, about staff not doing what they were supposed to do in relation to simple applications that came to the Ministry.

The culmination of that exercise from 2013, was the launch of the Ministry of Land's first ever Standard Operation Procedures in relation to every application that came before the Ministry, whether it be for State land leases, foreshore leases, mining leases or any application. We now have a consolidated Standard Operation Procedures for the Ministry.

This Standard Operation Procedures has been on trial for some time because we're talking here about decades of processes and procedures, some may differ from the other, so we're trying to put in place something standard that customers can relate to, and also that Management can relate to in assessing the staff within the Ministry. I must, to that end, thank the honourable Prime Minister and the hardworking staff of the Ministry in putting together this document which will, for the first time, be able to put a standard against which the performance of the Ministry and of staff can be measured.

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- Tell them!

HON. M. VUNIWAQA.- Madam Speaker, we have come a long way in the State land administration in Fiji. It took years, but now with this Standard Operating Procedures, we're able to (if I may use the word) impose a transparent, equitable and accountable way of State land leasing, beginning with the need for advertisements. Like the honourable Member said, that was a normal procedure. He would also agree that that was never done always. The Minister has a reserve power under Section 10 of the State Lands Act to direct that a land not to be advertised. That power is used sparingly and it is used in line with Government policy or a critical need that the nation may be facing.

I did speak about foreshore leases as well, Madam Speaker. This is also a critical area that hasn't been encompassed or captured in any sort of procedures within the Ministry. Yes, there have been general policy guidelines to that effect, but when it comes down to an officer who is assessing an application at her desk, there was nothing to guide these officers. But now with our SOP, these staff are able to refer to a document on their desk telling them what to do after every step. With this in force now, and we are hoping that by the end of this year, like with any new document, it will take time for the staff to get adjusted to it and for the timelines within to be fully implemented.

So, with the motion that is before the House, Madam Speaker, I reiterate the Government has examined the manner in which State lease approvals have been done. It has taken positive action by reviewing those, and putting together a set of procedures to address the challenges that existed there previously, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you very much, honourable Minister. You will note in the Order Paper that the next Adjournment Motion is supposed to be presented by the honourable Vadei, but we have received advice that he is unwell and is not able to table that motion. With that regard, we have come to the time when the weekly adjournment debate is now finished and we will vote on the Motion to adjourn Parliament. I remind Members that....

HON. RATU I.D. TIKOCA.- Point of Order, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Point of order!

HON. RATU I.D. TIKOCA.- I rise on a point of order, pursuant to Standing Order 74, Madam Speaker. This is in regards to the week's reference to decorum and the discipline and the honour of this honourable House. I would like, Madam Speaker, to refer to some history as previously we have also been given some history lessons from the other side.

The timeless speech of Sir Winston Churchill of the American people in October, 16th 1938, is as relevant....

(Chorus of interjections!)

HON. RATU I. D. TIKOCA.- Hold on! He says, relevant to our situation in Fiji today, as it was to the world back then, and as an introduction to my point of order, Madam Speaker, allow me to quote certain excerpts.

“Alexander the Great remarked that the people of Asia were slaves because they had not learned to pronounce the word "No." Let that not be the epitaph of the English-speaking peoples or of Parliamentary democracy, or of France, or of the many surviving liberal States of Europe. There is, in one single word, is the resolve which the forces of freedom and progress of tolerance and good will, should take...”

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- Point of Order, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- I will call on your point of order, if we can just complete the first point of order. Thank you.

You may continue, honourable Tikoca.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Carry on.

HON. RATU I.D. TIKOCA.- Thank you, Madam Speaker.

“It is not in the power of one nation, however formidably armed, still less is it in the power of a small group of men, violent, ruthless men, who have always to cast their eyes back over their shoulders, to cramp and fetter the forward march of human destiny. The preponderant world forces are upon our side; they have but to be combined to be obeyed....”

MADAM SPEAKER.- Honourable Member, what is the point of order?

HON. RATU I.D. TIKOCA.- Standing Order 74....

HON. F.S. KOYA.- What is your point of order?

HON. RATU I.D. TIKOCA.- Read your point of order!

“... but arms, instrumentalities, as President Wilson called them, they are not sufficient by themselves. We must add to them the power of ideas....”

HON. GOVT. MEMBERS.- What is the point of order?

MADAM SPEAKER.- What is the point of order, please? What is the point of order?

HON. RATU I.D. TIKOCA.- Standing Order 74.

MADAM SPEAKER.- What does it say? Point of order is really addressing any deviation on rules...

HON. RATU I.D. TIKOCA.- That is why I am actually standing on Point of Order 74.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- It's a Point of Order!

MADAM SPEAKER.- What is the Point of Order?

HON. RATU I.D. TIKOCA.- And the issue is reference to the decorum and order that we went through this week, and I think I have a right, my privilege to stand and express my feeling about what had happened through the week. I am just stating that, and what is wrong with that?

HON. OPPOSITION MEMBERS.- Carry on, carry on.

HON. RATU I.D. TIKOCA.- But arms, instrumentalities, as President Wilson called them, are not sufficient by themselves.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. RATU I.D. TIKOCA.- We must add to them the power of ideas..

MADAM SPEAKER.- Honourable Member, you will continue to have interjections, if you are not going to be focussed on the Point of Order that you are wanting to take. Please, can we have the Point of Order? How have we deviated from the Standing Order that you have just quoted?

HON. RATU I.D. TIKOCA.- The Point of Order under Standing Order 74 stating exactly what I am doing now. My right and my privilege.

MADAM SPEAKER.- How have we deviated from that Standing Order?

HON. RATU I.D. TIKOCA.- I am addressing the honourable House which is my privilege, and I am trying to refer to the order that we went through, that at times, it was disgusting and I want to raise my concern and be part of this.

(Chorus of interjections)

MADAM SPEAKER.- Normally, for Point of Orders, we are given 30 seconds. You have gone beyond the 30 seconds, this is why I am asking exactly what is the Point of Order that I can rule on.

HON. RATU I.D. TIKOCA.- I think, I have just explained myself, Madam. I am not too sure.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. RATU I. D. TIKOCA.- I am not too sure with the Point of Order that you are raising.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. I think the Point of Order that has been raised is the observance of the, respecting the decorum of the House in these last few days of sitting. Your Point

of Order is noted, and that will be noted for the way we are going to be proceeding with procedures of the House in the next sitting. But thank you for bringing that up. That Point of Order is noted.

HON. RATU I.D. TIKOCA.- Can I continue?

MADAM SPEAKER.- No, that Point of Order is noted.

(Chorus of interjections)

MADAM SPEAKER.- Honourable Member, the Point of Order is noted.

(Chorus of interjections)

MADAM SPEAKER.- Honourable Member, the Point of Order is noted.

HON. V. PILLAY.- Sit down!

MADAM SPEAKER.- And I thank you.

(Chorus of interjections)

MADAM SPEAKER.- Alright, this is the last day of sitting, I really don't want to finish this sitting with questions in our minds.

HON. RATU I.D. TIKOCA.- Madam Speaker, I am actually repeatedly being stopped from the rights that I have and the privilege in this august House, and that has always been in the last sittings of Parliament during question time. If you can allow me to address this.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Okay, my ruling is, yes, I will allow you to continue with what you are describing. Please, continue.

HON. RATU I.D. TIKOCA.- You see these dictators on their pedestals, surrounded by the bayonets and their soldiers and the truncheons of their police. On all sides they are guarded by masses of armed men, cannons, aeroplanes, fortifications, and the like - they boast and vaunt themselves before the world, yet in their hearts there is unspoken fear. They are afraid of words and thoughts; words spoken abroad, thoughts stirring at home they are all the more powerful because forbidden it terrifies them. A little mouse, a tiny little mouse of thought appears in the room and even the mightiest potentates are thrown into panic. They make....

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you, honourable Member. Honourable Member, I did give you time but it seems that your point of order is still unclear even with that time given and we have another point of order to be presented.

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- Point of order. Madam Speaker, I was going to say the honourable Member is using a Standing Order within the standing orders of Parliament that is inappropriate for him to make the comments that he is making. We recognise under Standing Order 74 that we all have the privilege to stand up and raise a point of order, like what I am doing now. But I think that the contents of what came later and I agree with your ruling that it is not within the point of order that he has raised which is why I am standing and I think that we should not allow for that. The House should not accommodate that.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- It's a point of order.

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- No, his point order is under Standing Order 74. He is using the wrong Standing Order. That's my point. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you for your point of order and I am not allowing any more points of order right now. We would now like to vote on the motion to adjourn Parliament and I remind Members that this vote is to decide whether to adjourn Parliament until Monday 11th May, 2015. Does any Member opposes the motion?

As no Member opposes the motion, it is therefore agreed to unanimously.

The Parliament is now adjourned to 9.30 a.m. on Monday 11th May, 2015.

The Parliament adjourned at 1.07 p.m.