

MONDAY, 30TH MAY, 2016

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

HON. SPEAKER took the Chair and read the Prayer.

PRESENT

Hon. Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum, Attorney-General and Minister of Finance, Public Enterprises, Civil Service and Communications
Hon. Faiyaz Siddiq Koya, Minister for Industry, Trade and Tourism
Hon. Parveen Bala Kumar, Minister for Local Government, Housing, Environment, Infrastructure and Transport
Hon. Mereseini Rakuita Vuniwaqa, Minister for Lands and Mineral Resources
Hon. Osea Naiqamu, Minister for Fisheries and Forests
Hon. Lt. Col. Inia Batikoto Seruiratu, Minister for Agriculture, Rural & Maritime Development and National Disaster Management
Hon. Rosy Sofia Akbar, Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation
Hon. Lorna Eden, Assistant Minister for Local Government and Tourism
Hon. Commander Joeli Ratulevu Cawaki, Assistant Minister for Rural and Maritime Development and National Disaster Management
Hon. Dr. Mahendra Reddy, Minister for Education, Heritage and Arts
Hon. Commander Semi Tuleca Koroilavesau, Minister for Employment, Productivity and Industrial Relations
Hon. Veena Kumar Bhatnagar, Assistant Minister for Health and Medical Services
Hon. Vijay Nath, Assistant Minister for Infrastructure and Transport
Hon. Iliesa Delana, Assistant Minister for Youth and Sports
Hon. Mosese Drecala Bulitavu
Hon. Mohammed Mursalinul Abe Dean
Hon. Roko Tupou Takeiwai Senirewa Draunidalo
Hon. Jiosefa Dulakiverata
Hon. Viliame Rogoibulu Gavoka
Hon. Semesa Druavesi Karavaki
Hon. Ro Teimumu Vuikaba Kepa
Hon. Ratu Kiniviliame Kiliraki
Hon. Jilila Nalibu Kumar
Hon. Dr. Brij Lal
Hon. Mikaele Rokosuka Leawere
Hon. Alvick Avhikrit Maharaj
Hon. Ratu Suliano Matanitobua
Hon. Alivereti Nabulivou
Hon. Ruveni Nadabe Nadalo
Hon. Ratu Sela Vuinakasa Nanovo
Hon. Niko Nawaikula
Hon. Mataiasi Akoula Niumataiwalu
Hon. Alexander David O'Connor
Hon. Viam Pillay

Hon. Prof. Biman Chand Prasad
Hon. Aseri Masivou Radrodro
Hon. Salote Vuibureta Radrodro
Hon. Lt. Col. Netani Rika
Hon. Balmindar Singh
Hon. Prem Singh
Hon. Ashneel Sudhakar
Hon. Ratu Isoa Delamisi Tikoca
Hon. Anare Tuidraki Vadei
Hon. Samuela Bainikalou Vunivalu

APOLOGY

Hon. Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama, Prime Minister and Minister
for *iTaukei* Affairs and Sugar
Hon. Ratu Inoke Kubuabola, Minister for Foreign Affairs
Hon. Lt. Col. Laisenia Bale Tuitubou, Minister for Youth and Sports
Hon. Captain Timoci Lesi Natuva, Minister for Immigration, National Security and
Defence
Hon. Jone Usamate, Minister for Health and Medical Services
Hon. Ratu Naiqama T. Lalabalavu

MINUTES

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

That the Minutes of the sitting of Parliament held on Friday, 29th April, 2016, as previously circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed.

HON. A. SUDHAKAR.- Madam Speaker, I second the motion.

Question put.

Motion agreed to.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

Acknowledgment of Honourable Members and Visitors in the Gallery

HON. SPEAKER.- I welcome all Honourable Members to this sitting of Parliament. I also warmly welcome a group of students from Gospel High School and members of the public joining us in the gallery and those watching on television, internet and listening on the radio. Thank you for taking an interest in your Parliament.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND CERTAIN DOCUMENTS

HON. SPEAKER.- I now call on the Honourable Minister for Industry, Trade and Tourism to table his reports.

HON. F.S. KOYA.- Madam Speaker, in accordance with Standing Order 38, I present the following Annual Reports to Parliament –

- (i) Tourism Fiji - Annual Report: 2010-2012; and
- (ii) Consumer Council of Fiji - Annual Report 2014.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Please hand the reports to the Secretary-General.

(Reports handed to the Secretary-General)

HON. SPEAKER.- Pursuant to Standing Order 38(2), I refer the Tourism Fiji - Annual Report: 2010-2012 to the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs and the Consumer Council of Fiji Annual Report 2014 to the Standing Committee on Social Affairs.

I now call upon the Attorney-General and Minister for Finance, Public Enterprises, Civil Service and Communications to table his reports, as well as a report to be tabled on behalf of the Honourable Minister for Defence, National Security and Immigration. The floor is yours.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Thank you. Madam Speaker, in accordance with Standing Order 38, and on behalf of the Honourable Minister for Defence, National Security and Immigration, I present to Parliament the Fiji Police Annual Report 2014. Also, pursuant to Standing Order 38, I present to Parliament the following Reports:

- (i) Report of the Auditor-General of the Republic of Fiji – Audits of Commercial Companies, Commercial Statutory Authorities, Majority Owned Entities – February 2009;
- (ii) Report of the Auditor-General of the Republic of Fiji – Audits of Government Commercial Companies, Commercial Statutory Authorities, Majority Owned Entities – Off-Budget State Entities – December 2009;
- (iii) Report of the Auditor-General of the Republic of Fiji – Audits of Government Commercial Companies and Commercial Statutory Authorities – June 2009;
- (iv) Report of the Auditor-General of the Republic of Fiji – Audits of Statutory Authorities – June 2009;
- (v) Report of the Auditor-General of the Republic of Fiji – Audits of Government Commercial Companies, Commercial Statutory Authorities, Majority Owned Entities, Off-Budget State Entities – December 2010;

- (vi) Report of the Auditor-General of the Republic of Fiji – Audits of Government Commercial Companies, Commercial Statutory Authorities, Majority Owned Entities and Off-Budget State Entities – June 2010;
- (vii) Report of the Auditor-General of the Republic of Fiji – Audits of Statutory Authorities – December 2010;
- (viii) Report of the Auditor-General of the Republic of Fiji – Audits of Statutory Authorities – June 2010;
- (ix) Report of the Auditor-General of the Republic of Fiji – Audits of Government Commercial Companies, Commercial Statutory Authorities, Off-Budget State Entities, Majority Owned Entities, Provincial Councils, and Special Projects – December 2011;
- (x) Report of the Auditor-General of the Republic of Fiji – Audits of Government Commercial Companies, Commercial Statutory Authorities, and Off-Budget State Entities – June 2011;
- (xi) Report of the Auditor-General of the Republic of Fiji – Audits of Statutory Authorities – December 2011;
- (xii) Report of the Auditor-General of the Republic of Fiji – Audits of Statutory Authorities – June 2011;
- (xiii) Report of the Auditor-General of the Republic of Fiji – Audits of Government Commercial Companies, Commercial Statutory Authorities, Off-Budget State Entities and Majority Owned Entities – December 2012;
- (xiv) Report of the Auditor-General of the Republic of Fiji – Audits of Government Commercial Companies, Commercial Statutory Authorities, Off-Budget State Entities and Majority Owned Entities – June 2012;
- (xv) Report of the Auditor-General of the Republic of Fiji – Audits of Statutory Authorities – December 2012;
- (xvi) Report of the Auditor-General of the Republic of Fiji – Audits of Statutory Authorities – June 2012;
- (xvii) Report of the Auditor-General of the Republic of Fiji – Audits of Government Commercial Companies, Commercial Statutory Authorities, Majority Owned Entities – Off-Budget State Entities – June 2013; and
- (xviii) Report of the Auditor-General of the Republic of Fiji – Audits of Statutory Authorities – June 2013.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Please hand the reports to the Secretary-General.

(Reports handed to the Secretary-General)

HON. SPEAKER.- Pursuant to Standing Order 38(2), I refer the Fiji Police Annual Report 2014 to the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence. Also, pursuant to Standing Order 38(2), I refer the following reports to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts:

- (i) Report of the Auditor-General of the Republic of Fiji – Audits of Commercial Companies, Commercial Statutory Authorities, Majority Owned Entities – February 2009;
- (ii) Report of the Auditor-General of the Republic of Fiji – Audits of Government Commercial Companies, Commercial Statutory Authorities, Majority Owned Entities – Off-Budget State Entities – December 2009;
- (iii) Report of the Auditor-General of the Republic of Fiji – Audits of Government Commercial Companies and Commercial Statutory Authorities – June 2009;
- (iv) Report of the Auditor-General of the Republic of Fiji – Audits of Statutory Authorities – June 2009;
- (v) Report of the Auditor-General of the Republic of Fiji – Audits of Government Commercial Companies, Commercial Statutory Authorities, Majority Owned Entities, Off-Budget State Entities – December 2010;
- (vi) Report of the Auditor-General of the Republic of Fiji – Audits of Government Commercial Companies, Commercial Statutory Authorities, Majority Owned Entities and Off-Budget State Entities – June 2010;
- (vii) Report of the Auditor-General of the Republic of Fiji – Audits of Statutory Authorities – December 2010;
- (viii) Report of the Auditor-General of the Republic of Fiji – Audits of Statutory Authorities – June 2010;
- (ix) Report of the Auditor-General of the Republic of Fiji – Audits of Government Commercial Companies, Commercial Statutory Authorities, Off-Budget State Entities, Majority Owned Entities, Provincial Councils, and Special Projects – December 2011;
- (x) Report of the Auditor-General of the Republic of Fiji – Audits of Government Commercial Companies, Commercial Statutory Authorities, and Off-Budget State Entities – June 2011;
- (xi) Report of the Auditor-General of the Republic of Fiji – Audits of Statutory Authorities – December 2011;

- (xii) Report of the Auditor-General of the Republic of Fiji – Audits of Statutory Authorities – June 2011;
- (xiii) Report of the Auditor-General of the Republic of Fiji – Audits of Government Commercial Companies, Commercial Statutory Authorities, Off-Budget State Entities and Majority Owned Entities – December 2012;
- (xiv) Report of the Auditor-General of the Republic of Fiji – Audits of Government Commercial Companies, Commercial Statutory Authorities, Off-Budget State Entities and Majority Owned Entities – June 2012;
- (xv) Report of the Auditor-General of the Republic of Fiji – Audits of Statutory Authorities – December 2012;
- (xvi) Report of the Auditor-General of the Republic of Fiji – Audits of Statutory Authorities – June 2012;
- (xvii) Report of the Auditor-General of the Republic of Fiji – Audits of Government Commercial Companies, Commercial Statutory Authorities, Majority Owned Entities – Off-Budget State Entities – June 2013; and
- (xviii) Report of the Auditor-General of the Republic of Fiji – Audits of Statutory Authorities – June 2012.

QUESTIONS

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. The first oral question and I call upon the Hon. S.V. Radrodro to have the floor.

Oral Questions

Rebuilding of Classrooms and Teachers Quarters
(Question No. 72/2016)

HON. S.V. RADRODRO asked the Government, upon notice:

Can the Honourable Minister for Education, Heritage and Arts inform this House when will the rebuilding of classrooms and teachers quarters in badly affected areas like Ra, Koro, Coastal Tailevu area, Cikobia, Vanua Balavu and Yacata will start?

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now call upon the Honourable Minister for Education, Heritage and Arts to have the floor.

HON. DR. M. REDDY (Minister for Education, Heritage and Arts).- Madam Speaker, I want to thank the Honourable Member for asking this question.

Madam Speaker, the construction of schools are not done by the Ministry of Education. The Ministry of Education has got a different brief. We educate students; primary, secondary and tertiary.

The construction of schools requires finance, hence we have a Construction Implementation Unit under the Ministry of Finance, however, I will just provide a brief overview and I suggest that the Honourable Member redirects the question to the Ministry of Finance later on.

Madam Speaker, the first step was to provide a comprehensive database on schools which requires construction and that was done and launched by the Honourable Prime Minister.

The second step, Madam Speaker, was to undertake an assessment by qualified engineers. Madam Speaker, 181 schools have been assessed by engineers and because of the difficulty to reach maritime schools, reports are still coming in.

Madam Speaker, the third step was to call for Expression of Interests from potential construction companies for design and construction. That process is closed, the tender for that closed on 25th May and maybe, by the second week of June, about 22 packages, in clusters, will be given to the various construction companies to design and construct schools in different areas and because of economies of scale, you give it to one contractor and 10 or 20 schools will get better dealer from that.

Madam Speaker, that is the process that is being adopted. Once we have the start date, then we can give the end date but overall, it is the desire of this Government to ensure that the schools get better infrastructure ready by end of this year. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. A supplementary question, Honourable Salote Radrodro.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Thank you, Madam Speaker and I thank the Honourable Minister for his response. When can the Honourable Minister table a report on the education sector in this House so that we can be well informed and to validate the information that you have just tabled?

The children are still out in the tents. What alternative strategies does the Ministry have in place, to be able to give the students and according to the Red Cross statistics, there are more than 85,000 children who are still studying in tents. So in short, the question is, what alternative strategies are in place to replace the tents, which are becoming very hot and not very conducive to children's learning, particularly bearing in mind the children that will be sitting for examination this year?

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Minister for Education, Heritage and Arts.

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Madam Speaker, the alternative strategy is to get the classrooms done and that is what I had said, that we have provided the data that this is the process. The process is one, to get the assessment done – 181 schools, the assessments have been done. These are not just some carpenters who are down there to do the assessment, these are done by engineers, Madam Speaker. Given the number of schools that are affected, it takes time – 181 schools have been done and we are waiting for reports from the maritime areas.

Honourable Members should realise the schools are dispersed in Fiji, they are in different, different islands. The next step, Madam Speaker, is to get the contractors. We cannot just willy-nilly dish it out to some carpenters to do the construction. There is a process, we are dealing with public funds, the process has to be followed. These are the same people who will come and question us as to why this person was given the contract.

Madam Speaker, that is the process I have explained, I suggest that the Honourable Member should wait.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you, I give the floor to the Honourable Nawaikula.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Madam, the Honourable Minister says that it is not the Ministry's responsibility, it is the Ministry's responsibility.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- He did not say that.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Three months and he says 'desire', we do not need desire, we want action. What has the Ministry done in the last three months, in relation to the health, to the welfare of these children who are sitting outside?

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Minister.

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Madam Speaker, I gave a comprehensive Ministerial Statement some time back.

HON. MEMBER.- He was not here.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Madam Speaker, this is the problem when we find people absent. I gave a comprehensive Ministerial Statement on how we dealt with it. I will email him another copy.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now give the floor to the Honourable Leawere.

HON. M.R.. LEAWERE.- Thank you, Madam Speaker, I thank the Honourable Minister for his response but the problem is that, these schools have students learning in these classrooms, but the question that I would like to pose to the Honourable Minister is, what kind of support are the students receiving in terms of counselling, like psycho-social support? How is the Ministry tackling that issue because these students have been through a lot of trouble and they are traumatised because of the devastation caused by *Winston*? I wonder what the Ministry is doing in terms of this psycho-social support for them. Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister.

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- In that Ministerial Statement, I answered that question. I am going to email because you were not there, I will email that Ministerial Statement, Madam Speaker, to the Honourable Member.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. I will give the last question to the NFP because three questions came from SODELPA, I now give the floor to the Honourable Professor Biman Prasad.

HON. PROF. B.C. PRASAD.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. I know the Honourable Minister, in his Ministerial Statement did not talk about funding exclusively. Can I ask him quite clearly, he referred as he should to the Ministry of Finance. Do we have the money, do we have the budget to fix the schools? Give us that answer.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Yes or no?

HON. PROF. B.C. PRASAD.- Or are you waiting for the budget? Are you waiting for the budget or you have the money? Give us a very clear answer.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. PROF. B.C. PRASAD.- Give us a very clear answer. Do you have the money to fix the school or not? Full stop!

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Madam Speaker, the Government has clearly said that “we will construct all schools.”

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. I have been informed that Question No. 73 has been deferred until Friday; Question 74 has been withdrawn; and Question 75 has been deferred until Wednesday. We will therefore, move on to the fifth oral question, which is Question 76 on the Order Paper. I now give the floor to the Honourable Viam Pillay?

‘Help for Homes Initiative’
(Question No. 76/2016)

HON. V. PILLAY asked the Government, upon notice:

Can the Honourable Attorney-General and Minister for Finance, Public Enterprises, Civil Service and Communications brief this House on the ‘Help for Homes Initiative’, how is it progressing and the areas so far covered and yet to be covered?

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now give the floor to the Hon. Attorney-General and Minister for Finance, Public Enterprises, Civil Service and Communications.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM (Attorney-General and Minister for Finance, Public Enterprises, Civil Service and Communications).- Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to thank Honourable Viam Pillay for this question.

Madam Speaker, the ‘Help for Homes Initiative’ has been in place on the ground now for three weeks, and it has assisted a total of 22,083 homes.

Madam Speaker, the areas that have been covered, included people who were claiming, via under this Initiative from Vanua Balavu, from the Lomaiviti Group, Taveuni, Savusavu, Bua, Tailevu, Ra, Tavua, Ba and Lautoka. Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Supplementary question, Honourable Vadei.

HON. A.T. VADEI.- Supplementary question, Madam Speaker. I thank the Honourable Attorney-General for his response.

Last week, we just celebrated with the people of Levuka the success of our weightlifting team, but unfortunately, the classification of the assistance given is not fair enough for these people, because most of their homes were completely damaged and yet, for the people from Urata Village, nothing was damaged, but yet they received assistance.

I got the evidence with me, and I am asking, what sort of classification was done to the 1,500 and the 7,000 assistance rendered to the people assisted after *TC Winston*?

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, if the Honourable Member knows of people who have benefitted from this particular initiative and they should not have, please, give that information. There will be a police investigation on people who received benefits that they should not have.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Supplementary question, Honourable Ratu Kiliraki.

HON. RATU K. KILIRAKI.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. It is mentioned that there are about 22,000 recipients of this initiative and my question is, how many are still left to be serviced in this initiative, and whether there is an open door because people have been advised to come to the Welfare to report in regards to the assistance?

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you, Honourable Minister.

HON. A SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, if I could ask the Honourable Member to repeat his question, because I did not understand what it was about.

HON. RATU K. KILIRAKI.- It was mentioned that 22,000 houses and recipients and my question is, how many are still there left to qualify for this initiative, given the fact that there is still an open door being broadcasted for people to come to the Welfare Office to report that they need assistance? Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you, Honourable Member.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, the reality is that in some areas wherever there were assessments, some of them were carried out by the Ministry of Natural Disaster Management, where they have gone out through the Divisional Commissioners and assisted.

So, let me give you an example, to put it to perspective, Honourable Kiliraki. In Taveuni, 1,620 homes were identified as being damaged, in some form or the other. But, in fact, a total of 2,300 homes have already been assisted through this particular initiative.

So, in terms of the assistance that has been provided, it is dependent on the individuals who have come along, signed the declaration, and there is a verification process. They may check with the list that has been assessed, but some people actually were not assessed at that particular point in time.

So, that is why you have the declaration, that is very critical and then of course, it is followed by the audit checks by the Ministry of Finance. So, there is a particular process in place and I will be issuing a full Ministerial Statement on this particular matter later on. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you, and the third and last question, I give the floor to the Honourable Dulakiverata.

HON. J. DULAKIVERATA.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. For the number of homes that will be built under this Programme, it is a very massive exercise. I want to ask the Minister, what programme do you have to ensure that all these homes will be subject to the National Building Code? Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Thank you. I thank the Honourable Member for this question.

Madam Speaker, the Honourable Member is absolutely right, when in the 1990s when they brought about the Building Code in Fiji, the then Government had decided that the Building Code will not be applied uniformly throughout Fiji because most people, in particular in the rural areas and the maritime areas, would not have the means to be able to build their homes to that standard. That is why the Building Code was not enforced. You go to most places in the rural areas, indeed in some urban areas, they do not necessarily follow the Building Code, and overnight to say ...

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- (Inaudible)

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.-... you must strictly adhere to this code. So, overnight you say that within Vanua Levu, half of the people will chase you away because if you were to say to them to apply this particular Code, they will not be able to afford it. Period.

What has happened, as part of this Initiative, Madam Speaker, as a requirement, if you are a recipient of this particular initiative, the drawings have been given to you at a hardware store, and the drawings are also available wherever they go and collect these cards, to show them how to adhere to this code or some of the fundamentals.

There were some basic drawings that was done, that was never given out. So, in this way, people are actually shown how to strap the beams, et cetera, and what strappings to use. It may not be fully compliant, that Tower Insurance will give you a full blown Cyclone Certificate Certification, but it improves on the quality of the strappings, improve on the quality of the way the homes are built compared to what it was previously. So, that is the initiative that was taken.

Those drawings have been given out to people and we ask them to adhere to that and it is a progressive attempt, Madam Speaker. You cannot expect all homes, all villages, everywhere in Fiji, including the rural areas to overnight comply with this. They cannot afford it. They simply cannot afford it and that is one of the issues that we have highlighted also.

We have been talking to the insurance companies, that the insurance companies themselves need to be able to provide a particular level of coverage. It may not be a full grown coverage, but if

certain basic requirements are met. So, if insurance companies were able to offer, say, \$3,000 or \$5,000 cover for these homes if they met the basic requirements for roof damage, then in the future, they would also be covered at a nominal premium. That is what we have done. As I said, we will be issuing a much wider statement on this later on, Madam Speaker. Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Given that some of the questions have been withdrawn and we have a lot of time in our hands, I will allow another question, and I give the floor to Honourable Nawaikula.

HON. RATU I.D. TIKOCA.- Madam Speaker, can I ask a question in regard to the same, please?

HON. SPEAKER.- Sorry, if it is the same question, then it has been answered. We will need a new supplementary question and I am asking the Honourable Nawaikula to have the floor.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Madam Speaker, for those who do not comply with those standards, are there plans in the future to bring them up, given that the strength of the hurricane will be the same everywhere?

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- We need to have a planned programme, we need to roll it out and that obviously, I can say it cannot be done and we hope to do that.

The Ministry of Industry and Trade has already put in place a Committee of Standards. It brings in all the engineers and architects, et cetera, together, to revive this particular adherence to the building code. Yes, we need to do that and in some instances, obviously over a planned few years, we need to probably go back and retrofit, and that is very critical.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now give the floor to the Honourable Dr. Brij Lal to ask his question.

Improving Building Standards
(Question No. 77/2016)

HON. DR. B. LAL asked the Government, upon notice:

Can the Minister inform this House as to what steps is the Ministry undertaking with regards to improving the Building Standards?

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. I give the floor to the Honourable Minister for Industry, Trade and Tourism.

HON. F.S. KOYA (Minister for Industry, Trade and Tourism).- Madam Speaker, I rise to respond to the question asked by the Honourable Member and I also thank Brij Lal for this particular question. I think I might elaborate a little bit more for the House with respect to the previous questions.

Madam Speaker, 'building standard' is generally a term referred to for the minimum requirements that a building contractor needs to fulfil when constructing a building and basically keeping in mind the quality and safety of the building. The Standards specify things, such as how a roof needs to be bound to the rafter, the strength of wind speed, et cetera, and the location of exits and access for disabled persons, et cetera.

Madam Speaker, these standards also include the minimum standards or minimum requirements set for the materials used in construction. For example, there are standards required for steel reinforcement, roofing materials, the strength of cement blocks, just to name a few.

All building construction in Fiji, Madam Speaker, especially in the urban centres, are governed by the National Building Code, as alluded to earlier, which is administered by the Central Board of Health, whilst the number of building material Standards are under the Ministry for Industry, Trade and Tourism.

Madam Speaker, in order to improve the standards as stated in the National Building Code and the list administered by the Ministry, the Fiji Building Standards Committee was reactivated in March 2016. The Committee includes all relevant stakeholders, such as the Ministry of Infrastructure, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Local Government, Engineers, Architects, Insurance Companies and Tertiary Institutions.

Madam Speaker, the Committee has been tasked to look at all standards that are required within the Building Code and the Building Material Standards enforced by my Ministry. The Committee is also tasked to recommend amendments and improvements to these particular Standards. Additionally, Madam Speaker, the Committee will also make recommendations on the licensing of professionals in the construction industry to ensure that we are able to set minimum requirements for professionals in the construction industry, especially when working on certain types of buildings.

Madam Speaker, having Standards does not always ensure that all buildings will be compliant. Therefore, the group of experts are working with the enforcement agencies to identify areas for improvement in the enforcement of the National Building Code and other Standards.

Madam Speaker, the Committee has also taken the role of creating awareness on the current code with about 2000 odd copies of the Home Builders Manual being circulated, to enable people to have basic information in the reconstruction phase.

Madam Speaker, the Ministry is working with all the relevant stakeholders to improve Fiji's Building Standards and is also ensuring that appropriate information is made available to the people as they rebuild their homes post-*Cyclone Winston*.

Thank you Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. A supplementary question, the Honourable Viliame Gavoka.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Madam Speaker, also relating to the previous question and this one regarding Building Standards, I wonder if Government is looking at setting up a support system on the ground to ensure that all the Standards are observed at the village level. It is very difficult to get

a structural engineer, an electrician or a plumber in the village, amongst others. So, all these wonderful ideas and policies and papers will come to nothing, if you do not have people in places around Fiji, whether in the Provincial Offices or in the Provincial Administrators to see that there is a team, who villagers can go to for clearance on how to build, in keeping with the new Standards. Is Government creating that support structure at the village level? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- I refer to the Honourable Minister.

HON. F.S. KOYA.- Madam Speaker, I think this Government is doing what Governments should have done 20 ago. There are homes outside villages also, Madam Speaker,

(Honourable Member interjects)

HON. F.S. KOYA.- Madam Speaker, what I had alluded to earlier, and I think it was not heard and I will say it again, having Standards does not ensure that all buildings will be compliant. Therefore, the group of experts are working with the enforcement agencies to identify areas for improvement in the enforcement of the National Building Code.

Madam Speaker, the review that is basically taking place is not just being looked at in a small way, it is actually being looked at holistically. So, all these things that needed to be addressed are being addressed by the actual Committee.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now give the floor to the Honourable Viam Pillay.

HON. V. PILLAY.- Thank you. Madam Speaker, can the Honourable Minister inform us; what is the purpose of reviewing the Fiji Building Materials Standards?

HON. F.S. KOYA.- Madam Speaker, over time, there came a need to review the minimum requirements set for Building Standards. This is crucial to improve the quality, and most importantly the safety of a building. I think *Cyclone Winston* has put this at the forefront of our minds.

The building construction and materials, Madam Speaker, need to withstand the strength of cyclones, earthquakes and other natural disasters. We cannot do these things haphazardly anymore. Most importantly, buildings should be able to serve the purpose that they are constructed for, Madam Speaker.

Furthermore, the Standards are reviewed and amended to take into account new technology that leads to improvement of the quality of building materials and provides a cost to effective construction process. Madam Speaker, also what must be borne in mind and as per our commitment in the Green Growth Framework, we are also ensuring that the review process also provides for environmentally friendly standards in the construction sector. So, as I had alluded to earlier, it is being looked at holistically in order to ensure that we have a complete Building Standards.

HON. SPEAKER. Thank you. Honourable Vadei.

HON. A.T. VADEI.- Thank you. Madam Speaker, I appreciate the response made by the Honourable Minister on the questions.

Madam Speaker, my question is, in improving standards, we need a laboratory to certify that the materials are properly used. In Fiji, we refer to FNU for the hardness of timber or concrete. May I ask the Honourable Minister; which laboratory they refer to in terms of the quality of the materials that will be disbursed from the retail outlets? Thank you.

(Laughter)

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you, Honourable Minister.

HON. F.S. KOYA.- Madam Speaker, may I ask the Honourable Member to repeat the last portion of the question.

HON. SPEAKER.- Please repeat the last portion of your question, Honourable Vadei.

HON. A.T. VADEI.- My question is, which laboratory were they referred to for the testing of the materials that the Committee will look to or into for the materials to be certified to be used the public.

HON. F.S. KOYA.- Madam Speaker, I thank the Honourable Member for the question. I think I will explain a little bit here for the knowledge of the House.

Madam Speaker, the current standards that are being reviewed by the Committee, one in particular is called the FSAS 1592 this is a design and installation of sheet roof and wall cladding, and FS2-1 2016 is sheet roof and wall cladding minimum.

Madam Speaker, some new standards that are being considered are in respect to wind loads for housing which is AS4055, continuous hot-dip metallic coated steel and stripped coatings of zinc and zinc alloyed with aluminium and magnesium. That is what my friend wants to hear. This is AS1397 and AS4055.

Madam Speaker, as I alluded to earlier, I will explain what he is asking.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. F.S. KOYA.- All of these things with respect to what he is asking also about the laboratory are being looked at by the Committee. The current laboratory deals with what it can, and the Committee is there to look at it holistically as to what is required for the future at the end of the day.

Also, we even do these things, such as the Steel Nails-Metric Series which is considered by the Committee. At the moment, the Standards are sufficient to regulate the quality of steel nails. So, we have a sufficient laboratory to do this but it is being looked at to see if there are improvements that can be made.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now give the floor to Honourable Bulitavu.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Madam Speaker, I thank the Honourable Minister for his answer this morning.

In regards to the experts who will be in the Committee to review the standards of materials, it seems that the materials that are currently being issued by the Help for Homes Initiative are not up to standards. Not only that Madam Speaker, homes that will be built, not according to Standards because materials that were supplied did not meet the minimum required standards.

What will the Committee and the Ministry do in regards to even complying with hardware companies in distributing these kind of materials, into the building of these kinds of homes to withstand cyclones and other climatic changes, even waves and arthquakes and other natural disasters? What will the Committee do in regards to standardising those buildings that have been built?

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister.

HON. F.S. KOYA.- Madam Speaker, the question with regards to Help for Homes should have been addressed to the Honourable Attorney-General.

However, when the Expression of Interest (EOI) went out, all that was part of EOI, it contained information that was given by engineers and I think that was sufficiently addressed. From what I understand, from your question, you are asking; what is it that is going to be done about the homes that had been built? So, I will relate to you something that I had said earlier.

There are enforcement agencies. If someone has, for example, purchased something that may seem deficient, they have a right to complain. They can actually tell us, and we will take to task the person that has supplied that material. So, there are enforcement agencies that deal with it.

Madam Speaker, especially after *TC Winston*, we have been very vigilant with respect to at the border and hardware stores with respect to finding out whether the right materials have actually arrived into the country, so we have been very vigilant about it. So, his fears should not be a problem.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now give the floor to the Honourable O'Connor.

**Transport Assistant Scheme – Areas of Assistance
(Question No. 78/2016)**

HON. A.D. O'CONNOR.- Madam Speaker, before I ask my question, may I take this opportunity to congratulate our national Sevens Team for winning the international tournament back to back.

Honourable Speaker, I rise to ask the question as follows:

Can the Honourable Minister for Education, Heritage and Arts provide details of schools that have been assisted with provision, for those who have to cross rivers or travel from one island to another? Thank you.

HON SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now give the floor to the Honourable Minister for Education, Heritage and Arts.

HON. DR. M. REDDY (Minister for Education, Heritage and Arts).- Madam Speaker, I thank the Honourable Member for his question.

Madam Speaker, in 2014, Government decided to ensure that all students are able to get to school are provided with bus fare assistance. The Government also extended the assistance to children who are not in the bus route by giving them accessibility to vehicles which are given Rural Service Licence (RSL), so that no student is disadvantaged by getting to school.

Madam Speaker, over the last two years, we also noted there are students in the maritime zone or in the interior who are having difficulty to get to school because they have to cross rivers or come from one island to the other. In this regard, the Ministry started to provide the schools with boats and engines.

Madam Speaker, in 2015, we had assisted 21 schools with boats and engines. In 2016, this year until now, we had assisted 17 schools by providing them with boats and engines.

Madam Speaker, through this initiative, we were able to assist 1,750 primary and secondary school students in the remote and maritime zone, to assist the students to be able to get to school and back on a daily basis. Madam Speaker, what we provided is a 23 feet fibre glass boat and a 40 Horse Power Yamaha engine to power the boat.

Madam Speaker, the boat has assisted students and teachers to cross rivers, ease the problem of travelling from the main land to the island, enable students travelling along the coast from their village to the school and return.

Madam Speaker, apart from the daily transporting of students, the boats are also used by schools for:

- transporting boarding students to their villages and back to school in the weekends;
- transportation of boarding rations from the villages to the school; and
- transporting students from the village to the nearby medical centres when they are not feeling well or during emergencies.

Madam Speaker, schools are also allowed to use the boat to transport teachers to get to the postal offices to access their salary, et cetera. The breakdown is as follows:

AREAS ASSISTED	NO. OF SCHOOLS ASSISTED	
	2015	2016
Kadavu	3	2
Bua/Macuata	3	3
Lau	5	3
Cakaudrove	3	2
Lomaiviti	1	2
Yasawa	3	2
Beqa	1	1
Malake Island	1	-
Labasa	-	1

Nadroga	1	-
Vutia Village	1	-
TOTAL	22	16

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Radrodro.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Thank you. Madam Speaker, I thank the Honourable Minister for that information. Can I request the Honourable Minister to undertake another survey, particularly after *TC Winston* to determine the need right now because may be some boats and engines would have been destroyed. For example, the village of Dakuilomaloma is not accessible by road due to the poor road condition. They find it easier to go by sea so that they can catch the transport from another village. I request if that survey could be undertaken, a new listing be done and if Dakuilomaloma Village could be provided with a boat and engine.

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- That is noted, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now give the floor to the Honourable Vunivalu.

HON. S.B. VUNIVALU.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. Can the Honourable Minister provide the names of the schools that were assisted, including the number of students that will benefit?

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you, Honourable Minister.

HON. DR.M. REDDY.- Madam Speaker, I want to thank the Honourable Member because I think it is an important question because it demonstrates our spread in terms of assistance, and penetration.

Madam Speaker, in 2015, the Kadavu Provincial School was assisted with one boat and engine, and 150 students benefited. Most of these students reside in the outer villages and their only mode of transportation to the school is the boat.

The other schools in 2015 was, Duavata Secondary School in the Macuata District, Madam Speaker, 76 students are benefitting from this, basically to transport students living in Cawaru, Nairivai, Caginiveisau, Lagi Villages to the school, and boat is the only need mode of transportation, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, Vatuvala Primary School in Cakaudrove, 32 students are benefitting from this boat and engine that we have provided through the Transport Assistance Scheme that we have in the Ministry. These students cross the river and sea to get to school and return home every day. It is very risky to travel in the *bilibili*, et cetera that they used to do during the previous Governments. So, we are now providing a safer mode of transportation.

Madam Speaker, Maloku District School in Lau, in the Eastern Division, 41 students are benefitting. Again, assisting in transporting students and teachers to the school.

Nasegai District School in Kadavu in the Eastern Division, Madam Speaker, 22 students are benefitting. Again, with transporting the boarding students every Friday back to their homes and then back on Sunday to the school. They are also transporting the Nasegai Village students to cross during high tide, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, the sixth school which is Tawake District School in Cakaudrove, 20 students are benefitting from this, that is, transporting these 20 students who reside in the outer village and coastline farming settlements to the school every day because there is no interior road for RSL vehicles to use.

Madam Speaker, in the Macuata Division we assisted Nadogo Secondary School where 60 students are benefitting by transporting them across the Wainikoro River. The boat will also be utilised by the school community to cross the river to access the health centre and police post.

The Sawaike District School in Gau, Lomaiviti was assisted last year where 21 students are benefitting, Madam Speaker. We assist in transporting students from the nearby village to the school every day.

The Cikobia Village School in Vanua Balavu, Lau in the Eastern Division, 10 students are benefitting. They are also assisted by transporting the students to access the health service and postal service in Vanua Balavu, as well as carting water from the Vanua Balavu main land to the school, Madam Speaker.

The Tuvuca Village School in Vanua Balavu, Lau was assisted with a boat and engine, and 30 students benefitted. Again, it is also utilised for carting water as well as assisting students to get to school.

The Wainiika District School in Wainiika, Cakaudrove, 18 students are benefitting from the provision of boat and engine that we gave last year, again transporting students from the village and settlements to school on a daily basis, Madam Speaker. It is also very difficult for students to walk on rocky sea shore, Madam Speaker, therefore, this is the better means of transportation but risky as well for the students to walk along the coast.

The Gaunavou Primary School in Yasawa, was given a boat and engine last year. Madam Speaker, 23 students are benefitting as students from two villages walk along the beach and seashore. This was also covered in one of the dailies print media last year, Madam Speaker, and now we are providing assistance with this mode of transportation.

The Lekutu Primary School in Bua had a boat so we only provided the engine. Madam Speaker, 36 students are benefitting and to transport 30 boarding students to the Tavea Island every Friday and return on Sunday, Madam Speaker.

The Uluinakorovatu Primary School in Beqa, Madam Speaker, they have a boat so we provided an engine, to assist them in transporting students, who used to walk from home to school every day.

Madam Speaker, Ratu Namasi Village School in Nabukeru in Yasawa was provided a boat and engine. This is to transport students back and forth, from home to school.

The Bouwaqa Village School in Teci, Yasawa, Madam Speaker, was provided with boat and engine to assist the students, 18 students are benefitting.

The Wai District School in Wai, Kadavu was provided a boat and engine last year, 80 students are benefiting.

Madam Speaker, Nayau District School in Lakeba, Lau; 63 students are benefitting. They are also utilising it to cart water to the school.

Madam Speaker, Ratu Mocevakaca Primary School in Matuku, Lau was provided a boat and engine last year, which is now assisting 59 students.

Madam Speaker, Ratu Lalabalavu Secondary School in Malolo Island was provided a boat and engine where 31 students are benefitting.

Madam Speaker, this year in a very short period of time until now, we have assisted 17 schools. Davetawalu Primary School in Naroi, Moala, Lau, 36 students are benefitting.

Madam Speaker, Vacelea Primary School in Nakasaleka, Kadavu; 107 students are benefitting, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, you can see the spread of assistance given and these places were forgotten in the past.

Madam Speaker, Vucama Village School in Qamea Island, Cakaudrove; 82 students are benefitting. The villages are very far apart and their only means of travelling to school is by sea and, therefore, we have provided them with the boat and engine.

Madam Speaker, Lamiti, Malawai School in Lomaiviti, Eastern Division; 80 students are benefitting. Imagine how these students were managing before, Madam Speaker!

Madam Speaker, Galoa Village School in Tavuki, Kadavu; 25 students are benefitting.

Madam Speaker, Naivivi Districti School in Qamea, 118 students are benefitting.

Madam Speaker, Rukua, Raviravi in Beqa; 60 students are benefitting.

Also in the Lau Group, Cicia High School, 21 students are benefitting; Cikobia District School, 17 students are benefitting; and Yasana-i-Ra District School, 17 students are benefitting.

Madam Speaker, in Batiki Disctrict School in Lomaiviti, 18 students are benefitting.

In the Yasawa, 23 students are benefitting in Naviti Districti School.

Madam Speaker, in Naikavaki Primary School in Bua, the bridge was damaged and construction will be starting soon. Therefore, it will be very difficult for students on the other side of the river to get to the Naikavaki Primary School. 32 students from the village are affected so they are now benefitting from the boat.

Madam Speaker, Galoa Island School in Bua, Macuata, 51 students are benefitting whereby students are transported to school on a daily basis.

In Lekutu District School, Bua, 36 students are benefitting, as well as 26 students are now benefitting in Vabea District School, Yasawa. Also this year, we provided a boat and engine to Vutia District Schoo, Rewa where 111 students are benefitting.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now give the floor to the Honourable Ratu Kiniviliame Kiliraki.

HON. RATU K. KILIRAKI.- Thank you. Madam Speaker, I would like to question the safety aspect of this transportation mode in the sea and in the river, whether it is compliant to the Maritime and Safety Authority of Fiji (MSAF) requirements in terms of lifejacket for each passenger, flares and the qualification of the operator to be able to operate an outboard engine. Those are the requirements of MSAF.

Also, the transporting of Year 1 and Year 2 students, whether they are able to swim in terms when the boat capsizes in the swift rivers. My question to the Honourable Minister is; does he address that in his Ministerial Statement?

HON. P.B. KUMAR.- Madam Speaker, I will answer his question but I am amazed. I hope that the Honourable Member asked this question to the previous Government when they were travelling on the *bilibili*....

(Laughter)

I will now answer his question, Madam Speaker.

(Chorus of interjections)

Madam Speaker, firstly, all boat operators are required to have a licence from MSAF, which is the prerequisite, so without that, we do not provide the boat and engine. Secondly, when you provide a boat and engine, it comes with lifejackets, Madam Speaker, tit is a package. Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now give the floor to the Honourable Viliame Gavoka.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Madam Speaker, on the question of asking the previous Governments, they should be reminded that they have been running the show for 10 years so you know

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Madam Speaker, can the Fiji-First Government, can the Honourable Minister now state quite clearly that no child in Fiji crosses the river by *bilibili*, as of today; can you confirm that?

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.-They have a very impressive statement about all of these, can he say to Fiji now; “no child is to cross the river by *bilibili*”, please?

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Madam Speaker, I suggest that the Honourable Member be reminded that we are addressing all these issues that have propped up now, people are coming forward with these issues we are dealing with it. So wait and see how we are dealing with them. I suggest that he waits and see how we are delivering on these.

(Laughter)

HON. SPEAKER.- I now call give the floor to the Honourable Bulitavu.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Madam Speaker, I thank the Honourable Minister for his answer. I will take a very specific example. There is a village in Vanua Levu in the District of Saqani, Malake Village. Across the river is Vanuavou District School. The students still travel by *bilibili* and the width of the river is about the width of this august House, Madam Speaker. It does not an outboard motor or a fibre glass boat.

Can the Honourable Minister explain the provisions in the Ministry that includes Irish crossings and all these kind of things and other alternative rather than providing these boats because of the width of the river and these people are travelling by *bilibili* every day to the school. This has been brought up to the district meetings and also raised to the Honourable Education Minister in Savusavu but nothing has been done. What are the things that the Minister or the Ministry can provide in regards to those rivers that are not that wide but are crossed everyday by students going to school?

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Minister.

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Madam Speaker, when schools bring these issues up to us, we do examine whether we need the Ministry of Infrastructure to look into that or we need to provide an assistance. So, bring it to us, if you have specific cases in specific areas, we are happy to look at it and work with other Ministries to deal with the issue. Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you, I now give the floor to the Honourable Alvick Maharaj.

Strides taken -"Fish for the Table"
(Question No. 79/2016)

HON. A.A. MAHARAJ asked the Government, upon notice:

Can the Honourable Minister for Fisheries and Forests inform the House on the strides taken by the Department of Fisheries in its "Fish for the Table" programme for our inland and highland communities? Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now give the floor to the Honourable Minister for Fisheries and Forests.

HON. O. NAIQAMU (Minister for Fisheries and Forests).- Madam Speaker, I thank the Honourable Member for his question. Allow me, Madam Speaker, to firstly elaborate on the importance of aquaculture for Fiji and then how the Government work towards putting fish on the table for our inland and highland communities.

Madam Speaker, aquaculture is a relative way of new development for most Pacific Island countries where it has been attempted. If history goes back less than 30 years, culture of marine and fresh water species generally still remain the subsistence of backyard and experimental stage in the Pacific. This is because considerable development is required before aquaculture can be considered economically sustainable.

Fiji, however, Madam Speaker, has the foresight technical knowledge and the political will to change the dynamics of driving aquaculture in a more productive and sustainable manner. It has through its aquaculture development driven programmes such as tilapia, sea weed, shrimp, black pearl, fresh water prawn, giant clam, milk fish, life rock and coral, and sandfish.

Madam Speaker, Fiji currently has and continues to invest in aquaculture through funding of seven projects for aquaculture development. These projects are spread throughout the four divisions with a total of \$2.5 million funding. To address the need of our rural, inland small scale subsistence farmers, the Department of Fisheries has projects and infrastructure in place. This includes Fresh Water Aquaculture Programme and through this programme, four hatcheries have been developed including the Tilapia Hatcheries in Ba and Naduruloulou with the capacity to produce about one million tilapia babies and serving about 267 fish farms. This will improve livelihoods and provide for food security for the farmers. The prawn hatchery in Galoa produces close to one million prawn babies annually for 35 fresh water prawn farmers in Fiji. The Dreketi Hatchery which is currently being revived to serve the needs and sustainable development of aquaculture in the Northern Division. Then we have the Caboni Multi Species Hatchery. This is a new 1.7 million hatchery in Caboni to be also utilised as a research and training centre.

We also have a Food Security Programme on aquaculture. This Food Security Programme enables provision of financial support through subsidy for farmers to strengthen food security and improve livelihoods through aquaculture development.

In addition to this initiative, Madam Speaker, the Department of Fisheries also provides tilapia and post larvae at no cost to the farmers for the stocking of their fish and prawn ponds annually. A dedicated team of aquaculture specialist who provides farm development and husbandry training and advise for both fresh water prawn and fish.

Feasibility survey for new farming request, provides ongoing aquaculture farm throughout and culture training. Madam Speaker, it is here in the inland and highland region of Fiji where

aquaculture complements merely integrated production system such as agriculture, aquaculture, livestock and fish farming, to name a few. Aquaculture fits well with our integrated rural development programmes in achieving fish for the table.

Madam Speaker, the Department of Fisheries fully recognises that the aquaculture also plays a crucial role not only in the national economic development but also in food supply, achieving food security and contribution to livelihoods. It is through these small medium scale rural aquaculture integrated programmes that Department provides, Madam Speaker, with the Fiji Government, to be able to facilitate a sustainable rural economy and secure improvements in the welfare of the rural population.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Supplementary question, Honourable Ratu Kiliraki.

HON. RATU K. KILIRAKI.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have a simple question for a villager in the inland of Naitasiri. If he wants to build a pond, how much does he has to pay to be able to breed tilapia to enable him to put it on the table? How much does he have to pay for a fish pond?

HON. SPEAKER.- The onus is on the Honourable Minister to answer the question or give a written answer.

HON. O. NAIQAMU.- Madam Speaker, under the Food Security Programme, the pond is constructed by the Ministry. Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you, Secretary-General. The first written question, Honourable Nanovo to ask his question.

Written Questions

\$10 Million Grant Assistance Scheme (Question No. 80/2016)

HON. RATU S.V. NANOVU.- asked the Government, upon notice:

Can the Honourable Attorney-General, Minister for Finance, Public Enterprises, Civil Service and Communications advice this House as to how many projects has been approved and funded through the \$10 million Government Grant Assistance scheme earmarked for the indigenous landowners that was approved in the 2016 Budget? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now give the floor to the Honourable Attorney-General.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM (Attorney-General, Minister for Finance, Public Enterprises, Civil Service and Communications).- Thank you. Madam Speaker, I would table my answer at a later sitting date, as permitted under Standing Orders 45(3) HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. We will now move onto the second written question and I will now give the floor to the Honourable Ratu Suliano Matanitobua.

Utilisation of \$2 Million for the engagement of Sports Coaches.
(Question No. 81/2016)

HON. RAU S. MATANITOBUA asked the Government, upon notice:

Can the Minister for Youth and Sports inform the House how much of the \$2 million under requisition for the engagement of Sports Coaches have been utilised in 2016?

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. I give the floor to the Assistant Minister for Youth and Sports.

HON. O. NAIQAMU .- Thank you, Madam Speaker, the Minister will table his answer at a later sitting date as permitted under Standing Order 45 (3).

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. That brings us to the end of the question time.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

HON. SPEAKER.- I now call upon the Minister for Education, Heritage and Arts who has given notice to make his Ministerial Statement under Standing Order 34. The Minister may speak up to 20 minutes. After the Honourable Minister has made his statement, I will then invite the Honourable Leader of Opposition or her designate to speak on the statement for no more than five minutes. There will also be a response from the Honourable Leader of the National Federation Party or his designate to also speak for five minutes and there will be no debate. I now call on the Minister for Education, Heritage and Arts to deliver his statement.

Technical College of Fiji

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Thank you. Madam Speaker and Honourable Members of the House, I want to thank you for allowing me to speak on the topic, Technical College of Fiji and updates on the graduation from the three campuses and the updates from the other eight campuses.

Madam Speaker, today I wish to bring to light details on the graduation of students from the three campuses of the Technical College and achievements of Technical Colleges of Fiji in general. I will also dwell on the details of the status from the other campuses of Fiji, in terms of the programmes offered and enrolment details.

The Technical College of Fiji, Madam Speaker, is the Bainimarama-led government initiative to give opportunities to our children who have been left out, marginalised because of the deferring circumstances and pushing them to drop out of school, thus losing hope for brighter future.

The Technical College is Government's instrument to assist children of poor households to also obtain a skilled based internationally recognised qualification, thus opening the doors for their and their families' prosperity. It is an institution which is established to supply also tradesmen in various areas of need in Fiji.

Madam Speaker, the poverty cycle is something which when engulfs the life of common man, become a stigma in their lives. This cycle in its worst form affects all who have connected to the breadwinners who live under the poverty line. Madam Speaker, the Bainimarama-led Government intends to tackle this vicious cycle affecting Fijians from all angles, educational opportunities is just one of them.

Madam Speaker, as such, the idea of establishing Technical Colleges was mooted in the FijiFirst party manifesto by the Honourable Prime Minister. The Ministry of Education, Heritage and Arts have evaluated that while we had some institutions catering for the demand of some course of studies, there was still a marked need for a more flexible institution which would cover the interests of all Fijians who have an aptitude for skills training.

Added to this, Madam Speaker, there was an urgent need to step in and recover the situation where students were blindly push into academic streams, when realistically they could not cope up with the demands. There was no avenue to understand and appreciate the interests of these students, leave alone polishing their talents and trade skills.

Madam Speaker, the Bainimarama-led Government stepped in and designed the establishment of Technical Colleges which was tasked to look at a wider scope of interests amongst Fijians. These schools were also designed to intake students from Year 10 and above so that for some students. important years of training and education were not lost in the failed pursuit of higher education academic qualifications. This institution at the same time was seen as an avenue to address

the growing need for qualified and competent skilled workers, brought locally and globally in the area of trade.

The set-up of the Technical College Campus in Nadi and the start of two others in Labasa and Suva respectively on the 23rd of February, 2015 was a key step in the process of establishing a remarkable total of 12 campuses around Fiji.

Madam Speaker, the number of students that graduated from the Vanua Levu Arya Campus, the Nabua Sanatan Campus and the Doctor Shaukat Ali Saheb campus at Nadi are as follows:

No.	School of Engineering	Dr. Shaukat Ali Shaib Campus	Vanua Levu Arya Campus	Nabua Sanatan/ SHTT Campus	Total
1	National Certificate in Automotive Electrical and Electronic Engineering (Level 2)	12	9	11	32
2	National Certificate in Automotive Mechanical Engineering (Level 2)	16	30	-	46
3	National Certificate in Welding and Fabrication (Level 2)		25		25
No.	School of Construction				
1	National Certificate in Carpentry (Level 2)	14	15	-	29
2	National Certificate in Cabinet Making and Joinery (Level 2)	8	9	-	17
No.	School of Hospitality				
1	National Certificate in Baking and Patisserie (Level 2)	27			27
2	National Certificate in Cookery (Level 2)	54	27	-	81
No.	School of General Studies				
1	Certificate in Horticulture (Level 2)	11	17		28
2	Certificate in Office Management (Level 2)	27	22	8	57
3	Cetificate in Information Technology (Level 2)	-		8	8
	Total number of students that graduated	169	154	27	350

Madam Speaker, at this juncture, I hereby proudly claim that at this very moment while I deliver my address;

- of the 169 students who graduated from Doctor Saukhat Ali Saheb campus in Nadi, 60 percent are already in employment, they have already got a job.
- Out of the 27 students who graduated from the Nabua Campus, Madam Speaker on the 13th of this month, 80 percent of them are already employed.
- Out of the 154 students who graduated from the Vanua Levu Arya Campus, 27 percent are already in full time paid employment.

Madam Speaker, this disparity in employment is in relation to the labour market capacity in the respective area: Vanua Levu, the capacity is a bit low, that is why you find that only 27 persons got the job, I am sure that there will be internal migration as well and it will take time for graduates. They just graduated last week, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, these figures are remarkable in itself, given the fact that not even a month has passed in the graduation, bulk of the students are already employed.

Madam Speaker, these number exclude those who are opting out to start up their own business but a significant number of students who graduated have informed us that they will get into their own business. One can imagine where these children would have ended up had this opportunity to Technical College not been given, Madam Speaker.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Hear! hear.

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Madam Speaker, the school dropouts would still be jobless and those who are already working but have no formal qualification would have continued to be violated the underpaid, Madam Speaker. We have given them a lifeline to these students and they have accepted it with both hands and our beloved nation will no doubt benefit from it.

Madam Speaker, let me read out the comments by some of the graduates as picked up by the daily print media last Saturday and I will take time to read Quote 1 to Quote 4, Madam Speaker:

Quote 1: Abhishek Maharaj ; Certificate II in Auto Electrical

Former Shri Gurunanak Culture College students, joined Vanua Levu Arya Campus to pursue his dreams and feed his interests in Electrical. The Auto Electrical graduate is happy to have attained a qualification with his field of interest. Brought up in a family that was not really well-off, Abhisek struggled to ensure that he kept his studies a priority. He did well in his studies and was an average student, his interests however was elsewhere. So when the Government's Technical College initiative was launched, he did not hesitate to apply and enrolled at the college.

Hasim Khan, proprietor of Khans Autowork said, "I'm really impressed with the level and knowledge Abishek has come up with. I have guided him and I believe he would be able to handle any job that he comes across. There are many people that I have employed and joined my business as apprentices, but this boy is something else. Not only is he hardworking but is disciplined as well, and I thank the Technical College lecturers for that."

Madam Speaker, that talks about the quality of output out of the Technical College and I am sure some Members will be talking about that, Madam Speaker. The final arbiter of quality of a product is the user. Madam Speaker, may I continue.

The son of a pioneer security guard said that he would not stop here, but will try to upgrade and up skilled himself as the situation present itself. Most of the time when development happens, Madam Speaker, it is just in Viti Levu, but the Government has brought this right to our doorstep. It is through this that I am now able to do what I love and really put my heart into. I have been provided with a new set of tools as promised by the Hon. Prime Minister, Madam Speaker."

Quote II: Atonio Jolame Tikoimakogai – Certificate II in Automative Engineering

Navakau, Vuna lad Antonio Jolame Tikoimakogai was left emotional as he recalled his earlier struggles. Tikoimakogai left high school in 2013 as a form five student to try and earn a living to support his family. Antonio's attendance in school was irregular as he tried to support his sickly mother. Graduating with a National Certificate in Automotive Engineering, the boy from Valebasoga said all he ever wanted was to earn enough money to better his family's living standard, Madam Speaker. I quote, " I only have sisters who are older than me so there was a stage that I just had to give up school and take my role as a male in the family. There were

many people who had negative vibes about me but I did not pay attention to that so I decided to join the Technical College. I had my mind set on my goal and today I have also been given an opportunity to work at Pacific Transport Limited, Madam Speaker I am so thankful to the Government of the day for providing me the tools that would greatly assist me in my job.”

That is the story of this young man, who was totally in disarray, dropping out of school to look after his sickly mother and other siblings, Madam Speaker.

Quote III: Vosabau Marisilina, - Certificate II in Cookery.

Madam Speaker, 21-year old Vosabau Marisilina of Siberia, Labasa graduated with a National Certificate in Cookery Level II. Having dropped out of Year 9 in 2012, Vosabau thought she would never be able to gain any formal qualification. She gave up hope, Madam Speaker.

An emotional, Tarisi Verevere, mother of Vosabau Marisilina held her head high as she recalled what her daughter had to go through before this huge achievement, and I quote, “Her dad was sickly and we had a lot of financial problems and this was really affecting Vosabau’s studies. She was a loner, had a real hard time making friends and had a real low self-esteem.” Having earlier felt alienated and left out in high school, Vosabau decided to join Vanua Levu Arya Campus in 2015 has not since going to look back and I quote, “I thank the Government for setting up the Technical College Campus of Fiji. They have given people like me hope of a brighter future, especially with the basic cooking utensils that were also given to me.” Vosabau also said that she would like to encourage potential TCF students to join the institution and achieve as much as and even more than the pioneering graduates of Vanua Levu Arya Campus.

Her employer notes, “We took her as an apprentice in 2015 and she has been doing a brilliant job. She is very productive and effective, which just goes to show that the quality of training delivered at the Technical College is very much relevant and applicable. We have since offered her a fulltime job with us. This is from the North Pole Manager, Kaushal Maharaj.

Quote IV: Neman Roqica - Certificate II in Panel Beating.

Madam Speaker, 24-year old Dreketi villager, Neman Roqica had lost all hope of being a skilled worker after a dropout of school in 2010 and I quote, “when the lecturers came for an outreach programme in our village everyone thought it was just a joke and no one believed that. So one day, I decided to come to Labasa and see if this was for real. I filled out the enrolment form, from there on there was no looking back.” It has been made easier for us and the help given by the Bainimarama-led Government is just overwhelming, not only are we supported by TELs in our tuition, but also in our bus fare and the provision of excellent training facilities, commented Neman.”

Neman said that he faced a lot of problems; people were gossiping and making fun of him, but he continued to advocate about Technical College to his peers. He managed to convince about 20 other youths from his village who have since joined the campus, and I quote, “I know the effects of staying in a village doing nothing and I don’t want to go there anymore. I know that there is much more I can achieve and this is just a starting block for me. I have

set my sights on bigger and better things especially to develop and improve my family's living standards. With the qualification and experience I take from here, it is my plan to open my own business and continue to encourage and tell other youths in my village about what the Ministry of Education is doing.”

Madam Speaker, these are the hard core visible deliverables from this initiative. It is revolutionary, Madam Speaker, it will transform the lives of those who had given up. It is a hand towards a brighter future.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- The technical college offers a range of opportunities, not only to children who make technical education their career path but also to adults ...

(Inaudible interjection)

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- *Wawa*, I will answer your question.

... and working people who take up short courses to polish on their skills and talents. People who carry out work from home such as baking, carpentry, joinery and catering, et cetera, can also attain training from this institution. These programmes are competency-based, they do not sit for final class examination, instead their exams are practical, demonstrations in the work which are accessed by internal as well as external assessors appointed by Fiji Higher Education Commission hence the accreditation of this programmes by the Fiji Higher Education Commission.

Madam Speaker, basic skills such as brick-laying, painting, hospitality, catering, cabinet making, joinery, plumbing, sheet metal works, baking, patisserie, et cetera, are as important to our economy as any other programme of study. The people who are already working on these professions are finally given the opportunity to attain a certificate on the talent and thereby increase their marketability and productivity. This is the very area our Government is tapping into as they all play an important role in our economy. The skills that young Fijians are gaining in various trades are not only designed to train them for fulfilling careers but are also essential part of Government's programme to lift the skill-base of the nation, Madam Speaker. This also enables the Fijian economy to grow, assist people to work towards national values and raise living standards for everyone.

Madam Speaker, let me now give you a breakdown of the programmes on offer at the other campuses, the new campuses that has started this year:

No.	District	Campus	Certificate Programmes Offered (Level 2)
1.	Bua	Ratu Epeli Ravoka Campus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certificate in Automotive Mechanical Engineering • Certificate in Carpentry
2.	Wainikoro	Macuata-i-cake Campus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certificate in Automotive Mechanical Engineering • Certificate in Carpentry
3.	Navua	C.P. Singh Campus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certificate in Automotive Mechanical Engineering

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certificate in Carpentry
4.	Nadroga	Nadrova/Navosa Provincial Campus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certificate in Cookery • Certificate in Automotive Mechanical Engineering • Certificate in Carpentry • Certificate in Cabinet-Making and Joinery
5.	Lautoka	Lautoka Sanatan Campus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certificate in Automotive Electrical Engineering • Certificate in Automotive Mechanical Engineering • Certificate in Welding and Fabrication • Certificate in Carpentry
6.	Tavua	Tagitagi Campus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certificate in Automotive Electrical Engineering • Certificate in Automotive Mechanical Engineering • Certificate in Carpentry
7.	Rakiraki	TISI Sangam Kuppuswamy Campus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certificate in Automotive Electrical Engineering • Certificate in Automotive Mechanical Engineering • Certificate in Welding and Fabrication • Certificate in Carpentry
8	Nausori	Anjuman Campus Hidayat-ul-Islam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certificate in Cookery • Certificate in Automotive Electrical Engineering • Certificate in Automotive Mechanical Engineering • Certificate in Cabinet Making and Joinery • Certificate in Carpentry

Madam Speaker, these are the programmes that are offered at the eight new campuses. As alluded to earlier on, not only does it transform the lives of the households from which these graduates originate from, these Campuses would also supply to the labour market with quality trained individuals who will make a difference in whichever professions they occupy, be it a motor mechanic, a carpenter, or a block layer, we all know that every individual's expertise in their area is their greatest asset and we at the Ministry intend to support all Fijians to flourish in those areas.

Madam Speaker, when we give enrolment rates in these campuses will demonstrate that these students would have been somewhere else, probably loitering in the village.

- i) Vanua Levu Arya Campus, Labasa with 515 students enrolled this year;
- ii) Ratu Epeli Ravoka Campus, Bua – 78 students;
- iii) Macuata-i-Cake Campus, Wainikoro - 81 students;
- iv) TISI Sangam Sadhu Kuppuswammy Campus, Rakiraki -121 students;
- v) Tagitagi Campus, Tavua – 100 students;
- vi) Lautoka Sanatan Campus - 89 students;

- vii) Dr. Shaukat Ali Sahib Campus, Nadi – 542 students;
- viii) Nadroga/Navosa Provincial Campus, Sigatoka – 302 students;
- ix) C.P. Singh Campus, Navua – 72 students;
- x) Nabua Sanatan Campus & Robertson Road – 587 students;
- xi) Anjuman Hidayat-ul-Islam Campus, Nausori – 288 students.

Madam Speaker, these are the intake levels at various campuses. We are very responsive to students, any issues raised by any member of public we are very efficient in delivery. Just last week the Honourable Bulitavu sent me an email asking about some issues on the graduation. Immediately I responded to him and let me read his response, Madam Speaker, “Honourable Minister, thanks for clearing the matter, I have spoken to the parents and students on the real issue that disqualified her from graduating. They have accepted it and I was advised that the student will enrol in September to complete what she failed to do. Many thanks for your genuine help, speedy delivery. Honourable Bulitavu.” Vinaka Bulitavu.

(Applause)

Madam Speaker, this is how we deal with it; immaterial whether they come from that side or this side, every child is our child, we want to educate them and deliver a knowledge-based society. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now call upon the Leader of the Opposition or her designate.

HON. M.R. LEAWERE.- Madam Speaker, I rise to respond to the Ministerial Statement by the Honourable Minister for Education regarding the Technical Colleges and also the students who have just graduated and also the number of campuses that he has provided to the House. However, what I would like to highlight is that, I would like to correct the Honourable Minister by saying that instead, there were institutions before technical colleges were introduced. We have TPAF, the Monfort Boys Town, all these institutions were there, up and running and they were very successful. So, to say that these technical colleges are running smoothly and also successful, that is an understatement, Madam Speaker.

The other issue, Madam Speaker, that I would like to raise is, whilst I commend the initiative by the Ministry for Education, but the fact remains that FNU was running similar courses; Level 1, Level 2, Level 3 and Level 4. They were running well with proper workshops and machines...

(Chorus of interjections)

...but what will the technical colleges going to have? That is a fact, Madam Speaker.

(Hon. Govt. Members interjected)

I am sure the Honourable Minister for Employment will also be affected because there is a lot of unemployment there, NEC has a lot of students who are looking for employment and are still waiting. Now, the numbers that are coming out from these technical colleges is making the list a bit longer.

(Laughter)

What will happen to them?

Madam Speaker, the Honourable Minister mentioned that they are already working in some of these workplaces but the fact is, what kind of pay are they receiving? Can you tell us? Are they below the tax threshold or are they above because the tax threshold is \$16,000.

(Hon. Member interjects)

Madam Speaker, there is high unemployment rate in this country and the worst thing is that, the Ministry of Education is contributing to this high unemployment rate.

(Hon. Members interject)

We have a lot of graduates still waiting to be absorbed into the workplace. They still do not find places to work in. So, let me suggest to the Honourable Minister, he should be talking to the industries and the employment holders so that they can work out how many students are needed in this area and when we look at the statistics that is provided, there is no mention about those in the home economics industry like sewing, catering, et cetera. Madam Speaker, I think he has failed in that regard. The Honourable Attorney-General should make sure that he should be doing what he is supposed to be doing as the line Minister for the Minister for Education.

When we look at Levels 3 and 4, there is a difficulty there, Madam Speaker, because they do not have it. When they come out from these Levels 1 and 2 Certificates, they are still being supervised and cannot work on their own because of the fact that they do not achieve that level where they can be productive in the workplace. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now call on the Leader of the NFP or his designate.

HON. PROF. B.C. PRASAD.- Thank you. Madam Speaker, I thank the Honourable Minister for Education for his statement. Also, I appreciate and congratulate students who graduated from those colleges and few of them have very good jobs. I think this is true of any institution, but let me come back to this whole idea of Ministerial Statements. We have heard the Honourable Minister speak about technical colleges in another Ministerial Statement. It seems that the FijiFirst Government Ministers have not stopped campaigning since the last Elections. They keep touting this great idea that suddenly, it was this Government which has started technical colleges.

Let me remind the Honourable Minister and I have very personal experience of this, Madam Speaker, we had schools which is to run vocational courses. I remember putting many students from my families and my village into those vocational programmes where they actually came out with a Level 2 Certificate, they went into employment and the Government at that time was providing them with a set of tools. If they were in automotive engineering, mechanical engineering or carpentry, they used to get a set of tools and they would go and get employment and then, Madam Speaker, they will work towards Level 1 Certificate. Level 1 Certificate was offered by the Fiji Institute of Technology at that time.

Madam Speaker, the Honourable Minister should come out here in his Ministerial Statement and should not give us a lecture about employment, poverty or vicious cycle, we understand that. Ministerial Statements are supposed to be a bit more than that.

There are several questions with respect to this and I have said this before in this House, Madam Speaker, I can understand there are students who are always coming out of any institution who will be bright, who will be able to do things and employers will be happy. However, that is not exactly the measure of quality. In fact, the Honourable Minister should reserve his judgment on this idea of quality, he should take some more time, there has to be some very good measures of quality in the future before we can say that.

Let me also say this, Madam Speaker, that while we have this idea of technical colleges which is built on what we had before in schools, and the enrolment that the Honourable Minister talks about is also a reflection because if you have a technical college in Vanua Levu, then some of the vocational programmes in other schools have been closed. So, if you put all those numbers and still I think it is too premature to talk about how many students are going to go into these technical colleges, so we need to wait for that.

I think my colleague raised some good questions with respect to jobs. I mean, what kind of jobs are they getting into and what are they being paid? So, it is not a very simple linear kind of relationship that you put up technical colleges, students will go there, they will come out with a particular qualification and then they will get into a job.

Madam Speaker, if you talk to a lot of employers and those in the construction sector and in the mechanical and electrical sectors of the economy, you will really then understand the difficulty we have with respect to technical skills in this country. And I want to say this to the Government and also to the Honourable Ministers for Education and Employment, that while we are looking at technical colleges, we need to go back to look at whether bringing back the idea of apprenticeship because in countries where they have good experienced technical people, they run very good apprenticeship programmes. In fact, in some countries governments actually provide subsidies and tax incentives, and so forth for employers.

Madam Speaker, it is alright to put all these students into technical colleges and vocational programmes but if you do not have a programme where students can enter into the labour market, go and do apprenticeship with Government support, with some incentives, then you will be able to produce good qualified experienced technical people and technical skills in this country which is badly needed, not by putting them into technical colleges, the way they are putting them. Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you very much, Honourable Members. Parliament will now suspend this sitting as we break for refreshment. We will resume at 11.40 a.m.

The Parliament adjourned at 11.09 a.m.

The Parliament resumed at 11.43 a.m.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you, Honourable Members. You may be seated.

We will continue from where we left off.

BILLS – FIRST READING

A Bill for an Act to provide for the powers and privileges of Parliament, Members of Parliament and Offices of Parliament (Bill No. 28 of 2016).

HON. SPEAKER.- In accordance with Standing Order 84(2), the Bill has now been read for the first time, and will now be listed on the Order Paper for second reading on a future sitting day.

I now call upon the Honourable Attorney-General to move his motion.

PREVENTION OF BRIBERY PROMULGATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 2016

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 51, I move that:

- (a) the Prevention of Bribery Promulgation (Amendment) Bill 2016 be considered by Parliament without delay;
- (b) the Bill must not be referred to Standing Committee or other Committee of Parliament; and
- (c) the Bill must be debated and voted upon by Parliament on Wednesday, 1st of June, 2016,

and one hour be given to debate the Bill for the right of reply given to me as the Member moving the Motion. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Any seconder?

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Madam Speaker, I beg to second the motion.

HON. SPEAKER..- I will now call upon the Honourable Attorney-General to have the floor.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, the Prevention of Bribery Promulgation, in fact, came into force on 4th of April, 2007, and this was, as we heard in morning tea time by the Go Pack Team, was brought about when Fiji also set up the Fiji Independent Commission Against Corruption (FICAC), and also then had decided to ratify the United Nations Convention Against Corruption. So, it is a package deal.

The main objective of the Promulgation, Madam Speaker, is to make provision for the prevention of bribery, corruption, electoral fraud and misconduct in public office.

Madam Speaker, the Promulgation, of course, has been utilised by FICAC, preventing corruption and electoral fraud. However, there are a number of prevailing issues within the Promulgation that need to be improved by virtue of the amendments laid out in this particular Bill.

Madam Speaker, a lot of the Clauses there are more functionary than anything else, but they do need to be put in place as a matter of urgency, and also to align it with other existing laws that came into being subsequent to this Promulgation being put in place.

Madam Speaker, for example, Clause 2 of the Bill amends the definition of ‘advantage’ by deleting the reference made to the ‘Electoral Act’ and substituting ‘Political Parties Registration Decree, and the Electoral Decree. The Electoral Act obviously no longer exists, it had existed then, and now it needs to be brought into conformity with the law that exists at the moment. For example, it is also in Clause 2 of the Bill that inserts the definition of what is in ‘appointing authority’ and the ‘Commission’. It substitutes the definition of ‘public servant’ with a new definition to include public officials also as defined under section 4 of the Crimes Decree. So, the Crimes Decree has been put in place, in a much wider perspective, so that needs to be put in the Prevention of Bribery Promulgation.

Also, Madam Speaker, for example, it takes out the references to the ‘general or special permission from the President’ as an exception to the offence of soliciting or accepting an advantage because of these types of permissions are not defined and, therefore, impractical in Fiji, Madam Speaker.

Clauses 4 to 8, for example, Madam Speaker, amends it by taking out references to the repealed Income Tax Act (Cap. 201). As you know that this Parliament approved the new Income Tax Act last year, so obviously needs to make reference to that Act, not the Income Tax Act (Cap. 201).

Again, for example, there is an amendment to Section 24 of the Promulgation for clarity sake. There is also now a new section for mandatory reporting of bribery offences, and other offences captured under Sections 3 to 9 of the Promulgation.

It also forces people to ensure, even within the Civil Service that if there is bribery potential or they may suspect there is a bribery act about to take place, they must report it as the mandatory requirements, in the same way, doctors, for example, now have the mandatory reporting of child if the child is brought to the hospital and they suspect there may be an abuse. It is mandatory for them to report it.

Clause 11 of the Bill, Madam Speaker, for example, the issue of the ‘Fiji Human Rights Commission, now we have the Fiji Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission, so that needs to be captured. There is a reference to Vodafone and the Fiji Islands Visitors Bureau, but none of these entities exist in that form. We now have Tourism Fiji and Vodafone Fiji Limited, so it corrects those mistakes. It also deletes the reference to the Ombudsman’s Office and Capital Markets Development Authority, because these public bodies no longer exist.

These are the functionary type of amendments that is required, Madam Speaker. It is related to the next Bill that I will also move, Madam Speaker, so I propose, as you have said that it be referred to a vote by this House and debated on Wednesday, in two days’ time, and that one hour be given for the Bill to be debated upon. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. The floor is open for comments, if any. The Honourable Attorney-General, would you like to give concluding remarks on this?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- No, thank you, Madam Speaker. I think, given the fact that the Act is quite functionary in terms of the amendments it seeks, we will obviously discuss it when we debate it on Wednesday in a one hour debate. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Parliament will now vote. The question is, that:

- (a) the Prevention of Bribery (Amendment) Bill, 2016 be considered by Parliament without delay;
- (b) the Bill must not be referred to Standing Committee or other Committee of Parliament;
- (c) the Bill must be debated and voted upon by Parliament on Wednesday, 1st June, 2016, and
- (d) at that time, one hour be given for a right of reply.

Does any Honourable Member oppose the Motion?

(Chorus of yes and noes)

HON. SPEAKER.- There being opposition, Parliament will vote.

Question put.

Votes Cast:

Ayes	:	27
Noes	:	17
Not Voted	:	6

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. There being 27 Ayes, 17 Noes and 6 have not voted, the Motion is agreed to.

HON. SPEAKER.- I now call upon the Honourable Attorney-General to move his motion.

**FIJI INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION (AMENDMENT) BILL
2016**

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Thank you, Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 51, I move that:

- (a) the Fiji Independent Commission Against Corruption (Amendment) Bill 2016 be considered by Parliament without delay;
- (b) the Bill must not be referred to a Standing Committee or other Committee of Parliament;
- (c) the Bill must be debated and voted upon by Parliament on Wednesday, 1st June, 2016; and
- (d) and one hour be given to debate the Bill, with the right of reply given to me as the Member moving the Motion.

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

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Madam Speaker, I beg to second the motion.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. I will now call upon the Hon. Attorney-General to have the floor.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, again, this is related to the motion that has just been approved for the amendment to the Prevention of Bribery Promulgation (Amendment) Bill. Again, Madam Speaker, it relates to the talk we just had.

As was highlighted in the morning tea break, that we are getting our Peer Review done. Just by way of background, Madam Speaker, when you ratify the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC), which Fiji did without any reservations, many countries do, do it with reservations, but we did it without reservation you can also put yourself up for what they call a Peer Review Programme. In other words, you volunteer to have other countries and check your compliance with UNCAC, and as was highlighted, the last review we had was in 2011 when Bangladesh and USA came and reviewed our compliance. Prior to that, we had France and Slovenia from memory, I stand to be corrected, with a couple of other countries that did do that.

Subsequent to 2011, which the meeting did not highlight, Madam Speaker, this morning, Fiji, in fact, has been requested to review other countries, given the fact that we have had ourselves reviewed, so Fiji was in fact, involved in the review. The last one I think was East Timor, where we went ahead with that. There was another country, I understand, in the Caribbean which I can give details of later.

Madam Speaker, the next review will now take place in Fiji. There are a couple of matters that are outstanding that we need to improve our existing law to make sure that we have further compliance with the general objectives and philosophy behind the ratification of UNCAC.

So, just by way of background, Madam Speaker, Fiji actually technically ratified UNCAC on 14th May, 2008. Of course, as we know, the establishment of FICAC was to eradicate prevalence of corruption and systematic abuse, and the misuse of public office into public sector. Under the Promulgation, FICAC is guided by the UNCAC Standards, which canvass a broad spectrum of powers that are given to the Independent Corruption Commission.

By way of background, Madam Speaker, when the FICAC laws were drafted, we had the services of a Senior QC from Hong Kong, Mr. Gerald McCoy who is actually a Kiwi, and who has been practising in Hong Kong for a number of years. He, in fact, helped draft the FICAC Promulgation.

So a lot of the genesis of the drafting and the rationale behind that, also came from the Hong Kong experience. There was a tweaking of it to suit the Fijian situation. Now, Madam Speaker, what we need to do as we have highlighted, we need to strengthen FICAC operative powers and if we look at the proposals that have been made through this amendment Bill, Madam Speaker, for example, there is a definition of Minister and President for the purpose of clarity.

There is a new paragraph, to allow FICAC to prosecute the offence which empowers the Commissioner to do so under any written law and of course, we can elucidate this further in the debate. Clause 4 of the Bill amends Section 5 of the promulgation to comply with section 115(6) of

the Constitution which says that FICAC must be independent, not subject to the direction or control of any person or authority to make it a lot more emphatic.

We are emphasising those points again. Clause 5 of the Bill amends Section 8 of the promulgation by deleting Section 8 and substituting it with the new one. So, for example, Madam Speaker, the termination of the FICAC officers when they are terminated, in terms of their right of appeal to the President. All of these is now being sorted out to ensure that there is complete independence of the Commission itself.

Madam Speaker, also again the Commissioner or the Deputy Commissioner to appoint FICAC officers and set out the terms and conditions of employment subject to the Standing Orders made under Section 11 of the Promulgation. The amendment empowers the Commissioner to remove a FICAC officer, if there is any suspicion as to the loyalty or the integrity of an officer which may jeopardise investigations carried out by FICAC.

As we see, Madam Speaker, you are now seeing a lot more cases appeared before FICAC, a lot more larger sums are now being disclosed through the investigated processors and we need to ensure that the integrity of the officers themselves are always maintained at all times and the Commissioner therefore, must be empowered to remove officers or even suspend them if there is any suspicion of them compromising the independence and the integrity of those officers.

Madam Speaker, as with the Police, for example if a Police Officer sees someone smoking or what may be seen to be a joint down the street, they can arrest them without necessarily a warrant. We do not go running off to the court and get a warrant and then you arrest them. On reasonable suspicion, you are able to arrest someone on the spot. Those powers are given to the Police and that has been an integral part of the Police powers for decades now.

Similar powers are now been extended to FICAC, so that when a FICAC officer suspects someone is being given a paper bag full of money, et cetera, they should be able to arrest them and then of course, comply with the law itself. Madam Speaker, it also gives further powers as with the police to bring in alignment with the police officers and the powers that exist to them.

Madam Speaker, also clause 8 of the Bill tidies up a particular provision under Section 10(b) of the promulgation to enable FICAC to seize evidence when conducting a search authorised by a search warrant. At the moment, the police officers are able to do that, but with FICAC, there is a bit of a lacuna. They have to go up and get an additional sort of order or order from the court to be able to seize it, as opposed to be able to seize something whilst they actually have a search warrant itself.

Clause 9 of the Bill amends Section 10 of the promulgation, provide penalties provisions for a person who refuses to submit to taking of any method of identification. We have a similar provision under Section 18 of the Police Act.

Clause 10 of the Bill amends the promulgation by inserting new provision that deal with interception warrants to help strengthen investigative powers of FICAC. Interception Warrants are not something new to Fiji under Section 12 of the Illicit Drugs Control Act, police officers are able to apply for something similar, in fact, the proposed amendment was derived from the Illicit Drugs Control Act 2004 which was enacted way back in 2004 itself. Accordingly, Madam Speaker, as I again bringing those powers in alignment that already exists.

Madam Speaker, also there is a particular provision regarding the protection of FICAC officers. The other key amendments, Madam Speaker, as was highlighted about the assets that

maybe, it should from any illegal means, as we know that with various provisions under the current Crimes Decree and again those powers are being given to the FICAC officers.

Madam Speaker, I think in similar vein, all the other provisions are there to ensure that, for example that the integrity of FICAC is maintained and then we have further compliance with UNCAC. So, when we have this Peer Reviewed, at least we have met those requirements that have been highlighted to us sometime back, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, with those introductory remarks, I would like to move that we discuss these amendments on Wednesday, in conjunction with the earlier amendatory proposals – Prevention of Bribery Promulgation Amendment Bill. We need to put this in place because it does have an impact on the operational areas of FICAC and their officers to be able to do them with a better job and I am sure, as we all agreed, we need to ensure that the officers who are actually preventing corruption and in fact, dealing with corruption are given the necessary tools and the necessary legal means, to be able to eradicate this very tedious crime that we have in our society. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Parliament is now open for comments, if any. I give the floor to the Honourable Karavaki.

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- Thank you. Madam Speaker, again we are going to vote at the end of this and surely we know what the outcome will be. That the motion being introduced will surely be the motion that the House will accept and I rise, Madam Speaker, just to indicate our concern. This is another Bill that is coming by way of Standing Order 51.

FICAC is a very important institution, Madam Speaker, and here we have a Bill that is introduced to amend the present Independent Commission Against Corruption Act and what is important, Madam Speaker, that I would like to indicate at this point, that this Bill is coming in a very narrow scope. It is just looking at the obligations and responsibilities that are there for officials and to strengthen or give them more power for the exercise of their duties.

Now, we have a Bill that not only, should it be confined to that but the voice of the people should be heard also, Madam Speaker, because this Bill or this Act including this Bill been introduced in this House has a very far reaching scope. We need to hear the voice of these people, even if we strengthen the parameters of the responsibilities of those that are tasked to administer this Act. We must also be aware if that is done and FICAC is not completely independent, all the things that we are putting into place now really will not be effective.

That is something, Madam Speaker, which I stand to show our concern that this is a Bill that must follow the normal process because different stakeholders have their own views. Now, it is coming into this House and we will be debating on this Bill, as it comes through the process of Standing Order 51.

As I have said, we will be looking at it in a very narrow scope, Madam Speaker. We need to hear the people, the people who have suffered under this, the people who have had experience under this Act. We know we need to strengthen it, but we must look at it in a broader perspective because even us that we are in this House, we must remember, one day we will be questioned under this and we must ensure that we do not escape this just because we are holding a position, a high position.

We must ensure, Madam Speaker, that we are not excluded from the application of the law and that is why, Madam Speaker, I am showing my concern and I believe this is our concern over here. There are people who are out there, Madam Speaker, who had questioned why the decision was like this, why the decision was like that and none over there in the FICAC office could answer

that, why Madam Speaker? Why, Madam Speaker, because there was direction coming from the top. This is our concern. Now, we are treating this Bill again in this way, this might as well become a Decree, Madam Speaker. The process it is coming through. We have a Parliament here, we have people who want their voices to be heard by the Standing Committees and then the law will follow its own passage. I stand, Madam Speaker, to really indicate our concern that although the Bill may be a very short one, but it is important. It is important as its application is far reaching and the people need to know what is in there and not only to become victims when the Bill is passed and they have no knowledge at all of how the present law is going to be applied. I hope that we can think about that. I believe there is no urgency in this being treated this way and let the own old process follow its own cause. That is all, Madam Speaker, thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now give the floor to the Honourable Draunidalo.

HON. ROKO T.T.S. DRAUNIDALO.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. I wish to support what the Honourable Karavaki had said about this Bill and the motion, that it be taken through Standing Order 51.

Madam Speaker, our objections to taking Bills through that Standing Order is well-known. We feel that in most times it makes a mockery of this place in fast tracking legislation which requires more input, especially from people who will be governed by it and I join the Honourable Karavaki in saying that this particular Bill has a lot of implications for the liberties of persons, and persons who are charged by FICAC, they need to engage counsel who do not come cheaply and all of these things. We have seen, Madam Speaker, that some prosecution appeared to be political witch hunts. The issue of independence was raised and I wish to repeat that.

In those circumstances and because this deals with the personal liberties of individuals and the Constitution also has a lot to say on that issue if the Bill of Rights is to mean anything, then the very least we can ask for, Madam Speaker, is for the Committee to have a look at this and the implications that it has on all of us who will be governed by this law. And I join, the Honourable Karavaki in stating my objection to it being taken fast-track through Standing Order 51.

All of us, Madam Speaker, are all interested and would support laws against corruption. So long, as that they are passed properly and the Commission is not used as some sort of political witch hunt institution that is not independent. So long, as those safe guards are there, Madam Speaker, we can confidently say that we support all these laws, but I ask again, Madam Speaker, and on that basis we ask that this be taken to Committee and people be properly consulted. Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- I give the floor to the Honourable Bulitavu.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. Just a brief contribution to the debate before the House in regards to the Bill that has been tabled.

Madam Speaker, I will concur with what is being said by the Honourable Semesa Karavaki in regards to this particular Bill to be taken to the Committees through public consultations rather than coming through by way of Standing Order 51 for a few reasons.

Firstly, if you look at the genesis of this particular Bill that has been tabled, it started as a promulgation in 2007. It was used because the then Bainimarama-led Government stated that one of

the causes of the them taking over the government was to eradicate corruption. That is why this particular institutions was put in place or set up. It was Decreed as we all know and this particular institution has made its way into the Constitution through Section 115. Both the Promulgation and the Constitution, the views are being shared by this side of the House since the establishment of this Parliament that both laws did not go through wider consultation but it was imposed to the public. Now we are introducing an amendment to the Bill which is before the House which will strengthen this particular institution in its operation.

Madam Speaker, the two points raised by the Honourable Attorney-General, one was that this particular institution will not be subject to any control of any person. I think there was a question that was raised a year ago or so, Madam Speaker, in regards to who is to appoint the Deputy Commissioner for FICAC and the answer that was given, that it was under the control of the President. But now that is going to be clarified through these amendments as to which governing authority FICAC will now be subject to? That is the question that needs to be answered.

Madam Speaker, if you look at Section 115(9) of the Constitution, you will actually see that FICAC gives reports and advice to the Office of the Attorney-General in regards to operation and other functions. These are some of the areas that people would like to give their views on, on how this particular institution is placed in the Constitution and now we have a Bill that is introduced that will pass into an Act to strengthen this particular institution.

The other thing, Madam Speaker, is it will be a duplication of what the Police Force is currently doing especially when you look at the issues raised by the Honourable Attorney-General in regards to search warrants and warrants to seize properties which currently the FICAC needs to get a Court Order from Court in order to do that. Madam Speaker, there were initial cases carried out by CID and after that it was taken over by FICAC, after Police had conducted the functions which FICAC did not have powers to do so. So, these are some of the duplications that are there and in regards to corruption cases, there is a Serious Fraud Unit at CID Headquarters in Toorak which also looks at the same thing and there are also qualified police officers who are trained in investigation and also in preparing cases that are to come into our courts..

Finally, Madam Speaker, I think the US Secretary of State, this year, a few months ago had also established the fact that this particular institution is no longer independent. There has been a report that has come out and made its way into the US Congress that is sufficient enough that this particular institution has been identified as not being very independent. Having that, the best way I would like to ask my Honourable friend if this particular Bill is withdrawn and comes through the proper procedure for Bills where it will be going to the right Standing Committee and wider public consultation is conducted as it is very important to the people of this country for us to have their opinions and say in regards to this particular Bill. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now give the floor to the Hon. Dr. Biman Prasad.

HON. PROF. B.C. PRASAD. – Thank you, Madam Speaker. I join my colleagues on this side in opposing the passing of this motion under Standing Order 51. As I have said in this Parliament before, Madam Speaker, I think there are serious issues with respect to the separation of powers within the Constitution. Constitutional Offices Commission, Madam Speaker, as you would know is chaired by the Honourable Prime Minister, has the Honourable Leader of the Opposition and one nominee, includes the Honourable Attorney-General and two other Government representatives.

In the previous Constitution, Madam Speaker, the Constitutional Offices Commission was always very, very independent away from the Government but that is given. The Constitution is there and I think Honourable Bulitavu is correct. I am not saying that the Honourable Attorney-General in this particular Constitution exercises the powers that he has outside of what he should do, but in future, Madam Speaker, if we have another Honourable Attorney-General who is given powers and Honourable Bulitavu is correct under Section 115 and I quote:

“The Commission shall provide regular updates and advice to the Attorney-General on any matter relating to its functions and responsibilities.”

What we are saying on this side of the House, Madam Speaker, is that when we are making laws that actually deal with these Constitutional Offices, we have to be very, very careful not to put in provisions that could be interpreted, that could be open to abuse not only by those who are responsible for administering the Commission but also by those who work for these independent organisations. That is why, Madam Speaker, I think it is appropriate that this Bill actually goes through the Standing Committee.

One thing that is very important, Madam Speaker, when we make laws and that is why Parliament have set the Standing Committee because many times people are not aware of the laws and the provisions in the laws. By putting Bills into Standing Committees, we give the opportunity for people not only to come and make submissions but because the Committee meets openly, these things are reported extensively in the media, people get to understand what are the changes that are being made to previous laws or what are the new laws? And if people do not understand laws, I mean it is all very good, Madam Speaker, to make laws and laws have implications on how people behave, how people act, how people deal with various provisions and how it affects wider society, and that is why law making itself has to be time consuming, it ought to be given the due consideration not only by Parliament but by its Committees, but by the people, and that is a better way of making laws, Madam Speaker.

This particular one requires a much more thorough scrutiny and debate because as some of our colleagues have said on this side of the House, that there is a perception that FICAC is not independent and that FICAC might be going on a political witch hunt. We need to remove those perceptions. FICAC is important, fighting corruption is important, we do not undervalue the objectives of these institutions and this will be an opportunity to look at the whole laws. Let us go through it in more detail and let the people who might be having this kind of perception, Madam Speaker, for them to come to the Standing Committee and make their views known. I think that would be very, very helpful for us as law makers in this Parliament to understand that. So with that, Madam Speaker, I oppose this Bill going through Standing Order 51, it should be referred to the proper Standing Committee for scrutiny. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- I give the floor to the Honourable Viliame Gavoka.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Madam Speaker, I am not a lawyer but one thing about FICAC is that it is so dominant in our community in instilling fear with other people. If you want to threaten anyone you just say “FICAC”. It has become almost like a monster that people now fear within our community and indeed the FijiFirst Government have been known to gloat over the fact that they have created something that, that somehow creates fear and brings discipline within our community.

That should not be the way we discipline our people, that should not be the way we live in this country.

If I go back to the beginning of this, from day one, it was very controversial because it took over a role that was primarily a Police role right from day one. However, Madam Speaker, I think if people use FICAC as a threat to threaten others then it is more the reason why we should have proper dialogue on this. Let people understand what FICAC is.

When I was General Manager of a resort, I was even threatened by one of my workers, “I will take you to FICAC”, I mean it is pretty pervasive throughout our community. FICAC is such a dominant institution now in our country. I think it is just healthy to bring it out into the open, have Committees to sit and let our people air their views about FICAC. I think if we go this way we will be just strengthening something that was created, which we think was created illegally by being Decreed at that time and continues to be a major force in our life, being used unwisely in many cases and I think we need to understand this and we can only do that if we allow people to have dialogue on this. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- There being no other input, I will now give the floor to the Honourable Attorney-General for his right of reply.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I would like to focus on the Bill.

The Bill, Madam Speaker, as I have highlighted addresses a number of key functionary issues pertaining to the functioning of FICAC. It also addresses, Madam Speaker, for example the ability of FICAC to be able to access proceeds of crime which currently is restricted only to the Director of Public Prosecution’s Office (DPP). So here for example, we have a large case that was before the Courts, I understand now under appeal, where you had businessman allegations of a million dollar being abused or having access to a million dollars through bribing public officials. The issue at the moment is, he has been found guilty, he has been sentenced but what about the proceeds from that criminal activity? At the moment FICAC does not have those powers to go and access those assets. It still has to go through DPP’s Office. If it is to be an independent body, it needs to be able to do that.

Madam Speaker, this whole notion about FICAC, everyone is scared of FICAC et cetera, if some individual is threatening a hotel manager and saying “I will take you to FICAC” it does not mean FICAC is a bad institution. Maybe the person is misusing that in the same way you have people saying, “if you do that, I am going to take you to the Divisional Commissioner; if you do not do that I have an uncle who is in the Police Force” people do that. It is not something peculiar to FICAC, let us be realistic about it.

In the same way, Madam Speaker, when the Independent Legal Services Commission was setup, everyone said, “it is not independent”. Today the ILSC provides an independent mechanism where, for example, you have complaints against lawyers. We have had senior lawyers, Madam Speaker, who have not been very trustworthy with trust fund accounts money, and they have actually been debarred for life as they need to be. But ILSC is an independent body, similarly Madam Speaker, there is also selective reading of the Constitution. Let me read various sections of the Constitution, it says, ...

HON. OPP. MEMBER.- Read the sentence.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Constitution is prevalent law, we understand that.

"In exercising its powers and performing its functions and duties, the Commission shall be guided by the standards established under the United Nations Convention Against Corruption."

Now, UNCAC is quite explicitly clear that an independent corruption body must be independent. Now we have had two peer reviews, none of them have found that there is no compromise in the independence.

Let me also read on further, Madam Speaker, it says,

"The Commission may regulate its own procedure and may make such rules and regulations as it deems fit for regulating and facilitating the performance of its functions.

In the performance of its functions or the exercise of its authority and powers, the Commission shall be independent and shall not be subject to the direction of control of any person or authority, except by a court of law or as otherwise prescribed by a written law."

Madam Speaker, nowhere in any written law does it say that FICAC is under the direction or control of anyone. They do not understand English. They are just simply reading it. Now, Madam Speaker, the point is that we have....

HON. RATU I.D. TIKOCA.- Point of Order

HON. SPEAKER.- Point of Order.

HON. RATU I.D. TIKOCA.- I table to you, Madam Speaker, all the proof that he is actually the head of FICAC and that has not been processed. Second time I did and he is talking exactly not the truth because the truth, I table here, that there are legal proof that he is the head of FICAC. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. GOVT MEMBER.- What is the Point of Order?

HON. RATU I.D. TIKOCA.- The Point of Order has been raised, the truth and nothing but the truth that is it against you.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. I can safely say that yes we did receive those documents but as it has been mentioned here that there will be a further debate on this on Wednesday, 1st June, 2016 and we can clarify further the points that he had raised.

Thank you. Hon. Attorney-General.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, I am not going to venture into the conflict of interest statement coming from that Honourable Member but the point is that the Honourable Member is not declaring his interest.

Madam Speaker, as I have pointed out, there is nowhere does it say that it is not an independent body. It would be foolish for us to engage with the people who engage in the morning tea, foolish for us to go and ratify undeservedly if there were some clandestine move to control it, we have had it reviewed. The reality is, Madam Speaker, that we need an independent body.

In the Bill that was tabled earlier on about the Code of Conduct for public office holders, in that you will see, Madam Speaker, that there was a specific provision, that in the event that there is a complaint made against FICAC or an officer in FICAC to the Accountability and Transparency Commission, then that complaint goes to the Police or the DPP. In the event if there is a compliant made against the DPP for corruption or the Police Officers, obviously you cannot have the police investigating, it goes to FICAC.

This is why, Madam Speaker, we have these checks and balances, this is why it is an integrated approach to law enforcement in particular white collar crime and corruption. So again I urge the Honourable Members, not to be emotional, to not try and make this a political football to actually look at the specific provisions vis-à-vis the United Nations Convention (UNCAC) that we have ratified. It is within that prospective, Madam Speaker, that they need to be able to review these amendments that we have proposed. We have also highlighted, Madam Speaker, these have operational impact on the ability of FICAC to fully carry out its functions and nowhere in the amendments has it in any way undermined the independence of FICAC. In fact if anything, it has strengthened it. So, they should be happy about that, if they are simply taking about the independence of the body. This amendment Bill strengthens it, both in its operational and its philosophical outlook, Madam Speaker. Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. The Parliament will now vote.

The question is:

- a) That the Fiji Independent Commission Against Corruption Amendment Bill 2016 be considered by Parliament without delay.
- b) That the Bill must not be referred to a Standing Committee or other Committee of Parliament;
- c) That the Bill must be debated and voted upon by Parliament on Wednesday 1st June, 2016 but that one hour be given to debate the Bill, with the right of reply given to the Attorney-General as the member moving this motion.

Does any member oppose the motion?

(Chorus of yes and noes)

HON. SPEAKER.- There being opposition, Parliament will now vote on the motion.

Votes cast:

Ayes	:	27
Noes	:	17
Not Voted	:	6

HON. SPEAKER.- thank you. There being 27 Ayes, 17 Noes and 6 have not voted, this Motion is therefore, agreed to. At this stage Honourable Members, I will seek leave of Parliament to continue with Consideration of Bills in the Order Paper since we have just one more to consider before we break off for lunch so that after lunch we do not have to return.

Does anyone oppose that?

(Chorus of noes)

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you, we will continue. I now call on the Honourable Attorney-General to move his motion.

PASSPORTS (AMENDMENT) BILL 2016

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 51, I move:

- a) That the Passports (Amendment) Bill 2016 be considered by Parliament without delay;
- b) That the Bill must not be referred to a Standing Committee or other Committee of Parliament; and
- c) That the Bill must be debated and voted upon by Parliament on Thursday 2nd June, 2016, but that one hour be given to debate the Bill, with the right of reply given to me as a member moving this motion.

HON. SPEAKER.- Do we have a seconder?

HON. LT. COL. I. B. SERUIRATU.- Madam Speaker, I beg to second the motion.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now call on the Honourable Attorney-General to have the floor.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, the Passports Act 2002 provides for the issuance of administration of the regulation of passports and travel documents for all Fijian citizens. The Passports (Amendment) Bill is envisaged to amend the Act to introduce a new category of passports to be called the Fijian official passport which will only be used by Fijian soldiers and other members of the disciplined force to travel safely between the borders of hostile countries while on peace keeping duties.

Consultations, Madam Speaker, have been held with Ministry of Defence, National Security, Immigration, Department of Immigration, RFMF, Fiji Police Force, the Correction Services and of course the various other relevant Government agencies including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Madam Speaker, currently in the Middle East, Fijians who are members of the disciplined forces, more specifically the Republic of Fiji Military Forces (RFMF) who are deployed as peacekeepers in Iraq, Sinai, Syria, Lebanon and Golan Heights. If a Fijian soldier is to be based in the Golan Heights, Madam Speaker, his or her passport will be stamped with the Israeli visa upon arrival. On the other hand, if a Fijian soldier is to be based in one of the Arab countries, that is, Iraq, Syria or Lebanon, his or her passport will be stamped with a visa from that particular country.

As part of their services as peacekeepers in the Middle East, Fijian soldiers regularly travel from one country to another, crossing borders between Israel and Arab countries to administer supplies, logistics and inspect the conditions of the troops and camps of fellow Fijian soldiers based in other countries within the greater Middle East.

Given the growing hostility generally in the region and also of course the political hostility between Israel and the Arab countries, any movement between the borders of Israel and the Arab countries poses an issue for our Fijian troops whose passport have been stamped with either an Israeli visa or an Arab country visa.

A Fijian soldier presenting an Israeli stamped passport at the border of an Arab country or vice versa, is likely to have their documents seized, or be delayed and subjected to further scrutiny. On some occasions, the soldiers are turned back and not allowed to enter that country and also face the risk of being detained at the border.

In order to mitigate this risk, Madam Speaker, there was a practical solution that was taken. It was an immediate practical solution so what the Fijian Government has been doing, Madam Speaker, is apart from them carrying their normal Fijian passport, they have also been issued with the emergency passports because sometimes the travel between the two countries get so petty that they do not like an Israeli visa stamp on the passport when they enter an Arab country or vice versa when they go from an Arab country into Israel. So, what has happened, Madam Speaker, is that the Government has been issuing them with emergency passports.

The emergency passports, Madam Speaker, as the word connotes it is only for emergency purposes but obviously it is being used for more than emergency purposes, it is to address these specific issues. An emergency passport is only valid for 12 months. So, Madam Speaker, in order to address this issue, given the fact that the Fijian disciplined forces, not just RFMF but other agencies are carrying out these duties, in order to be able to address this issue, in order to minimise the potential of them being stopped at various borders, this amendment to the Bill seeks to issue a new category of passports as called the "Official Passport" only for our people who are serving in these various areas and also for peacekeeping duties only.

So, in order to ensure their safe passage and safe travel, but also to ensure the fluidity of them coming through borders, we are asking that this particular amendment be made to the Passports Act. Madam Speaker, for example Clauses 1 and 2 again is a functionary type of amendment to the Act where it talks about creating a new category of passports. You will see that there is various sentences, various offences being created, if a person makes an unauthorised alterations et cetera to the passport and it is only when they come back, they have to hand back this passport to the Passport Office and essentially, Madam Speaker, these nine clauses that sets up the discipline forces and members of those discipline forces that will be entitled to this. Obviously Madam Speaker, there is an urgency to do this because we have people travelling there, we have our troops there and there is growing

tension between these different countries. So in order also to ensure that our troops are looked after, in order to ensure that our troops actually get easy access across the borders, it is imperative that we have this new category of passports. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Parliament is now open for debate on this motion. I now give the floor to the Honourable Ratu Isoa Tikoca.

HON. RATU I.D. TIKOCA.- I would like to raise a question whether the United Nations has been approached, because United Nations can issue passport which is relevant on both sides, why can we not consider that? Thank you, Madam.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you, do we have any other input?

Thank you, I will now invite the Honourable Attorney-General for his right of a reply.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. Again I move now that this Bill now be debated on Thursday, 2nd June, 2016 with one hour time limit being set. Thank you Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Parliament will now vote and the question is that:

- a) The Passports (Amendment) Bill 2016 be considered by Parliament without delay;
- b) The Bill must not be referred to a Standing Committee or other Committee of Parliament; and
- c) The Bill must be debated and voted upon by Parliament on Thursday, 2nd June, 2016 but that one hour be given to debate the Bill, with the right of reply given to the Attorney-General as the Member moving this motion.

Does any Member oppose the motion?

(Chorus of yes and noes)

HON. SPEAKER.- There being no opposition, the Parliament will now vote on the motion:

Votes cast:

Ayes	:	25
Noes	:	16
Not Voted	:	9

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. There being 25 Ayes, 16 Noes and 9 have not voted, the motion is therefore, agreed to.

Thank you, Honourable Members, the Parliament is now adjourned until tomorrow at 9.30 a.m. Please note that lunch is provided for Honourable Members in the Big Committee Room.

The Business Committee Members are also hereby reminded of our meeting in the Small Committee Room. Thank you.

The Parliament adjourned at 12.39 p.m.

