

THURSDAY, 9TH JULY, 2015

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

MADAM SPEAKER took the Chair and read the Prayer.

PRESENT

All the honourable Members were present, except the honourable Minister for Foreign Affairs; the honourable Minister for Youth and Sports; the honourable Assistant Minister for Youth and Sports; the honourable Assistant Minister for Education, Heritage and Arts; the honourable Ruveni N. Nadalo; and the honourable Vijay Nath.

MINUTES

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

That the Minutes of the sitting of Parliament held on Wednesday, 8th July, 2015 as previously circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed.

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

Question put.

Motion agreed to.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CHAIR

Acknowledgment of Visitors

MADAM SPEAKER.- I warmly welcome all of you joining us in the public gallery and those watching proceedings on television, internet and listening on the radio. Thank you for taking interest in your Parliament.

I especially welcome students and teachers from Nausori High School, who are observing today's sitting from the public gallery. I hope your visit will benefit you all, and on that note, I wish you all a very best in your studies.

Population Message

Honourable Members, Fiji is a global leader, in that, our Constitution already specifically provides for reproductive rights which is in Section 38(1).

A person's ability to plan the timing and size of his or her family closely determines the realization of other rights. Every individual has the right to make their own choices about their sexual and reproductive health - the freedom to decide when, and how many children to have.

Ensuring young women's access to voluntary family planning has the greatest impact on educational attainment, better job opportunities, lifetime earnings and protection against crime and violence, to name a few. Hence as the sustainable development goals are being defined, policy makers must not neglect to prioritise the reproductive health needs of young people who will carry the next sustainable development agenda forward.

PRESENTATION OF PETITION

Transforming Nadroga/Navosa High School to a Technical College

HON. V. R. GAVOKA.- Madam Speaker. I rise in accordance with Standing Orders 37, to table a Petition, signed by parents and the community in Nadroga/Navosa, asking Governments to review and rescind its decision to transform Nadroga/Navosa to a Technical College.

Madam Speaker, Nadroga/Navosa High School was started by the people of Nadroga/Navosa,, to provide education for their young and also provided boarding facilities. Over the years, Madam Speaker, it has met the needs of the people of the province, especially those from the hinterland, from the highlands of Navosa. We all know about the difficulties they face, Madam Speaker, they need to go to town, to the cities, to boarding schools outside of Navosa for secondary education.

It is not easy, Madam Speaker, particularly so for those who do not always make the grade. Over the years, those who could not make it into the schools were picked up by the province to come to Nadroga/Navosa High School. Hearing the story, Madam Speaker, it is a great story that those who could have just remained in the village, they could not make the grades were accepted into the school, and were brought up in the school and some of them have done very well.

The environment in the school, being what it is, like any boarding school, quite a number of them have done very well, they have gone on to Form 7 and even into universities.

Madam Speaker, if you take this away, there is a question “where will these students, who do not make the grade go to”, or “where will those from the highlands of Nadroga/Navosa and in the highlands of Nadroga go to?”

I have a petition here, Madam Speaker, signed by 248 parents and the community at large, to try and have a hearing on this, because they feel Madam Speaker, the decision was made in haste, it followed a channel and by the time they realised it, the provisional council had approved it and it has progressed to what is it today. What they felt, Madam Speaker, was, they were not consulted.

Madam Speaker, they feel and believe it is their Parliament that can look into this. It is the duty of what we have today that our people know at the end of the day the highest Court of the land, the Parliament can always look into the issues.

I ask the House, Madam Speaker, to accept this and convene an appropriate committee to look into this matter, to review and rescind this transformation of Nadroga/Navosa High School into a technical college.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Please hand your Petition to the Secretary-General.

(The Petition was handed to the Secretary-General)

Under Standing Order 37, I refer this Petition to the Standing Committee on Social Affairs.

PRESENTATION OF REPORTS

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, in accordance with Standing Order 38, I present the Fiji Financial Intelligence Unit 2014 Annual Report to Parliament.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Under Standing Order 38 (2), I refer the Fiji Financial Intelligence Unit 2014 Annual Report to the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs.

HON. CAPT. T.L. NATUVA.- Madam Speaker, in accordance with Standing Order 38, I present the Ministry of Defence, National Security and Immigration Annual Report to Parliament.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Under Standing Order 38(2), I refer the Ministry of Defence, National Security and Immigration Annual Report 2013 to the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence.

QUESTIONS AND REPLIES

Oral Questions

Tobacco Impacts on Health (Question No. 159/215)

Hon. V. Pillay asked the Government, upon notice:

Can the Minister for Health and Medical Services inform the House on how:

- (i) Fiji is dealing with the impact of tobacco on health; and
- (ii) it has responded to the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) which Fiji signed and ratified in October 2013?

HON. J. USAMATE (Minister for Health and Medical Services).- Madam Speaker, I rise to respond to the question asked by the honourable Member.

Madam Speaker, the World Health Organisation Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) basically sets out to do two things:

- (1) It sets out the steps that countries would need to take to reduce tobacco use because of the consequent harm and suffering that arises from its use.
- (2) It also includes initiatives, things that we can do in order to reduce the demand for tobacco, and also to control its supply.
- (3) So these are things that countries need to do because of the impact that tobacco has on the health of the people in the world and the people in a country *per se*.

In Fiji, there had been work on tobacco that commenced much earlier than this Framework. In fact, from the records, it shows that tobacco control initiatives started way back in 1997 and there was a legislation that was passed (Tobacco Control Act) in 1998 and enforcement commenced in 1999.

The Tobacco Control Enforcement Unit, therefore, started around 2002 with two full-time staff but in responding to the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, the Government has amended its Tobacco Control laws through the Tobacco Control Decree of 2010 and the Tobacco Control Regulations of 2012. What this did, they basically amended the Tobacco Control Act, 1998 and there were additional components added on to that original legislation in the Tobacco Control Laws and laws that apply to tobacco products, for example, customs and taxes.

The most effective way of dealing with tobacco and its impact on people is to have population wide policies, such as:

- 1) Policies like Benson Advertising on promotion and sponsorship of tobacco products. We need things that run across the gambit of the whole country.
- 2) Strategies on tobacco tax and price increases of tobacco.
- 3) Policies that forbid smoking in public and workplaces.
- 4) Policies and laws that require large, clear and visible graphic health messages on tobacco packaging.

I am glad to inform this House that all of these measures have already been implemented by the Ministry of Health in its tobacco legislations.

Fiji is now the only country in the Pacific to sign the Illicit Trade in Tobacco Protocol in 2013. There are 54 other countries that also sign that particular protocol but only one country has ratified it, that is, Nicaragua. Here in Fiji, we are now looking to also ratify that Protocol.

Furthermore, as a signatory to this Convention on Tobacco Control, the Convention requires us to put into place activities to help people stop smoking - smoking cessation, so subsequently the Ministry has been carrying out training for medical staff, we have tool kits on NCDs and training, so that they can help counsel people to stop smoking because of the impact this is having on itself.

In 2008, to make sure that we can have a greater impact right across the country as part of the Tobacco Control, we recruited in the Western Division three Tobacco Control Officers; in the Northern Division, an additional two Officers, in order to complement those who are already in Suva. Those enforcement officers will actually go out and make sure that the laws are being applied.

This year, as a result of all these activities, Madam Speaker, earlier this month, the WHO looked at the activities that we are doing here in Fiji, to try to control tobacco and its usage, the activities that we are doing to control the illicit trade in tobacco, and they recognise us. They gave us a gold medal and a certification. This is not done for all countries, it is done for countries that have been able to progress this, so we hope that we continue to move along this path, to have less and less numbers of our people and our young children smoking cigarettes or *suki* or whatever it is, so that they can look after their health and have a better future.

HON. RATU K. KILIRAKI.- A supplementary question, Madam Speaker. The answer that has been highlighted is commendable and we have been enlightened this morning with the aim or the chain of prevention or deterrent of influencing people to smoke. My question is, what is the policy of the Government for the people that are planting tobacco as well as the factory that manufactures tobacco in this country? It will be interesting to receive the answer in the interest of farmers as well as the company.

HON. J. USAMATE.- Madam Speaker, we know that while we understand that there is a need to limit the smoking of tobacco because of its harmful effects on people's lives but at the same time, we have to balance this with the livelihood of people. I think over the long-term, if possible, we will need to think and look as a nation, to see people to move away from crops that can harm people's lives but for the time being, we need to live with realities. People are living on tobacco at the moment, there is a tobacco company that also employs people so in life, there is always the need to look at the balance between health on one part and on the other part, look at the employment and the things that come out of employment. So at the moment, our policy is to balance these things so that as much as possible, we can have a win-win situation.

HON. M.R. LEAWERE.- Madam Speaker, I thank the honourable Minister for the legislation in relation to tobacco control. I would just like to ask the Minister if it is possible, to legislate tobacco/cigarette packages to be either in plain black or plain white, to discourage people from buying cigarettes.

HON. J. USAMATE.- That question is noted, Madam Speaker.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- This is a very very popular Convention that every country in the world are asked to ratify but Fiji, according to this, only ratified in 2013 so the reason we ask is, why the delay?

The Government has been in power for nine years and they only come to ratify this on the 7th year, could you explain the reason for the delay? May be sleeping, fishing or whatever.

HON. J. USAMATE.- Madam Speaker, I will need to go back to see the date of the Convention.

HON. MEMBER.- The date?

HON. J. USAMATE.- I am not too sure what the date is but I would like to point out that the emphasis or what we really need to look at is what we are doing on the ground. The tobacco enforcement activities have commenced well before that so even though we ratify or we sign and ratify it later, what we really need to see is the 'proof on the pudding' as we say on this side, the execution of what we do, so that it has an impact in people's lives.

(Chorus of Interjections)

We can talk until the cows come home, but what counts is the execution.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- The cows are already home!

(Laughter)

HON. J. USAMATE.- Those must be the Vanua Levu cows. These are the cows from Viti Levu
(Laughter)

MADAM SPEAKER.- Please, ensure that the cows do not enter Parliament House.

(Laughter)

HON. DR. B.C. PRASAD.- Madam Speaker, with respect to tobacco control and consumption, can the honourable Minister inform the House why \$400,000 that was returned for NCD activities out of the \$700,000 that Government collected from annual licensing of importers, wholesalers, retailers in 2015 returned to Government with no return to NCD activity from that allocation?

MADAM SPEAKER.- The onus is on the honourable Minister to answer or not to answer.

HON. J. USAMATE.- Madam Speaker, that is a new question. You will have to repose it before I can answer it.

HON. DR. B.C. PRASAD.- Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The question was directly relevant. It was in relation to tobacco control and consumption and the revenue that Government got (\$700,000), \$400,000 of that in 2013 and 2014, used to go for NCD activities. In 2015, that \$400,000

was returned to Government. It did not go to NCD. It is a very relevant question, if you want to control tobacco.

MADAM SPEAKER.- You had asked a supplementary question and the answer has been given, thank you. I call on the honourable Anare Vadei to have the floor.

HON. A. VADEI.- Madam Speaker, I just want to ask the honourable Minister or the Government whether they consider increasing the tax on tobacco in this Budget to deter smoking as a number one step being highlighted for their resolution on this issue?

HON. J. USAMATE.- Madam Speaker, I think if the honourable Members on the other side have been here during the Budget debate, they would have noticed that taxation increased from where ever it was. If there is one thing in which we continually tax every year, it is alcohol and tobacco because we want to deter people from using these because they have an impact on their lives. So, it happens every year and I believe, it will happen again in future.

Requirements for Applications on Vacant Land
(Question No. 160/2015)

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

Can the honourable Minister for Lands and Mineral Resources explain the requirements for applicants to apply for vacant pieces of land for housing and household farms?

HON. M.R. VUNIWAQA (Minister for Lands and Mineral Resources).- Madam Speaker, I rise to answer the question asked. The question is specifically on application for vacant pieces of land. There are two basic categories, one is the one that the question is asking about – vacant land where applicants are required to apply and the other one is where land is already in the market and there are dealings between lessees and intended buyers for those.

For vacant pieces of land, all those are advertised by Government to enhance transparency and get rid of allegations of corruption in the allocation of State land. For residential purposes, there is a requirement that the applicant is a Fiji citizen, that the applicant knows the partner or spouse has any other residential property, and that their joint income meets a certain threshold, depending on the location of the land and other circumstances surrounding the land.

For household farms – agricultural purposes, again, the applicant must be a Fiji citizen and we look for the ability or capacity to utilise the land for the purpose that it has been given for, agricultural purpose that is, and for that, we bring in the Ministry of Agriculture or it is a sugarcane farm, we bring in the relevant experts to look at that capacity, not only technical but financial as well.

Preference is normally given to farmers who have established themselves already in farms in any other parts of Fiji. If that is missing, then the capacity to farm and financial capacity becomes a very important requirement. That, Madam Speaker, is a summary of the requirements for housing and agricultural leases.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Supplementary question, and I invite the honourable Jiosefa Dulakiverata to have the floor.

HON. J.D. DULAKIVERATA.- Madam Speaker, I thank the honourable Minister for the answer to that question. I understand that the Lands Department has a very comprehensive land information system. I would like to further ask; do you have a record of all the vacant State land in the country?

HON. M.R. VUNIWAQA.- Madam Speaker, I thank the honourable Member for the question. He would know that we have a Land Information System but that, in our view, has become outdated, which is why Government, in the past year, has given out a budget for a project, the Land Use Master Plan. That Plan is to basically to identify all parcels of land, State land in Fiji, and to pinpoint the ones that are currently vacant. So in short, we will not be able to tell just like that because we do not have the technological data in place yet. What we have put in place is a team, a harmonisation team.

The harmonisation team are out now in the Western Division, looking at each and every parcel of State land on the ground – inspect it, bring the data back to Suva where the Geospatial Team is. This Team will put together these data into the computers so that we will be able to, at one stage, it will take sometimes to do this but we have started, and I assure the honourable Member, this House and all Fijians that we are moving towards that goal. The ultimate aim is to one day, not only for the Ministry of Lands, this will form the backbone for a National Geospatial System, where on a tap of a button, we are able to tell whether a parcel of land is available or not.

MADAM SPEAKER.- I give the floor to the honourable Niko Nawaikula.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Madam Speaker, some of those land were acquired from the native owners for public purpose but they have become vacant. Does the Government consult with landowners or, at least, ITLTB? If not, could you give the reason why not?

HON. M.R. VUNIWAQA.- Madam Speaker, that is a new question altogether.

MADAM SPEAKER.- I give the floor to the honourable Veena Bhatnagar.

HON. V. BHATNAGAR.- Madam Speaker, a supplementary question. Could the honourable Minister for Lands and Mineral Resources please clarify the process involved in allocating State leases?

HON. M.R. VUNIWAQA.- Madam Speaker, as indicated earlier, the first step is always advertisement. All State land now, there is a requirement for advertising so that the allocation process is very transparent. The next stage is the processing and preparation of leases, of course, that requires some certain discussions between other Ministries and us, and of course, registration with the Registrar of Titles. All in all, I had stated earlier when responding to some of the previous questions relating to the Ministry, the Standard Operating Procedures where all these processes are and certain timelines which have been put in. I had also mentioned then that this SOP is work in progress, we are still reviewing it in relation to timelines. So at the moment, we are looking at up to three months to finish off this entire process.

MADAM SPEAKER.- I give the floor to the honourable Bilitavu.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Madam Speaker, now that you have known the records of vacant land with your new IT system, how often will you be advertising these vacant land?

HON. M.R. VUNIWAQA.- Madam Speaker, every vacant land that has come to our attention during a quarter is advertised on the final week of every quarter. We advertise it in the newspapers and then we post it on our website, which is www.lands.gov.fj. It stays there for a month. Applications are received within the month and then processing starts thereafter.

HON. L. EDEN.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Minister, thank you for explaining the procedures - your Standard Operating Procedures, (SOPs) for allocation of State leases. Could the honourable Minister please tell us what other initiatives are being undertaken, to enhance leasing processes?

HON. M. VUNIWAQA.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. We have spoken about technology, another aspect of it for which we have a budget for this year, is the buying of satellite imagery. This is to allow us to remotely look at our parcels of land, all over Fiji, and hopefully by the end of the year, we will have that in place. Procurement processes are already under way.

We are also reviewing the State Lands Act, to look at those provisions that really do not apply in this day and age in relation to the allocation of State leases. Those would be the major, other initiatives which the Ministry is looking at, to ease the transaction of land allocation.

MADAM SPEAKER.- I give the floor to the honourable Balmindar Singh.

HON. B. SINGH.- Madam Speaker, I rise to ask a supplementary question, but Madam Speaker, it has been answered properly by the Madam Minister, it was the initiative that the Government is embarking on, on the reforms of the Land Act, which is being answered, Madam.

Police Action on Cultivation of Marijuana
(Question No. 161/2015)

HON. LT. COL. N. RIKA asked the Government, upon notice:

Can the honourable Minister for Defence, National Security and Immigration inform this House on the status of actions taken by Police against those who have been caught cultivating *marijuana*?

HON. CAPT T. L. NATUVA (Minister for Defence, National Security and Immigration).- Madam Speaker, to answer the question, I just go back to the last 12 months because these issues have been pending in Fiji for the last 30 years.

I just have to mention what has been done during the last 12 months. With reference to other successful operations with marijuana and other legal drugs, Police have conducted uprooting 2,800 marijuana plants and 7.8 kilogrammes of dried *marijuana* leaves, seized together with 261 *marijuana* sachets.

Additional to that, Police have arrested two suspects of illegal importation of methamphetamine and Police have arrested two suspects of possession of 30 kilogrammes of heroin in Lautoka in December 2014.

The programme done by the Police is that we have an effective *Duavata* programme, where we set up programmes in villages and in areas where they plant *marijuana* and have people who report back to the Police of activities in regards to planting marijuana. We have seen that as very successful.

Other programme is the physical presence of Police at random time at hotspots in areas where they think that have *marijuana* plantations.

There are also Rehabilitation Programmes in the prison, where people committed of planting *marijuana* have programme for rehabilitation, they have alternative crops to plant when they go back to their various villages. Thank you Madam.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. Supplementary question, I invite the honourable Viliame Gavoka to have the floor.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Madam Speaker, it is an established fact that drug is a global problem, and also established that if we continue to have demand, you cannot curb drugs; you cannot stop them growing heroin in Afghanistan or cocaine in Columbia. So, Madam Speaker, what are we doing about curbing the demand for drugs in Fiji, that is, the distributors, the organisation, organised crime who are involved in this thing? It must be a highly developed system to motivate the farmers to grow and distribute it to the streets of Suva or Lautoka, or where ever. What are doing about curbing - curbing the consumption of drugs? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- The honours is under Minister to answer that question or not?

HON. CAPT T.L. NATUVA.- Before I answer that question by the honourable Member, I would say "Happy Birthday" to the honourable Member today.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Happy Birthday, honourable Viliame Gavoka.

(Applause)

HON. CAPT T.L. NATUVA.- Madam Speaker, there are programmes being done within the Australian Police Force and the New Zealand Police Force in trying to curb....

The programme being done by the Australian Defence is more or less like waiting for the drugs to be transported to Australia or New Zealand, they come over here. They have more representatives of the Police Force in Fiji and also in Samoa and other Pacific Islands in order to work with the Police Department on ways of trying to stop the illegal trade. That programme has been very successful and they have seen that this has reduced the number of drugs being transported to that very areas in Australia and New Zealand. We have also, like the Canadian, for drugs to be transported to Australia, the market is from Canada and they are working with all the Police Department within these areas in the South Pacific. They also have representative from Canada in Australia and they liaise with our reps in Fiji, and also with our Australian Police within the Embassy on measures on how to curb the illegal drug trade.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you, before I call on the next Member to have the floor, could all those who have mobiles, please switch them off now. Thank you, I now give the floor to the honourable Balmindar Singh.

HON. B. SINGH.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. Before I put the supplementary question to the honourable Minister, I would like to join you, Madam Speaker, to welcome the students from Nausori High and the teachers to the proceedings of today. Thank you.

Madam Speaker, my question to the honourable Minister is, how effective is the Police *Duavata* Community programme in the area where *marijuana* is grown? Thank you Madam.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you, honourable Minister.

HON. CAPT T.L. NATUVA.- Madam Speaker, the *Duavata* programme had been in existence for the last ten years. They are reviewing the programme, they reviewed that last year. There is a new programme of the new *Duavata* Initiative from the Commissioner. The new *Duavata* Community programme is very effective, the reporting system is very effective at the moment as I mentioned before, and it is working very well.

MADAM SPEAKER.- I invite the honourable Salote Radrodoro to have the floor.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to ask the honourable Minister, what kind of assistance is the Government giving, or plans to give to these marijuana farmers to discourage them from pursuing the current farming practices and to be able to pursue alternative livelihood opportunities to be able to support their families? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you, honourable Minister.

HON. CAPT T.L. NATUVA.- I thank the honourable Member for the questions.

We can go back to Pillar 7, during the Bainimarama Government, where we had identified the alternative crop, that programme has been ongoing. At the moment with the Ministry of Agriculture and Regional Development, there are programmes of finding alternative crops.

When I visited Tukavesi two months back, I saw that there was a need to have an ice plant in that area as an alternative source of living. So I thought I would liaise with the Minister for Fisheries on a possibility of having that, and also the impact of the Strategic Plan that we are doing at the moment to have a database of what is required in each individual sector, places or provinces, has been done at the moment, in order to identify alternative crops or other ways of getting money from the general public

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. I invite the honourable Mosese Bilitavu to have the floor.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Madam Speaker, the question reads; “the status of action taken by Police against those who have been caught cultivating *marijuana*.” I think we have heard, there could be possibly three; one you are caught, you are charged and taken to Court. The second one would be for you to be rehabilitated after you are released, which is an initiative by the *Duavata* Programme. The third one, which I am trying to get to, the actions on Police upon arrest regarding human rights issues. The arrest, brutality, what has been done on those cases where, in Vanua Levu recently when there was a drug raid and in Kadavu too on the victims? What has Police done to those investigations internally on the arrests?

HON. CDR S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- Point of order, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Point of Order.

HON. CDR S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- Madam Speaker, the question is irrelevant to the questions that was initially asked.

MADAM SPEAKER.- I think the question is relevant because it is to do with actions taken by the Police, and I will invite the honourable Minister to have the floor.

HON. CAPT. T.L. NATUVA.- Madam Speaker, the Police were investigated and the files have been given to the DPP, to determine the offence and that programme is going on at the moment. But if you need me to be very specific on specific areas, I can provide you with information.

MADAM SPEAKER.- I will now have the last supplementary question, and I invite the honourable Ratu Sela Nanovo to have the floor.

HON. RATU S.V. NANOVO.- Thank you Madam Speaker. In relation to Kadavu, people who were involved in this were also taken to court and majority of them are in prison right now. And added on to that, even though they are already in prison, some of the items that they assumed that were bought under the *marijuana* proceeds were also confiscated from them, and the items are now lying in the Vunisea Police Stations.

My question to the honourable Minister, what will happen to those confiscated items? Will they be there? They have already been penalised, why can you not just release it back to them? Thank you Madam Speaker.

HON. CAPT. T.L. NATUVA.- Madam Speaker, it is the first time for me to hear that, and I will try to investigate and find out what can be done legally in order to get those items which has been confiscated by the Police. Thank you.

Outdated Sugar Master Award
(Question No. 162/2015)

HON. P. SINGH asked the Government, upon notice:

Would the honourable Prime Minister and Minister for *iTaukei* and Sugar Industry explain what does he and Fiji Sugar Corporation Chairman mean by their statement that the Sugar Master Award is outdated?

HON. REAR ADMIRAL (RET'D) J.V. BAINIMARAMA (Prime Minister and Minister for *iTaukei* and Sugar).- Madam Speaker, I want to add on my well-wishers to honourable Gavoka on his 68th birthday, No, 64, we did not see the honourable and learned Attorney General, if we had given him the opportunity he would be running around here clapping.

I just want to add on a couple of statements to the honourable Minister for Defence. I know for a fact that the police are also investigating people from Nadroga and people from Tunuloa with regards to *marijuana* farming, and I also note Madam Speaker that at one stage the honourable Kiliraki and honourable Bulitavu, honourable Dulakiverata and honourable Nanovo all stood up wanting to find out more about this. I also know for a fact that the Police are also looking into their areas.

Madam Speaker, I thank the honourable Member for this question, because once again it shows his myopic view of the sugar industry.

As a below average farmer it might be good to let him know about what is happening in the sugar industry. Very simply Madam Speaker, we are now in the Sugar Cane Industry and not the Sugar Industry. There is quite a difference and we will be diversifying into sugar cane related products and such matters need to be explicitly covered in the revised Master Award, and for that reason Madam Speaker, the Sugar Master Award which is part industry Act in 1984 is 31 years old and various provisions are no longer relevant. Thank you Madam Speaker.

HON. P. SINGH.- Supplementary question, Madam Speaker. There is still a Sugar Industry Act 1984 in place and the Sugar Industry Act provides that any review of the Master Award must be in concurrence with the Board of the Sugar Cane Growers Council. At the moment there is no Board, which was taken away in 2006.

Madam Speaker, in view of that is it not illegal for the honourable Minister to hold a review of the Master Award when the Sugar Cane Growers Council Board is not in place? They are the only authority, if there is a review can be concurred with.

HON. REAR ADMIRAL (RET'D) J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- Madam Speaker, we are trying to change the Sugar Cane Act, and that is why the Sugar Cane Industry has engaged a consultant to conduct consultations with all industry stakeholders, including all farmers, below average farmers, to help establish a modern system. Thank you

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Supplementary question, Madam Speaker. The honourable Prime Minister has said that the reason for the review is because it is old, but we have legislations here that go back 100 years. Could he explain to the House when was the last review conducted? When can we expect the next review, and what aspects of the Sugar Cane Award will be reviewed?

HON. REAR ADMIRAL (RET'D) J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- If honourable Nawaikula was listening, he would have heard me say “that we are conducting consultations.” Thank you.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- The last one, I want to know the last one?

HON. REAR ADMIRAL (RET'D) J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- Why is the last one so important when we are dealing with the new Sugar Industry.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Are you asking a supplementary question?

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Yes.

MADAM SPEAKER.- No, you are allowed only one supplementary question, per Member.

We will now move on to the fifth oral question.

Urgent Review of Liquor licences – Nightclub Opening Hours
(Question No. 163/2015)

HON. RO T. V. KEPA.- Madam Speaker, before I ask the question to the honourable Attorney General, can I add my greetings with yours and honourable Balmindar Singh, in welcoming the students and teachers from Nausori High School.

Nausori is a very important town for us, Madam Speaker, especially from the provinces of Tailevu, Naitasiri and of course Rewa, and I would like to encourage them in their studies and maybe one day, one or two of the teachers and one or two of the students might be sitting here sometime in the future.

Madam Speaker, my question is:

Given the high incidences of drunken brawls in Suva, can the honourable and learned Attorney, Minister of Finance, Public Enterprises, Public Service and Communications confirm if his Ministry will push for an urgent review of liquor licences, specifically nightclub opening hours, to support the maintenance of law and order in the country?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM (Attorney General, Minister of Finance, Public Enterprises, Public Service and Communications).- Madam Speaker, I would also like to acknowledge the question from the Leader of Opposition in welcoming the students from Nausori High School, the students no doubt are the future of the country, and indeed this is exactly what FijiFirst is catered for, is to look after the students' future – the younger people, is what FijiFirst is all about.

(Chorus of interjections from Opposition Members)

Madam Speaker, the question by the honourable leader of Opposition, is somewhat flawed in its premise and I would like to take Parliament through that. Suva is not the litmus test for law and order in the country. Secondly, liquor licences come under the Liquor Act, if anything is to be reviewed is not the

liquor licence, it is the liquor Act that needs to be reviewed. Thirdly, Madam Speaker, as we discovered, of course every government is concerned about any brawls that may be publicised in the *dailies*.

Meetings have been held between nightclub owners and also the Police, let us hear from the different nightclub owners here, we have had meetings with them also and there has been seen that there is no direct correlation between the drunken brawls and liquor licences or permits that have been issued to, for example Madam Speaker, those in the special economic zone.

Just by way of background, Madam Speaker, as you may recall that a few years ago, the government set up a special economic zone, both in Suva and also in Nadi, where a couple of the streets were allocated specifically, where night clubs and liquor licence hours were extended for a longer period of time and the reason why this was done, Madam Speaker, for a couple of reasons, and this is the map that shows you (I can give you, a copy of the gazette).

The reality, Madam Speaker, many people wanted to have entertainment and have drinks after 1.00 a.m. And what we have found is that the black markets were flourishing. People, for example, Madam Speaker, when the nightclubs was closed would perhaps go and drink under the mango tree, or coconut tree, somewhere near the seawall, under some cassava patch, whenever it was - completely uncontrolled, fights would break out, the Police with absolutely no ability to go and monitor each specific area - Wailoaloa beach is a classic example. People would get raped, absolutely no ability to monitor that, so the rationalisation was, if you have special economic zones and you open it for longer periods of time, it is a controlled environment and indeed, as we have dug up and the Police will also have meetings with the nightclub owners (we have got letters here verifying that). They found some of the photographs that appeared in some of the newspapers regarding drunkards out in the streets in the early hours of the morning in fact were from outside the zones, and in fact had gone to some black marketing areas to, or people buying drinks and drinking underneath the mango tree as you know behind the market up on the hill there.

These are some of the areas, and this some of the specific areas we need to ensure that does not happen. So those new direct correlation, Madam Speaker, between the liquor licence hours and the brawls. As you may have seen, those photographs are not appearing now because the Police and the nightclub owners are working very closely together. So, it would be a knee-jerk reaction to try and suddenly review the Act *per se*. It is working well, we are getting more people in a more controlled environment, they are paying service turnover tax in these nightclubs whereas previously when you go to a black marketing house or whatever it is, they do not pay VAT, they do not pay STT, this is also bringing in revenue, but it is more of a controlled environment, Madam Speaker. Thank you.

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

HON. RO. T.V.KEPA.- I thank the honourable and learned Attorney-General for his long answer but I have witnessed this myself, the brawls in the streets on my early morning walk, so it is not a knee-jerk reaction from us. We have seen young people, Madam Speaker, and these are mostly indigenous people who are at supposedly at the height of their productive time of their lives who are frequenting these nightclubs. So, it is a very serious concern that we bring to this House, Madam Speaker, because the opening hours are from 5.00 p.m. to 5.00 a.m., and that is very long for people to be in these night clubs, and some of them do not have the discipline to take themselves home.

So, we are asking, Madam Speaker, if they can seriously look into this Act and try and shorten the night-club hours so these people are not frequenting the nightclubs, but are going home early so they can be putting in a good day's work the next day. Thank you Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Attorney General, Minister of Finance, Public Enterprises, Public Service and Communication.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, that was a statement and it is not relevant ,I have already answer the question. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Supplementary Question. The Honourable Niko Nawaikula.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Because his Muslim. He does not drink. He does not go to out to nightclubs. The reason why Losana McGowan (very famous journalist) died is because of the licences.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Order! I would like you to withdraw the reference to the religion.

HON. A. NAWAIKULA.- That was a compliment. If you insist, Madam Speaker, then I will withdraw it because it came as a complement..

MADAM SPEAKER.- Please, carry on then.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Are you hurt by that?

MADAM SPEAKER.- Do not repeat what you said. Withdrawn, please continue.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- That was a compliment.

Madam Speaker, the reason why Losana McGowan, a very famous journalist died is because of this extended hours. Extended hours. Yes! And the reason the honourable and learned Attorney General says, the solution of the black market is to extend to these hours.

Could you explain the reason why he finds it unnecessary to review, the public needs to know that, because the public is suffering. All these are happening because you are extending from 2.00 p.m. to 2.00 a.m., they should be in church. It is a Sunday. Why!

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Attorney General.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker the logic from honourable Nawaikula is very, very mind boggling – seriously! You have someone, Madam Speaker, who is the matter I understand is before the courts, so how the death occurred is not for him to establish, nor is it for me to establish and whether there is a correlation between alcohol and the actual death, that is for the Courts to also establish. You know that honourable Nawaikula.

The reality Madam Speaker, suddenly they just go on hold on something and they are hanging all the ills, all the sins of any single thing is now on the extended hours. The realities I have stated before. Madam Speaker, there have been people who have drunk during the day and punched people during the day. People have been drunk and have their brawls during the day. Is he by extension of logic saying, Madam Speaker, lets ban alcohol in Fiji?

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- No.

HON. S.D.KARAVAKI.- Yes.

(Laughter)

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Honourable Karavaki agrees with that proposition. This is the obtuseness of this logic. The logic, Madam Speaker, is previously the reality as honourable Gavoka said before, if there is a demand, how do you curb the demand? The demand is for drinking. So, even if you shut down the nightclub at 8.00 p.m., people still want to drink. And, where will they go? You are going to give rise to more black market our outlets. That is the issue

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- Drink water!

(Chorus of interjections from Opposition Members)

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Perhaps, we need to listen to the honourable Karavaki. The reality, Madam Speaker, is this, we obviously have catered is not pubs are not opened until 5.00 a.m., everywhere in Fiji. It is only the designated area, Madam Speaker, to cater for specific needs.

Other nightclubs owners from other areas have said “we want extension” we said, “No.” They said “we have a need.” They said “if someone wants to drink a longer period in a legal place from Nasinu, they can come down to Suva and drink.” Otherwise, you do not drink. That Madam Speaker is the logic behind it, is not something peculiar to Fiji, many countries have adopted this, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, the other aspect too that the honourable Prime Minister just reminded me about is that, apart from stopping the black marketing, you are now actually creating more jobs. We have people drinking in controlled environments, we have more people getting jobs, they have double shifts, we have people now working extended hours, giving more jobs to our young people, that is on the flip side.

OPPOSITION MEMBER.- Inaudible interjections.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- We also, Madam Speaker, I cannot hear what honourable Dulakiverata is saying, but I think he mentioned about businesses. In the economic zone too, Madam Speaker, shops can open for long hours. They also can open, so if someone is opening a restaurant, someone is selling some watches, someone is selling other goods, they can open till late hours in those areas too.

So, it makes sense, Madam Speaker, is creating for a particular need, it is going to be controlled environment, there is now relationships developing between nightclub owners in Nadi and Suva. They are liaising with the police and the idea is to try and control it.

Obviously, people are going to completely go berserk, the Government will always look at it, but the issue is out of control. We need to look at everything on balance. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Supplementary question the honourable Prem Singh.

HON. P. SINGH.- I thank the honourable and learned Attorney General for his answers. Just on the special economic zone, particularly in Nadi, from Martintar to Namaka, as you know that this zone has been created within a very densely populated area. The complaints that come about through the Nadi Chambers of Commerce of two nightclubs that are operating there, and this is, I believe the honourable and learned Attorney General has been addressed about this one, that the purpose for which this zone was created was for tourism; for tourists to come and enjoy. But that defeats the purpose now because it is mostly patronised by the locals, and locals from in and around Nadi.

(Chorus of Interjections)

HON. P. SINGH.- I live there honourable Prime Minister, so I know better.

My question to the honourable and learned Attorney General is, in view of the complaints from the Nadi Chamber of Commerce and the residents of Namaka and Martintar, that the nightclub opening hours be curbed.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, I have a letter here signed by Mr. John Grey and Mr. Robert Singh from Nadi, and Mr. Grey, I understand is also part of the Nadi Chamber of Commerce in which he is saying that the nightclub hours should be left it at it is.

Madam Speaker, I do not think he owns a nightclub there, but it does make commercial sense too and when we gave out this extended period, it was not just for tourists, it was also for locals. Locals do also want to have drink.

Madam Speaker, the point is and I agree with honourable Prem Singh that some complaints were received. We have also received a lot of positive responses, there was one particular nightclub, I think it is called the "Ice Bar", I understand that was having people outside. They have been told not to have people outside the premises. That, I understand has been stopped. Obviously, if they are putting people outside the nightclub, they are breaching the licences. So, they get fined, et cetera; that was the issue in Nadi.

However, as far as all the other issues as concerned, everyone is happy with it, and it does again provide that focussed area for people to be gathering in. Madam Speaker, we had for example people from Denarau saying, "we only we have it" we said "no". Because we want to open the zone for local businesses also, and for locals to go there and enjoy themselves also within a controlled environment and be responsible about it.

So, we have local businesses who are benefitting from it, not just one or two businesses that run hotel outlets. This is the reality of it, Madam Speaker, and the fact is people do go and drink outside hours and this it to control that. And, we have to recognize that, they are many Members in this House who do drink. I am sure that many Members in this House who drunk after 1am. That is the reality.

HON. OPPOSITION MEMBERS.- That side, that side.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Honourable Nawaikula needs to put his hands on his heart and say that. But, that is a reality, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you, we will now move onto the sixth oral question and I give the floor to the honourable Mikaele Leawere.

Technical/Vocational Colleges in Schools
(Question No. 164/2015)

HON. M.R. LEAWARE asked the Government, upon notice:

Can the honourable Minister for Education, Heritage and Arts inform the House as to what would happen to the existing facilities, resources (including human resources) in secondary schools that offer technical and vocational studies, now with the introduction of technical colleges?

HON. DR. M. REDDY (Minister for Education, Heritage and Arts).- Madam Speaker, I join your good self and my colleagues in the House to welcome the students from Nausori High, and on behalf of the Government, I want to assure them, free education will continue, they can go to university as well for a brighter future.

Madam Speaker, I had explained this question to honourable Leawere when we met last, when we did the *matanigasau* at the Ministry of Education. However, I will do it again.

When the honourable Prime Minister announced that the technical colleges would be established, there were six things he noted with the existing vocational centres:

- 1) That little outfit all over, attached to a school were not fully equipped. Every school having a small outfit.
- 2) Lacked adequate number of qualified people – shortage all over in every district.
- 3) That students number were low in every place. So, not getting the proper economies of scale.
- 4) That student were saying that they were not getting an award qualification, they were not graduating and that problem with marketability.
- 5) Students were feeling, they were treated like a second class because within the same compound, they were studying with high school students.
- 6) Old mature students were finding it difficult to attend to that vocational outfit, because they were this young students in the same compound within the high school system.

It was then decided that we establish technical colleges at each district, with full resources and equipment from these small outfits, and we will provide awards programme at Certificate II level. In doing so, these equipment that are spread out in the small, little outfits, will be pulled at the technical college, those staff will be taken and absorbed in the technical college, and we will provide award programmes at Certificate II level, hands on in the various skilled technical areas. For example, carpentry, joinery, pastry, cookery, electrical, mechanical, to name a few.

Madam Speaker, the human resources, all of those in the vocational colleges, which would be closed, will be taken up and absorbed in the technical colleges, the equipment will be taken up in the technical colleges. So, there will be no issue with respect to human resources as well as there will be no wastage of this equipment.

Madam Speaker, we have got 85 of those vocational centres throughout Fiji, 14 was closed this year, with the establishment of three technical colleges. The other 71, we will look at them, wherever there is a technical college established, so vocational outfits around that place will be closed. Those empty classrooms will be utilised to expand the offering of the high school and primary school system.

About three weeks ago, Madam Speaker, to be proactive, we started to estimate the number of new classrooms that will be needed in various districts, as a result of rural to urban migration. So, now with that number, we are planning on how many new classrooms we need to construct from Year One to Ten, in particular and also other resource implications. So, there will be no other major issue with respect to resource mobilisation.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you, the honourable Balmindar Singh.

HON. B. SINGH.- Madam Speaker, can the honourable Minister explain how this initiative undertaken by FijiFirst Government benefitted the unemployed youths in the villages.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you, honourable Minister.

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Madam Speaker, I will do so but before that let me share some light on the petition. It was totally misplaced to get the petition here, and let me tell you why, Madam Speaker, because petition should go to the Provisional Council who has given us the approval to say “look you withdrawal your approval”.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- They don't own the school.

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- They should have gone there. Go back, the problem is closer to home, it is not here. It is not Parliament which is approving the conversion. So, it is a waste of the Committee's time to get a petition here, when your own village in your own community just cannot make up their mind. So, it is not cast in stone, if they do not want it, we will find another place so that the students or the children of Nadroga/Navosa are not denied technical education. We will ensure that they get it.

Madam Speaker, to answer honourable Balmindar Singh's question, as the honourable Prime Minister had announced that the technical college will provide opportunities for all those who thought that after dropping out they have no future of getting high education. They will absorb those in the villages who have finished off at Year 8, Year 9, Year 10, et cetera. Would all those after year 10, they have an aptitude for technical education rather than higher education, so they will come and get enrolled in the technical colleges, totally funded by the Government.

Madam Speaker, in addition to the award programme, there are some who would want to come for two weeks, three week to undertake short courses. For example, as we speak, at the technical college in Naduna, Labasa where students doing tile laying short course and brick laying short courses. Similarly all the technical colleges will provide short courses for all those children hanging out in the villages, et cetera, who cannot get a job because they do not have any particular skill. We will, the Bainimarama Government will skill them and let them out in the market to get a livelihood. *Vinaka*.

MADAM SPEAKER.- I give the floor to the honourable Jiosefa Dulakiverata.

HON. J. DULAKIVERATA.- Madam Speaker, I thank the honourable Minister for his answer to the question. My question is on the schools where all these technical colleges will be established. I understand that these are private schools, they own the property. From what you are saying, honourable Minister that you are doing them a favour by bringing the technical colleges to their schools. These are their properties, did you have to pay rent to go and establish a school there? They need a return, this is an investment.

MADAM SPEAKER.- I give the floor to the honourable Minister.

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Madam Speaker, what we are going around saying, as I said yesterday and unfortunately my honourable colleague was absent that we are looking at schools where the original intention is no longer being served.

HON OPPOSITION MEMBER.- Then pay rent.

HON. DR.M. REDDY.- *Wawa mada*.

(Laughter)

For example, in those days the student numbers in lot of schools in the rural areas were very high. Now the student numbers have gone down and there is another school outside, in an adjacent area. So we are looking at those schools where we could take them up and the other school can get the numbers up. Now, Madam Speaker, unfortunately the honourable Member that is not aware of that those schools

that we are taking up for technical college, they are given a monthly goodwill rent. So they are given to do whatever other activities that they want to, and we look after the whole premises including grass cutting, we take over all those expenses.

HON. V. BHATNAGAR.- Supplementary question to the honourable Minister. Can the honourable Minister explain what is the process of the approval for the technical colleges and when will the relevant stakeholders be informed?

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Madam Speaker, I want to thank the honourable Member for asking that question. This is the process Madam Speaker. When the board or the committee of that school decides unanimously that they want to offer that particular premises for the establishment of a technical college, we then show them the MOU, and if they are okay, we go to Cabinet, for Cabinet to approve the conversion of this school into a technical college. Once the Cabinet approves it, then we will go back and get the parties to sign the MOU, between the party and the Ministry of Education. So, Madam Speaker, at the moment, we have not even gone to Cabinet. If they want to change the decision, they can change the decision. That is the process - once Cabinet approves, we get the MOU signed, then we will go back to all the stakeholders including the students and tell them that where those students who want to continue the education beyond Year 10, if it is high school, where we will place them. We will go and tell the committee how they will benefit and we will advertise to those students outside who would want to attend the Technical College. That is the process, Madam Speaker.

HON. V. R. GAVOKA.- Madam Speaker, firstly thank you for the best wishes. Madam Speaker, 8th July is a day every year that I want to go quickly because I want it to come slowly, Madam Speaker. Remember there was a time when I was 15, I wanted to be 19 and 20. I have reached a stage of my life, now I want it to slow down a lot, Madam Speaker. But thank you any way, Madam Speaker, for the best wishes.

Madam Speaker, I am just a bit concerned about the statement made by the honourable Minister. He appears to be suggesting that we do not bring your problem to Parliament, if you get stuck somewhere, do not bring it to Parliament. I think the people of this country see this as the highest Court of the land and they can find relief in this House. That is what he is saying, keep it in Nadroga, do not bring it here. Madam Speaker, that is exactly what he said. Can I just ask the honourable Minister, there is no objection to a technical college but there are facilities within that college to also accommodate a technical college? There is no need to do away with Nadroga/Navosa. Consultations should have happened, it is heavy handed to go straight to the Provincial Council, it is a top down approach and people are bewildered that it is being done for them; no consultation at all. That is why they came to SODELPA asking for respite. Can you approach this differently with the idea that you accommodate the current school within the scope of the technical college that you want to start in Nadroga/Navosa?

MADAM SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister?

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Madam Speaker, that will not happen. First let me clarify, what I said was that, the problem is there, if they do not want to give the technical college, the honourable Member should go and tell them this premises is not available and just tell us or the honourable Member should have come to me to seek clarification. There is no need to bring a petition here and waste the Committees' time. The problem can be resolved there. Madam Speaker, we can resolve the problem at tea time, that is not an issue.

The substantive question that the honourable Member posed is that we have it on the same premises, that is what we want to avoid; a small outfit where the students think that, "look the students with nicely dressed uniform going to the high school, and they are being treated as second class" No! This is a

campus on its own, their own campus life of the student. There will not be a back yard outfit, No! That won't be – just a Technical College Campus. Thank you

MADAM SPEAKER.- I now give the floor to the honourable Mikaele Leawere.

HON. M.R. LEAWERE.- Madam Speaker, I would just like to ask the honourable Minister in terms of looking after the students, in terms of the technical college, what about the teachers in terms of their salaries. Which scale are you going to peg them on?

MADAM SPEAKER.- thank you. Honourable Minister.

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Madam Speaker, the teachers have their existing contract, they are side transferred to the technical college and when we advertise a new position, they can apply and if they get it, they get a better salary. So the teachers are side transferred, I am pretty sure, honourable Leawere understands, he is from a Union background what side transfer means.

MADAM SPEAKER.- I give the floor to the honourable Anare Vadei.

HON. A. T. VADEI.- In relation to the question, just to refresh the honourable Minister's mind, way back in the 1970's where with vocational studies students were issued with tools, whether this technical college will issue them with some support after their studies to start off rather than increasing the number at NEC.

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Madam Speaker, yes we discussed with the honourable Prime Minister some time back that each graduating student for the Award Programme will get a basic tool set worth about \$50 to \$60. For example, a carpenter, we do not want to let them lose without the basic tools. So the long and short of the question, is that yes, we will provide the basic tools which is within our budget.

Written Question

Foreign Investment Applications – 2006 to 2015
(Question No. 121/2015)

MADAM SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, that brings us to the end of the questions. I have been advised that the honourable Minister for Industry, Trade and Tourism wishes to table his written response. I now call on the honourable Minister.

HON. F.S. KOYA (Minister for Industry, Trade and Tourism).- Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 45(3), I hereby table my written response to Question Number 121/2015 raised by the honourable Bilitavu.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you.

(Reply to Question No. 121/29015 handed to the Secretary General)

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

Impacts of Climate Change and NCDs

MADAM SPEAKER.- The honourable Minister for Health and Medical Services has informed me that he wishes to make a Ministerial Statement under Standing Order 40. I now call on the honourable Minister to make his statement.

HON. J. USAMATE.- Thank you, Madam Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to talk about something that I think is very important for all of us in this country at this moment, and I am glad to see that the children are here to listen to this statement. I also welcome the children, I am from Lelean, just across the river.

I think, Madam Speaker, there are two great crisis that face this country, and we are right in the midst of this crisis now. It is not something that is coming a few years down the line, it is right here now. Two things that are impacting on us, and it will impact on our future; it will impact on our ability to remain sustainable, ourselves as a country, and also it will impact on all of our communities. These two issues are issues that are not only impacting us in Fiji, but the globe as a whole.

The first issue is something I am not going to spend too much time on, it is of course climate change. The changing of climate is having an impact on food supply and marine life, and here in Fiji, where we have tourism as a major part of our economy, it is having an impact on that, because of all the things that tourists come to see are going to be impact by this rising in the sea level, and all of the various attributes that come to it.

The greatest thing about climate change that I want to talk about, which will relate to the area that I want to talk which is NCDs, is that it is arising from our own choices as human kind.

The second major crisis, that is the crisis, the climate change crisis, we are right in the middle of it. If the world does not make a change within the next few years, we might go over the edge; if the temperatures in the world rise by 4 degrees centigrade; we have got big problems ahead of us. So, we are looking forward to the meeting that will take place in Paris in December this year, where the countries hopefully will listen to the message that the honourable Prime Minister has been preaching to make a change in the way we are doing things.

The other major crisis that we are now smacked in the middle of this crisis, we have an epidemic on our hands in this country; it is an epidemic that has not arisen overnight but it has arisen gradually over the years.

I looked at some of the *Hansard Reports* back in the 1980s and they were talking about NCDs at that time, but now Madam Speaker, we are right in the middle of this.

Some of the statistics that are being given to me in the Ministry of Health are telling me that about 80 per cent of all deaths is because of NCDs. That means of us here, Members of Parliament, 80 per cent of us will die as a result of NCDs. – 40 out of 50. You will not be hit by a car, you will not die because of HIV, or you will not die because of other communicable diseases, you will die because of NCDs. But I think the even more shocking statistics is that 87 per cent of all premature deaths. Premature death is if someone dies before the age of 60, that is how it is defined in Fiji, and 87 per cent of all premature deaths is because of NCDs. That is why I am saying, we are smacked in the middle of this huge epidemic, and it is something that if you continue to go on (as we are going on), even though we will soon be in a situation where it will overcome us, it will engulf us, just like a *tsunami* - it threatens to swamp the whole of our country into the future.

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- End of the world!

HON. J. USAMATE.- Maybe!

Again on this issue, on the issue of NCDs, we are right on the edge, just as we are in climate change, we are right on the edge of a major catastrophe. I would say that we are in a catastrophe right now. It is something that we need to take action on.

Non-Communicable Diseases, Madam Speaker, as you are well aware is associated with lifestyle or behaviour. It is about the choices that we make in life.

The main NCDs in Fiji, I am sure most of you know about this, but just let me repeat it, so I can reiterate these things.

- (i) Heart attacks;
- (ii) Strokes;
- (iii) Kidney failure;
- (iv) Asthma and other airway diseases;
- (v) Amputations;
- (vi) Mental diseases;
- (vii) Cancers;
- (viii) Violence and injury.

I was particularly taken aback this morning when I saw on the front page of the *Fiji Sun* the horrific rape case that took place in Nakasi. Those types of violence and injuries are also included as NCDs, but that is a list of NCDs.

There are four major risk factors that impact on a lot of these NCDs, and these are the risk factors that we have to control.

Firstly; the area that I have already talked about earlier this morning, and that is the smoking of tobacco. It has a huge impact on NCDs. It is the single thing that you can control and have an impact on a lot of NCDs, that is why Government has tried to control tobacco over the past few years.

The second thing that we need to control in order to make sure that we can try to make this epidemic plateau a bit and gradually go down, we have to focus on that, make the plateau go down; if not, it is going to keep climbing.

Secondly, excess sugar, salt and oil in our daily meals. That is something we have to control – sugar, salt and oil in our daily meals.

Thirdly, excessive alcohol intake.

Fourthly, the lack of physical activity, lack of exercise.

That is why I am always particularly glad to see that row at the back because they are always standing up during question time. So, they are able to get their exercise while we are in Parliament. That is really good.

These four risk factors, they then lead to four lifestyle behaviours that lead to an increase in four different things that we are trying to manage. One is our blood pressure – blood pressure goes up; second, our blood sugars, blood cholesterol and our body mass.

In the Year 2010, they had a Fiji Global Burden of Disease Study. They tried to identify the top five causes of premature deaths – dying before the age of 60. These were:

- (i) Heart Attack;
- (ii) Stroke; you know heart attacks and strokes are basically very similar. It is just about clogging up your arteries. If they clog up here (heart), then this one goes, if they clog up there (mind) - that one goes. That is all it is.

- (iii) Diabetes;
- (iv) Pneumonia; and
- (v) Preterm birth complications.

I recently chaired a Pacific Health Ministers Meeting in Yanuca and at that meeting, the World Health Organisation gave some revised figures on what the top causes of premature deaths in Fiji are, and now it has changed a bit. It is still heart disease at the top, but now diabetes has become number 2. So diabetes is jumping up - diabetes is number 2 and stroke is number 3.

So, I think as I said, the most important statistics for us to keep in mind is that 87 per cent of premature deaths is caused because of this thing.

In essence, heart attacks, strokes and diabetes in Fiji are due to a number of things. I have already mentioned a few of them – obesity, excess salt, sugar and fat consumption, smoking, physical inactivity, with consequent high blood sugar, high blood pressure and high blood cholesterol.

These are the issues that we, the leaders in this House, must tackle. It is something we must tackle. These are the things that Fiji, as a whole, must address and these are the areas that will be included in the Strategic Plan or NCDs that will be launched next week. It will require the co-operation of all Members in this House, the whole of Government approach, all the different ministries, and the whole of society in Fiji for us to have an impact on this.

I was just looking at some surveys that we had. We have this STEPS Survey that looks at a number of things related to these NCDs. We had a STEPS Survey in 2002 and another one in 2011.

The 2011 Survey tells us that only 2.7 per cent of adults in Fiji are at low risk of heart attacks and stroke; (I think it is most of the people in this side of the House), 63.4 per cent are at moderate risk; and 34 per cent are at high risk. In other words, 97.4 per cent (that is almost everyone) is at either moderate or high risk. That is why I say that it is an epidemic, and we are right in the middle of it. Amongst Parliamentarians, if we take the number that we have here, that means only one of us (50) is low risk. 72 are moderate risk and 17 are high risk and 49 of us are of moderate or high risk, that is startling. It is a shocking status, and it is something that we need to work with.

As I have said before, diabetes has become worse. If we had this Parliament back here in 1980 when they had 72 members, only three out of the 72 Members of Parliament at that time would have had diabetes because that is equivalent to four per cent of them. In 1980, only four per cent of our population had diabetes.

By the time we got to 2011, it has jumped from four per cent to 30 per cent, one in three. There is the rapid rise within 31 years as our lifestyles begin to change. It is more than the 700 per cent increase in 31 years. If we do not change this trend, very soon, one out of every two people will have diabetes in this country. That has an impact on them, their jobs and their employers, their productivity, it has an impact when they come to the hospital, and it has an impact on everyone, it is something that we really need to address.

If we look at weight problems in Fiji, the other side of this, the WHO Global School Health Survey, 2010 revealed that there is increased percentages of weight problems in Fijian children who are 13 to 15 years old. So, it is not by the time you get to 30 that you start getting these problems, it is starting at the age level of the children that we have here. So, these are the age levels that we need to target.

In this Survey, it found that only 60 per cent of Fijian children aged from 13 to 15 have normal weight. By the time they reached adulthood, the ratio has changed - 60 per cent at the age of 13 to 15

have normal weight and by the time they become adults, only 40 per cent have normal weight; a 20 per cent drop.

I apologise to the ladies in this Chamber but we also fund that. Fijian women, in particular, are two times more obese than men and one in three have low haemoglobin. So, I believe, Members of Parliament, that this is something we need to focus on, and we must, therefore, focus on our young, get to them early, and that is why there is such strong emphasis in the Ministry of Health of the required visits for mothers to our clinics so that they can meet with the medical people and discuss with them. That is why we now have dieticians in all of our subdivisional hospitals and hopefully, we will be able to move them out to other areas to teach mothers on how to prepare nutritious meals.

The thing about NCDs is that, it is something that cannot be solved within the Ministry of Health because all the causes are upstream, we are downstream here. So, we need a lot of action to deal with the issues that are upstream so it requires the whole of society, a whole Government approach. It cannot be solved by the Ministry of Health alone. We can treat those who have it but ultimately, the solution is to do as much as possible to prevent it. In the Ministry of Health, the kinds of things that we talk about in order to prevent this, we need to worry about how people think, mental health is hugely under-reported here.

What everyone eats counts, every meal that you eat counts, it has some impact to the blood that flows through our bodies. Every breath that we breathe counts. If you breathe the wrong thing, it obviously is going to have an impact on you, the breath that you breathe also counts. If you drink, every drink that you drink also counts. All of these things are influenced by what we see as the good life so our conceptualisation of what the good life is needs to change, and this a major area that the Ministry of Health will begin to address over the next few years of our strategic planning on NCDs.

Our focus will be twofold; firstly, to promote on wellness and secondly, to improve health care delivery systems. In promoting wellness, we will be focussing on creating wellness lifestyles in partnerships with Fijians beginning from conception (birth) to senior citizens. We will be focussing on communities, settlements, municipalities, et cetera. We have also had meetings with faith-based organisations. We would like to do that so that we can work in partnership with them. The programme is delivered through all the nursing stations and health centres through our ante-natal care to look after newborn babies, maternal and child health, school health, adolescent health and outreach and outpatient services, and already Government has begun to do a lot of the programmes to assist this programme. We have heard of the food vouchers given to mothers to encourage them to book early for their pregnancy when they are about to give birth so they can start their checking early, milk supplementation, nutrient supplementation, canteen guidelines. We thank the Ministry of Education for putting those guidelines in place so that good food is served in schools.

We now have 84 health promoting schools. It is a programme that is run under the Ministry of Education and 77 are primary schools. The Ministry of Health has formed MOUs with Government, non-government and civil society organisations, for example, MOU with LTA for tobacco control, so that you cannot smoke on public service vehicles.

We have MOUs with the Ministry of Youth & Sport for physical activities; MOUs with the Ministry of Education on health promoting schools that I have talked about; collaboration with organisations like Diabetes Fiji for foot-care screening and also for foot-care training; for the Cancer Society, Heart Foundation and Kidney Foundation, and Westpac to promote wellness life incentives.

We also now have two wellness buses. Rather than wait for people to come, we have one wellness bus in Viti Levu and one in Vanua Levu. They go around and they can do the screening all over in the different villages and towns; that is happening now.

We have established our nursing stations and health centres to have tool kits for screening blood sugars, blood pressure and weight checks. Our dieticians have tool kits to measure blood haemoglobin, blood cholesterol and full demonstration kits.

This month is NCD month for the Ministry of Health. This year, in order for us to address this NCD problem for those who already have NCDs, we must make sure that we can identify them. That is why we have set ourselves the target to screen 90,000 people this year for NCDs. So, later next week, screening will begin to take place and it will be taking place all over Fiji. For instance, on Tuesday, 14th of July, there will be screening taking place in Mau Village in Namosi, Luvunavuaka in Tailevu, Lagilagi Methodist School, Vunibua Community, Kia Street in Suva, Raj Moti Lal Street in Suva, Bagasau Housing, Nawamagi Village, Tokoloa in Tavua, Rups Tavua Branch, Rewasa in Ra, Nailaga in Ba, Reddy Drive in Lautoka, Raddison, Nadi and Nawailevu in Bua. The teams will be going out to screen people all over the country so we can identify who the troubled cases are so that their cases can be managed.

Overall, we need to be able to change our lifestyle. It will require a health in all approach. In every decision that we make, whether it is trade or taxation or anything else, we must look at the health component. We must look at the health implications of every decision we make because it can have an impact on this.

A health in all approach will require effective leadership and I believe Parliament needs to lead the way. We, the elected representatives of the people must preach this message, not just preach but we must walk this message, we must show it. I believe one of the easiest things that we can do, when people come to Parliament and they see the food that we give to them, that they are NCD-friendly food. We need to make sure that the food at morning tea is 50 per cent fruit and vegetables. Let us remove the stuff that contributes to our own demise.

I think we also need to have a programme where we, parliamentarians, rather than standing up and sitting down during meetings, that we should organise some form of physical activity that we organise, so we can all participate in. When we do that together, we give a message to the nation so that they can follow suit. That is why I am standing today, my fellow parliamentarians, this is something (as I have said) which is epidemic. If we do not take some action, it will require a lot of things that we need to change, maybe laws, taxation and other things like that. But I think for us, as Members of Parliament, we need to lead the way. We need to demonstrate that, so I hope as a result to this, Madam Speaker, that we can organise some ways in which we can demonstrate to the nation that we, as their elected representatives, are leading the way.

In the future, as I mentioned, our NCDs strategic plan will be launched next week, we would like everyone who is hearing me over the television or the radio to take note, if you know that the screening is taking place and you do not know your status, show up. Be screened, listen to the advice that is given to you and go back and change your lifestyle. Listen to the advice that is given to you and go back and change your lifestyle so that you can have a better life.

The other thing that I would like to say is that, NCD is not inevitable. It is not like something that we cannot reverse, it can be reversed but it requires from all of us a whole of Fiji approach. So, I look forward to working in partnership with the Ministry of Health and with everyone, to make sure that we can deal with this NCD epidemic that is threatening to engulf us and threatening the future of our future generations.

(Applause)

HON. RO. T.V. KEPA.- Madam Speaker, I rise on a Point of Order.

Madam Speaker, under Standing Order 60 on relevancy. For the honourable Minister for Health and Medical Services to be really relevant to us here in the Parliamentary Complex and the staff as well, when he mentioned all the other different areas for the whole of Fiji approach, he did not mention that Parliament would come under the screening process. So, I am requesting the honourable Minister as to when is he going to bring in that screening process to Parliament so that it becomes relevant for us as well.

MADAM SPEAKER.- The point of order is really on the rules and proceedings of the House but we will definitely....

HON. J. USAMATE.- If I am not mistaken, it is a request for the screening to be done here for Parliamentarians?

HON. RO T.V. KEPA.- Yes.

HON. J. USAMATE.- I am sure my staff are listening to me now, "Staff, please organise the screening here, tomorrow".

(Laughter)

MADAM SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, I would like us to break for refreshment and when you partake with the refreshment, please ensure that you know how many calories are there in each of the snacks that you will be having. However, I will be calling on the responses from the Opposition, both from the Leader of the Opposition designate and the NFP leader designate, at the end of the refreshment.

We will now adjourn for refreshment and we will resume at 11.45 a.m.

The Parliament adjourned at 11.12 a.m.

The Parliament resumed at 11.50 a.m.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, we will resume from where we left off in the Order Paper. I will now call on the honourable Leader of the Opposition or her designate, to respond to the Ministerial Statement.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Madam Speaker, I rise to respond to the Ministerial Statement by the honourable Minister for Health on Non-Communicable Diseases (NCD). I thank the honourable Minister for highlighting that NCD has reached a crisis level, that it is an epidemic and it is causing the highest death rate. I also note, Madam Speaker, that he has focussed on the advocacy work that is currently being undertaken by the Ministry. Additionally, I note that NCD has been brought up and highlighted in the Health Ministers Meeting in Yanuca and also at the Speaker's Retreat at the Warwick.

However, Madam Speaker, I am very concerned that the honourable Minister has not highlighted any immediate remedial action because if a disease is considered "a crisis", it is considered "epidemic", and it is causing the highest death rate, then there must be an immediate response. It must be immediate so that it can address the crisis level that we are in. For example, when HIV AIDS was considered at a crisis level, Fiji took very positive actions towards that. Even though the honourable Minister has highlighted all the relevant or necessary advocacy work that have been undertaken, but we know that advocacy work will take its time. It is something that is continuous because to change mindset or life attitude or to change behaviour, it is going to take time and we agree with that.

We agree with all those, sort of, proactive or preventative measures, they are good, however, the Government needs to take immediate action to be able to address this NCD which has reached crisis level. It is causing the highest death rate and the honourable Minister has mentioned that it is 87 per cent. That is horrendous for a country like Fiji that is still developing to have that kind of death rate and for us to be engaging in advocacy work, that is not enough. It is not enough, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, UNDP has also highlighted that Fiji needs to engage more in terms of addressing NCDs. Also in your Retreat, Madam Speaker, at the Warwick, the doctor who heads the NCD Centre for wellness highlighted the great and the immediate need. Actually, I heard him and I said, "I could hear a desperate voice", a desperate voice that the Government needs to address NCD now, and that is true. The honourable Minister has also highlighted that it is true, but what are we doing about it? Advocacy work will take its time. So, Madam Speaker, we have to look at the curative side of medicine, and curative side of medicine means accessibility to medicines.

Madam Speaker, we will recall that it was tabled in this Chambers and I had tabled that motion that the honourable Minister for Health seriously considers including all the NCD medicine in the free medicine list. As we know, that motion was defeated. Even though that motion was defeated, I welcome the Ministerial Statement this morning because it tells us that there is genuine concern, but Madam Speaker, medium concern will mean more immediate action I would like to draw our attention to the priority sectors under Health in "turning promises into deeds" and I quote:

"7.10 Government has allocated \$8 million to provide free medicine to all Fijians with annual income below \$20,000 and this includes medicines for non-communicable diseases".

So, I ask the question, Madam Speaker, how much of that \$8 million has been provided towards medicine for NCDs? The money is here, as stated in this Budget allocation. I would like to ask the honourable Minister, how much of that money has been allocated to immediately address the burden that we have on NCDs otherwise we will continue with this? We will bring it up again, sensitise it for advocacy purposes, and I would like to add, Madam Speaker, Einstein once said, that "if we keep on doing the same things over and over and over again, expecting different results, then that is the perfect formula for insanity".

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- I now call on the Leader of the National Federation Party or his designate to respond.

HON. DR. B.C. PRASAD.- Madam Speaker, I thank the honourable Minister for his very passionate and indeed, mind boggling statistics that he produced on NCD and also I think he raised issues about climate change.

First, Madam Speaker, on climate change, let me say that I have been very pleased with the Prime Minister's advocacy on behalf of Fiji and indeed the Pacific with respect to global climate change mitigation measures, and I hope that he will continue to carry that on. I think as the honourable Minister quite rightly said, it is a very, very serious issue. I know that the very critical meeting later this year in December in Paris which the honourable Prime Minister is hoping to attend, I would actually encourage him, Madam Speaker, to take a bipartisan delegation to that meeting because it will show the importance that Fiji places on the whole issue.

The other point that I would like to make, Madam Speaker, is that, I think there are a lot of windows available for global climate change funds to be sourced, and I do not think Fiji and the relevant Ministry which is in charge of climate change is doing enough to put out proposals, to ensure that we have enough money for appropriate adaptation measures.

Madam Speaker, let me come back to NCD, the honourable Minister is right, it is an epidemic and I think it should concern us all very much. As a very practical suggestion, Madam Speaker, in response to the honourable Minister's call for a bipartisan approach and for this Parliament to take a very active interest in addressing this issue, can I suggest that the Standing Committee on Social Services make it its business, a continuing business for the life of this Parliament to work with the honourable Minister and his Ministry and indeed, through Parliament, look at some of these issues so that there is always a bipartisan interest in the way in which we are dealing with this issue.

There are, Madam Speaker, four issues that the honourable Minister pointed out and they relate to the four targeted interventions he pointed out and they fall into the category of:

- 1) cigarette control and consumption;
- 2) alcohol control and consumption;
- 3) physical activities; and
- 4) addressing food issues.

Madam Speaker, I think this morning, we had some discussions about laws. There is always a balance between law and advocacy, and there is always this issue of opportunity cost, direct cost and indirect cost. I think, given the crisis with respect to NCD, we need to look at the appropriate laws as well, Madam Speaker, and these laws relate to:

- 1) alcohol control and consumption;
- 2) addressing food issues such as food labelling;
- 3) legislation with respect to junk food and snacks, and various kinds of drinks.

Sometimes, we have to weigh the opportunity cost.

There are issues about revenue, issues about tax, and issues about promoting business but if you look at all these together, Madam Speaker, we may find that the indirect cost and some of the direct cost

of high incidents of NCDs in Fiji could very easily outweigh the gain in revenue, for example, that we might get in extending the opening hours.

I think there are merits in looking at the legislation, especially binge drinking which involves young people having easy access to drinking places. So, Madam Speaker, it is not inappropriate for this Parliament and for Government at appropriate times, to look at reviewing some of these legislations because as honourable Salote Radrodro said, advocacy is very important or education is very important. However, Madam Speaker, when you have a crisis at hand which is what the Minister said, then we need to take direct action.

Before I sit down, Madam Speaker, let me just give a very personal example

MADAM SPEAKER.- Can we have your concluding statement, please.

HON. DR. B.C. PRASAD.- I have not had sugar for 15 years.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Is that a concluding statement?

HON. DR. B.C. PRASAD.- Yes. I have not been taking sugar for the last 15 years, apart from natural sugar in fruits, et cetera. For the last 15 years, I have religiously kept my exercise regime and I can tell you that the last time I had my check just recently, I had everything below risk. That may be a message to honourable Members of Parliament to adopt those as well.

MADAM SPEAKER.- We will move on to the next item on the Order Paper.

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON THE FIJI ROADS AUTHORITY (AMENDMENT) BILL 2015

MADAM SPEAKER.- Before I invite the honourable Attorney General, I wish to remind honourable Members that as per the motion is moved by the honourable Attorney General understanding Order 51 and resolved by Parliament yesterday, gives Members only one hour to debate on each Bill and honourable Members will be notified accordingly.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, I move:

That the Bill of Act to Amend for the Fiji Roads Authority Decree 2012, Bill No. 11 of 2015, be now read for the final time and have the Bill passed accordingly.

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

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, I will be just very brief in my opening remarks as we know that we had a fairly extensive discussion in this particular Bill yesterday. This Bill is quite minor, in a sense it seeks to rectify the anomaly regarding the Minister responsible for Fiji Roads Authority, and allowing the specific provision for the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to become an *ex officio* member of the Authority, and also to set a standard so they meet, at least, once a month. They, of course, could meet more times in that in a month.

MADAM SPEAKER.- I now invite debate on the Bill.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Madam Speaker, you will see that in most, if not all of these, the position from the Opposition that we will be, agreeing. I need to explain the process, especially the media. For example, if the media were here, why did you oppose it yesterday and you agree to it today? I am standing here to make the explanation.

Yesterday, we have the motion and the motion had short-circuited the process by which it is not going to the Standing Committee and there is no consultation. The gist of our position yesterday was on that. Sure, there is something good here but you need to consult because the value of democracy is transparency.

Now, that we have come to the third reading, we have done away with second reading and the second reading, you are entitled to debate on policy. Why do you need this? Why don't you do it? So, that has also been sacrificed because the motion carried on. So, we are going right to the third reading.

In third reading, the debate is limited to the contents of the Bills here. As I have said, in the end, in most if not all of these, we will be saying "yes" but we will mostly be criticising the other side of why did you not do this and that, to those.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Honourable Member, your comments are noted.

HON. A. M. RADRODRO.- Madam Speaker, as already been alluded to, the process of what we had anticipated have not been taken yesterday through the Standing Orders 51. As we look at the contents of this Bill, it sounds very and seems to be very small. However, there are technicalities in the wording of this Bill. It is good that is now been taken up by the Attorney General, to see that there are needs to be changes in the current Decree because probably it is not working, according to the situations of the ground. Therefore, you need to come up with the Bills.

Whilst we need to request that the process be followed, we need to have a wholesome approach. How many of these amendments will come through later? Because as and when you go through the process of the Fiji Roads Authority, you see there needs to be changes. Now that you realise that the CEO needs to be a member of the Board. That is nothing new. For any GCCs or GSAs, CEOs are always part of the Board and some of them usually also assume the roles for company secretary. So, Madam Speaker, this is one change that has been coming through.

The other Madam Speaker, is the issue of the Board. Another change that is coming is that the board needs to meet, at least, once in each month. However, the important issue here is; what are the contents of the Board? This is a highly technical institution, so are there technical expertise in the Board?

We see that the roads and bridges that have been alluded to yesterday, there are still delays in their implementation. The roads to Nausori Airport, it has been changed several times and the roads from Nadi Airport to Votualevu Junction, is it probably there is a lack of expertise in the Board to give the direction for the organisation to do its work? Also the Naqali/ Serea Roads, there are a lot of delays and a lot of costs involves in those delays.

Madam Speaker, as I have said, the law needs to be understood and in this situation, we need to sit down in the process that has been suggested by the Opposition yesterday, so we can look at it in a wholesome manner.

HON. ROKO. T. T. S. DRAUNIDALO.- Madam Speaker, just a very small contribution to this Bill, the substance of it, I note with great interest the new section 4, Section 11 to be amended; "(5) The Authority shall have a minimum of one meeting in each month". Madam Speaker, I do agree that the

regulation of roads and drivers is very important, I just wish we could transfer it to the business of making laws as well.

MADAM SPEAKER.- I now invite the honourable Attorney General to make his right of reply.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, I am glad that honourable Members of the Opposition actually agree with the Bill. Madam Speaker, the reality is that, all the Bills that we are presenting, do have some time critical issues and that is why they have been brought into Parliament.

Regarding things like composition of the Board, obviously that has never come under the purview of any Act itself. It is always the appointment done by the Minister. I completely agree with him that the members of Boards need to be the right people in any organisation. I can lament to you about the composition of various Boards. I know you have set on many Boards before and also how they were appointed previously.

Board members have also been removed because we need to constantly look for the right people. I completely agree with him also. No law is set on stone, anyone knows that, honourable Karavaki will tell you. We have many laws right since Independence that have being amended so many times. Even the new Companies Act that we proposed, the one prior to that in the 1970s, has been amended several times. It is not something that the Parliament can always do at one shot and will all be done. As matters do arise, it does happen. Of course, you do not want a constant things about it. So, Madam Speaker, I thank once again all the honourable Members of the House in supporting this Bill. I know issues have been raised regarding processes, all I have to say to that as we have discussed yesterday, it is to do with time critical issues. There are more functionary type of issues that need to be addressed and we now recommend that this Bill be now voted upon and supported support the Bill.

Question put.

Motion agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments, read a third time and passed. (Act No. of 2015)

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON THE LAND TRANSPORT (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2015

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, I move:

That the Bill for an act to amend the Land Transport Act, 1998, which is Bill No. 12 of 2015 be read for the final time and be voted upon.

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

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, again this particular Bill was also discussed yesterday when the motion was brought about. Again, it is quite a small Bill in the sense that we are only addressing the issue of demerit points, where through this amendment, the LTA, CEO or the Board will not be able to award demerit points to a licence holder, only the Court will be able to do that. What we have found, Madam Speaker, is that when individual members of the public have been fined or penalised through a fine, there also had been merit points taken off from their licenses. We are bringing about this amendment to ensure that that does not happen.

MADAM SPEAKER.- I invite debate from the honourable Members.

HON. P. SINGH.- Madam Speaker, I would just like to give a short contribution to this Bill. The amendment is generally accepted, as we said. The reason why this demerit points was given to LTA in 1998 was to reduce the workload of the courts. Unfortunately, that did not happen that way. This issue of taking away demerit points from the LTA and giving it back to the courts is welcomed. I hope that it is something that will give us the opportunity to look at the wider issues that are confronting the LTA.

We should also look at the issue of fines, particularly the fixed penalties, the exorbitant rates, they are just borrowed from one of the legislations in the State of Queensland, I believe, looking at the local economy, the local earning power of the people here, I think we should really look at that as well. As I said, this will open up the window of opportunity to reveal the whole Act in pursuant to the review that is on board. I do trust that we have started the process, and we should not end it here. We have to adopt measures to address the issue of corruption, nepotism and cronyism that exists within the LTA.

With that short contribution, we welcome this change and hope that in future the honourable Minister will bring in more amendments that would suit and be favourable to the road users.

MADAM SPEAKER.- I now give the floor to the honourable Bultavu.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Madam Speaker, I think our position as being rightly said by the honourable Nawaikula yesterday, I think we were just disputing the processes that could have been deliberated more at Committee stage, but now that is being considered by Parliament and agreed to yesterday due to time constraints and the need to review this particular legislation.

In regards to the content of the Bill, as already alluded by the honourable Prem Singh, we support the content but there are other issues that could have accompanied the amendment to make the Bill more comprehensive. I went and checked online yesterday, and just to remind the honourable Minister that the report online only reached Chapter 4 recommendation and if that can be uploaded so that the full report could be there for the public to know the things that have already been announced by Government. But, generally, I think people are happy in regards to the removal of the demerit point system. This has been an issue in Labasa and most of these drivers, accompanied by the petition that was submitted by honourable Aseri Radrodro, they have lost their source of income. For six months, they have to look for other alternative employment which is very hard to get because they are only qualified to drive.

The other issue that I would like to raise, Madam Speaker, is the type of infringement that should fall within the demerit, if this demerit will be taken back to the courts. It was already in court, it was taken back to LTA because of the backlog in court, but with LTA, the issues that have come are due to the abuse of powers, probably the LTA officials making bookings, they have issues with drivers. Most of them pick up drivers, they have a bad relationship, book their number plates and they book them. These are the issues that happen on the streets on how illegal operation charges normally come to drivers, especially when they have a bad relationship with the LTA officials.

The other issue that should be considered also, Madam Speaker, when a customer gets into a taxi, the taxi driver does not have any choice as the customer determines the route, the drop off point and if he wants to go shopping in a certain area. If a driver is an out-base driver and he wants to go to an in-base town area, the driver does not have any choice. However, they are normally booked because they go into the in-base area and I hope that the assurance that the report has which also highlights the open-base system, if that could also be implemented to allow out-base drivers operating in in-base or to pick any passenger from any base and drop them off at any place. In-base drivers normally do not operate at night, they knock off at 6.00 p.m. and the drivers that are available are only outside base drivers. So, that could also be considered as another improvements to this particular issue that is before the House.

The other issue, also Madam Speaker, from previous bookings, when you have transfer of permits, bookings by the previous owner, LTA normally tries to enforce it onto the new owner to pay up what the other wants. So the sin of the person who committed LTA wants, and the new one to actually pay for what the other one had committed. Those are issues that normally come from the ground, from the people, so there are rooms to improve.

The behaviour of LTA officers on the streets, normally they are rough, very unprofessional and they should be educated so that they should not ill-treat the citizens but treat them with respect because they also earn an income for the State.

The other thing, Madam Speaker, is the suspension notice that goes to a driver. Normally when a driver is booked, they confiscate his licence and they do not give him a notice. This driver does not have any right to appeal because he does not have any notice to ring up to the tribunal or the board and it comes after 6 months to 8 months, by then the suspension time is already over. Those could be some other areas that could be considered by the Ministry, especially in this Bill, they could improve the work at LTA in dealing with our citizens who are PSC drivers and who serve our public in general, and with that, Madam Speaker, we support the amendment to the Bill.

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- Madam Speaker, I would like to make my contribution to the Bill now before the house. I thank the honourable Minister for explaining the purpose of introducing this Bill and also the contribution that had been made.

I have a burden, Madam Speaker, that I would standard this time to explain what I have understand the process involved in the issuance of demerit points according to the Land Transport Authority Act. When a person, Madam Speaker, is issued with a Traffic Infringement Notice, he is or she is given a choice, whether he or she admits the offence contain in the Traffic Infringement Notice (TIN) or not. If he or she accepts it, then he would go or she would go to the Land Transport Authority Office and pay for the penalty, the prescribed penalty there, which is in the regulation itself, and corresponding to that there is also a demerit point if it attracts a demerit point. But there are some offences that do not attract demerit point, Madam Speaker, and that is recorded in the demerit points record. But only if the person does not go and pay, it means that he or she wants to contest, what is written or the charge being made against him, which is contained on the TIN. Then he would be required within up to 21 days he or she had not gone to the Land Transport Authority office, then the notice would be referred as like it is a summons to court, and then he would be required to go to court.

The court, Madam Speaker, has the power. After the person is convicted, then he or she would be sentenced, would be fined and according to the demerit points, the court has the power to even order according to the number of demerit points prescribed in the regulation, or more or less. That is what the court has the power to do. But here, we are removing the part that the recipient of the TIN are required to go to the Land Transport Authority because they do not want to go court because they accept "Alright, I have committed the offence."

So the demerit points it would be misleading to say that it should be issued at the time the TIN is issued, is given to the driver because the demerit point is only issued after I had gone to the Land Transport Authority and give my TIN over there, and I said "I want to pay for the prescribe penalty." Which means I have admitted the offence and then that demerit points will be issued, will be put against me, and it goes into the demerit points record. Now, that is the part, that is how to be taken away.

The main reason, Madam Speaker, that provision was put in there, because of the alarming death and indiscipline on our road in Fiji. Now every year we talk about the number of death, this year we already exceeded the number of deaths that we have in the same period of last year. We have overtaken that and the conduct of drivers on the road is very dangerous, becoming very dangerous, even to ride on

the road. I always pray, Madam Speaker, to come from home to come here - "God please help me to reach my destination. Help me to reach my destination." Because it is very dangerous to come on our road.

I had, Madam Speaker, listened to the submissions that were given by the people over Fiji at the time the consultation was made, and it was important to make the decision because of the lives of the people. We care about the livelihood of the drivers because they are being subjected to fines, demerit points, the licence is taken away, suspended for six months. But, do we also care for those people whose families, the lives of their loved ones have been taken because of carelessness on the road? The main element here was safety, Madam Speaker.

Now, because it has been taken to the court, people who pleaded guilty just go and pay for the prescribed penalty will not be subjected to this anymore - to demerit points, because I can have the money just to go and pay, I do not really care because my driver's licence will be still with me, and I do not care if I go to court. That was that component. The component that was there. To me, I look at this, Madam Speaker, it appears that there has been a mistrust or there is no trust in the work of the Land Transport Authority officers. And the issue of the demerit point is not a problem to me, Madam Speaker, as I see here. The problem, it looks like they are reflecting on the officers of the Land Transport Authority. It looks like there is no trust in them carrying out of their work, and there is no need to change the law because of that - address the man power of human resources. You have to address that one there. Not what we are doing here to change the law. So every time anything happens in the human resources sector that we have to change the law.

I do not think that should be the way that they should go about this. I am raising this Madam Speaker, we have taken our stand already, to highlight the issues there and here because we may be misconceived in our understanding of what actually happen you know in this Act. This Act was supposed to address the indiscipline and the safety that is required to be there in the roads, and unfortunately, we are taking it away.

Madam Speaker after having said that, we are coming now to the reading, the last stage of the Bill. I have a Land Transport Act here unless if my copies has not been updated, I would like Madam Speaker just to refer to the amendments referring to section 90, the proposed amendment is this.

Section 19 of the principle Act is amended by the living subsection 3b and 4. If that is correct Madam Speaker, if we amend section 3b and 4, it appears to me unless it reflects the true intention. We have gone past the second reading where amendment should have been done.

Subsection 3 says "for the purpose of subsection 102, the period of mis-qualification commences:

- a) If a case of a person convicted by the court on the conviction date or (there is a or at the end which refers to b but now b has been taken away).

Also 4 is deleted which therefore provides reading 5, which is the next subsection here, to be alternative to (3a). Unless, Madam Speaker, this is would be a problem if the intention is not there because otherwise if you read "a" then 5 becomes an alternative because "or" is still there and this amendment does not reflect that. It does not contain the provision, the proposal to also delete "or" at the end of subsection (a) of sub-section 3 under Section 19.

That is to me, Madam Speaker, is a problem of expediting process. We need to have a look at it properly. If my scrutiny is correct then I believe Madam Speaker, something should be done to amend this. Otherwise if my scrutiny is not correct then I do not have anything else to say to contribute to that, Madam Speaker.

With those words Madam Speaker, I have given my contribution and thank you very much.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now give the floor to the honourable Viam Pillay.

HON. V.M. PILLAY.- Madam Speaker, I rise in support of the motion before the House.

Madam Speaker, for a long time we heard many complaints from the people of Ba and Fiji against LTA. Sometimes LTA stops vehicles to check and when they do not find anything they book for unnecessary things like one hand driving, number plate, et cetera. This has been an ongoing problem.

Madam Speaker, the law previously was that when a driver accumulated nine de-merit points then their driving licence will be suspended for six months.

Madam Speaker, taxi drivers, bus drivers, cane lorry drivers, minivan drivers, carrier drivers who earn a living by driving could lose their livelihoods if decided by LTA.

Madam Speaker, the removal of LTA's powers to issue de-merit points has suggested it is just a starting point and a good start.

I welcome the move and it will surely help the poor drivers of Ba and whole of Fiji, who were previously punished twice that is with fines and de-merit points. The powers will still be with the courts where it will be decided fairly.

I commend the government for bringing this Bill and for removing LTA's powers to punish the drivers of Fiji twice with both fines and then de-merit points.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now give the floor to the honourable Aseri Radrodro.

HON. A. RADRODRO.- Thank you, Madam Speaker my contribution will just be a short one.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you before we continue I will just ask the honourable Leader of the Government in Parliament to have the floor.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

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

That Standing Orders 23 (1) be suspended so as to allow the House to go beyond 12.30 p.m. to complete the debate on the motion before the House.

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

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you, we will continue with the debate.

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON THE LAND TRANSPORT (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2015

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- Thank you Madam Speaker. I would just like to remind the House that the role of the LTA and its vision is Steering Fiji Safely. So, this Madam Speaker, speaks volumes of the functions that are carried out by LTA.

The suggestion that I would like to put to the honourable Minister, is there is already an existing LTA Tribunal that is already in existence as provided for in their Act. And whether by taking the matter to court as we all know there is lot of outstanding issues on road fines that have yet to be dealt with by the court and this will be an additional burden to our court. So, why can we not just revitalise and utilise the Land Tribunal to look into such matters.

MADAM SPEAKER.- I will now invite the honourable Attorney General and Minister for Finance, Public Enterprises, Public Service and Communications to speak in reply.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, I completely agree with the honourable Members on the other side of the House that there are more matters other than de-merit points pertaining to LTA. And in fact the report that was conducted by the Minister of Anti-Corruption and Justice in fact emanated from the fact that there was so many complaints.

I am glad honourable Bulitavu has a copy of the recommendations the photocopies is there but if you want to see the annexes they are about this high from complaints from members of the public. And I completely agree that a lot of other issues need to be addressed.

In the recommendation, Madam Speaker, there were three sets of action that needed to be taken. In some instances what we have recommended was that the Minister set up a committee to provide further input because it needed some technical assistance, technical input. For example, in Fiji there has been not set guidelines as to how many taxi licences or permits needs to be issued in Fiji. We have in some jurisdictions people complain there are too many taxi licences, others they are saying that too few taxi licences, so there is no signs behind that. So, for example LTA has not come up and said alright there is a population base for every 50 people there needs to be one taxi licence given. So, the population of one area hypothetically is 1000 therefore there needs to be 20 taxi licences. That is how you come about that.

Then the issues or what criteria do you use to give the licences. We found some very rich people having 15 to 20 licences and they continue to get it. Many people see mini buses and taxi licences as a means livelihood. There a lot of widows for example, who apply for mini bus licences, but they do not get it. So, we have also recommended that the Committee look at the criteria that needs to be looked at. There are many taxi drivers who have been driving for 30 years, 15 to 20 years and they do not get licences. But somebody else who is not even a taxi driver comes from the side and gets a taxi licence. In fact we have recommended the drivers who have been driving for more than 10 years be one of the people from that group that needs to be given priority.

So, these are the kind of issues that we will refer to the Committee. There is another category of issues that could be immediately rectified by the Minister responsible. We have a lot of people for example, who may have motor vehicle they have an accident or the father is out of job so they cannot maintain the vehicle well. Now the family has done well they maintain the vehicle which has been out of action for three years but when they take it to LTA, LTA says you have to pay wheel tax for the past three to four years. They cannot afford it they just have enough money to bring the car onto the road. So, that in the regulation that the Minister introduced is basically given an amnesty which says in the next one year anybody that has got a car off the road for the past number of years you bring it in they can make it road worthy you do not pay the rest of the wheel tax. So, you will get more people with access to transportation.

The other thing that the honourable Minister has also done regarding agricultural machinery. If it is more than less than 50 per cent of the time on the road you do not pay road user levy. Deregulating rental car and hire business.

The other category of issues that we said needed to be addressed was through amendments to the Act itself. And this is all the critical ones that needed some quick amendments and attention to.

Madam Speaker, we of course over the years honourable Prem Singh had highlighted about that the Act is borrowed from Queensland. Of course honourable Karavaki has major input into that I am sure he tailored a lot of that for local conditions. But I agree with him that some of the penalties were too high and indeed that is what the Bainimarama Government did as I highlighted yesterday not wearing seat belts was \$80.00 now it is \$40.00. The first top of the fine was \$80 now it is \$40.00. And there may be other areas that need to be revised and that unfortunately sometimes when we are having problems when we borrow legislation from offshore.

Madam Speaker, the issue about the de-merit points being imposed so it would stop this. Logically looking at it Madam Speaker as the honourable Karavaki has highlighted road death continues to rise. Notwithstanding the fact we have already had de-merit points in place. So, obviously the de-merit points is not a deterrent death is increasing in road deaths so it is not a deterrent. There are obviously other issues pertaining to the type of reckless driving or careless driving that may take place on our road. The solution is not de-merit points.

Madam Speaker, with those words I would like to recommend that we now support this Bill which will bring about enormous amount of changes and benefit for ordinary Fijians.

Question put.

Motion agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments, read a third time and passed. (Act No. of 2015)

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON THE INCOME TAX (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2015

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, I move:

That Bill for an Act to amend the Income Tax Act (Cap. 201), Bill No. 13 of 2015, be now read for the final time and voted upon to be passed.

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

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, as highlighted yesterday, again similar to the other Bills, there are some of types of critical issues in this particular Bill.

For the first part, Madam Speaker, the amendment is brought about to ensure that private sector organisations that have contributed by way of sponsorship, for Team Fiji to participate in the Pacific Games, they had been promised some tax deductions and that was it caters for. It also caters for the Fiji Rugby Union, to be able to source sponsorship from private sector, to be able to assist them for the preparations for the World Cup that is going to be held this year in UK.

We, of course have a very tough pool, as we all know, I think it is called the death pool but I am sure that the Fijian Team can do well, in particular if it has been given the right level of assistance, and this is precisely what it seeks to address.

Madam Speaker, the second part of course is pertaining to the lifting of the cap from \$25 million to \$60 million for movie production and the rebate that is available. It does also gives us the ability to attract,

as we highlighted a major Hollywood production to Fiji. It does make us a look more attractive and if we do not meet this timeline, obviously, it can be detrimental both to our Fiji Rugby Team and also the confidence that was given to the sponsors of the Pacific Games and also for this movie production.

MADAM SPEAKER.- The Bill is now open for debate. May I remind honourable Members that the debate must only be on whether the Bill should pass and not the content.

HON. M. D. BULITAVU.- Madam Speaker, I think our stand is similar to the other two previous Bills that are now Acts. The only issue that we have here, Madam Speaker, in reading the Bill that is before us, the content, we realised there is an income tax reduction for involvement into FASNOC and FRU activities, and also tax rebate for film producers or production companies. What the Bill is silent on, I would like the honourable and learned Attorney General to at least throw more light into that on how much will these film production companies contribute and their donations, if that would be more or less than the tax rebate and what would be their donations to FASANOC and FRU and how much will they be paid on the claim tax rebate and other incentives. Those are just the areas that could be clarified according to the Bill, I do not find anywhere, that it is tied up on what should be the quantum of their contribution to FRU and FASANOC.

Nonetheless, as you have said, we support the Bill as it is but just more clarification on to how much they have to donate to qualify for this tax rebate.

MADAM SPEAKER.- I invite the honourable Aseri Radrodro to have the floor.

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. I commend the contents of the Bill but with some little adjustments for consideration.

The tax rebate on the Fiji Rugby Union, if it could be improved to 200 percent, I think rugby stopped this nation and therefore should be given so that it can allow the support of rugby to grow, right from the school level, to the provincial level and onto the international level. At the moment we note that Fiji Rugby Union is in need of cash, it would only augur well if the amount of rebate be increased to two times the donation that has been given by companies.

Madam Speaker, there could also be a threshold for cash donations. As it is, it seems to be vague on the amount of donations that attracts tax rebate; it is open. Previously tax rebate is usually given for any contribution at \$100,000 and above. As we know that significant money, significant investments will also need tax rebates. One other sport that could also be included is the sport of cricket. I think they are also been knocking on the doors of Government to request for assistance and I do not see that in here. I know, they are part of the FASANOC organisation but mostly FASANOC organisations are mostly Olympic sports. Cricket is not an Olympic sport. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. I give the floor to the honourable Attorney-General for his Right of Reply.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. I refer honourable Bilitavu to Section 21 amendment ZY, it says, "... one an half times the amount of any cash donation". So, that is 150 per cent that I was talking about; the deduction. So, for example, if someone gives a \$100,000, he is entitled to \$150,000 tax deduction.

Madam Speaker, again like I said that including other sports as the honourable Member highlighted, we do not make it too open, because obviously, you can then see a way of how companies can actually try and offer an escape needs to be specific for specific events. If, we leave it very open then you know you might find all companies giving donations, and then getting 150 per cent tax deduction. So, we also

have to control that, this is why it is specific to the World Cup and specific to Pacific Games for FASANOC.

It has been done before, I know in 2001 when the Pacific Games was held in Fiji, there was tax deductions given them, previously for other events that has been done. But the trend generally is for specific events, otherwise we get into this whole area where companies can try and escape the situation.

I move that the Bill be adopted, Madam Speaker.

Question put.

Motion agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments, read for the third time and passed. (Act. No. of 2015)

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON THE WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2015

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, I move:

That a Bill for the Act to amend the Workmen's Compensation Act (Cap. 94), Bill No. 14 of 2015, be read for the final time and be voted upon.

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

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, I think all Members of this House and I am sort of traversing on very dangerous grounds when I am daring to speak for the other side of the House, but I am sure they would all support this Bill because it does improve the lot for the workers of Fiji. In that, this Bill basically allows for an increase in the quantum payable under Workmen's Compensation.

This Bill, Madam Speaker, as was highlighted yesterday also increases compensation payout for deaths from \$24,000 to \$50,000, an increase of 108 per cent; compensation payout for permanent total incapacity from \$32,000 to \$67,000 and permanent partial incapacity from \$24,000 to \$50,000. It also imposes, Madam Speaker, penalties on employers who do not actually report injuries. In the fixed penalty that has been imposed, Madam Speaker, there is also a recognition of the demarcation between the different sizes of company, because on one hand we need to ensure that there is a distinction between what we may call the 'small guys' versus the 'big guys'. The 'small guys' need to be given a particular level of assistance, because they are small businesses. We need to work with them. It does not mean that they do not comply with the law, but we should be able to assist them also the same time to ensure compliance.

Madam Speaker, the other important point of course is that it now does recognise *de facto* relationships, and in particular as you know, Madam Speaker, in Fiji when we talk about *de facto* relationships, we are generally talking about women. It is the women who actually suffer from a lack of recognition of *de facto* relationships. I know many people in this House would know many people who may have more than one kitchen, as they say in Fiji and some people, may be honourable Karavaki is honourable, but may be others in this House do know of others who do it. Madam Speaker, of course there are some people who may not necessarily be married but are in *de facto* relationships. That is really the issue, Madam Speaker that needs to be addressed, and that is what this Bill seeks to address.

Madam Speaker, if you also see at the end of the Bill, it just sets out the form in which the fixed penalty notice can be issued through the Ministry of Labour.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now invite debate on whether this Bill should pass.

HON. LT. COL. N. RIKA.- Madam Speaker, I have a short contribution to make.

Madam Speaker, we need to protect our workers and their families against catastrophic financial cause of severe injuries or death. Families may suffer impoverishment if their sole breadwinner suffers permanent disability, they no longer have the ability to work and earn a living. Statistics show, Madam Speaker, that from 2010 to 2014 there were 413 work-related deaths in Fiji, and 1,592 work-related injuries during this period. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) encourages good practices in the provision of employment injury compensation. For that, I commend the Government for reminding the employers and workers about their obligations under the labour laws, and of course, the amendment to the Workmen's Compensation Act.

Madam Speaker, the increase in the Workmen's Compensation is very much a welcomed move by the Government. We can imagine the smiles this amendment will bring about to those families around the country, that will qualify for this compensation. This amendment to the Workmen's Compensation Act must be fully supported by this august House because it is an achievement that will bring and benefit the injured workers of this country.

Madam Speaker, I stand to agree to Bill, No. 14 of 2015.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now give the floor to the honourable Tupou Draunidalo.

HON. ROKO T.T.S DRAUNIDALO.- Madam Speaker, we support this amendment. Yesterday, I expressed some concerns about whether or not the employers were consulted, and if this was worthy of going to Committee to do the necessary consultation. If anything, Madam Speaker, the only thing we would ask the Government to consider is that this be reviewed in a year's time and the amounts be increased.

Talking about the issue of whether or not employers were consulted, I am reliably informed that quite a number of prominent ones are happily aligned to the Government, and so we trust their consultation process could have been done there, and they do not require the assistance of the Opposition in getting them to be consulted further.

In the Explanatory Notes, it notes that the increases for partial and disability, together with the increase for deaths is similar in amount, and perhaps the Minister could explain if there were any considerations as to giving one more over the other or why they had to of the same amount. That is all, Madam Speaker.

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

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. Our position on this side of the House is similar to the previous presentation on the now enacted Acts. In regards to the Workmen's Compensation (Amendment) Bill, 2015, I think we all feel for this. We need to have feelings for these victims and have remorse on injured workers and even dependents of deceased workers.

The other issue with regards to this, that we could perhaps improve the legislation that is before us. It is not only the low payout, it is also the late payouts at the Tribunal that normally frustrates the dependents who are bringing up these claims. It normally takes about six months, 12 months or two years to get the payment done. In those circumstances where the Government is the employer, and in normal cases, the honourable and learned Attorney General makes representations at the hearing and certain things that come up in regards to medical opinions, that normally drags cases, and this brings about

frustration and the survivors would always would like to have a quick or more efficient way to get those payouts.

On the private sector, Madam Speaker, I think in certain issues, it depends on the condition of the business, sometimes there are late payments because of the income that will be generating in, but that will be dependent on the court orders that will be given by the Tribunal on when they are to make those payments.

On the other regard, Madam Speaker, I think the funding on compensation fund, it normally is budgeted. Sometimes, after cases are determined, the late payments are due to the lack of funding that is there to disburse to the victims as per the ruling.

The other issue, Madam Speaker, for the first time, the employers will be fined \$1,000 for not reporting a matter. Currently, employers are required to report, but this is being put into force them to report on any injuries in the work area. Now, there are other ways to improve this, Madam Speaker, especially when victims arrive at the hospital and the doctors at the hospital can also alert the Labour Officers, those who will be responsible for this and they can do it for the police too. So, the Ministry can be informed on the type of injuries on where it took place so it gives the Tribunal or the Ministry of Labour a perspective that this particular injury occurred in the workplace. Those are some of improvements that could be made in future to this particular issue which is before the House.

On behalf of the Opposition, SODELPA members of this side, I think we generally support the Workmen's Compensation (Amendment) Bill which is before the House.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- I have a short contribution to make. The difficulty that I see is in relation to the employers. For employers who are organised and established, it is very easy for them to attend to this because they can take out insurance. I am just asking the Government, in the future, maybe to look at some kind of compulsory third party, so that it helps everyone because for the small businesses a payout might mean the close of the business. That is all I wish to make.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now invite the honourable Attorney General to speak in reply.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to thank the general endorsement of this Bill by the Opposition members. A couple of issues have been raised and in fact a lot of them have been quite valid. Unusual, honourable Bulitavu, but Madam Speaker, the issue about workers compensation as I highlighted yesterday, if people take out worker's compensation insurance, and if you look at the rate of insurance premium, it is relatively low compared to other types of insurance. I can give the figures to the honourable Nawaikula regarding that. We are also as we did increase the payout for third party insurance, we saw where the premium was not increased and we do not expect or commensurate increase in premium with the quantum payable now under worker's compensation. We obviously will also be talking to a number of insurance companies regarding that because since the 1990's the quantum has not increased.

Madam Speaker, the issue about delay, I completely accept, that that delays were a hallmark, in fact within the Ministry of Labour. Approximately in 2008, the honourable Prime Minister assigned one doctor, 1 lawyer and about 12 Senior NCO's; the doctor was a Major rank, the lawyer was Colonel rank from the RFMF and they went and cleaned out about 3,000 outstanding applications that dated back to 1999. So between 1999 and 2004, there is something like 3,000 cases that had not been attended to and with the help of these personnel from the RFMF, millions of dollars were paid out where ordinary workers were actually just waiting around for these payments to be made and their families. So that was being addressed and also if you look at some of the budgetary provisions previously, the compensation

allocation was increased and off course we cannot let it happen again, completely accept that, that should not allowed to happen again.

Honourable Bulitavu raised a very important point and that is the time that is taken to make compensation payments. Overall, the system, if you do take them to court. In the case with third party insurance, the issue raised about those unfortunate passengers who perished in that bus incident. You will see that we have made budgetary allocations for this, we want to setup a Victims Compensation Tribunal where there set fees or amounts, so in fact in New Zealand they price it right down to your finger. You lose a finger, there is a set amount, if it is your working hand, the finger, the amount is obviously different to the cost of the finger or the price of the finger in a non-working hand. We want to set that up, also to reduce the fact that now there is in Fiji, in fact for a long period of time, it is very litigious. As you know when insurance companies get involved, they hire lawyers and the lawyers then think that the best way they can provide a return to their client is how not to payout.

So by having a separate Tribunal System, we will be able to fast track or remove the so litigious mindset that we have regarding payout to victims whether through third party insurance, whether through these types of compensation payout, that is something we are working on, Madam Speaker. This Bill of course addresses immediately the fact that if tomorrow or whenever this Bill comes into effect, if it comes into effect from tomorrow, any worker that may die unfortunately or may become disabled, they will be able to get this new payment compensation that we have stated in this Bill.

Question put.

Motion agreed to.

Bill reported without amendments, read a third time and passed. (Act No. of 2015)

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON THE MEDIA INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2015

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, I move that a Bill for an Act to amend the Media Industry Development Decree 2010, Bill No. 15 of 2015 be read the final time and be voted upon.

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

MADAM SPEAKER.- Thank you, I now call on the honourable and learned Attorney General to have the floor.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, this Bill has two features, if you like. One of them deals essentially with allowing foreign ownership and cross ownership for paid TV services here through satellite or terrestrial. So it opens up the market, Madam Speaker. It allows new entrance to come into the market, it also allows existing registered media organisations under the Decree to be able to venture into this new area of business, and they were not deemed to be in breach of the Decree because of the cross media ownership provision not applying to this.

The other provision Madam Speaker, is the removal of any fines that can be imposed on journalists. So under the existing provisions, the tribunal can award a fine against the journalist of up to \$1,000. I know in the media and the social media, a lot of mis-information spread that there were 10's of thousands of dollars but for journalists it is \$1,000, but even that is now being removed. The fines that can be impose by the tribunal only now aligns to the actual company and also to the publishers or the editors of those organisations. Thank you Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- I now invite debate on whether the Bill should pass. I give the floor to the honourable Dr. Biman Prasad.

HON. DR. B.C. PRASAD. – Madam Speaker, first we support this Bill but let me just add, when I moved a motion in the last session of Parliament to repeal or review the Media Decree, and obviously we had some very good debate on it. I remember, Madam Speaker, the honourable and learned Attorney General in his right of reply describing that motion as a silly one. I am actually happy that he has somewhat changed his view, Madam Speaker, and I am happy that there is some light at the end of the tunnel in terms of looking at this, still after this amendment, what I consider to be a draconian Decree. I say this, Madam Speaker, because it is an important issue for the country. Internationally, Madam Speaker, as I said last time, we have been condemned for having that kind of media laws. I would just ask the honourable and learned Attorney General to perhaps clarify a little bit more on the removal of the \$1,000 fine because in Part 10 of the Decree it still says that upon conviction for any breach of the media code, a media organisation could be fined \$100,000; a publisher/editor \$25,000 and/or two years imprisonment and a journalist or media \$1,000 and/or two years' imprisonment, whether the two years' imprisonment also goes with the \$1,000 fine?

Having said that, Madam Speaker, I would request the Government, and indeed, I think it will look very good on all of us as Members of Parliament, and indeed, it will look good on Government as well because as I have said, there has been a lot of condemnation of the media laws, and we talk to journalists everyday. They come and tell us very clearly that they are afraid; they are being constrained by media organisations; by editors and publishers and by having those penalties for media organisations and publishers and editors, we will continue to keep the noose around their neck, indeed, it will flow on to the journalists. So, I think we have taken a step, we could have used my last motion to appoint a committee to review the Decree, we did not, I am happy that the Government has, at least, made a small concession, and I am sure the media personnel, the journalists could see that as a positive development.

However, Madam Speaker, many of them would still wait for the Government to finally bite the bullet and review the Media Decree in its entirety. I hope that they will bring an amended Bill in the not too distant future to this Parliament, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- I invite the honourable Viliame Gavoka to take the floor.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Madam Speaker, I rise to contribute to the dialogue on this Bill. At the outset, we fully support it but we still stress that it would have been better if it had come through the normal process, instead of invoking Standing Order 51 to fast-track this.

Madam Speaker, just some clarification from the side of Government; here, we will be giving licences to overseas players to come in into the local markets to compete with our people. In Fiji, we have *TV One* and FBC are the main players in here and *Mai TV*, a secondary provider. I just wish to have some clarification on this, Madam Speaker, because the advertising dollar in Fiji is very limited, it is a very small advertising market. Already, it is no secret that *TV One*, *Fiji TV*, a public listed company is struggling. Without its PNG subsidiary, it could have been losing money over the last 10 years but now that they have sold their PNG subsidiary, they would be really struggling, Madam Speaker, to compete against some big boys in competing through a very limited advertising dollar in this country.

I just wish if you could be clear on that. I know it was mentioned yesterday that *Sky TV* could be spinned off to Digicel, which is fine because if you look at the books of *Fiji TV*, *Sky TV* has been a money-losing arm of *Fiji TV*. But that again, in New Zealand, it took about 17 years for *Sky TV* to make a profit, but that is the call of the owners of *Fiji TV*, if they want to spin it off. However, when they spin it off to someone like Digicel that is a big company and competing against old guys in the advertising in this country. I just want that to be clarified. I just want to make sure that our players – FBC, *Fiji TV* and *Mai*

TV are not put into a position when they are competing against big boys, and lose out on the available advertising dollar in the country. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER.- I will now invite the honourable Bhatnagar to have the floor.

HON. V. BHATNAGAR.- Madam Speaker, I rise in support of Bill No. 15, A Bill for an Act to amend the Media Industry Development Decree, 2010. The Bill opens up market for foreign investments in the media industry with, of course, adequate measures and conditions in place, that is, providing security to all media businesses.

As the honourable and learned Attorney-General mentioned yesterday that no local content will be allowed to be aired or shown by these providers, except for commercial advertisements which are also bound by various terms and, of course, conditions, wider selection of choice for the general public, revenue for the Government, and of course, security to our local media. So, you can see that the Bill is proposed in the best interest of all stakeholders.

Madam Speaker, I also believe that journalists would be most happy to note that the amended Decree will remove the possibility of a fine, thus allowing them to do their work without the threat or rather, the fear of being fined. Of course, this does not mean they compromise their duty towards responsible reporting. The only people who could be fined would be the publisher or, of course, the editor. On the same token, Madam Speaker, I have been in the media industry for long and I do not remember a case where a journalist was actually fined. This goes on to prove that our journalists have been reporting sensibly, and I believe this Bill will strengthen their confidence even more.

Madam Speaker, taking into consideration that the amended Bill will enhance on investment, revenue and remove the threat of possible fines imposed on our journalists and give our people a wider choice in sports and entertainment area, I support the Bill.

MADAM SPEAKER.- I now give the floor to the honourable Tupou Draunidalo.

HON. ROKO T.T.S. DRAUNIDALO.- I just wish to add a little bit to what has already been said about the fines and the imprisonment, Madam Speaker.

The media outlets, Madam Speaker, are commercial entities and if there is a risk of journalists who work in commercial entities, writing stories that are not kosher to the powers that be, that would mean that media owners, through editors and publishers, will put an end to those stories. That is the practical effect of it, Madam, because the fines \$25,000, \$100,000 is not a small amount, but I think the real worry of the big media outlets as well is the prison time, and that would come upon the owners/directors of the companies that own media outlets.

So, it is welcomed, the \$1000 fine is taken off journalists, but we need to put it into perspective. Journalists are still not free to write and report news independently because if they do and the editors and publishers do not think it is a risk that they are willing to ride the risk of \$100,000, \$25,000 and imprisonment, certainly as I know, media outlets refer their various stories to their lawyers, and lawyers are not going to tell their clients to risk \$100,000 fine. They will just tell them; "Do not publish this." Well, I would have thought the leader of the Bar would not want to just hear from lawyers in the news, but if that is what he wants to encourage, then we will all just hear from one sector, Madam.

I just wanted to expand on the issue of fines and imprisonment, and I go back to a matter I pointed out yesterday, it is just the drafting of it. I know the honourable and learned Attorney-General has said that international news that come through pay television is not affected, but it is just the way the Bill is worded, Madam Speaker, because the first subsection 23(a) says "...provided that –

- (a) such television services are limited to entertainment and sports programmes or channels sourced from any other country.”

It does talk about news but it is only local news, Madam Speaker, and there are some provisions that refer to local news and all of that, so if it is not mentioned, perhaps the Attorney-General's Chambers are going to rely on that legal form of interpretation where if one is mentioned, the other one is not mentioned, but the other one is not covered. This, in terms of legal drafting, is messy, and if the wrong Minister wanted to, could certainly restrict that as well. I am saying that to be helpful. It is messy, it leaves it twisting in the wind, so to speak, Madam Speaker.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, if you listen to the honourable leader of the NFP and the honourable Draunidalo, I think they have caught up with couple of their mantras and they just keep on spinning it in the hope that something happened, in the same way that some Members of the Opposition have caught on to this word called “transparency” and “corruption”. That actually started by the Bainimarama Government and now they apply it to everything where it does not actually apply to.

Madam Speaker, the point of difference between what the honourable Leader of NFP because some time back is a repeal and he said “we do not repeal”. This is an amendment. There is a huge difference between a repeal and an amendment to a particular Act. Madam Speaker, we had also said that should they believe that any law that come so strongly in any law is in some way in conflict with the Constitution, please take it to a court of law.

Madam Speaker, to clarify, “no a journalist cannot go to gaol”, Section 66, the amendment takes care of that. Madam Speaker, the allowing of full ownership with Pay-Television actually is not free-to-air television. It is actually for Pay-Television, not free to air, and I completely agree with the honourable Gavoka that there is a limited market in Fiji, to clarify this. Full jurisdictions have limited markets. Fiji is of course a population with less than one million people. This is precisely the reason why we have put that the Minister may put special provisions by issuing a special licence. We will assist the market but it also does give Pay-Television entrance into the market some form of liberty to be able to assess the commercial viability of them entering into the market. We also have to remember that Pay-Television audiences are generally different to free-trade audiences. Sometimes they overlap, no doubt about that, but generally people who can afford to pay for Pay-Television will have Pay-Television, so many people who cannot afford Pay-Television that is why they have free-to-air television, this is why we have more local content, et cetera, in future television. I think the issue about the news as raised by honourable Draunidalo, is not massive drafting, Madam Speaker.

It is quite clear, we all sense special conditions but many people see CNN. If you look at the content of CNN, no doubt we can see it as for entertainment, Madam Speaker, but the reality is, it says “no local content, including local news”, so I think that reverses the matter. We would like to thank honourable Members for their support. Just regarding Fiji Television, Madam Speaker, let me also say and make the comment, if you look at the Fiji TV structure, I do not know about now but just a couple of years ago, it was very very top heavy, it had an in-house counsel, it had a deputy in-house counsel, it had five or six senior managers for different areas, so it is also a question of how commercially viable you are running the organisation. We need to streamline this because as recognised, there is a limited market available. We need to be able to be very efficient in these organisations but we are hoping that now, with the 12-year licence of course, that is being issued to Fiji TV, it will encourage them to also invest more into the technology and obviously to be able to have a wider network in terms of coverage.

Madam Speaker, I support the Bill, and for it to be put to vote.

Question put.

Motion agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments, read a third time and passed (Act No. of 2015)

MADAM SPEAKER.- I will now go by the direction of the honourable Members because we have two other Items on the Order Paper. If you would like to go through this before lunch so that at the end of this time, we can break for the day.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- I think we will have a lot of debate on it so we might as well come back.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, the Business Committee will meet after this.

We will now adjourn for lunch and return at 2.30 p.m.

The House adjourned at 1.27 p.m.

The House resumed at 2.40 p.m.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, we will continue with the next item in the Order Paper.

SURFING DECREE REPEAL BILL, 2015

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, I rise on a Point of Order.

Madam Speaker, before we get into the debate on the second reading, I would like to draw Parliament's attention to the Bills that have been tabled by the Opposition that they are very peculiar Bills and, in fact, defective. The reason why they are defective (if I could speak on both the Bills) is that, they have only the short titles and commencement provisions, and do not have any substantive provisions at all. For example, Madam Speaker, the principles and merits of the Bill come out in the substantive provisions in the Bill, and how can the House debate the merits and principles of the Bill that only has a title and commencement provisions?

Madam Speaker, for example, the Bill for an Act to Repeal the Regulation of Surfing Areas Decree that is the title. Clause 1 says; "this Act may be cited as a Surfing Decree Repeal Act", that is a citation. Then it says; "this Act shall come into force in the day of its publication in the *Gazette*", that is it. What is the Act going to do? Where is the substantive provision in the Act or in this proposed Bill?

Then, Madam Speaker, if you look at the Explanatory Note on the top, it is not part of the Bill but if you look at the commencement date, Clause 2 says; "this Act shall come into force on the day of its publication in the *Gazette*" and the Explanatory Note says; "Clause 2 is the provision providing for the commencement of the Act when assented to by the President". There is a conflict there but there is nothing here to say what this Bill will do, it only has a title, so it is defective. How can we debate as to what are the contents of the Bill? There is no contents in the Bill.

Similarly, Madam Speaker, a Bill for an Act to repeal the Mahogany Industry Development Decree that is the title. Then it says; "this Act must be cited as the Mahogany Industry Development Repeal Act", that is what it is going to be cited as. It says; "This Act shall come into force on the day of its publication"; to do what? How can we debate this when it does not say what the Act is going to do? This is why it is defective, Madam Speaker.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- A point of Order, Madam Speaker. The honourable and learned Attorney-General has not cited the appropriate Standing Order that he is coming from. If you look at the legislative procedures which is Standing Orders 83 to 90, it does not say anywhere how the format of a Bill should be, and rightly so, because when it is referred to the Standing Committee, that is where that can be cured.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Honourable Member, I note the Point of Order. We would like to take a closer look at the Point of Order that has been given before I make a ruling on it. So, I will suspend the sitting and we will come back once we have looked at it.

The Parliament adjourned at 2.45 p.m.

The Parliament resumed at 2.55 p.m.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

MADAM SPEAKER.- I thank you for your patience, honourable Members, but I continue, I would like to welcome the young women out there in the gallery. Some of them are women with disabilities, you are most welcomed this afternoon.

Ruling on Standing Order

I now wish to make a ruling on the Point of Order raised by the honourable and learned Attorney-General and Minister for Finance, Public Enterprises and Communications.

A Bill must begin with a long title which sets out the purposes of the Bill. In this instance, both Bills contain an appropriate long title. However, whilst the purpose of both Bills appears clear from the long titles, there is no provision in the content of each Bill, which would give effect to the stated purpose. They are, in effect, Bills with the title but no substantive clause.

In my opinion, for example the Surfing Decree Repeal Bill should contain an additional clause. The Regulation of Surfing Areas Decree, 2010 is hereby repealed. That is the clause. The Mahogany Industry Development Repeal should also contain a similar additional clause.

I, therefore, rule that the Bills are not competent for Parliament to consider at this stage. If the Bills were to be re-submitted for First Reading at a later sitting with the necessary amendments, there is no reason why the Bills could not be considered. At this stage, however, I ordered that the Bills be withdrawn.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Madam Speaker, I rise on a Point of Order. The people who scrutinised these documents be cautioned because otherwise, it is just a waste of time coming here. They should have looked at it, and advised us of the defects so that it could have been cured rather than wasting our time here.

MADAM SPEAKER.- Your concern is noted.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, can I just make a point on that note; this is why generally the Bills are drafted by Government. I think the responsibility should not be just shoved entirely on the Secretariat of Parliament because if the Opposition was to bring a Bill, it is also their responsibility to ensure that the fundamentals of any Bill is actually within the Bill itself. There are four lawyers amongst them.

(Chorus of Interjections)

MADAM SPEAKER.- I agree. Anyway, my ruling has been made, and thank you very much for your indulgence on that.

Before we adjourn for the day, we have an announcement to be made by the honourable Leader of Government in Parliament.

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Madam Speaker, can I extend another invitation. This is the launching of the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism Trade Policy Framework for Fiji and all honourable Members are invited. It is at 18.30 hours at the Grand Pacific Hotel and it is free. So, we are all invited to attend.

HON. J. USAMATE.- Madam Speaker, if I may, whilst responding to the honourable Leader of the Opposition's suggestion that we should have a screening for Parliamentarians. I am pleased to announce that the team is set up for you. So, when you go here, please turn right, as you go out so that you can be screened so that you may know your status.

(Applause)

MADAM SPEAKER.- That brings us to the end of our sitting today. The House is now adjourned until 9.30 tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 2.59 p.m.