

PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI



PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

DAILY HANSARD

WEDNESDAY, 7TH MARCH, 2018

[CORRECTED COPY]

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WEDNESDAY, 7TH MARCH, 2018

The Parliament met at 9.30 a.m., pursuant to adjournment.

HONOURABLE SPEAKER took the Chair and read the Prayer.

PRESENT

All Honourable Members were present, except the Honourable Minister for Local Government, Housing, Environment, Infrastructure and Transport; and the Honourable Ratu N.T. Lalabalavu.

ADMINISTRATION OF OATH/AFFIRMATION OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honourable Dr. Mere Tuisalalo Samisoni subscribed to the Administration of Oath/Affirmation of Allegiance and took her seat in the Chamber.

HON. SPEAKER.- Congratulations to the Honourable Member and welcome to Parliament!

I also take this opportunity to welcome her family, who are observing from the public gallery. Welcome to Parliament! I now invite the Honourable Dr. Mere Samisoni to deliver her maiden speech.

Maiden Speech – Hon. Dr. Mere T. Samisoni

HON. DR. M.T. SAMISONI.- Madam Speaker, it is some 12 years since I spoke in this Parliament. My term as a Member of Parliament (MP) then was cut short by the military *coup* of 2006.

I come to this Parliament in the last stages of its life before another General Elections. I offer Honourable Members on both sides my greetings and trust that in the time left to us, that we will be able to make decisions to enhance the welfare of the people of Fiji.

I am sorry that my occupation of this Parliamentary seat comes as a result of the untimely death of the late Honourable Ratu Sela Nanovo. I offer his family and people my condolences, and promise that I will do my best to honour his legacy.

Having said that, Madam Speaker, I feel duty-bound to tell Honourable Members that the method of unilaterally choosing to fill vacancies is not a democratic one. It denies the people the right to vote in a by-election. Such elections provide a valuable snapshot of voter opinion between national polls.

We cannot assume that their feelings are static. The public mood changes. Therefore, when a vacancy does occur between Elections, voters should be allowed to decide their new MP. That is what democracy is about; to update information and service delivery to the people. It is not about keeping the existing numbers in Parliament as they are.

Madam Speaker, in my allotted time, I will raise issues of concern to me and SODELPA, the Party I am honoured to serve. My first choice of topic for this maiden speech is the withholding of demographic information from the Census. The Honourable Leader of the Opposition has now raised that issue in a question. The Honourable Attorney-General has replied so I will not, therefore, go into detail today. But as a businesswoman, I wish to tell the House that the knowledge of racial ethnic mix of a nation is critical for any commercial enterprise to succeed. Different ethnic groups have different tastes, preferences, outlooks and needs.

Investors looking at new ventures, serving an ethnically and culturally diverse populace, must have a full picture of that populace and its characteristics. This enables value to be added to product choices that will make a good contribution to the company's bottom line. For example, my company, the Hot Bread Kitchen in 1980 after a feasibility study, I went along to visit the Hindu and Moslem leaders to reassure them that we never will use beef or pork, we only use alternatives out of respect for our valued customers. Further, we use Halal yeast. Today, 37 years later, our brand is a household name and this trust in my brand that I will never fail my customers.

A failure to assist investors with all the data they need is a sure way for the Government to continue with its very low scores in an internationally known rating scale for measuring how business-friendly a country is. In the World Bank's Index for Ease of Doing Business, the SDL, when it was in Government, showed what could be done. It scored a rating of 34 out of 155 countries. From there, it planned to move further up the ladder. We outperformed some countries with developed economies.

The FijiFirst Government has been so incompetent in this area that in 2016, Fiji dropped to 84th place out of 155. Its rating in 2017 slumped further to 101. This is international statistics. The Government has still not learnt its lesson. Its extreme desire to command, control and regulate has not diminished.

The pressure it placed on the Credit Bureau forced that business to close, thus depriving investors of a ready source of information to help strategic decision-making. The World Bank noticed this and is now asking for the gap to be filled.

All this is about information for the 21st Century information economy. There is a different ballgame now, it is a new world order and a new world view. Information that is properly managed makes economies and countries work. They are able to serve their local markets and connect to the global value chain and business opportunities. These links in to the supply value chain to enhance national competitive and comparative advantages.

When a population is as diversified as ours, with two major racial groupings and numerous smaller ones, ethnic data has special statistical significance. It helps to achieve entrepreneurial innovation and adds to the positive features of what we call today, "moral capitalism". This is private enterprise that can no longer simply focus on the need for constantly increasing profit, other factors come into play, such as social responsibility, environmental awareness and protection, and the national interest. The foundation has widened it and the framework is more holistic, it is no longer just focussed on money. It is not a question of business operating in isolation from the rest of society, the people, all of us together, are the key stakeholders in the entire spectrum of these issues.

Madam Speaker, permit me now to address something that does relate to the findings of the Census. It is clear that some of us in this House need to come to grips with reality. Fiji is not homogeneous. We do not have uniformity and ethnicity. More so than most countries, we are multi-ethnic, multi-cultural with different languages, traditions, beliefs and values. This pluralism is our defining characteristic. It is the nation of Fiji. We should not pretend things are otherwise, neither should we pretend that unity in our diversity can be achieved just by words and dictatorial legal imposition. It takes hard, patient effort, goodwill, the right policies, political commitment and extensive consultation and *talanoa* that our Prime Minister has always been promoting, right across the nation.

Let me say to the Honourable Members on the other side that they should not confuse race with racism. These are separate. Race is the categorisation of humans into distinct groups with shared traits and ancestry. Racism in its simple form is a prejudiced belief that members of a certain race are superior or inferior to another race. Thanks to the climate created by the FijiFirst Government. Anyone who mentions race is likely to be branded as a racist. This is dangerous, it is nonsense and it must stop!

Madam Speaker, I mentioned *talanoa* when I spoke about our search for unity as a nation. There is no need here for me to explain this as a means of communication and dialogue. The Honourable Prime Minister has already done that for us when he was in Bonn in COP23 and the lead up to it. He promoted the virtues of *talanoa* as a cultural method of resolving issues and finding common ground through compromise. This was how things were done in Fiji and the Region, and we should show the world the Pacific way of settling differences. COP23 then adopted *talanoa* as a means of dealing with the political problems surrounding climate change.

Madam Speaker, I ask today; where has *talanoa* gone? Why is there no *talanoa* in this House? The Honourable Prime Minister's supporters will say he goes around the countryside having *talanoa* with the people. That is enough but those discussions are mostly about complaints of lack of basic services and then Prime Minister ordering officials accompanying him to follow up. That is not *talanoa*, it is called "feedback" and it is not just for the Honourable Prime Minister. He should be making it available to the House in special reports. This process will collectively and holistically link Government and Parliament to all capital resources and the people, that is what is important. The focus is to serve the people with all our capital.

Our country and this Parliament desperately need to apply the democratic and true *talanoa* spirit to many complex challenges facing this nation.

We have just had a visit from UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein. It was not a good visit for the Government. The High Commissioner raised issues we all know about. He did this in polite, diplomatic language, but the message to the Government and its higher authority was plain. Get your act together and start behaving like a proper democracy!

HON. OPPOSITION MEMBERS.- Hear, hear!

HON. DR. M.T. SAMISONI.- The High Commissioner, Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, mentioned the *talanoa* dialogue platform for COP and the inclusion of civil society groups. He went on to tell how the civil society groups he had met, passionate and constructive human rights defenders, were frustrated at the narrow civil space available to them in Fiji and the suppression of dissenting voices. They shared their concerns with the High Commissioner, Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein. He got to the heart of the matter when he said and I quote:

"I call on the government, to draw upon the wisdom and knowledge of civil society organisations domestically as they do at international level. There is clearly a need for an improved *talanoa*, a space for people to talk about the most difficult issues. There are many issues in Fiji that need to be aired and the Government will need to open up the space for that to happen."

This was a strong reprimand from one of the world's leading human rights authorities.

Let me add to what the High Commissioner, Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, said. There is clearly a need for *talanoa* not only in civil society but also in this parliamentary system. This will enable us to pool our resources and abilities as we seek bi-partisan solutions to the pressing issues facing our people. If the Honourable Prime Minister wishes to protect the image he has promoted as a master of discussion and compromise, he must bring the *talanoa* spirit he took to Bonn to this House. If he does not, he will be accused of hypocrisy. In fact, he is already exposed to that.

I can assure this House that when SODELPA forms the next government there will be plenty of *talanoa* with those in Opposition. *Talanoa*, this home-grown process model, can be applied to solving many of our urgent challenges, such as rehabilitating the sugar industry, rescuing the health system and expanding Information Communication Technology capabilities. It can be empowering, less stressful than normal decision-making and debate, yet be more productive. Make no mistake, properly applied, it can link diversity to unity. Of course, at some point, the informal nature of *talanoa* dialogue has to become a little more structured by noting decisions, preparing reports on these and moving on to recording of resolutions.

Madam Speaker, I would very much like to see an organised national *talanoa* underway to address the crisis in our environment which I can only describe as a big disgrace and a national shame. Our country is plagued and scarred by heaps of garbage, rubbish and junk all over the place. Virtually every day in the newspapers, we see the photographic evidence of this desecration on our landscape. We observe it ourselves and cannot be avoided.

This Government has positioned itself with some success as an international champion in the battle against climate change and environmental conservation. The FijiFirst Manifesto contains a promise to safeguard our environment and protect the natural world for the benefit of our present and future generations.

On this very visible evidence, this Government has failed miserably. I can see no focussed and concerted effort at work here. Volunteers cleaning up the mess should be commended but as things are at the moment, their endeavours are futile. Get rid of rubbish this week and two weeks later, it is back again. This is pathetic, Madam Speaker. I am sure our side of the House would be more than willing to sit down for publicised *talanoa* sessions with the Honourable Prime Minister and his environmental team.

I add one more comment, please, Madam Speaker, effective management and policing of the existing crisis is necessary, along with the stiffer penalties for offenders. But there is no way in the world that I can support the Government's policy of \$1 million fines and life imprisonment for offenders. These are bizarre penalties mentioned in a regularly-featured television by one of the Ministries. Perhaps, Government itself should be fined for its failure to protect the environment.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you, Honourable Member.

(Acclamation)

MINUTES

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

That the Minutes of this sitting of Parliament held on Monday, 5th March, 2018 as previously circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed.

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

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Point of order, Madam Speaker!

HON. SPEAKER.- Point of order!

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- My point of order, Madam Speaker, I would like to refer your good self to page 321 of the Uncorrected Copy of the *Daily Hansard* of Monday's Sitting. Let me take you, Madam Speaker, to the fifth sentence where an answer was given by the Honourable Attorney-General which probably would be amounting to misleading this House in regards to statistics that he shared from the answer that is there, that there was no collection. According to the statement of the Commissioner for Census yesterday, there was collection of data on ethnicity that was done but due to data being compromised, it was not released so that statement is really wrong.

The second one, Madam Speaker, on the eighth sentence there, there was no data collected in 2007 during the Census. We have got evidence here, Madam Speaker, that there was also data collection on ethnicity in the 2007 Census which can be tabled to the House for your consideration. And given that there...

HON. SPEAKER.- Order!

I reckon what you are saying do not qualify under the point of order process because you are making statements on statements we made. In fact, we are looking at the Minutes that it is a true record of what transpired on Monday and no statements on those record. Therefore, the point of order is not taken. However, you can bring up those issues under a substantive motion.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- So that is the available path for me to follow, Madam Speaker?

HON. SPEAKER.- Yes, bring it up as a substantive motion.

I will now repeat. Parliament will now vote on the motion.

Question put.

Motion agreed to.

HON. PROF. B.C. PRASAD.- A point of order, Madam Speaker.

I rise on a point of order under Standing Order 74(1)(a) where, in my humble view, "there is an alleged breach of Standing Orders or practices of Parliament."

Madam Speaker, I urge this House to consider Standing Order 58(3)(a) and (b), as I lay out the issue which says that protocols while speaking must be observed.

Madam Speaker, on Monday 5th March, 2018 during question time pertaining to the Honourable Leader of Opposition regarding the 2017 Census, I followed up with a supplementary question which then led to the Honourable Attorney-General, who misled this august House that no ethnic data was collected by the 2017 Census enumerators.

I quote, Madam Speaker, the comment by the Honourable Attorney-General in response to my supplementary question on Monday, 5th March, 2018 and I quote from Page 321 of the Uncorrected Copy of the *Daily Hansard*:

"No, such data was collected. He needs to understand that there has been no aggregation of data based on ethnicity in 2000 and 2017 Census none whatsoever. They need to move away from that, they think we are hiding it, we are not hiding it. There was no collection of data."

The points of the Honourable Attorney-General allegedly misleading and bringing dishonour and disrepute to this august House which are not standard practices of this House as per Standing Order 74(1)(a), are as follows:

1. there was no census done in 2000, there was a Census done in 2007; and
2. in the 2007 Census, there is public information readily available, that clearly shows the aggregation of data on ethnicity.

Madam Speaker, the people of Fiji who we are supposed to represent are up in arms over this issue. There is already a hash tag called, 'My Ethnicity Counts' starting on social media. Everyone who was counted willingly, allowed strangers in the form of enumerators into their houses to extract very private and confidential information from them with the understanding that this information is to be used to enhance Government services and support, and are now being told that the Bureau of Statistics has a competency issue, which I find very hard to believe because the previous statements are contrary to the statement from the Bureau today. And especially when this exercise actually costs the taxpayers about \$14.5 million which was passed in the 2017-2018 Budget, only last year.

Madam Speaker, with this point of order, I actually seek a ruling from you, whether the Honourable Attorney-General misled us when he said that the census was done in 2000 and that there was no aggregation of data based on ethnicity done, it was done in 2007. And I will lay on the table a briefing pertaining to public statement in support of Standing Order 74(1)(a), that there is an alleged breach of Standing Orders or practices of Parliament. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you, Honourable Member. I will have to look further into the evidence to enable me to make a ruling. Therefore, I will make a ruling at a later date.

We will move on to the next item in the Agenda.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CHAIR

Welcome

HON. SPEAKER.- I welcome all Honourable Members to today's sitting of Parliament.

I wish to warmly welcome the members of the public joining us in the gallery and those watching proceedings on television and the internet and listening on the radio. Thank you for taking interest in your Parliament.

Self-Assessment exercise on the Sustainable Development Goals

Honourable Members, as you may be aware, a Self-Assessment Exercise on the Sustainable Development Goals was conducted from 3rd October, 2017 to 6th October, 2017 by the Research and Library Services Unit of the Fijian Parliament, in consultation with consultants from the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and UNDP. I am proud to inform you that the Fijian Parliament was the first in the world to conduct this self-assessment exercise. The Secretary-General of the IPU, Mr. Martin Chungong, stated that the exercise showed the Fijian Parliament's strong commitment and ownership in dealing with the SDGs.

The self-assessment exercise aims to assess the capacity and readiness of Parliaments to engage in the implementation of SDGs. Members of Parliament acknowledged that in order for Fiji to achieve the implementation of the SDGs, its institutional capacity, structures and work processes needed to be strengthened.

There was also a broad-based bipartisan agreement that SDG monitoring and oversight should be mainstreamed into the Parliament's work. It is, therefore, important to hold regular trainings and workshops on general and/or sectoral SDG topics to ensure that all parliamentarians are regularly updated on SDG-related issues and development.

At this juncture, I wish to acknowledge all those who participated in this self-assessment exercise, and present to you copies of the Report titled: "*The Parliament of Fiji and the Sustainable Development Goals: Self-Assessment, 3-6 October 2017*". It is for your information.

And finally, let me acknowledge and with the Honourable Faiyaz Koya Happy Birthday and many Happy Returns of the Day!

(Acclamation)

I could have sung happy birthday but my voice is not really that clear. Thank you.

We will move on to the next Item.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND CERTAIN DOCUMENTS

HON. SPEAKER.- I now call upon on the Honourable Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Public Enterprises, Civil Service and Communications to table his Reports.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, according to Standing Order 38, I present the following Reports to Parliament:

1. The First Quarter Appropriation Statement 1 August 2017 to 31 October 2017, which also includes the:
 - Actual Expenditure for the first quarter;
 - Projected Expenditure from 1st August, 2017 to 31st July, 2018; and
 - Annual Budget Expenditure from 1st August, 2017 to 31st July, 2018.
2. Mid-Year Fiscal Statement 1 August 2017 to 31 October 2017, for the financial year 2017 and 2018 as required under Section 44 (1) of the Financial Management Act which includes the:
 - Actual Expenditure of the period of six months which is 1st August, 2017 to 31st January, 2018;
 - Projected Expenditure from 1st August, 2017 to 31st July, 2018;
 - Annual Budget Expenditure from 1st August, 2017 to 31st July, 2018;
 - Total surplus deficit for the period of six months and corresponding period of the previous financial year; and
 - Projected surplus deficit for the financial year compared to the actual surplus deficit of the previous financial year.
3. Fiji Airports Limited - 2016 Annual Report.
4. Fiji Ports Corporation Limited - Annual Report 2016 .
5. Pacific Fishing Company Limited - Annual Report 2016.
6. Fiji Public Trustee Corporation Limited - Annual Report 2016.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

(Reports handed to the Secretary-General)

Under Standing Order 38(2), I refer the following Reports to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts:

1. First Quarter Appropriation Statement 1 August 2017 to 31 October 2017; and
2. Mid-Year Fiscal Statement 1 August 2017 to 31 January 2018.

Under Standing Order 38(2), I refer the following Reports to the Standing Committee on Social Affairs:

1. Airports Fiji Limited - Annual Report 2016;
2. Fiji Ports Corporation Limited - Annual Report 2016; and
3. Fiji Public Trustee Corporation Limited - Annual Report 2016.

Under Standing Order 38(2), I refer the Pacific Fishing Company Limited - Annual Report 2016 to the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs.

HON. SPEAKER.- I now call on the Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs to have the floor.

PRESENTATION OF REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

Review Report of the Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development and National Disaster Management 2015 Annual Report

HON. V. PILLAY.- Madam Speaker, on behalf of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs, I am pleased to present the Review Report of the Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development and National Disaster Management 2015 Annual Report.

The Standing Committee on Social Affairs was established under Section 109(2)(b) of the Standing Orders of Parliament of the Republic of Fiji, and is mandated to examine matters relating to health, education, social services, labour, culture, media and their administration.

On 15th September, 2017, Parliament resolved to refer the Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development and National Disaster Management 2015 Annual Report to this Committee for the purpose of scrutinising and reporting back to Parliament at a later date. The focus was particularly on the areas of administration, legislation, budget, organisation structure, functions, policies, programmes/projects of the year as per Standing Order 110(1)(c). The Committee also reviewed the various projects and programmes administered by the Ministry, including the challenges encountered in delivering their mandates.

Subsequent to the presentation made by the Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development and Disaster Management and Meteorological Services the Committee inquiries and assessments were based on their key outputs and the corresponding budgetary utilisation.

The performance of the Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development and Disaster Management and Meteorological Services is commendable. However, the Committee is of the view that the Ministry must strengthen their systems and processes for a more effective and efficient service delivery to the rural areas and maritime islands.

Finally, I would like to extend my appreciation to the Honourable Members who were involved in the formulation of this bipartisan Report, the:

1. Honourable Veena Bhatnagar - Deputy Chairperson;
2. Honourable Salote Radrodro - Committee Member;
3. Honourable Ruveni Nadalo - Committee Member; and
4. Honourable Anare Vadei - Committee Member.

In my capacity as the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs, I commend this Report to Parliament.

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

(Report handed to the Secretary-General)

HON. V. PILLAY.- Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 121(5), I hereby move a motion without notice that a debate on the contents of the Report is initiated at a future sitting.

HON. V.K. BHATNAGAR.- Madam Speaker, I second the motion.

HON. SPEAKER.- Parliament will now vote.

Question put.

The Question is:

That a debate on the contents of the Report is initiated at a future sitting.

Does any Member Oppose?

(Chorus of "Noes")

HON. SPEAKER.- As no Member opposes, the motion is agreed to unanimously.

Motion agreed to.

HON. SPEAKER.- I now call on the Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs to have the floor.

Review Report of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs -
Fiji Higher Education Commission 2014 Annual Report

HON. V. PILLAY.- Madam Speaker, on behalf of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs, I am pleased to present the Review Report for the Fiji Higher Education Commission 2014 Annual Report.

The Standing Committee on Social Affairs was established under Section 109(2)(b) of the Standing Orders of Parliament of the Republic of Fiji and is mandated to examine matters relating to health, education, social services, labour, culture, media and their administration.

On 6th February, 2016, Parliament resolved to refer the Fiji Higher Education Commission 2014 Annual Report to this Committee for the purpose of scrutinising and reporting back to Parliament at a

later date. The focus was particularly on the areas of administration, legislation, budget, organisation structure, functions, policies, programmes/projects of the year as per Standing Order 110(1)(c).

The Committee took note of the Annual Report. The Committee has conducted a review of the Fiji Higher Education Commission 2014 Annual Report and has no matters to bring to the attention of the House, therefore, recommends that the House takes notes of its Report.

Finally, I would like to extend my appreciation to the Honourable Members who were involved in the formulation of this bipartisan Report.

In my capacity as a Chairman of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs, I commend this Report to Parliament.

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

(Report handed to Secretary-General)

HON. V. PILLAY.- Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 121(5), I hereby move a motion without notice that a debate on the contents of the Report is initiated at a future sitting.

HON. V.K. BHATNAGAR.- Madam Speaker, I second the motion.

HON. SPEAKER.- Parliament will now vote.

Question put.

The Question is:

That a debate on the contents of the Report is initiated at a future sitting.

Does any Member Oppose?

(Chorus of "Noes")

HON. SPEAKER.- There being no Opposition, the motion is agreed to unanimously.

Motion agreed to.

HON. SPEAKER.- I now call on the Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs to have the floor.

Review Report of Standing Committee on Social Affairs –
Fiji Association of Sports and National Olympic Committee (FASANOC) 2016 Annual Report

HON. V. PILLAY.- Madam Speaker, on behalf of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs, I am pleased to present the Review Report for the Fiji Association of Sports and National Olympic Committee (FASANOC) 2016 Annual Report.

Subsequent to the presentation made by FASANOC, the Committee's inquiries and assessments were based on their key outputs and the corresponding budgetary utilisation.

The performance of FASANOC is commendable, however, the Committee is of the view that through subsequent monitoring and evaluation processes, the Association can strengthen and enhance its governance, administration and sports delivery systems and processes.

The Committee in its findings noted that during the year, FASANOC had implemented its Resurgence Agenda, an initiative through the Commonwealth Games Federation's Development Programme which is driven by the FASANOC Sports Education Commission and focuses on the:

- Development of the strategic performance plan;
- National Federation capacity and expertise development;
- Athletes development and performance support; and
- Peak performance in competition.

Finally, I would like to extend my appreciation to the Honourable Members of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs in the formulation of this bi-partisan Report, the:

1. Honourable Veena Bhatnagar - Deputy Chairperson;
2. Honourable Salote Radrodro - Committee Member;
3. Honourable Ruveni Nadalo - Committee Member;
4. Honourable Anare Vadei - Committee Member; and
5. Honourable Alvick Maharaj - Alternative Member.

In my capacity as the Chairman of the Standing Committee of Social Affairs, I commend this Report to Parliament.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Present the Report to the Secretary-General.

(Report handed to the Secretary-General)

HON. V. PILLAY.- Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 121(5) I hereby move a motion without notice that the debate on the contents of the Report is initiated at the future sitting.

HON. V.K. BHATNAGAR.- Madam Speaker, I second the motion.

HON. SPEAKER.- Parliament will now vote.

Question put.

The question is:

That the debate on the contents of the Report is initiated at the future sitting.

Does any Member oppose?

(Chorus of 'Noes')

HON. SPEAKER.- There being no opposition, the Report is agreed to unanimously.

Motion agreed to.

HON. SPEAKER.- I now call upon the Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs to have the floor, again.

Standing Committee on Social Affairs' Consolidated Report -
Ministry of Employment, Productivity
and Industrial Relations 2004-2009 Annual Report

HON. V. PILLAY.- Madam Speaker, on behalf of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs, I am pleased to present the Consolidated Report for the Ministry of Employment, Productivity and Industrial Relations Annual Report from 2004 to 2009.

The Standing Committee on Social Affairs was established under section 109 2(b) of the Standing Orders of the Parliament of the Republic of Fiji, and is mandated to examine matters relating to health, education, social services, labour, culture, media and their administration.

On 15th September, 2017, Parliament resolved to refer the Ministry of Employment, Productivity and Industrial Relations Annual Reports from 2004 to 2009 to this Committee, for the purpose of scrutinising and reporting back to Parliament at a later date. The focus was particularly on areas of administration, legislation, budget, organisation structure, functions, policies, programmes/projects of the year as per Standing Order 110(1)(c). The Committee took note of the Annual Report.

The Ministry of Employment, Productivity and Industry Relations strives to ensure that all workers are protected against all forms of discrimination in their workplace, through the design, development and enactment of the modern and visionary labour laws and management system that apply and deliver real social justice in the workplace.

The Committee has conducted a review of the Ministry of Employment, Productivity and Industrial Relations Annual Report from 2004 to 2009, and has no matters to bring to the attention of the House. The Committee recommends that the House takes notes of its Report.

Finally, I would like to extend my appreciation to the Honourable Members who were involved in the formulation of this bi-partisan Report, the:

1. Honourable Veena Bhatnagar - Deputy Chairperson;
2. Honourable Salote Radrodro - Committee Member;
3. Honourable Ruveni Nadalo - Committee Member;
4. Honourable Anare Vadei - Committee Member.

In my capacity as the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs, I commend this Report to Parliament. Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- Please, hand the Report to the Secretary-General.

(Report handed to the Secretary-General)

HON. V. PILLAY.- Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 121(5), I hereby move a motion without notice that the debate on the contents of the Report is initiated at a future sitting.

HON. V.K. BHATNAGAR.- Madam Speaker, I second the motion.

HON. SPEAKER.- Parliament will now vote.

Question put.

The Question is:

That the debate on the contents of the Report is initiated at a future sitting.

Does any Member oppose?

(Chorus of 'Noes')

HON. SPEAKER.- There being no opposition, the motion is agreed to unanimously.

Motion agreed to.

HON. SPEAKER.- I now call on the Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs to have the floor.

Review Report of the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs
on the Fiji Electricity Authority 2016 Annual Report

HON. L. EDEN.- Madam Speaker, I am pleased to present the Review Report of the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs on the Fiji Electricity Authority 2016 Annual Report.

The Committee applauds the Fiji Electricity Authority (FEA) for not only producing a profit of \$59.6 million for the year 2016, but also for absorbing all costs related to restoration works, post-TC *Winston* without having to increase borrowings or increase tariff rates.

Fiji currently enjoys the lowest power tariff rates in the region, including those of Australia and New Zealand. Whilst this is commendable, the Committee noted with interest that FEA's future Power Development Plan (PDP) will cost in the vicinity of \$2.4 billion and that this will greatly hinge and the right electricity tariff.

thank the Hon. Members involved in the production of this Report and also the Parliamentary Staff who assisted.

On behalf of the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs, I commend this Report to Parliament.

The Committee urges the Fijian Competition and Consumer Commission (FCCC), FEA and relevant stakeholders to engage in dialogue to ensure the best possible outcome for both, FEA and the general public in the long run.

With regards to FEA's commitment to reduce its resilience on the use of fossil fuel by 2030, the Committee was pleased to hear that renewable energy projects are being looked into with earnest. The Committee has recommended that due diligence and great care must be undertaken when scrutinising these possibilities, so as not to repeat the failure of the Butoni Wind Farm that was commissioned back in 2007. There are many options available, including solar, wind, wave, waste, geothermal, et cetera, but choosing the right system best suited to Fiji, is imperative.

And lastly, the Committee notes FEA's role in assisting Government to achieve its target to supply electricity to every household in Fiji by the year 2021. Both, the Government and FEA, have invested extensively in extending the national grid to access remote communities and settlements, and the Committee commends both, the Government and FEA for this worthy target.

I thank the Honourable Members involved in the production of this Report and also the Parliamentary staff who assisted. On behalf of the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs, I commend this Report to Parliament.

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

(Report handed to the Secretary-General)

HON. L. EDEN.- Madam Speaker pursuant to Standing Order 121(5) I hereby move a motion without notice that a debate on the contents of the Report is initiated at a future sitting.

HON. V. NATH.- Madam Speaker, I second the motion.

HON. SPEAKER.- Parliament will now vote.

Question put.

The Question is:

That the debate on the contents of the Report is initiated at a future sitting.

Does any Member oppose?

(Chorus of 'Noes')

HON. SPEAKER.- There being no opposition, the motion is agreed to unanimously.

Motion agreed to.

HON. SPEAKER.- I now call on the Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs to have the floor.

Review Report of the Standing Committee of Economic Affairs on the
Pacific Fishing Company Limited (PAFCO) 2015 Annual Report

HON. L. EDEN.- Madam Speaker, I am pleased to present the Review Report of the Standing Committee of Economic Affairs on the Pacific Fishing Company Limited (PAFCO) 2015 Annual Report.

Madam Speaker, upon scrutiny of the PAFCO Annual Report of 2015, the Committee noted with interest that consistent and sufficient supply of tuna remains a challenge for PAFCO. Relevant stakeholders were encouraged to pursue all avenues to assist PAFCO with this issue, one possibility being membership options for Fiji and becoming a party to the Nauru Agreement, which currently controls the vast majority of available stock in the Region. Another avenue would be to revisit dialogue with our neighbour Kiribati, who are renowned for their fish stocks. Talks with Kiribati were initiated back in 2010, with the aim to benefit PAFCO and in return, enable Kiribati to benefit from PAFCOs' expertise.

Other challenges faced by PAFCO are wharf and port handling fees. The Committee urged PAFCO to enter into dialogue with relevant authorities to seek concessions in these areas, given the socio-economic benefits provided by PAFCO to the people of Lomaiviti. Approximately 1,000 people are employed by PAFCO depending on the season, making them the largest sole employer of this area in Fiji.

The Committee was pleased to note that PAFCO has recently renewed its agreement with Bumble Bee Foods LLC for a further 10 years. This is a positive move for the future of PAFCO, who rely heavily on their relationship with Bumble Bee. The Committee has recommended that this relationship be nurtured.

I thank the Committee Members; the Honourable Vijay Nath, Honourable Dr. Brij Lal, Honourable Viliame Gavoka and Honourable Prem Singh, who were present in the production of this Report and also the Parliamentary staff, who assisted.

On behalf of the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs, I commend this Report to Parliament.

HON. SPEAKER.- Please, hand the Report to the Secretary-General.

(Report handed to the Secretary-General)

Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 121(5), I hereby move a motion without notice that a debate on contents of the report is initiated at a future sitting.

HON. V. NATH.- Madam Speaker, I second the motion.

HON. SPEAKER.- Parliament will now vote.

Question put.

The Question is:

That the debate on the contents of the Report is initiated at a future sitting.

Does any Member oppose?

(Chorus of 'Noes')

HON. SPEAKER.- There being no opposition, the motion is agreed to unanimously.

Motion agreed to.

HON. SPEAKER.- I now call on the Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs to, again, have the floor.

Standing Committee on Economic Services – Reserve Bank of Fiji

HON. L. EDEN.- Madam Speaker, in line with the Governments' change in fiscal year, the Reserve Bank of Fiji in accordance with Section 54 of the Reserve Bank of Fiji Act 1983 subsequently adopted the 31 July period end, to ensure that its financial year coincided with the Fijian Government's financial year. This Report covers the seven month period from 1 January 2016 to 31 July 2016, and it is important to note that these results are not comparable to the 2015 comparatives due to the difference in the number of months comprising the financial periods.

Overall the Bank's performance during the seven month period has been positive despite various setbacks earlier in the year, namely the devastating effects of *Tropical Cyclone Winston* in February and the after effects of heavy rain caused by *Tropical Cyclone Zena* in April. At the end of July 2016 foreign reserves stood at \$1.982 billion which is the equivalent of 5.5 months of retained imports. This is highly commendable in light of the fact that the International Monetary Fund states that a benchmark of three months is quite sufficient.

The principal activities of the Reserve Bank of Fiji, Madam Speaker, are:

1. To regulate the issue of currency and the supply, availability and international exchange of money;
2. To promote monetary stability;
3. To promote a sound financial structure;
4. To foster credit and exchange conditions conducive to the orderly and balanced economic development of the country;
5. To regulate the insurance industry; and
6. To regulate the capital markets and securities industry.

The Committee also noted with interest that:

1. In accordance with the RBF Act, the sum of \$16.929 million was payable to the Fijian Government for the period 1 January 2016 to 31 July 2016.
2. As at 31 July 2016, there were 10,623 inward remittances conducted via the Mobile Money Channel, an increase of 201.3 percent for the same period in 2015.
3. As at 31 July 2016, total currency in circulation was \$751 million. The value of notes in circulation rose by 2.3 percent and the value of coins in circulation rose by 5.7 percent. The \$100 note recorded the highest growth whilst the \$50 note was the highest circulated note.
4. The Fijian dollar is fixed to a basket of five currencies (USD, AUD, NZD, JPY and EUR) and setting the exchange rate is a daily responsibility of the Bank. The mid-rate of the Fijian Dollar against the US Dollar is disseminated by 9.00 a.m. each business day and it is used by commercial banks to set rates with which they transact foreign exchange with customers.
5. The Bank has achieved an excellent ratio of gender balance with approximately 50 percent of its staff being female including positions of senior and middle management.
6. Of the 5.5 percent inflation outcome by July 26-end, 2 percent was driven solely by our higher kava prices even though kava constitutes only 2.5 percent of our Consumer Price Index basket.

I thank the Honourable Members involved in the production of this Report, and also the Parliamentary staff who assisted. On behalf of the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs, I commend this Report to the House.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you, please hand the Report to the Secretary-General.

(Report handed to the Secretary-General)

HON. L. EDEN.- Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 121(5) I hereby move a motion without notice that a debate on the contents of the report is initiated at a future sitting.

HON. V. NATH.- Madam Speaker, I second the motion.

HON. SPEAKER.- Parliament will now vote.

Question put.

The Question is:

That the debate on the contents of the Report is initiated at a future sitting.

Does any Member oppose?

(Chorus of 'Noes')

HON. SPEAKER.- There being no opposition, the motion is agreed to unanimously.

Motion agreed to.

HON. SPEAKER.- I now call on the Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs to again have the floor.

Standing Committee on Economic Affairs -
2015 Reserve Bank of Fiji Insurance Annual Report

HON. L. EDEN.- Madam Speaker, the Committee was happy to note the following recommendations made in the Parliamentary Report of the 2015 Reserve Bank of Fiji Insurance Annual Report, significant progress has been made with regards to crop Insurance.

The new Fiji Care Bundled Micro Insurance Product provides 11,606 registered cane growers with access to some form of insurance at a premium of just \$1 per week or \$52 per annum. The Committee looks forward to similar packages being introduced and made available to other sectors in agriculture including livestock farmers.

The Committee also wishes to commend the initiative taken by BSP that has broadened the range of offerings for health care at what was then Suva Private Hospital now MIOT Pacific Hospital, enabling the reduction of a great number of cases that used to be treated overseas to be now treated locally in Fiji.

Overall for 2016, the performance of the Fijian insurance industry remained sound despite significant damages caused by *Tropical Cyclone Winston*, which incurred the highest claims payable to date for the general insurance sector.

The Committee feels that in general the attitude towards insurance is still very conservative and that a continuous awareness programme is imperative to encourage more of our citizens to safeguard themselves against the unexpected.

I thank the Honourable Members involved in the production of this report, and also the Parliamentary staff who assisted. On behalf of the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs, I commend this report to Parliament.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you, please hand the report to the Secretary-General.

(Report handed to the Secretary-General)

HON. L. EDEN.- Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 121(5) I hereby move a motion without notice that a debate on the contents of the report is initiated at a future sitting.

HON. V. NATH.- Madam Speaker, I second the motion.

HON. SPEAKER.- Parliament will now vote.

Question put.

The Question is:

That the debate on the contents of the report is initiated at a future sitting.

Does any Member oppose?

(Chorus of 'Noes')

HON. SPEAKER.- There being no opposition, the motion is agreed to unanimously.

Motion is agreed to.

HON. SPEAKER.- I now call on the Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs to have the floor.

Standing Committee on Social Affairs -
Rights of Persons with Disabilities Bill No. 12 of 2016

HON. V. PILLAY.- Madam Speaker, I am pleased to present the report of the Social Affairs Standing Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Bill No. 12 of 2016. The Bill seeks to provide for and uphold and enforce the rights of Persons with Disabilities in Fiji, as provided for under the United Nation Conventions on the Rights for Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

The 24 year old Fiji National Council for Disabled Persons Act 1994 is the only legislation which relates directly to Persons with Disabilities in Fiji. The Act is mainly outdated and does not sufficiently address the needs for Persons with Disabilities. It further establishes the Fiji National Council for Disabled Persons and provide for the administration role of the Council, but it is very limited in that it does not convey all or enforce the individual or collective rights of Persons with Disabilities in Fiji.

In this regard the Committee had called for submission from the public on this Bill through advertisement made in the two local newspapers *Fiji Times* and *Fiji Sun* on Saturday 11th, Thursday 18th and Saturday 25th June 2016, respectively.

The Committee acknowledges the advisory support from the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation and the Solicitor-General's Office during the consultation process of the Bill. At this juncture the Committee wishes to thank the 19 stakeholders' written submissions and social contribution towards the consultation process. Also the Honourable Members extends its gratitude to the People's Republic of China, Chinese Embassy based in Fiji, for the support towards the Committee's study visit to China for the purpose to observe China's best practices on its services and legislations for Persons living with Disabilities.

In addition, the Committee commends the support from the United Nation Development Programme, Pacific Centre, for the assistance rendered towards the engagement of Professor Ron McCallum, a legal expert in labour law. The Committee was fortunate to involve Professor Ron McCallum, who was the Chairman of the first Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of the United Nation, that monitors the compliance of the CRPD. Professor Ron McCallum provided the much needed technical support, advice and guidance which assisted the Committee to scrutinise the Bill

thoroughly and make amendments. At the outset, the Committee believed that this law will empower and allow persons with disabilities to realise their rights.

The formulation of this Bipartisan Report was possible through the hard work and tireless effort by my Committee members and my heartfelt thanks to my Committee colleagues, Honourable Veena Bhatnagar (Deputy Chairperson), Honourable Salote Radrodro, Honourable Anare T. Vadei and Honourable Ruveni Nadalo. I also remember and thank the late Honourable Ratu Sela Nanovo, Honourable Alvick Maharaj, who was the alternative member and also Honourable Dr. Brij Lal for their valuable contributions and for availing themselves as members for those Members who were unable to attend the Committee meetings.

Lastly, I thank the Secretariat for the administrative support provided from day one until the finalisation of this Committee Report. On behalf of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs, I commend this Committee Report on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Bill to Parliament.

Madam Speaker, at this juncture, pursuant to Standing Order 121(1), I hereby table the Committee's Report on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Bill No. 12 of 2016) and pursuant to Standing Order 86 that it be set down for consideration by the Committee of the Whole on a future sitting day.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you, please hand the Report to the Secretary-General.

(Report handed to the Secretary- General)

Pursuant to Standing Order 121(5) and Standing Order 86, the Standing Committee has now reported back the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Bill (Bill No. 12 of 2016) and will be set down for consideration by the Committee of the Whole, on a future sitting day.

Honourable Members, before we proceed to the next item on the Order Paper, I am to inform the Honourable Members that I received notification of an urgent oral question from Honourable Mikaele Leawere this morning. I have had a look at the question and rule that the question does not qualify as an urgent question under Standing Order 43(1). Therefore, the question is disallowed.

QUESTIONS

Oral Questions

Fishing Licences (Question No. 11/2018)

HON. P. CHAND.- Before I ask the question, Madam Speaker, I wish to pay tribute to the two young pilots who lost their lives in the Cessna accident, and look forward to public outcomes by the investigator.

My question is:

Would the Honourable Minister for Fisheries inform Parliament why fishermen applying for fishing licences are being asked to agree to pay access fee for *qoliqoli* on an undetermined figure that will be finalised later by the Permanent Secretary for Fisheries and whether such *qoliqoli* is going directly to the resource owners?

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU (Minister for Fisheries).- Madam Speaker, I rise to respond to the question asked by the Honourable Member, and I would like to ask that this question be withdrawn. I will explain the reasons. The consultation processes is still ongoing, but I would briefly inform the House the stage where it is now.

Madam Speaker, I would first like to make it clear to Honourable Members of the House that the Ministry of Fisheries is neither asking nor are we charging any fees to fishermen or members of the public who are applying for licences in customary fishing areas.

I would like to reiterate that the current work done by the Ministry of Fisheries is only to review the current licence fees. The review of the coastal licence fees will allow us to legislate the portion of payable fee that will go directly to the customary fishing rights owners for the harvest of marine resources within their area of customary fishing rights. This work was approved last year and is currently in its consultative stages.

The consultation phase involves our officials conducting research on the quantum and the profit margins for fishermen. This is in addition to other variables which include the different methods of fishing, scale of fishing and the fish species that are being targeted. This has allowed us to break the major indicators into different margins.

Madam Speaker, noting that the work has not been finalised, I would like the Honourable Members of this House to note that there are four different tiers of licencing that the Ministry of Fisheries is looking to finalise, and these are:

- Tier 1 applies to Rural, Semi-Commercial fish;
- Tier 2 applies to Commercial Fishing Operators, operating vessels less than 23-feet;
- Tier 3 applies to Commercial Fishes, operating a vessel over 23-feet; and
- Tier 4 applies to Aquarium Fish Collectors and Operators.

Additionally, Madam Speaker, while undertaking this work we are looking to review the validity of the licence period to reflect a 36-month expiry period which will commence on the date the licence is issued. This will not only allow our fishermen to continue to fish with ready licence come the festive season but it also helps the fishermen to secure financial support from financial institutions.

To conclude, let me reiterate that neither has any demands been made nor has there been any access fees collected from fishermen. This will be finalised once the current consultation process is concluded.

(Honourable Members interjected)

HON. SPEAKER.- Order! Order! Let me have the floor, please.

Since the Honourable Minister has asked to withdraw the question for reasons very clearly described, I will not allow any supplementary questions.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Point of Order!

HON. SPEAKER.- Point of Order.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Madam Speaker, this question has gone through the Business Committee and, therefore, under the Standing Orders it has to be asked and he has answered.

HON. SPEAKER.- Exactly!

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Because he has answered, we should have the opportunity to ask.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. SPEAKER.- Exactly. Order!

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- I want to ask the question.

HON. SPEAKER.- Yes, the question has gone through the Business Committee and it was approved and the Honourable Minister has described the situation why it should be withdrawn. Therefore, the question can be brought up again at a later date and we can debate on it very substantially. Point of Order. Honourable Bilitavu please.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Point of Order, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Point of Order. Honourable Bilitavu?

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- You have allowed the Honourable Minister to answer, can we ask issues for clarification from the statement he has just given? That has been allowed by you, Madam Speaker, and I think it will be fair for you to give that opportunity to the Opposition from the statement that he has given.

HON. SPEAKER.- The question was asked and it was answered. The answer is that the substance of the question is yet to be finalised and therefore it does not warrant further debate on that particular question. That is the reason why we are not allowing any supplementary questions.

HON. B.C. PRASAD.- Point of Order!

HON. SPEAKER.- Point of Order. Honourable Professor Biman Prasad..

HON. PROF. B.C. PRASAD.- Madam Speaker, in relation to what the Honourable Minister said, I have with me evidence of a form and a letter...

HON. SPEAKER.- Order!

HON. PROF. B.C. PRASAD.- ...that fishermen have to sign.

HON. SPEAKER.- Point of Order is on the rules and procedures and not on the content of the Minister's speech.

HON. PROF. B.C. PRASAD.- But this is the content, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Aseri Radrodro, you have the floor.

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- From the Honourable Minister's lengthy explanations, we just wanted to confirm whether the month of March as he had stated earlier that the whole exercise will be completed, is that still on target or not? Is March 2018 still on target or not, honourable Minister has missed the target date.

(Honourable Member interjected)

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Yet again you are referring to the content of the Minister's speech which does not qualify under the point of order process. No more point of order thank you, even showing all those papers will not change my ruling. Honourable Mosese Bulitavu you may have the floor.

Establishment of Mercy Commission
(Question No. 12/2018)

HON. M.D. BULITAVU asked the Government, upon notice:

Can the Honourable Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Public Enterprises, Civil Service and Communications inform the House why the Government has not established a Mercy Commission since the inception of the 2013 Constitution?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM (Honourable Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Public Enterprises, Civil Service and Communications).- Madam Speaker, I rise to respond to the question asked by the Honourable Member. Madam Speaker, Government does not establish the Mercy Commission.

HON. SPEAKER.- Do we have any supplementary question. Honourable Nawaikula?

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Honourable Minister we know that there are many, many who are complaining about the need for this. Does he have any alternative to look into the plight of the prisoners who deserve to be out by this time?

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, the question is not related to the substantive question. The question says, can the Honourable Attorney-General inform the House why the Government has not established a Mercy Commission. The answer is that the Government does not establish the Mercy Commission.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA .- Do you have an alternative to look into their plight?

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. An answer has been provided. Honourable Bulitavu?

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. I think some applications that have been coming from inmates to the Department of Prison and it has been forwarded to the Attorney-General's Office. I agree with the Honourable Attorney-General that the Judicial Commission Service will be appointing members advising the President through the consultation of the Honourable Attorney-General. Has the Honourable Attorney-General's Office received some applications from inmates who have been applying for their cases to be considered by the Mercy Commission.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, any applications that needs to go to the Mercy Commission is actually referred to the Mercy Commission and the Secretariat receives any of those applications.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Salote Radrodro?

HON. S. V. RADRODRO.- Thank you Madam Speaker. If that is the case on the Mercy Commission when will the Parole Board be established?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, the Honourable Member should know a Parole Board is different to Mercy Commission.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Aseri Radrodro?

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- Madam Speaker, would it be correct to consider that the Honourable Attorney-General is being negligent in conducting his role, as mandated by law to consult the JSC for the establishment of the Mercy Commission?

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Member, your question is not a question, it is a statement.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Are you asking me to incriminate myself?

HON. A.M. RADRODRO .- No, no it is a question.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Semesa Karavaki you may have the floor.

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI .- Can the Honourable Attorney-General after he has stated in this House that the Government does not set up the Mercy Commission, then can he explain to this House who will set up the Mercy Commission?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Thank you Honourable Member, the 2013 Constitution Republic of Fiji establishes the Mercy Commission, that is what it does.

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

Review of Fiji's Investment Policy and Act.
(Question No. 13/2018)

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

The Ministry for Industry, Trade Tourism, Lands and Mineral Resources is currently working in collaboration with the World Bank Group/International Finance Corporation to review Fiji's Investment Policy and Act, can the Minister inform the House the reason for this review?

HON. F.S. KOYA (Ministry for Industry, Trade Tourism, Lands and Mineral Resources).- Madam Speaker, I rise to respond to the question asked by the Honourable Member and I thank him for his question.

The main reason for the review is to develop a new investment policy and a modern investment law and regulation which will be able to adapt to what is now a changing economic environment.

Madam Speaker, this is due to the fact that the current Foreign Investment Act is almost two decades old and its past amendments to the Act were largely procedural in nature with regards to how Investment Fiji registered and facilitated foreign investment into Fiji.

Madam Speaker, the review will now focus on the overarching policy and regulatory framework that captures our development aspirations as stated in our five year and 20 year National Development Plan. The vision in the National Development Plan is transforming Fiji and the review of the Investment Policy and law is actually consistent for this particular vision.

Madam Speaker, all these years we were well informed and this House is very well informed that the Fijian economy has been experiencing unprecedented levels of growth which is never ever been achieved before. We have had eight years of positive growth, Madam Speaker, and over the past five years we have experienced an average growth...

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Four years.

(Chorus of interjections).

HON. SPEAKER.- Order! Please, the Honourable Koya has the floor.

HON. F.S. KOYA.- Madam Speaker, he may not like it, they may not like it but I will tell you the Fijian public likes it. So let them hear it, Madam Speaker, because they are watching.

HON. MEMBERS.- Hear, Hear!

HON. F.S. KOYA.- Madam Speaker, over the past five years we have experienced

(Chorus of Interjections)

Madam Speaker, I like standing because it is my birthday so everyone could see me.

Madam Speaker, over the past five years we have experienced an average growth of 4.5 percent with 5.6 percent in 2014 being the highest recorded for decades. Now the investment figures have also been very positive with over 25 percent contribution to the GDP and most importantly Madam Speaker, this is a very important piece of information which Honourable Biman Prasad should hear; 25 percent contribution to GDP and most importantly the private sector investments have contributed approximately 15 percent so that is inward Madam Speaker. Furthermore, the RBF economic review has stated that investment has remained upbeat in 2017 and on average new lending from commercial banks for investment increased by an average of 23 percent in 2017.

Madam Speaker, the strong growth of investment has been obviously made possible by the long term forward thinking and pro-growth policies of the FijiFirst Government.

Madam Speaker, also for us the Government continues to provide a relevant infrastructure, it is equally important that the policy in the end the regulatory framework are continuously reviewed and revised to actually meet the market demands.

Madam Speaker, the Fijian Government over the past years has set the foundation for a modern economy and a modern nation state that is responsive to the needs of the stakeholders and the changing global environment, and we all know about the change in global environment in terms of trade and investments.

Therefore, Madam Speaker, the Investment Reforms that the Ministry and the World Bank Group and International Finance Corporation is working on will clearly outline a Reform Action Plan. Hence the process has commenced with an Investment Reform map which is formally termed as IRM. This

highlights the opportunities to implement an investment regulatory framework that positions Fiji at the forefront in terms of taking advantage of global investment flows.

Furthermore, Madam Speaker, the IRM identifies Fiji's development vision, entails the diversification towards knowledge and technology intensive sectors and activities, hence we need to ensure that the resources are actually channelled towards attracting the right kind of investment and investors.

Therefore, Madam Speaker, the Investment Reform Action Plan will include three things:

1. An investment Policy Statement which will set out the objectives and principles that will achieve the overall vision;
- 2.
3. A comprehensive investment law that provides the rights and protections; and
- 4.
5. the obligations to both domestic and foreign investors and clearly define laws with investment promotion agencies that is Investment Fiji and the Regulatory Agencies.

Madam Speaker, as we progress the reforms will also look at strengthening the roles and responsibilities of all Government agencies including Investment Fiji, and I am sure Honourable Gavoka will be happy to hear that. Therefore the investment reform, Madam Speaker, will take a holistic approach that will establish a new investment regime that whilst being attractive to investment is also protecting our national interest, Madam Speaker. I thank you for this opportunity to respond.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Supplementary question, Honourable Viliame Gavoka.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Thank you Madam Speaker. This means the preference is; with the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which is totally meaningless to those people who are watching the proceedings today, what is more important is the price of bread, and it is getting very expensive.

(Honourable Members interject)

Madam Speaker, my question is, ...

(Laughter)

... will the review, the price of goods, the cost of living in this country is out of sync to the GDP they say is growing in this country is totally meaningless to our people.

Will the review factor in those areas that need to be protected, restricted for local investors, given that we are a young people, trying to make it in the business world. We need to provide some protection for them and restrict some activities for our locals. Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Minister?

HON. F.S. KOYA.- Madam Speaker, sometimes I think they just listen to what they want to. It is quite astounding as to what they listen to and what they do not want to listen to. By the way, the price of bread, Madam Speaker,

HON. PROF. B.C. PRASAD.- Answer the question.

HON. F.S. KOYA.- With the price of bread, please just look at the price of bread, I am responding to what he said. Thank you very much, Honourable Prasad.

Madam Speaker, I did say quite clearly right at the end, and I will repeat what I said. The Investment Reform will take a holistic approach that will establish a new investment regime and whilst being attractive to investment, it is also protecting our national interest. How much more can I say, Madam Speaker?

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Biman Prasad.

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. PROF. B.C. PRASAD.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. We have heard many times from the Honourable Minister about investment.

(Honourable Members interject)

The question is, can the Honourable Minister explain why do we keep getting a lower ranking by the World Bank on the ease of doing business? Businesses are really under a high cost of doing business. Can you explain, despite the reforms as you have not been able to achieve any ranking?

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. F.S. KOYA.- Madam Speaker, although Honourable Prasad knows that his question should relate to what the question is although it does not directly relate

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. F.S. KOYA.- It is not, Madam Speaker, but I am going to have fun answering this, trust me.

Madam Speaker, he knows very well when he is talking about the ease of business, et cetera, he knows very well that it has been said many a time in this House and we have approached this subject with the World Bank. Let me tell you something. We have approached this subject with the World Bank and when you go and do a survey, you do not go to all the anti-government agencies and get your details.

(Laughter)

That was what happened. That is where we came from, and I can tell you my friend, I can tell you my friend ...

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. F.S. KOYA.- ... they also realise this, because I can tell you this much, it has come from the Ministry of Economy and from the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism and we have told them so. Madam Speaker, and I will say this publicly, the World Bank is not always correct.

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Howard Politini?

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. SPEAKER.- Order! Order!

HON. H.R.T. POLITINI.- Supplementary question, Madam Speaker. How does the Ministry plan to keep all stakeholders involved in this process? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister?

HON. F.S. KOYA.- Thank you, Madam Speaker, maybe this is a question that Honourable Gavoka should have asked.

Madam Speaker, as with anything that Government does, consultation with stakeholders is crucial in the process of the review and it is the same here, when this process of review with respect to investment policy and law, there is a consultation with stakeholders.

The Ministry will ensure that the stakeholders, both Government and private sector are involved in all the stages of this particular reform process. This is an important document, Madam Speaker. This process of review, to give everyone some background, began in 2015 with a series of consultations undertaken with key stakeholders towards the drafting of an Investment Reform Map.

In November, 2017, Madam Speaker, the Ministry, together with the World Bank Group and IFC, presented the initial information and data was collected for the Investment Reform. This was a high-level consultation involving key investment approval related agencies to validate the information in the data.

Madam Speaker, in February, 2018, the first draft Investment Reform Map (IRM) and policy statement was presented to the stakeholders in a workshop, which incorporated comments and feedback from all relevant stakeholders. Madam Speaker, the parameters of the draft law were also discussed during this workshop and the Ministry will continue consultations through one-on-one meetings and combined consultative meetings to obtain comments and the draft policy and the law.

Madam Speaker, there is widespread support on this from all the stakeholders for this particular reform exercise, and we are working towards getting a draft Investment Bill clearly and ready to be tabled in Parliament shortly Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Sudhakar?

HON. A. SUDHAKAR.- Thank you, Honourable Speaker. My question to the Honourable Minister is, why is there a need to transition from a Foreign Investment Act to a Comprehensive Investment Act?

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister?

HON. F.S. KOYA.- Sorry, I was consulting with the Minister for Economy. Madam Speaker, why is there a need to transition from a Foreign Investment Act to a comprehensive Investment Act?

Madam Speaker, the Fijian Government believes that whilst there is a need to attract foreign direct investment in specialised areas, there is also a need to provide our domestic investment with similar rights, protections and obligations that foreign investors are given.

The Act aims to increase investments, generate employment and also promote growth for the benefit of the people of Fiji. Fiji is committed to providing equity for investors with transparent, reliable,

efficient and fair rules and procedures within the framework of international treaties and the agreements to which Fiji is actually a party.

Madam Speaker, a comprehensive investment law will actually provide a wider coverage to enable the Fijian Government to provide specific rights and protection to foreign Investment whilst providing the domestic and existing investors an avenue where their investment is adequately supported by an enabling environment.

Madam Speaker, investors in general, will have a clear idea of the rules and regulations around investments in Fiji and they will have an idea of what avenues of recourse that they may have. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Parliament will now be suspended so we can have a break for refreshment and we will resume at 11.30 a.m.

The Parliament adjourned at 10.58 a.m.

The Parliament resumed at 11.30 a.m.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you, Honourable Members, you may be seated. We will resume from where we left off. I call on the Honourable Netani Rika to ask his question.

Climate Patterns – Challenges faced by the Ministry in Food and Nutrition security
(Question No. 14/2018)

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

In line with the changes in climate patterns, can the Honourable Minister for Health and Medical Services inform the House as to the challenges faced by the Ministry in Food and Nutrition Security?

HON. R.S. AKBAR (Minister for Health and Medical Services).- Madam Speaker, I rise respond to the question asked by the Honourable Member and I thank the Honourable Member for the question. Please, allow me a couple of minutes to give a background information regarding the question that has been posed by the Honourable Member.

Madam Speaker, we are all aware that climate change is real, climate change is here and climate change is affecting people across the globe, including our Pacific islands.

Climate change exacerbates the risk of hunger and under nutrition through six of these elements. Extreme weather events increases the frequency and intensity of some disasters such as drought, floods and storms and recently *TC Winston* wreaked havoc in Fiji. We have also had the impact of *TC Gita* experienced by our people. This has an adverse impact on livelihoods and food security. Climate related disasters have the potential to destroy crops, critical infrastructure, key community assets therefore deteriorating livelihoods and exacerbating poverty.

Madam Speaker, sea level will rise as a result of climate change, affecting again livelihoods of our coastal communities and river deltas.

Madam Speaker, in terms of food security, climate change affects all dimensions of food security and nutrition. Food availability changes in climatic conditions and we can see that the production of some staple crops have already been affected. Any future climate changes threatens to exacerbate this. Higher temperatures will have an impact on yields while changes in rainfall will affect both crop quality and quantity.

Food access: Climate change could increase the prices of major crops in some regions including ours. For most vulnerable people, lower agricultural output means lower incomes. Under these conditions, the poorest people who already use most of their income on food, sacrifice additional income and assets to meet the nutritional requirements or resort to poor coping strategies.

Madam Speaker, on food utilisation, climate related risks affect calories intake, particularly in areas where chronic food insecurities already is a significant problem. Changing climatic conditions could also create a vicious cycle of diseases and hunger. Thus, nutrition is likely to be affected by climate change through related impacts of food security, dietary diversity, care practices and health and finally, food stability.

The climatic variability produced by more frequent and intense weather events can upset the stability of individual and Government food security strategies, creating fluctuations on food availability access and utilisation.

Madam Speaker, if I go back to the question, I will be able to address the second part of the question, that is looking at nutrition and I believe my colleague, the Honourable Minister for Agriculture would be in a better position to advise the House on food security.

Madam Speaker, as we have noted, there are overwhelming signs available that climate is changing. In terms of food and nutrition security here in Fiji, there are some key challenges that, we, like any other developing nation, are facing and expect these challenges to grow as we continue to feel the extremities of climate change. Mainly for us, the burden of malnutrition, underweight, overweight and micro-nutrient deficiencies exist.

Madam Speaker, unfortunately, this is commonly occurring in some households with the most vulnerable affecting children and the elderly. In our last National Nutrition Survey in 2016, it was revealed that almost half of our population is estimated to have anaemia, that is like 41.6 percent. That is very alarming.

On the other hand, there are also issues of non-communicable diseases, particularly with the issues of overweight and obesity in children.

Madam Speaker, climate change as I said, affects our food production, it affects our nutrition security capacity, which in turn increases our dependency on imported food and processed foods. It also becomes a huge contributing factor to the escalating levels of NCDs. For instance, according to the same National Nutrition Survey in 2016, 4.8 percent under five year olds, 7.2 percent within 15 to 17 year olds, 8.1 percent within 15 to 17 year olds are found to be overweight.

Our statistics also reveal that 31.4 percent of our adult population are overweight while 31.7 are obese. This means more than half of Fiji's population is at a higher risk of suffering from some form of NCDs such as diabetes, hypertension, cardiac diseases and cancers.

Apart from this, the survey has also showed micro nutrient deficiencies in women of child bearing age with 19.7 percent having iron deficiency, 8.5 percent with folate deficiency, 18.3 percent with Vitamin A deficiency and 19 percent having zinc deficiency.

Micro nutrient deficiency with women often results in compromised status for newborns and problems associated with maternal and child birth.

Madam Speaker, all in all, nutrition security is indeed a challenge for the Ministry and Government as a whole. That is why we are taking a whole of government approach. I would like to advise the House that the Ministry of Health and Medical Services does not work alone. It works with other agencies like the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Women, Ministry of Youth and Sports, and Ministry of iTaukei Affairs. We also have the academic institution of USP and FNU, international and regional organisations such as WHO, UNICEF, Food and Agriculture Organisation, where we try to work together in a very collaborative form and find our solutions.

Based on that, we have developed our policy on Food and Nutrition Security 2018 and the Fiji Plan of Action for Food and Nutritional Security 2018-2022 and these documents are aligned to the Ministry's National Strategic Plan and, of course, the five-year and the 20-year of National Development Plan for Fijians. These will be later submitted to Cabinet by the Honourable Minister for Agriculture.

Madam Speaker, before I allow for supplementary questions, it is very important to watch what we eat, that is the underlying challenge that we are facing. It is very difficult to change mindsets of people as to what to eat. We all eat, but being more aware of the foods' nutritional value of foods, the type, amount and timing of our food intake are very important, and I think each of us should be the ambassadors

for our local communities or groups and talk to people about the need to rely more on locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables. I am sure in the morning, we talked about bread and why the price of bread has gone up. I am also sure we are going to talk about butter and why the price of butter has gone up and I am sure very shortly, we will talk about lamb chops and why the price of lamb chops has gone up and many more. I totally understand but, Madam Speaker, we need to be champions of healthy living ourselves.

I think we need to start off by looking at our own plates during our tea time, lunch and afternoon refreshment and let us start off, because charity begins at home. So before we can actually get our people to get into the habit of eating healthy foods, we need to be champions of that. Let us avoid obesity and being overweight, so let us eat and promote the three main food groups that our primary school teachers teach us. Let us feed our children with healthy fruits and vegetables, promote more green leafy vegetables like, *bele*, *saijan* and vegetables best grown in our climatic conditions here.

We have launched the “*Mai Kana App*.” for the information of the House. Through the Food and Nutrition Centre, last year, we launched a mobile application called “*Mai Kana*” which is a user-friendly software designed in Fiji for Fijians and it promotes healthy eating. It allows us to record, visualise our meals and monitor our daily meals and nutrition, balanced and healthy. Having this App is similar to having a personal dietician at home, who is going to guide you to healthier lifestyles. So if you do not have that App, please, download the “*Mai Kana*” App from the “Google” Store right-away, and that applies to all of us. We have had 4,000 people already downloading this application but we would like more Fijians to download that because it definitely works in promoting healthy lifestyle.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Salote Radrodro?

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Madam Speaker, I acknowledge the response by the Honourable Minister when she says that there is a policy framework in place and the Ministry will adopt a whole of Government approach with the other key ministries playing the key role. The question to the Minister is; can the Honourable Minister explain what kind of assistance, in terms of resource allocation, is given to the key stakeholders that you have mentioned, to the Ministries to be able to help them effectively or successfully implement the framework on food and nutrition, Madam Speaker?

HON. R.S. AKBAR.- Madam Speaker, given that we are champions of climate change and with our Prime Minister’s Presidency to COP23, the various Government Ministries, especially the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Women looks after the Pregnant Food Voucher Programme and other Social Protection Programmes, to ensure that the people are able to supplement their daily income with these food supplements. The rest of the Ministries I talked about - the Ministry of Education, my Ministry which has the Food and Nutrition Centre, the Ministry of Agriculture, all have their allocated share of the budget which relies on the Honourable Minister and because this is a priority area, we all share this with other Government agencies to ensure that we actually bring this plan of action into a reality and implement it.

HON. PROF. B.C. PRASAD.- Madam Speaker, the Honourable Minister actually towards the end, referred to the real challenge of food and nutrition security and that is, the cost of living. Advocacy and education is fine, Madam Speaker, but at the end of the day, can the Honourable Minister tell this House that it is the high cost of living and the prices of many of those nutritional items that are affecting the nutrition security of many of our people, especially low-income people?

HON. R.S. AKBAR.- We talked about butter and bread, so let us talk about noodles and other things.

Madam Speaker, the increase in cost of living is basically when you talk about inflation and this inflation is driven more so by external factors rather than our domestic policies. I have read of articles where the FijiFirst Government has been

HON. PROF. B.C. PRASAD.- Bananas

HON. R.S. AKBAR.- Hold on, Honourable Prasad. That is why, Honourable Professor Prasad and other Honourable Members that side, let us grow local! We have abundance of land, let us get our people

HON. MEMBER.- *Bele.*

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. R.S. AKBAR.- Madam Speaker, please, allow me to continue, if they have finished. Like I said, instead of promoting food, we do not need that to complement nutrition in our diet, like I said, fatty lamb chops, lamp flaps, let us go for promoting locally bred sheep. Let us all promote locally bred poultry. Let us promote local milk farmers so that the milk production increases. Let us promote organic, Honourable Professor Prasad and Honourable Members. Let me just read this.

However, Honourable Members of the Parliament and the public, it is important to note that the FijiFirst Government has put in a lot of measures to help people cope with the rise in inflation, especially in terms of food prices. We have increased the income threshold to almost 90 percent; we have reduced the PAYE tax rate; provided free school fees, bus fare, continuation of zero-VAT in basic food items. We have a lot of Social Welfare Programmes that assist our families who are struggling.

Madam Speaker, I think it is lost on the other side. What I am saying is, let us promote healthy living by growing all food locally, that is what I am saying. Let us promote our people eating fish that we can catch rather than lamb chops.

(Honourable Member interjects)

HON. R.S. AKBAR.- No, fresh fish.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Coconut oil instead of

HON. R.S. AKBAR.- Exactly!

Let us promote our local fishing industry, Honourable Members. The point is, it is not beyond our control to promote healthy living, that is what I am saying. We live in Fiji, surrounded by the sea. We have abundance of land, we just need to build on the will power of our people. Let us eat healthy, have backyard gardening, that is what we are trying to say. I hope it is loud and clear because with the attitude that is coming from the other side, Honourable Speaker, I think we have already lost the battle even before we started if we have Honourable Members with that attitude and mentality.

HON. A.T. VADEI.- Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the Honourable Minister, because the market is flooded with genetically modified and processed food, what sort of alternatives are available for healthy food that the Ministry is preaching about for consumer protection in health and wealth?

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister?

HON. R.S. AKBAR.- Madam Speaker, I think we do not grow genetically modified food in Fiji, Honourable Member, but the Honourable Minister of Agriculture and the Honourable Minister sitting next to me, they are working on organic farming. We are trying to promote organic farming but at the end of the day, it is all about the choices we make. We can have a hundred or so of food items that are organically or genetically modified or junk in nature, but it is the choice that we want our people to make, and we want our people to make healthy choices. That is what we are talking about.

HON. SPEAKER.- The last question from Honourable Nawaikula?

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Madam Speaker, possibly because of all that, NCD is increasing. So, we need more education and awareness but my question is, how much of education and awareness on how to eat right is factored into our education curriculum?

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister?

HON. R.S. AKBAR.- Madam Speaker, with climate change, the global temperatures warming, I think the temperature here is quite high. Again, let me go back and say that we are doing all we can. We need partnerships...

HON. MEMBER.- (Inaudible interjection)

HON. R.S. AKBAR.- Let me read to you some of the programmes we have in trying to combat nutrition:

1. we are encouraging breast feeding advocacy programmes to ensure our children are born healthy; and
2. the Government is giving out food vouchers to complement and supplement the health of pregnant mothers.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister, you do not have to continue answering the question if they are not prepared to listen.

HON. R.S. AKBAR.- Madam Speaker, thank you. I mean, it has been obvious from the beginning that you do not want to hear the truth, you do not want to listen so I will stop here. Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- I now give the floor to the Honourable Prem Singh.

Total Output of Electricity of all Generators
(Question No. 15/2018)

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

Could the Honourable Acting Minister for Local Government, Housing, Environment, Infrastructure and Transport inform Parliament of the total output of electricity of all generators purchased by Fiji Electricity Authority (FEA) to-date, why are the generators unable to meet the electricity demand during power blackouts?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM (Acting Minister for Local Government, Housing, Environment, Infrastructure and Transport).- Madam Speaker, I rise to respond to the question asked by the Honourable Member and I thank him for this question. This question obviously came through the Business Committee, as usual Honourable Prem Singh does put two questions in one question.

The first question is about the total output of electricity of all generators, Madam Speaker. The total maximum generation output for FEA is 239.89 megawatts whereas the maximum total demand load is 177.12 megawatts. Why are the generators unable to meet the electricity demand during blackouts?

Now, Honourable Prem Singh, I just want to correct you on something. When you ask about generators, generators are not only driven by diesel, so this figure that I have given you is electricity generated by all generators. I think you probably have a misconception there.

Madam Speaker, when there is a blackout, the electricity obviously goes off. Now one of the unfortunate things is of course in the past, we have never had redundancies built-in. So, as you know, the major source of supply of electricity in Viti Levu is from Monasavu, where 55 percent of the renewable sources including some other renewable sources of energy comes through Monasavu, 45 percent is from thermal sources or fossil fuel as we call it.

Now when the main grid, the line that comes from Monasavu, goes to Vuda and goes to Suva, if there is a lightning strike, as you know the Honourable Minister for Natural Disaster Management and the Honourable Prime Minister has also mentioned in this House, because of the frequency of inclement weather, we do get a lot of lightning strikes, for example in the middle of Viti Levu. It cannot be helped. The unfortunate thing though is we do not have any redundancy, so we have only one line. If that line gets struck by lightning, the electricity goes off. Most countries in the world have a redundancy, so if one goes off, the other ones picks up. Unfortunately this was not done. In order to do build a second line, it will cost us US\$100 million.

There is also a capital projects plan in place and we expect this line to be constructed in the next five years at US\$100 million and today its term is about FJD\$200 million. That is the kind of capital input that is required in FEA to stop any lightning strikes stopping us from getting any electricity. When there is a strike and you have a blackout on Viti Levu because obviously Vanua Levu, Taveuni and Ovalau are independent of Viti Levu, and by the way Vanua Levu is run by diesel generators, including Labasa and Savusavu. Of course, Taveuni now has Somosomo and Ovalau and it is run by diesel generators also.

There is a FEA Activator National Blackout Restoration Plan, whereby all major power stations carry out its black start process to normalise the power. It is not like a generator at home, you know when the power goes off and if you have a stand by generator (I do not know Honourable Member if you have one), but those people who do have, as soon as the electricity goes off in your home, the other one kicks in, it is almost instantaneous. You cannot do that with the national grid.

Just because you have a stand-by generator, it does not instantaneously kicks in, it takes a while because it carries a lot of load. The restoration of power supply is coordinated by the National Control Centre at Vuda and takes place in a systematic and methodical manner to ensure that at all times there is a balance between the amounts of generation capacity on the line and the load that is reconnected to the power system because when the power goes off, when you bring it back up, you have to slowly do it. That is why sometimes it takes a few hours. You cannot instantaneously put it up because it will collapse. That is how electricity works.

Any imbalance between the generation and the load will result in partial or total collapse of the power system, meaning the restoration process has to be restarted all over again. This restoration could be at the regional or national level and takes around two to three hours as we have seen recently it happened about three weeks ago when we in fact had the Commonwealth Education Ministers Meeting when it actually happened.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. There being no supplementary question, I now give the floor to the Honourable Jiosefa Dulakiverata.

Status of the Lakena Land Subdivision in Nausori
(Question No. 16/2018)

HON. J. DULAKIVERATA asked the Government upon notice.

Can the Honourable Minister for Industry, Trade, Tourism, Lands and Mineral Resources inform the House on the status of the Lakena Land Subdivision in Nausori?

HON. F.S. KOYA (Minister for Industry, Trade, Tourism, Lands and Mineral Resources).- Madam Speaker, I rise to respond to the question asked by the Honourable Member and I thank him for his question with respect to the status of the Lakena Land Subdivision in Nausori. This was established in 1980 and it is quite a general question, and as a former valuer, he should know how massive the Lakena Subdivision is. It is approximately 669 hectares and of that 669 hectares, 733 lots were allocated. So my answer is going to be pretty general and I hope that suffices.

Let me enlighten the Honourable Member and the rest of the House and the general public, with respect to the Lakena Subdivision, it comprises of several kinds of leases. There are 168 leases which are agriculture leases, 55 leases which are industrial leases, 367 leases which are residential leases, five commercial leases, three educational leases, three religious leases, three for State for special use and three subsistence leases.

Madam Speaker, today the Ministry actually continues one of its core roles which is the maintenance of the existing subdivisions and the purpose of this particular maintenance project is to upgrade and improve infrastructure and public utilities and amenities in existing subdivisions on State lands and then transfer the responsibilities for future maintenance to the relevant agencies and authorities. Maintaining these subdivisions also ensures that the roads of design constructed are aligned to Fiji Roads Authority standards.

In addition, Madam Speaker, the maintenance work includes upgrading of access roads, water supply, sewerage et cetera, construction of drains and footpaths, vehicle at crossings et cetera and also erection of walls to arrest soil erosion, landslides and clearing of blocked drains to avoid flooding et cetera. On average, Madam Speaker, maintenance of about six State divisions or State subdivisions in Fiji are implemented annually and we do have a budgetary provision for that. I hope that suffices, Honourable Member.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Nawaikula?

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Madam Speaker, Honourable Minister, on the upgrading and improvement, this has been promised many times but the one that you are saying now, are there plans budgeted and when will this be done? Can you tell us an exact timeframe when that can be done?

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister?

HON. F.S. KOYA.- Madam Speaker, as I said earlier, there is a budgetary provision for all the subdivisions that Government has undertaken. Now, that budgetary provision does not take care of one, it is all of them, they are programmed and it goes as per requirement if there is something...

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- So what do I tell them? I go back now and if they ask me, what do I have to tell them?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- (Inaudible interjection)

HON. SPEAKER.- There is only one question, please.

HON. F.S. KOYA.- Are you finished?

As I was about to say, there is a schedule. If you would like an exact time, I can give it to you later but there is a schedule and I think is attended to in terms of importance with a lot of flooding, et cetera, that goes on in recent times, they need to divert, extreme emergency cases are actually done even quicker. But if there is a specific issue that the Honourable Member has and he thinks there is a problem then, please let me know, it will get taken care of.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Mosese Bulitavu?

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. Supplementary question. Given that the Honourable Minister has not given an assurance as to when, but the residents at Lakena, given that they had formed a committee in trying to follow-up certain promises that were made in the area on reserving subdivision lease, I think the Honourable Assistant Minister Vijay Nath is aware of the committee at Lakena. They are waiting for Government to come back to them to explain those details. Can the Government communicate back to the committee on the progress of the applications that they have made?

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Minister?

HON. F.S. KOYA.- Madam Speaker, the question is related to the status of the sub-division. If he is referring to complaints, as he knows very well, all he has to do is write to me and refer to a specific part and I will attend to it. Honourable Member, you just raised that it in Parliament, I am telling you right now that if you come to me and tell me exactly what it is they have requested, I will attend to it.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Aseri Radrodro?

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. My question will be just a very short and sweet one regarding Lakena land subdivision. Can the Honourable Minister inform this House whether the status of updating, in terms of titles, can it be done for the Lakena subdivision before Elections?

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister?

HON. F.S. KOYA.- Madam Speaker, like anything else in this world, there is a process that you must follow whether there is Elections or not, the process needs to be followed.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Jiosefa Dulakiverata?

HON. J. DULAKIVERATA.- Madam Speaker, supplementary question. I thank the Honourable Minister for his reply.

Madam Speaker, just for the information of the House, this subdivision was created for an irrigation scheme, especially for rice cultivation. Most of these leases have expired and some have been used for residential and other purposes. Because most of the land have been vacant, they have gone into *ad hoc* development.

Madam Speaker, can the Honourable Minister inform the House, what is the status of the land that have expired? Can the residential subdivisions be carried out to cater for the demand for residential homes?

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Minister?

HON. F.S. KOYA.- Madam Speaker, with the status of lease expiry in the Lakena subdivision, there are 22 expired agriculture leases; re-entry is one of them, 18 is actually expiring, three have been surrendered - all of which were issued on a 20-30 year term. If he is asking whether it is going to be a sub-division, out of the 22 expired leases for Lakena, two have been advertised, the lease documents have been uplifted by lessee for execution, six are currently under preparation for lease, three has a lease submission, two are awaiting inspection and two are awaiting additional documents, such as TIN letters and probate, et cetera, that needs to be done, three have surrendered and one re-entry. That is the current complete status of that particular subdivision.

The whole subdivision, Madam Speaker, was initially as I said earlier, there are 168 agricultural leases; it has not changed the status to-date, except for the property owners that may have been transferred, et cetera, and all of that needs to be done but that is the current status, Sir. If you want to change the status, it has to follow its normal process if that is to be done.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Lastly, Honourable Prem Singh.

HON. P. SINGH.- I thank the Honourable Minister for his response. Could the Honourable Minister inform this House, of the leases that have been issued for agriculture and other purposes, out of the whole 669 hectares, what portion of the land remains unresolved, that is not being subdivided or issued with leases, if there are any? And what is that unresolved portion intended for?

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Minister?

HON. F.S. KOYA.- Madam Speaker, I think some kind of maths lesson is required here. The 669 hectares, 733 lots were allocated of that entire 669 hectares. If you want, I will give you a map for it and you can see for yourself.

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

Definitions of “Crown Grant” and “State Land”
(Question No. 17/2018)

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI asked the Government, upon notice:

Can the Honourable Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Public Enterprises, Civil Service and Communications provide the House with the definitions of “Crown Grant” and “State Land” under the existing laws and how can it be reverted to its original owners?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM (Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Public Enterprises, Civil Service and Communications).- Madam Speaker, I rise to respond to the question asked by the Honourable Member and I thank him for his question.

Madam Speaker, when Sitiveni Rabuka carried out the first two *coups* in 1987, the Head of the State who was the Queen was actually removed and then it was unilaterally declared a Republic and therefore there was a Decree that was passed in 1989 to amend “Crown” to “State” because we no longer

could hold the “Crown” as the Head of the State. So therefore it became “State Land” and the definition was changed from “Crown Grant” to “State Land”.

State Grants, Madam Speaker, is defined under the Land Transfer Act as “any grant of land by the State.” So where the State actually grants the land to someone, the effect of a State Grant is that the State Grant gives the land to someone who then holds the title, this is what we call “fee simple of freehold title.”

Let me read the relevant Section of the State Lands Act:

“Subject to the provisions of the Constitution of the Republic of Fiji and of any written law, the Minister, after consultation with Cabinet, may and on behalf of the State, sell portions of State land and make and execute under the public seal of Fiji grants in fee simple thereof.”

For example, Madam Speaker, when the SDL Government converted the Momi land which was converted from *iTaukei* land to Crown, then they gave it as a conversion to become freehold land because only the Crown can do that in those days, now obviously the State can only do that. So the State was able to, because it became from *iTaukei* to State land, then they could actually transfer that land in fee simple which meaning it became completely freehold, therefore, they hold the land in perpetuity. That is what it actually means, Madam Speaker.

I assume that the extent of the question the Honourable Member once asked under the 2013 Fijian Constitution which I will read to you, Madam Speaker, it says that any *iTaukei* land acquired by the State for a public purpose after the commencement of this Constitution under Section 27 or under any written law shall revert, shall revert to the customary owners.

“Shall” means it is a “must”, in law it means “must”, “shall revert to the customary owners if the land is no longer required by the State”. So today, we have in law, constitutionally speaking also, as we know that the Constitution overrides any other written law, that any *iTaukei* land that is used by the State for any public purpose, so as we are given examples in this Parliament before, for example if the State acquires a hill to put up a water reservoir and it is for that public purpose to provide water to many thousands of people. If the State after a period of time then decides that they no longer require that land for the purpose of having a reservoir, they cannot hold on to the land. They must give the land back to the *iTaukei* landowners. So, that is how you have the reversion which is now guaranteed under the Fijian Constitution, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER. - Supplementary question Honourable Nawaikula.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- A lot of indigenous people feel discriminatory because that provision only starts from 2013. Can the Honourable Minister explain to the House, what about those that were acquired before 2013? Why did you not include those because there are many more that were acquired for public purpose, as opposed to after 2013?

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Member.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, the Honourable Member knows this, he is a practising lawyer but I will take him because he loves the word “sovereignty” and I will take him back to the Deed of Cession which many of you hold on the other side as some holy grail. Let me read clause 4 of the Deed of Cession.

HON. MEMBER.- (Inaudible interjection)

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- The Deed of Cession says, Madam Speaker, that the absolute proprietorship of all lands not shown to be now alienated so as to become bona fide, the property of Europeans or other foreigners or not now in the actual use or occupation of some chief or tribe or not actually required for the probable future support and maintenance of some chief or tribe shall be and is hereby declared to be vested in Her Majesty her heirs and successors. That was signed by the chiefs. Only one was from the Western Division, all the others, as I said to the Honourable Prime Minister from the Eastern and the Southern Divisions, they signed this, Madam Speaker.

Consequently, Madam Speaker, that became Crown land or became State land. The Honourable Member and Honourable Karavaki would also know. There was a case called Ratu Epeli Kanakana and Others and the NLTB where they took the then Government to Court and the NLC for claim on the entire Suva Peninsula to be reverted to *iTaukei* land. The Court also held that it cannot be done so. All subsequent Constitutions including the 1970 Constitution, 1990 Constitution and the 1997 Constitution which they all support similarly did not allow the reversion of such lands. They know that, Madam Speaker, because the reality is that many of these land actually have been given out as mortgage, et cetera. People have a right to know about the consistency of their title.

This is why Madam Speaker, any responsible law maker cannot retrospectively allow for changes in the law because people feel confident in the law at the point of time in which they made the transaction. This is why you never allow retrospective application rules, so going into the future, today 91 percent of all the land in Fiji is *iTaukei* land.

Madam Speaker, if for example, as I gave the example, if the Government acquires some land for public purposes the Government must give back that land to the *iTaukei* landowners of that the particular landowning unit should they no longer require it for that purpose. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER. - Thank you. Honourable Dulakiverata

HON. J. DULAKIVERATA.- Thank you Madam Speaker. Can the Honourable Minister inform the House as to what is the current status of all the land bought under the Land Buy-Back Scheme, that is to buy back land which is now freehold for the benefit of the landowners? Thank you.

HON. A. SAYED-KAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, the Honourable Member who has also worked with the Ministry of Lands knows that that responsibility of the buy-back sits with the Minister for Lands. He should be directing that question to Minister for Lands.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Semesa Karavaki

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would just like to ask the learned Attorney-General whether they can consider the land being acquired not to be converted to State land but to remain as a native land but leased by the State so that the landowners can continue to receive benefits at the duration of time that the land is being used by the State for public purposes?

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you, Honourable Minister.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, the Honourable Member also would know this that when you acquire land for public purposes because of the security of tenure and the investment has been made by the State, the States needs to have complete control over that land for the period of time in which it is used for public purposes. As the Honourable Member would also know, should you have another holder of the title or the lease, then you will always need to go back to them to ask.

For example, if you made modifications or changes to the land or any property that is on the land, obviously you need to go back to the lease holder. This is why land is acquired for public purposes. They fall within the ambit of the State land. However, of course it does not preclude the Government from having arrangements, for example things like we are currently leasing land for various purposes or leasing buildings on which this *iTaukei* lease holding does not preclude Government from doing that.

For anything that is for public purpose, where members of the public continuously use that for that particular purpose, of course, it is always going to the State land. Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. There been no other question, I will now give the floor to the Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Fiji Roads Authority - Workmanship
(Question No. 18/2018)

HON. RO T.V KEPA asked the Government, upon notice:

Would the Acting Minister for Local Government, Housing and Environment, Infrastructure and Transport explain how the Fiji Roads Authority can ensure there is a high standard of workmanship maintained, following the construction or maintenance works on roads, particularly in terms of changing weather patterns?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM (Acting Minister for Local Government, Housing and Environment, Infrastructure and Transport).- Madam Speaker, I rise to respond to the question asked by the Honourable Member and I would like to thank her for this question. There is no doubt the changing weather patterns has an enormous impact on roads and the manner in which we build roads and the manner in which we rehabilitate roads.

Madam Speaker, many of the roads that are on the coastal areas, for example, Ovalau is a very good example. With the inundation of the encroaching seas, many of the roads that are right on the cusp of the foreshore and land itself are actually being eroded. So, there is obviously a need to, for example, find alternative routes or to build very technically engineered seawall so that the water actually does not come in and encroach on that.

One of the challenges of course, Madam Speaker, is that many of the roads in Fiji currently that is tarsealed, many of them were built decades ago, if you look at roads in Raiwaqa, Nabua and various other places even roads like Mead Road and even roads in Lami. One of the issues, of course, as they say "one of the greatest enemy to road is water" because this is why we have seals. When you have a seal on top of the road, the water should not actually go through the seal. Of course water does go through, how much of it goes through and what kind of drainage systems you actually have beneath the road, the base course, that obviously is very critical too.

So, those of you who have been driving around Suva, you would see that many of the roundabouts are now being concreted because of the heavy traffic that goes around the roundabout, because when trucks turn on the corner, the load shift from left to right or right to left. It puts pressure on the roads. So, you need to be able to re-enforce roads. These are some of the challenges that we do have. In some instances of course, Madam Speaker, in order to be able to spread the limited resources that we all have is that sometimes there are remedial works that are carried out which is supposed to last for few years but in fact to go back and fix it up is what is really required.

You need to actually dig deep because many of these roads actually were not necessarily built correctly in the first place. So, over the years because of the heavy tonnage on the roads, you have seen

bigger trucks, at one point in time, we were getting trucks that were used in mining areas running on normal roads. You cannot have a heavy truck running through Belo Street. Belo Street may not be actually built to carry that kind of weight.

So, these are some of the fundamental issues that need to be addressed, and in fact, the FRA is actually dealing with that from the perspective. There is quality assurance and technical audit team now to go out and audit the performance and recommend remedial actions. We had instances of course where some of the contractors, when they were in fact given work, they had not brought it up to the standards. In the contracts now, any deficiencies are now corrected at the expense of those contractors. So the number of issues of course that we are facing are the quality of the roads, I mean a classic example, not just roads, roads include bridges.

Look at the two bridges that the Chinese have very graciously given us by way of a grant in Vatuwaqa and the Stinson Parade. Bridges are supposed to last for 90 to 100 years, and these bridges were built, I understand in the late 1960s and 1970s, but they have already failed. If you go to the Western Division, we have bridges that were built by the CSR, we are still using them and it has been 80, 90 and 100 years. So the quality control was really an issue, Madam Speaker.

Now, we have implemented many of these changes and of course using modern day technology. Of course many of the local contractors need to be brought up to speed as you know a lot of the work is outsourced to them. There are issues about poor workmanship from the past, the need to use new technology and the need to be able to carry out some fundamental rehabilitation works to ensure that the construction and maintenance of roads, particularly in terms of changing weather patterns will be addressed.

I just want to inform the House too, Madam Speaker, we have for example for coastal protection on the island of Vanua Levu, Koro, Cicia, Vanua Balavu, Gau and various other places and Western Viti Levu, about \$10 million has been allocated for coastal erosion adaptation for these islands. We similarly are carrying out rehabilitation works, if you see many of the roads now are very heavily used, heavily based population because of the traffic usage and of course the quality of the roads that were built previously. Thank you Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Leader of Opposition.

HON. RO T.V. KEPÄ.- Supplementary question. I thank the Honourable Minister for his response but I am not talking here about the rural roads, Madam Speaker, I am talking about an urban road. The Honourable Minister says poor workmanship of the past, this is poor workmanship of the present, Madam Speaker. Why is it that Denison Road, which is just up the road from here, has to be worked on over three times already and each time worse than the last time. In the present time, they have been there for a month and I do not know how long they are going to be there, Madam Speaker. This is wastage of very limited resources that the Honourable Minister has spoken about, so I just want him to respond to that Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, Denison Road has not had an upgrade the way it is having now. There were of course potholes that had been filled previously and as we know, all those lanes - Denison Road, Service Road, many of these roads have been there for years. If you see the road that goes down Domain, Allardyce Road, all those roads have been fixed up.

If anyone drives past Denison Road, one will see the amount of work that is actually involved, there is underground drainage and pipes that are old. Many of the roads, Madam Speaker, as we have

said previously, where the road is built, we actually have water pipes underneath. Many of these pipes were put in place in the 1940s and 1950s, particularly in the Suva area. Those pipes are getting old and they are leaking. Some of these pipes are actually built using asbestos, so when those pipes actually leak the ground, because it is softer underneath the road and when trucks and vehicles go past it, it becomes soft from underneath when it is not sealed and you do not have proper maintenance, it also becomes soft from the top, so obviously the roads will break up. They are actually putting drainage systems underneath the roads. Madam Speaker, they have to have proper drainage system and that is what is actually been done, proper footpaths and proper streetlights. Those works needs to be carried out fundamentally and they actually cost a lot of money. This is why we are not doing upgrades everywhere. We need to identify the key strategic areas where these roads needs to be fixed. This is part of what we call the urban road upgrades. Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Parmod Chand.

HON. P. CHAND.- Thank you Madam Speaker. Supplementary question, this question talks about standard of workmanship maintained, following the construction or maintenance works on roads. Last week, I visited the whole of Bua and Dogotuki, the road conditions are pathetic. What I am saying here is that we have a lot of money going in but the roads have narrowed down and the standard of grading is very poor. What is the Ministry going to do about standard of grading? At the moment, the roads are graded, not shoulder to shoulder, but just very narrow roading and the drains just do not exist. What is the Government's plan in fixing rural roads, especially in Vanua Levu, where a lot of school children miss schools because public transport cannot operate due to these bad roads.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, the Honourable Member has a habit of doing this. With the actual question he stopped at roads, the rest of the question is particularly in terms of changing weather patterns which he did not read out, he stopped two thirds of the way.

The question, Madam Speaker, of course is, there are many kilometres of roads in Fiji that have not been maintained for years; there are many kilometres of roads indeed, bridges and crossings that were built to substandard or no longer can handle the traffic that we generate. The number of vehicles on Fijian roads have almost tripled compared to a few years ago. A lot more people have access to vehicles, obviously a lot more vehicles on the road, the roads will breakup more and there is a lot more stress on the road.

Madam Speaker, we do have a plan, we cannot do all the roads all at once, we also have limited budget and they will be addressed. Of course, Madam Speaker, as we have said, the new methodologies in terms of building roads, rehabilitating roads, and we do not want to do what was done previously - simply come and just grade the road and you do not do any drainage. If you have a look around, drive around even through the Queen's Highway and various other places, you will see a lot of vehicles on the roads are actually digging the sides of the roads doing proper drainage. Drainage has been one of the issues.

Just a case in point, if you go to Nadi Town, when you cross the bridge going from Nadi to Lautoka,,the bridge before Namotomoto Village, the roundabout that goes to Denarau, just after a simple rain it floods. This was done back sometime in the early 2000, they concreted it, why? Because no one thought about any drainage, there is no drainage outlet. The water has nowhere to go, so there are a number of issues. Yes, of course, we accept the fact that there are some roads that obviously need more attention and they will be done. There are 100s and 1000s of people who want their roads to be tarsealed. We cannot tarseal all the roads in Fiji but we need to ensure that the roads that are not tarsealed are maintained regularly and they will be maintained regularly. We have a programme for that, Madam

Speaker. I urge Honourable Member to look at the flyer that was distributed when we delivered the Budget. In that flyer, it sets out all the major rural roads that we are addressing which include roads also in Vanua Levu. Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. There being no other supplementary question. Time has caught up with us, Honourable Members, at this point we will suspend proceedings for lunch. Please note that lunch is provided for Honourable Members in the Big Committee Room. Parliament will resume proceedings at 2.30 p.m.

The Parliament adjourned at 12.28 p.m.

The Parliament resumed at 2.30 p.m.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you, Honourable Members, you may be seated. We will continue from where we left off. I now give the floor to the Honourable Ashneel Sudhakar to ask his question.

HON. A. SUDHAKAR.- Madam Speaker, the Acting Honourable Minister for Infrastructure is not in the House at the moment. The request is that my question be taken after Honourable Politini's question.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you, I now give the floor to the Honourable Howard Politini.

Maintenance of Drainage by Municipal Councils
(Question No.20/2018)

HON. H.R.T. POLITINI asked the Government, upon notice:

Can the Honourable Minister for Waterways inform the House about the progress on the \$1.3 million grant for maintenance of drainage works by Municipal Councils?

HON. DR. M. REDDY (Minister for Waterways).- Madam Speaker, I rise to respond to the question asked by the Honourable Member and I would like to thank him for asking that question.

Madam Speaker, as you may recall from my Ministerial Statement on Monday, this is the first time the Government is providing additional grant on top of the normal grant to some of the municipal councils to deal with drainage issue in the urban area.

Madam Speaker, you may note that while the urban ratepayers pay for the use of urban facilities, the users are not only urban ratepayers but also rural people as well. Therefore it creates a bit of a burden on the municipal councils to deal with all the issues with the defined revenue stream that they have. In light of that, for the first time the Government decided that in the 2017-2018 budgetary allocation, they will provide appropriation for most of the municipal Councils to deal with specifically the drainage issue, in particular the negative effects of flooding that happens there. So if you are able to fix the drain to a large extent, it will remove the issue of flooding.

Madam Speaker, as noted by Honourable Politini, \$1.3 million was provided to the municipal councils. The amount provided depended on the size of the municipal council and the nature of problems that they face. Madam Speaker, you will note that when I read out the amounts that were given to the municipal council, this will reflect the kind of problems that they face. For example, the highest was Nasinu Town Council, it received \$476,000, second highest was Nadi Town Council, which received \$352,000 and the third highest was Rakiraki Town Council, it received \$212,000.

Madam Speaker, the amount reflects the nature of problems these municipal councils are facing and the size. The highest was Nasinu Town Council, a pretty large area and unfortunately the kind of ratepayers that we face there are not really healthy ratepayers in the sense of payments. So that is why such an amount has been allocated to Nasinu Town Council to ensure that we are able to assist the town council in dealing with these drainage problem.

The second highest, Madam Speaker, is Nadi Town Council, as you know is a very important town. One of our upcoming towns that would probably become a city soon, quite widespread and we often hear in the media about the problems faced by the town boundary; they were given \$352,000. Of course, Rakiraki Town, \$212,000 in addition to the dredging work that will be undertaking for those two

rivers. This specifically deals with constructing new drains or converting the underlying drains into open drains and cleaning it up decently.

Madam Speaker, we have the smaller towns, like Tavua Town Council, \$12,290; Ba Town Council \$32,000; Lautoka City Council, \$40,000; Sigatoka Town Council, \$32,000; Nausori Town Council, \$80,847; Labasa Town Council, \$48,000; Savusavu Town Council, \$21,000 and Levuka Town Council, \$15,000.

Madam Speaker, we had a meeting with all the leaders of the towns and municipal councils, followed by signing of an agreement that these grant will be provided on acquittals basis. So if you do the work, give us the acquittals and we will release the grant immediately. In some cases where there were some cash flow issues, we provided grants earlier on for them to start their work. We also had training of dedicated staff from these municipal councils who will be responsible to deal with this money and ensure that all paperwork is in place.

Now, Madam Speaker, the following town councils have called for tenders, have taken quotations and they have finalised the award to contractors: Nadi Town Council, Nasinu Town Council, Rakiraki Town Council, Labasa Town Council, Savusavu Town Council, Sigatoka Town Council and Nausori Town Council. They have awarded contracts. On the other hand, the following municipal councils have done the ground work and have the capacity to undertake in-house drainage and maintenance work. They will be using their own staff and machines and they have to undertake the work. These are the Lautoka City Council, Ba Town Council, Tavua Town Council and Levuka Town Council. Madam Speaker in addition to that, we have the following town councils where work has already commenced. These are the Lautoka City Council, Sigatoka Town Council, Rakiraki Town Council and Nasinu Town Council.

Madam Speaker, the slow progress in getting this out even though we gave out the grants about two months ago is because of the weather condition. Madam Speaker, we do not want to call the contractors saying that this has not been done well, et cetera. We do not want the work to be hampered by the weather condition. We decided that if the weather is bad, stop the work and wait until the weather settles down then we undertake the work so that there is no repetition of work or the contractor does not come back and say that we have done the work and we want additional money to do any remedial work.

Madam Speaker, the progress is that four town councils have already begun work and the others have given out contractors or they have got their own people to start with the work, thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Dulakiverata.

HON. J. DULAKIVERATA.- Supplementary question, Madam Speaker. The municipal councils normally carry out this type of work and they finance it from the money derived from the rates paid by ratepayers. Now that the central government is footing the bills for road construction and all those type of work, there should be enough money in their coffers to carry out their job. Why do you think, Honourable Minister, these people deserve to be given the grant?

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister for Waterways.

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Madam Speaker, I took a lot of time to explain in detail why Government decided to supplement the funding and here comes the Honourable Member asking, why do we have to give them additional money to undertake this work? I spent a lot of time and let me do it again for the sake of the Honourable Member.

Madam Speaker, as I said, the revenue stream for urban centres comes from the urban citizens, the ratepayers, but the users are both the urban and rural-dwellers. Some municipal councils, where the

ratepayers are not that rich, for example the Nasinu Town Council is faced with ratepayers from squatter settlement, so the stream of revenue is not that amount and also the collection rate is not that good.

Madam Speaker, to deal with that problem Government has decided to assist these town councils until such time they are able to deal with this problem themselves with the existing stream of revenue. Now, while we are taking a proactive approach to ensure that we deal with this problem, the Honourable Member is now asking why we are giving the money to deal with this problem. Madam Speaker, the same Honourable Member, when the work is not done will stand up and say, "Why are we not assisting the town council in dealing with this problem?" Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- I now give the floor to the Honourable Parmod Chand

HON. P. CHAND.- Given this surplus allocation of \$48,000 to the Labasa Town Council, considering the fact that every time there is rain, most of the streets are flooded and very badly.

(Chorus of Interjections)

HON. P. CHAND.- My question is this, firstly, are you confident with the leadership of the councils because they only have the Administrator and the workers without any elected members, councillors? Do you think or believe that they are able to deliver what you have proposed? Secondly, have you put in place a mechanism to ensure that this takes place, that is, the drainage is clean and Labasa is free from being flood-prone at times?

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Madam Speaker, 80 percent of his question should have been directed to the Honourable Minister for Local Government. I will answer 20 percent of his question which talks about how we can ensure to put this money to good use.

Madam Speaker, the Honourable Member did not listen when I explained that the first thing we did and I said, "this is on acquittal basis", meaning, "we are not going to give you money and say, you are going to do whatever you want to do", we say, "You go and do the work, send us the receipts, our engineers will come and inspect that the work is done, we will kick off and get you the money."

Secondly, Madam Speaker, we have assigned our technical staff or engineers to ensure that they go and inspect the work and ensure that the work is done as per the scope of works.

Thirdly, Madam Speaker, we met the Administrators in our boardroom and explained to them what our expectations are on how the money should be utilised. We also asked them to send one staff from each municipal council. We have also taken time out to train them on how this money will be accounted, how they need to keep the documentation, how they need to enter the data and we have developed an electronic dashboard for them to submit the data, Madam Speaker. That is how we are going to ensure that the money is put to good use.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Honourable Minister, what about a new detailed comprehensive study on proper drainage layout? Is this money included or are you just repairing existing drainage and maintenance?

HON. DR. M. REDDY.- Madam Speaker, I will pass my Ministerial Statement which I presented on Monday to the Honourable Member, where I gave a detailed explanation on how we are going to deal with all the issues that we are facing now and how we are going to develop the master plan for each municipal council. Thank you.

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

Update of Duguvatu Rural Electrification Project
(Question No. 19/2018)

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

Can the Acting Minister for Local Government, Housing, Environment, Infrastructure and Transport provide an update on the Duguvatu Rural Electrification Project?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM (Acting Minister for Local Government, Housing, Environment, Infrastructure and Transport).- Madam Speaker, my apologies for coming in late and thank you for accommodating me by moving the next question up in the line.

Madam Speaker, the Duguvatu Rural Electrification Programme, also known as Tuvavatu in Rakiraki, if you see the 2017-2018 Budget Allocation for Rural Electrification which was distributed to all the Members of this Parliament, it says, "Tuvavatu, Rakiraki in the Western Division". At that point in time, the number of applicants were 32; the total cost then was \$392,248, which was an assessment given by FEA.

Madam Speaker, the work in fact had already started. As you know, when we put up electricity posts or poles we do not just simply go and plant it anywhere, a survey needs to be done as well as an assessment, and this is part of the project. It is about four kilometres away from the Penang Sugar Mill. As it stands now, Madam Speaker, the quotation has been revised which goes up to \$458,000 now, and there are more homes that have in fact been included in this particular project. Of course, part of this is \$37,000 is allocated for house wiring. It is one thing to get the electrical poles in the new area and you actually have the connectivity from the electrical poles down to the actual houses and the house wiring that needs to be done.

Madam Speaker, the total cost of the project as stated is about \$495,000, which should provide electricity to 37 households, with approximately 185 people, including the elderly, parents, youth and children. The designed projects have already been completed and tender works are expected to be carried out this month in March, after the surveys have been done.

The work involves comprise the installation of 108 power poles and stringing of 23,000 metres of overhead power lines. The grid extension and house wiring works are expected to commence in May 2018 to be completed roundabout August to September of this year and will be funded, of course, as allocated in this year's 2017-2018 Budget.

Madam Speaker, I would like to just point out that there was a press statement that was issued by the National Federation Party (NFP) in this respect, and the media release said:

"Duguvatu families still in dark. Residents of Duguvatu, Rakiraki, are still awaiting the supply of electricity by FEA and the Rural Electrification Programme despite the promise made by the Prime Minister last year. The Prime Minister, Honourable Voreqe Bainimarama had last year on his "consultation visit" with his large entourage reportedly made the commitment at Taitaiya Memorial School to provide FEA Power to 37 cane farmers' families residing in Duguvatu area."

It goes on to say where it is, "... NFP Leader led by Professor Biman Prasad and the General Secretary met the President of Duguvatu, during their *talanoa* session raised concerns including the failure by Government to fulfil its promise to supply electricity to the residents."

Madam Speaker, this is what you call "cheap politics".

(Chorus of Interjections)

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- If the Honourable Members were genuine in actually finding out the correct information, firstly, I urge all Members to read your Budget papers, read the Supplements. If they knew about it they could have picked it up easily, they are going to have proper *talanoa* sessions take all this information with you and say, “Hang on it is here, Tuvavatu, Rakiraki, \$392,000, and it is going to be done in this financial year”, or if they had any doubts, they could have very easily called the Honourable Prime Minister or call me up, or call up the Minister for Infrastructure and Development and found out.

As the Honourable Prime Minister does when he actually goes in his consultations and people raises issues, he picks up the phone and calls whoever is in charge of it and gets an update. They could have done that too, that is what you call “true *talanoa* session”, Honourable Dr. Samisoni. That is what true *talanoa* session is about, that is what you call “bringing service to the public” not playing cheap politics and going to this unsuspecting people as they have been doing in Vanua Levu regarding butter, et cetera, Madam Speaker.

HON. PROF. B.C. PRASAD.- Point of Order, Madam Speaker. I think the Honourable and learned Attorney-General is once again extending his comments and bordering on accusations which are not true. He is talking about Vanua Levu. The *Fiji Sun*, we know what the FijiFirst *Sun* newspaper does. This particular issue, Madam Speaker, is what the people told the General Secretary and he issued a statement - that is all.

HON. SPEAKER.- The point of order is really not to the content of what is being presented. It is on the rules and the procedures of the House, so that does not qualify the point of order, Honourable Minister.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, thank you, again, procedurally, they have got it wrong. As I was saying, if we are going out to members of the public and if we want to give them the correct information, there is availability of information and they truly want to do that. This is the update that I have given and this is the information that is available in the Budgetary Supplements and they could have actually given that information. What is actually happening now, Madam Speaker, they will say, “See, we issued a press release, and now they are doing the electricity because we are the ones who are going to raise this up with them”, that is what is happening.

(Chorus of interjections)

Madam Speaker, the fact of the matter is, as we have said on a number of occasions, economic development should be the objective of all Honourable Members of this House. Electricity should not be politicised, water should not be politicised, roads should not be politicised, and that is a fact. Not everything is politics. There is a thing called integrity, there is a thing called truth, honesty, transparency. Honourable Nawaikula, all of these issues are outside the ambit of politics, not everything is fair game in politics.

This side of the House, led by Honourable Prime Minister as our leader, we do not view everything to be fair game in politics. Madam Speaker, we have standards, we have integrity and this is the update in respect of this Duguvatu.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Ratu. Kiliraki.

HON. RATU K. KILIRAKI.- Thank you Madam Speaker. In terms of rural electrification, in this particular question, Duguvatu, can the Honourable Minister give an assurance in terms of rural

electrification in areas like Waisa, Naterumai, Lomaivuna and in Naitasiri? There are so many other places still waiting for rural electrification, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- All right, we are actually talking about Duguvatu Rural Electrification Project at this time but the onus is on the Honourable Minister, if he wants to answer that.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, when the Honourable Member raises Naitasiri, it always reminds me about the story that Honourable Prime Minister told us. For years, the people of Naitasiri have provided electricity to the West of Viti Levu through Monasavu and all that they could see was an overhead power lines over their heads but they never got electricity themselves. It was the Bainimarama-led Government that gave them electricity. We have said this so many times.

Madam Speaker, the other issue with rural electrification was

HON. MEMBER.- It is every Government's responsibility.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- But none of them did it, none of them did it, you see this is the point. They just have this cliché terms. The Ratu Mara-led Government did not do it, the SVT Government did not do it, the SDL Government did not do it, but it was the Bainimarama-led Government that did it. No matter how much they yell, the reality is, there is an unprecedented capital infrastructure development under the Bainimarama-led Government and the FijiFirst Government. Madam Speaker, they need to look at the statistics, they do not know how to read statistics..

(Honourable members interject)

Madam Speaker, the fact of the matter is, the Honourable Member talks about specific areas, let me also remind him that it was the Bainimarama-led Government and the FijiFirst Government that removed the requirement to pay the 10 percent for rural electrification. As we have said so many times, there were so many villages, so many settlements, so many cane farming areas; people who were waiting for electricity and people had to contribute 10 percent each. So if you have 50 homes, if 25 homes contributed the 10 percent and the other 25 did not, they did not get electricity, it was just hanging in there.

Madam Speaker, this Government, there is moans and groans, it is a fact. So their monies kept languishing in Trust Accounts. It was this Government that returned the money to them and said that they no longer require any deposit, any contribution to have rural electrification brought to their household.

Madam Speaker, never before in the history of Fijian governance has a government presented in their budget, specifically a list of which areas will be covered in that financial year, how many people and how many applicants are there - never before. The areas that the Honourable Kiliraki is referring to, I urge him to see the list. If it is not in the list, Honourable Kiliraki, I remind you that we have another budget coming up, it will probably be in that budget too.

(Laughter)

We have works planned out for the next three to four years, of course because we will be here for the next three four years and it will get implemented in the 2018-2019 Budget. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- There being no other question, we will now move on to the next one and I invite Honourable Dr. Brij Lal to ask his question.

Somosomo Hydro Power Station in Taveuni
(Question No. 21/2018)

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

Can the Acting Minister for Local Government, Housing and Environment, Infrastructure and Transport update the House on the Somosomo Hydro Power Station in Taveuni?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM (Acting Minister for Local Government, Housing and Environment, Infrastructure and Transport).- Madam Speaker, I rise to respond to the question asked by the Honourable Member and I thank him for the question.

The Somosomo Hydro Project was made possible through aid funding from the People's Republic of China, amounting to \$14.5 million. In addition, Government had allocated \$6.8 million for the establishment of the FEA depot, with the total project cost amounting to \$21.3 million.

The project was constructed by Hunan Construction Engineering Group from China. The construction commenced in December, 2013 and was handed over to the Fijian Government in April, 2016 for the official commissioning by the Honourable Prime Minister in March, 2017. The project has an installed capacity of 700 kilowatts and the current peak demand on Taveuni is about 230 kilowatts, which is sufficiently met by the project and has the potential to meet future demands.

Madam Speaker, as I will highlight, we are in fact going to extend the grid. The Government is able to save about \$1.9 million per annum in diesel fuel imports and of course, FEA too, it affects their bottom line. The grid extension works is done in several phases.

Phase one was completed in 2017, which included the construction of the 10 kilometre transmission line from Waileqe to Wairiki, benefiting a total of around 1,086 homes. This is about 5,430 people within four villages and nearby settlements, two secondary boarding schools, 3 primary schools, business centres in Naqara and a Government Station at Waiyevo.

Phase two works is currently ongoing and it includes the extension of the grid to Tagimoucia Settlements, Wailaqe, Qilia, Vunidawa, Nabuloni Settlements, Vuniwai, Naqara Settlements, Niusawa Methodist School, Loloi, Waiyevo, Fakima, Naiyalala and Nalele Settlements. Government had committed an additional \$2 million in the 2017-2018 Budget for grid extension. Phase two extension includes an additional 515 homes. They have never had electricity in Taveuni. They will be connected, thereby increasing the number of households to more than 1,601 homes. The house wiring works will cost approximately \$515,000. This would benefit approximately 8,000 people including the elderly, parents, youths, students and children of course.

Phase three will be proposed in the 2018-2019 Rural Electrification Budget and will include the extension of the grid to communities and settlements for Waileqe, Naiselesele, including Matei Airport and nearby hotels, and also from Wairiki to South Taveuni School in Vuna. Thank you Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- There being no supplementary questions, Honourable Ratu. Kiliraki?

HON. RATU K. KILIRAKI .- Thank you, Madam Speaker, just a question whether the landowners are properly compensated and to what extent they have been compensated for building the hydro?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, Government of course always ticks all the boxes regarding access to land, if there is access to land required, then obviously proper leases, proper arrangements and proper compensation actually would need to be paid as provided for under the Constitution.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you, there being no other question, I now give the floor to the Honourable Samuela Vunivalu to ask his question.

Increase in the Price of Butter
(Question No. 22/2018)

HON. S.B. VUNIVALU asked the Government, upon notice.

Can the Honourable Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Public Enterprises, Civil Service and Communications explain the increase in the price of butter in the country?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM (Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Public Enterprises, Civil Service and Communications).- Madam Speaker, I rise to respond to the question asked by the Honourable Member and I thank him for his question and his interest in butter.

I think the Honourable Member is quite baffled and that is why he has asked this question about various claims made by the Honourable Prasad in Vanua Levu, again you see this kind of claims being made in rural areas of Fiji by perhaps people who do not access to the correct information.

Madam Speaker, it has been reported in the media that Honourable Prasad has claimed that the rise in the price of butter has essentially been driven by Government and Government's Policies.

HON. OPPOSITION MEMBER.- Government policies.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- You did not hear what I said. Listen, I said "Government and Government policies", the same way there is a difference between "collation" and "collection" - remember that, Honourable Member.

(Laughter)

There is huge difference, Madam Speaker.

HON. PROF. B.C. PRASAD.- In the *Hansard*

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, it needs to be corrected, go and see the video.

Madam Speaker, what Honourable Professor Prasad told the people of Vanua Levu is completely false. Let me give a few facts.

Fiji imports the majority of its bulk requirements, in other words, butter slabs from New Zealand with a value addition done in Fiji. As such, butter price in New Zealand fully influences butter price in Fiji. Madam Speaker, what we call Rewa Butter is in fact butter that has already been made in New Zealand. It has been done since the Rewa Dairy days, since the Sam Speight days, the Mr. Dharam Chand

days. They bring in the butter, they have these big churners, we like a lot of salt, they throw in salt, they churn it, and then we get Rewa Butter. That is Rewa Butter, that is the fact.

Madam Speaker, for years, Rewa Dairy, as it was known then, has always had protection. Rewa Dairy has always brought in bulk butter at zero-rated duty. They pay VAT, the Rabuka Government introduced VAT, they started paying VAT on it. Madam Speaker, in order to protect Rewa Dairy, there was a duty on fully packaged butter that came from overseas, brought in by other companies like Anchor Butter, et cetera. Madam Speaker, duty protection rate was 27 percent, in fact, in order to salvage Rewa Dairy, this was before it was divested of its shares in 2009, we needed to protect it so we went further and put up the duty from 27 percent to 32 percent. So the duty is not as a result, as being insinuated by Honourable Professor Biman Prasad.

HON. PROF. B.C. PRASAD.- It is there.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, as insinuated by the Honourable Professor Biman Prasad that is was put in only after the divestment took place. That duty protection existed even in all the years prior to that. So it is completely false to aggregate the sale or the divestment of shares in Rewa Dairy which became Fiji Dairy to the import duties that have been imposed, completely false.

Madam Speaker, the reality is, the average landed cost of butter slabs duty free range from \$13 per kilogramme and went as high as \$14.48 per kilogramme in 2017, compared to \$8.88 in the beginning of last year. Why?

Madam Speaker, because the price of butter worldwide has gone up, there is a huge demand for butter, in fact, if anyone does their research well, perhaps some people lose their research skills when they come to Parliament. The reality is that, there is an increase of 63 percent, why? It is because most milk producers now in the world actually want to have higher value added products from milk. So, because of the growth of the middle class in the Asian market, people want more cheese and cream. These are what we call the high end products. It takes a lot of milk to make cheese, it takes a lot of milk to actually make cream, it actually takes a lot of milk to make powdered milk. Powdered milk essentially comes from milk that is burnt, a lot of milk needs to be burnt to get powdered milk. This is why, Madam Speaker, the Rewa Dairy does not even make powdered milk. They import it, they package it, like the Rewa Cow, Lodhias, I think, brings it in. Madam Speaker, they bring it in bulk and they package it.

Madam Speaker, getting back to butter as we were talking about, the reality is ,butter is also price controlled at the retail level. So, we know Madam Speaker.

HON. PROF. B.C. PRASAD.- Do not say, do not save the price.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, I do not know whether Honourable Professor Biman Prasad understands English or not. I just said..

HON. PROF. B.C. PRASAD.- Point of Order!

I think the Honourable Attorney-General should give the full information when he talks about price control...

HON. SPEAKER.- Sorry, I have not given you the floor.

HON. PROF. B.C. PRASAD.- He is not talking about...

HON. S.B. VUNIVALU.- Who gave you the point of order?

HON. SPEAKER.- I have not given you the floor yet and your point of order does not qualify as you know very well. So please, Honourable Minister.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, I just said butter is price controlled at the retail level, what does that mean? It means it is not price controlled for the wholesale. Anyone with powers of deduction would understand that, Madam Speaker, I have just said that.

Madam Speaker, any person who understands Finance, most economists do not necessarily understand finance. Madam Speaker, anyone understanding Finance would point out -.see Honourable Professor Biman Prasad is on extremely soft ground. It is all right to go to the people of Vanua Levu and spin things that you want to spin, but when the facts are actually presented, they start making all these sorts of noise. The reality, Madam Speaker, that the duty on butter has been the same even when it was Rewa Dairy. The fact of the matter is, and I can present all of this in writing and it can be verified by an independent third party, the world price of butter has gone up. If your source of butter is not from your own country, you will be affected by world commodity prices; pure and simple.

In the same way as fuel, we do not produce fuel. The price of fuel at the moment has gone up, why? Because there is a cold winter in Europe. In England, everyone is frozen. They need to have heaters, it requires fuel, so the price of fuel goes up because there is a demand for it. Similarly when there is less of a particular supply, then there is a higher demand, obviously the price will go up. Madam Speaker, in fact, if you look at what has been also said.

HON. PROF. B.C. PRASAD.- (Inaudible)

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, it has also been said that the price of fuel, of butter or any other product that lands in Fiji in Viti Levu and goes to Vanua Levu, obviously, the freight will go up.

HON. PROF. B.C. PRASAD.- Why?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Because it will impact on the price. In the same way, fuel is price controlled. The margin that is given by the Commerce Commission will be higher because to cart the goods, it will go up and therefore the price of fuel will go up. Similarly, when they send stuff from Vanua Levu to Viti Levu, the price will go up. When you get a goat from Vanua Levu, the price of the goat is more expensive than in Viti Levu, because they have to pay for the freight cost. That is the local export from Vanua Levu to Viti Levu but majority of the goods that go from Viti Levu to Vanua Levu actually emanates from this island.

Madam Speaker, again I want to acknowledge Honourable Samuela Vunivalu's question because I think a lot of misinformation regarding this and the reality is that, in the NFP website, the Honourable Professor Biman Prasad is saying "they would remove the zero duty concession enjoyed by Fiji Dairy and allow all importers to compete on a level playing field".

Basically, Madam Speaker, if he is going to allow zero-rate on duty on the importation of butter by Rewa Dairy, it will naturally extend to milk and everything else. Madam Speaker, so let us check out Fiji Dairy, let us check out Fiji Dairy Cooperative Limited, let us go and tell all the 300 dairy farmers "please do not supply milk because we are going to import milk from Australia and New Zealand", and that's what he calls import substitution.

HON. PROF. B.C. PRASAD.- (Inaudible)

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, the reality is the farmers in Fiji are now getting paid more per litre for milk at the farm gate price when they did before in Rewa Dairy. In fact, they are getting \$0.20 more for premium per litre, that is the reality. Madam Speaker, the reality is unfortunately for the opposition, they grab onto something despite the facts. The reason why he is interjecting so much is because he is caught out. That is why he keeps on yelling.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- You see, Madam Speaker, I am not the one lifting up my hands. Madam Speaker, the reality is, you see they are obsessed with Southern Cross Foods. They are obsessed with it because they think this is the “genie in the bottle” that will save them, it will not.

HON. PROF. B.C. PRASAD.- (Inaudible)

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Please, keep it.

HON. PROF. B. PRASAD.- Carry on.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, the reality is this, Southern Cross Foods, when they came into Rewa Dairy, Rewa Dairy had a dead stock of \$17 million. Unfortunately, I forgot to bring it, I have it in my drawer when they did the accounts for Rewa Dairy, a Rolex watch was bought from Prouds by the then Speight for his personal use, using Rewa Dairy funds.

You look at the accounts of Rewa Dairy, with all the shenanigans, the farmers were losing out. Madam Speaker, today the farmers have 20 percent shares in the company without any liabilities. They were paid a dividend of half a million in 2015, \$1.2 million in 2016, and again \$1.2 million in 2017. Madam Speaker, this is the reality of what has happened; they had soaked up the debt and yes they have been given protection in respect of other products for a limited period of time.

If you look at the agreement of the actual sale, there were certain conditions that were attached to the sale. The conditions were that, they have to invest in the farm themselves. They have to set up chilling plants in the Western Division, which they already have in Ba and Lautoka and with the Honourable Minister’s concurrence, another two chilling plants would be setup in Nadroga and Yaqara.

Madam Speaker, what this does is, it actually has a much bigger reservoir of people who contribute. You have cane farmers, *dalo* farmers and *yaqona* farmers who may be doing it as their main source of income. If they keep three, four, five, six cows, they can get some income. They do not have to travel far away, people come and collect it, there is a chilling plant. We are growing the industry, Madam Speaker. They also had to invest in modernising the plant and machinery for the factory to a reasonable satisfaction of the seller within three years.

Madam Speaker, whatever concession they get, apart from butter, it finishes off in four years’ time. It is not for perpetuity, it is for the fact that we wanted to assist the farmers. We want to be able to ensure that, Madam Speaker, just as any responsible government would do. We need to ensure that we will still have the capacity to supply certain food sources of ours. If you shut down Rewa Dairy, which is now called Fiji Dairy, and we bring all our milk from overseas, because of this notion of zero rating duty, what happens when the world price of milk goes up? We will all be vulnerable to it. What happens to the 300 farmers? Are we going to convert into beef cattle farming?

This is again a sign like Duguvatu, it is cheap politics, it is not representing the facts. Madam Speaker, the reality is that, if you go to the supermarket and if you see the price differential, it is all price

controlled. We have, Madam Speaker, used the same logic as Honourable Prasad. There are many other items in Fiji that does have a particular level of protection to bring the industry up.

I have been to industries in Vanua Levu, they are given protection. They make certain products because we want the manufacturing sector in Labasa to grow. So with their policy, what will happen is that, they will open up the market, zero rate duty, timber industries close down but you may pay five cents less for your butter. Where will they get the five cents for their butter?

You see, Madam Speaker, it does not make economic sense. So the reality is that we have a provision in place. The price of butter has gone up because of world market prices. Let me alert everyone, those of you who like sultanas. The price of sultanas in the world market has gone up. Honourable Dr. Samisoni may be aware of these because she may put sultanas in the buns she makes. The price of sultanas has gone up in USA by 50 percent already. Rates for sultanas, currants, dried fruits are already going up.

You can read articles now. Honourable Dr. Samisoni may want to hedge on it. These are some of the issues that we are subjected to because of world market prices. We cannot play cheap politics with it, we cannot go to outlying places in Fiji and say, "oh it has gone up because of government". Honourable Vunivalu, thank you for the question, please tell the people in the Western Division that this is the truth.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Nawaikula supplementary question.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Madam Speaker, the reality is that, the Government has taken away the ownership of Rewa Dairy from the farmers, My question is, as a result of all those changes, is the milk production increasing or not?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, I just mentioned to Parliament that the farmers still own shares, they are shareholders.

HON. M.A. NIUMATAIWALU.- 20 percent.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Yes, they have 20 percent shareholders, without any liabilities. The company with the \$17 million debt, Honourable Nawaikula does not understand that. Someone sent me a post on what he said about FNPF, completely false and I have got some answers there. I wish he asks me questions on FNPF. I will give him a lecture on how to read financial statements.

Madam Speaker, here we have a situation where we have farmers who are still shareholders, 20 percent, and they get dividends.

(Honourable Member interjects)

HON. SPEAKER.- Not on the content.

(Honourable Member interjected)

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, but the first part of his question was about farmers, not having any shares. I am addressing that.

(Honourable Member interjects)

HON. SPEAKER.- I may have to stop you from doing interjections because you are really very disruptive. We would like to hear the answer to the question.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, I shudder to think Honourable Nawaikula's understanding of Corporate Law or even understanding the stock market. A share is a share, you have shares in the company which means you are a shareholder of the company, which means you are the owner. How more plain can I get?

Madam Speaker, firstly, again this is a misapprehension by them, whether deliberately or because of their ignorance, I really do not know but obviously the point is not getting through to them. Secondly, as the Honourable Minister for Agriculture will tell you, we had an outbreak of both *Tuberculosis* and *Brucellosis* in the dairy industry. Do you want to drink milk from the cow that has got *Tuberculosis*, *Brucellosis*? Obviously the milk production will go down.

It is not logical that it is being sold. If we did not have *Tuberculosis* and *Brucellosis*, obviously, the milk production will go up. Cows have to be put down. How can you get milk from a dead cow?

(Laughter)

Unfortunately we do not drink goat milk. Madam Speaker, this is what you call "clutching at straws." You cannot clutch milk, Honourable Nawaikula, your logic has no logic.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Mere Samisoni, supplementary question.

HON. DR. M.T. SAMISONI.- Just on milk production, carrying on with that thought. I just wanted to ask a question; I was told by my village people from Lomaloma in Vanua Balavu, Lau that no more milk has been sent over there for the school children. Is that the result of no more supply or less supply? And they were not told that they will not be getting any more milk. If something is failing in the policy, something should be done and that schools are informed because they are asking me for help. Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, that question has got nothing to do with the price of butter or milk production at Rewa Dairy. I understand the Honourable Member is asking about the lack of supply through the free milk scheme in the primary school, if I could get the clarification.

HON. DR. M.T. SAMISONI.- Yes, I mean, it is all connected, is it not?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- No, it is not.

HON. DR. M.T. SAMISONI.- Madam, my supplementary question.

HON. SPEAKER.- You are only allowed one question. We will move on to the next.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Sorry, Madam Speaker, I just wanted to clarify one thing by Honourable Nawaikula about the milk production, he said about being dropped. Yes it did drop because of *Tuberculosis* and *Brucellosis*, the number of farmers has increased from 262 in 2012 to 350 dairy farmers to-date because more people see the livelihood in the dairy industry and we are creating sustained livelihoods for them. Milk production will come up once we have cleaned up the cows.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you, we will move on to the written questions. I now call on the Honourable Parmod Chand to ask his written question.

Written Questions

Foreign Nationals with Fiji Passports – Number of
(Question No. 23/2018)

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

Would the Prime Minister and Minister of iTaukei Affairs, Sugar Industry and Foreign Affairs inform Parliament of how many foreign nationals by country of origin have obtained Fiji passports or have become Fiji nationals since October 2014?

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Can I raise a Point of Order, Madam Speaker?

Standing Order 45(3), when you are asking written questions, you just refer to the question number, you do not have to read the question. If that can be addressed, Madam Speaker, because this has been the trend for quite a while.

This Standing Order clearly specifies that for written questions, you just refer to the Honourable Minister and the number of the question, not the whole question.

HON. SPEAKER.- When we refer to the number of the question, it just restricts the Honourable Member to just that question, because sometimes Honourable Members makes statement before the question or other questions, that they are able to read that question under that number that has been allocated to them, and this has been the practice.

HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA (Prime Minister and Minister of iTaukei Affairs, Sugar Industry and Foreign Affairs).- Madam Speaker, I will table my answer at a later sitting date as permitted under Standing Order 45(3).

HON. SPEAKER.- I now call on Honourable Mosese Bulitavu to ask his written question.

Status of Investigation - Attacks on Places of Worship
(Question No. 24/2018)

HON. M. BULITAVU asked the Government, upon notice:

Can the Honourable Minister for Defence and National Security inform this House, how many places of worship were attacked since the last sitting of this House in September 2017 and what is the status of the investigation in respect of each of those reported attacks?

HON. RATU I. KUBUABOLA (Minister for National Security and Defence).- Madam Speaker, I have the answer and I would like to table my response now.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now call on the Honourable Ratu Kiniviliame Kiliraki to ask his written question.

Number of Complaints - Default FNPF Payments
(Question No. 25/2018)

HON. RATU K. KILIRAKI asked the Government, upon notice:

Can the Honourable Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Public Enterprises, Civil Service and Communications inform the House on the number of complaints received with respect to default FNPF payment by Employers to Employees for the year 2017 and the status of these complaints?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM (Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Public Enterprises, Civil Service and Communications).- Madam Speaker, I will table my written answer in accordance with Standing Order 45(3).

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now call upon Honourable Ratu Suliano Matanitobua to ask his written question.

Assistance Available to Registered Youth Clubs
(Question No. 26/2018)

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

Can the Honourable Minister for Youth and Sports explain the nature of assistance that is currently available to registered youth clubs and the procedure to obtain such assistance?

HON. LT. COL. L.B. TUITUBOU (Minister for Youth and Sports).- Madam Speaker, I will table my answer at a later date permitted under Standing Order 45(3).

HON. SPEAKER.- I now call on the Honourable Mohammed Dean to ask his written question.

Number of Fijians Assisted Under the First Home Buyers Grant
(Question No. 27/2018)

HON. M.M.A. DEAN asked the Government, upon notice:

Can the Acting Minister for Local Government, Housing and Environment, Infrastructure and Transport inform the House on how many Fijians had been assisted under the First Home Buyers Grant?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM (Acting Minister for Local Government, Housing and Environment, Infrastructure and Transport).- Madam Speaker, I will file the written answer in accordance with Standing Order 45(3).

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Question time is now over.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

HON. SPEAKER.- The Minister for Industry, Trade, Tourism and Lands and Mineral Resources has given notice to make two Ministerial Statements. Under Standing Order 40, the Minister may speak up to 20 minutes. After the Minister, I will then invite the Leader of the Opposition or her designate to speak on the Statement for no more than 5 minutes. There will also be a response from the Leader of the National Federation Party or his designate to also speak for 5 minutes. There will be no other debate.

I now call on the Honourable Minister for Industry, Trade, Tourism and Lands and Mineral Resources to deliver his Statement.

Statement on the Ministry of Lands and Mineral Resources

HON. F.S. KOYA.- Madam Speaker, I thank you for this opportunity to deliver a Ministerial Statement in my capacity as Minister for Lands and Mineral Resources.

Madam Speaker, the Ministry through the Department of Lands and the Department of Mineral Resources will remain steadfast to continue to deliver the best of our services as mandated.

Madam Speaker, before I proceed further, I would like to respond to a couple of issues that were raised by the other side of the House in an earlier Parliamentary session before this one started, regarding the lack of surveyors.

Madam Speaker, surveying is one of our core professions and I would like to report that three new surveyors have now also been registered since and added to the list of registered surveyors as per Fiji Gazette of 19th January, 2018. This has brought the total number of registered surveyors in Fiji to 41. And I also confirm in this noble House that the Ministry continues to push for more registration of surveyors this year and the years to come.

The Survey Division within the Ministry, Madam Speaker, carries out surveys on State Lands for the purpose of issuance of registered lease and land titles. This includes the:

- Upgrading of the National Geodetic Framework;
- Development of State Land;
- Survey of mahogany plantations;
- Survey of Government Stations on *itaukei* land; and
- Maintenance of existing subdivisions on State Land.

Some of the work conducted recently through the Survey Division includes; surveyed works at Walu Bay, Navakai Treatment Plant and the Naqali and Labasa Depots, to name a few.

Madam Speaker, the upgrading of Fiji's Geodetic Datum Project is also progressing well whereby two out of the eight Continuous Operating Reference Stations (CORS) have been completed namely, Labasa and Nabouwalu. The CORS is a base station consisting of a Global Navigational Satellite System (GNSS) that gives an instant precise position and is used in many industries, including navigation in the air, on land and sea, and also with respect to precision agriculture, construction, mining, surveying and also used in scientific research. So, this has a critical component.

The team responsible has moved to other areas in Fiji and after the completion of this particular project, we will have an internationally recognised Datum, enhancing rapidly growing use and exchange of high resolution and accurate geospatial information, and a precise comprehensive geodetic framework.

Madam Speaker, also in the last Parliamentary session, the Honourable Dulakiverata mentioned regarding Unimproved Capital Value (UCV) method of assessing land rental and about how it had outlived its usefulness and purpose and the basis of assessing our land rent needed to be reviewed.

Realistically, Madam Speaker, the legislations that governed the assessment of land rental on State Land were made during colonial times, and the decision to adopt the UCV was considered appropriate in view of the economic situation at that time.

Madam Speaker, in its simplest form, the UCV method of rental assessment determined land rental on the value of the land. This excludes all improvements made thereon, and for the Honourable Member's information, Unimproved Capital Value (UCV) method of land rental assessment has not

outlived its usefulness and purpose as the legislation governing it is still very much intact and actually quite legally sound. There are other basis of land rental assessments, such as Capital Value and Market Rental. Capital Value assesses land rental on the improved value of the land whilst the Market Rental assesses land rental on an open negotiated market. All of these methods, Madam Speaker, have their own merits and demerits.

Madam Speaker, land rental on any land is the amount of money that the lessee pays for occupying those land and our role is to ensure that the land rental assessed on State Land are fair and affordable by our lessees; whether it is assessed on UCV or any other basis. Government plays a crucial role in this, Madam Speaker, in balancing the need for better services to the people and ensuring that the monetary return to Government also is fair. We are never in the business as Government of making money.

The Valuation Division of the Ministry continues to carry out all valuation needs of the Government. Headed by the Chief Valuer, the Division also undertakes all land acquisition projects for all public purposes, carries out rating evaluation for local municipalities, assesses and reassesses ground rental for all State leases and manages 556 active State leases on *iTaukei* land.

In addition, Madam Speaker, the Division also provides valuation advice to Government statutory organisations, such as Fiji Roads Authority (FRA) and Water Authority of Fiji (WAF) on their projects, such as the Stinson Bridge, the Vatuwaqa Bridge, Rakiraki Bridge, Nausori Airport and the Nadi and Suva Road upgrading projects.

The Division works in collaboration, Madam Speaker, with other Government agencies through acquiring properties that are required for projects and in turn processes the payment of compensation to affected landowners. It is important to mention that the Ministry, through its Valuation Division, on the 27th February, 2018 paid a total of \$1,934,638.06 to all the 13 municipal councils at Government rates.

Madam Speaker, before I enter into the Land Bank Division in detail, I would like to enlighten also, Honourable Dulakiverata, on an issue raised earlier in a parliamentary session in September last year, regarding landowners consultation. Honourable Member, I am not sure if you know this but I think you should, we do have a dedicated Public Relations Team whose primary role is to conduct landowners consultation and awareness throughout the duration of a particular financial year.

From August to the month of February, the Unit has conducted 17 landowner awareness consultations, 23 landowners revisitations and five roadshows. The consultation is an integral component of the Land Use Division operations and the welfare of the resource owners is always and always will be a priority.

Aligned to the objectives of the Land Use Act, the Land Use Division, Madam Speaker, has derived a total amount of \$8,535,046.68 as lease proceeds for the landowners to-date. This amount is expected to increase before the end of the financial year, Madam Speaker.

Another phenomenal achievement executed by the Division for this financial year is the survey of 1415 acres of customary land, covering five parcels in the Central Division and five in the Western Division. This accomplishment will benefit landowners and investors economically in terms of sustainable development.

The market valuation of our designated *iTaukei* land with ongoing assessment of prevailing market rates is a progressive component of the Division's operations and this is a proactive measure adopted to ensure predetermined market rates for designated properties are made available to both, the

landowners and potential investors, as and when required. The Division was able to execute a total of 51 predetermined market rates and 14 valuation lease offers for this financial year.

Madam Speaker, a critical requirement with regards to any rental agreement is to have a thorough understanding of all the clauses within these lease conditions. I made mention in May 2017 of the number of leases that had been renewed as 874, but as of December 2017, the number has increased to 1,480. The Ministry will continue to pursue the renewal of all expired leases in this financial year.

Madam Speaker, furthermore, the stance of the Ministry on the National Development Plan has instigated the Ministry to strengthen its Environmental Division through the reviewing of its systems and processes. We have engaged four dedicated natural resource project officers to monitor extraction activities and these officers, Madam Speaker, are responsible in carrying out routine monitoring of river gravel and sand extraction, mangrove removals and the illegal unregulated foreshore reclamation. Ultimately, this will address the issues of extraction and mitigate environmental practices.

From August 2017, Madam Speaker, to January 2018, a total of 71 rivers, sand and gravel extraction inspections have been conducted. In addition, the Ministry has facilitated, through the Neglected Development Minerals Programme, multiple trainings and awareness sessions with relevant stakeholders and the strategy intends to diversify the local economy and support ancillary services, such as engineering, mechanical and construction businesses within the legal framework. The programme realises our pursuit of being socially, environmentally responsible and economically vibrant, and ultimately benefitting the local communities.

Also, Madam Speaker, it is important to mention in this august House that with the vision of empowering the landowners, the Ministry is also educating them through awareness workshops, to develop themselves further by being licence holders. Two of the workshops have been conducted, one in the Central/Eastern Division and one in the Northern Division, inviting resource owners to participate.

Madam Speaker, this is a very important message that I would like to deliver to the other side of this House and, of course, to the general public. The Department of Mineral Resources is responsible for developing groundwater resources and this is one of its core roles. Providing groundwater resources for human consumption to alleviate water problems through properly conducted hydrogeological investigation and assessment is this Government's priority. This includes the identification of potential drilling sites and the development of boreholes on reticulation to ensure that safe and clean drinking water supply benefits our rural communities.

This, Madam Speaker, is a fact that has been overlooked by all previous governments. The lack of access to clean, fresh water is considered to be one of the major threats to human life and water, Madam Speaker, is life and clean water means health. The essence of life and it is a birthright for everyone and this will become available to all the people in Fiji under this Government. Clean water is not an expenditure of State funds, but is actually an investment into the country's future.

For the past six month alone, a total of 148 families with a total population of 822 have benefitted from the commissioning of eight boreholes in the villages of Vatani in Kaba Peninsula, Tailevu; four villages in Kubulau, Bua; Navatu, Nasasaivua and Waisa in Natokolau, including the Navasua Government Station. In addition, Madam Speaker, Yavuna Village in Nadi town and Tai District School which has a total school roll of 131 students, five staff quarters, Madam Speaker, those ones were also done. Just as an example, Yavuna village is actually in quite close proximity to Nadi Town. However, all previous governments forgot about them, but we have not. This Government has not.

For the Navatu project, Madam Speaker, we laid about 910 metres of pipe under the sea and for the Yavuna project, we reticulated about 70 metres of pipes across and over the Mosi River, in our efforts

to provide clean and safe water to communities in geographically challenged locations, who had never had access to a sustainable water source. At this juncture also, the Mineral Resource Department I must say, worked day and night to ensure this was done in a timely fashion, and I commend them.

In addition, reticulation work has been completed and ready for commissioning seven other boreholes which will benefit a total of about 115 households in the villages of Nakanacagi in Macuata and Nagasauva in Udu Point, Qwali Settlement and Narata Village in Nadroga, including Ratu Latianara School in Serua, Nairukuruku Primary School, Saioni AOG in Nadroga, which has a total number of 991 students and 27 staff quarters. An additional four boreholes, Madam Speaker, in Cikobia Island in Lau, Qerelevu and Nakavika in Ba and Votulailai in Serua have been successfully drilled and further reticulation work is to be conducted shortly.

Madam Speaker, the ground water development is nationwide focused and runs complementary to the Water Authority of Fiji. The Ministry has also recently purchased supporting drilling equipment to help improve ground water service delivery. Further, a team from the Ministry conducted product verification to purchase replacement groundwater drill rigs due to the high demand. Once the drill rigs are purchased, it will improve the service delivery of providing safe, clean and sustainable ground water especially to the rural areas and its surrounding communities.

For the next 5 months, the Ministry is looking at carrying out more groundwater development, and I will name the areas as such:

1. Avea, Vanua Balavu
2. Benai, Ba
3. Lomawai, Nadroga
4. Nanuku/Wailevu, Ra
5. Tokio, Ra
6. Naveiveiwali, Wainibuka
7. Naidi, Savusavu
8. Koroivonu
9. Bucaiyavu
10. Karoko
11. Napuka Catholic School
12. Vunisavisavi
13. Volivoli Primary School
14. Vatukaroa
15. Matailobau, Naitasiri
16. Dinesh, Lomaivuna Naitasiri
17. Lot 171, Sector 5, Lomaivuna, Naitasiri

In conclusion Madam Speaker, the Ministry of Lands is always looking at itself introspectively in terms of its service delivery and we are continuously improving our processes whilst at the same time advancing our national framework in terms of technology and human resource to meet the demands today. I thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- I now call on the Leader of the Opposition or her designate to deliver their response.

HON. J. DULAKIVERATA.- Thank you Madam Speaker. I rise to respond to the Ministerial Statement by the Honourable Minister for Lands and Mineral Resources on behalf of the Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Madam Speaker, I wish to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the former Ministers for Lands, former and current staff of the Department of Lands and Survey and all the stakeholders involved in the meaningful contribution to land administration and development in Fiji. It is their effort that has transformed State land administration to what it is today.

Madam Speaker, land is an important factor of production and plays a key role in development of any nation. There are two key issues in the Ministerial Statement that I would like to speak on because of the constraint of time.

One is rent re-assessment Madam Speaker. This is provided for by the State Lands Leases and Licenses Regulations of 1980 and it lays down the procedures for rental re-assessment. The leases, Madam Speaker, are to be re-assessed every five years and unfortunately there has been a lot of arrears in the rental collected by Government over the last two years.

In the Auditor General's Report of 2015, the rent arrears for the Lands Department is \$26.9 million; this is unprecedented, the highest that it can ever be. During the last decade, Madam Speaker, this used to be just around \$10 million. This is rent arrears alone, and it continues to rise year after year. There is no reason for this increase in rent arrears. The Department should carry out awareness and offer incentives to the tenants to pay up their rental on time.

Secondly, Madam Speaker, this is only part of the problem. The other problem is the non-reassessment of some of the leases which has resulted in the loss of substantial income to the State. There is no reason for this non-reassessment, Madam Speaker, because of the GIS system that the Government has and the support mechanism that the department offers for lease administration.

Madam Speaker, on valuation, the profession has grown to prominence over the years since the enactment of the Valuers Registration Act 1987. The growth in the activeness in the Institute of Valuation and Estate Management of Fiji also resulted in the introduction of the degree course in Estate Management at the tertiary institutions such as USP and FNU. These courses, Madam Speaker, used to be only available overseas.

The problem, Madam Speaker, is that valuers are now performing other tasks other than their core functions. Rent reassessment is one of the core functions of valuers and there used to be a sub-unit that deals specifically with the issue, it is not the case anymore which has led to more leases missing out reassessment and loss of Government revenue. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now call upon the Leader of the NFP or his designate to deliver the response.

HON. P. SINGH.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. I thank the Honourable Minister of Lands for his Ministerial Statement and I am aware of the sheer gravity of this task. Property valuations are a source of information for financial reporting as well as decision making in land governance as cited in a paper delivered by Mr. Narayan at the World Bank Conference on Land and Poverty last March.

Madam Speaker, the Minister rightly observed the functions of the Lands Department in terms of valuation. Their functions also extends to the valuation of property within the boundaries of municipalities to determine the UCV on a sexennial basis with a six-yearly term. Madam Speaker, recently we had a sexennial valuation of properties within the boundaries of Nadi Town and we saw that the UCV across the board went up by 42 percent. This gives the information that the Council needs to rate the properties accordingly.

Madam Speaker, while the Fiji Institute of Valuation and Estate Management had adopted the international valuing standards, they appear to be systematic institutional informational and technical issues still hampering its implementation. Furthermore, the valuers from our private sector have articulated very clearly that there is a lack of research from specialists in this field that allows for reflection and improvement. There are issues with measurement standards, to cut down on subjectivity in the valuations performed locally.

Madam Speaker, as the Honourable Minister alluded to reassessment of leases, the reassessment is based on the valuations and the valuation needs to be in line with the current land tenure practises. Having said that we have seen quite a number of cases particularly with Lands Department and the lessees where Lands Departments Valuation Section has missed out on the five-year reassessment as provided by under the leases. It is only when leases, that lessees go in for a land transaction or land deals then only they are made aware that there is a reassessment due.

Madam Speaker, in all fairness, if you miss the five-year reassessment as the landlord, then you miss out or you “missed the bus” as we say, and the lessees should not be burdened with the reassessment due to not fault of theirs.

In this aspect, Madam Speaker, if I can draw the Honourable Minister’s attention that this has to be streamlined and in fairness, that all leases which attract five-year reassessment, they need to be complied with by the Lands Department; so as not to burden the ordinary lessees.

Madam Speaker, the Honourable Minister talked about the general survey of leases. It is good to know that a progressive programme is in place to continue to monitor and survey all land in Fiji, particularly the State land. State land are those lands which are either owned by the Government or the Government has acquired them through other processes. So in essence, the valuations and reassessment of rental go together and the technology has to be up to standard and these standards have been talked about internationally and locally. All we have to do is to get some brains on board and streamline this process. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now call again the Minister for Industry, Trade, Tourism, Lands & Mineral Resources to deliver his second statement.

HON. F.S. KOYA.- My second statement, Madam Speaker?

HON. SPEAKER.- Do you have your second statement?

HON. F.S. KOYA.- Yes.

HON. SPEAKER.- Just before you deliver your second statement, I seek leave of the House that we delay the afternoon tea until after the sitting, given that we still have a few other items to go through.

Any opposition?

(Chorus of “Noes”)

There being none, thank you very much.

Honourable Minister you may now deliver your statement.

HON. F.S. KOYA.- Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Statement - Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism

HON. F.S. KOYA.- Madam Speaker, I thank you for giving me the opportunity to take the floor and make a Ministerial Statement in respect to the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism. Madam Speaker, I wish to reiterate the point that was made earlier regarding Fiji and the Fijian economy and us experiencing eight consecutive years of unprecedented levels of growth.

Madam Speaker, as I have mentioned earlier, this is the feat that has never been achieved before. Over the past five years as I had said, the average growth was 4.5 percent, later 5.6 percent in 2014 being the highest record recorded for decades. This upward trajectory, Madam Speaker, is actually forecasted to continue in the years to come.

Madam Speaker, one of the key contributors to this sustained economic growth is investments. Investments have actually remained very positive contributing as I said earlier 25 percent to the GDP and the GDP of a country is very important unlike what the other side might say.

It contributes 25 percent of the GDP and most importantly as I have said earlier on, the private sector investments have actually contributed approximately 15 percent. As I have said also Reserve Bank's review states that investment remained upbeat for 2017. A new lending by commercial banks for investments increased by an average of 23 percent in 2017.

Madam Speaker, in terms of foreign direct investments we have seen an upward trend for the past decade and according to the World Bank Group, I have seen an average annual inflow of foreign direct investment in the country has reached US\$320 million. This increased trend inflow has enabled to continuously increase FDI stock to GDP ratio which averaged 87.2 percent for the 2013- 2015 period.

This, Madam Speaker, is a summing that everyone should know, this is way above the East Asian and Pacific Region average of 38.6 percent. I think that is a phenomenal achievement on Fiji's behalf.

Madam Speaker, for the same period the FDI inflows to GDP in Fiji has been around 7.2 percent which is again higher than the East Asia and Pacific Regional average of 4.3 percent. A phenomenal achievement for Fiji, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, more investments or most investments here in Fiji have been focussed on the primary industries services such as:

- i) Finance
- ii) Hotel and Tourism related activities
- iii) Telecommunications
- iv) Manufacturing Industries such as Food & Beverages

Madam Speaker, it is also being noted that the key investment source markets for Fiji have been traditionally Australia and New Zealand with China showing an emerging trend. This is also attributed to the in-roads that the Ministry had been able to make into these countries through the effective marketing and promotion undertaken by our Trade Commissions in these areas and also the High Commissions and Embassies.

Madam Speaker, I am also pleased to inform this august House that after an absence of about two decades, Fiji once again has a Trade Commission in New Zealand. The office is now operational and is supporting potential investors to consider Fiji as a business destination and assisting Fijian exporters to tap into opportunities in New Zealand. This is a major accomplishment for the Fijian Government and

is reflective of the importance that we place in positioning Fiji as a hub for trade and investment in the region as well as strengthening our economic relations in New Zealand.

The strong growth, Madam Speaker, of investments has been made possible because of the long-term forward thinking and pro-growth policies of the FijiFirst Government. In addition, the Government has continued to develop infrastructure that is vital for trade and investments. The 2017-2018 National Budget continued the commitment of Government in providing an enabling environment to investors and to businesses.

Madam Speaker, the recently undertaken analysis of investment inflows by the World Bank Group IFC has identified opportunities for Fiji in attracting efficiency-seeking investment. Efficiency-seeking investments is determined to be the leading contributor to a country's productive capacity and also to its portfolio diversification.

In addition, in order to capitalise on our hub status and get the best economic results from investments and achieve structural transformation, we need to focus on attracting investors that are export-oriented.

Madam Speaker, 2017-2018 Budget provides for a number of continuing and new initiatives that focus on building the manufacturing services and ICT sectors and encouraging investments in the production of high-quality finished goods. One such initiative is the Wairabetia Economic Zone; zone which target investments from leading ICT, manufacturing and supply-chain management and other medium-to-large scale firms. There will be tailor-made incentives for investments in that particular zone.

The implementation of the zone, Madam Speaker, is well underway with the project being steered by inter-agency taskforce. Consultants have been recruited in areas of project management, master planning and the design of the zone. We will ensure that the rigorous environmental impact assessment is undertaken to ensure balance between the protection of environment and achievement of national development objectives, such as creation of employment and the uplifting of livelihood of people and supporting micro and small and medium enterprises as part of the supply chain in spurring an overall economic activity in the west. It is anticipated that once a design phase, Madam Speaker, is completed, development of the site will begin later this year and we have already received significant interest from international investors and financiers to partner with the Fijian Government in this critical project.

Madam Speaker, I wish to draw the attention of this House to the audio-visual industry. Madam Speaker, this has grown significantly in the past few years. In the past three years, this industry has really grown exponentially and there are strong signs the industry will continue its growth trajectory.

Madam Speaker, the audio-visual industry has been an industry that has not been the focus of discussions or debates over the years. The previous governments have not given it any thought and not given the audio-visual industry the due credit or attention that it deserves.

The audio-visual industry, Madam Speaker, was given a boost in 2012 by increasing the Film Tax Rebate to 47 percent. This, Madam Speaker, is the best film incentive in the world and has gained the attention of the film-making world and the producers from the United States of America, India, Australia and Europe.

The growth of this emerging industry relies on foreign production activity to fuel it. Hence, the more foreign productions that come into the country, the more economic activities are generated by this industry. The Fijian audio-visual sector, Madam Speaker, is forging its way to becoming a fully-fledged local industry that supplies sustainable employment and sustainable returns for investment.

Madam Speaker, in terms of numbers, the industry in the last three years has shown exceptional performance. In 2015, there were 42 productions with a budgetary value of about \$9.9 million. In terms of total budgetary value of all the production in Fiji, in 2017, this value increased to \$308 million. The number of productions also increased by 76.2 percent in 2017. It is worth noting that in 2015, the local spend by the productions was valued at \$5.8 million, which was increased by \$109.2 million or by 2,055 percent increase in 2017 to \$125 million. The economic activity created by the audio-visual productions in 2017 is approximately \$350 million, which again is an increase of \$333.8 million in comparison to 2015.

Madam Speaker, these productions come to Fiji and they spend large amounts of money, typically over three to four months period. Few industries can match the injection of foreign income into Fiji at the pace that foreign film productions can. For example, a large production will spend \$15million over three months directly into the Fijian economy.

Madam Speaker, the increase in large film productions has led to increased employment of local talent, and of course our local vendors are engaged to supply products and services to the productions. These include hotel accommodation; land, air and sea transportation; catering; hardware and building materials; equipment hire; financial; insurance; and professional services. There is also investment by locals into new areas of businesses that can provide technical support to the industry, for example, set and prop designs, et cetera that are needed by the industry. In addition, Madam Speaker, the benefits are not limited to just employment and businesses but includes payment of location fees to landowners where the production is located. Most productions have been undertaken in maritime zones and smaller townships.

Madam Speaker, I wish to highlight an example of the benefits to the local community from audio-visual productions. Pacific Line Productions Pte Ltd – Koh Lanta, Robinson, Survivor (French, Polish and Swedish versions of Survivor) have spent in Yasawa:

Benefits	Amount (\$)
Catering by village women for local workers	345,230
Boat Hire from local villagers	42,100
Location Fees for use of Yasawa I Rara	768,893
Location Fees (iTLTB charges)	148,111
Employment Costs for local villagers	944,971
New roads running north-south and east-west connecting villages	552,540
Total Local Spend	2,801,845

Madam Speaker, I wish to emphasise that the \$2.8 million is a direct benefit to the local community of Yasawa Islands which would not have been realized if the film production had not taken place there.

Large productions, Madam Speaker, have also undertaken development and upgrade of infrastructure, such as roads and jetties in remote location to facilitate their access to certain filming locations and have generated widespread benefits again to the locals residing in that area.

Madam Speaker, some of the major productions that have been undertaken in the past three years, these are from various countries include:

Country	Television productions	Feature Film
United States of America	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Survivor (CBS) Stranded with a Million Dollars (MTV/Viacom) Kicking and Screaming (Fox/Lionsgate) Wrecked Season 2 (TBS) Fiji Pro (World Surf League) 	Adrift (STX Entertainment)
Australia	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The Big Adventure (Channel 7) The Last Resort (Channel 9) Bachelor in Paradise (Warner Bro International TV, Australia) 	
France	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Koh Lanta Fidji (Adventure Line Productions) Koh Lanta All Stars (Adventure Line Productions) Adventure Robinson (Adventure Line Productions) 	
Poland	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Survivor Poland (Adventure Line Productions) 	
Sweden	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Robinson Season 17 (Adventure Line Productions) 	
India		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Jaani (Prem Motion Pictures) Party (Amma Creations)
China		China - Daddy Where Are We Going? 2 (Real Dream Productions)

Madam Speaker, television shows such as The Survivor Series US, which is one of the largest television productions in the world is viewed by over nine million people per episode and has a global audience of about 120 million viewers. Koh Lanta Fidji is France's most popular reality television show and is viewed by 5.1 million viewers per episode. We can see the benefits from the audio-visual sector is far-reaching as it puts on display to a global audience what Fiji has to offer not only as a filming destination but as a tourism destination.

Madam Speaker, studies also show that wherever a successful film has been shot the location has experienced a growth of 54 percent in tourism arrivals in the four years following the productions, many examples of films increasing tourism, include:

Film	Location	Impact of visitor number
Braveheart	Wallace Monument, Scotland	300% increase a year after release
Captain Corelli's Mandolin	Cephonia, Greece	50% increase
Field of Dreams	Iowa, USA	35,000 visits in 1991 and steady increase every year
Four Weddings and a Funeral	The Crown Hotel, Amersham, England	Fully booked for at least 3 years
Harry Potter	Various locations in UK	Increase of 50% of more in all filmed locations
Mission Impossible 2	National Park, Sydney, Australia	200% increase in 2000
Notting Hill	Kenwood House, England	10% increase in one month
Pride and Prejudice	Lyme Park, England	150% increase
Sense and Sensibility	Saltram House, England	39% increase
The Beach	Thailand	22% increase in youth market in 2000
Troy	Canakkale, Turkey	73% increase

Madam Speaker, we do not have the calculations of the increase from Bollywood but the figures in Bollywood are quite substantial and even large than these ones. I cannot actually recall the name of the movie that was shot in Spain somewhere then.

Fiji Tourism or Film tourism Madam Speaker, is a growing phenomenon worldwide which Governments around the world have started paying attention to and are providing the relevant resources for the development of their audio-visual industries.

Madam Speaker, in this regard, with the support of the Ministry of Economy, the Ministry has been able to provide the relevant resources to Film Fiji. Since 2015, Film Fiji's budget has increased by 133 percent to over \$2 million. This is primarily to support Film Fiji's marketing and promotion activities in key markets, such as US (Hollywood), India (Bollywood), China, to name a few.

Madam Speaker, the 5 year and 20-year National Development Plan (NDP) provides a clear link between tourism promotion and the development of the audio-visual sector.

In addition, the NDP also states that to improve prospects for the audio-visual industry and film-making there needs to be partnership with the private sector. This will include the development of large production studios, enhanced availability of specialised equipment and nurturing of our local talent.

Madam Speaker, the Fijian Government will continue to provide the relevant resources for the marketing and development of the audio-visual sector and provide an enabling environment to encourage investment into related infrastructure.

Madam Speaker, I thank you again for allowing me this opportunity to take the floor and provide an update to this House on the AV industry.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Madam Speaker, I rise to reply to the statement by the Honourable Minister for Trade in regards to the Audio Visual Industry.

At the outset, Madam Speaker, let me just comment on a phenomena that I saw here on Monday that is keeping the social media quite active, the fact that only that side of the House were bitten by insects

on Monday, and not this side of the House. It may be telling us, Madam Speaker, that the insects are also saying what SODELPA has been saying “Time is up for the other side”.

(Chorus of Interjections)

Madam Speaker, we were not bitten, they were in misery.

Just on the GDP, Madam Speaker, I know that everyone differs on this but let me relate an experience with the former President of France, Nicolas Sarkozy. He told his people, “Listen, give me a better metric to measure our economic performance” because when he was talking about the GDP, the French people were calling him a liar because it was not in sync with the experience of the people on the ground. The same as in Fiji.

You can talk about GDP growth of whatever percent but people in here are having a miserable time. I have a lady who said to me, “Sir, help us with the cost of items” she said, “As you go to the supermarket or the market, do not look at the price on the shelf, look at the faces of the people”, that is what she told to me. It is still true today, please can you look at a metric to measure your performance. GDP is out.

Madam Speaker, let us be very clear about FACV, about filming in Fiji. People come here because the Yasawas and the Malolos are some of the most naturally beautiful spots on earth, let us be very clear on that. Let us not say that that is because of FijiFirst. What is important for us, Madam Speaker, is to ensure that the owners of that naturally beautiful area are well-looked after when they do filming and, Madam Speaker, they are not.

There is a case today in the Yasawas where filming was carried out on a reserved land, no consent was obtained and it is now a court case. We do not want this to happen for filming here because people are so lax in the way they handle these things.

Madam Speaker, you have to set in place a proper structure, proper tariff on how to film on native land, on native beaches, *qoliqoli* because it is creating a lot of tension in the Yasawas and the Malolo.

(Chorus of Interjections)

What is happening, Madam Speaker, is that when they want to film on a beach, they put up security stopping the locals from walking past that beach. They were born there, and they have the right to walk there but when there is filming they say “You cannot walk here, you cannot even fish in your *qoliqoli*” so these things have to be properly monitored. A structure has to be put in place.

Madam Speaker, on tourism, the landowners of Mana would not want filming to be done on Mana because when there is a filming crew in the house, they stop all the tourists from coming and it does not operate as a proper island resort but as a filming location.

Madam Speaker, the multiplier effects of a proper hotel is much, much greater than when the filming crew is in the house. They are complaining, part-timers are laid off, no tours to the villagers, no shell market, no activities. It is creating a lot of angst in the Malolo, in the Yasawas and it behaves FijiFirst to go on the ground and set it up properly. Yes, we like FACV.

HON. MEMBER.- Tell your son.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Yes, they bring in a lot of money but do it properly so that the people do not turn against filming. I know what it is like. I brought in a crew once and they liked one part of Fiji

but when they went to the other part, the locals became so upset about the whole terms. Yes, we like it but do your work properly, Madam Speaker.

HON. P. CHAND.- Madam Speaker, I thank the honourable Minister for his Ministerial Statement. I am aware that Film Fiji as directed by the Film Act of 2002 is intended to promote and develop the Audio Visual Industry in the Fiji Islands and the scope of its mandate extends to film, TV, video, music, IT software and e-commerce studio city zones, including telecommunications, call centres and back office operations.

If I were to superimpose another current Government initiative on top of today's update, that is the Young Entrepreneurship Scheme, yes, I would have to say that I am a little disappointed. Let me clarify, Madam Speaker, yes we want new and budding entrepreneurs to make their mark, overturn and drive the current dynamics of business but there is one strata already in this space that needs special consideration also.

Madam Speaker, there is a class already embedded and experienced Fijian-born specialists in film, animation, music, IT, multi-media, photography, art, et cetera, who need a leg-up. They work hard, we have worked with some of them. They are outstanding, passionate and eager to grow, yet big contrast, especially Government contracts a few and far between because they are being sandwiched by offshore entities who have set up roots here most recently.

We are not suggesting nationalism, Madam Speaker, we need competition in order to up our gain. What we do suggest is a level playing field that does not discriminate against our own to whom we owe our first priority as sons and daughters of Fiji, and the National Federation Party is looking very carefully at how we will grow them.

CONSIDERATION OF BILLS

EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS (AMENDMENT) BILL 2018

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

- a) That the Employment Relations (Amendment) Bills 2018 be considered by Parliament without delay;
- b) That the Bill must pass through one stage at a single sitting of Parliament;
- c) That the Bill must not be referred to a Standing Committee or other Committee of Parliament;
- d) That the Bill must be debated and voted upon by Parliament on Thursday, 8th March, 2018

and that one hour be given to debate the Bill, with the right of reply given to me as the Member moving this motion.

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

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, this Bill is a very minor amendment. Essentially, we are hoping that all the Members of Parliament will support this Bill. This is essentially to remove the discriminatory practice or provisions against females in the Employment Relations Bill which says "...prohibiting employment of females on underground work in mines...."

This is obviously not in compliance with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and various other equality provisions that exist within the Constitution, and it is just simply the removal of that particular provision.

HON. SPEAKER.- I call on contributions to the Bill. There being none, Parliament will now vote.

The Question is:

Pursuant to Standing Order 51, that the:

- a) Employment Relations (Amendment) Bill 2018 be considered by Parliament without delay;
- b) Bill must pass through one stage at a single sitting of Parliament;
- c) Bill must not be referred to a Standing Committee or other Committee of Parliament;
- d) Bill must be debated and voted upon by Parliament on Thursday 8th March, 2018,

but then one hour be given to debate the Bill, with the right of reply given to the Honourable Attorney-General as the Member moving the motion.

Does any Member oppose the motion?

(Chorus of 'Noes')

HON. SPEAKER.- There being no opposition, the motion is agreed to unanimously.

Motion agreed to.

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

MEDICINAL PRODUCTS (AMENDMENT) BILL 2018

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

- a) Medicinal Products (Amendment) Bill 2018 be considered by Parliament without delay;
- b) Bill must pass through one stage at a single sitting of Parliament;
- c) Bill must not be referred to a Standing Committee or other Committee of Parliament; and
- d) Bill must be debated and voted upon by Parliament on Thursday 8th March, 2018,

but then one hour be given to debate the Bill, with the right of reply given to me as the Member moving this motion.

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

HON. SPEAKER.- I now call on the Honourable Attorney-General to speak on his motion.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, again, this particular Bill is a very minor amendment but essentially important amendment to essentially ensure that the various procedural issues that are faced by the Council itself are removed. Again, there are only two Clauses within the amendment that is sought, to ensure that the proceedings of the Board and the conflicting provisions are actually removed so the Board proceedings can actually be held in a streamlined fashion.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- The motion is up for debate. Any comments?

(There were no comments)

There being none, Parliament will now vote.

Question put.

The Question is:

Pursuant to Standing Order 51, that the:

- a) Medicinal Products (Amendment) Bill 2018 be considered by Parliament without delay;
- b) Bill must pass through one stage at a single sitting of Parliament;
- c) Bill must not be referred to a Standing Committee or other Committee of Parliament;
- d) Bill must be debated and voted upon by Parliament on Thursday 8th March, 2018,

but then one hour be given to debate the Bill, with the right of reply given to the Honourable Attorney-General as the Member moving the motion.

Does any Member oppose the motion?

(Chorus of 'Noes')

HON. SPEAKER.- There being no opposition, the motion is therefore agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

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

PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (AMENDMENT) BILL 2018

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

- a) Public Enterprises (Amendment) Bill 2018 be considered by Parliament without delay;
- b) Bill must pass through one stage at a single sitting of Parliament;
- c) Bill must not be referred to a Standing Committee or other Committee of Parliament;
- d) Bill must be debated and voted upon by Parliament on Thursday 8th March, 2018,

but then one hour be given to debate the Bill with the right of reply given to me as the Member moving this motion.

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

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

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, again, it is a very minor amendment, essentially to bring the Public Enterprises Act in alignment with the new Companies Act because as we would know that under the old Companies Act, we had to have at least two shareholders for a company to be formed. Of course, now under the Companies Act as modern day practice, we need only one shareholder. And this essential amendment is just to remove 'two (2)' to 'one (1)' and have that provision.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Do we have any comments for debate?

(There were no comments)

Parliament will now vote.

Question put.

The Question is:

Pursuant to Standing Order 51, that the:

- a) Public Enterprises (Amendment) Bill be considered by Parliament without delay;
- b) Bill must pass through one stage at a single sitting of Parliament;
- c) Bill must not be referred to a Standing Committee or other Committee of Parliament;
- d) Bill must be debated and voted upon by Parliament on Thursday 8th March, 2018,

but then one hour be given to debate the Bill, with the right of replying given to the Honourable Attorney-General as the Member moving the motion.

Does any Member oppose the Motion?

(Chorus of ‘Noes’)

HON. SPEAKER.- There being no opposition, the motion is agreed to unanimously.

Motion agreed to.

HON. SPEAKER.- For the information Honourable Members, there are three motions from respective Chairpersons of Standing Committees; two by the Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs and the third motion by the Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs.

At the outset, I wish to clarify that the wording of the motions allows the Parliament to debate the contents of the Reports. At the end of the debates, we will be voting merely to note the Reports. I remind Honourable Members that once the vote is taken on the motions, it ends there and the Reports will not be debated again in Parliament.

I now call upon the Chairperson of the Standing Committee of Social Affairs to move his motion.

**REVIEW REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL AFFAIRS –
UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC 2013 ANNUAL REPORT**

HON. V. PILLAY.- Madam Speaker, I move:

That Parliament debates the Review Report of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs on the University of the South Pacific 2013 Annual Report which was tabled on 10th February, 2016.

HON. V.K. BHATNAGAR .- Madam Speaker, I beg to second the motion.

HON. SPEAKER.- I now invite the Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs to speak on his motion.

HON. V. PILLAY.- Madam Speaker, the Honourable Prime Minister, Honourable Ministers, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition and Honourable Members of Parliament, on behalf of the Honourable Members of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs, I take this opportunity to speak on the motion in regards to the review that was made to the University of the South Pacific 2013 Annual Report.

At the outset, this Committee Review Report is a bipartisan one. It has the contribution of all parties in the Committee. The Committee was satisfied with the overall performance of the University. These are in terms of their mandated role which comprise the following as an education provider, solution provider, leader and development partner.

Overall the performance of the University of the South Pacific (USP) in 2013 was commendable and we also acknowledge USP in allowing the Fijian Government to exercise leadership in the Region. The Fijian Government wonderfully hosted the main campus and has contributed enormously to USP's success for the past 49 years, and continues to support it strongly. The USP's finances have matured over time and the Fijian Government has contributed a lot to USP and in 2013, it has contributed about \$36,419,395 which comprised of 19.5 percent of USP's total income.

The Committee after its consultations with USP, recommends that USP's financial statements to be audited by Government Auditors since Government provides an annual grant to USP every year. In terms of the member countries' contribution, out of the 12 member countries, Fiji contributed about 74 percent of the total contribution which derived from the two distribution criteria and that is, the Student Grant and the Campus Grant.

Finally, the Committee acknowledge USP's contribution in Fiji. These are in terms of regional learning institution, a major employer, provides relevant research, provision of sound policy advice, community service and outreach promotions, and maintenance of culture and language and generate economic activities in Fiji.

Madam Speaker, with those few comments, as a Member moving the motion, I thank you for this opportunity.

HON. SPEAKER.- I now invite Members, if anyone wants to speak on the motion?

Honourable Mikaele Leawere?

HON. M.R. LEAWARE .- Madam Speaker, let me just make a short contribution on the Review Report of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs on the Annual Report of USP. I begin by expressing my gratitude and appreciation to the work done by the Committee regarding USP. It is no ordinary feat to exist and excel as a totally regional and purely Pacific University for the past 50 years, through thousands of students who pass to make Fiji and the Pacific a knowledge-based society, seeking to strive higher in education.

It is pleasing to record from the Report that more than 34,000, Madam Speaker, 21,000 students graduated from USP from 2004 to 2014. It was an era of the Public Service Commission, Fijian Affairs Board and the Multi Ethnic Scholarship under the SDL Government for those Scholarships which enabled many of those 75,000 law students were from Fiji to attain university education.

Madam Speaker, on Page 7 of the Review Report, I note that the Committee has found the USP was paying an average of about \$400,000 legal fees per annum. This is according to the assessment made by the Committee in its own words, "very high." I do not think anyone in this House, Madam Speaker,

has any qualms with the statement of facts, suffice to say, “let us examine the cause of this high legal cost.”

Madam Speaker, the findings that follow that particular observation by the Committee, in a way, substantiates the cause of such high legal fees because of the poor labour relations issues between the University and its staff.

I think the Committee could have gone further to examine the components of this legal cost and determine how much of it was for labour relations issues.

Madam Speaker, as a nation which contributes about 75 percent of the total grants to USP and we have 75 percent of the students are from Fiji, we cannot not ignore the payment of such exorbitantly legal fees and allow the hard earned tax payers funds to go to the coffers of the lawyers at USP. The Opposition believes if the same money could be better utilised for development of accommodation facilities for those students who study at the University of the South Pacific, who are from rural and maritime communities.

Madam Speaker, universities are not places of silence and for the dumb. They are supposed to be places of innovative ideas flying freely with freedom of expression and scrutinising the conduct of public affairs, to create meaningful debate on national issues and policies. However, Madam Speaker, the period from which this report is from was totally a different one in Fiji then now as the situation at University of the South Pacific, as opposed to its past is no better even now, as anyone seeking to question the conduct of public affairs or policy is either silenced or shown the door as a result of the reports that records the departure of professors from the university. Ten (10) Senior Staff of the University have departed due to this.

Finally, Madam Speaker, the culture of silence that has enveloped University of the South Pacific as a centre of critic on public policies and leadership is well explained by the fact that it doesn't gather the courage to do so and the university may lose a part of the 74 percent funding from the Government of the day. But as a shadow Minister, I assure USP that when we are in Government, you will not be guaranteed of this funding to continue but also the freedom to create a healthy debate with the fear of oppression or loss of funding from the State. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Aseri Radrodro, you have the floor.

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- Thank you, Madam Speaker, just like to make a brief contribution on the Report on the Standing Committee on Social Affairs especially regarding their recommendation. There have only one recommendation and the recommendation reads that “the Office of the Auditor-General to audit USP and the Report be submitted to Parliament”.

Madam Speaker, this is a very important recommendation by the Committee in regards to the amount of contribution that the Government of Fiji has contributed to the University operation. There is also a need for value for money auditing in terms of the operations of the university especially if we look at some findings of the Committee. One of the findings noted that some people in the teaching professions are now engaged in the senior administrative management. No wonder, Madam Speaker, that the operations of the university are in tatters, especially outside of the academic activities.

There is a need for proper regulatory auditing in the operational affairs of the University of the South Pacific. The Committee also noted that the USP Council decides on all the cost adjustments that were made to the Unit and programmes offered in USP is based on certain factors. What is currently happening right now is the fees

that are levied at the university for students per subject, is a bit too much . This needs to be reviewed and I am, therefore, strongly in support of the recommendations of the Committee that there is a need for the Auditor-General to audit the University of the South Pacific and the Report to be submitted to Parliament. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Before we continue, I call upon the Leader of the Government has a motion to table.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

HON. LEADER OF THE GOVERNMENT IN PARLIAMENT.- Madam Speaker, I move under Standing Order 6:

That so much of Standing Order 23 (1) is suspended so as to allow the House to sit beyond 4.30 pm today to complete the business up to the third motion only as listed under Schedule 2 in today's Order Paper.

HON. SPEAKER.- Do we have a seconder?

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

HON. SPEAKER.- I now call upon the Honourable Leader of the Government to speak on his motion.

HON. LEADER OF THE GOVERNMENT IN PARLIAMENT.- Madam Speaker, Monday to Thursday sittings are for Government business. Madam Speaker , we just want to conclude that three motions are listed in today's Order Paper. As I have stated in the motion that it just needs to sit beyond 4.30 pm today to complete the third motion. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Do we have any input from the Honourable Members?

(Chorus of “noes”)

Question put.

Motion agreed to.

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON THE REVIEW REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL AFFAIRS – UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC 2013 ANNUAL REPORT

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, I probably should make a response in respect to this given this is about the Standing Committee Report? The USP one?

HON. SPEAKER.- Yes.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, I feel somewhat compelled to make a report, of course, the Fijian Government has been supporting USP since the late 1960s. The Fijian Government is the largest contributor to USP, of course, it has a number of Fijian students. The University of the South Pacific, like Fiji National University and the University of Fiji, is the beneficiary of Government's Scholarship Scheme and also the TELTS Programme. I was somewhat baffled by Honourable Leawere's

comments about freedom of expression at the university et cetera. Nothing of that nature is affected by those committees' work nor in practical sense affected at all. I think that is bit of stab in the back.

Madam Speaker, the universities in Fiji, including USP, has the level of academic independence that it should have because all modern tertiary institutions do have. Of course some of your Honourable Members have actually been holding meetings there too without any interference by anyone not even withstanding the fact that Government does fund it to the tune of \$36 million. I think it is quiet amiss of the Honourable Member to start making those sorts of allegation without any proof which obviously becoming a standard practice from the other side, both inside and outside the House.

Madam Speaker, the accountability of course is very important and I think Government does have measures in place and we will of course continue to ensure that there is proper accountability. The Fijian Government is represented on the Council of USP. They will continue to be able to give us the opportunity to question any anomalies that may arise from any of the spending.

The USP of course is the beneficiary also of other donors and grant providers and not just other South Pacific Island countries but also by other countries such as Australia, New Zealand and Japan that have invested in different aspects of USP. We look forward to working together with USP as it does provide a particular level of expertise in certain disciplines that other universities in Fiji do not provide. We look forward together of course being fostered and in fact buffered up the funding we do provide and I thank the Committee for the Report that they have provided. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. there being no other input I now call on the Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs to speak in reply.

HON. V. PILLAY.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. Apart from the issues that we have given this afternoon, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the University of the South Pacific for its roles and contributions towards these key focus areas which affect Fiji, including our neighbouring countries. This is in terms of the Pacific cultures and societies, Pacific oceans and natural resources, environment and sustainable development and climate change, human capacity building in leadership, economic growth, regional cooperation and integration for sustainable economics, ICT and non-objective economic and Government public policy and social cohesion.

Madam Speaker, at this juncture I thank you for this opportunity. Thank you.

Question put.

Motion is agreed to unanimously.

REVIEW REPORT - FIJI ELECTRICITY AUTHORITY 2014 ANNUAL REPORT

HON. SPEAKER.- I call on the Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs to move her motion.

HON. L. EDEN.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I move that Parliament debates the Report on the Fiji Electricity Authority 2014 Annual Report which was tabled on 28th September, 2016.

HON. V. NATH.- Madam Speaker, I second the motion.

HON. SPEAKER.- Now, I invite the Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs to speak on the motion.

HON. L. EDEN.- Thank you. Madam Speaker, the Honourable Prime Minister, Leader of the Opposition, Honourable Ministers and Honourable Members of Parliament. On behalf of the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs, I take this opportunity to speak on the motion with regards to the review that was made on the Fiji Electricity Authority Annual Report 2014.

Madam Speaker, following perusal of the report and the presentation and discussions held with FEA's Chief Executive Officer and their Financial Services Unit Leader, our Standing Committee was satisfied with the report and chose not to make any recommendations. Further, Madam Speaker, given the year of this report and the number of years that have lapsed, our Committee felt that this was a prudent decision.

Madam Speaker, as the member moving the motion. I thank you for this opportunity.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. The motion is now open for debate and we invite comments if any. There being none.

Parliament will now vote to note the content of the report.

Does any Member oppose the motion?

Chorus of 'Noes'

Motion is there agreed to unanimously.

REVIEW REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS ON THE FIJI HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION 2013 ANNUAL REPORT

HON. SPEAKER.- I now call upon the Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs to move his motion.

HON. V. PILLAY.- Madam Speaker, I move that Parliament debates the review report of the Committee on the Fiji Higher Education Commission 2013 Annual Report which was tabled on 11th February 2016.

HON. V. BHATNAGAR.- Madam Speaker, I second the motion.

HON. SPEAKER.- I now invite the Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs to speak on his motion.

HON. V. PILLAY.- Thank you. Madam Speaker, the Honourable Prime Minister, Honourable Ministers, Honourable Leader of Opposition and Honourable Members of Parliament. On behalf of the Honourable Members of the Social Affairs Standing Committee, I take this opportunity to speak on the motion in regards to the review that was made to Fiji Higher Education Commission 2013 Annual Report. At the outset this Committee review report is a bi-partisan one which has the contribution of all parties in the Committee.

The Committee was satisfied with the overall performance of the Commission for its specific targeted outcomes on education and training for sustainable development and education and training for

knowledge based society. This was in line with Government's priorities which was derived from the following key output indicators that comprised of;

1. Education and training at tertiary level
2. Quality, relevance and consistency of education and training provision across the nation
3. Key capabilities development through national qualifications and
4. Education and training culture that is based on continuous improvements, new opportunities for education and training.
5. Education and training that is internationally recognised and informed and progressive Fijian society and an innovation and research and continuous development.

Whilst the performance of the Fiji Higher Education Commission in 2013 was commendable, however, the Committee believes through its finding that the performance could be further improved on the mentioned key output areas. The Committee through its consultations with the Commission noted that the budgetary allocation was an issue which affected their capacity to deliver all their key outputs.

In this regards, the Committee recommends that budgetary allocation be increased to address the issue. However, it was noted from 2015 to 2016 and 2017 budgetary allocation, that it has been increased over the years. The grants administered by the Fiji Higher Education Commission is based on an agreed funding model and only to eligible institutions.

Eligible institutions are those that have been fully aggregated with the Fiji Higher Education Commission and have charitable trust status. Through the consultation with the Commission, the turnover rate of staff was an ongoing issue. This has increased because the Commission experienced in 2013 that nine of their staff resigned or moved to other institutions which offered a good salary package.

In this regard, the Committee then recommend that the staff remuneration be reviewed so that the salary of staff at the Commission is also up to par. Most importantly it was noted that the budgetary allocation every year are based on the Commission programmes, needs for that particular year. In addition to that the Employer Benefit Expense Allocation in 2014 has been increased and the Committee hope that this will address the remuneration issues of the Commission. Thank you Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. The motion is now open for debate and I invite input if any. Honourable Leader of Opposition.

HON. RO. T.V. KEPHA.- Madam Speaker, in supporting the two recommendations made by the Social Affairs Standing Committee, I would briefly, like to give a bit of a background on the Fiji Higher Education Commission.

In 2005 the Ministry of Education at that time contracted Dr. Tupeni Baba to write a paper to be presented in Parliament on Higher Education in Fiji. It was first of all presented in Cabinet as the paper on Tertiary Education Commission which was written to streamline higher education and bring them under some kind of order for monitoring and evaluating purposes. The paper addressed the importance that this tertiary education commission be independent as it was to provide oversight to all tertiary institutions as Australia, New Zealand, China et cetera were bringing in their own programmes as they saw Fiji as being very accommodating with very little regulation on the programs they offered which were to be addressed either face to face or online.

However, Madam Speaker, before the entity on Tertiary Education Commission could get off the ground, a coup was executed on December 05, 2006 and we all know about that *coup*, Madam Speaker. So, the next Minister for Education had this gift-wrapped package waiting for him on the top floor of Marela House, which saw the light of day in 2008. I believe, Madam Speaker, that Dr.

Tupeni Baba's paper, that was tabled in the SDL Cabinet at that time, which was known as the Tertiary Education Commission Paper, did not know that it had an identical twin or that it was cloned. This became known as the Fiji Higher Education Regulation 2009 and Fiji Higher Education Regulation 2010. The Fiji Higher Education Commission, Madam Speaker, was launched in 2012 and this was the paper that I have seen to be Professor Tupeni Baba's paper, that was developed in 2005.

Madam Speaker, we fast forward to this report that we are debating in the House today. Although funding comes through the Ministry of Education, this does not provide independence to the Fiji High Education Commission as highlighted in this report, Madam Speaker.

Staff are not civil servants. Civil servants are able to get a pay rise but the Higher Education Commission staff do not have any job evaluation and that is why they are saying in this report that there are a lot attrition among academic staff.

One can imagine the insecurity of the Commission which states there in page 14 of the report, that there were 26 staff and they had already lost 9 when he came to report on that to the representative from the Commission Madam Speaker.

So, what type of interference was going on for them to lose 34 percent of their staff and this was an administration that morphed into the dictatorial Fiji First government, Madam Speaker.

One line budget; why has this funding not going directly to them so that they can be independent and for them to report on their budget as per the norm. They needed an increase in their funding from \$2.5 million to a more realistic figure to implement their core functions. This is one of the recommendations made by the Standing Committee, Madam Speaker.

The Fiji National University, Madam Speaker, as reported in this Standing Committee report, they had a 10 percent increase in funding in 2012. The Higher Education lost staff to FNU after that increase. What they are saying in this report is that all the training expenditure spent on the Commission staff were for those staff that joined FNU, something is wrong somewhere. The report also highlighted about the high dropout rate, which is very worrying.

The report goes on to say that the high dropout rate between year 1, 20,000 students are taken into the education system and in year 13 only 6,000 to 7,000 make it and they even say that the figure could be as low at 250.

So, from year 1 and only 250 are ending up in year 13, no wonder there is so much high unemployment Madam Speaker. What is happening to these thousands?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- (Inaudible interjection)

HON. RO T.V. KEPAL.- Please be realistic, these figures are telling us the truth.

(Chorus of interjection)

HON. RO T.V. KEPAL.- *Oilei! Oilei!*

Madam Speaker, these figures are coming out of the Report from the Fiji Higher Education Commission and you read it, or you should read it and educate yourself.

There you are Madam Speaker, no wonder we have the high unemployment in this country and if these are the figures coming out every year, Madam Speaker, you know it is really worrying.

In this report also Madam Speaker, they state the importance of TVET in the schools and this is to cater for the students in providing them the safety net for the many students who are dropping out each year. In trying to address this urgent issue, the Fiji Higher Education Commission marketing team have visited the Hindu, Muslim and Christian authorities to try and get them to see the light of day and the importance of TVET. They also went out to some provinces, Madam Speaker, as highlighted in this Report, Serua, Namosi, Bua and Kadavu and they are planning a trip to Lomaiviti and other areas and also to bring about this awareness exercise and to provide interventions so that the education would provide more relevancy for the students who could become potential dropouts.

What is reported as a mismatch Madam Speaker, between students and the curriculum or the teaching and learning is supported by what the CEO of Fiji Commerce and Employers' Federation Nesbitt Hazelman said in the Speaker's debate and you are well aware of this, Madam Speaker. At the Speaker's debate last year, that what is needed is to close the gap between the education provided and the higher level skills requirement of the industry. Closing the gap in other words between tertiary education and industry training as they cannot even now meet the demand in the building and construction industry, skills in the manufacturing industry, heavy mechanics in the bus industry.

Madam Speaker, you are well aware that we were told that day there were 36 bus drivers from the Philippines, that is another story. Many of them could not make it pass the LTA licencing requirements who deemed them not qualified enough to drive but they could be employed as mechanics. How were they allowed into the country in the first place, Madam Speaker, that is the question that we are asking. It is anyone's guess. There are many other areas needing skilled personnel, Madam Speaker, Cooks, Chefs in the tourism and hospitality industry et cetera.

In conclusion, Madam Speaker, on reflecting on the gap or the divide between Fiji's tertiary institutions and the workforce which needs to be addressed urgently to provide skilled employment, growth economy and create a happier more prosperous population. I support the motion Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Attorney-General you have the floor.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Thank you Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I will actually talk about the motion which is the Review Report of the Committee on the Fiji Higher Education Commission 2013 Annual Report.

The Chair of course at that time is now an NFP candidate. While in Dudley High School last night I think there were about seven or 14 people. Madam Speaker, but the point about this is that recommendation one says that the Commission's budgetary allocation be increased to support the Commission is fully achieved through its key output areas.

Madam Speaker, yes I think you would see that from 2013 the Budgetary allocation for the Higher Education Commission is been on the rise. In fact at the moment we are talking to the current Director, Linda who is actually doing some good work and in respect of getting the focus changed of the Higher Education Commission. I think the issue about the high turnover of staff, yes of course any high turnover of staff in any organisation is of cause a worry. Perhaps it could have been because of the leadership skills that existed at that point in time.

I can assure the Parliament that the leadership issues in the Higher Education Commission has been changed. We are currently working also with the New Zealand Government through one of their assistance to be able to bring about a particular level of focus. There is of course no doubt that in Fiji

even if you look at things like Vocational Training, given the growth in the economy and in particular the construction industry there is a dearth of trades people in more of these higher skilled trade areas, and as a result of course not only bus drivers per se but what we are concerned about is things like for example getting in high trades people to lay tiles, et cetera. Construction companies have brought in people from Indonesia, Bangladesh and Philippines.

On the flip side, Madam Speaker, we have a lot of Fijians who are recruited by the Kiwis to go to Christchurch for the Christchurch rebuild. This is a global phenomenon that we need to also address to ensure that through our Higher Education Institutions in particular things such as the Technical Colleges, there is in fact a question by Honourable Leawere tomorrow about this, Technical Colleges, we need to be able to buff up our Technical Colleges.

Whenever the economy grows and there is a demand for particular services there is always a lot of pressure and of course there would be a gap in certain areas and we need to address that as a nation to be able to ensure that we do not have the dearth of skill sets. The challenge for all of us in this Parliament is to ensure that we provide the right type of training and we look forward to working with the Commission. I would like to thank the Committee for its report and the recommendations that they have made are noted. Thank you Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now invite the Chairperson on Standing Committee on Social Affairs to speak in reply.

HON. V. PILLAY.- Thank you Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I do not have any further comments.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Parliament will now vote to note the content of the Report.

Does any Member oppose the motion?

(Chorus of “ayes” and “noes”)

Question put.

Motion agreed to.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. That brings us to the end of today’s sitting. Honourable Members we note there are two motions pending under Schedule 2 in today’s Order Paper. Since these are motions by the Opposition Members, they will be carried forward to Fridays Order Paper.

Moreover Honourable Member if you care to be around, at 6 p.m. dinner will be ready. We are serving dinner at 6.00 p.m. We anticipated a lengthy sitting and we ordered dinner so at 6.00 p.m. there is going to be a big dinner ready for you in the Committee Room and you are all invited to the dinner

The Parliament adjourned at 4.57 p.m.