

PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI



PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

DAILY HANSARD

FRIDAY, 20TH APRIL, 2018

[CORRECTED COPY]

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FRIDAY, 20TH APRIL, 2018

The Parliament resumed at 9.34 a.m. pursuant to adjournment.

HONOURABLE SPEAKER took the Chair and read the Prayer.

PRESENT

All Honourable Members were present, except the Honourable J.V. Bainimarama, Prime Minister and Minister for iTaukei Affairs, Sugar Industry and Foreign Affairs; the Honourable Lt. Col. I.B. Seruiratu, Minister for Agriculture, Rural and Maritime Development and National Disaster Management and Meteorological Services; Honourable Ratu I. Kubuabola, Minister for National Security and Defence; the Honourable F.S. Koya, Minister for Industry, Trade, Tourism and Lands and Mineral Resources; and the Honourable V.K. Bhatnagar, Assistant Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation.

ADMINISTRATION OF OATH/AFFIRMATION OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honourable Ratu Tevita Navurelevu Niumataiwalu subscribed to the Administration of Oath/Affirmation of Allegiance and took his seat in the Chamber.

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

(Applause)

I now invite the Honourable Ratu Tevita Niumataiwalu to deliver his Maiden Speech.

Maiden Speech - Hon. Ratu T.N. Niumataiwalu

HON. RATU T.N. NIUMATAIWALU.- Madam Speaker, and Honourable Members of Parliament, I rise with my sincere and gracious heart to deliver my Maiden Speech to this august House, and I wish to express my sincere gratitude for this opportunity.

Allow me to begin my speech with a quote from James Chapter 1 Verse 9 (1:9), and I quote:

“My dear brothers and sisters, be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to get angry. Your anger can never make things right in God’s sight.”

Madam Speaker, I wish to pay my tribute to the founding leaders of this nation and all the Honourable Members of Parliament, who have set very high standards for us to emulate and continue to maintain and evolve the dignity and decorum of Parliament as the highest court in the land, in charge of legislation and participation of our people in the affairs of our nation.

I wish to pay a very special tribute to my predecessor, the Honourable Mosese Bilitavu, who had, in the last three-and-a-half years of his service to this House, served the people of Macuata and Fiji at large, voicing out our concerns, highlighting issues of national importance and for tirelessly striving for a free, just and united Fiji. The Nawailevu, Bua Petition Report that was debated earlier this week was very close to his heart. God-willing, his dreams will come true, pending the National Elections later this year.

Madam Speaker, the Honourable Mosese Bilitavu was honest, fearless, intelligent, articulate, witty and patriotic. He has left behind a legacy for the youth of this country to follow, seeking political,

working for the total development and welfare of Fiji, blending our traditional and customary ideals and principles with national leadership.

Madam Speaker, I bring to this House the continued good wishes of my Party, my voters, the chiefs and the people of Macuata by the grace of the Almighty God. I wish to put on record with a sense of appreciation and hard work, the effort that was put in by my family, relatives, friends and the people of Vanua Levu during the last General Elections. I say to them that their efforts have not gone in vain.

Madam Speaker, at this juncture, I also wish to remember and thank my ancestors, parents, siblings, my wife and children, as well as my teachers and mentors, whose unwavering blessings, encouragement and support have made me what I am today. Madam Speaker, it is something leaders need all their lives to keep attached to their roots, and to inspire the future generations to be leaders of our nation.

Madam Speaker, I am also indebted to my work colleagues and to some of the institutions under whose banner I had the opportunity to serve in this country, namely the Ministry of Fijian Affairs and the Fiji Police Force. The knowledge and expertise which I have gained from those institutions will greatly my role as a Member of this House and servant of the people.

Madam Speaker, the values enshrined in the *Holy Bible*, and in the goodness of our people have inspired me to take up this challenge of national duty. I dedicate myself and pledge like all the Honourable Members of this House, and all the right-thinking people of Fiji, to put my knowledge and experience to effective use, defending the freedom, unity and scope of our human and natural resources.

Madam Speaker, allow me to thank my party, the Social Democratic Liberal Party (SODELPA) for having faith in endorsing me as one of its candidates in the last General Elections. Like every Member of my Party, I am proud of our founding values, ideals and principles that we stand for, to seek and restore a free, just and united Fiji.

Madam Speaker, though I have entered this House in its last stages, I have been following the proceedings of our Parliament keenly, and I must salute the Honourable Leader of the Opposition and all the Honourable Members on the Opposition bench for the brave fight that they have put up for a worthy cause against the majority of the Government of the day. Our people are proud of the Opposition and no doubt, they will be even more proud to vote us into Government later this year.

HON. OPPOSITION MEMBERS.- Hear, hear!

(Laughter)

HON. RATU T.N. NIUMATAIWALU.- Madam Speaker, I wish to state my view on the human rights of every person in Fiji. Every community in Fiji have their own basic human rights, including indigenous rights. Indigenous rights are also human rights, as are women's rights as well as the rights of the indigenous peoples and the rights of the children. The international community recognises the rights of indigenous peoples to manage their land and resources, as well as to identify their culture and traditions and their indigenous institutions. In supporting indigenous rights, we do not seek to place indigenous rights above the human rights of members of Fiji's minority ethnic communities, given the indivisibility and equality of human rights.

Madam Speaker, in the same vein, we recognise the fact that the indigenous community are the majority population, does not mean they lose their entitlement to their indigenous rights, in particular their right to be consulted and to give their free, prior-informed consent to changes affecting their land,

culture, and resources, which is at the heart of their grievance of the last 11 years of the Bainimarama Government.

Madam Speaker, Fiji is at a crossroad and there are many wounds that need healing. Peace is possible for our beloved nation, if we all learn to understand each other's needs, for peace, security, belonging and prosperity, to reconcile our differences and encourage peace amongst all our communities for the betterment of our future generations. Peace and progress are only possible if we work together.

Madam Speaker, various changes and laws have been imposed on the people of Fiji without their consent over the last 11 years of the Bainimarama Government. This includes the imposition of the 2013 Constitution Decree, and the various decrees that limit human rights like the Public Order (Amendment) Decree

HON. GOVERNMENT MEMBER.- Act.

HON. RATU T.N. NIUMATAIWALU.- Sorry, Act.

And the Essential National Industries Decree.

HON. RATU T.N. NIUMATAIWALU.- Further, Madam Speaker, the suspension of the Great Council of Chiefs in 2007, the termination of the Great Council of Chiefs Regulations in 2008, the authority given to the Minister of Fijian Affairs to appoint all Members of the Fijian (now iTaukei) Affairs Board, the termination of the Council of Chiefs in the Fijian Affairs Act of 2012 and their representatives from the Native Land Trust Board, the establishment of the Land Bank through the Land Use Decree can alienate Fijian land for up to 99 years, and no court of law or tribunal or a commission shall hear, determine any challenge under the Decree, including the further 99 year extensions under the Decree. These are examples, Madam Speaker, of the way that Fijians have lost control of the management of their land over the last 11 years.

Madam Speaker, those who initiate these changes must be aware that these changes are widely unacceptable to the majority of the indigenous Fijians, and those groups who support our interest and wellbeing and this does not mean that we forget about the interests and welfare of the other communities living in Fiji.

Madam Speaker, this morning I have been inspired to propose a solution to the problem arising because of the changes, and I believe that it is the only true way to solve our problems in Fiji. To solve the problems, Madam Speaker, we need to remake and redefine our values but to redefine these values, we need to define the biblical truth because Fiji and the Fijian values were rooted in the biblical truth and it was the true foundation of liberty and love.

Madam Speaker, may I invite your memory back to the 19th Century. After the arrival of the indentured labourers and through dialogue, negotiation and through the generosity of the natives and the influence of the biblical teaching, our neighbours the Giriti descendants were welcomed, received, recognised and finally they were graciously declared to be citizens of Fiji. Madam Speaker, I will fail in my duty as a loyal Member of Parliament to ignore this truth, the truth that enables Fiji to be a multiracial country is commanded by the Lord Jesus Christ. I will fail in my duty as a loyal Member of Parliament to ignore this truth, the truth that has enabled Fiji to be a multi-racial country is commanded by our Lord Jesus Christ in the *Gospel of Matthew* Chapter 22 versus 37 to 39, the two great commandments whereby all laws depend: "Love your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind. Love your neighbours as you love yourself." This is the truth, this is the solution and this is a true foundation to build our nation. This is the truth that always prevails in Fiji.

Madam Speaker, I therefore, plead to Honourable Members to put the interest of our people first and recognise those values and this truth. There is no greater good than to serve our people and our nation faithfully. And I call upon all those present here today and the future leaders of Fiji to join us in this noble pursuit as we continue to march and to make Fiji a free, just, united and prosperous society. It also draws home the point the need to embrace each other and reclaim a Fiji the way the world should be.

Madam Speaker, with these few words, I thank you and all Honourable Members of this House for your forbearance and I am looking forward to future proceedings in the Parliament. *Vinaka vakalevu.*

(Applause)

MINUTES

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

That the Minutes of the sitting of Parliament held on Thursday, 19th April, 2018 as previously circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed.

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

Question put.

Motion agreed to.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CHAIR

Welcome

HON. SPEAKER.- I welcome all Honourable Members to the final sitting for the month of April. I also welcome the members of the public joining us in the gallery and those watching proceedings on television, the internet and listening to the radio.

I especially welcome the USP and UniFiji Law Students and the athletes of the Wainibuka Secondary School. And congratulations to Camari Adi Lasaqa for not only winning gold in the 1500m Girls Open Grade but breaking a 10-year record.

(Applause)

I wonder what her secret is. I hope you will enjoy today's proceedings and also learn about the Parliamentary practices and procedures.

Response to Written Questions

For the information of Honourable Members the Secretariat has received the written responses to Written Questions 10/2018 and 27/2018 asked by the Honourable Ratu Kiniviliame Kiliraki and Honourable Mohammed Dean respectively. These have been conveyed to the Members and e-copies will be circulated to all Honourable Members and also be made available on the Parliament website.

QUESTIONS

Oral Questions

Accountability and Transparency Commission (Question No. 155/2018)

HON. P. SINGH.- Madam Speaker, before I ask the question may I once again wish all our secondary school athletics competitors all the best and hope that they will enjoy the three-day tournament.

The question is:

Would the Honourable Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Public Enterprises, Civil Service and Communications inform Parliament of the delay in the establishment of the Accountability and Transparency Commission under Section 121(2) of the Constitution, as the Commission has to be appointed by the President on the advice of the Judicial Services Commission following consultations with the Attorney-General?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- (Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Public Enterprises, Civil Service and Communications).- Madam Speaker, I would like to firstly welcome Honourable Ratu Niumataiwalu to Parliament. There is obviously quite a lot of work we have to do after listening to you this morning.

Madam Speaker, I thank the Honourable Member for this question but it is somewhat baffling that the Honourable Member who has actually had a bit of experience working in law firms, et cetera, has not realised that you need actual laws for an actual organisation to function.

If you read Section 121 which establishes the Commission which is unprecedented for the first time in Fiji, we actually have a Constitution that establishes an independent Commission to look into the affairs of the Prime Minister, right all the way down to senior Government Officials, including Members of Parliament, in respect of accountability and having transparency.

If you look at Section 121(8) and (9), it states, and I quote:

(8)“The authority, functions and responsibilities of the Commission shall be prescribed by written law, and a written law may make further provisions for the Commission.

(9) A written law shall provide the Commission with the jurisdiction, authority and powers to receive and investigate complaints against permanent secretaries and all persons holding a public office.”

Those written laws are before the Committee. We presented the Bills and it is before the Committee, so once the law is passed by Parliament, it becomes an Act of Parliament, then obviously you can have the Commission established because how can a Commission exist without any laws.

HON. S.D. KARAVAKI.- Then you should bring it to Parliament?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- We have already brought it to Parliament, it is before the Committee. The Information Bill and the Code of Conduct Bill 2016 is before the Committee.

Honourable Prem Singh in your quest to score cheap political points, you actually missed the fundamental point and the fundamental point is, you cannot have a Commission without the laws.

HON. P. CHAND.- Madam Speaker, a supplementary question.

HON. SPEAKER.- Supplementary question.

HON. P. CHAND.- I believe our Party had queried the enactment of the Freedom of Information and Code of Conduct legislation which the Government had said would be a priority as no other government had done it. It was then told by the Attorney-General then that the Government was working with experts from the UNDP and a legislation would be brought to Parliament in March 2015. In April 2016 when NFP again raised this issue, the Committee was set up.

The question is, why has Government reneged in its promise to ensure full accountability and transparency? Why the delay, Madam Speaker, when the Committee is prepared to look at the Online Safety Bill in a month? Is it not accountability, transparency, conduct of MPs and freedom of information far more important than most of what has transpired in this Parliament?

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Acting Prime Minister.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, if we had brought about the Information Bill and Code of Conduct Bill under Standing Order 51, they would have jumped up even further because it has far wide-reaching consequences for them or if they want to get elected to Government when they get into Government as MPs and in respect of the Information Bill, Madam Speaker, we need widespread public consultations in that respect.

Madam Speaker, Standing Order 51 regarding online safety does not stop public consultations either. They have had that, they wanted an extension and we have given them the extension. The point is, he has written that supplementary question before I gave my answer and again, Madam Speaker, it is cheap political point-scoring.

(Honourable Opposition Member interjects)

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- It is a fact! The more moans and groans we get from them, we know that we are actually telling the truth.

Madam Speaker, the point of the matter was presented to Parliament in 2016. The Committee is still looking at it. If the Committee had brought it across to us, we would have presented and debated on it in Parliament, we would have had the Bill approved and it would have become an Act of Parliament, so we get the Commission in place.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Prem Singh.

HON. P. SINGH.- A supplementary question, Madam Speaker. I think the Honourable Attorney-General is too obsessed with his cheap political points-scoring, always blaming the Opposition for it. But in this case when we can do the Online Safety Bill and Registration of Sex Offenders Bill in a month or two, this has been with the Committee for almost two years now. So Madam Speaker, this should be treated as a priority which we were told in this Parliament in 2016 when the Bills were brought it.

Madam Speaker, no one doubts it without the written law, you cannot have this Commission. We are following the rules that are in the Constitution. It is before the Committee, but why is it taking so long?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, they want to have a question about the Committee, go and talk to the Committee, it has nothing to do with us. Once we refer the Bill to the

Committee, the Committee deals with it. They sit in Committees, they know that. There are many other Bills that are before the Committees that are languishing but we do not interfere with the Committee. This is the reason why, Madam Speaker, some of the matters are actually expedited.

Madam Speaker, if you look at the Code of Conduct Bill and if you look at the Information Bill, it is extremely extensive. It is one of the largest Bills that had been presented to this House. In the same way, we have the Companies Bill. Again it was referred to Committees, one of the first of its kind in Fiji. We repealed the old Act, which was why it was referred to the Committee. Now, the Committee can give priority to its work whichever work they want to, and this is precisely the reason we have stated that.

They are obsessed with the Online Safety Bill, they are obsessed with the Registration of Sex Offenders Bill when, Madam Speaker, it is a grave and immediate community issue. The Registration of Sex Offenders Bill, we stand up in this Parliament and talk about the rise of sexual abuse in this country and everyday we see some grandfather raping his daughter, some father raping his daughter and we have just seen that recently, over a period of 12 years. Even other teachers breaching the fiduciary duty that they have, the trust. We all want to say, "We will do something about it," this is why the Bill was expedited. We are doing something about it. In the same way Madam Speaker, the Online Safety Bill is an immediate social issue. We have extended it, given them another month because of *TC Josie*, et cetera, that we have had.

Madam Speaker, in respect of this Code of Conduct and the Information Bill, we already have seven measures that are in place already - constitutional provisions, albeit skeleton. We also have provisions under the Fiji Independent Commission Against Corruption (FICAC) in regard of public officers also. So there are various mechanisms and avenues of redress that people can refer to in respect of public officers being corrupt. Essentially that is what it is about, it is about accountability, so FICAC and various other laws within the Crimes Act actually can address that in the meantime.

This Commission is giving it further resonance, putting it at the pinnacle of all accountability. So the fact is, there are certain laws that actually do provide for this and cater for the philosophy behind this provision, the spirit behind the law, Madam Speaker. But we do not have any provision in respect of sexual offenders. We do not have any provisions in respect of online safety.

That is a fact, Madam Speaker. So if, for example, today a Minister is being corrupt, we do not have to wait for the Transparency Commission, they can be reported to FICAC and they can be reported to the police. They can be reported to the DPP. We have the Auditor-General's Report too where people can actually be charged for offences of where they get their information from.

Madam Speaker, the fact of the matter is, these provisions are already in place and again, I would say, it is cheap political point-scoring.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Aseri Radrodro.

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- I would just like to ask a supplementary question.

HON. SPEAKER.- Supplementary question.

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- I think the question which has been asked is, why the delay in the establishment of the Accountability and Transparency Commission and the answers that we have been getting is referring us to Chapter 8 regarding written laws which is under the Committee. There is nowhere in these related sections and provisions in the Constitution that the Commission is to be accepted subject to the law. Can the Honourable Minister give us an indication when will the establishment of the Accountability and Transparency Commission come into fruition?

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Acting Prime Minister.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, it is now the Constitution Section 101 again. First of all, it is not Chapter 8. The actual Section of the Constitution is Section 121(8) not Chapter 8. Section 121(8) and (9) says, and I will read it out again:

“(8) The authority, functions and responsibilities of the Commission shall be prescribed by written law, and a written law may make further provisions for the Commission.

(9)A written law shall provide the Commission with the jurisdiction, authority and powers to receive and investigate complaints against permanent secretaries and all persons holding a public office.”

Madam Speaker, this is the point; if you are going to do something, they cannot operate in a vacuum. I am holding this up, if I remove this, this telephone will fall. In the same way, if I appoint the Commission and there is no laws to back it, it will fall.

Madam Speaker, it is a very fundamental basic requirement of anything to function, you need the laws, unless this specific provision gives it that need itself to function it itself. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- I now give the floor to the Honourable Alvick Maharaj to ask his question.

Government’s Policy on Sustainable Productivity
(Question No. 156/2018)

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

Can the Honourable Minister for Employment, Productivity and Industrial Relations inform the House on the Government’s policy on Sustainable Productivity?

HON. J. USAMATE (Minister for Employment, Productivity and Industrial Relations).- Madam Speaker, I thank the Honourable Member for his question and I would also like to the welcome the Honourable Ratu Niumataiwalu to Parliament and also congratulate the lovely lady from Wainibuka, “Wainifire,” who broke the record that stood there for 10 years. I think that is an example also of what we need, greater productivity in terms of our school.

Madam Speaker, productivity is something that is important to any country. It is something that we have to constantly think about, and I was thinking last night about this question, about the concept of sustainable productivity. It is not just a question of being as productive as possible, but being able to sustain that productivity over a long period of time.

When we look at the definition of productivity, it is basically the relationship between what you put in to an organisation or to a country and what you get out; the input and the output ratio. If you have a fixed set of inputs, then the question is, how can you squeeze or get ultimate or optimal outcome out of that set of inputs that you have?

That is when we talk about Government when it looks at the issue of productivity, we are looking at that relationship; input and output. What are the inputs? Inputs are people, they always talk about land, labour and capital. The land that we have, how can we get optimum results out of that land? The capital, having access to capital that we can combine with labour and land in order to get the outcomes that we want, and also for the capital that we need.

Government's strategy for sustainable productivity revolves around these three issues and Government addresses the issue of productivity at three different levels, what we call the meso level or the national level; a kind of thing that Government has to put in at the national level, at the macro level. At the organisation level which is call meso level and at the macro level, at the level of different individuals. So Government policies of productivity address activities at all of these levels - at the national level, at the level of organisations and also at the level of individuals.

At the national level, we need to look at the quality of the inputs that draw into producing whatever it is that we produce. One of major inputs that we have is the quality of our people. People add value to things. If you do not have the right kind of people with the right mindset, the right knowledge, right competencies and with the right attitude and abilities, you will not be able to produce the kind of outputs that you want.

If you look back at what the Government has been doing over the past few years during the tenure of the Bainimarama-led Government and the current FijiFirst Government, there has been a heavy emphasis on enhancing the kind of people that we have within our workforce and within our country. There has been a huge emphasis on educational reform, there has been a huge emphasis on making sure that everyone in this country can have access to primary, secondary and tertiary education. There has been a huge emphasis on the kindergartens to make sure that people at that very critical age group of 5 to 6 have access to the kind of learning that allows them to grow so that they can flourish, and ultimately then be able to produce the kind of outputs that you want.

It sets a foundation for us to be able to produce the kind of skill work. If we have the brilliant strategies and the brilliant organisations that are accountable but we do not have the people to work it, with the right kind of knowledge, mindsets, et cetera, it all falls to naught, and obviously also the heart, as the Honourable Dr. Samisoni is talking about.

In terms of people, Government over the past decade has invested a lot money and a lot of effort, and a substantiative amount of our budget is focussed on education. We have established the Fiji Higher Education Commission (FHEC) that looks at the work, and tries to make sure that all the training providers and education providers in this country meet certain standards.

This FHEC then has the responsibility of assigning the money that Government provides for these tertiary institutions and assigns it to all of the organisations that we have, either assigns the money that we give to the University of the South Pacific (USP), to Fiji National University (FNU), to the University of Fiji it gives out money that we give for Tutu Training Centre, all of these training providers. Madam Speaker, the FHEC has been put in place to do that. Once again, it is a reflection of the importance that we attach to the quality of the workforce that we have in this country.

Over and above that under the FHEC, we have also established a National Qualifications Framework. This Framework looks at the quality of the qualifications that we need in this country. It has established National Certificates in a wide range of trade areas. We now have National Certificate in Plumbing, Construction, Automotive, so how do they develop these Certificates? They go out and ask industries, "What is the kind of person that you want to be baking bread in your company or to be fixing cars?" They develop those standards and they ask all the training providers in this country; "If you want to be assisted, your training programme has to meet the national standards." So all of that work has been focused primarily on making sure that we can develop the right kind of work for us.

Government has also put in place the National Toppers Scheme (NTS) Programme. What is the NTS Programme? Government is looking at what are the key skillsets, the key types of people whom we need in Government for Government to be able to achieve its aims. Then it has told people in Fiji, especially the students; "If you want to get the Toppers Scholarship, you have to aim for this particular

marks in this particular area”, because Government is willing to provide you that Toppers Scholarship because we need people in those areas to move Government’s agenda.

Nowadays, we know that we need people with science, technology, engineering and maths. These are areas in which we need a lot of people to be coming into the workforce and the Government has emphasised that it is providing assistance for that.

We have also said that we have put in place the Tertiary Education Loans Scheme (TELS) Programme. This Programme is basically saying that if your career choice is not in the edge of where we have priority needs in Government but you get a place in the University or institute of higher learning, Government will make sure that you will be able to take up that opportunity, even if you do not have money in your pocket. Even if you do not have money, they will open up the opportunities and I am glad to see that we have a lot of students here today and they will hear this and know that they have opportunities to take up within the education sector.

In terms of productivity, it is the quality of the input. One of the Government’s strategy has been to make sure that this particular input, the human resource, the human capital that we have in this country, we invest as much as possible in it so that people come out with the right knowledge, the right skills and the right attitudes in their heart to be able to deliver when they enter the world of work.

Secondly, Madam Speaker, the other great input that they talk about is people and access to land. I think over the years, if you will go back and read all the reports about the problems that we have had in economic growth, one of the core issues has been access to land. Over the past two years, the Government has made sure that those who want to work their land have that ability to work their land. At the same time while we do this, we take cognisance ...

(Honourable Opposition Members interject)

HON. J. USAMATE.- I am answering the question.

(Honourable N. Nawaikula interjects)

HON. J. USAMATE.- We made sure that if there is land available, we need to make the land available to those who are willing to work it. This is why we have issues like the Land Bank. The land is made available, if it is not being used, we make it available to those who can make use of that land so that it can be used for productive capacity, we can develop outputs and we can develop issues that help our people.

The Government has also invested in assisting landowners to make the best use ...

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister, you really need to be more succinct and very focussed on the question.

(Honourable Opposition Members interject)

HON. SPEAKER.- Order! Please allow the Honourable Minister to carry on, time is going.

HON. J. USAMATE.- Madam Speaker, I am explaining that when you talk about productivity, it is about the relationship between inputs and outputs and then explaining Government’s policies on how we try to make the best use of the inputs that we have. The inputs are land, labour and capital, systems and processes and knowledge. I am trying to explain all that Government has done to try to enhance the quality of resolutions. So, that is what I am trying to do. Madam Speaker. Can I continue?

(Honourable Opposition Member interjects)

HON. J. USAMATE.- No, I am still there, I am still answering the question.

(Laughter)

HON. SPEAKER.- Would you like to make your concluding remarks?

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

The other part I was talking about is capital. Obviously capital, if you do not have infusions of capital you need to deepen the component of capital that you have in your production. If not, you will not be able to get what you want out of it.

(Laughter)

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Point of order, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Point of order.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Madam Speaker, the response has continued for more than almost 10 minutes and according to the Standing Orders on relevancy, the Honourable Minister has diverted from the original question. Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

(Laughter)

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister, would you like to make your concluding remarks.

HON. J. USAMATE.- Thank you, Madam Speaker, concluding remarks.

On sustainability, it means that it just not just happens today and it stops. This Government is focused on making sure that productivity goes on and on and on and one of the central tenets of making sure that we can have that sustainability is to have a country where people have respect for one another. That is why we have fought very hard to have this Constitution so that everyone is recognised in this Constitution. When you have that atmosphere of people respecting one another, and we put in all our efforts to make the country go, only then do we have sustainability.

The second issue about sustainability is this, we know the issues that are going to challenge us. The issue of climate change is something that we are going to be adopt.

(Laughter)

Madam Speaker, perhaps I will rest here and I will wait for the supplementary questions.

(Laughter)

I hope I will get another supplementary question.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, I invite Honourable Niko Nawaikula to ask his question.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- All that, Madam Speaker, comes to nothing.

(Laughter)

The bottom line is, how many students who qualify from tertiary schools can the workforce absorb in one year? That is what we wish to know, so can you please tell us that, what percentage? Is it increasing or decreasing; that is the bottom-line.

HON. J. USAMATE.- There is, without a doubt.

Madam Speaker, over the past few years with the heavy investment of this Government in education, there have been more places made available, without a doubt.

(Honourable Member interjects)

HON. J. USAMATE.- If you have been looking at what has been happening at the USP, the number of students from Fiji in USP is increasing. If you look at FNU, has the number declined or have they gone up?

Most certainly, they have gone up. If you look at what has happened to people out in the rural areas who never had the opportunity to earn a vocation, now we have established technical training colleges. Have the numbers gone up? Obviously the numbers have gone up. So, Government has made sure that there are more opportunities available. We do not develop children coming out of the system with the idea that all of them will go on and get a job, no. We are also telling them, "We want some of you to become entrepreneurs."

That is why we have established the Young Entrepreneurship Scheme (YES) so that when they go into these institutions of high learning, they do not only work with the idea that; "I am after this, I am going to look for a job", but also with the idea that I will be a job creator so that they can create jobs and more and more people will get jobs. That is the idea of sustainability, creating young with the right knowledge, right skills and the right mindset so they can continue to grow this economy.

That is why under the Bainimarama-led Government and under the FijiFirst Government, we have had unprecedented nine years of consecutive growth. That is why under this Government, we have dropped unemployment rate from 7.1 percent to 5.5 percent and now to 4.5 percent and if this Government stays in power, we will continue to do that until perpetuity.

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you, Honourable Members. Since today is Opposition day, I am restricting supplementary questions.

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. SPEAKER.- Could I have the floor, please?

I am restricting supplementary questions to three and will be three questions from the Opposition.

HON. A.T. VADEI.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. I thank the Honourable Minister for the wide range of answers that he gave. For the benefit and the interest of school children, whether his Ministry has some sort of database of which subjects should our children study for so that they could get employed much faster?

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Minister.

HON. J. USAMATE.- Madam Speaker, I was talking about the fact that Government has already identified within Government itself the key areas that we want people to study. That is why we have established the NTS. So, if you look at all of the areas in which we give scholarships for Toppers, those are critical areas for Government.

When we look at the development needs of Fiji as a whole, we say that if you want to study doctors, architects, surveyors these are the critical ones. So, we have the database, the study is made, the announcement is made. What is the future likely to be? What is going to be the kind of industries that we need 10 years from here today? What is the change going to be in technology? What are the groups of competent people that we already have in this country? What are the gaps and how are they going to finish?

It is only as a result of that exercise that we produce that list of areas in which we provide

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- Enough surveyors.

HON. J. USAMATE.- We cannot find enough surveyors, we need specialist doctors, as the Honourable Minister talks about, it is from that understanding. We do not pluck things out of the atmosphere, no. We base ourselves on the analysis within the current situation, seeing what it means and then we develop our policy options, start the interventions to address the needs of this country to make sure that we can have sustainable productivity.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. We have one last question from the Opposition.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Thank you, Honourable Speaker. I take this time to congratulate the young lady for her achievement and also to all the students and schools participating in the Coke Games, particularly the defending champion in the girls division, Adi Cakobau School.

Honourable Speaker, if indeed the sustainable development should translate to less poverty, one of the big problem in Fiji right now is traffic jam. Traffic jam means economic vulnerability.

(Honourable Member interjects)

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- Don't you like people buying cars?

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Madam Speaker, traffic jam means economic waste and inefficiency. Can the Honourable Minister explain what is his Ministry doing with the Ministry of Infrastructure and all other key Ministries to be able to control or bring down traffic jam, it is against the productivity?

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, we really need to bring decorum back into the House. When an Honourable Member is speaking, we all want to hear what she or he is talking about. We have viewers on television and we have people here in the gallery, who would like to hear. Please, just maintain control of the noise in the House so that we can hear the Member speaking.

The question had been asked and now I give the floor to the Honourable Minister.

HON. J. USAMATE.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to thank Honourable Radrodro for her question, but I must say it is quite an absurd notion to think that when you have traffic jam, it is a sign of degeneration. Certainly not!

Traffic jam means when you have a lot of cars on the road. It means that the economic growth has been working, productivity has been working and people have more money in their pockets to buy cars. Is that not a good thing? Does it not show that the policies of this Government are working?

It shows that it is working. It shows that the productivity is becoming sustainable.

Secondly, for the roads, Madam Speaker, just to shorten it, we have been in discussions with the Ministry of Infrastructure, and they have their plans. We are looking at enhancing the public transportation system. There has been talks about bus lanes to make sure that we have dedicated bus lanes, so more people will use public transport. There probably will be some sort of ideas of looking at the hub and spoke system. People bring their cars to a central place then they use public transportation system to come into the central business district and then move themselves out again before they pick up their own transport.

I think the Honourable Attorney-General and the Honourable Minister for Infrastructure has talked about that, so there are plans in place to make sure that we can cut down on the amount of time that people are in traffic. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you, I now give the floor to the Honourable Ro Teimumu Kepa, the Leader of Opposition to ask her question.

Construction of Bicycle Lanes to Ease Traffic Congestion
(Question No. 157/2018)

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

With the influx of many vehicles on our roads, what are the Honourable Minister for Local Government, Housing and Environment, Infrastructure and Transport's plans for the construction of dedicated bicycle lanes to ease traffic congestion and help minimise pollution?

HON. P.B. KUMAR (Minister for Local Government, Housing and Environment, Infrastructure and Transport).- Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I also thank the Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Madam Speaker, may I take this opportunity to thank the new Member of Parliament, if I may suggest for him to change his tune as well. Madam Speaker, in fact, this is a Government plan that I am going to talk about. It is not my plan, it is the Government's plan. The question needs a very comprehensive response because after so long, we are going to revive this bicycle lane in this country so it needs time for me to explain on this.

Madam Speaker, the success of Fiji's development is dependent on the infrastructure that is reliable enough to encourage people and businesses to invest in the future. Infrastructure standards are largely driven by the need for reliability and the core element of this infrastructure is the road network.

Madam Speaker, Fiji Roads Authority's (FRA) goal is to provide an effective and sustainable land transport network to the people of this country which FijiFirst is doing. In return, our people are able to gain easy access and travel safely to their destinations. This subject matter has been discussed in few forums after COP 23 and I am happy that it gives me an opportunity to inform this House on the progress of this subject matter.

Madam Speaker, years of investment have gone into building over 7,000 kilometres of roads and there are plans to expand this network. The expansion of the road network also provides opportunities for construction of dedicated bicycle lanes. This must be physically viable with no side constraints, such

as deep drains, big trees and narrow road. In this regard. Madam Speaker, FRA with other stakeholders have identified the following areas:

- Greater Suva transportation areas;
- Nadi - Lautoka;
- Nausori - Korovou;
- Labasa - Savusavu; and
- all urban centres.

These studies will commence in the next financial year. However, the 2015 Household Travel Survey (that is the Technical Report) highlighted that less than 0.1 percent of the sample data of respondents use bicycles as the main mode of transport by area. This is in comparison to more than 42 percent of respondents who use buses, carriers, minibuses, taxis and other forms of vehicle as a main mode of transport by the area. In fact, Madam Speaker, what the survey is trying to tell us is that, the use of bicycle as a mode of transport is very low or used as recreational activity in Fiji.

Madam Speaker, having said that, that will not stop FRA in carrying out and determining the areas that I have highlighted, and as I have said that the work will commence in the next financial year. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

HON. RO T.V. KEPAN.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. I thank the Honourable Minister for his response. My concern is where he says that bicycle-use is very low according to their survey, that is quite true, Madam Speaker.

Last week, there was a boat that arrived at the Suva Wharf that offloaded 200 cars, Madam Speaker, taking up the number of second-hand cars to have been offloaded only in April this year to close to 1,000 vehicles. If that pattern continues by the end of the year, they would have brought in another 3,000 vehicles. That is of great concern to the people. How will the Honourable Minister fit in bicycle lanes with so many vehicles already on the road and the vehicles that are waiting to come on to the road? How would he be able to fit that in, if he can just give us a short response?

HON. P.B. KUMAR.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. Time and again, in this august House, Government has explained and responded to the Opposition in terms of motor vehicles in this country. They are very much against our people having cars, I really do not know why. They have not come up with any constructive idea or make suggestions to Government. They are only worried about why we are allowing cars into the country, that is what they are saying.

Madam Speaker, that is their right and freedom, and we are not going to stop anyone from buying cars but they must also understand that Government has allocated millions of dollars to FRA for creating four lanes. Why are we doing all these?

Considering the number of cars that are coming into this country, we are not closing our eyes, sitting down and saying what is happening, we are doing what we are supposed to do but next time if you are going to bring this type of question, please, be constructive about it. There is no point saying that you have seen somewhere 200 or 300 cars being unloaded, what does that tell us? What does that mean to us?

Madam Speaker, before I take my seat, there were some queries on whether we have got a Bicycle Act. I need to say that, "Yes, we do have a Bicycle Act" and as I have said that the studies will be carried

out by FRA in consultation with other stakeholders, and at the same time, there will be a review to this Bicycle Act because this Act is of 1939. Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Niko Nawaikula.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- The Honourable Minister said that they are doing what they are supposed to do. They are doing nothing to the traffic. One simple solution is flexi-time so that we all do not start work at 8.00 a.m.

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- That is the first time

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Can you consider flexi-time so that people start in the morning at 7.00 a.m., some start at 8.00 a.m. and some start at 9.00 a.m. so that we do not all come into Suva together? Use your brain.

(Laughter)

HON. SPEAKER.- I am sorry, that was not a question, it was a recommendation. Honourable Dulakiverata, you have floor.

HON. J. DULAKIVERATA.- Madam Speaker, I want to welcome the students and management of Wainibuka District School.

Madam Speaker, in the last session of Parliament, I raised an issue and I offered a suggestion to the Government to ease the traffic between the Suva-Nausori corridor. I suggested that the Koronivia Road be extended to Suva to ease the traffic. The Honourable Acting Prime Minister said that it will go through mangroves and it will be very expensive to build.

Madam Speaker, they never even bother to check that the road from Koronivia to Suva will not go through any mangroves because a study had already been done. If you talk about the expensive building of the road, the road to Kiuva is all through mangroves and it was built without piling concrete

(Honourable A. Sayed-Khaiyum interjects)

HON. J. DULAKIVERATA.- No, Madam Speaker, my question to the Honourable Minister is; what are you doing with the road network to ease the traffic jam?

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister.

HON. P.B. KUMAR.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Honourable Member says that he has offered his view in the last sitting; that was not a very reasonable offer that he has offered and that is why it was not taken on board.

Madam Speaker, there is a proposed regional group. Let us finish this four-lane road that you are seeing right now. We are told by the Honourable Member that we are doing nothing which is usual for him to say, but there is a proposed regional road. Upon the completion of that four-lane road, FRA is going to look into that regional road, it will solve the problem in that corridor.

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

Plans to Plant Agarwood in Fiji
(Question No. 158/2018)

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

Can the Minister for Forests inform the House if there are plans to plant Agarwood in Fiji?

HON. O. NAIQAMU (Minister for Forests).- Madam Speaker, I rise to respond to the question raised by the Honourable Dr. Brij Lal. Thank you, Honourable Member, for your question and also the interest shown on Agarwood. Before I proceed, I also take this opportunity to welcome and thank Honourable Ratu Tevita Niumataivalu for joining the House.

Madam Speaker, my Ministry is currently undertaking silviculture research on Agarwood. The research undertaken is to find out the best site, soil, weather, rainfall and other ecological factors to be considered when growing Agarwood or any other species for that matter.

My Ministry has started this research since 2015 and currently measuring growth and survival of this species in different sites. This is fairly a new species introduced in Fiji by a company called World Forestry Fiji and my Ministry is working together with this company in undertaking research on how best to grow this.

Very briefly, Madam Speaker, Agarwood also known as 'aloeswood' or 'gharuwood' is a fragrant dark resinous wood used in incense, perfume, medicine and small carvings. It is formed in the heartwood of *Aguilaria* trees in their natural habitat. Unlike sandalwood trees which produce oil without any intervention, Agarwood, when grown outside its natural environment in plantations, need to be inoculated with a certain fungus at a certain age, to induce resin production from which the essential oil is derived.

When the trees are healthy, Madam Speaker, Agarwood has a light or pale colour but when it is infected by disease, the process of infection creates a response to the attack, resulting in a very dark and incredibly aromatic resin known as oleoresin. It is this rich dark resin which is so highly priced and from which Agarwood essential oil is extracted. This is why it is different from sandalwood as it requires external intervention to induce resin and subsequently oil production.

In the wild, the production of this resin can take many years and like a good wine, the older the resin the more priced it becomes. Because of its huge cost and extreme rarity in the wild, the trees are now cultivated and the resin is actually created by artificial infection and its essential oil extracted by water distillation.

Agarwood is native to India as well as several areas of South East Asia, including Vietnam, the Philippines and Indonesia. Outside its native countries, it is most widely known in the Middle East, China, Taiwan and Japan. We are yet to develop this technique, Madam Speaker, but my Ministry will be working on these species and document research findings over a span of time. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- A supplementary question, Honourable Nabulivou?

HON. A. NABULIVOU.- A supplementary question to the Honourable Minister: how long does it take to do the research for Agarwood?

HON. O. NAIQAMU.- Madam Speaker. My Ministry will take more than seven years to undertake this research.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Prem Singh?

HON. P. SINGH.- A supplementary question, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- A supplementary question.

HON. P. SINGH.- This is a very interesting proposal, Madam Speaker, but we note that Agarwood is not a species native to Fiji. Can the Honourable Minister advise when this august House will see a comprehensive forestry policy, and I ask this because we have been given piecemeal updates on each species, so when can we have a comprehensive Forestry policy?

HON. SPEAKER.- ... the Agarwood but the onus is on you to answer.

HON. O. NAIQAMU.- Madam Speaker, it is not related to the question.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Dulakiverata?

HON. J. DULAKIVERATA.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. I thank the Honourable Minister for his response. The Agarwood is a very economical tree in terms of the price. So I thank the Honourable Minister for the research they have been doing but a lot of people are now planting Agarwood in their compound or farms and there have been some extensive nursery to produce more seedlings.

May I ask the Honourable Minister as to why is the Ministry not promoting the production or the planting of such trees like Agarwood because it is economical?

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister?

HON. O. NAIQAMU.- Madam Speaker, I have clearly mentioned in my response that the Ministry is still undertaking research.

HON. SPEAKER.- Last question. Honourable Ratu Kiliraki?

HON. RATU K. KILIRAKI.- A supplementary question, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- A supplementary question.

HON. RATU K. KILIRAKI.- Can the Honourable Minister explain or enlighten us on the plan of the Forestry in terms of the accessibility of Agarwood to the average local people or whether it is going to take it up as a corporation like Fiji Hardwood and Fiji Pine.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Minister?

HON. O. NAIQAMU.- Madam Speaker, the Honourable Member is jumping the gun. I have already clearly mentioned in this House, the Ministry of Forests is still conducting research. The same thing happened to Fiji Pine Limited during the olden days, the trial for Fiji Pine started initially in the early 1960s and the Fijian Government established the Pine Scheme in 1972. Right now, the Agarwood is still on trial in Fiji. Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- Given that two questions were not admitted, I will give the floor to the Honourable Sudhakar to ask his last question.

HON. A. SUDHAKAR.- Madam Speaker, the Honourable Minister has elaborated on the benefits of Agarwood, my question to the Honourable Minister is, what sort of land is best suited for Agarwood cultivation and which parts Fiji would be best for Agarwood plantation?

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you, Honourable Minister.

HON. O. NAIQAMU.- Madam Speaker, it is still on research and trial.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Members, after a question is asked, I will see who stands up first and I have already said that it is the Opposition who will be given the opportunity to ask supplementary questions. But if you are not standing up and Government is standing up first, then I will give the floor to the Government. I now invite the Honourable Dr. Samisoni to ask her question.

HON. DR. M.T. SAMISONI.- Thank you Madam Speaker, before I ask the question may I congratulate the Wainibuka 100 metres champion. Madam Speaker you did ask a question, you wondered what was the secret. Can I just say, it is the protein from the *kai* from Wainibuka River and the all the fruits and vegetables. Thank you.

Good Quality Internet Communications Services
(Question No. 159/2018)

HON. DR. M.T. SAMISONI asked the Government, upon notice:

How can the Honourable Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Public Enterprises, Civil Service and Communications ensure good quality internet communication services?

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

Internet accessibility nowadays, Madam Speaker, is almost a need. Most people, of course, need access to internet. The Honourable Member's question can be answered, of course, in two ways; I think there are two elements to it. One of them is, of course, accessibility and the other one is the stability of the internet, the backbone. I suspect the Honourable Member whilst not necessarily clear that you are asking more about the stability of the internet.

Madam Speaker, penetration, of course, and internet is very, very critical, what is also more important is the affordability. As we have said previously, Madam Speaker, the digital age many people have hailed to be the great equalizer but it can be the greatest dis-equalizer. If you have children, club members and the public businesses, for example, accessing 4G, living in Suva, Nadi, Lautoka, Sigatoka or some remote parts in Kadavu or Lau, not actually accessing that, then actually we have a problem in creating a much bigger device between those population or indeed, Naitasiri, Ba, et cetera.

So Government's objective first of all was to ensure that we have accessibility to digital communications, including internet communication and mobile phone communications, available everywhere. We have, at the moment, about 95 percent network coverage throughout Fiji.

We have, of course, recently seen a lack of accessibility because of various damages to infrastructure, for example, to Vodafone, Digicel and various other TFL sites. A lot of them are actually very busy in maintaining them and putting them back up.

So the issue is about accessibility, Madam Speaker, and about affordability and the other one is about the backbone of it, and the backbone means that we need to have a particular level of redundancy. As we have seen recently (I think) it was last week for a few hours in the morning, I do not know how many would have noticed, but the internet was actually down because on the Southern Cross Cable which comes from Australia, lands in Fiji and goes up on to the western coast of USA, the particular service strata provided to Telstra, that system had gone down. So our internet capacity was actually quite low and accessibility was low.

The other point, of course, Madam Speaker, is what we call IXPs. At the moment, for example, if I have got a gmail account and I want to email Honourable Dr. Samisoni on her gmail account, my message actually gets routed all the way to Australia, comes all the way back to her account even though she is only a few feet away from me. Now, what we are doing in working with ITC is developing what we call the IXP (Internet Exchange Point) system. What it does is it actually recognises where the message is coming from within the country and going to someone to that same country, then it actually routes the message within the country itself rather than having to travel all the way back out of the country and then coming back to you. Those are some of the projects that we are working on.

But stability, of course, can be a big issue. As you know a lot of money we put in, about US\$5.6 million in giving the people of Vanua Levu accessibility to internet connectivity. Although people in Vanua Levu currently get internet connectivity, it is also through microwave linkages because we know it is not very stable above water by having the cable land in Savusavu and the Honourable Members should be very pleased with this. The speed will, of course, increase by 100 percent and indeed, the capacity will increase by 100 percent.

In a few weeks' time actually over the next few years, we are intending through TFL, laying a fibre optic cable from Savusavu to Labasa. This, of course, will increase the capacity of it but redundancy, Madam Speaker, is an issue. As we know that most of the internet services in Fiji are actually delivered through broadband which is this, we have close to 600,000 smart phones in Fiji so people with smart phones can access internet with their phones itself, even though they may not have terrestrial linkages itself.

HON. DR. M.T. SAMISONI.- Supplementary question.

HON. SPEAKER.- Supplementary question, Honourable Dr. Samisoni.

HON. DR. M. SAMISONI.- Thank you very much Honourable Minister for your very informative response. I appreciate that.

My issue here and if I could say, this was a personal case. It took six and half days for Vodafone to respond to my issue and I just could not get up on to the internet either my broadband or my wi-fi. We tried to sort it out and it could not, it took six days.

Finally, Madam Speaker, told me to go down on a Friday afternoon after five days, he told me to go down because someone could not come up, I accepted that but being a business person we are going to be productive today and we cannot be productive when we do not have our IT or our a broadband.

May question, Sir, is why this Government wants to compete in the private sector because Digicel were able to solve their problem with me within five minutes – do this, do this, do this, over that period.

HON, SPEAKER.- Thank you, Honourable Acting Prime Minister.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, the Government is not in the business of internet provision.

HON. SPEAKER.- Is there any other supplementary question, Honourable Salote Radrodro.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Madam Speaker, I thank the Honourable Minister for his explanation. Just a question on the rehabilitation after *TC Winston* in regards to the Vodafone tower in Vanuabalavu which went down, I am not too sure if that is being repaired so if the Honourable Minister could confirm whether it has been repaired. If not, when could it be done because it really is affecting the communication in terms of *TC Winston* rehabilitation with the people of Vanuabalavu and their relatives in the urban centres or overseas in regards to helping them financially rebuild their homes?

HON. SPEAKER.- The Acting Prime Minister.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, like the Honourable Member, I am not aware of when it will come up or if it has come up, I assume you do not know whether it comes up or not. Just before you ask, I was actually texting the CEO of Vodafone to find out, so once he responds, then perhaps I can tell you after we finish.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you, last question, Honourable Niko Nawaikula.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- We take it for granted here, but in the villages in rural areas they have to go to a certain place, even to make a nice phone call. What does the Government intend to do to improve that?

HON. SPEAKER.- The Honourable Acting Prime Minister.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. Honourable Member, as I have said in Parliament previously that the Universal Service Access Fund will take a certain percentage. By law, there is a requirement and certain percentage of the profits of the mobile phone companies need to be actually paid into this particular Fund and then those funds are used to fund various towers, et cetera, in remote places, in particular when it is commercially not viable for them. For example, you could have a bay in the corner of Kadavu somewhere where there is absolutely no connectivity, and because there is only 50 people living there, Digicel or Vodafone will think, "Well, it is not viable for us to put up a half a million dollar tower and these people will not use the phone as much, so we will not get a rate of return on our investment for maybe 30 years." That is where this Fund actually comes into spot, and we have actually advertised these places.

We have also reached out to these mobile phone companies, but what we are doing, Madam Speaker, previously the mentality was that, if you can see some of them in some of the hills, that each provider set up its own tower, what we call visible pollution, but what we are trying to do now is set up a single tower in which everyone can come and put all their facilities and the antennas, et cetera, so we save on cost and then they focus more on the services. So there are spots like that and that is how this funding will be provided for that and, in fact, we are working on that at the moment.

HON. SPEAKER.- I now give the floor to Honourable Jilila Kumar to ask her question.

Promotion and Improving Occupational Health in Fiji.
(Question No. 160/2018)

Madam Speaker, before I ask my question, I would also wish to welcome Honourable Tevita Niumataiwalu to Parliament.

My question is:

Can the Honourable Minister for Employment, Productivity and Industrial Relations inform the House on the measures that have been taken and will be taken by the Ministry to promote and improve Occupational Health in Fiji?

HON. J. USAMATE (Minister for Employment, Productivity and Industrial Relations).- Thank you, Madam Speaker, I thank the Honourable Member for the question that has been focussed on Occupational Health and we are basically talking about two things, as I mentioned before:

1. the health of the people that are in workplaces; and
2. how do you make sure that when people come to the workplace itself, their health is not affected in a negative way by the quality of the workplace that we have.

I also mentioned that we worked together with the Ministry of Health and Medical Services and we produced this Occupational Health and Services Profile, that looks at the situation that we have in the country and what needs to be done to try to build up or improve Occupational Health in the country.

So, in terms of what my Ministry will be focusing on, we will be focussing on the recommendations that are here, some of the things that need to be addressed within this particular profile on how we move forward to try to maintain the health of the workers that we have.

This is very important for us because as I had mentioned earlier when I talked about productivity, the key input in productivity is people. Some of the people who had talked about the productivity have talked about human resources, the fountain head of productivity. If you have people who are workers and they who know what to do, they can do it, they have the right attitude and if they are healthy psychologically, physically and mentally, they will be able to deliver the kinds of things that you need.

One of the important things that we are focusing on now is that there is an International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention 161 that focusses on Occupational Health Services. So, in the Ministry, we are now looking at what we need to do in order for us to be able to sign up to that particular Convention. That Convention is also important also because it is very closely aligned to the right to health that we have in the Constitution.

In Section 38 of the Constitution it says, and I quote:

“The State must take reasonable measures within its available resources to achieve the progressive realisation of the right of every person to health, and to the conditions and facilities necessary to good health, and to health care services, including reproductive health care”.

So the ratification of that Convention is something that we will move towards, but will not ratify it until we ensure that we have all the necessary structures in place, all the necessary things that allow us to ratify that particular Convention.

The Convention also calls very strongly for enterprise level Occupational Health Services. At the moment for instance, we have a lot of emphasis on Occupational Safety, that is why we have the Occupational Health and Safety Committees. They are tripartite in nature, they need to be led by the workers within a particular country, but a lot of their focus is on keeping things safe.

We need these Committees and the other mechanisms that we have to start focussing a lot more on the health of the people that are in those workshops. So this enterprise focus has more of a preventative focus rather than a reactionary focus. A lot of the things that we do now, our reaction, we will wait for something to go wrong then we try to do something to alleviate. But this preventive focus is trying to make sure that things are not focused on reaction.

We already have Occupational Health & Safety (OHS) Committees. They are already in place and what we are looking at now is to see how we can tweak the responsibilities of those Committees so they do not just work or focus on safety but also have a more proactive role, a more prominent role in encouraging the health of workers. These Committees need to look at advising employers and workers, and their representatives who are the trade unions of what needs to be done to maintain the health of the people that are in the different enterprises.

The Ministry will also be working very closely and has already started very closely in its work with the Ministry of Health and Medical Services to develop a national policy, a programme and an action plan, an actual plan of what it needs to do for occupational health and occupational health services. And in doing this, a lot of the work that we are doing so far has been focused on the large organisations but most of our people are working in smaller, medium and micro enterprises.

A lot of people are working in the informal sector and agriculture and this is where the challenge lies. Our challenge lies in looking at occupational health of people in the formal and informal sectors at the smaller organisations, agriculture and the self-employed. This is where it is going to our challenge and through our discussions, not only with the Ministry of Health and Medical Services but also with our National OHS Advisory Board, we need to address this area because 60 percent of our working population is in that particular sector; formal, informal and subsistence-type of economies.

We are also looking to strengthen our capacity in the Ministry to do this. We already have a doctor who has a qualification in occupational medicine and a nurse, but we need to strengthen that so that we can begin to provide a lot more services to assist in areas like occupational hygiene and occupational psychology because the status of mind of people can have a huge impact on their productivity. *Ergonomics*, the design of seats, chairs and tables that enhance productivity or reduce it. Those are areas that we need to be able to focus on in the future.

So Madam Speaker, those are some of the areas that the Ministry is focusing on and we look forward to working extensively with the Ministry of Health and Medical Services so we can try to address the issue of occupational health. People have the right to know that when they are working in a workplace that their health will not be affected in a negative fashion by the work itself, the way the work is carried out and the surroundings in which the work is carried out. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Given the time constraints, I will not allow any supplementary questions. We will move on to the next question. Now I give the floor to the Honourable Niko Nawaikula.

Disaster Management Processes
(Question No. 161/2018)

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

How can Government assure the House that the victims of *Cyclone Keni* would not be subjected to the same process and difficulties that *Cyclone Winston* victims were made to follow?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM (Acting Prime Minister, Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Public Enterprises, Civil Service and Communications).- Madam Speaker, we can assure the House that the assistance that was given during *TC Winston* obviously was very, very, extensive. *TC Winston*, just to remind Parliament, was the second strongest storm that ever hit landfall in the world and obviously it caused widespread devastation and wiped off one third of the value of our Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Notwithstanding that, we still grew at a very although albeit at a nominal rate, very sort of modest sum but we still grew in that particular year. So the level of assistance that was provided was actually very extensive. It needed a lot of coordination, logistics and we have for example, introduced for the first time in that particular process, the Help for Homes Initiative. I know the Honourable Member has been particularly perturbed by one or two areas where he feels in particular, I know he has highlighted Taveuni and where some people have still not been able to fully utilise their cards because of various investigations.

But overall, Madam Speaker, if you look at the level of assistance that has been provided, over 90 percent of all the people have received their goods, they are satisfied with what they have received and now of course, Madam Speaker, if you compare *TC Winston* with *TC Keni*, *TC Keni* was actually a Category 3 storm that of course brought winds and heavy rainfall in particular flash flooding. As you know that the Honourable Viam Pillay as we mentioned yesterday has been very heavily involved in that respect.

Madam Speaker, we have also rolled out, the Honourable Prime Minister announced before his departure for CHOGM that the Cyclone Assistance Relief Effort (CARE) for Fiji, there are various aspects to that. We have what we call the “homes care” the “farms care” “sugar cane care” “lease holders care” “welfare care” and “e-transport care” and we will see all the details that is going to be advertised in tomorrow’s papers and also three other forms of medium to tell people as to how they will be assisted. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Supplementary question.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Supplementary question. Can I just ask the Honourable Minister to inform the House what guarantee or what measures is the Government doing to ensure that the structures are strong and cyclone proof especially where you are distributing materials and leaving it to the owners to build their own houses?

HON. SPEAKER.-Thank you. The Honourable Acting Prime Minister.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, I thank the Honourable Member for this question and it is a very important question actually, because as we have seen majority of the homes that were damaged during *TC Winston* did not meet up to any standards.

If you go to any rural area, any farm or any village, people simply just put up structures and as part of that initiative, and whilst we sort of rolled out about \$125 million in respect of the Help for Home, as part of the requirements when they went and bought materials from the hardware store, we had the building code standards, the basic codes standards available in the three languages and we had diagrams, et cetera, and everyone was supposed to refer to that. We made various public announcements in respect to that. That is the best way that we can do that.

As the Honourable Usamate highlighted, we actually do not have enough of those types of people with the expertise to actually go out and view every single structure. It is a personal responsibility for them to build back better.

Madam Speaker, also in respect of the ability to go and, as I said, view every structure is not possible, it can take ages. We have left it to them to build accordingly and we have also provided materials and for the Help for Homes, we ensure that the materials that they could purchase met various compliance standards. Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Viliame Gavoka.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. It took more than two years after *TC Winston*, students are still studying in tents and people are still living in tents. We believe that Government has surrendered its responsibility to the private sector to do all these work.

Can we ask Government then, to bring back the structure that was DISMAC, that has been trialled over the years and that had been successful? Please can you bring back DISMAC and do not surrender your responsibility to private sector.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Acting Prime Minister.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, again the Honourable Member is perhaps misleading Parliament because DISMAC did not build homes the way that we are doing. DISMAC was more to do with what we call the Natural Disaster Management Office (NDMO) that we have set up. The equivalent to that, has been given a different name.

Madam Speaker, NDMO does not actually render all of its work to the private sector. It is still done by Government. The Ministry for Natural Disaster Management actually manages all coordination. The building of schools is actually outsourced, but some of the schools are still built by the Ministry of Infrastructure too, in particular or the RFMF. We find contractors not willing to go to certain islands or certain parts of Fiji because they think it is economically and financially not viable for them.

So, we have RFMF going to many of these, in fact we have to be very grateful for the RFMF for doing all these constructions for us in providing the engineering capacity. If we did not involve the private sector in the building of the schools, and just left it to Ministry of Infrastructure, we would still be languishing. Most of the schools have been built.

The Honourable Member keeps on saying, “people are in tents, schools are in tents”. I gave in the last session of Parliament an exact number of schools which are in tents and which are not in tents. There are only two schools that I highlighted in Koro. All the others have some form of alternative structure and most of the schools will be completed next few months; in fact lot of them have already been done, a very small percentage is left.

Also, Madam Speaker, when we had the “Help for Homes” it did not mean that we go and build their homes. We actually are giving them access to materials to build their homes; and that has always been an issue. Of course, Madam Speaker, there is a boom in the construction industry. The economy is growing at a fast rate and put under various pressure. There is a shortage of people in the construction industry.

We had a budgetary provision in the 2017-2018 Budget where the Ministry of Rural and Provincial Development and a provision allocated to go and train people to become carpenters and that

has been done in the maritime and rural areas. So we can have more people who know actually how to hammer joints and then what have you. So, all of that is being done. It is incorrect to say that we are fund by the NDMO to the private sector.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Before we move on to the next oral question, the Coca-Cola Games has brought in a number of important visitors to Parliament today and here with us is from the Uluivalili College, Wailevu, Savusavu - Mr. Akuila Mocololo, Mrs. Divani Bola and Mrs. Lusiana Dileqa. Welcome to Parliament.

Thank you. I now give the floor to the Honourable Netani Rika to ask his question

Fishing Business Development Plans
(Question No. 162/2018)

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

Can the Honourable Minister for Fisheries inform the House of what strategies are being developed to make Fiji the main business hub for fishing vessels to operate in throughout the Pacific?

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU (Minister for Fisheries).- Thank you, Madam Speaker. I thank the Honourable Member for the question.

Madam Speaker, Fiji is blessed by its geographical location, infrastructure development, connectivity to international markets and the availability of premium port services. It is because of these advantages over the years Fiji has been an attractive port for calls by foreign fishing vessels outside Fiji's waters with many choosing to operate out of Fiji.

These vessels are mostly fishing vessels targeting tuna and occasionally visits from vessels targeting Patagonian Toothfish, Bluefin Tuna and Demersal fish such Orange Roughy and Bluenose; all multi-million dollar fisheries. Over the past five years the average number of foreign fishing vessels arriving into and using Fiji ports is recorded as 480 vessels, outnumbering the combined total number of merchant ships and cruise liners using Fiji ports by far.

Madam Speaker, it is also to be noted that Fiji lies in the outer periphery of the main tuna migratory paths and, therefore, catches in our waters are not as vast as in the waters of our Pacific Island neighbours lying to the North East of us. However, what is lost on the one hand can be gained on the other and that would be through having an internationally recognised fishing port that offers world-class services from slipway repairs and crewing services to other fisheries related services, such as provisioning, bunkering, transshipment in port, exporting of landed catches through the provision of administrative services, such as flight arrangements, banking, immigration, money transfers, shopping and entertainment. In short a one-stop shop for fisheries business.

This business centre model is estimated to inject 100s of millions of dollars into our economy by either directly through the exports of the landed fish or indirectly through the provision of services and other economic spinoff, for example, revenue to farmers who supply vegetables to the fishing vessels. Other benefits include:

- More employment opportunities for our nationals;
- Contribution to the reduction of local market fish prices due to fish supplied by them;
- Surplus of fish and healthier food choices; and

- Supplying of raw materials and meeting the needs of processing plants that we have around our urban centres.

The overarching goal that needs to be accomplished is to make our ports very attractive and conducive to suit these vessel's needs.

Madam Speaker, I would like to stress on three main issues that needs our attention. First, is the maintenance of health and safety in our ports around Fiji. Madam Speaker, this is an important subject that needs the cooperation and discussions with our stakeholders. The maintenance of vessel crew and the security of vessels has always been one of the key deciding factors for foreign vessels to use our ports apart from the availability of Port services.

Infrastructure and connectivity to export markets: in recent years, the security and hygiene of one of the worst Fiji ports has been a concern due to underlying jurisdictional issues.

The second consideration for fishing vessels to use is the implementation of Port State Measures. Madam Speaker, this is quite important to international shipping, especially foreign ships that use our ports.

In my statement yesterday, I spoke of how we have complied with the European Union requirements. The European Union and other international bodies that we supply our fish to require international Ports standard and the requirements are covered under the Port State Measures.

Madam Speaker, the standard mandate asks to conduct stringent checks prior to arrival during entry and prior to departure of fishing vessels. This is done through vessel background checks that are conducted electronically prior to the vessel's arrival, body and inspection of vessels as they are conducted when the vessels do arrive in Port and pre-departure clearances which are conducted prior to the vessel's departure.

Madam Speaker, those are the few points that I wanted to highlight as additional to the questions that have been raised in this House this morning. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. We will have only one supplementary question considering the time and I will give the floor to the Honourable Viliame Gavoka.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Thank you, Madam Speaker, we have all these boats, fishing vessels visiting Suva. Can the Honourable Minister explain why Levuka continues to be handicapped by the raw materials, that is, tuna to keep its factory fully functioning? It has the capacity to produce 35 tonnes of tuna albacore every year, but at the most, it does about 23 or 24. So, with all these vessels bringing in fish to Suva, why is Levuka not getting its proper supplies of fish? Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you, Honourable Minister.

HON. CDR. S.T KOROILAVESAU.- Thank you, Madam Speaker, that is basically a supply-and-demand question, and the prices that PAFCO in Levuka is willing to pay for raw materials. If the prices that are available overseas are attractive to the fishing companies and the fishing vessels that arrive in Fiji then they will supply those requirements to overseas countries. If Levuka or PAFCO can match the price, then certainly they will be able or willing to sell to PAFCO in Levuka.

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

Written QuestionsSustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
(Question No. 163/2018)

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

At the UN Sustainable Development Summit in September 2015, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted, which includes a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to end poverty, fight inequality and injustice and tackle Climate Change by 2030. Can the Honourable Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Public Enterprises, Civil Service and Communications give a baseline report on the progress towards the 17 Goals by 2030 to ensure that no one is left behind?

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you, in the absence of the Acting Prime Minister?

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU (Acting Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Public Enterprises, Civil Service and Communications).- Madam Speaker, the Honourable Minister will provide the answer at a later sitting date.

HON. SPEAKER.- I now give the floor to the Honourable Ratu Kiliraki to ask his second written question.

Total Volume of Development Minerals Extracted From 2013-2017
(Question No. 164/2018)

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

Can the Honourable Minister for Industry, Trade, Tourism, Lands and Mineral Resources provide the total volume of the following development minerals extracted annually for the last five years to 2017 –

- (a) river gravel;
- (b) river sand;
- (c) quarry rocks;
- (d) top soil;
- (e) mud and clay soil; and
- (f) soapstone.

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- (Acting Minister for Industry, Trade, Tourism, Lands and Mineral Resources).- Madam Speaker, the Minister will be providing his answers to the question as allowed under the Standing Orders.

HON. SPEAKER.- For the last written question, I give the floor to the Honourable Ratu Suliano Matanitobua.

Status of Licensing and Exploration of Namosi Copper Mines
(Question No. 165/2018)

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

Can the Honourable Minister for Industry, Trade, Tourism, Lands and Mineral Resources update the House on the status of the licensing and exploration of Namosi Copper Mines?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- (Acting Minister for Industry, Trade, Tourism, Lands and Mineral Resources).- Madam Speaker, I thank the Honourable Member for his question. We will provide an answer as provided for under the Standing Orders.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you, question time is over. I ask the leave of the House to enable me to organise the following next two items on the agenda:

1. Motions for Debate; and the
2. Ministerial Statements within the one hour given to us.

Do I have your permission that I juggle time just to accommodate both? May be we may limit the time for the End of Week's Statement later on.

Before we proceed on the next Item which is Motions for Debate, I wish to inform the Honourable Members that the Honourable Aseri Radrodro has withdrawn his motion listed under Schedule 2 in today's Order Paper.

Before I call on the Honourable Dr. Samisoni, I wish to advise the House that pursuant to Standing Order 35(2), we will have to commence with the End of Week Statements this morning at 11.30 a.m. Therefore the vote on the motion will be taken before that.

I will now call on the Honourable Samisoni to move her motion.

LICENSING OF PSYCHOLOGISTS

HON. DR. M.T. SAMISONI.- Madam Speaker, I move:

That this House hereby takes note of the importance of Social Science and its relevance to the development of human resources and calls upon the Government of the day to legislate the licensing of psychologists so as to provide citizens of Fiji with the best quality of psychological services.

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

HON. SPEAKER.- Now, I invite the Honourable Samisoni to speak on her motion.

HON. DR. M.T. SAMISONI.- Madam Speaker, I will give with a bit of background then I will say why I believe we should be legislating today. That is the framework.

Technology has changed from hunter/gatherer economy using spears, bows and arrows, knives to agriculture using wheels, horse and cart, to industrial using machines where tasks were assembled into piecemeal manufacturing line, where work was monotonous, repetitive and dissatisfying to the 21st Century using information to become a knowledge economy. That is a lot of change and, therefore, requires not only legal changes but the spirit has to always align, very important, because with these exchanges, we have to change. There is no doubt about it as well described this morning by the Honourable Minister for Productivity.

With such changes and technology, this is accompanied by the move away from getting linear or focused on money and productivity only to a holistic, integrated monetary disciplinary framework for moral capitalism linked to human values, human behaviour and thought processes explained in psychology.

Institution: Fiji Government Ministers while strategically accepting the need to change and reform for the knowledge of the new world order with their Green Growth Framework 2014, Strategic Development Goals, 2030 and National Development Goals both in the 20-year (2017 to 2036), and a comprehensive five-year Development Plan of 2017 to 2021, at process and behaviour level, FijiFirst Party Government must also demonstrate cultural change with the times that include moral capitalism.

Fiji Corrections Services: some of the cases that are found there need psychologists. For example, the Honourable Minister needs to *talanoa* to counterparts and the Standing Committee for Foreign Affairs and Defence in their Review Report on the Fiji Correction Services, 2015 Annual Report, (Parliamentary Paper No. 34 of 2018), included in their list of findings, I quote:

“Noted that the Fiji Corrections Service’s submission and site visit on the need to increase the number of psychologists”

So you already have psychologists in the system.

We have rehabilitation programmes; the inclusion of psychological programmes for the inmates can also strengthen the rehabilitative programmes of the Fiji Correction Services.

On the same issue, if the Government is employing psychologists in the Fiji Correction Services then are they qualified? Under what regulations, how can the Fiji Corrections Services account for the psychologist programmes and skills?

Further, to enhance the Fiji Correction Service delivery, the Committee proposed a list to include:

1. noted the increase of youth population into the Correction Services. For the 2015 youth population (from 16 to 35 years old) represented 37 percent while in the general population, Madam Speaker, there is only 35 percent of youth. Therefore, there is a need to expand the Nasinu Correction Centre into a vocational centre for juvenile youth inmates.

This is a recommendation from the Report, Madam Speaker:

2. Due to the challenges and stressful work environment in the Fiji Correction Services, there is a need for the post-traumatic stress disorder programmes for Correction Officers and their families.

For the bigger picture, we must also change with the times to account through good governance. How can the people be informed to understand the changes necessary for improved personal productivity that have already been well described by the Honourable Jone Usamate. Entrepreneurial outcomes have been well described by the Honourable Minister for Productivity.

Entrepreneurial outcomes well-described by both the Minister of Productivity and the Acting Prime Minister. Gender equality was well-described by the Minister of Women’s Affairs through the protection and regulation to understand the purpose, science of behaviour and mental processes, Madam Speaker, starting with the professionals under their regulatory framework. This is to regulate their registration, practice, service delivery, research and body of knowledge to remain relevant to the times.

Therefore, change and reform from the old economic order to the new can connect human values, well-described by the Acting Prime Minister in the value chain management; can connect human values to markets to Government legislation and policy at different levels, individual, organisational, national and global. So the networking is so important and they are already on top of that, Madam Speaker.

When do we start in Fiji? Now it is the time to link up with the purpose of public safety and good; to assist those who have studied in this field and continue to graduate as psychologists, when can legislation be implemented and by the professional body of members?

Comments to support the motion:

1. University graduates have no place to work, why are we educating them in this field? There is no professional indemnity insurance because there is no legislation and the cost of insurance is so high.
2. The Prime Minister raised the issue of bullying. Is there a psychologist in the Department of Education? They will assist in alleviating the victim problem. Further bullies also need, as perpetrators, to stop self-harm.

I think the Leader of Opposition well described yesterday the need for counsellors and psychologists but what I am saying, there need to be trained.

3. The public prosecutor raised the need for psychologists in the Department of Justice to assist in law-making, especially in domestic violence and jails to change from retributive justice to rehabilitative justice.

It is not enough to have counsellors. Many are with certificates or undergraduates without supervision and social workers. Psychologists are needed as we are talking about changing behaviour and mental processes for the long term to sustain change and conflict resolution for the individuals, groups, organisations and nation building with international networks.

We need to be now working in positive dynamics as well described yesterday by the Honourable Acting Prime Minister, so we are talking the same language - visionary, objective at strategic level. But what I am talking about is we need to also get together at a process level and to bring about change, and this in the spirit of the law.

After the historical *coups* in Fiji, fear and hate have been suppressed by Decrees for media, political and criminal. This oppression, I believe, is now a public order disease, Madam Speaker, in which psychologists have an important professional role to play in a rehabilitative team. We need to 'carrot not the stick' to manage the high cortisol in the bloodstream. Cortisol is a substance that is created by the adrenalin that when you are afraid, it really shoots up and it stays in the bloodstream.

We need to understand, Madam Speaker, the effect of that and that is fear from fear. It is not good for other sections but I am not here to speak about the parts of your body. In fact psychologists ought to guide Government in policy guidelines. Obama and Cameron recruited them into their Government to help design interventionist type policy-making. Too many so-called psychologists are practicing but they are not qualified with no licencing board to oversight psychological practitioners, Madam Speaker.

On the role of capitalism in the new information 21st century economy, the change from the old economic order requires entrepreneurial innovation as well described by the other side of the House, and I like that. That is very good, to connect all capital where linear focus on money only or labour productivity is now outdated and we need moral capitalism.

We need the spirit, the heart and the mind to work together. Therefore, in the new world order, Madam Speaker, the multi-disciplinary holistic framework is designed to integrate all capital from the different multi-disciplinary bases. These include, social, psychological, technical, economic, financial, moral, spiritual, ethical, political information. The emphasis is on good governance, accountability and participation of the people for strategic successful entrepreneurial outcomes-jobs, jobs and jobs and balanced national budgets.

The Honourable Prime Minister puts it well for the Green Growth Framework for Fiji (2014), it is not business as usual, no more silos, no more sectors but cross-cutting, environmentally, socially and economically through the *Talanoa* to sustain development.

We need to talk more, we need to debate more in a mature way, Madam Speaker, and psychology (I believe) would bring that into the picture. With people participation and ownership at source, this locks in environmental and sustainable processes and culture through prevention described by the Honourable Minister for Employment, Productivity and Industrial Relations.

This is the practical part, next comes theory to integrate, and professionalise practice. For example, sociologists argue that learning process is rooted in history. It started with our first teacher or mother. This is linked to the transformation of Protestantism.

HON. SPEAKER.- I will allow only one response for no more than 10 minutes.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, this particular motion is in respect of the licencing of psychologists. Madam Speaker, obviously it would appear that the Honourable Member believes the licencing of psychologists can only be done through statute. Yes, that is true but also in some jurisdictions, licencing of psychologists can be done without legislative framework. For example, in Singapore, the Singapore Psychological Society (SPS) has a register of psychologists and only if you are registered with the SPS, can you be recognised as a psychologist who can perform services. Similarly in Malaysia, the Malaysian Society of Clinical Psychologists, and various other jurisdictions in Canada, United States, India, South Africa, United Kingdom, New Zealand and Australia. There are various laws and regulations that actually provide for their registration.

We have, of course, other professions, Madam Speaker, where you do not have actual legislative or Government oversight in the actual registration but there are various frameworks that do that, for example, the Institute of Accountants certifies Accountants. They have the CPA programme. Government does not have a say in that, but they have their own various mechanisms.

At the moment, legally speaking, there is nothing stopping the group of psychologists in Fiji to have their own mechanisms to register. And they can always, of course, go out and say to members of the public that, "Only if people who are registered within our organisation, should you recognise them as people who have met various standards." They can do that, there is nothing is stopping them. I have had a discussion with Honourable Dr. Mere Samisoni in respect to this, Ofa Duncan (Swann) had had a discussion with us about it.

We had discussed about whether we should put in place a law. We had some preliminary discussions with the Solicitor-General's Office sometime back, and we are, of course, looking at that. If there is a need, we will do that, Madam Speaker. But I do not think it requires an immediate need to have a particular law and the note should be there for accordingly approve this motion, to put in place a specific law for psychologists to be registered, then the law to be able to provide citizens with the best of quality psychological services.

We do not need the law for them to be able to provide citizens with the best of quality psychological services. Government itself will not do that, it is the quality of the psychologists. It is how they are monitored, and should they form their own society or own organisation, they can actually go out and say, "These people are already registered." They can put an advertisement and then met various standards and they can offer the services.

There is no doubt what Honourable Dr. Samisoni has said is that, psychologists are very important. But as I also highlighted in a couple of days ago in Parliament that many parents, many students do not see the study of psychology as a preferred career is seen as something you are dealing with mental health, et cetera, a lot of stigma attached to that. And we, of course, need to be able to think outside the box.

We completely agree with that, the Mercy Commission, for example, is in place. We had the first meeting in which, for example, we have said that we need services of the psychologists, the psychologists from Correction Services are on standby to be able to assist the psychological nature of the person who is actually requiring or some for mercy under the Mercy Commission provisions. So there is no doubt they do play a role and suppose that many of us here in this Parliament probably need psychological services too in respect of times when you may have emotional issues, you may want to be able to discuss, you may want to be able to talk to an independent third party. Of course, that gets into the area of psychiatry which is, of course, different to psychology and psychological services. So there are some various new answers in respect of psychiatry and psychological services.

But, Madam Speaker, I recognise what the Honourable Member is saying, but there is no need to actually have in place a specific legislative framework, to be able to provide good quality psychological services in Fiji. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Dr. M. Samisoni, you have five minutes to speak.

HON. DR. M. SAMISONI.- Thank you, Madam Speaker. Thank you very much to the reply. This question came from the psychologists themselves. They are worried, one, that they feel they cannot even go to the insurance company to get help from there. They felt that a regulatory Bill or Act or whatever you call it, I am not a lawyer, can help them come together. Perhaps, it should be alerted to them if they do not need a regulatory body, that they set up their association to help them come together and form a body so that they can also do their research. That body of knowledge will help their profession to grow and develop according to their group.

I am merely the messenger, I am trying to help them and I believe that this House should also help them on how they go about rectifying their legal problem. What do you do about that, I am here to ask?

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Parliament will now vote on the motion.

Question put.

The Question is:

That this House hereby takes note of the importance of social science and its relevance to the development of human resources and calls upon the Government of the day to legislate the licensing of psychologists so as to provide the citizens of Fiji with the best quality of psychological services.

Does any Member oppose the motion?

(Chorus of Ayes and Noes)

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

Votes Cast

Ayes	-	13
Noes	-	25
Not Voted	-	12

HON. SPEAKER.- There being 13 Ayes, 25 Noes and 12 Not Voted, the motion is defeated.

Motion is defeated.

END OF WEEK STATEMENTS

HON. SPEAKER.- The first End of Week Statements will be from the Honourable Aseri Radrodoro, so can you limit your Statement to five minutes, given the time constraints.

Urgent Need for Upgrade of All Wharf Facilities

HON. A.M. RADRODRO.- Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I rise to give my End of the Week Statement highlighting the need for Government to urgently upgrade all wharf facilities around the country, for example, Natovi Jetty and Savusavu Wharf, to facilitate night operations.

Madam Speaker, recently Fiji has experienced major shifts in our weather patterns. Minor tropical cyclones that would previously not be as destructive as we are now facing, have become an issue of concern and destruction for people and assets.

We now have to expect that our environment is certain to continue evolving. Manmade developments are, in fact, exacerbating the changes occurring. The recent *Tropical Cyclone Keni* saw storm surges occur and what used to be small creeks and rivers, overnight created new waterways, thus destroying homes and farms.

Madam Speaker, our ocean will not be immune to change. Being a maritime nation, we can expect that similarly our maritime routes will experience environmental changes.

Recently, one of our ships that has often travelled the route from Natovi to Vanua Levu and to Levuka, ran aground near Qoma Island in Tailevu. From around 8.00 a.m, the passengers, majority of them women and children were stuck on board the *Spirit of Altruism*. It is understood that 138 passengers were supposed to be on board, however, the Ministry of Transport officials informed that 182 passengers were, in fact, on the ship. These passengers had to undergo high water rescue and be transferred to the *Spirit of Love*.

When I visited Natovi Jetty in the early afternoon on the day of the incident, Madam Speaker, to see for myself the dangerous sea rescue, I noted the concerns of MSAF staff and Police, as well as the community, that the rescue was said to end at night around 9.00 p.m., and it did, Madam Speaker.

As we all know, the Natovi Jetty is not equipped for night operations. Similarly, the bulk of our jetties and wharves around the country face the same predicament. Waiting sheds for such jetties should be well equipped and so should medical services be available and cafeterias can be included.

Proper sanitation services, like water and public convenience, must be provided. We all know that after long journeys on some of these inter-island vessels, people wish to utilise public convenience facilities, given ships carry very limited availability of such amenities for their often hundreds of passengers.

Madam Speaker, a basic medical facility would also be ideal for instances, travelling passengers become sick on board ships and need urgent medical assistance on arrival at their destinations. In this day and age, when commercial activity is restricted to day operations only, the nation would benefit from a thriving 24 hour operations of our jetties, similarly to our ports.

Madam Speaker, when the environment is conducive for investment, development will follow. Perhaps, when jetty and wharf upgrades occur to include night operation frequency of shipping services to outer islands can also be improved as currently, we know the demands far outweigh the ability of the service provider.

I note that in the 2017-2018 Budget, Madam Speaker, allocations for upgrading and replacement of bridges were allocated \$30.6 million to include crossings in rural areas. The Budget was said to cater for repair works to be carried out on 60 critical bridges around the country. In these Budget allocation, the maintenance and renewal of jetties in Savusavu, Vunisea in Kadavu and Natovi was allocated \$11.1 million.

Madam Speaker, jetties to be upgraded include; Nabouwalu Jetty Stage II, Savusavu Jetty, Vunisea 2 Jetty, Waiyevo Jetty, Natovi Jetty and Waiting Shed, Makogai Jetty, Koro Jetty, Lomaloma Jetty, Nabukeru Jetty and Wainiyabia Jetty. These budgetary allocations, Madam Speaker, must get off the ground and become a reality.

Last weekend, Madam Speaker, I made a visit around Viti Levu to see for myself the destruction of infrastructural facilities following *TC Keni*. Upon my visit to Ellington in Rakiraki, I noted that it has been out of operation for a few months now. This is an important wharf, Madam Speaker, for it sits on an ideal part of the Western Division, midway between Natovi Jetty and Lautoka. It would do well for the Government to rehabilitate this crucial wharf and make it available again as an option for the travelling public and businesses.

The Ellington Wharf, in fact, can be made to be a modern facility and provide supporting commercial activities like shops, waiting area, eating facilities, public convenience, et cetera, I am sure, these will entice shipping companies and the general population to make use of such friendly amenities.

Madam Speaker, I would like to end with an important note, I must mention that these wharves and jetties are manned by officials who deserve the proper resources to be able to do their work. MSAF staff must guarantee jetties have at least one property, properly outfitted speed boat at its disposal to assist them in their operation.

As mentioned in the Natovi incident, Madam Speaker, the officials have mentioned that MSAF were relying on the vessels in distress for information. There was no way of independently obtaining what was going on because the entity did not have the necessary speed boats to visit the *Spirit of Altruism*. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. I now give the Honourable Minister responsible to speak in response and you have five minutes.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Thank you Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I will focus on the maintenance and upgrade facility as highlighted by the Honourable Member. The jetties and maintenance renewal has been allocated in the flyer that was given out, Madam Speaker, and I will focus, of course, the Honourable Member sort of went off tangent when he talked about the vessel in distress and various other issues, but I will focus on Natovi and Savusavu and various other major works.

In Natovi, Madam Speaker, the FRA is planning to upgrade the jetty by improving their current ROR facility and providing a second jetty with the exclusive use of inter-island ferries. The estimated cost of this work is FJD\$17 million, however FRA is discussing a share cost arrangement with the predominant user of the ROR facility.

For Savusavu, there is a plan to repair the existing jetty to prolong its life another five years while the full reconstruction jetty including ROR facilities is planned and designed the consideration of future adjacent property development intentions. The estimated cost of repair work is FJD\$2 million, the projected cost of reconstruction work is estimated an access of FJD\$20 million. There is also plan, Madam Speaker, to carry out immediate repairs in Lakeba, Cicia, Rotuma, Kavala at an estimated cost of FJD\$4 million.

Madam Speaker, therefore the Honourable Member does talk about the need to repair jetties in those particular areas but of course, we need to ensure that all the jetties are actually fixed. Of course we have in the last 5 years, for example, carried out works in Qarani, Yasawa-i-Rara, Nabouwalu and Bau Landing and FRA is currently working on upgrading jetties to suit berthing approach as and when the need may arise.

From a budgetary perspective, I would like to again highlight within that context the ports master plan with a seven year implementation plan is currently being developed to determine the current *status quo* of international port operations, Government is currently exploring options for the development of the new international sea port in Vanua Levu and the possibility of relocating cargo services from Suva Wharf. Initial feasibility study for the port in Vanua Levu has been undertaken with work underway for technical, economic and environmental impact assessment in detailed designed work.

Again to reiterate, Madam Speaker, in the meantime \$11.1 million has been allocated for the upgrading of jetties in the 2017/2018 Budget - Nabouwalu Jetty Stage 2 which is physical works - \$3 million, Savusavu Jetty renewals - \$3 million, Vunisea 2 jetties renewals - \$2.4 million, Waiyevo Jetty, Taveuni rehabilitation from *TC Winstorm* - \$1 million, jetty maintenance overall is \$0.5 million, Natovi Jetty Waiting Shed - \$600,000, Makogai Jetty - \$400,000, Koro Jetty - \$25,000, Lomaloma Jetty physical works - \$25,000, Nabukeru Jetty - \$50,000 and Wainiyabia Jetty - \$30,000.

Madam Speaker, the Honourable Member alluded to about works commencing immediately. There has been some problems in getting people to actually do the jetties as we have highlighted previously that there is a huge dearth of construction companies available including MOIT is all tied up with the rehabilitation works from *TC Winston*, the RFMF Engineers are also tied up and we are also working with the private sector.

For some of the works, tenders were called but no one actually bid at all or when the bids did come in, there is an estimated cost of \$2 million, people bidding it like \$7 million and obviously we are going to do that. So, re-tenders have been called for those works and I understand just having discussions with the FRA board recently, that some of those ones that there were tenders coming in have now actually

got some, people have tendered in and so the works will commence accordingly. Thank you Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you.

Tourism Business Industries

HON. SPEAKER.- I now call on Honourable Viliame Gavoka to deliver his statement.

HON. V.R.GAVOKA.- Thank you Madam Speaker. I wish to make a statement to draw the attention of the House to the tourism industry at a time when tourism is reportedly buoyant.

Madam Speaker, we hear that tourism is an all-time high and the gross receipts reported lately was at around \$1.8 billion. This is quite significant and to be expected given a momentum that the SDL Government and everyone had been building over the years to what it is today.

Madam Speaker, as we know that it is our belief that we should now be seeing a million visitors in this country and after 12 years of FijiFirst and the regime, they still way off half a million visitors hence our believe that it needs some good managements and that will happen soon when we take over the Government in the next few months.

Madam Speaker, in the midst of all these buoyancy, we have properties like Vatulele that has been closed for six years.

HON. GOVT. MEMBER.- It is a private property.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- It is so important to the people of Vatulele and when I brought up in the House, Government was surprised. So, who is watching the shop? Maybe they should cut back on some these travels, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, there are a number of resorts that are in distress like Mango Bay, affecting the people of Namatakula, also on sale after years of distress.

There was a time, Madam Speaker, under SDL we had a lot of backpackers, a lot of small businessmen who came in, borrowed money and we set it out for them, but they eventually disappeared; no support from the Government.

Madam Speaker, in terms of the workers of this country, you may remember, Madam Speaker, I brought in a petition here. The tourism workers in Fiji should get a service fee as they do in Japan, Korea, Hong Kong, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore and all those areas. We wondered, if we are doing so well, why can we not pay our people the service fee?

Madam Speaker, you gave it to the Economic Affairs Committee, we started working on it and one day all of a sudden the FijiFirst Members in the Standing Committee decided to kill the petition. It died and hopefully it will be reflected when you count the votes this year.

Madam Speaker, there is seasonality. Our workers are mostly part-timers. They should be made permanent and with the tourism industry, it is about seven months of plenty and five months of famine. So, during those five months a lot of these part-timers are released. When they are brought in, the rates that apply to them are not sufficient to keep their families in comfort. Maybe the Honourable Minister for Employment could take this on.

Madam Speaker, there is this issue of leakage. We all talk about buying locally but sadly we are not. There is a lot of importation of agricultural produces and we have been hearing about this agricultural revolution from this Government for years now. Nothing is happening.

Return to the landowners: Some hotels should be paying 3 percent of their gross receipts to the landowners. Some are still not paying 3 percent and indeed the time has come to review this, to bring it out to economies of the day maybe to 5 percent or 6 percent or 7 percent. Because the hotels are making some good money and we would like it to translate to the earnings of the landowners.

Over Water Bungalows: If you construct a resort on *i qoliqoli*, he must compensate the *i qoliqoli* owners properly. The best way of doing it is to have them, also earn a percent of the receipt as they do on the land.

Today, Madam Speaker, Momi is not paying anything to the people of Nalolo who own the *i qoliqoli*. I believe in the Malolo, they still do not do that in Likuliku, we have been told that they are doing it but the landowners said they are not. But going forward, Madam Speaker, I hope that this Parliament, the leaders of this country would make sure when you build a resort over an *i qoliqoli* you must make sure that the return the *i qoliqoli* owners receive is sufficient.

Going forward, Madam Speaker, in the way we are building infrastructure, fine, we have a very lovely terminal building in Nadi Airport. I believe someone said it has been rated amongst the best in the region. But, Madam Speaker, as I have said many times, you must balance that with the reality of life in Fiji. Someone wrote in the papers last week, Nadi Hospital is a highway to heaven. In the vernacular, Madam Speaker, we say *vale ni bula* or *vale ni mate*. The people of Nadi are saying “*iqori na vale ni mate*”; you go there to die, it is a highway to heaven. You cannot have a glitzy airport rated with the best in the region, and only a few minutes away is a hospital, that is a highway to heaven. We must balance it.

Yesterday I spoke about the amount of money we spend on golfing in Natadola, it will be \$45 million this year. All the support to Air Pacific which will be about \$54 million this year, but in Natadola I have shared with you about a woman who was drawing water from a well, throwing the bucket into the well to draw water out. I was horrified, Madam Speaker, that in my area people are still doing that. I did it when I was small but SVT came, they gave us water. I wish SDL to relook at these remedies and go slow on pampering the rich, paying them to come and play the golf for four days and look after those women. I do not want any woman in Fiji to be throwing a bucket into the well to draw out water, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, the amount of money spent in Natadola on golf could have provided water for people from Natadola all the way to Nadi, but it is still not happening, Madam Speaker, because the priorities are very poor. So, what is of concern here is that tourism should not be orbiting on its own. They move away from the people of Fiji. People in Fiji must grow in tandem with the growth in tourism.

Today it is not happening, Madam Speaker, and it needs a good management and it is a Government that listens, a Government with good priorities and a Government that lives with the spirit not just by the law and, Madam Speaker, if we can do that, we could say, “Yes, we agree that it is benefitting everyone in this country. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- I call on the Acting Minister for Industry, Trade and Tourism, Lands and Mineral Resources.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Madam Speaker, the Honourable Member sometimes when he speaks, he kind of lose track of as to what to say because his always clutching at straws. Everyone

knows that the tourism industry is doing well, everyone knows that the rate of return is becoming higher, everyone knows that the receipts have increased, Madam Speaker, everyone knows, the fact of the matter is that they bring in things like water not being available. This is the only Government that has provided a comprehensive approach and policy to getting reticulated water systems and the stand alone .water systems in the rural areas more than any other Government before. It is the fact.

Those people did not start drinking from wells just because this Government came into being, they were drinking from the well for ages. Why did not they do it before if they want to take a so-called holistic approach to that? Madam Speaker, the facts of the matter is, that by saying that we should have some specific taxations for the staff, Madam Speaker, the staff of Fiji working in hotels benefit from things like free education, we increased income tax thresholds, free text books, subsidised bus fares, their children benefit from it. They get \$125 million when they were affected by *TC Winston*, Madam Speaker. None of that which they are talking about. It is just cheap political point scoring again.

Madam Speaker, the reality is that the buy locally campaign has never been more focused than ever before. It is this Government that talked about buy Fijian, Fijian grown, Fijian sewn, Fijian produced. Under this Government, Madam Speaker, we worked together with the RBF which now gives scholarships, it actually funds various projects for chefs in Fiji hotels who use local produce. What were they giving out at breakfast before; apples and pears and oranges that we imported before. Now we are trying to get them to use local fruits, get the tourists to eat local fruits. We have hotels now that have their own veggie patch. They have their own vegetable gardens, they are working together with Joes Farm and various other enterprises to be able to ensure that they provide those kind of facilities and in fact use Fijian products, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, again he has highlighted Likuliku, I heard that the last time he highlighted, I had text Tony Whitton, I just pulled out the text here, they do give compensation for landowners in Malolo and for Likuliku, it is here. Now they also said that there is a dispute amongst the trustee and the *mataqali* in the legal battle amongst themselves and this why TLTB has held it back, whether that has been resolved, we do not know. But the fact of the matter is that Likuliku actually pays compensation. To come to this Parliament again and again and use that as an example, knowing they are actually paying it, Madam Speaker, it is completely inappropriate. It is not a very honourable thing to do, it is creating a ruckus, Madam Speaker.

As I have said previously, we, as Honourable Members of this Parliament, must be focused on growing the economy and Fiji must be depoliticised. Let us not try to score cheap political points because Elections is around the corner and try and undermine the economy. Do not do that, please, I am imploring the Members of the Opposition.

These young people sitting in the gallery, they will feel the effects. Just for cheap political points you want to undermine the economy and say “Everything is bad”, what message are we sending to the outside investors, internal investors? It significantly undermines the economy, do not do that, represent things fairly. The reality, Madam Speaker, is, they talk about Natadola, and they talk about all the golf courses.

Madam Speaker, now the airport is done. If the airport was not done they would complain about the airport. Now that the airport is done, the roads are done then they are going to the hospitals.

(Laughter)

The Honourable Minister for Health has spoken about it so much. We have announced it in this Parliament about the public-private partnership. We are taking a holistic approach. They are taking a singular approach. Madam Speaker, when you do governance, you need to take a holistic approach, a lot

of balls you have to juggle. We cannot just say, “Let’s only look after this to the neglect of the other area.” You have to be able to take a holistic approach.

Yes, Madam Speaker, we have done numerous changes that have taken place. Yes, the golf has been done. Yes, for example, Fiji Airways has given the assistance for \$18 million. It is no longer there because it is already up and running. That is what governments do. They go and look at the various areas of how we can maximise the potential for that area, we provide the assistance and then we move out and look at various other areas.

No Government should be stagnant in its approach. So Madam Speaker, I think this End of Week Statement is completely inappropriate, it is completely all over the place. I thought he was going to talk about taxation or talk specifically about what we can do together to improve the tourism sector given his background in the tourism sector. I mean I note when he worked in the tourism sector, none of the hotels were doing what he want them to do now, nor did they push for it then, Madam Speaker. We have proper leases in arrangement.

Madam Speaker, the fact of the matter is that you will see some significant changes in that respect and we are working together with the landowners regarding that.

The Honourable Prime Minister is the Chair of iTLTB. As a Board Member, the chair of iTLTB, Madam Speaker, he has also worked with them so we are looking at new methodologies as to how the landowners can participate in new leases.

Obviously, on existing leases, you cannot go and change the legal parameters of that because this again will undermine the confidence. So Madam Speaker, I implore all Members of this House and also those people outside the House to, please, let us look at the facts and the realities on the ground. Let us work together to build our economy. Do not undermine it just for short-term political gain. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- I now call on Honourable Mikaele Leawere to deliver his statement.

Civil Service Employment Contract

HON. M.R. LEAWERE.- Madam Speaker, I rise to make a statement on the Civil Service Employment Contracts and its implications upon employment relations, welfare of civil servants and its impact on the morale of the Civil Service seeking redress to issues of concern.

Madam Speaker, Fiji’s Civil Service is a gift of the colonial administration substantiated by the knowledge and expertise of those who have served in the system and successive Governments. Madam Speaker, the current Civil Service Reforms are not the first and will not be the last. Civil Service Reforms and the upgrading of Civil Service institutions and structures are evolving processes. They have to be so to enable our Civil Service to be on par with the challenges of the day and to prepare for the future.

Madam Speaker, there are some very good reasons for which we in the Opposition, the trade unions and the civil servants oppose this current Civil Service Reforms. They can be best summarised as follows:

1. Lack of resources to train and develop the civil servants to enable them to perform up to expectations;
2. Short term contracts resulting in deprivation of employer services such as long service leave and fear of job security;

3. Denial of the right to collective bargaining, thus weakening the voice of the civil servants against their employer;
4. Unfair job evaluation resulting into chaotic appointments, dismissals, reshuffles and replacements;
5. Disturbances caused to the administration and operations of the various arms of the State and the loss of suitably qualified civil servants by way of resignation, dismissals and sent home to await the outcome of their job evaluation results.

Madam Speaker, 30 years ago, Fiji was governed by the Alliance Party with about \$300 million budget and we had every supply available to enable the civil servants to serve the Government and the people of the day. Now we have a ballooned budget of about \$4 billion, yet our civil servants are in poor working conditions and lack the necessary information, equipment and gadgets they need to execute their duties.

Madam Speaker, the imposition of short term contracts deprive the civil servants from employer benefits such as long service leave and awards. The non-renewal of these contracts exiles the worker into the unemployment sector looking for jobs. By virtue of being dismissed or a contract not being renewed, these workers have a hard time to secure jobs in the private sector because of the stigma of being dismissed or sacked from the Civil Service.

Fortunately, Madam Speaker, our private sector has been kind enough not to adopt these kind of draconian employment terms and conditions and they look after our workers far more better than the Government of the day. They should learn from the private sector on how to appreciate, train and provide welfare measures to our civil servants.

Madam Speaker, in one contract, for instance, an employee had his appointment and contract executed for three months, that is from the 16th January, 2018 to 15th April, 2018 (this year). In a memorandum issued on 29th March, 2018, his contract has been extended for another month.

The powers to hire and fire civil servants are now vested with the Permanent Secretary under whose mercy the entire civil servants of any given Ministry or Department work. This is simply too draconian and will take a toll on the morale of the civil servants. In our opinion and that of the trade unions and civil servants, this nature of powers is extremely detrimental to the welfare of the civil servants.

Madam Speaker, the Civil Service contracts, in many cases, can be terminated by the issuance of one week notice. This again, is a gross violation of the ideals and principles of the Labour Law and totally unacceptable to the civil servants and every right thinking citizen of Fiji.

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

HON. M.R. LEAWARE.- Let me now come to the pay issue, Madam Speaker. The confusion created by the new or unfair job evaluations resulting into appointments, dismissals and reshuffles in the Civil Service has had a chaotic impact upon the civil servants as far as their pay is concerned. In many cases, civil servants have received less than \$50.00 for a fortnight and told to await the decision on their fate and that of their pay. No worker would want to work under such circumstances and even if they do, out of no choice their morale and performance would always be below expectations.

Madam Speaker, trade unions are a fact of life. They are there to protect and work for the welfare of our workers. They have international recognition and find mention and acceptance in the various conventions on which we were lectured in this House two days ago.

The presence of the trade unions has seen the evolution of labour laws and tripartite approach to industrial relation matters in every part of the world. We cannot choose to become an island and isolate ourselves. We cannot choose to look good by putting right to collective bargaining on the paper and issuance of rosy statements for everyone knows how unions and workers are suppressed. The denial of the right to collect bargaining by the civil servants upon their employment is an evidence of this statement.

Finally, Madam Speaker, I sum up by a quote from a Russian writer which I find quite relevant:

“Those in power should empower the people. The moment you rob the people of their power, it will not be long before they will rob you off your power”.

With those remarks, Madam Speaker, I commend this statement to the House.

HON. SPEAKER.- I now call on the Acting Prime Minister.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- The Honourable Member is robbing this Parliament of the truth. Madam Speaker, before I actually go on to what the Honourable Member said, it kind of encapsulate.

The Honourable Members from NFP talked about the Accountability and Transparency Commission. Section 156 of the 1997 Constitution required Parliament to, I quote:

“As soon as practicable after the commencement of the Constitution, to put in place a law regarding the code of conduct”.

The Rabuka Government, Chaudhry Government, Qarase Government did not do it. We are lumped to doing it. They were supposed to have done it, they did not do it.

Madam Speaker, Section 174(5) of the 1997 Constitution, they all laud about, it says:

“As soon as practicable after the commencement of this Constitution, Constitution, Parliament should enact the law to give members of public rights of access to information, freedom of information.”

None of them did it, we have done it, we have tabled it, Madam Speaker, it is there and the Committees to do it, so for them to come along and be shenanigans is immaterial. In the same way as the Honourable Leawere talks about....

HON. OPPOSITION MEMBER.- (Inaudible)

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Please, you are caught up.

Madam Speaker, Honourable Leawere talked about the Civil Service and contracts being demoralising, et cetera, and talking about someone who has got a one-month contract. Madam Speaker, he is again picking one or two contracts because they would have got an extension, that is the issue but prior to the Civil Service Reform, 72 percent of all the staff were already on contracts. Now we have 95 percent of the Civil Service who are on contracts. Contracts can be given up to five years, you go and talk to any person in the private sector, and no one gives you a contract for more than five years.

In fact those contracts in the private sectors are for three years. Generally, that is the standard of doing things. Honourable Vadei talks about it, he has been a civil servant all his life, never been in the public sector and we all know about the qualities of the Civil Service contribution. Madam Speaker, the fact that of the matter is this, the Civil Service has received the highest pay rise ever ...

HON. GOVERNMENT MEMBERS.- Hear, hear!

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Up to 80 percent payraises, 40 percent, 50 percent. School teachers were being paid, head of schools were being paid to a mere \$35,000, \$40,000 and now getting paid up to \$75,000, \$65,000. Nurses have received their payrise of up to 80 percent.

Madam Speaker, on top of that, we are now having what we call the “Annual Performance Assessment”, some of them are doing it every 18-months, some doing are doing it on an annual basis, some of them may be doing it every two years, depending on the nature of the work. But apart from payraises, they get a Performance Assessment so we are able to distinguish those people who are high performers, they will get paid a lot better. That is extremely morale boosting in particular for those civil servants who are high performers, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, we have specific training given to the Civil Service. We have in fact put various checks and balances in place. He talks about the Permanent Secretaries having carte blanche approach to the hiring and firing, completely further away from the truth.

Madam Speaker, if you apply for a job in the Civil Service, if you are not unhappy with the process, you actually apply to the Public Service Commission. If you are a civil servant, you have been brought to the Public Service Disciplinary Tribunal which is independent and run by members of the Judiciary. You can appeal that, you can have a hearing with that, he did not mention any of that, complete obfuscation of what is actually happening on the ground. Again, cheap political point-scoring is what he is doing.

Madam Speaker, we work with the Trade Unions. In fact, this week on Monday, the Permanent Secretary for Education together with the Civil Service Reform Management Unit met with them to discuss, how they will take the teaching approach given the fact that a lot of schools were closed for a week and a half? How will they deal with it? Will the teachers come in during the holidays or will they not come, so it is completely false to say that we are not working with the Trade Unions.

The Trade Unions have, on continuous basis, been engaged given the information, if they do not want to participate, that is their problem. Of course, sometimes they participate, sometimes they do not, it is completely false to say that, again he is sitting there and he knows that but he stands up and believes that he can just say whatever he likes. Maybe he is following the Member in front of him. Madam Speaker, this is unfortunately the state of the submissions that we find from the Opposition.

Madam Speaker, the reality is this that all of these information is available publicly, it is available on the website, we have many civil servants who are absolutely amazed by the changes that have taken place in such a short period of time. Many of them have benefited from it, of course, those who want to live in the past like Honourable Leawere will get caught out. They have to improve their services. We have had, for example, people who apply for Civil Service jobs, they seem to write, and say, “I should get this because I have been in the Civil Service for 15 years”.

Then we have some bright spark who comes along and has been there for five years and actually writes exactly what is strategic or her strategic plan is? How they can improve that particular position in the Department, obviously they will get the job because they are more committed to the position. The old way of thinking is, that the longer you are in the Civil Service, you have the automatic right to get the

job irrespective whether you spend one third of your time around the grog bowl or not, or whether you come one-third of the time late.

We need high performance in the Civil Service, Madam Speaker, and let me remind this Parliament of what is the job of the civil servant; and what is the job of Government?

1. To have service delivery;
2. To be ordinary Fijian people of this country.

We are not here to serve the civil servants, the civil servants are here to serve the ordinary people of this country.

HON. GOVERNMENT MEMBERS.- Hear, hear!

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- We must not lose focus on that because it is the ordinary taxpayers of Fiji that actually pay for our salaries, they should tax collection, Madam Speaker, that is the approach we need to undertake. Of course, we want to be an employer of choice. This is why when we carried out the Civil Service Reform, we also carried out assessment of the salary range compared to the market, and we try and pay as much as the market can do.

Madam Speaker, just yesterday we have approved what they call “the scarce skills, “reward”, so there are certain scarce skills that exist within our society. Honourable Jone Usamate talked about that.

Madam Speaker, if we want to be able to attractive within the Civil Service, we cannot do the run-of- the-mill, salary approaches. If it is, for example, someone who may be an international trade specialist, they may be hired by the Ministry of Industry and Trade. There are other agencies that won them. You have the Forum Secretariat, SPC, UNDP and everyone else want these services. So in order for us to be able to retain them or to keep them, we need to be able to pay a higher rate and this is exactly what the Civil Service Reform is doing.

We are also making announcement today, in fact, Madam Speaker, but those people are on Band F regarding overtime. Previously there is only a particular category of nurses but now everyone is applicable on or in that band, they will actually get the overtime too. All these numerous changes have taken place, the meal allowance is being paid up to \$20 a meal. It used to be about \$9 which will not get you very far in Denarau, it may get you far perhaps in Tavua but not very far in most of the other cities so we have given meal allowances of \$20, none of this is mentioned.

So, Madam Speaker, again, rather than sort of going on and on about it, the fact of the matter is, what the Honourable Member has presented is completely misrepresentative of the ground realities. I urge him again to get out of this time war, move with the times, get out of this time war where you have this adversarial approach and say, “We are the union, we are going to fight with Government or whatever it is.” Please, get out of it. Take an approach where we create a salubrious environment between the employer and the employee and at the end of the day, the objective of the Civil Service is to deliver services to the ordinary people of this country. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

(Applause)

HON. SPEAKER.- I now call on the Honourable Acting Leader of the Government in Parliament to move his motion.

ADJOURNMENT

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- Madam Speaker, I move:

That Parliament adjourns until Monday, 14th May, 2018 at 9.30 a.m.

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

Question put.

Motion agreed to.

HON. SPEAKER.- At this juncture, I sincerely thank all Honourable Members for your participation and contributions to the Parliamentary proceedings in the course of this sitting period.

I also reiterate my gratitude to the Committees for their hard work and efforts in presenting and ensuring that a large number of Review Reports were tabled and debated during the week.

On the same note, I would like to thank the Ministries that have heeded Standing Order 121(6) and have subsequently responded to the recommendations in the Standing Committee Reports that were referred to them. Additionally, may I remind those Ministries that have yet to submit their responses to do so, as we are coming close to the end of the term of this Parliament.

I now declare Parliament adjourned until Monday, 14th May, 2018 at 9.30 a.m.

Thank you very much, Honourable Members.

The Parliament adjourned at 12.23 p.m.