

# **PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI**



## **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**

### **DAILY HANSARD**

**MONDAY, 11TH FEBRUARY, 2019**

**[CORRECTED COPY]**

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## MONDAY, 11TH FEBRUARY, 2019

The Parliament met at 10.12 a.m., pursuant to notice.

The Honourable Deputy Speaker took the Chair and read the Prayer.

### PRESENT

Hon. Josia Voreqe Bainimarama, Prime Minister and Minister for iTaukei Affairs and Sugar Industry

Hon. Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum, Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Civil Service and Communications

Hon. Rosy Sofia Akbar, Minister for Education, Heritage and Arts

Hon. Parveen Kumar Bala, Minister for Employment, Productivity, Industrial Relations and Youth and Sports

Hon. Mereseini Rakuita Vuniwaqa, Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation

Hon. Dr. Mahendra Reddy, Minister for Agriculture, Rural and Maritime Development, Waterways and Environment

Hon. Cdr. Semi Tuleca Koroilavesau, Minister for Fisheries

Hon. Osea Naiqamu, Minister for Forestry

Hon. Lt. Col. Inia Batikoto Seruiratu, Minister for Defence, National Security and Foreign Affairs

Hon. Jone Usamate, Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Disaster Management and Meteorological Services

Hon. Ashneel Sudhakar, Minister for Lands and Mineral Resources

Hon. Dr. Ifereimi Waqainabete, Minister for Health and Medical Services

Hon. Premila Devi Kumar, Minister for Industry, Trade, Tourism, Local Government, Housing and Community Development

Hon. Alexander David O'Connor, Assistant Minister for Health and Medical Services

Hon. Veena Kumar Bhatnagar, Assistant Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation

Hon. Vijay Nath, Assistant Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Disaster Management and Meteorological Services

Hon. Alvick Avhikrit Maharaj, Assistant Minister for Employment, Productivity, Industrial Relations, Youth and Sports

Hon. Alipate Tuicolo Nagata, Assistant Minister for Employment, Productivity, Industrial Relations, Youth and Sports

Hon. Jale Sigarara, Assistant Minister for Agriculture and Maritime Development

Hon. Viam Pillay, Assistant Minister for Environment Rural Development

Hon. Joseph Nitya Nand, Assistant Minister for Education, Heritage and Arts

Hon. George Vegnathan, Assistant Minister for Sugar Industry

Hon. Selai Adimaitoga, Assistant Minister for iTaukei Affairs

Hon. Mitieli Bulanauca

Hon. Mosese Drecala Bultavu

Hon. Viliame Rogoibulu Gavoka

Hon. Dr. Salik Ram Govind

Hon. Anare Jale

Hon. Ro Teimumu Vuikaba Kepa

Hon. Sanjay Salend Kirpal

Hon. Inosi Kuridrani

Hon. Dr. Ratu Atonio Rabici Lalabalavu

Hon. Ratu Naiqama Tawake Lalabalavu

Hon. Mikaele Rokosova Leawere  
 Hon. Ratu Suliano Matanitobua  
 Hon. Ratu Tevita Navurelevu  
 Hon. Niko Nawaikula  
 Hon. Vijendra Prakash  
 Hon. Prof. Biman Chand Prasad  
 Hon. Lenora Salusalu Qereqeretabua  
 Hon. Adi Litia Qionibaravi  
 Hon. Major-General (Ret'd) Sitiveni Ligamamada Rabuka  
 Hon. Aseri Masivou Radrodro  
 Hon. Salote Vuibureta Radrodro  
 Hon. Simione Rokomalo Rasova  
 Hon. Jese Saukuru  
 Hon. Rohit Ritesh Sharma  
 Hon. Lynda Diseru Tabuya  
 Hon. Lt. Col. Pio Tikoduadua  
 Hon. Ro Filipe Tuisawau  
 Hon. Peceli Waqairatu Vosanibola

HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, I invite you all to observe a minute of silence in remembrance of the late Honourable Speaker, Dr. Jiko Fatafehi Luveni.

(Honourable Members observed a minute of silence)

Thank you, Honourable Members, you may be seated.

HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, in accordance with Standing Order 17(3), I will now resume my seat in the Chamber, to allow the Secretary-General to preside over Parliament for the Election of a Speaker.

(The Honourable Deputy Speaker leaves the Speaker's Chair)

### **ELECTION OF SPEAKER**

SECRETARY-GENERAL.- I now call for nominations for the Speaker of the Parliament of the Republic of Fiji, and I call upon the Honourable Alvick Maharaj for a nomination.

HON. A.A. MAHARAJ.- Thank you, Madam.

I move:

That Ratu Epeli Nailatikau do take the Chair of Parliament as Speaker.

SECRETARY-GENERAL.- Is there a seconder?

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

SECRETARY-GENERAL.- I now invite the Honourable Alvick Maharaj to give a brief account of the nominee's credentials.

HON. A.A. MAHARAJ.- Thank you, Madam Secretary-General.

The Honourable Prime Minister, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, Honourable Cabinet Ministers and Honourable Members of Parliament, members of the public who are watching from the public gallery or from the comfort of your homes; a very good morning to you all.

I have much pleasure in introducing my nominee, Ratu Epeli Nailatikau. He was born on 5th July, 1941 and is married to Adi Koila Nailatikau, with one son and one daughter.

His career started in 1962 when he joined the Royal Fiji Military Forces (RFMF). He served as a Commander of the RFMF from 1982 to 1987.

Ratu Epeli Nailatikau was the President of the Republic of Fiji from 2009 to 2015. His first appointment was from 5th November, 2009 to 11th November, 2012. He was then re-appointed as President of the Republic of Fiji from 12th November, 2012 to 11th November, 2015.

He has had a long and distinguished career in the Military, Diplomatic Services and Government. From 2001 to 2006, he served as the Speaker of the House of Representatives. Ratu Epeli Nailatikau was also the Chairman of the Parliamentary Appropriation Committee and the House Committee.

He served as a Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Fijian Affairs from July 2000 to September 2001. On 5th October, 2006, he was appointed as Ambassador in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. On 8th January, 2007 he was appointed as Minister for Foreign Affairs and External Trade after which he served as Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Provincial Development and Multi-Ethnic Affairs.

Ratu Epeli Nailatikau's illustrious career has spent 20 years in Military and 17 years in diplomatic services.

On 14th June, 2015, Ratu Epeli Nailatikau was appointed the UNAIDS Regional Goodwill Ambassador for the Pacific Region. He had previously served as a UNAIDS Special Representative for the Pacific. In October 2004, he chaired the first Conference of Pacific Parliamentarians in the 'Role of Pacific Parliamentarians in the fight against HIV/AIDS'.

Ratu Epeli Nailatikau has extensive knowledge and hands-on experience on the working of the Civil Service and the role of the Government and stakeholders in development and international diplomacy. With his illustrious career, together with his excellent public relation appeal needed in outreaching and interfacing with people of this country, I move that Ratu Epeli Nailatikau do take the Chair as the Speaker. Thank you, *vinaka vakalevu*.

SECRETARY-GENERAL.- Thank you, Honourable Member.

Honourable Members, are there any other further nominations?

HON. L.D. TABUYA.--Madam Secretary-General, I move:

That under Standing Order 17(4) that Tanya Marion Waqanika do take the Chair of Parliament as Speaker.

SECRETARY-GENERAL.- Is there a seconder?

HON. RO F. TUISAWAU.- I beg to second the motion.

SECRETARY-GENERAL.- I now invite the Honourable Lynda Tabuya to give a brief account of the nominee's credentials.

HON. L.D. TABUYA.- Madam Secretary-General, the Honourable Prime Minister, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, Honourable Members of Parliament, members of the public present here today, our fellow citizens; *Yadra, Namaste and Faekesia* .

It is my pleasure to outline the credentials of our nominee, Tanya Marion Waqanika, a God-fearing woman of 45 years old, who is married with four children. She hails from the village of Natumua, Tavuki in the island paradise of Kadavu, and her mother is from the chiefly village of Lomanikoro in Rewa.

Ms. Waqanika was the recipient of the scholarship to study law in Australia in 1993, and she was admitted to the New South Wales Supreme Court in 1997 and also the High Court of Fiji in 1997.

She started her career in the Office of the Prime Minister, the Attorney-General's Chambers, she worked at the Fiji Revenue and Customs Services and also the Suva City Council as a Legal Officer and where she ended at the Fiji Television. Now, she is operating her own law firm called Waqanika Law, and she is also a former council member of the Fiji Law Society.

Madam Secretary-General, those are the credentials I submit on behalf of our nominee, Ms. Tanya Marion Waqanika.

SECRETARY-GENERAL.- Thank you, Honourable Member. Are there any further nominations?

Since there is more than one nomination, Honourable Members, we shall proceed with the casting of votes by secret ballot, and I now call on the Chamber Attendants to distribute the ballot papers to the Members.

Honourable Members, you are requested to write the name of the person whom you wish to vote for on the ballot paper and fold it so that the name written on it cannot be seen.

(Distribution of ballot papers by Chamber Attendants)

SECRETARY-GENERAL.- Honourable Members, pursuant to Standing Order 17(8), I call upon the Honourable Alvick Maharaj and Honourable Lynda Tabuya to come forward and act as scrutineers and observe the count at the Table.

(Ballot papers collected and counted at the Table in the presence of the scrutineers)

SECRETARY-GENERAL.- The results of the vote are as follows:

- |                          |   |               |
|--------------------------|---|---------------|
| 1. Ratu Epeli Nailatikau | - | 30 votes; and |
| 2. Tanya Waqanika        | - | 21 votes.     |

Having received the greatest number of votes, I now declare Ratu Epeli Nailatikau, as the Speaker of the Parliament of the Republic of Fiji.

(Applause)

Pursuant to Standing Order 17(11), the ballot papers will now be destroyed in the presence of the Scrutineers. May I call upon the Scrutineers to please, come forward.

(Secretary-General, in the presence of the scrutineers, destroyed the ballot papers)

I now call upon the two Members from the Government to escort the Speaker of the Fiji Parliament, Ratu Epeli Nailatikau, to take the Oath of Allegiance and of Office.

(Ratu Epeli Nailatikau was escorted by Honourable Lt. Col. I.B. Seruiratu and Honourable Cdr. S.T. Koroilavesau to the Table)

(Applause)

SECRETARY-GENERAL.- I will now ask the Honourable Members to rise for the Administration of Oath by the Speaker of the Parliament of the Republic of Fiji.

(Ratu Epeli Nailatikau subscribed to the Administration of Oath/Affirmation of Allegiance and took his seat in the Chamber)

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, please, be seated.

### **COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CHAIR**

HON. SPEAKER.- The Honourable Prime Minister, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, Honourable Ministers and Assistant Ministers, the Honourable Members of Parliament, the Secretary-General, distinguished guests and the people of Fiji; as your elected Speaker, first and foremost, I thank the Almighty God for the honour bestowed on me.

I sincerely thank the Honourable Prime Minister and the Honourable Members of Parliament for the trust, the honour and privilege of electing me as Speaker. I thank you for the confidence that you have placed in me and I am keenly aware of the obligations into which I now enter.

I follow in the path of the late Honourable Dr. Jiko Luveni, our first woman Speaker, who has now set the standard for all those who will follow. She combined ability, firmness and impartiality with dignity and good temperament. I shall endeavour to be a worthy successor.

The challenges that come with this responsibility, I do not take lightly and to the best of my ability, I will serve with diligence, dignity and honour.

The Speaker does not represent a political party or a certain segment of the electorate or population, and it is important to point out that the Speaker is appointed by the Fijian people, represented through you, their representatives. Just as you feel politically responsible to serve the Fijian people, as Speaker, my role and responsibility is to equip you to perform your principal role as legislators and decision makers. In other words, our primary interest is the same, and that is to serve all Fijians.

Honourable Members, the people of Fiji have assigned to us an enormous responsibility. We must safeguard public trust by conducting ourselves with dignity and in a manner that brings honour and dignity to our nation. Of great importance, Honourable Members, is the need to observe and follow the Constitution and our Standing Orders, to ensure public trust, confidence and respect for this Parliament and its Members.

In this regard Honourable Members, I encourage this Parliament to embrace collegiality, fellowship and respect for each other. Let us be the agents that promote unity and advance the common good for our nation and our people.

Honourable Members, may we live to fulfil a legacy that brings transformation as we continue on the trajectory of unprecedented economic growth and social empowerment. I look forward to serving

in this role as Speaker and to working with you all. May God bless you all and may God bless our beloved nation.

(Applause)

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, before I suspend the proceedings for this morning, let me just say something about this process of being asked to be Speaker of the House, so that you can fully understand it and others can also fully understand. It is not an easy process, I have been through it twice.

On the first occasion when I was asked, I did not even know that the nomination was taking place on that day. I had accompanied my good wife to Parliament, she was to be sworn in as a Senator. So that was the reason that I happened to be in the public gallery that morning.

Whilst we were there in the old Parliament, I could see the Prime Minister and members of his Cabinet, some of whom are here today, looking around anxiously but I did not know what it was about. Then the lanky Ilaitia Tuisese came over and spoke to Mrs. Qarase, who was seated in the VIP gallery, above me. And while speaking to her, he looked over and saw me there and said 'hello' to me.

Then, when he went across to join the government side they asked him, because he was the last one to arrive, "We are looking for Ratu Epeli, have you seen him". And he said, "He is over there". I saw them looking around and then someone (Pita Nacuva) came up and asked me to go and sit in the front of the Public Gallery which I declined.

Joeli Kalou was seated there, he was the other nominee, and I got an inkling that something was up. I tried to obtain an Order Paper, but I did not have time. The Secretary-General had announced that the first item on the agenda was the election of the Speaker. And the Prime Minister was called upon and he said, "I propose Ratu Epeli Nailatikau". That was the first time I had heard the initial request by the Prime Minister confirmed. So it is not an easy process to go through. You do not know about how the process develops and what you have to do on the day because there was no briefing.

On this occasion, I was approached by a third party to be a nominee, then I spoke briefly with the Prime Minister some two weeks ago and then he gave me a short final briefing on the weekend to be here today about 9.30 this morning, but to await the decision of the House. So now I just want to emphasise that I am here as the servant of this House so I look forward to working with you all.

Honourable Members, we will now suspend proceedings. As you may all be aware, this will be the first time for me, as your Speaker, to preside over the proceedings. In that regard, the House will suspend proceedings and will resume at 2.30 p.m. to allow the Secretariat to brief me on the order for the day.

For the information of Honourable Members, refreshments will be served at the Big Committee Room now. Lunch for all Honourable Members will be served at 12.30 p.m. also at the Big Committee Room.

Thank you, Honourable Members, and the House is now suspended until 2.30 p.m.

The Parliament adjourned at 10.47 a.m.



The Parliament resumed at 2.30 p.m.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, I now call upon the Leader of the Government in Parliament to move his motion. You have the floor.

### **MOTION OF CONDOLENCE**

HON. LEADER OF THE GOVERNMENT IN PARLIAMENT.- Thank you, Honourable Speaker. Honourable Speaker, I beg to move that this Parliament expresses its deep sadness at the death of the Honourable Speaker, Dr Jiko Luveni and expresses its deep condolences to her family, acknowledges her distinct services and contribution to this nation and especially during her distinguished tenure as the first female Speaker of the Fijian Parliament. Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, is there a seconder?

HON. A.A. MAHARAJ.- Honourable Speaker, I second the motion.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, before I call on the Leader of the Government, I wish to advise the Honourable Members that there will only be two speakers for this motion; the mover and a member designated from the Opposition. At the end of the right of reply by the mover, the motion will end there.

I now call upon the Leader of the Government in Parliament to speak on the motion. You have the floor.

HON. LEADER OF THE GOVERNMENT IN PARLIAMENT.- Honourable Speaker, I take this opportunity, first of all, to congratulate you for your election as Speaker of this august House yet again. Honourable Speaker, it would only be apt to welcome you back to the seat that you so diligently occupied and served, with distinction during the period from 2001 to 2006.

Honourable Speaker, I think of no other fitting candidate to assume the role of Speaker to fill the void left by the sudden departure of the late Madam Speaker of the House than your good self. You bring to the House, Honourable Speaker, guile, wisdom and tonnes of experience, which I am sure, will help guide the deliberations of this House now and into the future.

Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members of Parliament will agree that with your election, the House is in good hands and I would wish to congratulate once again the Deputy Speaker, for her appointment to that high office.

Honourable Speaker, this is the first sitting of Parliament without the presence of the late Madam Speaker, Dr. Jiko Fatafehi Luveni who departed suddenly from our midst in late December 2018. It is only fitting, Honourable Speaker, for this august House to reminisce on her life and acknowledge her services and contribution to the nation especially her notable appointment as the first female Speaker of the Parliament of Fiji.

You will agree Honourable Speaker that the role of Speaker requires a sense of fairness, a bit of humour and tonnes of patience that the late Madam Speaker so graciously displayed since her election to that high office in 2014. She guided the proceedings of this House with tact and poise for which she will be forever remembered.

Honourable Speaker, the late Madam Speaker well emulated your lead during her period of tenure as Speaker of the House. Honourable Speaker, there are many things in a person's life that will only come to the fore after their passing. This holds true for the late Madam Speaker.

Honourable Speaker, in honour of the late Madam Speaker, I would hope for the discourse to be what she deserves to be one that speaks to us all about her to be worthy of her but I am not sure if it will be enough.

Honourable Speaker, if I were to write a story about the life and the achievement of the late Madam Speaker, it would be entitled "breaking glass ceiling" the life of Dr. Jiko Fatafehi Luveni. Why, Honourable Speaker? It is only after her death that many Fijians realised that quite apart from being the first female Speaker of the Fiji Parliament, she was the pioneering female in many areas in her professional and public life; areas which were predominantly male terrain in the past.

Honourable Speaker, Dr. Luveni the late Madam Speaker, graduated in 1967 as the first female dentist in Fiji and practiced as a dentist throughout Fiji from 1968 to 1981. Dr. Luveni was responsible for the establishment of the Oral Health Education Unit of the Ministry of Health and the implementation of the Oral Health Education Programme.

In 1985, Honourable Speaker, Dr. Luveni coordinated the Fiji National Dental Health Survey and was in 1987 responsible for the production of Health Education Materials and in that same year, piloted the Fiji Family Planning Communication Campaign.

Honourable Speaker, the late Madam Speaker was not only the first female dentist in Fiji. She also became a tutor, an external examiner for dentistry at the Fiji School of Medicine. She was also a tutor in Public Health subjects. Between 1988 and 2007, Honourable Speaker, the late Dr. Luveni held various strategic positions in the health sector including being the Project Manager of the Health Learning Materials Centre of the Ministry of Health and was the United Nations Population Fund Programme Management Officer serving as desk officer for a number of Pacific Island States.

Honourable Speaker, it ought to be noted that Dr. Luveni in her quest to serve did not limit her prospect to dentistry and oral health but ventured into other areas within the health sector involving herself in the combat against HIV and AIDS and in the field of public health.

Honourable Speaker, in recognition of her contribution to oral health and dentistry in general, the late Madam Speaker, Dr. Jiko Luveni was the first Fijian dentist and only the third woman ever to be conferred an Honorary Fellowship from the Royal Australasian College of Dental Surgeons, the ultimate honour for any dentist.

Honourable Speaker, talking about breaking glass ceilings that the late Madam Speaker did, the late Dr. Luveni was a true patriot even when the stakes were high, she did not hesitate to come forward to serve. When approached to serve as a Minister for Women, Social Welfare and Poverty Alleviation in the Interim Government in 2008, she willingly obliged.

Honourable Speaker, she revolutionised that Ministry during her tenure as Minister putting in place a number of ground breaking programmes including the Zero Tolerance Violence Free Community Programme, partnership with the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) for the Sexual Reproductive Programme for Women and Girls, the National Sewing Machine Distribution Programme, the Engagement with the Barefoot College of India for grandmothers to be trained as electrical and solar technicians and the inauguration of the National Women's Exposition among others.

Honourable Speaker, the late Madam Speaker was instrumental in gender development initiatives such as the establishment of the Fiji Women's Federation, the Fiji Women Ambassador initiative in 2014 and the development and endorsement of the National Gender Policy. Her passion for the empowerment of women, Honourable Speaker, did not come to an end with her departure from that Ministry. She was instrumental in the recognition of Fiji as first in the world to have developed and adopted a Standing Orders for Parliament, ensuring that all policies reviewed are gender responsive.

Honourable Speaker, the late Madam Speaker reformed the Social Protection Programme, changing the emphasis from family assistance with a range of Social Protection Programmes that included the Social Pension, the introduction of welfare to work place programme and special consideration for persons with disabilities.

Honourable Speaker, the late Madam Speaker was first elected as Speaker of this august House in 2014 at the age of 68 years. At that stage in her life she could have easily chosen to withdraw from public life to spend time with her family. She chose not, but to soldier on. Such was the commitment and determination of the late Madam Speaker, to make a difference in our nation and the lives of our people.

Honourable Speaker, she was 72 years old when she was re-elected as Speaker of the House in November 2018, shortly before her demise. At that age in our cultural context a lot of women were stereotyped as a nurturing figure, or loving, a symbol of wisdom, pulling the strings on her family from the comfort of her home, she chose not, but to do that from the front and at national level in one of the nation's most challenging roles. Honourable Speaker, such was the conviction that the late Madam Speaker held until the very end.

With the restoration of democracy in 2014, a new Fiji was ushered in requiring a new way of thinking, a new set of values, a new set of processes, a revision of policies, a new way of doing things and ultimately a new Speaker of Parliament, Dr. Luveni was the choice.

When approached to take up the role of the Speaker of the House, the late Honourable Speaker, Dr. Luveni, fully understanding the weight of responsibility that comes with it, did not shun the challenge. She was prepared to bite the bullet and that she did. Honourable Speaker, you will agree that having to referee your field with 51 players is no easy feat. That, the late Madam Speaker handled masterfully.

Honourable Speaker, the late Madam Speaker served as Speaker with courage, skill and tact. She never shouted, she was a worker who led by example, she persevered and was innovative. She was committed to her values, she had a humble disposition yet was astute in decision making. The manner with which she carried out the role of Speaker was perhaps best, summed up in a quote attributed to the Honourable Leader of the Opposition carried by a New Zealand Press in reference to the late Madam Speaker which reads, and I quote:

“There was always a degree of goodness, respect and warmth whenever we passed each along the corridors of Parliament.”

That was the person she was.

Honourable Speaker, in the delivery of her role as Speaker, the late Madam Speaker, focused on results. Amongst her achievements as the Speaker of the House was the recognition of the Fiji Parliament as the first Parliament in the world to adopt the Inter-Parliamentary Union Gender Tool Kit which is a guide to Members of Parliament on how to scrutinise legislation from a gender perspective; the only Parliament in the world where its Standing Orders require a gender based analysis, being the first

Parliament in the world to carry out a self-assessment exercise on the Sustainable Development Goals and the list goes on.

Honourable Speaker, the late Madam Speaker, inspired the general populous to identify themselves with and be familiar with Parliamentary processes and proceedings. That was the rationale for her Meet the Speaker initiative, the Speaker's Debates and her involvement in the Roadshows.

Honourable Speaker, the late Madam Speaker was an advocate for family, health and children. At the time of her departure to eternal rest, she held the position of Champion of Early Childhood Education in Fiji and had chaired regional conferences on the subject held in Fiji, that was phenomenal, using her influence as Speaker of the House to progress her passion for the enhancement of the quality of our lives as a nation, starting with families.

Honourable Speaker, as the first female Speaker of the Fiji Parliament, the late Madam Speaker has transformed the Fijian political arena, setting the stage and challenging the women of our country, of our age and those that will come after us, to come forward and participate in national leadership, let alone politics.

Honourable Speaker, the late Madam Speaker has demonstrated through her life, work and indeed her leadership that the social norms of the past can and will change. She, along with distinguished women of our age, are role models and sources of inspiration to the younger generation within our nation and across the Pacific.

The late Dr. Luveni, Honourable Speaker, has pushed the frontiers of women in leadership in Fiji and paved the way for others to follow in her footsteps, and that is the legacy that she has left us with, that was her gift to the people of Fiji.

Honourable Speaker, since the late Madam Speaker is no longer with us, in the rich vibrant living capacity of what she left behind, there was a wide thread of consistent determination soothing passions that she brought to the House, and which we had never really noticed until she was no more, that was Dr. Jiko Fatafehi Luveni.

Honourable Speaker, the late Madam Speaker had broken glass ceilings but we certainly cannot assume that in all context, they have been thoroughly smashed. One only has to witness the gender composition of this House to realise that it has not, and that will be the challenge for our generation and the next.

Honourable Speaker, it will be remiss of this House not to acknowledge the support of the late Madam Speaker's family which surely was the premise upon which her success as a professional, and indeed a Speaker of the House, was founded. This House owes Colonel Inoke Luveni, the late Madam Speaker's husband and their children and grandchildren a debt of gratitude. Honourable Speaker, the late Madam Speaker had lived her life well; she committed to her course; she devoted her life to our common good as a nation; she wrote her own destiny.

Before I take my leave, Honourable Speaker, I beg to invite Honourable Members of the House, in honour of the late Madam Speaker, to kindly accept the motion before the House, that this Parliament expresses its deep sadness at the death of Dr. Jiko Luveni and express deep condolences to her family, acknowledging her distinct services and contribution to this nation and especially during her distinguished tenure, as the first female Speaker of Parliament. Honourable Speaker, this august House, and our nation owe this to her.

Honourable Speaker and Honourable Members of the House, I thank you for your indulgence.  
*Vinaka vakalevu.*

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, I thank the Honourable Leader of Government for moving this motion, and I now call on the designated representative from the Opposition - the Leader of the Opposition, the Honourable Sitiveni Rabuka.

HON. MAJOR-GENERAL (RET'D) S.L. RABUKA.- Thank you, Honourable Speaker, may I, first of all, congratulate you, Sir, on your election as the Honourable Speaker of the House of Parliament of the Republic of Fiji.

We look forward to your guidance and your rule as the Speaker of the House. I also would like to thank the Honourable Leader of Government Business for the address in support of the motion that is before the House and, that is, we express deep sadness at the death of the Honourable Speaker, Dr. Jiko Luveni.

The Honourable Speaker, Sir, I cannot add any more to the correct and glowing tribute given by the Honourable Leader of the House. Those of us that went to church yesterday would know that yesterday was the fifth Sunday in Epiphany and most of the readings, Honourable Speaker, in the houses of worship yesterday, were based on the calling of people over the ages and times.

There was the Old Testament reading about the Prophet Isaiah, who was called in the year that King Uzzaiah died when the State of Judah was in turmoil. There were stories of David in his own Psalms, talking about sheep without shepherds. There is also a New Testament piece of reading about the Apostle Paul writing to his own church which he set up in Corinth when he had been taken in by the Roman authorities, writing back trying to encourage unity.

The Honourable Speaker, Sir, the late Dr. Jiko Luveni had often-times spoken about her feeling and her belief that she was called to the high office you now occupy. Those references to the Holy Scriptures I mentioned, Honourable Speaker, speak of calling on people of ages and times, mostly at times when there was a conflict, difficulty or even war in their own countries.

Each of them believed they were called and all of them met with very very strong opposition in answering their call. Paul, as most of us have read, was beheaded in prison. The Prophet Isaiah was a slave for many years. David, the warrior, shepherd, King was expelled from his home for some time, but they all believed they were called, Honourable Speaker, Sir.

The late Dr. Luveni, in most of her speeches, acknowledged that she was called, and as a person called, she had to go through those difficult patches, and in harmony with the words spoken by the Honourable Leader of Government Business in the House, we saw that, right through her carriage of office.

The Honourable Speaker, Sir, if I may, have the liberty to acknowledge the presence in the gallery of Mrs. Qereqeretabua, a professional colleague of the Honourable, the late Dr. Jiko Luveni, in the medical profession and also the Soqosoqo ni Vakavulewa ni Taukei (SVT) Minister for Health, also in the gallery, who worked with the late Speaker, Dr. Solomone Naivalu, Roko Tui Lutu. These two knew Dr. Luveni before she came into the wider services of the nation and international service, and then the Parliament of Fiji. They can testify to the words of the Honourable Leader of the Government Business. You and I, Honourable Speaker, Sir, know her from the days on the golf course, you were the same era in schools, and by the way, Honourable Speaker, Sir, the former Minister for Health was my house captain, your Junior Boy, before you became head prefect of the school I went later to.

However, we are here to pay tribute to a loyal servant of our country, and as we pay tribute to her service, we also offer our condolences to the people of Naduruvesi, Turaga Na Tui Ono, Tui Doi, all the Chiefs of the chiefdom of Ono. We saw all of them there, Honourable Speaker, during the funeral rites, in ceremonies, all from different professional and political backgrounds but they had all come together to acknowledge a daughter of the island and the chiefdom of Ono-i-Lau and pay their tribute to someone, a lady, who brought pride to their far-flung island of Ono-i-Lau.

So I rise this afternoon, Honourable Speaker, to support the motion moved by the Honourable Leader of the Government in Parliament and offer our condolences to the people of Ono-i-Lau and our congratulation also to the people of Ono-i-Lau, the Tui Ono and all of their people for producing such a loyal, hardworking, devoted and dedicated servant for us in Fiji.

On behalf of the Honourable Members of the Opposition, I support the motion that is before the House that we express our deep sadness and sorrow at the death of the late Honourable Speaker.

Honourable Speaker, Sir, when she died, I had conveyed a message asking that we convene for a day to express our deep sorrow at her passing, that did not happen but we have done it this time, and I would like to thank the Government for setting aside funds for the State-funded funeral we had for her. She deserved no less, and I support the motion before the House, Sir. Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, I thank the Honourable Leader of the Opposition for his contribution to this motion. As is the procedure, and as there are only two speakers to this motion, I will now call upon the Honourable Leader of the Government in Parliament, the Honourable Inia Seruiratu, to speak on his right of reply.

HON. LEADER OF THE GOVERNMENT IN PARLIAMENT.- Honourable Speaker, I have no further comments to make but again to acknowledge the Honourable Leader of the Opposition and Honourable Members of the House for their kind compliments. Thank you, Sir.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, all there is for me to do now is to thank the two speakers this afternoon for their contribution to this motion.

I now call on the Honourable Lt. Col. Inia Seruiratu to move his motion, you have the floor.

### MINUTES

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

That the minutes of the sitting of Parliament held on Friday, 30th November, 2018 as previously circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed.

HON. A.A. MAHARAJ.- Honourable Speaker, I beg to second the motion.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, Parliament will now vote on the motion.

Question put.

The Question is:

That the Minutes of the sitting of Parliament held on Friday, 30th November, 2018, as previously circulated be taken as read and be confirmed.

Does any Member oppose the motion?

(Chorus of 'Noes')

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, as there are no Members opposing the motion, the motion is agreed to unanimously.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

## COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CHAIR

### Welcome

HON. SPEAKER.- I welcome all Honourable Members to the first sitting period for the year 2019. At this juncture, I would also like to welcome members of the public joining us in the gallery and those watching proceedings on television and the internet and those listening to the radio.

### Role of Speaker

Honourable Members, it is indeed a great honour to be appointed as your new Speaker. I, for one, know that I have humongous shoes to fill, but I will do my utmost to carry on with the work that the late Honourable Speaker had started, diligently, professionally and to the best of my ability.

The late Honourable Speaker has set a milestone which will be very hard to follow, but I know that with your assistance, Honourable Members, and also with the assistance of the Secretariat, I will be able to achieve the tasks that are before me.

Honourable Members, I would like to sincerely thank the Government for having faith in my ability to be at the helm of this august House, and to take you through till the next General Elections in 2022. In that connection, Honourable Members, I look forward to working closely with all Honourable Members of the House.

### Standing Committee on Justice, Law and Human Rights – Tabling of Reports

For the information of Honourable Members, the Business Committee has unanimously agreed for the Standing Committee on Justice, Law and Human Rights to provide its reports at a future sitting of Parliament, pertaining to:

1. Adoption Bill 2018 (Bill No. 31 of 2018);
2. Code of Conduct Bill 2018 (Bill No. 32 of 2018); and
3. Registration of Sex Offenders Bill 2018 (Bill No. 33 of 2018).

Honourable Members, the Business Committee has duly taken note of the challenges faced by the Committee in conducting public consultations and in that regard, Honourable Members,

I, therefore, resolve that the Standing Committee on Justice, Law and Human Rights will table its report at a future sitting of Parliament.

I thank the Honourable Members.

## PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND CERTAIN DOCUMENTS

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, I now call upon the Honourable Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Civil Service and Communications, the Honourable Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum. You have the floor.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, first, congratulations on your appointment and we look forward to working with you.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have 11 Reports to table and I would like to read them out one by one, with your permission, Sir:

1. Fiji Financial Intelligence Unit - 2017 Annual Report (*Parliamentary Paper No. 73 of 2018*);
2. Fiji National Provident Fund - Annual Report 2018 (*Parliamentary Paper No. 125 of 2018*);
3. Fiji Public Trustee Corporation Limited - Annual Report 2017 (*Parliamentary Paper No. 86 of 2018*);
4. Pacific Fishing Company PTE Limited - Annual Report 2017 (*Parliamentary Paper No. 87 of 2018*);
5. Report of the Auditor-General of the Republic of Fiji - Follow-up of Selected 2016 Auditor-General's Reports for various sectors (*Parliamentary Paper No. 133 of 2018*);
6. Report of the Auditor-General of the Republic of Fiji - Follow-up Audit on Management of the Land Reform Programme (*Parliamentary Paper No. 134 of 2018*);
7. Report of the Auditor-General of the Republic of Fiji - Audit Report on Municipal Councils for 2013 (*Parliamentary Paper No. 135 of 2018*);
8. Report of the Auditor-General of the Republic of Fiji - 2017 Audit Report on General Administration Sector (*Parliamentary Paper No. 07 of 2019*);
9. Report of the Auditor-General of the Republic of Fiji - 2017 Audit Report on Social Services Sector (*Parliamentary Paper No. 08 of 2019*);
10. Report of the Auditor-General of the Republic of Fiji 2017 - Audit Report on Economic Services Sector (*Parliamentary Paper No. 09 of 2019*); and
11. Report of the Auditor-General of the Republic of Fiji - 2017 Audit Report on Infrastructure Sector (*Parliamentary Paper No. 10 of 2019*).

Thank you.

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

(Reports handed to the Secretary-General)



Honourable Members, under Standing Order 38(2), I refer the following Reports to the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs:

1. Fiji Financial Intelligence Unit - 2017 Annual Report (*Parliamentary Paper No. 73 of 2018*); and
2. Pacific Fishing Company PTE Limited - Annual Report 2017 (*Parliamentary Paper No. 87 of 2018*).

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

1. Fiji National Provident Fund - Annual Report 2018 (*Parliamentary Paper No. 125 of 2018*); and
2. Fiji Public Trustee Corporation Limited - Annual Report 2017 (*Parliamentary Paper No. 86 of 2018*).

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

1. Report of the Auditor-General of the Republic of Fiji - Audit Report on Municipal Councils for 2013 (*Parliamentary Paper No. 135 of 2018*);
2. Report of the Auditor-General of the Republic of Fiji - Follow-up Audit on Management of the Land Reform Programme (*Parliamentary Paper No. 134 of 2018*);
3. Report of the Auditor-General of the Republic of Fiji - Follow-up of Selected 2016 Auditor-General's Reports for various sectors (*Parliamentary Paper No. 133 of 2018*);
4. Report of the Auditor-General of the Republic of Fiji - 2017 Audit Report on General Administration Sector (*Parliamentary Paper No. 07 of 2019*);
5. Report of the Auditor-General of the Republic of Fiji - 2017 Audit Report on Social Services Sector (*Parliamentary Paper No. 08 of 2019*); and
6. Report of the Auditor-General of the Republic of Fiji - 2017 Audit Report on Economic Services Sector (*Parliamentary Paper No. 09 of 2019*);
7. Report of the Auditor-General of the Republic of Fiji - 2017 Audit Report on Infrastructure Sector (*Parliamentary Paper No. 10 of 2019*).

Honourable Members, I now call upon the Honourable Minister for Employment, Productivity, Industrial Relations, Youth and Sports, the Honourable Parveen Bala, to table his Report.

HON. P.K. BALA.- Honourable Speaker, in accordance with Standing Order 38, I present the Ministry of Youth and Sports - Annual Report 2016-2017 (*Parliamentary Paper No. 102 of 2018*) to Parliament.

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

(Report handed to the Secretary-General)

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, under Standing Order 38(2), I refer the Ministry of Youth and Sports - Annual Report 2016-2017 (*Parliamentary Paper No. 102 of 2018*) to the Standing Committee on Social Affairs.

Honourable Members, I now call upon the Minister for Fisheries, the Honourable Cdr. Semi Koroilavesau, to table his Report.

HON. CDR. S.T. KOROILAVESAU.- Honourable Speaker, in accordance with Standing Order 38, I present the Ministry of Fisheries - 2016/2017 Annual Report (*Parliamentary Paper No. 130 of 2018*) to Parliament.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister, please, hand the Report to the Secretary-General.

(Report handed to the Secretary-General)

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, under Standing Order 38(2), I refer the Ministry of Fisheries - 2016/2017 Annual Report to the Standing Committee on Natural Resources.

I thank you, Honourable Members. We will now proceed to the next Item on the Order Paper.

## QUESTIONS

### Oral Questions

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, the first Oral Question for today, I call upon the Honourable Inosi Kuridrani to ask his question.

#### Decline in the Sugar Production (Question No. 01/2019)

HON. I. KURIDRANI.- Honourable Speaker, Sir, firstly, I wish to congratulate you on your election as Speaker for this term of Parliament, and I wish you all the very best.

Honourable Speaker, my question is:

Sugar production has been on a declining trend from 310,140 tonnes in 2006 to 139,502 tonnes in 2016, despite the heavy input of resources financially and technically. Can the Honourable Prime Minister and Minister for iTaukei Affairs and Sugar Industry explain the reason for this decline as this decline is also reflected in the Reserve Bank of Fiji Annual Report 2017/2018?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Point of Order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, as per tradition, the Business Committee decides on the questions and we saw that the Honourable Inosi Kuridrani actually add in some new sentences to the question which obviously adds a different dimension to the question. So he is out of order by actually adding to an agreed question by the Business Committee. Thank you.

HON. GOVERNMENT MEMBERS.- Very poor.

HON. I. KURIDRANI.- Mr. Speaker, Sir, I withdraw my last sentence and I begin again.

My question is:

Sugar production has been on a declining trend from 310,140 tonnes in 2006 to 139,502 tonnes in 2016, despite the heavy input of resources financially and technically. Can the Honourable Prime Minister and Minister for iTaukei Affairs and Sugar Industry explain the reason for this decline?

HON. SPEAKER.- I thank the Honourable Member. I just want to remind Honourable Members that the business of the House is decided by the Business Committee. If we stick to that procedure and only to that procedure, we will get on with the debate in this House in quick time. I see that the Honourable Prime Minister is eager to answer this question and I have the honour to give the floor to the Honourable Prime Minister.

HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA (Prime Minister and Minister for iTaukei Affairs and Sugar Industry).- Thank you Honourable Speaker. Honourable Speaker, I join my fellow Parliamentarians in congratulating you on your election and appointment as Speaker of the House.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to respond to the question raised by Honourable Inosi Kuridrani. It is of no surprise and indeed predictable that the Honourable Member and indeed, the Opposition usually uses the year 2006 as its baseline. The Honourable Member also uses 2016, knowing fully well that it was the year that a category five storm, *Tropical Cyclone Winston* hit Fiji, this as we all know was the second strongest storm in the world, taking out one-third of our Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and killing 44 of our people. So this does not give a true indication of the sugar production trend.

In order to assess the sugar production trend, Mr. Speaker, we cannot only look at a few years' data and especially not 2016. Various factors need to be considered, including decades and decades of data to see what has affected our sugar production. In fact, three years prior to the *TC Winston*, the trend in cane production was on the rise.

Mr. Speaker, I am not sure whether the Honourable Member knows what TCTS stands for, it is the tonnes of cane per tonnes of sugar which is in the ratio of tonnes of cane that is required to make the tonnes of sugar. We have seen improvements in that, we require lesser tonnage of cane to produce more sugar. In other words there is less wastage, greater efficiency and more for the farmers.

Also the total cane crushed in 2017 increased by 18 percent, year on year, a commendable effort despite the damages of *TC Winston* and I would encourage the Honourable Member to have a look at the Fiji Sugar Corporation website which has all these figures. Mr. Speaker, Sir, the sugar industry landscape has changed dramatically, not only from 2006 but way back from 1987 when the *coup* makers saw the sugar cane industry as a threat to their political ambitions and set out to wittingly or unwittingly destroy it. This significantly undermined the confidence of the sugar cane farmers who had been for generations making a living and contributing to our economy through the sugarcane industry.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, land leases which started expiring in 1996 and its politicisation started seeing the reduction in farm lands available for sugarcane farming. All Honourable Kuridrani has to do is talk to Honourable Niko Nawaikula who has a lot of stories in that area.

(Laughter)

But, that, Mr. Speaker, meant a lower number of active sugar industry players, namely the sugarcane farmers and labourers, the increase in natural disasters also had an unforeseen impact on sugarcane production. All these factors, Mr. Speaker, have a combined effect of significant changes to Fiji's annual sugarcane and sugar production outputs. To address this declining trend, let me assure this

august Parliament that the Government has put in place strategies aimed at having a sustainable sugar industry and these are outlined in the National Development Plan which I hope everyone on the other side of the House have an opportunity to read.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I intend to update the Honourable Members in future on the detailed strategies that is being pursued and planned for the sugar industry. I thank you.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- *Vinaka.*

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, I thank the Honourable Prime Minister. A supplementary question? You have the floor, Honourable Professor Biman Prasad.

HON. PROF. B.C. PRASAD.- Thank you, Honourable Speaker. I agree with the Honourable Prime Minister that before 2006 we had issues with respect to land leases and the number of farmers went down to 18,000. But since 2006, the number of farmers have declined by about 6,000, it is actually now only 12,000 farmers and cane production is today half of what it was in 2006. Can the Honourable Prime Minister explain if the non-renewable of leases were a factor after 2006, in the decline of the number of farmers from 18,000 to 12,000?

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you Honourable Professor Biman Prasad. I now give the floor to the Honourable Prime Minister, Sir, you have the floor.

HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- Yes, Mr. Speaker. Let me elaborate more on the five of the attributing factors for the decline in the sugar production, which he knows about, but he does not want to tell everyone.

(Laughter)

HON. PROF. B.C. PRASAD.- I am asking you.

HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- First is the land lease issue which continues to be a major challenge for the sugar industry, as a result of non-renewal of leases. The total sugarcane farming land had reduced from 73,000 hectares in 1996 to 55,000 hectares in 2006. This has further reduced to approximately 39,000 hectares in 2016. Many would argue that some Members of the other side of House had contributed to this, as I mentioned before.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the second attributing factor relates to the reduction and the number of active sugarcane farmers. From 1997 to 2017, the number of active sugarcane farmers reduced from 20,000 to 11,000, from the 8,000 farmers who left the industry, 5,000 farmers had during the period in 1996 to 2006 or approximately 58 percent.

Of course, we had aging farmers, another attributing factor is that majority of the sugarcane farmers had aged and retired. Currently 79 percent of our farmers are above the age of 50 years and majority of the current generation have moved on to find employment in other sectors, thanks to the Ministry of Youth and Sports and also to the Ministry of Education, Heritage and Arts with regards to free education and issues with regards to sports.

On the shortage of labour, Mr. Speaker, Sir, the fourth attributing factor relates to the shortage of labour particularly cane cutters which has reduced from 15,000 in 2006 to 7,000 in 2017, and the last nine years of consecutive economic growth has resulted in better opportunities in other sectors that have reduced the available labour pool in the sugar industry.

And of course, natural disasters as I have explained, Mr. Speaker, the fifth and final attributing factor that I would like to share today relates to the negative impacts of natural disasters in the sugar industry. I talked about *TC Winston* but during the period 2007 to 2016, Fiji had experienced eight natural disasters in the form of tropical cyclones, flooding and prolonged droughts.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, these unforeseen events have reduced the sugarcane production from 2.4 million tonnes to 1.7 million tonnes of cane during the period 2007 and 2010. Similar effects also were experienced for three consecutive years from 2014 to 2016 where the industry was affected by three disasters including *TC Winston*. As a result, the sugarcane production declined from 1.8 million tonnes to 1.3 million tonnes of cane.

Despite these industry's challenges, Mr. Speaker, the FijiFirst Government remains committed to having a sustainable sugar industry in Fiji and for Fiji, and the focus of the industry reforms is on growth, improved governance, structure, modernisation and resilience. I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- I thank the Honourable Prime Minister. Honourable Niko Nawaikula, you have the floor on a supplementary question.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Honourable Speaker, before I ask my supplementary question, may I congratulate you first.

I am sure, 13 years you do nothing.

(Laughter)

I am sure, Honourable Speaker, if the Honourable Prime Minister goes from Sabeto to Rakiraki, he will see all these farms abandoned. Very simple, why are all these people leaving? Answer that, why?

HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- Mr. Speaker, obviously he has not been listening for the last 10 minutes.

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- Stay awake! Stay awake!

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, I think the Honourable Prime Minister has answered this question quite extensively. I now give the floor to the Honourable Member on a supplementary question.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Honourable Speaker, Sir, my question to the Honourable Prime Minister. Given that there was a consultation last week in the North, carried out by the Fiji Sugar Corporation (FSC) and also the concerns from the farmers in terms of trying to make new generation farmers remain in the farms and also the issue of landowners in terms of lease payment review, in terms of Committee on Better Utilisation of Land (CBUL) and also the various incentives that the farmers are crying for, which they have aired. What measures does the Minister or the Ministry have in place to address the issue of production of cane?

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- No, it is not there. That is why I have brought it up and the Honourable Assistant Minister was there in that consultation, he chaired that meeting. So, what measures are there that the Ministry can give to satisfy these farmers?

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Prime Minister, you have the floor.

HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- Thank you, Honourable Speaker. Honourable Speaker, I have said that all the answers are in the National Development Plan. He should stand up and read it but the proposed strategy to deal with some of these, Honourable Speaker, if they do not know, we created the CBUL strategy in 2010. Let me start ....

(Honourable Members interject)

HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- Because of people like him.

We started the CBUL strategy to entice the owners of the land to give up their land for farming and of course, we have increased interest from 6 percent to 10 percent or 4 percent, goes straight to the landowners and in fact we have the CBUL money now, that is available for the landowners.

I will talk more on the Fiji Sugar Corporation Financial Performance, Honourable Speaker. Their annual gross profit of 2018 is \$844,000, the last annual gross profit by FSC was in 2007.

A new mill in Penang is not viable, everyone is talking about that, that the supply of sugar within the Rakiraki area is low. However, the new mill will be considered if production within Penang mill area increases, that is part of the talk that is ongoing now, when the production is there.

The 2019 targets for the sugar industry, Honourable Speaker, is two million tonnes of sugarcane production (TCTS of 8) and finalisation of the National Sugar Policy by June. Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- I thank the Honourable Prime Minister, is it on the supplementary question, Honourable Member?

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Yes, Honourable Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- You have the floor, Sir.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Thank you, Honourable Speaker. Honourable Speaker, all is well and good but can the Honourable Prime Minister answer one simple question here: The yield per hectare in Fiji is below 40 tonnes per hectare. In other jurisdictions, it is about 80 or some even 150 tonnes per hectares. What is Government or FSC doing to increase the yield per hectare in Fiji; and when can we see some improvements on that? Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you, Honourable Member. Honourable Prime Minister, you have the floor.

HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA.- Thank you, Honourable Speaker. The Sugar Research Institute of Fiji (SRIF) is working on getting better ratoon so we can get better yields. Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- I thank the Honourable Prime Minister. I think we have exhausted this question, and we will move on to the next question for the day.

Programme of Work - Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2018  
(Question No. 02/2019)

HON. R.R. SHARMA.- Honourable Speaker, before I ask the next question, I also wish to congratulate you on your appointment as the Speaker of the House.

My question is:

Can the Honourable Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation inform Parliament on the programme of work undertaken by the Ministry on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2018?

HON. M.R. VUNIWAQA (Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation).- Honourable Speaker, Sir, I congratulate you on being appointed as the Speaker of this august House.

Honourable Speaker, following the commencement of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2018 on 21st March, 2018, the Council for Persons Living with Disabilities was established under Section 3 of that Act, and since then they have been hard at work, putting together an implementation plan. It is basically a forward-looking plan to see how we can translate the provisions of that Act into action on the ground. Putting together that five-year implementation plan, Honourable Speaker, consultations were done prior to the plan being drafted, particularly in relation to people living with disabilities and those service providers that provide services to persons with disabilities.

There are 10 key objectives for the implementation plan, again they are aligned to our national obligations under the Act and also to our international obligations under the Convention of the Rights of Persons Living with Disabilities.

Honourable Speaker, apart from the implementation framework, the Ministry has also started doing a review on our National Disability Policy. It was a ten-year policy and the Ministry is currently reviewing that policy to bring it up-to-par with what the Act promises to those persons living with disabilities, and also in accordance with our obligations under Section 42 of the Constitution. Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- I thank the Honourable Minister. Honourable Member, you have the floor.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Honourable Speaker, Sir, I join my other colleagues in congratulating you on your appointment as the Speaker for this term. I also acknowledge and thank the Honourable Minister for alluding to the implementation framework on the Act for those living under disability.

Under the budget supplement for the current budget, under the mid-term review, the Government is saying that they will continue to monitor the programme that will promote the protection of those living under disability. On the same vein, in our previous workshop at the Warwick, the Director for the Fiji National Council for Disabled Persons (FNCDP) alluded to the fact that because they are the central agency for the implementation of the Act, he highlighted that their biggest constraint is on resources.

Honourable Speaker, can the Honourable Minister explain how they will monitor the effectiveness or the implementation of the programmes without the much-needed resources, as had been alluded to by the Director of FNCDP? Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you, Honourable Member. Honourable Minister, you have the floor.

HON. M.R. VUNIWAQA.- Thank you, Honourable Speaker. The implementation framework has one of its key objectives as the monitoring, evaluation and learning component. That is where the FNCDP and other relevant stakeholders and the Ministry, of course, taking the lead role, will be able to measure the actions on the ground by the different stakeholders that do contribute to the lives of those living with disabilities.

Resource-wise, Honourable Speaker, in the current budget here, one thing we should understand is that, Government has taken a multi-sectoral role in addressing the needs of those persons living with disabilities, so it is not only my Ministry that carries a budget for services to be rendered to persons living with disabilities.

In total, Honourable Speaker, Government has allocated \$12.76 million in this current financial year to different stakeholders, including Fiji Roads Authority, for example, to make roads and footpaths, wheelchair-accessible. There is money that has been given to Habitats for Humanity in relation to accessibility of homes for those persons living with disabilities. There is money given to the Ministry of Education to make schools more inclusive for those children living with disabilities, so it is a multi-sectoral, multi-pronged approach that has been taken by Government and we really should not be looking at just one Ministry in doing that but that was in May.

The Ministry of Women carries \$9.35 million in its budget in the current financial year. This is to cover for the new disability allowance that this Government introduced in the previous financial year, and apart from that ....

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Insufficient.

HON. SPEAKER.- You have the floor, Honourable Minister.

HON. M.R. VUNIWAQA.- Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

The Honourable Member would hope she knows that at the last Census, there were statistics that was provided by the Bureau of Statistics on the number of persons living with disabilities in our country, 13.7 percent of our population have some form of functional disability in Fiji. This is around the universal average of 15 percent, so we are not going to address this in one year. It is going to be a continuous exercise by the various ministries in government and stakeholders outside of government to continue to rise up to what we promise to persons living with disabilities under Section 42 of the Constitution, and this government is committed to that, year-in and year-out.

HON. SPEAKER.- I thank the Honourable Minister. The last supplementary question on this question, Honourable Professor Biman Prasad.

HON. PROF. B.C. PRASAD.- Thank you, Honourable Speaker. A quick question to the Honourable Minister: The government to encourage the employment of persons with disabilities - allows the 300 percent tax deduction, I am just wondering whether the Minister has some data or is the Ministry planning to collect data and whether employers in the private sector have actually responded to the government's initiative to employ more people with disability?

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Minister, you have the floor.

HON. M.R. VUNIWAQA.- Honourable Speaker, we can provide some data to the Member, but as far as I know right now, I do know of some employers who have been employing persons living with disabilities and one in particular that we had visited is the bus-making factory in Samabula, Lal Coachworks, that employs persons living with disabilities within their factory, and I am sure there are other employers out there that have been employing persons living with disabilities over the years. We can provide the statistics that the Honourable Member has asked for.

HON. SPEAKER.- I thank the Honourable Minister for that.



Honourable Members, the hour is moving on and on this note, I would like to stop proceedings for 15 to 20 minutes for afternoon tea. If there are no objections, and I see none, the House is adjourned for 20 minutes for afternoon tea.

The Parliament adjourned at 3.42 p.m.

The Parliament resumed at 4.05 p.m.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, for the purpose of complying with the Standing Orders with respect to sitting times, I will allow a suspension motion to be moved. I now call upon the Leader of the Government in Parliament to move his motion.

### **SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS**

HON. LEADER OF THE GOVERNMENT IN PARLIAMENT.- Honourable Speaker, I move under Standing Order 6:

That so much of Standing Order 23(1) is suspended so as to allow the House to sit beyond 4.30 p.m. today, just to complete all the Questions as listed in today's Order Paper.

HON. A.A. MAHARAJ.- Honourable Speaker, I second the motion.

HON. SPEAKER.- I now call upon the Leader of Government in Parliament to speak on his motion.

HON. LEADER OF THE GOVERNMENT IN PARLIAMENT.- Honourable Speaker, we have a few questions left as listed in today's Order Paper and I kindly request the indulgence of the House to allow us just to complete these questions before we adjourn for tomorrow's sitting, Honourable Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- The motion is on the floor for debate and I invite comments, if any.

HON. L. TABUYA.- Honourable Speaker, the Opposition has no objection to this motion to go beyond the time so that the Questions can be asked as in the Order Paper. Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you, Honourable Member. There being no others wishing to take the floor, Honourable Minister, you have the floor.

HON. LEADER OF THE GOVERNMENT IN PARLIAMENT.- I have no further comments, Honourable Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Members, it is straight forward then. There being no other speaker and no objections, we will move on. I now give the floor for the third question of the day to the Honourable Moses Bilitavu.

HON. M.D. BULITAVU.- Honourable Speaker, before I ask the question, I also congratulate you, Sir, for ascending to the Chair of the Speaker.

### **QUESTIONS**

#### **Brutal Treatment of Suspects in Custody (Question No. 03/2019)**

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

Can the Honourable Minister for Defence, National Security and Foreign Affairs inform the House on how he intends to eradicate the brutal treatment of suspects in custody?

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU (Minister for Defence, National Security and Foreign Affairs).- Honourable Speaker, I thank the Honourable Member for the question.

In response, very briefly as Minister responsible for Defence and National Security, I do not take this issue lightly. During my visit to the Fiji Police Force (FPF) on 16th January this year, and I intend to continue with this visit next week, Honourable Speaker, I have made this message very clear to the FPF.

Of course, for this, Government through the Office of the Minister, needs to work very closely and in close collaboration with all stakeholders, including the FPF, the Judiciary, civil society, Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and the public at large. Honourable Speaker, I look forward to the day where this will be history, where this will be something of the past, if I may say.

I was encouraged when I did visit the FPF on 16th January this year, for two major reasons; one is the position taken by the Commissioner of Police and his senior staff. It starts from the top, it starts from the leadership and they have taken a zero tolerance on brutality. And that, Honourable Speaker, gives optimism and hope to us (I speak as a Minister) and, of course, to the systems and all stakeholders as well.

I would again wish to acknowledge the Commissioner of Police for taking such a strong position on such issues and this has filtered down to the senior staff. This is a strategic move, Honourable Speaker, and we need to work very closely with the stakeholders (as I have said) so that it can filter down to all the ranks within the FPF.

You would notice, Honourable Speaker, that in the *Fiji Sun* on Saturday, 9th February, 2018, there was an article titled, "Lodge complaints if officers use excessive force", by the Assistant Commissioner of Police, Mr. Itendra Nair. That emphasises what I was saying, Honourable Speaker, that it has been the shift in culture in the FPF, starting from the Commissioner through his senior ranks, zero tolerance on brutality. The Assistant Commissioner, Itendra Nair, has made it very clear that if members of the public do experience abuse of powers given to the FPF, they are to lodge their complaints to their Internal Affairs Department within the FPF, so that they can be investigated.

As I speak, Honourable Speaker, we have about 11 cases that are in the process of completion of investigations or even awaiting the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions' (DPP) decision. There are three concerning police officers from the Southern Division of the FPF, one from the Eastern Division that is awaiting DPP's decision and for the three cases in the Southern Division, one is before the court, one is still under investigation and one is also awaiting DPP's decision.

For the North, we have one case, Honourable Speaker, and that case is now before the court. Of course, in the West, we have about six - four are under investigations and two are awaiting DPP's decision. That is the position taken by the FPF's Senior Commander elements and, of course, that position of theirs needs to be applauded and acknowledged because it sends a very strong message to the members of the FPF.

Working together with the other agencies, Honourable Speaker, let me mention the legislative reform. Fiji has ratified United Nations Convention Against Torture (UNCAT) and last week, we hosted UNCAT in Fiji and, of course, there were strong statements from the Honourable Prime Minister. For the FPF specifically, I will talk on what they are doing now, Honourable Speaker.

Firstly, is the setting up of the First Hour Procedure in the FPF. Basically the phrase, 'First Hour Procedure' gives members of the public or complainants who are brought before the Police for

investigations, to bring in their families, lawyers, et cetera, into the Police Interview Room during the first hour when they are brought into the FPF facility.

Secondly, Honourable Speaker, is what we call the Video Recording Initiative. This is something that is consistent with the Judiciary. With this Video Recording Initiative, we have the first three systems operating - two at the CID Headquarters and one at Totogo Police Station. And we are in the process of procuring 10 such gadgets again, going through the Government procurement system now and once the purchasing process has been finalised, we will also have these in the various Stations.

Apart from that, training is ongoing. We have sent about 20 officers to the UK to familiarise themselves and get further trainings on these new developments and the processes that are in place and, of course, working with the UN as well. As we speak, Honourable Speaker, in the Internal Affairs Department of the FPF, we have officers from the Human Rights Office of the UN Representative here in Suva, visiting the FPF regularly to investigate and work in detail with them and providing guidance as well.

Lastly, Honourable Speaker, it is the Legal Aid Commission that also provides assistance, particularly lawyers, if during the first hour when people are brought into the Police Station, if they do not have any lawyers, then they can get assistance from the Legal Aid Commission in which Government has provided a budget of \$10 million in the current financial year.

Like I said, Honourable Speaker, I look forward to the day when this will be a thing of the past, given the developments that have taken place. I only urge the public to work with the Police as well. We need to look at the context in which the FPF operates because there are times in which they are threatened, they are assaulted and attacked and there are times when people resist arrest. There are provisions for Police to use reasonable force and sometimes this goes overboard. I urge the members of the public to work very closely and, of course, provide the necessary assistance to the FPF. Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- I thank the Honourable Minister.

Honourable Member, you have the floor.

HON. RO F. TUISAWAU.- Thank you, Honourable Speaker. Firstly, congratulations on your appointment.

Just in relation to this question, we thank the Honourable Minister for explaining the processes which are mostly preventative in any violence by the State's organs. We acknowledge that action has been taken in terms of those who are perpetrating the violence and trying to bring justice to the victims, but most of the times their victims and families are left without any follow up.

I would like to ask the Honourable Minister if there is any new framework or plans in place to put in place compensation regimes or frameworks for those who have been victims of violence by State employees, particularly those which resulted in deaths.

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Honourable Speaker, I thank the Honourable Member for the question. We have the court process in which complainants can take their grievances if there are unresolved issues and that is the avenue in which they can access justice so that their issues can be taken and, of course, the Human Rights Commission. Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you, Honourable Minister. Honourable Member, you have the floor.

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- Madam Speaker.

(Laughter)

Honourable Speaker, my humblest apology.

HON. SPEAKER.- She is a better looking person than I am.

(Laughter)

I do not blame you for that.

(Laughter)

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- Honourable Speaker, I am so used to addressing the lady at the Chair, I would like to seek your acceptance for having addressed you wrongly at the Chair, Honourable Speaker.

Whilst on that note, I would like to take this opportunity as well, Sir, to congratulate you on your ascent to that high Chair. We congratulate you and I wish you well, whilst you serve in the Office of the Speaker.

Honourable Speaker, my question is, if the Minister is aware whether or not the FPF and Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission have a common database on all cases of alleged police brutality received either by the FPF or directly through the Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission. If, yes, is there a correlation among the number of complaints? If no, when does he look at such a database to be created?

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- I thank the Honourable Tikoduadua. Honourable Minister, you have the floor.

HON. LT. COL. I.B. SERUIRATU.- Thank you, Honourable Speaker. Let me assure the Honourable Members of this august House that this is a project work in progress. I specifically mentioned from the beginning that this is strategic, this is long term, and because of the recent ratifications, we have obligations to fulfil this, Honourable Speaker.

Of course, we have these linkages with those agencies and it is a matter of having the right equipment as well, so that we can share information and definitely, that is something that we have under serious consideration so that we can improve on the processes and systems to bring efficiency in the work that is undertaken by the FPF, together with major stakeholders. Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- I thank the Honourable Minister. We will now move on to the next question and that is the question to be asked by Honourable Sanjay Kirpal.

Recent Typhoid Outbreak  
(Question No. 04/2019)

HON. S.S. KIRPAL.- Honourable Speaker, Sir, firstly, I wish to congratulate you on your appointment as Speaker of this august House.

My question is: Can the Honourable Minister for Health and Medical Services elaborate on the recent typhoid outbreak?

HON. DR. I. WAQAINABETE (Minister for Health and Medical Services).- Honourable Speaker, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your appointment and I would like to thank the Honourable Member for the question.

Typhoid fever is caused by bacteria called *Salmonella Typhi*, which is endemic to Fiji and is commonly transmitted through the consumption of contaminated food and water, and when hygiene practices are compromised.

Honourable Speaker, anyone can get typhoid. It is carried and spread by humans. Both, ill persons and carriers of the bacteria, shed *Salmonella Typhi* in their faeces - stool, waste or poo.

About 3 percent to 5 percent of people become carriers of the bacteria, after their acute illness and other suffer mild form of the illness that goes unrecognised. And these people may become long-term carriers of the bacteria, even though they have no symptoms.

I wish to inform the august House that whilst at Fiji National University (FNU) last year and the year before, we were part of a project to try and identify who these long term carriers could be. As people get typhoid fever, Honourable Speaker, by food or drink beverages and by shedding *Salmonella Typhi* and gets into the water for drinking or washing food.

As this *Salmonella Typhi* is eaten or drank, they multiply and spread in the blood stream and the body reacts with fever, the signs and symptoms including weakness, general discomfort, stomach pain and diarrhoea which is very, what we call constitutional symptoms or symptoms that are very vague and the only way to test for typhoid is to take samples of stool or blood test to check for *Salmonella Typhi*.

We treat them with antibiotics and if they see and seek medical attention quickly within a week, they can recover quickly but if they are not able to, the incubation period is up to two weeks and the duration of illness can be up to three to four weeks. The symptoms can then worsen into chest congestion, abdominal pain discomfort, the fever becomes constant and about 10 percent of people have the current symptoms for about one or two weeks.

Honourable Speaker, the Ministry declared an outbreak for Navosa and Naitasiri in September 2018. The Navosa outbreak has since ended while cases continue to be reported from Naitasiri and Namosi but this is on a downward trend. There has been one death from Naitasiri during the outbreak. All confirmed cases have undergone the appropriate management following the antibiotic guidelines. These include cases that are either admitted to the subdivisional or divisional hospitals and those seen and treated as outpatients.

Clinical teams at the Colonial War Memorial (CWM) Hospital are aware of the typhoid situation in the subdivisions and are on high alert with a high index of suspicion and all positive stool culture cases have been notified and placed on the appropriate antibiotic regimen.

In Naitasiri since September 2018, Naitasiri has had 53 cases, 38 confirmed and 15 suspected. In Namosi since October 2018, a total of 22 cases, 10 confirmed and 12 suspected have been reported. The Ministry until to date has what is called a Subdivisional Outbreak Response Team (SORT) both, for Naitasiri and Namosi which has been working in collaboration with the Naitasiri Provincial Council, the Water Authority of Fiji (WAF) and also the Provincial Administrator's Office under the Commissioner Central's Office. These have been continuous public health awareness campaigns. Our team has been

designated to screen and investigate any cases that fit the case definition for typhoid fever in the communities.

Honourable Speaker, we have gone on to even work with provincial administrator's office with interventions as of such, I could say that the Nabaitavu Village under the supervision of our Ministry's officers, last Saturday, I commissioned the water and sanitation projects which we have been working on ever since December.

Honourable Speaker, for Namosi, SORT has implemented the Namosi Typhoid Containment Action Plan since December last year. In December 2018, the Ministry of Health officials had engaged discussions with provincial councils and members of both Namosi and Naitasiri communities, involving the FPF or strategies to strengthen public health measures to prevent the spread of typhoid fever. As you are aware, Honourable Speaker, this is the period of festivities in our country. The Ministry's Namosi Taskforce has been based in some of the villages conducting public health and awareness campaigns, investigating close contacts and screening potential suspected cases.

Following the recent adverse weather, the team have conducted premises disinfection in several regional villages including evacuation centres. Honourable Speaker, while the Ministry of Health and Medical Services is trying its best to contain typhoid, dengue and other vector-borne diseases, however, the Ministry cannot fight this alone. We need all hands on board.

We need the leaders in our communities and Non-Government Organisations and faith-based groups but most importantly, we need Members of this august House to advocate for the support on disease prevention in their own communities whether it be non-communicable diseases or communicable diseases like typhoid, dengue and leptospirosis. We need strong leaders who can go beyond their roles to offer solutions and assistance to make positive changes and not just condemn for political mileage.

With that Honourable Speaker, I would like to emphasise the need for collaborative effort to conquer the battle against typhoid. I appeal to all Honourable Members of this august House and the general public that we act together, act now to keep our nation clean and free not only from typhoid but also from dengue and leptospirosis.

Honourable Speaker, there is an ongoing community awareness and messaging through media and we urge anyone who may have the symptoms of typhoid, dengue or leptospirosis to seek medical advice to avoid any complication. After all, Honourable Speaker prevention is better than cure. Thank you, Sir.

HON. SPEAKER.- I thank the Honourable Minister. I give the floor to the Honourable Member on supplementary question.

HON. V. PRAKASH.- Thank you, Honourable Speaker. I also join my fellow colleagues from the Government side to congratulate you as our Speaker of the House.

My supplementary question is, what is the possibility of our people with typhoid having a diagnosis missed at our health facilities?

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you, Honourable Member. Honourable Minister, you have the floor.

HON. DR. I. WAQAINABETE.- Thank you, Honourable Speaker. As I have suggested one of the issues that we have with typhoid is that the initial symptoms can be quite vague. As I have said in my speech earlier, Honourable Speaker, fever, vague abdominal pain, it could be head-ache and as you know

during that period is also a period when there are viral infections, flu-like symptoms. So there is a small possibility.

What has happened during that period, Honourable Speaker, is that we have asked all our Medical Officers and all our Nurse Practitioners and those at the front line to have a high index of suspicion for typhoid, dengue and leptospirosis. By doing that, they have it consciously at the back of their minds that whenever they see anyone with constitutional or vague symptoms, this might be happening and to put them on the clinical pathway for recognising whether or not this person or the patient may have typhoid or not. Thank you, Sir.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you, Honourable Minister. Honourable Member, you have the floor on a supplementary question.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Thank you, Honourable Speaker. Honourable Speaker, sometime ago the Honourable Minister, in one of the villages indicated that one of the causes of this disease was the lack of toilet facilities in those villages. And indeed there was a report last week in the media that there was a case where 65 people used only one toilet. This is a sad indictment of the stewardship of FijiFirst after 12 years, this is what we have in Fiji. Can the Honourable Minister tell the House on how his Government is going to improve the population and toilets in this country?

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- It is in the media, he said it.

HON. SPEAKER.- Order, order!. Honourable Minister, you have the floor.

HON. DR. I. WAQAINABETE.- Honourable Speaker, it is the task of any Fijian while building their house to ensure that they build the whole house which includes the provision of sanitation facilities. What we have been doing, Honourable Speaker, is in these areas where we have found there was a mismatch between the number of households and the number of sanitation facilities, we have been encouraging them to build and we have actually supported them by utilising our own funds within the Ministry of Health. In these areas where there was a typhoid outbreak in Namosi and also in Naitasiri which is actually more.

In Nabaitavu Village last week on Saturday, there were seven new toilets that we the FijiFirst Government helped provide for these members of our community. We felt, Honourable Speaker, that because they could not provide for themselves, it was our duty to prevent typhoid and to provide for them.

Not only that, Honourable Speaker, allow me to finish, we also taught them how to make toilets. Our people did not take leave, I had directed them to stay on site, they did not take leave for the whole of December and January, staying in the community with them; in Nabaitavu, Waidracia and also working in Natavea, not including the villages in Namosi (I will come to that later); working with them, teaching them the WASH sanitation facility, how to be able to wash, how to be able to provide when there is a big gathering.

As you know, Honourable Speaker, this is the time of festivities; our people went there to actually see them that they wore gloves, that they washed their hands when they prepared food, and that was because of a directive I issued that they will not go on leave until they made sure that we contained typhoid. These were in the areas that have typhoid.

(Honourable Member interjects)



HON. DR. I. WAQAINABETE.- Of course, what he was talking about, that is an area that has not had typhoid....

(Honourable Member interjects)

HON. DR. I. WAQAINABETE.- Allow me to finish, Honourable Member, you have had your turn. You have had your turn.

That is an area that has been brought up in the paper, it did not have a typhoid outbreak. We concentrated our efforts on the areas, Honourable Speaker, that had a typhoid outbreak. Now that we have contained it, then we will come down to those other areas. I thank you, Sir.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you Honourable Member. I think we have exhausted this question. Sufficient reply has been given by the Minister responsible and if there is a need for further questions in the proceeding days on this subject, that could be brought up in another form but I think we will move on, time goes on.

I now have the pleasure of giving the floor for the fifth Oral Question for today to the Honourable Viliame Gavoka to ask his question. You have the floor.

Fiji Airways CEO  
(Question No. 05/2019)

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Thank you Honourable Speaker. This is my substantive question, I have been remiss that I did not offer my congratulations to you Sir, for your appointment to the position of Speaker. We have had four wonderful years, but we are all learning, but hopefully with your experience Sir, you will take this House to greater heights. Thank you, Sir.

Honourable Speaker, my question is:

With a number of airlines serving Fiji and neutrality being critical, can the Honourable Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Civil Service and Communications explain the reason why the Chief Executive Officer of Fiji Airways sits in the position of Chair of Tourism Fiji?

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM (Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Civil Service and Communications).- Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Honourable Member for the question. The reason, Mr. Speaker is that Civil Aviation falls under the Attorney-General's Office and the question is about Fiji, an airline serving Fiji and the question of neutrality. The issue of airlines serving Fiji is not governed by Tourism Fiji, it is actually governed by the Air Services Agreement.

The Air Services Agreements are agreements that actually determine how many times a particular company or airline company can fly into Fiji and how many seats they can bring in to Fiji. That is the role of the Air Services Agreement. It is done on a bilateral basis, in other words between two countries.

The role of the Air Services Agreement is completely different to the role of Tourism Fiji. Tourism Fiji is all about marketing Fiji. It is all about branding Fiji and putting Fiji out into the international market to obviously lure visitors to Fiji. Now, Fiji Airways which is actually the national carrier of our country, brings close to approximately 70 percent of all tourism arrivals into Fiji. A bulk of the tourists who come to Fiji, over 95 percent actually come by an aeroplane and of those people that come by an aeroplane to Fiji, nearly 70 percent come by Fiji Airways.

Mr. Speaker Sir, there is absolutely wonderful synergy between Fiji Airways and Tourism Fiji. In that, both of them have the same objective of bringing visitors to Fiji, enhancing the growth of tourism arrivals in Fiji but not just growth in terms of numbers, but also in terms of the yields that we make. So, the question proposed, Mr. Speaker, Sir, is actually premised incorrectly because there is absolutely no conflict of interest between being the Chairman of Tourism Fiji and being the Chief Executive Officer of Fiji Airways.

There is absolutely no conflict because Tourism Fiji does not determine how many planes come in to Fiji. In fact, indeed under the current Chairman of Fiji Airways as Chairman of Tourism Fiji, Air New Zealand has actually increased its frequency of flights from Christchurch. He has in no way stopped this because that is not his role. It is actually determined through the Air Service Agreement which is done through the Attorney-General's Office.

So, I would suggest Honourable Speaker, that there is absolutely no question of neutrality in any way being breached by the Chairman of Tourism being the CEO of Fiji Airways. Indeed, we have had other CEOs of Fiji Airways being Chairman of Tourism Fiji: Mr. Dave Pflieger, Mr. Stefan Pichler, who were also Chairpersons of Tourism Fiji whilst being CEOs of Fiji Airways.

In that period also, we have had Virgin Airways coming into the market, increasing the number of flights. We have had other airlines increasing the flights. Indeed Qantas is now going to fly their own metal, or in other words, their own aircrafts very soon whilst the Chairman of Tourism Fiji is the CEO of Fiji Airways. So, there is absolutely no conflict, there are no breaches of any neutrality. Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- I thank the Honourable Minister. Honourable Member, you have the floor on a supplementary question.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Thank you, Honourable Speaker. Honourable Speaker, the question here is Tourism Fiji. Tourism Fiji is given funding by the taxpayers of Fiji to market the destination and it makes that possible by harnessing the cooperation of every player in the industry: hotels, airlines and the likes. That is why Tourism Fiji to get the maximum out of everyone, needs to have a neutral chairman. So, you cannot have a stakeholder like an airline chairing the Board of Tourism Fiji because through that funding, it multiplies by bringing in all stakeholders to add to the marketing of Fiji.

So, how can the Government say that Fiji is getting its maximum out of marketing by having this CEO of a major player chairing the body that controls the funding of marketing? Thank you.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- What is the question?

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Member, I think the Honourable Minister has answered your question ...

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- No, no.

HON. SPEAKER.- ... sufficiently. What is your supplementary question?

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- My supplementary question is: how can the Government be confident that the funding for Tourism Fiji is being utilised to its maximum by having someone who is not a neutral player, in a situation where everyone should work together; where Tourism Fiji should bring in all the players as one. It is like this, Honourable Speaker, Korean Air develops the Korea market, Air New Zealand develops the New Zealand market, Qantas and all those players develop the Australian market. How can you then have their competitor chairing the body that decides on the marketing fund for Fiji? That is where I am coming from. Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you, Honourable Member, but it is sufficient to me and I have heard clearly what the Honourable Minister has explained. There is no conflict of interest amongst the stakeholders in this case, and things have been going on hunky-dory, if I might say.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- No, no, only during FijiFirst time.

HON. SPEAKER.- However, I will give the floor to the Honourable Minister to explain.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- Thank you, Honourable Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think the Honourable Member actually just answered the question himself. He said that Qantas promotes Australia, Korean Airways promotes Korea, Air New Zealand promotes New Zealand; that is their home-base; that is where their roots start; they need to get people, as they say, “bums on seats” - out of Australia, into Australia, that is what Fiji Airways does. Tourism Fiji’s job is to get tourists to Fiji, same objective.

Honourable Speaker, the Honourable Member has been the Chief Executive Officer of what used to be called “Fiji Visitors Bureau”, and he would also know that people have served on the Fiji Visitors Bureau Boards and Tourism Fiji Boards who are hoteliers. So, then he would say, “Let us not get any hoteliers because if we get the General Manager of Marriot to sit on Tourism Fiji Board, he might actually get everyone to come to Marriot” - no.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, we have the Tourism Fiji Act that lays down the objectives and the mandate of the board members of Tourism Fiji. They cannot breach this, and as the Honourable Member would also know that now under the new Companies Act, board members, even in statutory organisations have a fiduciary duty to the very organisation on which they are board members.

So, there is no way that the CEO of Fiji Airways who sits as Chair of Tourism Fiji will somehow or the other manipulate the Tourism Fiji strategy, so tourists come in to Fiji will only sit on Fiji Airways. He does not have the capacity to bring them all. It is in his interest obviously as Chairman of Tourism Fiji to bring as many tourists to Fiji. We should all be happy about that. We should all be happy about supporting our national carrier. We are an island nation and we need to have a national carrier. He says “Ahhh ....”

Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is critical. Can he imagine if tomorrow we did not have a national carrier?

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- That is not the point.

HON. A. SAYED-KHAIYUM.- If we have a cyclone, if we have any sort of disruption, nobody will fly to Fiji. Fiji Airways is the only airline that flies in and out of Fiji at all times, as long as safety is there.

So, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I cannot understand what is the objective of this question. On one hand, we are supporting Tourism Fiji with a very nice handsome budget. On the other hand, we have members of the board, including the CEO Fiji Airways, including members from the Sheraton Westin Hotel chain, there are other credible board members who are also from the hotel industry working together to market Fiji. The gentleman who is the chairperson, is not in any way a conflict, because the objectives are the same, thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you, Honourable Minister.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- ... \$18 million to Fiji Airways.

HON. SPEAKER.- I think, Honourable Member, we have covered this question sufficiently, with a thorough answer. Time goes on, and we will move to the next question.

Honourable Members, I give the floor to the Honourable Dr. Salik Govind for the sixth Oral Question for today.

HON. DR. S.R. GOVIND.- Honourable Speaker, before I ask the question, Sir, I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate you in your appointment as the Speaker of this august House.

Addressing Drug Abuse by Youths in Sports Community  
(Question No. 06/2019)

HON. DR. S.R. GOVIND asked the Government, upon notice:

Can the Honourable Minister for Employment, Productivity, Industrial Relations, Youth and Sports explain to Parliament as to what initiatives has the Ministry of Youth and Sports done to address the issue of drug abuse amongst the youths in the sports community?

HON. P.K. BALA (Minister for Employment, Productivity, Industrial Relations, Youth and Sports).- Thank you, Honourable Speaker, and I also thank the Honourable Member.

Honourable Speaker, before I give my response, I would also like to congratulate you, Sir, on your appointment as the Speaker of this House. We also wish you the very best in your role as the Honourable Speaker.

Honourable Speaker, in the absence of the National Policy, the sporting bodies have their own disciplinary procedure in place. There have been a lot of requests by the sporting bodies to have a national policy so that they can implement in terms of dealing with youths in relation to drug abuse.

Therefore, Honourable Speaker, to address the drug abuse, in fact, let me say at the outset that the Government is very concerned in this regard, therefore, the Ministry of Youth and Sports formulated a draft National Sport and Drug Policy in 2016. At this juncture I would like to thank and acknowledge my former colleague Minister, for doing the ground work since 2016. Now, we are finalising the Policy through a public and stakeholder consultation process before the same is tabled for Cabinet's approval.

Honourable Speaker, the main objective of this proposed National Policy is for our youths to understand the harmfulness of drugs to our sports people. It is also our hope that implementing these policies and legislations will assist the prevention of drugs intake by our sportswomen and sportsmen. Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- I thank the Honourable Minister. You have the floor, Honourable Member.

HON. DR. S.R. GOVIND.- Honourable Speaker, I have a supplementary question: In recent days, there have been allegations in the media of drug abuse by soccer players. Can the Honourable Minister for Employment, Productivity and Industrial Relations; and Youth and Sports, inform the House on the action taken by the Ministry on this particular incident?

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you, Honourable Member. The Honourable Minister, you have the floor.

HON. P.K. BALA.- Thank you, Honourable Speaker, I thank him for not taking the name of Ba. In fact, this issue took place at the Soccer Academy in Ba and there have been some media statements in regards to this allegation. Till to date, this has been only an allegation but that does not mean that we will sit on it. We have asked the Fiji Football Association (FFA) to investigate and give us the full report. We have been assured by the FFA that the report will be given to us by the end of this week. Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Member, you have the floor.

HON. N. NAWAIKULA.- Honourable Speaker, the Minister has been in Government for 13 years, trying to develop this policy. Can you inform the House, why all these 13 years and you still have not come up with the Policy? What is the reason for the delay? Drug abuse has been prevalent even 13 years before that, so what is the reason for the delay?

HON. SPEAKER.- The Honourable Minister.

HON. P.K. BALA.- Thank you, Honourable Speaker. Likewise, I can also ask why there was no National Policy before 2006. But I do not want to get into the debate with the Honourable Member, but let me say this, that this was the only Government that has ever thought of bringing a National Policy.

HON. GOVERNMENT MEMBERS.- Hear, hear!

HON. P.K. BALA.- And this draft of National Policy was formulated in 2016, and there have been some consultations, and as I have stated earlier on that we are on the final stages of getting this paper done. Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you. Honourable Tikoduadua, do you have a supplementary question?

HON. LT. COL. P. TIKODUADUA.- Honourable Speaker, my question; is the Ministry going to carry out a comprehensive anti-drug campaign amongst our young sportsmen and women and athletes? What will be the nature of the campaign by the Ministry?

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you, Honourable Member. Honourable Minister, you have the floor.

HON. P.K. BALA.- Thank you, Honourable Speaker. Very briefly, at the moment, the Ministry Officials are on the ground. While they are taking this national policy throughout the country, we are making awareness to the youths of this country.

But as I have said earlier on, there is no national policy at this point in time. Once we have the policy, then and only we can punish people, but as far as awareness goes, that framework of awareness programme will be within that national policy which we will carry out. Thank you so much.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you, Honourable Minister.

We will move on to the next question. I will give the floor to the Honourable Professor Biman Prasad to ask Question No. 07/2019. You have the floor.

Progress of MOU & Joint Feasibility Study – Fiji/PRC  
(Question No. 07/2019)

HON. PROF. B.C. PRASAD.- Thank you, Honourable Speaker. Since this is also my substantive question, I also join the Honourable Members in congratulating you on your election as the Speaker of the House.

With such an extensive and distinguished record of service, I am sure we will be counting on your wisdom as we progress into the second term of this Parliament. I also realised, Honourable Speaker, that with your election, we actually now have three former Commanders of the Military in Parliament.

My question is:

Can the Honourable Minister for Industry, Trade, Tourism, Local Government, Housing and Community Development inform Parliament on the progress achieved on the Memorandum of Understanding and Joint Feasibility Studies conducted by the Governments of Fiji and the Peoples' Republic of China on the proposed Free Trade Agreement as contained on page 64 of the Supplement to the 2018-2019 Budget Address?

HON. P.D. KUMAR (Minister for Industry, Trade, Tourism, Local Government, Housing and Community Development).- Honourable Speaker, I also would like to congratulate you on your appointment as the Speaker of the House, and I wish you well for next four years and beyond.

Honourable Speaker, I also want to thank the Honourable Member for his question. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that was signed between the Fijian Government and the Government of the People's Republic of China was to explore the possibility of having a trade arrangement between the two countries. And the idea was to conduct a joint feasibility study because there is a recognition that the two countries are in different stages of development and that had to be captured before we could proceed any further on the trade agreement. So before I go into the progress part of things, let me just provide some context as to why the MOU was signed.

As you know with the growth of Fijian industries, there is a need for new markets for Fijian products and services. Our biggest markets are Australia, New Zealand, USA and Pacific Island countries. We cannot simply limit ourselves to this market, we need to go beyond and we need to look for new markets and what we had found with China, it is doing extremely well at this stage. The economic growth for China increased by 6.4 percent in 2018, with total trade growing by 9.7 percent in 2018 as compared to 2017.

The point to be noted here is that, imports into China have increased at a faster rate of 12.9 percent. This is an indication that China is trading with the world and Fiji has potential to grow its exports to China, provided there is a preferential access.

Currently, Fijian exports to China is around \$97.6 million. With the establishment of the Fiji Trade Commission in China, Fiji has managed to introduce new products into the Chinese market. A few examples include; bottled water, beauty products and beverages.

We have also managed to attract investors from China in the manufacturing sector where they can produce some of the products and send it back to the Chinese market, and one such example is the noni tea.

We recognise that there are difficulties Fijian exporters face when they enter the Chinese market. There is a high tariff for Fiji-made products, unlike say, for example, New Zealand or Samoa. When they

export noni products into the Chinese market, it goes in duty free whereas when we export our products into the Chinese market, we attract 25 percent duty, and the reason being that New Zealand has entered into a Free Trade Agreement with China and Samoa is a Least Developed Country (LDC).

So, looking at the potential, the idea was to explore the type of trade arrangement the two countries can have. In this regard, an MOU was signed for a joint feasibility study and a consultant was appointed. The consultant prepared a draft report that went through two consultative sessions with the various stakeholders, and now we have the final report which was submitted to the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism in December 2018. So, what's the next step?

The next step is to take this paper to Cabinet to seek Cabinet's direction so that the technical team can start negotiating the recommendations that were listed in the feasibility report. So, this is where we are at this stage.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you, Honourable Minister. Honourable Member, you have the floor.

HON. PROF. B.C. PRASAD.- Just a very quick supplementary question to the Honourable Minister and thank you for that very good answer. Are there plans to have extensive consultation, Honourable Speaker, with the business community in Fiji before any final trade agreement is signed?

HON. P.D. KUMAR.- We strongly believe in consultation and before we came up with the final report, consultations were held with the private sector, industry groups and Government Ministries, to truly understand what we wanted as a way forward. Even after the Cabinet endorses the recommendation or sets the direction for further negotiation, we will be talking to the private sector.

HON. SPEAKER.- I thank the Honourable Minister. Honourable Members, we will go on to the eighth Oral Question for today.

Fiji-Wide Vaccination - Meningococcal  
(Question No. 08/2019)

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

Can the Honourable Minister for Health and Medical Services update Parliament on the Meningococcal vaccination that was carried out Fiji-wide last year?

HON. DR. I. WAQAINABETE (Minister for Health and Medical Services).- I thank the Honourable Member for the question.

Honourable Speaker, Meningococcal infection outbreak was declared in Fiji on 20th March, 2018. The infection was noted to be prevalent among our young from age one to 19 years, and cases were identified from almost 12 Medical Subdivisions on the two main islands in Fiji, and also on the islands of Levuka and Kadavu.

The identified strain causing the outbreak in Fiji was Meningococcal Type C and there are different strains that are causing infections around the world, and for Fiji it was Type C. The vaccination campaign, Honourable Speaker, was one of the strategies to control the Meningococcal infection outbreak in Fiji.

Honourable Speaker, the decision for the vaccination campaign was endorsed by the FijiFirst Government. The vaccination campaign commenced on 14th May, 2018 and ended on 31st October, 2018. The goal of the campaign was to keep our target population healthy and risk-free and this is our

young. The main objective was to stop the spread of the deadly Meningococcal infection by vaccinating all children from age one to 19 years in Fiji.

Honourable Speaker, the target population from age one to 19 years according to our data then was 309,145. All children from age one to 19 years for this campaign were to be vaccinated, except those who have been vaccinated at St. Johns College in Levuka in 2017, Navesau Secondary School in April 2018, vaccination by the General Practitioners or otherwise in the years of 2017 or 2018 with the written proof of vaccination or a form validated by parents or guardians, Kioa Island and Labasa Sangam Nursing School.

The campaign which was launched on 11th May, 2018 started with the Central Division and Ra Medical Subdivision on 14th May, 2018. The Western Health Services commenced on 10th August, 2018 and the North Health Services on 20th August, 2018. The Eastern Health Services on 13th August, 2018 and the mass campaign ended on 31st October, 2018.

Honourable Speaker, the Ministry responded by strengthening the clinical management of the principal cases and their contacts. There was increase communications during the period, raising awareness on the disease, its prevention and precautionary measures to be undertaken by the public and awareness of the vaccination itself.

The outbreak was also coinciding with the national major sporting events for our children, for example, the athletics finals, so the Ministry worked in collaboration with the sporting event organisers to conduct inspection of billeting sites, have informed booths to provide communication materials for the people coming to watch the games, especially the school children. And also getting MenC advertisements to be displayed periodically on the big TV screens on the stadium.

Honourable Speaker, there was enhanced active surveillance to confirm diagnosis early, and also confirm the strain causing the infection by our surveillance team. Vaccination was provided for long term protection by the Ministry and employed three different types of delivery for the vaccination:

1. Ring vaccination. This is the type of vaccination that included the principal, who had the infection and the people around him or her, for example, the village in Kioa and the Labasa Sangam Nursing School.
2. Ad hoc, those who bought their own vaccines from pharmacies and advised to go to the nearest Health Centre.
3. Mass nation-wide campaign.

Honourable Speaker, the target population by the Ministry was 309,145. I am pleased to inform this august House that we vaccinated 281,044 of our children. Unvaccinated was 28,101, our percentage vaccination was 91 percent, one of the best in the world in a very short time. The percentage of unvaccinated is 9 percent. Of all the children in the school, 100 percent of them were vaccinated.

Honourable Speaker, the Ministry will continue to provide MenC vaccination to all children reaching the age of one and those who are eligible but have not been vaccinated. We are using our contacts in the field, all our facilities, to be able to try and ascertain those children of ours and ensure that they have this protective vaccination done.

Honourable Speaker, much appreciation goes to the Fiji Military Forces for allocating drivers to the Ministry for the campaign. Work was made easier by the Ministry's team due to the efficiency of



how they provided logistical support for us to be able to take our teams into some of the most remote areas in the highlands and to the islands to be able to reach our children and protect them from MenC.

The Ministry would like to acknowledge those that have contributed to this success:

1. The Government and Cabinet for being courageous to conduct this vaccination campaign and the funds to go with it;
2. I take this opportunity to also sincerely acknowledge the tremendous support of all our multi-sectoral stakeholders ranging from the donor agency namely World Health Organisation, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia, UNFPA, UNICEF and the International Coordinating Group (ICG) that was providing collaborative support in a timely and transparent manner;
3. Government Ministries and Departments, the staff in my Ministry who were involved in the campaign; and
4. To the parents and guardians for giving their consent for the vaccination of our children.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- I thank the Honourable Minister. Honourable Member, you have the floor for two supplementary questions.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Thank you Honourable Speaker and I thank the Honourable Minister for Health for his enlightenment on MenC vaccination. For the 28,000 who have not been vaccinated, can he enlighten us on how they are going to be reached and if there should be another outbreak, do we have the vaccines readily available to be able to address the outbreak? Thank you Honourable Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- I thank the Honourable Member. Honourable Minister, you have the floor.

HON. DR. I. WAQAINABETE.- Thank you Honourable Speaker. I thank the Honourable Member for that question. I had highlighted it a little bit in my discussion. All those who were in school last year have been vaccinated, so those who have not been vaccinated were those who did not come to school. So, those between one year to five years, and also those who had finished school, that is the population that we are beginning to search for and are trying to encourage them to come forth for vaccination.

The second part of the question was, sorry, I could not get it correctly, Honourable Speaker.

(Inaudible interjection)

HON. DR. I. WAQAINABETE.- Honourable Speaker, this vaccination is a one-off; it is a long term protection. They will not get MenC, that was the reason this FijiFirst Government made that investment, to protect our children.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. DR. I. WAQAINABETE.- We have the vaccine, Honourable Speaker. Thank you very much.

HON. SPEAKER.- Thank you, Honourable Minister. Supplementary questions?

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- A supplementary question, Honourable Speaker. I congratulate the Government for the 91 percent effort but the Government should also remember the alarm came from this side of the House. We were the ones who told you to do it ...

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- ... and we continued to put that pressure on you to make sure it happened. So it would be nice, Honourable Speaker when he reads his credit, to include the people on this side because we were worried that MenC could be like SARS to destroy ....

HON. J. USAMATE.- Point of order, Honourable Speaker!

HON. R.S. AKBAR.- Not true!

HON. SPEAKER.- Honourable Member, if you want to ask a supplementary question, it is very clear. You can ask a supplementary question to the Honourable Minister, but do not review it with a statement.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.-Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER.- Ask your question.

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- Honourable Speaker, I just wanted to put a bit of background to the question.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. V.R. GAVOKA.- I am allowed one minute, but can I digress, Honourable Speaker? It costs about \$75 to have dialysis in Labasa, would cost \$200 in Suva, even those who go from Suva to Labasa pay \$200 for dialysis. Can the Honourable Minister explain that, please? What is happening here? Thank you.

(Chorus of interjections)

HON. SPEAKER.- Order! That is a different question altogether, Honourable Member. I think we have covered this question sufficiently. You can bring that question up on another occasion because it is a new question completely.

Honourable Members, I now call on the Honourable Viliame Gavoka to ask his written question, Question No. 9/2019. You have the floor.

#### Written Questions

Lease Premium - FNPF Hotel Properties at Denarau  
(Question No. 09/2019)

HON. V.R. GAVOKA asked the Government, upon notice:

The leases for the FNPF hotel properties at Denarau have been recently renewed and lease premiums paid to landowners at some \$8 million, can the Honourable Prime Minister and Minister for iTaukei Affairs and Sugar Industry indicate whether the percentage of gross receipts paid to the landowners is 3.5 percent or 5.5 percent?

HON. J.V. BAINIMARAMA (Prime Minister and Minister for iTaukei Affairs and Sugar Industry).- Honourable Speaker, I will table my response at a later sitting date as permitted under Standing Orders. *Vinaka*.

HON. SPEAKER.- I thank the Honourable Prime Minister. That will be under Standing Order 45(3). We will now move on to the second written question and I now give the floor to the Honourable Mikaele Leawere.

Seasonal Workers Programme -People Who Benefitted  
(Question No. 10/2019)

HON. M.R. LEAWERE.- Thank you, Honourable Speaker. I will be the last Member to offer our hearty congratulations on your election as Speaker of this august House.

My question is; can the Honourable Minister for Employment, Productivity and Industrial Relations enlighten Parliament on the status of the Seasonal Workers Programme and how many have benefitted from it?

HON. P.K. BALA (Minister for Employment, Productivity and Industrial Relations, Youth and Sports).- Honourable Speaker, I will table my response at a later date as permitted under Standing Order 45(3). Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER.- I thank the Honourable Minister.

Honourable Members that brings us to the end of this Questions period for this afternoon and for today. Honourable Members, I have been advised that there are no Ministerial Statements and no Bills for Consideration today. The hour is late and I intend to call an adjournment if there are no objections to that. I thank all Honourable Members for your contribution to today's sitting.

The Parliament is now adjourned until tomorrow at 9.30 a.m.

The Parliament adjourned at 5.19 p.m.