



PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI

MINUTES

of Proceedings of Parliament at Suva on Monday, Twenty-fifth Day of May, 2020

1. The House met at 9.30 a.m. pursuant to adjournment.

2. Hon. Speaker took the Chair and read the Prayer.

3. MEMBERS PRESENT

All Honourable Members were present except for the Hon. Rosy Akbar.

4. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The Leader of the Government in Parliament the Hon. Inia Seruiratu, moved that the Minutes of the sitting of Parliament held on Friday, 27 March 2020 as previously circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed.

Motion seconded.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

5. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CHAIR

Hon. Speaker welcomed all Honourable Members to the sitting and all those watching the live broadcast and the live streaming of the proceedings.

Hon. Speaker reminded Honourable Members of his ruling on 26 March 2020 with respect to seating arrangements, voting by acclamation, opening of the bar and speaking protocols for the 19 Members seated in the gallery and that all measures will remain in place for the duration of the sitting week.

Hon. Speaker also advised Honourable Members that during the sitting week, most documentation would be shared electronically. He further advised that hard copies

would be provided only for the Order Papers and Minutes of Proceedings and all other documents including the uncorrected version of the *Hansard* reports and Standing Committee reports would be provided electronically to Honourable Members.

6. MAIDEN SPEECH BY HON. FAIYAZ KOYA

The Hon. Speaker informed Honourable Members that the Minister for Commerce, Trade, Tourism and Transport the Hon. Faiyaz Koya would deliver his maiden speech.

7. PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND CERTAIN DOCUMENTS

The following reports were tabled in Parliament and referred by the Hon. Speaker to the relevant Standing Committees for their deliberation –

(a) Standing Committee on Public Accounts

- (i) Mid-year Fiscal Statement – 1st August 2019 to 31st January 2020; and
- (ii) Report of the Auditor-General of the Republic of Fiji – Audit Report on Provincial Councils – Volume 3.

(b) Standing Committee on Economic Affairs

- (i) Tourism Fiji Annual Reports for 2013 and 2014; and
- (ii) Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism – 2017-2018 Annual Report.

8. PRESENTATION OF REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

(a) Standing Committee on Social Affairs

The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs the Hon. Viam Pillay tabled the Committee's Report on the annual review of the Ministry of iTaukei Affairs for the 2016-2017 financial year.

The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs moved a motion without notice pursuant to Standing Order 121(5) that a debate on the content of the report is initiated at a future sitting. The motion was seconded and agreed to unanimously.

(b) Standing Committee on Justice, Law and Human Rights

The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Justice, Law and Human Rights the Hon. Alvick Maharaj tabled the Committee's Report on the Office of the Prime Minister 2016 Annual Report (January-July).

The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Justice, Law and Human Rights moved a motion without notice pursuant to Standing Order 121(5) that a debate on

the content of the report is initiated at a future sitting. The motion was seconded and agreed to unanimously.

(c) Standing Committee on Economic Affairs

The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs the Hon. Vijay Nath tabled the Committee's Report on the Reserve Bank of Fiji Insurance 2018 Annual Report.

The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs moved a motion without notice pursuant to Standing Order 121(5) that a debate on the content of the report is initiated at a future sitting. The motion was seconded and agreed to unanimously.

(d) Standing Committee on Public Accounts

The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts the Hon. Alvick Maharaj tabled the Committee's Report on the Whole of Government Audit Reports for the 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013 financial year.

The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts moved a motion without notice pursuant to Standing Order 121(5) that a debate on the content of the report is initiated at a future sitting. The motion was seconded and agreed to unanimously.

9. MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

The Hon. Speaker informed Honourable Members that the Ministerial Statement was withdrawn and that it would be delivered on a later day.

10. CONSIDERATION OF BILLS

The Hon. Speaker informed Honourable Members that there were no Bills for consideration.

11. MOTION BY THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL AFFAIRS

The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs the Hon. Viam Pillay moved that Parliament debates the 'Report on Annual Review of the iTaukei Trust Fund Board, 2017' which was tabled on 1 April 2019.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

12. MOTION BY THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs the Hon. Vijay Nath moved that Parliament debates the 'Reserve Bank of Fiji Insurance 2017 Annual Report' which was tabled on 4 April 2019.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

13. MOTION IN THE NAME OF THE HON. NIKO NAWAIKULA

The Hon. Niko Nawaikula moved that Parliament resolves to establish a Special Committee under Standing Order 129 to review the cost of living. The members of the Special Committee shall comprise the following –

- (a) Hon. Viam Pillay (Chairperson);
- (b) Hon. Alvick Maharaj;
- (c) Hon. Selai Adimaitoga;
- (d) Hon. Viliame Gavoka; and
- (e) Hon. Niko Nawaikula.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Hon. Speaker called for the vote by acclamation.

Motion defeated.

14. MOTION IN THE NAME OF THE HON. SITIVENI RABUKA

The Leader of the Opposition the Hon. Sitiveni Rabuka moved that Parliament expresses its profound gratitude to the late former Prime Minister for his selfless service to the people of Fiji. The late Mr Qarase became the Interim Prime Minister after the events of 2000 and was elected as Prime Minister at the 2001 General Election.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

15. SUSPENSION MOTION BY THE LEADER OF THE GOVERNMENT IN PARLIAMENT

The Leader of the Government in Parliament the Hon. Inia Seruiratu moved under Standing Order 6 that so much of Standing Order 23(1) be suspended to allow the House to sit beyond 4.30 p.m. to complete the remaining items listed on the Order Paper.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

16. MOTION IN THE NAME OF THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL PURSUANT TO SECTION 145(1) OF THE CONSTITUTION AND STANDING ORDER 131

The Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Civil Service and Communications moved a motion for the purposes of section 145(1) of the Constitution and pursuant to Standing Order 131, that Parliament approve –

- (a) that the Government guarantee the Fiji Airways borrowings consisting of a mix of domestic borrowings up to FJ\$191.1 million and offshore borrowings up to US\$117.1 million with a total limit of approximately FJ\$455 million valid for a period of three (3) years, effective from 30 May 2020; and
- (b) that Fiji Airways be exempted from paying a guarantee fee.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

17. QUESTIONS

53/2020 Hon. Lenora Qereqeretabua to ask the Minister for Education, Heritage and Arts – Can the Minister inform Parliament why has Government for almost 5 years failed to fulfil its 2015 budget policy announced in November 2014 of providing tablets or laptops as per

its objective of 'one tablet or laptop per child' to all primary and secondary school students, which is so critical now to online learning especially with disruption to school caused by COVID-19.

- 54/2020 Hon. Sanjay Kirpal to ask the Minister for Defence, National Security and Policing, Rural and Maritime Development and Disaster Management – Given the restrictions put in place by the Government during the COVID-19 pandemic, can the Minister inform Parliament what role the Fiji Police Force played in managing and containing the spread of COVID-19.
- 55/2020 Hon. Sitiveni Rabuka to ask the Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Civil Service and Communications – Can the Minister update Parliament on the repayment of the Global Bond of US\$200m which is due in October 2020.
- 56/2020 Hon. Dr Salik Govind to ask the Minister for Local Government, Housing and Community Development – Can the Minister elaborate on the COVID-19 relief provided by the Housing Authority of Fiji, the Public Rental Board and the Housing Assistance Relief Trust (HART).
- 57/2020 Hon. Adi Litia Qionibaravi to ask the Local Government, Housing and Community Development – Can the Minister inform Parliament what assistance is available to homeowners and victims of the recent category four tropical cyclone Harold, who are not members of FNPF.
- 58/2020 Hon. Alipate Nagata to ask the Minister for Commerce, Trade, Tourism and Transport – Can the Minister inform Parliament on what investments are being made to improve inter-island maritime shipping.
- 59/2020 Hon. Ratu Tevita Navurelevu to ask the Minister for Defence, National Security and Policing, Rural and Maritime Development and Disaster Management – Can the Minister update Parliament on the status of implementation of the Job Evaluation Exercise (JEE) approved by Cabinet in 2014 which agreed on the payment of increment increases to Fiji Police Force personnel.
- 60/2020 Hon. Selai Adimaitoga to ask the Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Civil Service and Communications – Given that the COVID-19 crisis is likely to continue, is Government going to provide any further assistance to those who have lost their jobs.

Written Questions

- 61/2020 Hon. Sitiveni Rabuka to ask the Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Civil Service and Communications – Can the Minister provide an update on the status of implementation of Government Capital projects (in the first 6 months) of the 2019-2020 fiscal year.

- 62/2020 Hon. Mikaele Leawere to ask the Minister for Agriculture, Waterways and Environment – Can the Minister inform Parliament on the current status of drainage work being carried out by the Ministry in the following areas –
- (a) Lomary schools;
 - (b) Sigasiganilaca;
 - (c) Galoa Village;
 - (d) Nakoba Settlement;
 - (e) Draunikula Village; and
 - (f) Naboutini Village.
- 63/2020 Hon. Ro Teimumu Kepa to ask the Minister for Education, Heritage and Arts – Can the Minister provide to Parliament the list of all registered schools and the teacher/pupil ratio in the following categories –
- (i) early childhood;
 - (ii) primary;
 - (iii) secondary;
 - (iv) technical colleges; and
 - (v) tertiary.
- 64/2020 Hon. Jese Saukuru to ask the Minister for Forestry – Can the Minister inform Parliament how many land owning units were assisted and the type of assistance offered from the 70% of the Lease Security Bonus retained by Fiji Pine.

Responses to the Oral and Supplementary Questions were given by the respective Ministers.

Responses to the Written Questions would be tabled at a later sitting date by the respective Ministers, as permitted under Standing Order 45(3).

The Hon. Speaker also informed Honourable Members of the following –

- (a) Oral Question 53/2020 would be carried forward until such time the Minister would be available;
- (b) Oral Question 55/2020 and Written Question 61/2020 would be stood over; and
- (c) Oral Question 57/2020 had lapsed.

18. ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Speaker thanked all Honourable Members and adjourned Parliament until Tuesday, 26 May 2020 at 9.30 a.m.

Parliament adjourned at 7.01 p.m.

Speaker of Parliament

Secretary-General to Parliament

25th May, 2020.