



PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI

MINUTES

of Proceedings of Parliament at Suva on Monday, Thirty-first Day of August, 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. Ratu Tevita Navurelevu.

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, 31 July 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 also informed all Honourable Members of the hand-over ceremony by the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Fiji Group to the Fiji Red Cross Society during the break.

Hon. Speaker also advised all Honourable Members and viewers that they can now follow the Parliament livestreaming on YouTube. Members and viewers can

access this channel by visiting the YouTube page and typing in, Parliament of the Republic of Fiji.

6. 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 Economic Affairs

- (i) Pacific Fishing Company PTE LTD – Annual Report 2018.

(b) Standing Committee on Natural Resources

- (i) Ministry of Lands and Mineral Resources – Annual Report for the Year Ending 31 December 2011;
- (ii) Ministry of Lands and Mineral Resources – Annual Report for the Year Ending 31 December 2012;
- (iii) Ministry of Lands and Mineral Resources – Annual Report for the Year Ending 31 December 2013;
- (iv) Ministry of Lands and Mineral Resources – Annual Report for August 2016 – July 2017; and
- (v) Ministry of Lands and Mineral Resources – Annual Report for August 2017 – July 2018.

7. PRESENTATION OF REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

(a) Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence

The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence the Hon. Alexander O'Connor tabled the Committee's Review Report on the following –

- (i) Madrid Agreement Concerning the International Registration of Marks 1981 (Madrid Agreement);
- (ii) Protocol Relating to the Madrid Agreement (Madrid Protocol), (together known as the Madrid System); and
- (iii) Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property.

The Hon. Speaker informed that pursuant to Standing Order 121(1)(b) and Standing Order 130(4), the Standing Committee had reported back.

(b) Standing Committee on Public Accounts

The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts the Hon. Alvick Maharaj tabled the Committee's review report on the 2019 Annual Report of the Office of the Auditor-General.

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.

(c) Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence

The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence the Hon. Alexander O'Connor tabled the Committee's Review Report on the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict.

The Hon. Speaker informed that pursuant to Standing Order 121(1)(b) and Standing Order 130(4), the Standing Committee had reported back.

(d) 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 2016-2017 Annual Report.

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.

8. MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

(i) Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Civil Service and Communications the Hon. Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum delivered a Ministerial Statement. The Hon. Ro Filipe Tuisawau and that Hon. Lenora Qereqeretabua responded respectively.

(ii) Minister for Infrastructure, Meteorological Services, Lands and Mineral Resources the Hon. Jone Usamate delivered a Ministerial Statement. The Hon. Mitieli Bulanauca and the Hon. Pio Tikoduadua responded respectively.

9. MOTION BY THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL AND MINISTER FOR ECONOMY, CIVIL SERVICE AND COMMUNICATIONS

The Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Civil Service and Communications moved a motion pursuant to Standing Order 51 –

- (A) That the Public Health (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill 2020 be considered by Parliament without delay;
- (B) That the Bill must pass through one stage at a single sitting of Parliament;
- (C) That the Bill must not be referred to a Standing Committee or other Committee of Parliament; and
- (D) That the Bill must be debated and voted upon by Parliament on Thursday (3 September 2020), but that 1 hour be given to debate the Bill, with the right of reply given to him as the Member moving the motion.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

10. MOTION BY THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL AND MINISTER FOR ECONOMY, CIVIL SERVICE AND COMMUNICATIONS

The Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Civil Service and Communications moved a motion pursuant to Standing Order 51 –

- (A) That the Pharmacy Profession (Amendment) Bill 2020 be considered by Parliament without delay;
- (B) That the Bill must pass through one stage at a single sitting of Parliament;
- (C) That the Bill must not be referred to a Standing Committee or other Committee of Parliament; and
- (D) That the Bill must be debated and voted upon by Parliament on Thursday (3 September 2020), but that 1 hour be given to debate the Bill, with the right of reply given to him as the Member moving the motion.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

11. MOTION BY THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL AND MINISTER FOR ECONOMY, CIVIL SERVICE AND COMMUNICATIONS

The Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Civil Service and Communications moved a motion pursuant to Standing Order 51 –

- (A) That the Television (Amendment) Bill 2020 be considered by Parliament without delay;
- (B) That the Bill must pass through one stage at a single sitting of Parliament;
- (C) That the Bill must not be referred to a Standing Committee or other Committee of Parliament; and
- (D) That the Bill must be debated and voted upon by Parliament on Thursday (3 September 2020), but that 1 hour be given to debate the Bill, with the right of reply given to him as the Member moving the motion.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Hon. Speaker called for the vote by acclamation.

Motion agreed to.

12. MOTION BY THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL AND MINISTER FOR ECONOMY, CIVIL SERVICE AND COMMUNICATIONS

The Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Civil Service and Communications moved a motion pursuant to Standing Order 51 –

- (A) That the Companies (Amendment) Bill 2020 be considered by Parliament without delay;
- (B) That the Bill must pass through one stage at a single sitting of Parliament;
- (C) That the Bill must not be referred to a Standing Committee or other Committee of Parliament; and
- (D) That the Bill must be debated and voted upon by Parliament on Thursday (3 September 2020), but that 1 hour be given to debate the Bill, with the right of reply given to him as the Member moving the motion.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

13. MOTION BY THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL AND MINISTER FOR ECONOMY, CIVIL SERVICE AND COMMUNICATIONS

The Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Civil Service and Communications moved a motion pursuant to Standing Order 51 –

- (A) That the Immigration (Amendment) Bill 2020 be considered by Parliament without delay;
- (B) That the Bill must pass through one stage at a single sitting of Parliament;
- (C) That the Bill must not be referred to a Standing Committee or other Committee of Parliament; and
- (D) That the Bill must be debated and voted upon by Parliament on Thursday (3 September 2020), but that 1 hour be given to debate the Bill, with the right of reply given to him as the Member moving the motion.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

14. MOTION BY THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL AND MINISTER FOR ECONOMY, CIVIL SERVICE AND COMMUNICATIONS

The Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Civil Service and Communications moved a motion pursuant to Standing Order 51 –

- (A) That the Citizenship of Fiji (Amendment) Bill 2020 be considered by Parliament without delay;
- (B) That the Bill must pass through one stage at a single sitting of Parliament;
- (C) That the Bill must not be referred to a Standing Committee or other Committee of Parliament; and
- (D) That the Bill must be debated and voted upon by Parliament on Thursday (3 September 2020), but that 1 hour be given to debate the Bill, with the right of reply given to him as the Member moving the motion.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

15. MOTION BY THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL AND MINISTER FOR ECONOMY, CIVIL SERVICE AND COMMUNICATIONS

The Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Civil Service and Communications moved a motion pursuant to Standing Order 51 –

- (A) That the Passports (Amendment) Bill 2020 be considered by Parliament without delay;
- (B) That the Bill must pass through one stage at a single sitting of Parliament;
- (C) That the Bill must not be referred to a Standing Committee or other Committee of Parliament; and
- (D) That the Bill must be debated and voted upon by Parliament on Thursday (3 September 2020), but that 1 hour be given to debate the Bill, with the right of reply given to him as the Member moving the motion.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Hon. Speaker called for the vote by acclamation.

Motion agreed to.

16. 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 Housing Authority 2015 which was tabled on 1 April 2019.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

17. MOTION BY THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENCE

The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence the Hon. Alexander O'Connor moved that Parliament debates the Review Report of the Ministry of Defence, National Security and Immigration Bi-Annual Report January–July 2016 which was tabled on 4 April 2019.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

18. 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.

19. MOTION IN THE NAME OF THE HON. ADI LITIA QIONIBARAVI

The Hon. Adi Litia Qionibaravi moved that Parliament resolves to establish a special committee under Standing Order 129 to inquire into the impacts of drug-related abuse and make recommendations on how the use of drugs can be reduced. The members of the Special Committee shall comprise the following –

- (a) Hon. Alexander O'Connor (Chairperson);
- (b) Hon. Dr Salik Govind (Deputy Chairperson);
- (c) Hon. Veena Bhatnagar;
- (d) Hon. Ratu Tevita Navurelevu; and
- (e) Hon. Adi Litia Qionibaravi.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Hon. Speaker called for the vote by acclamation.

Motion defeated.

20. QUESTIONS

- 91/2020 Hon. Pio Tikoduadua asked the Prime Minister and Minister for iTaukei Affairs, Sugar Industry and Foreign Affairs – Can the Prime Minister explain to Parliament the high average of Total Cane to Total Sugar (TCTS) of 11.8 recorded by the Fiji Sugar Corporation until 10 August 2020, in respect of cane crushing and sugar production.
- 92/2020 Hon. Viam Pillay asked the Minister for Commerce, Trade, Tourism and Transport – Can the Minister inform Parliament as to what is Government doing to address shipping accidents happening in our waters, especially in Nabouwalu.
- 93/2020 Hon. Sitiveni Rabuka asked 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.
- 94/2020 Hon. Dr Salik Govind asked the Minister for Health and Medical Services – Can the Minister update Parliament on the drug shortage for some chronic diseases that was highlighted in the media recently.

- 95/2020 Hon. Salote Radrodro asked the Minister for Health and Medical Services – Can the Minister update Parliament on the preparedness of health facilities and the hard working health personnel outside Viti Levu and Vanua Levu for any COVID-19 cases from pleasure crafts including yachts and super yachts that stopover in Lau and other maritime islands.
- 96/2020 Hon. Jale Sigarara asked the Minister for Education, Heritage and Arts – Can the Minister explain what are the priority areas for Toppers scholarships and the categories of Tertiary Education Loans available for the academic calendar 2021.
- 97/2020 Hon. Aseri Radrodro asked the Minister for Commerce, Trade, Tourism and Transport – Since COVID-19 was declared a pandemic, can the Minister provide an update to Parliament on the status of the Government Shipping Franchise Scheme, in particular the seven non-economical routes namely, Northern Vanua Levu, Upper Southern Lau, Lower Southern Yasawa, Northern Lau, Lomaiviti, Rotuma and Yasayasa Moala.
- 98/2020 Hon. Veena Bhatnagar asked the Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Civil Service and Communications – Can the Minister provide an update on the total payments made so far for unemployment assistance together with FNPF.

Written Questions

- 99/2020 Hon. Lenora Qereqeretabua to ask the Minister for Health and Medical Services – Can the Minister provide the following to Parliament –
- (a) the total number of doctors in Fiji’s public health and medical services as at 31 August 2020;
 - (b) the total number of doctors in each public health and medical facility respectively as at 31 August 2020;
 - (c) the ratio to population per doctor in each public health and medical facility as at 31 August 2020;
 - (d) the ratio to population per doctor in each respective public health and medical facility for the designated area/district/division the facility serves as at 31 August 2020; and
 - (e) the number of specialists in each divisional public health or medical service hospital as at 31 August 2020.
- 100/2020 Hon. Dr Ratu Atonio Lalabalavu to ask the Minister for Health and Medical Services – Can the Minister provide details as to how the \$40m allocated under Head 50 in the COVID-19 Response Budget was spent in particular –

- (a) list of all the goods procured from this allocation, the vendor and cost of each item; and
 - (b) list of all the services procured from this allocation, the vendor and cost of each item.
- 101/2020 Hon. Lynda Tabuya to ask the Minister for Local Government, Housing and Community Development – Can the Minister update Parliament on the following –
- (a) criteria for selection of grantees for the Housing Grant Scheme for first time homeowners in the 2019-2020 financial year; and
 - (b) the breakdown of the 543 applicants who benefitted in terms of amounts given and location of home.
- 102/2020 Hon. Mikaele Leawere to ask the Minister for Forestry – Can the Minister inform the Parliament on the following regarding land lease payments for forest reserves –
- (a) what is the total number of Forest Reserves;
 - (b) list of Reserves by total land area and the Provinces where these Reserves are located;
 - (c) formula for calculation of lease payment derived; and
 - (d) whether the allocated amount of \$64,000.00 in the 2019-2020 budget was fully utilised.
- 103/2020 Hon. Ro Teimumu Kepa to ask the Minister for Education, Heritage and Arts – Can the Minister provide the following to Parliament –
- (a) itemise in detail how the \$35.5m budget allocation for 2019-2020 was spent; and
 - (b) an updated record of the 2,525 active students on the National Toppers Scheme as stated in her response to the 2020-2021 Budget Address.

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).

21. ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Speaker thanked all Honourable Members and adjourned Parliament until Tuesday, 1 September 2020 at 9.30 a.m.

Parliament adjourned at 8.14 p.m.

Speaker of Parliament

Secretary-General to Parliament

31st August, 2020.