



# PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI

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## MINUTES

of Proceedings of Parliament at Suva on Monday, Eighth Day of February, 2021

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. Alvick Maharaj and Hon. Inosi Kuridrani.

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, 11 December 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 informed all Honourable Members that the 'No Smoking' and the designated 'Smoking Area' signs were being put up across the Parliament precincts including inside the offices, and reminded all to take heed and adhere to these.

The Hon. Speaker then delivered his rulings on the following –

- (a) an urgent oral question raised by the Hon. Prof. Biman Prasad; and
- (b) an adjournment motion by the Leader of the Opposition the Hon. Ratu Naiqama Lalabalavu.

The Opposition Members walked out of Parliament immediately after the rulings were read out.

## 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 Social Affairs
  - (i) 2019 Sugar Research Institute of Fiji Annual Report;
  - (ii) 2019 Sugar Cane Growers Fund Annual Report; and
  - (iii) 2019 Sugar Cane Growers Council Annual Report.
- (b) Standing Committee on Public Accounts
  - (i) 2020 Office of the Auditor-General Annual Report.

## 7. PRESENTATION OF REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

- (a) Standing Committee on Public Accounts

The Deputy Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts the Hon. Joseph Nand tabled the Committee's review report on the 2017 Audit Report on the Social Services Sector.

The Deputy 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.

## 8. MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

- (a) Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Civil Service and Communications the Hon. Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum delivered a Ministerial Statement. There were no responses from the Opposition as they had not returned to Parliament.
- (b) Minister for Health and Medical Services the Hon. Dr Ifereimi Waqainabete delivered a Ministerial Statement. The Hon. Dr Ratu Atonio Lalabalavu subsequently responded. There was no response from the NFP as they had not returned to Parliament.

- (c) Minister for Agriculture, Waterways and Environment, the Hon. Dr Mahendra Reddy delivered a Ministerial Statement. The Hon. Jese Saukuru subsequently responded. There was no response from the NFP as they had not returned to Parliament.

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 the Hon. Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum moved a motion pursuant to Standing Order 51 –

- (A) That the High Court (Amendment) Bill 2021 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 (11 February 2021), 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 the Hon. Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum moved a motion pursuant to Standing Order 51 –

- (A) That the Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Bill 2021 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 (11 February 2021), 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 Heritage Bill 2021 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 be immediately referred to the Standing Committee on Justice, Law and Human Rights;
- (D) That the Standing Committee must report on the Bill at the May sitting of Parliament; and
- (E) That upon presentation of the report on the Bill by the Standing Committee, the Bill must be debated and voted upon by Parliament at the May sitting of Parliament, 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.

12. 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 Public Rental Board 2016 which was tabled on 1 April 2019.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

13. MOTION BY THE DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

The Deputy Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts the Hon. Joseph Nand moved that Parliament debates the Review of the Office of the Auditor-General Annual Report 2015 which was tabled on 13 May 2019.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

14. MOTION IN THE NAME OF THE HON. LENORA QEREQERETABUA

The Hon. Speaker ruled that the motion had lapsed since the Member was not present.

15. QUESTIONS

1/2021 Hon. Lenora Qereqeretabua to ask the Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Civil Service and Communications – Can the Minister update Parliament on the contingency measures taken by Fiji Airways as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic on the air travel industry.

2/2021 Hon. Alexander O'Connor asked the Minister for Commerce, Trade, Tourism and Transport – Can the Minister explain what assistance is available for MSMEs in Fiji, especially in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and Tropical Cyclone Yasa and Tropical Cyclone Ana.

3/2021 Hon. Ratu Naiqama Lalabalavu to ask the Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Civil Service and Communications – Can the Minister provide an update to Parliament on the arrangement of the \$1 billion loan from the World Bank and the International Finance Corporation under the Country Partnership Agreement 2020-2024.

4/2021 Hon. Dr Salik Govind to ask the Minister for Agriculture, Waterways and Environment – Can the Minister explain what types of agricultural assistance has the Ministry provided post Tropical Cyclone Yasa and Tropical Cyclone Ana.

5/2021 Hon. Mikaele Leawere asked the Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Civil Service and Communications – Can the Minister update Parliament on the current status of the Tertiary Education Loan Scheme (TELS) and National Toppers Scheme (NTS).

- 6/2021 Hon. Rohit Sharma asked the Minister for Education, Heritage and Arts – Can the Minister inform Parliament on the number of schools that have been damaged from Tropical Cyclone Yasa and Tropical Cyclone Ana and the contingency plans that have been put in as a result of those damages.
- 7/2021 Hon. Inosi Kuridrani to ask the Minister for Agriculture, Waterways and Environment – Can the Minister update Parliament on the work by the Ministry in identifying an alternative crop to marijuana that can be taken up by farmers.
- 8/2021 Hon. Veena Bhatnagar asked the Minister for Health and Medical Services – Given the threat of increased diseases following tropical cyclones, can the Minister advise Parliament what steps has Government taken to combat the outbreak of diseases such as leptospirosis, typhoid, dengue and diarrhoea after Tropical Cyclone Yasa and Tropical Cyclone Ana.

### **Written Question**

- 9/2021 Hon. Ratu Suliano Matanitobua asked the Minister for Defence, National Security and Policing, Rural and Maritime Development and Disaster Management – Can the Minister inform Parliament on –
- (a) the total number of Police Officers posted/based at each Police Station in the Central Division; and
  - (b) the number of vehicles allocated to each Police Station in the Central Division.

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

The Hon. Speaker ruled that Oral Question 1/2021 had lapsed pursuant to Standing Order 45(6). The Hon. Speaker further informed Honourable Members that Question 4/2021 was withdrawn as the Hon. Minister had addressed this in his Ministerial Statement.

The Hon. Speaker allowed the Hon. Lynda Tabuya to ask Question 3/2021 and Hon. Jese Saukuru to ask question 7/2021.

Response to the Written Question would be tabled at a later sitting date by the respective Minister as permitted under Standing Order 45(3).

## **16. ADJOURNMENT**

Hon. Speaker thanked all Honourable Members for their contributions and adjourned Parliament until Tuesday, 9 February 2021 at 9.30 a.m.

Parliament adjourned at 4.15 p.m.

**Speaker of Parliament**

**Secretary-General to Parliament**

8<sup>th</sup> February, 2021.