



FORTY-NINTH SESSION

Hansard Report

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Second Meeting

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MADAM SPEAKER took the Chair at 1.00 p.m.

OPENING PRAYER

MADAM SPEAKER (N. RATTLE): Honourable Members please be seated.

We give thanks to the Reverend Oirua Rasmussen for again joining us for our Parliament Sessions and who has expressed a wonderful sermon for us this afternoon that will lead us in our deliberations for the day.

Honourable Members, I extend to each and every one of you a welcome, a Kia Orana, a *turou* to our dignified House this afternoon.

And to our guests in the Public Gallery this afternoon – welcome, as well as an extension to all the people in the Cook Islands listening in to our radio this afternoon.

There has been a new change in our seating in Parliament this afternoon as you will realise, that the Honourable Member Manuela Kitai has moved from my right here and is now sitting on the left side with the rest of his Members of Parliament.

MADAM SDPEAKER’S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There’s a very important notice I’d like to put out today and that is your forms that were put out in your induction packet which asks you to complete for your bio data for each Member. We would like you to complete those and hand them in today.

During this week starting as of today, you will have your photos taken in the Prime Minister’s room that’s been prepared by Isaac. When he calls you please go and have your photo taken which will accompany your bio data as recording for Parliament and also will go on our website.

You will find in your pigeonholes information on the Cook Foundation. This is a funding that is provided by Mr George Cook from UK of \$2,000 per Member to apply for humanitarian purposes proposals and you will see I have prepared a little explanatory note for you. Honourable Members, the forms will be placed in your pigeonholes and it needs to be filled in. The gentleman, Mr Cook, has allocated \$50,000 for our use during the year and each Member will be entitled to \$2,000.

Please feel free to come in and fill in the forms so you are ready to submit your applications.

Thank you. And the last thing is, when you are talking today please remember the Interpreters translating our speeches. If you want your speeches to be accurately captured by the Hansard, please speak in English and our Interpreters will translate it in Maori. Our Hansard is documented in the English language only.

Thank you.

Now this is our Question Time for half an hour.

QUESTION TIME

I see the Honourable Vaitoti Tupa. You have the Floor.

MR V. TUPA: Greetings to you Madam Speaker. Greetings to all of us this afternoon.

I would like to ask this question to the Minister of the RAC or if there's a new Minister to this portfolio, then to the new Minister. During my maiden speech last Friday, I raised the issue about burial at sea because last year we wrote a letter to the Minister for RAC. This letter was from our mother church but it was submitted through the Religious Advisory Council to the Minister responsible for the Religious Advisory Council. This is not an easy question to address because it's quite challenging because these burials have taken place within our ocean.

The question is whether the Cabinet have received this letter which came through the umbrella organisation – the Religious Advisory Council. This letter was submitted because our mother church does not agree with this practice hence the submission of this letter to Cabinet.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you. And I see the Honourable Prime Minister. You have the Floor.

HON. H. PUNA: Thank you Madam Speaker and greetings to you and all your staff members.

Thank you Honourable Member for Matavera for raising this hard question. He has answered his own question by saying that it is a hard question.

This issue was raised by our people during the last couple of years. There we have received the submission from our mother church of our nation. We need to respect this because it is their views but I do believe that for our people listening in to the broadcast, it will be good if all our people will participate in the dialogue on this matter. Not to leave it to our hearts to tell us and instruct us on what we have to do. Because if we observe our burial practices in this age, there are many ways of conducting the funeral burials. Some people prefer to be cremated and I know that some people are not very happy with that practice. There are also those who want to

be buried at sea. This is not a simple matter but I think it deals with their connection with the ocean.

But what we are accustomed to from the early stages of burial, we like to be buried in the ground. Perhaps that is why we believe that we should continue that practice.

But for myself, Madam Speaker and Honourable Members of this House, I believe that we should return the decision to be made by the people of our nation and not just in the hands of a handful such as the Cabinet, or in the hands of our MPs but we need to seek the complete views of our people because this is a very challenging matter.

Therefore that is my response to this challenging and difficult question posed by the Honourable Member from Matavera.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you.

I see the Honourable William Heather. You have the Floor.

HON. W. HEATHER: My question goes to the Minister of ICI. Minister you can see that during this time water is dry and the question here is what is your Ministry doing to try and alleviate this water situation.

In Ruaau at this time there is no water. Like I have always said in the past when it becomes dry Ruaau and Nikao will not have any water. So the question is what is the solution? We know that the project Te Mato Vai is going on but is there another avenue to address this problem?

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you and I see the Minister of ICI, you have the Floor.

HON. R. TAPAITAU: Kia Orana, Madam Speaker and staff of Parliament. Kia Orana also to the Ministers and Honourable Members today. The question coming from the Honourable William Heather regarding the shortage of water, I think we all know at the moment that we have a plan in place, we are implementing at the moment Te Mato Vai. I think that will cater for most of the Cook Islands as we go along in the future.

I have also heard that Nikao have the same problem. If the Member of Parliament for Ruaau, William Heather maybe he can come and see me so we can address also the issues for Ruaau because at this stage Nikao also got the same problem and I think also with Ruaau and that is to get this out of the way by putting in place a plan for more water storage.

It has also been put out on the radio information that we are short of water at the moment as it is dry and it is a problem that's going to go on until we have further rain. So in saying that if the Member of Parliament from Ruaau does come and see me then we will address his problem. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you and I see the Honourable Terepai Maoate you have the Floor.

MR T. MAOATE: Thank you, Madam Speaker and greetings to everyone this afternoon. A supplementary question on the question by Honourable William Heather. This question is regarding shortage of water in the Outer Islands. We know that a lot of money has been spent on the water shortage for Penrhyn.

I am not sure whether to direct this question to the Minister of ICI but I will ask it to a Minister who can answer this question regarding the Outer Islands. We in Aitutaki have no water. I have not seen anything in the Budget but can you tell me what we are going to do for the Outer Islands including Aitutaki? Before we do anything else, because this problem with water has been going on for a long time.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you and I give the Floor to the Deputy Prime Minister.

HON. M. BROWN: Thank you Madam Speaker, thank you very much for the question regarding water the problems that is associated to Rarotonga and the Outer Islands and although it is not the usual practice to talk about a Bill that's before the House currently I will still answer in that in this Budget there is allocation that's been set aside on Aitutaki for the water gallery development in Tautu.

This is in addition, Madam Speaker to the numerous community water tanks that's been set up throughout Aitutaki and this is in addition, Madam Speaker to the community programmes for water tanks for households right throughout the Outer Islands including the water tower that is completed for Mitiaro and of course on Rarotonga, Madam Speaker as is mentioned Te Mato Vai Project. Currently 65 million dollars is what it will take to put our country into a footing where water problems will be addressed.

In the island of Penrhyn of course a second shipment of water has been delivered to this island due to the low rain fall experienced on the island. So the challenge Madam Speaker is storage on Rarotonga in particular. I sympathize with the Member for Ruaau because also where I am in the back road in Tupapa there is very low level of water, nothing going through at all in fact over the weekend.

However, Madam Speaker a number of years ago the 2,300 water tanks distributed through the water tank subsidy around Rarotonga have proved to be very useful to households and despite low water flowing through the taps those who have taken advantage of the nearly 2,300 tanks are benefitting from having water storage at their households. And also not forgetting the water gallery project for Atiu that is also contained in this year's allocation.

So water is a number one priority for life, Madam Speaker which is why I encourage the Members of the Opposition to not oppose any initiatives we have for water but to support it wholeheartedly. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you and I see the Honourable Selina Napa you have the Floor.

MRS S. NAPA: Greeting to you all in this Honourable House. My question is going to the Prime Minister. Mr Prime Minister can you please tell us in this House as we can see the Member of Parliament for RAPPa is not in the House today as you have

said in the newspaper that he will be arriving over the weekend to be with us. However, he is not in the House can you please tell us his whereabouts.

You have probably heard there's all sorts of rumours floating around in regards to his absence and why isn't he here with us?

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you and I see the Honourable Prime Minister.

HON. H. PUNA: Thank you Madam Speaker and I am pleased that Honourable Member has at last asked the question here in this House instead of repeating it on TV and I take it Madam Speaker that all Honourable Members in this House are aware of the Standing Order that prohibits any personal implications on any Member. So to mention rumours in connection with the Honourable Member is totally improper.

However, what I know is what I can say. The Honourable Member left Rarotonga for medical check up in Auckland. He had asked the Deputy Prime Minister for leave as I was not in the country at the time. The understanding was that he would be away for about a week and then will be back in Rarotonga after his check up. However, in short, the Member has not returned. Despite efforts to make contact with him, that has been unsuccessful. It was on that basis Madam Speaker that I took the decision to terminate his appointment as a Minister. Purely on the basis that that sort of behaviour in my view did not measure up to the high standard expected of a Minister of the Crown.

That is all that I know Madam Speaker. The comments in the paper last week that he was coming back in the weekend were not mine. I would like to ask the Honourable Member to check with the writer of the Cook Islands News article as to where he got that information from.

Madam Speaker, anything outside of what I have told this Honourable House will be pure speculation and I would ask Honourable members to desist from that. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you. Do you have a supplementary question? Is there no one else who has a question because you have asked a question? I will give the Floor to the Honourable Vaitoti Tupa.

MR V. TUPA: Thank you Madam Speaker. I have a supplementary question to my first question. I thought of raising this question tomorrow but we still have time on our Question Time.

My question is one that has also been written by the RAC to the former Minister last year.

MADAM SPEAKER: Honourable Member, if you have already asked the question on the topic and your question was answered, you should not repeat the same question.

MR V. TUPA: Bear with me Madam Speaker; this is a totally different question.

MADAM SPEAKER: In regards to the RAC letter on burial at sea?

MR V. TUPA: No.

MADAM SPEAKER: Alright, you may continue.

MR V. TUPA: My second question, you can decide who will answer this question. My second question is regarding same sex marriage. This is an issue of concern to our mother church which lead them to submit another letter through the Religious Advisory Council on the matter of same sex marriage. I have studied our existing laws on marriages and in our laws it refers to man and woman.

The reason I'm asking this question is that we have witnessed last year and incident that occurred in the district of Puaikura. What happened was that two ladies arrived in our country with the intention of renewing their vows but the traditional leaders of Puaikura decided against the practise. The question then is, whether this matter has been discussed by Government based on the letter submitted through the CICC to the RAC and to you.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you. I recognise the Honourable Prime Minister on the Floor.

HON. H. PUNA: Thank you Honourable Member for this difficult question. You're used to raising this type of question. I will talk to you later because you are not allowed to make a long statement before asking your question.

Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister doesn't have an answer to this question and neither does Government has the answer. Again, our people have the answer to this question. Maybe the Honourable Member is not aware that we have a Crimes Bill that is currently before the House which Parliament Select Committee has taken to our people here and in the outer islands for consultation.

The appropriate answer Madam Speaker to this question is for us to wait for the views of our people on this matter through the consultation process conducted by Parliament Select Committee. I know we have our own views concerning this issue but it is only right for us to wait for our people's views so that we can decide on this important issue in our country. This is my short answer Madam Speaker. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Prime Minister. Our time is almost expired and I think we will not be able to complete a question if we start so hold that thought for tomorrow's Question Time.

Honourable Members, that completes our Question Time. We will now go to Presentations of the Bill.

BILLS FOR PRESENTATION

I now call on the Minister of Internal Affairs for the presentation of the Welfare Amendment Bill.

DEPUTY CLERK AT THE TABLE: Short Title reads: Welfare Amendment Act 2018.

BILL READ A FIRST TIME

MADAM SPEAKER: Can the Minister please name the date and the time for the Second reading of the Bill.

HON. V. MOKOROA: After the Law Practitioner's Bill or Appropriation Bill.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Welfare Amendment Bill is ordered for the Second reading immediately after the Law Practitioner's Bill or the Appropriation Bill.

We will now go to Presentation of Papers.

PAPERS FOR PRESENTATION

I call on the Deputy Prime Minister to present Papers 2 and 3.

HON. M. BROWN: Kia Orana Madam Speaker. It is my honour to present:

**Paper No. 2 – The Customs Tariff Amendment Order 2018,
Serial No. 2018/4 and also**

Paper No. 3 – Excise Order 2018, Serial No. 2018/05

I now lay these on the Table.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Deputy Prime Minister.

We will now go onto Orders of the Day which is on the Second reading of the Appropriation Bill.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

The Appropriation Bill now is open for debate on the principles and merits of the Bill. As the Prime Minister who is the Secunder of this Motion, I will give the first opportunity for you to debate on the principles and merits of the Bill.

HON. H. PUNA: Madam Speaker, I reserve my speaking right until later. I prefer if the Members of the Opposition speak to the merits and principles of the Bill first.

MADAM SPEAKER: Honourable Members, the Floor is now open for debate on the Appropriation Bill. I see the Honourable Member Vaitoti Tupa, you have the Floor.

MR V. TUPA: Thank you very much Madam Speaker. Before I talk on the merits and principles of the Bill, I seek your indulgence to allow me to make some comments to the people in my constituency Matavera.

In my maiden speech Madam Speaker, I spoke about all the bereavements in our village Matavera. During my speech, I overlook some names and did not mention them. I would now like to convey my sincere condolences to the family of Tai and Rupe Rima who lost their beloved son, Tereinga Rima. I would also like to convey my deepest sympathy to Tereinga's partner, our daughter Rosa during this time of bereavement. I also convey our heartfelt condolences to the Samuel family and to the family of the late Tony Moeauri because one of his son's partner, Nane Inamata comes from our village Matavera.

I would also like to mention the Minister of our Cook Islands Christian Church for the passing away of his mother and our condolences go out to the Saitu Marsters family and the Tapaitau family on the island of Penrhyn.

Now I would like to come back to the Bill before the House and talk about merits and principles of the speech delivered by the Minister of Finance.

Firstly, I would like to acknowledge those responsible for preparing this Appropriation Bill and also the report presented to us by the Minister for 2018/ 2019.

Firstly, I would like to talk about Agriculture. I notice in this Appropriation he has increased the appropriation for Agriculture by \$84,000. However, I believe Madam Speaker this is not enough. However, we cannot make objections because this budget has already been set. Maybe Madam Speaker we should consider increasing the Vote Item for Agriculture in the 2019/2020 budget to \$3million. Madam Speaker this is not an assumption figure. Although the law provides for the Island Councils on each island to administer the Agriculture sector in the outer islands, I strongly believe the administration of Agriculture in the outer islands should centralise. That is why I proposed for \$3 million for our Agriculture sector in the next financial year. Therefore, Madam Speaker, I will sit very closely with the Minister and the Associate Minister of Agriculture so they can revisit the Vote Item for Agriculture and put things right in the next budget for the financial year because I have done my proposals for Agriculture to help this area in our country.

In the report from the Minister of Finance, a proposal was made to establish a High Commission in Fiji. I believe Madam Speaker the time is not right for this to take place because all the projects put in place lacks sufficient funds to implement them. Therefore Madam Speaker, I do not support this proposal. Maybe we should give it another ten years before we consider establishing a High Commission in Fiji.

I will now talk about the Vote Item for the Ministry of Health. I am happy to see the increase made by the Minister in the budget for the Ministry of Health to the tune of \$1million. Madam Speaker, this to me is not sufficient Minister of Finance. I recognise some difficulties faced by the people in the Outer Islands especially the issue about the nurses sent to the Outer Islands to look after the Ministry there. We should attend to the plea of our people in the Outer Islands for them to have their own doctors.

Maybe, Madam Speaker, one issue that we should look at – this is a practice in Australia and this is to do with flying doctors. This is one option for us to consider

and maybe we should also consider whether it is cheaper to provide doctors for the Outer Islands or use the system of flying doctors.

I will now talk about the Vote Item for the Ministry of Infrastructure Cook Islands. I noticed Minister of Finance that you have also increased the allocation for the Ministry of Infrastructure. Maybe we should further provide financial support for ICI in the next budget for the financial year. Therefore, Minister, may I humbly request that the increase you have made in our budget for this financial year, please consider our road works. Maybe this is the time to re-look at the roads of the whole district of Takitumu so that we are in accordance with the traditional practice of Vaka Takitumu in likening it to a fish. We start from the head through the body until we reach the tail.

Therefore, I request the Honourable Minister of Finance and also the Minister for ICI for you to look at this issue properly. Let us not concentrate on one area only to do the road work but to work from Matavera right through to Titikaveka. I notice the improvement of the roads in Tupapa is coming up slowly.

I will now come back to the appropriation for Ministerial Support. I am a bit confused with the allocation for Ministerial support. I notice that the budget to support the office of the Opposition is insufficient. Maybe when there is a change in the future, this issue will not bother us anymore. Minister of Finance please review this allocation in the budget for the next financial year.

Honourable Minister, I am also looking at the Vote Item for our Outer Islands. I noticed that you have increased the Vote Item for some islands except for the island of Enuamanu. This allocation is not sufficient to me. In this Honourable House Madam Speaker, there are nine Members of Parliament who inherit from the island of Enuamanu. Therefore, Minister, may I request that we look at the allocation for Ngaputuro – Atiu, Mauke and Mitiaro and the projects in place for these islands. I am not concerned about the island of Aitutaki but I would like to ask that we look at Ngaputuro first before we move to Aitutaki.

Madam Speaker, I am not concerned about the Vote Item for the islands in the Northern Group. I believe that their allocation should be reduced. Even though I have connections to the island of Pukapuka and the islands of Manihiki and Rakahanga, Minister, let us review these allocations in the future.

I will now talk about the newly created Department of Corrective Services. I also noticed that their Vote Item is not sufficient especially the operation side Madam Speaker. I believe this is a new department and therefore we should give our support to help build this department.

Madam Speaker, I will now come back to the appropriation for Ministry of Internal Affairs. I do believe this is one Ministry we need to give it close inspection especially in the area of the minimum wage. Today the minimum wage is \$7.25 and I also realise that over the years Government have been in the practice of increasing the minimum wage by 25 cents.

I touch upon the area of child benefit. Today when we look at the payments for the age groups of children because as we can see the payment of these funds the age has been raised from 14 years to 16 years. I do believe it should start during this Budget.

MADAM SPEAKER: Your time has expired and I see the Honourable William Heather you have the Floor.

HON. W. HEATHER: Madam Speaker, I rise to move:

That normal extension of speaking time be given to all Honourable Members

MADAM SPEAKER: I see the Honourable Deputy Speaker.

Seconded by the Honourable Toka Hagai

I will put the Question. The Question is:

That normal extension of speaking time be given to all Honourable Members?

Motion agreed to

You may continue Honourable Vaitoti Tupa.

MR V. TUPA: Thank you Madam Speaker and thank you for the extension of my speaking time. As I said before, Madam Speaker I proposed that it should start this year.

Although it has not been mentioned in the Appropriation Bill I return back to the issue of the old age pension. I request that the Minister give some thoughts to this because within this Honourable House, Madam Speaker I do believe that in one year's time many of us will collect the old age pension. Maybe to the Minister of Finance to re-look at the allocation maybe an adjustment of the ages for collecting this pension.

The reason I pose this thought Madam Speaker, I would like to state in this House today, Madam Speaker and all Honourable Members that our old age people some have reached 60 and they have worked for so long to carry this nation and their situation needs a lot of help.

Therefore I touch on this issue in line also with what you have done last year where if you reach 70 you have a raise in the old age pension. I would suggest that you look at the age bracket from 60 to 65 and from 65 to 70 for allocation of age brackets for our old age pension.

Therefore, Madam Speaker these are some of the thoughts I would like to pose now maybe when we look at the actual appropriation of each Ministry then I might stand to raise some more issues. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER; Thank you and I see the Honourable Patrick Arioka you have the Floor.

MR P. ARIOKA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Thank you for this opportunity to address this Honourable House, our Honourable Members of Parliament and our people of the Cook Islands.

Madam Speaker, allow me to first congratulate you to your appointment considering the many achievements held under your leadership in previous years can only be fitting that the helm of Parliament work needed not only to be complimented but to further progress improvement for the future of this Honourable House and country.

I too like to join together with all the Honourable Members of the House to wish you well Madam Speaker. So therefore Madam Speaker, allow me to address my people as well as my constituency.

Greetings to us all in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To all of us Honourable Members in this House the Parliament of the Cook Islands, the Leader of the Opposition and all your Members, the Honourable Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister and all Honourable Members of Government, this Honourable House and all the staff of this House as well as to all our people listening in, greetings to you all in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Even though we have greeted everybody, Madam Speaker I would like to take this opportunity to greet my people in Puaikura and my constituency of Murienua. First of all greetings to my people of Puaikura and the three pillars of our district from the boundaries of Tuoro to Toreaiva, greetings in the name of our Lord. Tinomana Ariki Paramount Chief and all the traditional leaders of the Vaka Puaikura and all our people greetings to you all.

To the many different churches within our district, the Pastors and leaders to all the Church elders, deacons and to our youth as well as to our young people, greetings to you all.

To the Queens Representative, His Excellency Tom Marsters and your good wife Tuaine Marsters and the heads of ministries and all the public servants, greetings to you all.

To all the people in my electorate of Murienua, the seven main traditional leaders in our district and to all of you that have been bestowed with traditional titles and to those that have passed away and to everyone in our constituency even our young people, greetings to you all.

To all the different churches, your leaders and elders in Murienua, to Bishop Tutai Pere of the Apostolic Church, the Reverend John Andrew of the CICC church, to Pastor Nga Pouao of the New Hope church, the Catholic church, the Seventh-day Adventist church and to Pastor Plitz Napa of the LDS church, greetings to you all.

Special greetings and condolences to families that are grieving for lost loved ones. The families of Papa Jeff Bergman who passed away after a long illness. I extend my sympathy to Mama Maria and the Bergman and Napa families.

Special greetings also to all the elderlies, our old people and the young people also, greetings to all of you.

Special acknowledgment to the Principal and teachers of the Rutaki Primary School, Tera Poti Maeva and the team that have travelled to the island of Mangaia. We trust your visit to Mangaia will be a beneficial one not only for your team but also for the people of Mangaia. Greetings to you all.

Special greetings to my campaign committee, Papa Bob Mare, Miimetua Martin and our life-member Mama Ngaupoko Tuuri, and all our faithful committee members greetings to you all. To our chairman Papa Mau Raina and assistant chairman Tamarangi Tamarangi and the committee advisor, Ngatamaine Aniterea, greetings to you all.

It is your faith in me to stand as your Member of Parliament for our constituency both the local and expatriate people of Murienua that I find myself in this House and I thank you all for this great opportunity. Greetings to you all today.

A special acknowledgement Madam Speaker to our former Deputy Prime Minister Teariki Heather and to your family and supporters I thank you for that you have done on my behalf and for Puaikura especially. I greet you my elder in the Name of the Lord.

Special acknowledgment to my friend James Beer as I heard of your reputation in this Honourable House. The efforts and means that you went through to battle for our constituency. Kia Orana to you the former Member of Parliament for Murienua to you and your family.

Madam Speaker I would like to share my gratitude to those leaders who have held this honourable responsibility and therefore I thank them for their wisdom and their encouragement and best wishes to the journey and task at hand.

Madam Speaker as a fresh, new, young vibrant Member of Parliament today. But I am also cautious to the inner heart whisper of my late father Papa Temotu Arioka who always remind me of these words. No matter how bad you try, reach as far as you can but never forget to plant your foot to the ground.

In light of this Madam Speaker I would like to therefor pay tribute to my late father Papa Temotu Arioka an inspiring Atiuan Orometua and my late Mama Ada Arioka who were both responsible for shaping into the person I am today. I also pay tribute to my maternal parents to my mother Tereapii Tiputoa Taio Heather and my father Benjamin George Nichols on the island of Aitutaki and to my family here and abroad.

It is only because of family love and care that I am blessed to be here Madam Speaker in this Honourable House as a Member of Parliament and a servant to my people of Murienua and to the people of the Cook Islands. I can only give praise to the Lord Almighty for the wisdom and knowledge and the care of love to be surrounded by the many who has been responsible for this day. Therefore Madam Speaker I thank the Lord for His Grace and Blessings.

Madam Speaker if I may, I would like to give my support to the Speech from the Throne by His Excellency and also the debate of the Appropriation Bill that is before the House. We can all agree that the time ahead is not only an exciting one but a challenging for this Honourable House and this Government. I may be optimistic Madam Speaker but it tells me that this journey requires a confident team with fresh, new and vibrant will power to do the job because we are embarking on a new charted opportunity to try to secure as he said Madam Speaker a strong foundation for a healthy growing economy.

As I listened carefully Madam Speaker I am so encouraged and inspired on the fact that I cannot agree more that the conclusion remarks in stating that “we collectively as a nation strive in their trials and their triumphs by making choices that put people first to help transform the lives and build a better future for everyone. Therefore Madam Speaker the Bill before us is exactly the peoples Bill.

Secondly Madam Speaker the fact that the focus of this Bill as well as the Speech from the Throne emphasis Pa Enua participation on this vision is even more exciting for our people especially for our young and vibrant youth on each of these islands. I can say this Madam Speaker because one of those new growing sectors which I had the privilege of serving for 29 years have already mapped this course for putting its people first to jointly graduate into the tourism sector towards a sustainable future and economy.

I am happy to report Madam Speaker that the agriculture sector of this country focuses in the Pa Enua and is now converging with our Tourism Industry here in Rarotonga including our very own trade markets that helps with the reduction in depending on the exports. I take note of my colleague the Honourable Member for Matavera concerns with the Budget that is placed before the House. I can confirm Madam Speaker as well as this Honourable House that this Budget is only supported as well with the Ridges to the Pa Enua Action for resilience livelihood project.

MADAM SPEAKER: Honourable Member I am going to interrupt you now because it is our break time and you may take the Floor again when we return.

Parliament is now suspended until 3.00 p.m.

Sitting suspended at 2.31 p.m.

Parliament resumed at 3.00 p.m.

MADAM SPEAKER: Please be seated.

Parliament is resumed.

Welcome back Honourable Members. Before we went on a break, the Honourable Patrick Arioka had the Floor on the debate of the Appropriation Bill and you may continue.

MR P. ARIOKA: Thank you Madam Speaker and in fact I was just ready to excite the Honourable House. The very crucial part of my information to be shared with the

Honourable Member from Matavera was this very part that I wanted to announce to this Honourable House.

And therefore, Madam Speaker, I just left off just to announce the number of programs and projects that were about to be initiated and already some have been initiated through the Ridge to Reef Program and the Pearl Program.

I thank the Honourable Member of Matavera also for supporting that our Budget is not enough or too small but I think what is important to note, Madam Speaker, is the fact that we need to be responsible how we spend the money in a more effective manner.

In fact, Madam Speaker, we are also happy that the Island Government of respective islands was part of that consultant to affirm the course for this program planned in 2017 into 2018.

So therefore, Madam Speaker, it's not about not enough money but it's about using the money in the right place and in the right way.

Madam Speaker, I have one of those important initiatives that has already begun and therefore I congratulate the Chamber of Commerce, Madam Speaker for taking the lead in this week's workshop for discussion with leaders of the Pa Enua and Rarotonga who will be part of this exciting new direction for agriculture, fisheries and tourism with regards to sustainable food products supply.

It will be exciting because the very essence of the economic sector for better agricultural investments, adaptation of new technologies and methods, modern markets in attracting our young vibrant farmers have already begun. It will be exciting because this vision is supported not by the one agency but by a joint effort from the many Ministries and stakeholders of the private sector, non-Government organisations, the respective Island Governments and their communities in this journey.

As our people in the Pa Enua listen to this very important announcement, we need to ask ourselves how important it is to our people and I can happily say our people will be participating and benefiting in this growing economy together that sustains a growing as well as new livelihoods.

The Pa Enua direction for Agriculture is a strategic one, Madam Speaker, because the ever growing housing market on Rarotonga is reducing the availability of prime agricultural lands. We have to take note Honourable Members of this House that the growth of the housing market remains beyond our control.

We have to agree today that the future of agriculture in the next ten to twenty years needs to come from the Pa Enua and therefore it is our responsibility in this Honourable House to prepare the islands for this visionary outlook.

For my constituency Madam Speaker as Member of Parliament we will be sharing the same vision that we will be embarking on to be part of this exciting journey. The growing potential of our young men and women cannot be underestimated in the

agriculture and fisheries sector today and this will be the focus for Murienua, including addressing our concerns for improved residential water and sanitation, water streams, drainage, upgrading and establishing better road networks and reducing coastal impacts.

An example, Madam Speaker, Murienua being on the south side of the island, we are constantly faced with the destructive seasonal tides affecting our coastline. We need serious overhaul revamping coastal rock protection to help reduce further land erosion. The truth, Madam Speaker, these phenomena are increasing in their destructive capability and we need better long-term planning on this problem in Murienua.

Secondly, Madam Speaker, my mention of the growing housing market is also occurring in Murienua as new and established housing are increasing and towards the hills and roads becomes a new problem and it affects further water streams and drainage. This is not an isolated matter Madam Speaker. It is also occurring around the island of Rarotonga. In that respect we are looking forward to better planning for a much more resilient infrastructure to cope with twenty year climate extremes.

Madam Speaker, in concluding I too would like to echo His Excellency's concluding remark that we cannot afford to ignore but I truly believe it is the ingredient to succeed in this very vision that states: "The Cook Islands is at its strongest when we are all pulling in the same direction."

MADAM SPEAKER: Honourable Member, your time has expired and that includes your extra ten minutes that was accorded to you.

Thank you.

May I remind you Honourable Members that this is not our time to do your maiden speech. This is a time to debate on the Budget so you will be accorded your 20 minutes plus your ten minutes. I have allowed you to read your speech, but for your information, we are not to read when we are debating but due to the fact that many of you are new, then we are allowing that for today. Just for your information.

I see the Honourable Nooroa Baker. You have the Floor.

MR N. BAKER: First of all, thank you very much Madam Speaker. May the Lord continue to bless you as you lead us during our Parliament deliberation?

As this is my first time in this Honourable House, please bear with me as I continue with my training.

I would also like to say thank you to all the staff working in this House and to all the Members of Parliament I would also like to say thank you. May the Lord grant us the knowledge to be able to continue with our work in this House.

As previously mentioned, by Madam Speaker we are not permitted to greet our constituency in our maiden speech but I will greet my constituency.

MADAM SPEAKER: Honourable Member, may I just make a comment.

You certainly are allowed to give your greetings to the people listening in.

MR N. BAKER: Thank you Madam Speaker.

I would like to say thank you to the people in my constituency Akaoa for electing me as their representative in Parliament. I won't spend my time saying thank you to the people of Puaikura as there are very important matters to discuss in this House. I would like to say thank you to everyone in Puaikura, and those who have leadership positions. To all the churches in Puaikura and to all those that helped during my campaign time for me to be able to enter this House, greetings to everyone.

I would like to speak on the Budget now and talk about the allocation for the Ministry of Health. I have experienced health issues and the problems with the hospital system. I can see the budget for the Ministry of Health has increased but my observation is that it is not sufficient.

I went through difficult times with the health of someone who is close and dear to me. I went to the hospital to find out what is lacking with the health care system there. When I asked what the problem was, I was told there are not enough funds for health system. So I would like to ask the Minister of Finance to increase the budget for the Ministry of Health.

There is other work that needs to be done in our country, such as our Agriculture and Corrective Services. My own observation is that the budget allocated for Corrective Services is not enough.

I have personally supported and encouraged some young people who have been to prison through my own business. I have asked these young people of their experiences and what their thoughts are and they told me there are insufficient resources in the prison like beds, blankets and food. They told me there is not enough funding. I note Honourable Minister of Finance that your allocation for Corrective Services is only \$100, 000. So Honourable Minister I ask that we look at this allocation again.

I will now move to the appropriation for Agriculture. This is one area that I believe the allocation should be increased because we can see that the food imported from New Zealand, for example cabbages, and various food products can be grown here on Rarotonga and in the Outer Islands. I ask the Minister to please look at the allocation for Agriculture in this budget especially the Outer Islands and ensure that more help is given to them.

I have been to Mangaia and I have observed how we can improve and help the growers there. One area I have noticed is that there are not enough youth in the Outer Islands to do this work. How can we carry on the work in Agriculture, if there is no manpower to do the crucial work? Maybe there are ways we can do to make improvements. May be the Associate Minister Patrick Arioka can look into this also.

I would like to mention what has happened in our village over the last few months. There are now four families who have lost their houses due to fire. I would also like to ask the Honourable Minister from Nikao to please look into this matter. The Friendly Mart belonging to Doreen Boggs, Tex Mart and the recent fire concerning the Arama factory. I plea to the Minister to urgently look into this issue because I believe Tex Mart and the Friendly Mart have contributed much to the village of Arorangi and to the economy of Rarotonga. The workers in these shops now have lost their jobs because of the fire. This is the reason I am asking if it is possible to look into this, urgently.

I look at us Members of Parliament sitting in this Honourable House today and ask myself, how many people have been Members of this House? Some of our elders have occupied these seats and we may ask, what have they done for our people? So my question to us in this House today is, what are we going to do for our people because they are the ones who put us into this House.

I was happy to hear the Prime Minister's speech in saying that, we did not come into this House to argue but to discuss matters which will help our people. So I thank all of us in this House and I thank the good Lord for putting us in this House.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you very much Honourable Member, and I see the Honourable Tereapii Kavana you have the Floor.

MR T. KAVANA: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker for allowing me this opportunity to speak for the first time in this House, so greetings to you. You are in the right place to clip the ears of the Members in this House if they become naughty. Please allow me the opportunity before I speak on the Budget to speak to my constituency.

Kia Orana to all the people of Araura Enuu listening to me this afternoon. The three constituencies Vaivaitau, Are Nikau and Amuri-Ureia. I am here not to just speak for my constituency but I am also speaking on behalf of Araura Enuu.

I greet everyone in Arutanga, Reureu, and Nikaupara and special mention of my campaign committee, my Chairman Papa Tupuariki Puna, Vice Chairman Papa Ngaa Upu, the treasurer Amiria Karore and the secretary Tuaine Rota. I thank the people of my constituency for voting me to represent you in this House. I thank the Lord for this honour that has been given to me to be in this House which took place on the Election Day which is the 14 June 2018.

I would also like to thank the Prime Minister and the Cook Islands Party for giving me the opportunity to run as their candidate in my constituency.

There have been questions raised by some people who know me as a humble person, a planter and a fisherman and my ability to represent them in this House. My people, I am in this House to make a change for us in my constituency Arenikau and for our people on the island of Araura and also as a Member of Parliament for the Cook Islands.

I would also like to thank all my supporters who voted me into this House. I also thank those who didn't vote for me Madam Speaker. I am here my people to represent you all. To all those who did not support me, I will try my very best to build a good relationship which has been shattered. I would like to ask you all for us to work together.

To the Opposition side of the House, to your Leader and to all Honourable Members, your views are important for the enhancement and development of our nation. I will now put my greetings aside and talk about the Appropriation Bill before us.

I would like to give my full support to the Appropriation Bill before the House today. I can see the appropriation allocated for my island Aitutaki and it has increased so I would like to thank Government. I have in my hand a list of projects and the allocated budget to do these projects on our island Araura. I heard a few comments made by our Honourable Members with regards to water works. In the Budget Book \$400,000 has been allocated to the Ministry of ICI for the water gallery. An allocation of \$226,000 for Aitutaki road improvements has also been given to the Ministry of ICI.

Under the budget for OPM, \$2.474million is allocated for Aitutaki Renewal Energy. This is a lot of money. For Manatua Cable project is \$2million. My people, it is only right that we thank our Government for this budget. These are the projects that I have to do during my term in Parliament and I want these projects to be completed in the four years ahead of us. You put me in this House as a warrior and this House is a place for warriors. A warrior will always stand and protect his people whether it's right or wrong he will take the load on his shoulders. He will never be defeated on the battle field but he will fight for his people. Therefore, I would like to thank Government for giving us this budget. Maybe our former Members of Parliament was not active enough to do their job in this House but this is now my turn. I would also like to ask my two colleagues in the Opposition for us to work together.

I would now like to talk about the allocation for the Ministry of Health. This is an important Ministry and there is need to provide them the support in order to improve the Ministry. We all have different types of ailments so we need to be cautious of our health. The food that we eat here at Parliament is most appropriate to help with our health.

I will now talk about Agriculture. Every time we have workshops in Aitutaki, Pat and the others conducting the workshop always report to us that about \$3million to \$5million is spent on importing produce from overseas. Now that I am in Government, I will encourage the people on our island Aitutaki to plant vegetables and export them here for the hotels. The lands here have been taken up by houses so you will need our help in the outer islands to plant and provide vegetables for our people here in Rarotonga. This will also help our people in the outer islands.

With regards to the budget for Education, Education is the pillar of any nation. We need to inject more money in this Ministry to help our teachers to educate our children as they are future generations of our country. Therefore, I rise to give my full support to this Appropriation Bill for our nation. God bless us all.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you. I recognise the Honourable Member Kitai from Aitutaki, you have the Floor.

MR M. KITAI: With your indulgence Madam Speaker, please allow me to send words of greetings to the people in my constituency before I speak on the Appropriation Bill. Madam Speaker may I also seek your indulgence to allow me to say a traditional chant.

*Eia ia ngaru e tu i Raukakau nei e Iro
Tuatini, tuamano
E tai tarau ma rua
Uriuri ki tana uriuri
Pokipoki ki tana pokipoki
E pupui ki te rangi
E rarango ki te vaka
Ka eke ia ngaru e Iro
Ie-ko-ko*

Greeting to all Honourable Members in the House. Madam Speaker this is my first time to come in this House. I would like to extend my greetings to the people in my constituency. Kia Orana to all my political families on Aitutaki, the Family of Peace and the Family of Love. To all the Ministers in various denominations and their wives and families, Kia Orana in the name of our Lord. To the different denomination on Araura, Kia Orana. To the traditional leaders and your families, Kia Orana in the name of our Lord. To our Council members and your wives and families, Kia Orana to you all. To my Ariki Manarangi and your husband and family, Kia Orana to you. To all the elders, the youth and children, Kia Oarana to you all.

I also convey special greetings to my dear wife who endlessly worked hard in supporting me during the campaigning time. She gave me love and sincerity and endured exhaustion because it's a destiny she chose. I thank her from the bottom of my heart. I would also like to thank my hardworking committee, my Chairman and his wife and family, the Assistant Chairman, his wife and children, Kia Orana in the name of our Lord. To my Secretary and your wife, the Assistant Secretary and your wife, Kia Orana to you all. To my Treasure and Assiatnt Treasurer, I greet you in the Name of our Lord. To my Campaign Manager, I want you all to know that my Campaign Manager is a female, to you and your husband and family, Kia Orana in the mighty name of our Lord.

I want you all to know that my committee members are all female. They are all maidens, greetings in the love of God. It is because of their hard work that brought me into this House. I give my utmost acknowledgement to all of them. During the campaign times, we always meet every Monday and they set the agenda for us. I will only know the agenda of the meeting when we meet.

I would like to convey my special greetings to my friend, Mona. To you Mona, your wife and your children, Kia Orana and greetings in the mighty name of our Lord.

There's a Bible verse that says: "Many will run the race but one will take the crown." So I would like to thank the people in my constituency.

Madam Speaker, I will now come back to the Appropriation Bill before the House.

I heard my Honourable friend earlier on say that he is in this House to represent the people of Araura. Therefore my friend, when I knock on your door please open the door.

I will now talk about the Vote Item for the Ministry of Agriculture. I want you all to know that we have some young people in our constituency who are interested in planting. I know that the Associate Minister Patrick Arioka is aware of this. Our only issue is that we do not have a tractor. If only the Prime Minister would give his allocation to buy a tractor for Vaivaitau, it'll be perfect. This is the issue we are encountering at the moment. We do not have a tractor.

Madam Speaker, there are many requests from the people in Vaivaitau but we will attend to those requests one by one. So my Honourable friend please open the door when I knock. I will conclude my speech with a chant which says:

*Noku ei toku purotu
No roto i te kutikuti o te rangi
Ie-ko-ko*

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you and I see the Minister of Infrastructure.

HON. R. TAPAITAU: Madam Speaker, greetings in the name of our Lord. Psalm 127: 1 says "*Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that built it, except the Lord keep the city, the watchmen waketh but in vain*"

I have chosen this verse because it is relevant to my role as Minister of Infrastructure. Every day I always ask the Lord to grant me the knowledge and wisdom in executing my responsibilities.

Kia Orana to the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, Honourable Ministers and all Members of Parliament in the House. Greetings to all the staff members of this House. We must not forget them because they have a big responsibility to play before we enter this House.

Kia Orana also to all the people of the Cook Islands listening in to this broadcast. Kia Orana to my people of Tongareva. I give you my greetings and utmost blessings of Our Lord. To the three different pillars of our island, Kia Orana. The land - the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and all the Council Members, the Government sector – the EO and all the public servants on the island, to the different denominations on our island – greetings. To all the Ministers in the villages of Omoka and Tetautua, Kia Orana. To the Assistant Ministers on Tetautua and Omoka, Kia Orana. To both church members on Omoko and Tetautua, Kia Orana.

I would like to convey my deepest sympathy to our families who lost their loved ones.

To our elders who have passed on – Papa Keikava Moerangi, Mama Areanu and recently Mama Roriki Saitu, and also Mama Rite Tapaitau also known as Mama P. May the Lord give you comfort and God bless you all.

Kia Orana to all my hardworking committee members for your big effort during the campaign period. Your effort is the result of my presence in this House today. I am speaking to you today as your Member of Parliament and your Minister. To all the people of Tongareva residing overseas, to my parents, my older brother, my sister and my younger brother, Kia Orana in the name of our Lord.

I would also like to acknowledge the former Members of Parliament, former Ministers of the Crown of Tongareva. Special mention to my father, the late Tepure Tapaitau, QPM and also to my mother, Miera Tapaitau. I am the man that I am today because of these two people. Also to my queen – my wife – for your undying support during these times.

I would also like to thank Government for the support during the Te Maire Maeva Nui that we have just finished. Also for the support during the time we had insufficient water. Also to our people at home, we thank God for his wonderful blessings. I received a phone call and I was told that it rained for the whole day two days ago. Kia Orana and Kia Manuia.

I would like to speak on the Appropriation Bill. I fully support the Appropriation Bill but also there are little glitches I think that we can remedy. Like everything else, I think Health plays a big part in every Budget because Health is another issue that we have up in Tongareva that we try to combat every year. In saying that with things like flying doctors to the Northern Group, I fully support that but the Secretary of Health is sitting in front of me so I think she's doing a good job at the moment.

Also, with regards to the Ministry of Agriculture, I think once upon a time the Cook Islands exported a lot to other countries and we are looking at the Honourable Minister of Agriculture and the Associate Minister, Patrick, to spearhead this.

For Infrastructure which is the portfolio I hold, we can only get better with this. I have no issues or objections to the Appropriation Bill. As I said earlier, I support that wholeheartedly. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Minister, I see the Honourable Selina Napa you have the Floor.

MRS S. NAPA: Madam Speaker, before I talk on the Bill if you would allow me to say greetings to the people in my constituency.

I would like to give thanks to the Lord for bringing me back into this House because during the election time there were many candidates running for the seat of Teimurimotia. So I would like to thank my Committee members, my supporters and those people who voted for me during this election.

I would also like to extend my greetings to the traditional leaders of Titikaveka. To all the different denominations in my village, to the public servants, the business

sectors in my village, to the sports organisations and the children in my village, Kia Orana. Before I came back into this House, I know we have worked so hard in our own community during this time.

I would now like to talk about the issue on water. We have water intakes in Takitumu but we do not have water in Titikaveka right now. I mentioned in the past about people on the inland side of the road coming to the beach side to find water for their shower in the evenings.

I was happy when the Prime Minister mentioned in his speech last Friday that we should be working together in this House when we discuss the Bill for the sake of our people. I will ask that when we in the Opposition ask for help, please work together with us so we can make sure that we serve our people. I am always saying that I have been elected to serve my people and not to be served.

I will now come back and express my views on some areas in the Budget and I mention the Contingency Fund. I can see that last year the sum was \$100,000 and now it has increased to \$200,000. I have tried to get some help for the people in my constituency especially for the old people but I was not successful. I was always given the excuse that there is not enough money in the Contingency Fund. I want the Minister of Finance to explain the purpose of this fund and if any Member of Parliament have the right to ask for help from this fund.

I also want us to touch on the appropriation for the Police. There are many criminal activities such as burglaries and theft in my village. I noticed the appropriation for Police has increased but I want to know if this increase is for more staff or is it for salary adjustments.

When I look at these two areas, although I support that the Police need their salaries increased, they also need more staff. In the last two weeks we held a meeting in Titikaveka to try and find ways to minimise theft in the village. This is specifically because of the tourists visiting our shores because they are the ones that are being affected. When we asked for help from the Police Services, we were told we could only have one Police Officer for the whole of Takitumu. When you look at Takitumu this is a big area and we were told there is not enough workers the reason we can only have one Police officer for Takitumu. Our wish was to have one officer for Titikaveka, one for Ngatangiia and one for Matavera.

Takitumu is bringing a lot of money into the country from tourists. I am sure when the Honourable Member Tuavera makes his speech, he will say Ngatangiia brings in a lot of tourists into the country. Our three electorates are one and we say we are all Takitumu.

Madam Speaker I note in the Appropriation Bill there are some Government Departments with reductions in their budget this year, such as the Ministry of Education and Environment. Why is this? What is happening here because these are the areas that we have been trying to ensure that we maintain the standard expected by our people? We want good education standard for our children. I would like to ask the Minister if he can clarify the reasons for the decrease in these two appropriations. I am not sure about the reduction in the budget for the Environment because the

number for visitors has increased. We are also targeting to improve our infrastructure area to cater for our increasing tourist sector. These two areas will also impact our environmental sector.

The last issue I want to mention about the Ministry of Internal Affairs because I noticed the decrease in their net appropriation. I really thought this Ministry will receive an increase this year because we intend to increase the child benefit age to 14 years but their net appropriation has decreased. All the Government Ministries that have their budget allocation decreased, if you total them all, it will amount to over one million dollars.

I am surprise however when we come down the list to the Ministerial Support Office, their allocation is very high. What is the reason for these big increases in the Ministerial Support Office budget? I hope these increase are not to procure the services and favours of the people that are in their constituencies. They cannot spend this money on such campaign tactics but for their office use only.

We need to look at these allocations carefully, for instance the office of the Minister George Angene because he has a large allocation for his office.

HON. G. ANGENE: Point of Order, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: What is your Point of Order, Honourable Minister?

HON. G. ANGENE: My Point of Order is to the Honourable Member of Teimurimotia concerning her comments regarding the allocation for my Ministerial Support. She asked as to why it is a large figure and yet there is only a few staff in my office.

I would like to inform the Member for Teimurimotia...

MADAM SPEAKER: Honourable Minister I think it is a reference to the amount of money that has been increased and the allocations that has been decreased. I suggest we leave the comments on the Floor until we come to the time the Minister of Finance responds to the questions on the Appropriation then he will give a proper explanation to the purposes of the Budget.

May I ask for your concurrence?

HON. G. ANGENE: Thank you Madam Speaker, I spoke because my name was mentioned, my office and my staff and that is my reason for standing to explain this allocation.

MADAM SPEAKER: Maybe not this time because there is nothing wrong with what was spoken. It is only to highlight what has been decreased and the allocations that have been increased with the few staff in your office.

HON. G. ANGENE: I want the people to know there are 7 staff in my office.

MADAM SPEAKER: Right. If we can leave this matter for now.

HON G. ANGENE: Alright.

MADAM SPEAKER: I see the Honourable Terepai Maoate.

MR T. MAOATE: Madam Speaker, I stand to ask the Minister to mention the Standing Orders in reference to his Point of Order. What the Honourable Member Selina Napa is saying is accordance to the debate on the merits of the Appropriation Bill.

MADAM SPEAKER: We will leave this debate or Point of Order for now until the end of the Budget debate when after the Minister of Finance takes the Floor to explain or responds to the questions. He can then explain the proper answers to the questions raised.

Thank you and I give the Floor to the Honourable Selina Napa, you have some extra time.

MRS S. NAPA: I have lost my trend of thoughts. Madam Speaker as I previously mentioned about the decrease in the appropriation of some of the Government Ministries and yet the Minister's Support offices have big increases. I want to know as to the reasons for this.

I also want to know what this three months' severance pay of \$166,000 is about. Also I ask for clarification of this Ministerial Baseline reimbursement contingency. Further, I ask for an explanation for the Civil List personnel Associate Ministers' amount of \$90,000. I also ask for an explanation of those Ministers earning salaries above \$90,000. And yet when we look in this Budget book, and the Minister that I thought would be getting a high salary is not in this book, he is actually the lowest paid Minister and that is the Deputy Prime Minister who is also the Minister of Finance. Why is this?

I am not happy about these changes and I searched in this Budget book for an explanation to my many queries and I found none. Maybe the Minister of Finance will be the one to respond rightly to these queries. Those are my thoughts on our Appropriation Bill.

My last thought is similar to these male Members of Parliament who are paying tributes to their wives for their support of their work as Members of Parliament and also for supporting them during the election period and finally getting them in this Honourable House. I am happy that they have given these respects to their wives. The old saying is true, "behind a good man is a good woman."

At this time I would like to pay tribute to my darling husband, and of course the saying applies to us, "behind a good woman is a good man." He has a special supporting role in our constituency which is our Fire Brigade, a volunteering community venture. This is stationed in Titikaveka and the men volunteering in this area are so busy lately in carting water to those homes in need that I hardly see my husband. This also includes putting out fires in the villages which lately has been an

issue on our island. We should, that is the Government and the Opposition work together to curb this alarming issue.

I would like our Cook Islands people to hear as I extend my personal sincere congratulatory tribute to the new Members of Parliament. I would also like at this time to pay tribute to all the Members of Parliament that were not successful and I know have contributed immensely to the wellbeing of this country.

These are my thoughts and God bless us all.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you very much Honourable Member. I see the Honourable Toka Hagai. You have the Floor.

MR T. HAGAI: Firstly, greetings to each and every one of us in this Honourable House. Praise the Lord for you Madam Speaker.

Before I greet everyone, I have a traditional chant from Tapuahua.

(Member delivers his traditional chant)

Before I left my people to come to Parliament, this is the chant I presented to my island people because I was leaving them and the ocean is what separates us. Before I left them, their request was, when you get to Rarotonga turn to the sea and deliver this chant to show that you remember and love us. During the time of the election campaign this is the motto I composed for my island, *Te Atua Mou e Ko Koe rai te Pu – God Almighty You Shall Always Be Our Guide*. A Bible verse to support our motto is found in *Jeremiah 29:11*, *“I know the plan that I have for you declares the Lord and to prosper you, not to harm you. A plan to give you hope and to give you a future.”*

I love the morning devotion thoughts during the campaign period and the day before the election. This is the Bible verse of the day, *“If you desire to be with me, then follow me”*. And on the morning of the Election Day this is the Bible verse, *“This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased.”* I placed my faith on that and I was confident to win the election for Tapuahua.

I therefore would like to say thank you to my supporters, my Chairman, Bundy, and to all the following people: Tutero Taripo, Trainee Maea, Kavana, Maggie, Paula and Enuake. My young campaign committee did their work properly and worked hard and when I arrived on the island, they told me we will not go into people’s homes to campaign but the people will come to me. I was very surprised when I was told that all I had to do was to sit and wait for the people to come to me. They told me, we will come to you and we will tell you when it is time for you to speak.

On the 24th of May was the launching of my campaign on Rakahanga. I delivered a well spoken speech to my island people without knowing that this speech will end me in court in Rarotonga. When I went to Court I was questioned about this speech. I presented a beautiful speech which I mentioned about the blessings from above, blessings from below and blessings from everywhere for you and me.

I would like to convey my greetings to the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor and the Council of Tapuahau – greetings to you all today. To all the elderly left on the island of Tapuahua – greetings to you all in the name of our Lord. To all the students, the Principal and all the teachers – greetings to you all in the name of the Lord. Special greetings to my father, Temu Hagai who is planning to fly to New Zealand this evening - greetings to you Dad, thank you for giving me the opportunity to be in this Honourable House.

I would like to say that you are my main supporter and the reason I am in this House. When I was elected the Member of Parliament for Rakahanga, it reminded me about the story of David. We all know the Bible story of David when he was elected as the King of Israel. David was the last born in his family. He has older brothers wiser than him but the Heavenly Father chose David to be King.

I remember clearly the day when you approached me Dad and you said, “You are the right candidate to stand for Rakahanga”. You ticked all the right boxes about me that enable you to form a conclusion about me becoming the appropriate candidate to stand for the election.”

Today, I stand here as a very proud son and I thank you so much for your support. You have made the right choice. I would also like to say thank you to my wife who returned to Auckland yesterday. We will meet again when you return.

I also convey special acknowledgement to sister Tina, who was my opposing candidate in the last election. Although you did not succeed in the last election, I thank God for the choice the people made as to who should represent them in this House.

I would also like to say thank everyone in this House for electing me as the Deputy Speaker of the House. When I was nominated and seconded to hold the position, no one objected. This means everyone supported my election to the position. I grasped this position not just with one hand but with both hands and I would like to reassure the House I will try my best to do this job.

I would now like to speak about the Budget. When I finished looking through the Budget Book, I could only think of one good expression which is in the Penrhyn language, and that is, “*mea hau teia* budget – this is a very good budget”. Listening to previous speakers expressing their views on the Budget, it seems there are hesitations in expressing their real thoughts on this Bill. I am not sure why because after scrutinising the Budget, I can only say one thing and that is, this is the people’s Budget because everything in this Budget is for the people.

One Vote Item that I am very happy is the Vote Item for the Ministry of Health. Last year, we debated and argued about the issue with doctors for the Outer Islands. Again, it has being highlighted in this House. That Budget has long gone and we now have a new Minister for the Ministry of Health and this is our new Budget for the Ministry of Health.

In this new Budget, there is an allocation for flying doctors to our Northern Islands like Rakahanga and Penrhyn. Maybe the Opposition will say that we should thank

them but let me remind you that your job is to make noises to us in Government so that we can create new initiatives to confirm to our people that we are ready for this. To lead a country, you have to be smart. When the Opposition speaks, it reminds me of the cabin bread tin when we use it for drumming, a good drumming will make you want to dance.

This Budget I believe is to be spent on our people to help with their health issues. In the Northern Group, when you look at the report from the Ministry of Health there is a high rate of diabetes and high blood pressure. I want to hear the Opposition ask what we are going to do with this problem. Are they going to spend money to grow vegetables that will improve the lives of the people in the North so we don't fly doctors to the Northern Group?

They spend their time talking about doctors. Doctors these days don't want to be paid \$10 per hour. You don't want to pay for a doctor for \$50 dollars and upwards to go to Rakahanga and only have one patient a month. The Coalition Government of this day has a good idea and they fly doctors to check the health of the people in the Northern Group. The Opposition is saying this is their idea. This is their idea in 2008 but they did not know how to make this idea work but when this Government came in power in 2010, the money became available and the doctors were able to go up to the Northern Group to check the health of our people.

I want to thank the Ministry of Health, the Minister and staff who are running this Ministry for the work that has been done.

I now wish to touch on the Ministry of Agriculture. I have heard of the programmes that this Ministry have started. I thank the former Minister of Agriculture Papa Kiriau because during his term he tried to find ways and means to improve the work of the Ministry of Agriculture to help our people.

Now we have a new Minister, there is a new idea there, a new initiative and a smart plan that has been put in place by the Associate Minister and the Minister of this Ministry. We in the Northern Group want to improve the growing standards of produce on our island because the soil is good. As we face climate change today, we are growing food that did not use to grow on our island but they are growing well now.

MADAM SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I will have to interrupt you as it is nearly time to adjourn. You can continue your speech at the next sitting. I call on the Leader of the House please.

MR T. TURA: Madam Speaker, I rise to move a motion but before I do that may I seek leave to announce a special bereavement notice.

MADAM SPEAKER: Motion first.

MR T. TURA: Madam Speaker, I rise to move:

That Standing Orders 54 (2) be suspended to allow Parliament to sit in extended hours during the period Monday, 24th to Thursday 27th September 2018 as

follows: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday Parliament sits from 1.00 p.m to 2.30 p.m and 3.00 p.m to 5.00 p.m and 7.00 p.m to 8.30 p.m and again from 9.00 p.m to 10.00 p.m. Parliament is suspended from 2.30 p.m to 3.00 p.m and 5.00 p.m to 7.00 p.m and also from 8.30 p.m to 9.00 p.m on these days.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you and I look for a Seconder for the Motion please and I see the Honourable Selina Napa.

MRS S. NAPA: Madam Speaker, before I second the Motion I'd like to move:

To amend the Motion to the following

MADAM SPEAKER: The Motion is seconded by the Honourable Selina Napa and what would your amendment be?

MRS S. NAPA: I move:

To amend the Motion to say that this House adjourns

MADAM SPEAKER: Have you written your amendment down please, I would prefer you give me your written amendment so I can be sure what your amendment is amending from to please. Can you get the amendment off the Member please, thank you?

In future Honourable Members if you are going to amend a Motion on the Floor you write your amendment because it's a lot easier to follow that so we know exactly what we are amending from to so we get it right. You can read your amendment.

MRS S. NAPA: I move:

That the Motion be amended to say that this House adjourns this meeting until 7 pm from Monday to Thursday at the time allocated 1pm to 2.30 p.m, 3.00 p.m to 5.00 p.m, 7.00 p.m to 8.30 p.m and from 9.00 p.m to 10.00 p.m.

MADAM SPEAKER: So what exactly is your amendment because that sounds exactly the same as the Motion put?

MRS S. NAPA: The Motion says to suspend.

MADAM SPEAKER: No, no let me explain to you, this Motion is in two portions. One is the change of the actual times that we are going to be sitting and the Parliament is suspended is the time that we actually suspend Parliament.

So for example when we sit at 1.00 p.m, we normally suspend at 2.30 p.m and we come back at 3.00 p.m. When we sit at 3.00 p.m, we carry on to 5.00 p.m so the part on the suspension is to say we will be suspending Parliament on these days say from tomorrow on at 2.30 p.m to 3.00 p.m which is normal and then in the evening when

we come back from 5.00 p.m to 7.00 p.m we will be suspending at 8.30 p.m to 9.00 p.m and then we begin again from 9.00 p.m to 10.00 p.m.

This is exactly what you are saying so we have not changed anything. Your amendment does not change anything because we will be having a break for half an hour on the day sitting as well as the evening sitting. So from 7.00 p.m to 8.30 p.m we suspend and then 9.00 p.m we come back till 10.00 p.m we adjourn for the next day. Are you clear? Before I put the question I will read this to you again but Honourable Member you have something to say?

MRS S. NAPA: Madam Speaker, if you can just clarify the difference between suspension and adjournment.

MADAM SPEAKER: Suspension is like we do every day. We start work at 1.00 p.m, suspend at 2.30 p.m, we go for a break and we come back at 3.00 p.m. Because we are sitting an extra sitting tonight we will come back at 7.00 p.m we will suspend at 8.30 p.m, come back at 9.00 p.m to 10.00 p.m and we will adjourn. Now when we finish this we will be suspending until 7.00 p.m tonight. Is that clear? That is what the Motion was about so you have seconded the Motion and I will put the question so when you vote you know exactly what you are voting for which is just what I have explained to you.

So the Question is:

That Standing Orders 54 (2) is suspended to allow Parliament to sit an extended hours during the period of Monday 24th to 27th September 2018 from Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 1.00 p.m to 2.30 p.m, 3.00 p.m to 5.00 p.m, 7.00 p.m to 8.30 p.m and 9.00 p.m to 10.00 p.m and Parliament will be suspended from 2.30 p.m to 3.00 p.m, 5.00 p.m to 7.00 p.m, 8.30 p.m to 9.00 p.m?

Motion agreed to

Unfortunately, Leader of the House we have run out of time for me to give you the opportunity for your request earlier and so Parliament is now suspended till 7.00 p.m this evening Monday, 24th September.

Sitting suspended at 5.05 p.m

Sitting resumed at 7.00 p.m

MADAM SPEAKER: Please be seated Honourable Members. Parliament is resumed. Welcome back Honourable Members. Before we suspended, the Honourable Toka Hagai had the Floor on the interrupted debate of the Appropriation Bill 2018. You may have the Floor again.

MR T. HAGAI: Before we suspended our Parliament, I was talking about the vote item for the Ministry of Agriculture. We all understand that in the past, Agriculture was the backbone of our country. During last term, I was involved in a workshop for Pearl which replaced SRIC project. The Pearl workshop was called Pa Enea Action

for Resilient livelihood. Involved in this workshop were the Mayors and Executive Officers of the Southern Outer Islands. I was invited to attend this workshop to help me understand what is happening in the Ministry of Agriculture. I listened to all the views presented in this workshop. The workshop was conducted under the leadership of the Secretary of Agriculture and also the current Associate Minister today the Honourable Member Patrick Arioka.

The workshop helped me with some new ideas. We heard the Honourable Member for Matavera requesting for more budget for the Ministry of Agriculture based on his assumption that the vote item is insufficient. If he was in this workshop, he would have appreciated the amount of money allocated for the workshop. I think he was meant not to attend the workshop because if he did, he would have challenged my views tonight.

The programme focused and was aimed to assist both the Northern and Southern Group islands. However, the workshop I attended focussed on the Southern Group Islands only. I believe the workshop for the Northern Group Islands will be conducted this year so I would like to ask our Honourable Members to attend the workshop if they have time and especially our planters living in the Outer Islands.

When the workshop was finished, I returned home and had a meeting with our planters in Rakahanga to prepare us for the same workshop to be held for the Northern Group Islands. I believe in the last few days, work has been done in the Southern Group as a result of that workshop. Therefore, I would like to encourage all our people in the Southern Group to continue planting in order to provide fresh and healthy produce for your consumption.

As mentioned by previous speakers, we should plant vegetables on our islands and export it here in Rarotonga to cater for the needs of our tourists here. Maybe Honourable Members on the Opposition side are fitting in their roles as oppositions and our side will make things right for our people.

In our Agriculture sector, everyone will benefit, from our school children, our youth and our older people and you will all help to build our nation through Agriculture on our islands. I will now conclude my speech Madam Speaker and give the opportunity to other Members of Parliament to make their comments.

May God bless us all, Kia Orana and Kia Manuia.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you very much Honourable Member. I recognise the Honourable Tama Tuavera, you have the Floor.

MR T. TUAVERA: Kia Orana Madam Speaker and Kia Orana to all Honourable Members this evening. I seek your indulgence Madam Speaker to convey my greetings.

First, I would like to convey my greetings to Mama Tangi Joseph in hospital. After church yesterday, we went to visit Mama Tangi. Sometimes Madam Speaker it surprises us when we go to the hospital and find people that we know who are hospitalised without our knowledge. During our visit to the hospital, I saw Papa

Arera from Muri who has heart issues and I also saw John Baxter from the island of Aitutaki. I gave them some words of encouragement and trust that one day we will meet again at home.

I would also like to convey my greetings to the people in my constituency Ngatangia. I would like to thank my hardworking committee members, my Chairman, the Campaign Manager and also all my supporters who supported me during the General Election. I think this is sufficient Madam Speaker.

Deputy Speaker, greetings to you this evening.

I want to start my speech by asking this question in this House tonight. Deputy Speaker, why do we appropriate money in this House for projects only to realise in the new Appropriation that the project was never completed. Why? Because our people understand that our responsibility in this House is to pass this Appropriation Budget so that the money can be used. When I look at this 2017/2018 Budget, it is like the 2018/2019 Budget. I am suspicious Deputy Speaker that this Budget is from the 2017/2018 Budget and restored in the 2018/2019 Budget. This is what we call turning old money into new money and then our Minister of Finance here announced that this is a surplus.

The Budget for 2017/2018 was approximately \$274million. The Budget this year is approximately \$269million. There is a decrease of \$4.3million. Deputy Speaker, this is a lot of money. There are certain appropriations that I don't see any return for.

With regards to the Outer Islands Budget, Island Administrators, Island Councils there is a total of 415 personnel. This total is for all the Outer Islands and yet it is costing us \$6.7million. Now the Rakahanga election comes to mind when listening to the Government workers giving evidence in the Election Petition that we just finished. They were unsure what their responsibilities were at work, even the Mayor and the administrator who is the boss were unsure when they were asked what the responsibilities of these people were. I think for you Honourable Member for Rakahanga, a job description would have solved all this.

I will bring us to page 260 which talks about staffing resources in Pukapuka, Output 4. There is a total of 163 workers. This is very high for a population of 522 and I suspect the population have dropped since the Te Maeva Nui ended. What is the productivity or return from this money? You know, if you are a businessman you've got to ask this question. You don't put money out and don't expect anything back.

Can someone point out to me what are the social developments or socio-economics in these two documents that was given out to us? What really is the means for these islands to earn or build a future for themselves?

I want Government to tell us what their plans are for our people in the Outer Islands as a way to financially support themselves instead of relying on Government. For \$6.7 million we can work something with our people in the Outer Islands. We should not look at how much people we pay for example paying twenty people in Rakahanga and whatever number it is in Pukapuka or in other Outer Islands, we should look at ways of helping them to support themselves in the Outer Islands.

I just want to touch on the Atiu runway stabilisation. In the 2017/18 budget, \$400,000 was appropriated and only \$100,647 was used and I believe the project is not completed. It was never completed. Where's the money?

Again I come back to old money being shifted around and put back into the new Budget as new money.

Let's come back to Rarotonga for the bridging and drainage projects. About \$2 million has been appropriated but the actuals in 2017 is only \$170,000. Where's the money?

Now back to my old favourite. Muri road widening – page 199. \$287,000 has been allocated and I'm not sure if this will get anything done. Last year it was \$40,000. I'm not sure what this was for. Where's the money?

Then the land issues for the landowners were blamed for the delay of this road in Muri. You know, for this very important road in Muri where the tourists are most, this is the golden mile in Rarotonga and I am sure the Minister of Finance, the DPM knows this because that's where his tourism dollar is coming from.

You know, we should be speeding up these projects, not holding it back. When you hold these projects back you are killing our tourism.

We have a good thing happening in Muri where we have night markets but we are getting choked by the amount of vehicles parked on both sides of the road. I would hate to think what would happen if a fire engine comes down the road because at the moment it's like wait one end for all the cars to go through, then the other lot will come through because we all know there's no back road in Muri and there's no way you can bypass the congestion on the road unless you go along the beach. So, Government, please do not delay this project especially in Muri.

Last Friday the Minister of Infrastructure informed this House they have plans for the roads. I have a question for the Minister of Infrastructure. Do you have the resources to complete these projects? Do you have the money to purchase new machineries because I'm looking at it? ICI don't hold that much machinery anymore and for you my friend, that's a big problem if you are going to tell me that you can do the job in Muri or anywhere on the island.

There is also the problem of hiring the right people – engineers that can do the job or are you going to tender these jobs out? Is Government going to deliver on the projects that have been appropriated? What we want to see from this side is performance. We want to see projects finished that was appropriated. You only have to have a quick look inside the book and you will find there are projects moved over, moved over and moved over. Where's the money? We on this side are not going to fight you not to do the projects. We want you to do the projects. We want you to finish the projects.

The last four years I've been going on about Agriculture, Aquaculture in the Outer Islands. Every year I speak about these projects. I'm actually very happy that the

Minister of Agriculture is doing something about that. As you bluntly put it Prime Minister, we are supposed to be working together because we put the ideas in. We don't even get any pat on the back to say "Hey, you want to come to Atiu and have a look at what we're doing in Atiu because you kept talking about it." These are just little things Prime Minister but in the end it will come out in a big way. It would be seen as we in the House are trying to work together for the good of our people.

In the 2016/17 Budget – page 173 and page 190 – Sanitation Upgrade Program (SUP) was signed between the New Zealand and Cook Islands Governments in 2014 and it was expected to end on the 30th June 2018 which has just gone by. I believe this was an \$18 million program funded by New Zealand of \$10 million, the EU \$4 million and Cook Islands Government \$4 million. What happened? Has the project been completed?

In the 2017/18 Budget – page 216, we appropriated the Te Mato Vai Water Upgrade at \$31,339,828. Just round it to \$32 million. This year's Budget 2018/19 has gone up by \$8 million. Let's round it off to \$40 million. That was for the SUP.

In 2017/18 we appropriated for the Water Sanitation Program which is called WASP - \$27 million. This year it's gone down by \$7 million. It now sits at \$19,250,000. To me it looks like money was shifted from the Water Sanitation Program (WASP) to the Te Mato Vai Water Upgrade to make it look like new money.

Deputy Speaker, these are public documents and you are asking us to appropriate the budget. Why are the projects not being done? I believe you have the right to ask for report on all projects that have been appropriated in this Honourable House. This House is being held to ransom with unfinished projects and then it's announced as surplus. The Minister can state to the nation as money in the bank because he can. Deputy Speaker the reason for this is because the Crown accounts have not been audited. If it was I doubt if he could be making these statements.

I will come back to the Vote Item for Agriculture. This is something I love to talk about. I must ask where is the economic development plan to sustain Agriculture? What is the end product and where is it going to?

The next step would be farm management on all products. Market opportunities, where are the markets? Transportation, cost of shipping and also is there a middleman. I am happy that the Minister of Agriculture mentioned to me that she is looking at a shop on Rarotonga that may be able to handle this. I will let her name the shop because I don't want to burst her bubble.

I believe that for the northern group we are looking at aquaculture. During Te Maeva Nui a lot of people were asking for dried fish, for paua so why can't we be doing aquaculture. They are well suited for this method. All we need is the Minister of Finance, I am sure you can dig up some more money somewhere and get this project going for our people up North and if we can help our people outside the reef of Rarotonga in the Northern Group and Southern Group they will be self sustained and I truly hope that they can send their products to Rarotonga. That is my contribution to the Budget.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Member for Ngatangiia. I see the Honourable Member for Pukapuka, you have the Floor.

MR T. ELIKANA: Thank you Deputy Speaker. Secondly, congratulations to you Madam Speaker, may God give you the knowledge and wisdom to guide the work of this House. To you Deputy Speaker, I give you my best wishes.

I stand Deputy Speaker to give my support to the Appropriation Bill before the House and to support the notion presented by the Minister of Finance that this Budget is the people's Budget.

Before I express the rest of my thoughts please I seek leave for a moment to greet my people of Pukapuka and Nassau. I would like to apologise to the Interpreters however I have been requested by my people to speak their language as they are listening in to this Parliament.

First of all, greetings to you Paramount Chief, Kaisara Pakitonga Ariki, and traditional leaders of Pukapuka/Nassau and to everybody on the island of Pukapuka/Nassau, greetings in the name of our Lord. To everybody residing on all the island of Nassau, your families and your children, greetings to you all in the name of our Lord. All those on the surrounding islands greetings to you all in the name of our Lord.

I would like to greet the different denominations on our island. To the three main churches on our island, the Catholic, Seven Day Adventist and the Cook Islands Christian Church, Kia Orana to you all. To all the Ministers and the Deacons, the elders of the churches, greetings to you all in the name of our Saviour. To the members of the congregations may God give you the strength to carry on the work of the church on our islands.

I also want to greet those of our people in Government. To our Mayor, Papa Levi, your household and your family, greetings. The Council members on Pukapuka as well as Nassau greetings to you all. To the Government representatives on the island of Pukapuka and Nassau, greetings to you all. To the EO running the operations of Government on the island, Pio Ravarua, greetings to you and your family. To the 162 Government workers on the island of Pukapuka greetings to you all.

Later on, I will make an explanation so my Honourable colleagues from Matavera and Ngatangiia will understand a little bit more what is happening on our island.

To our island of Nassau, Papa Topetai, Mama Tuakana, Papa Tevora Jack, Papa Tuakatau, Felix Poila and to all of you, greetings.

I would now like express my many thanks to my hardworking Committee who worked hard to put me in this House. Firstly to the President of the Cook Islands Party on Pukapuka, Maaila Malenga, Kia Orana to you, your wife and family. To the Chairman, Tapaanga Mataora, your family and all the hardworking members of the Committee, greetings in the name of our Lord.

I also extend greetings to our lawyer. To those of you who placed your trust and faith in me and put me in this House I say to you all, thank you very much.

I would also like to extend greetings to my friend Willie Katoa, your wife Anna and family, greetings in the name of our Lord and Saviour. Greetings also to your Committee for your hard work however the decision has been made by the people of Pukapuka/Nassau.

I would now like to express my condolences to the household of Mama Maoake Ngatokorua and all the families. I will come back to Rarotonga, and extend my special appreciation to the President of the people of Pukapuka on the island of Rarotonga, Doctor Kirianu Nio and your Committee. I thank you for your support and for putting me here in Parliament.

I would also like to greet my Campaign Manager who is one of the tallest person in this country, Ripanau Karito Tauia. If you are listening my friend, I extend to you my sincere appreciation for your hard work to get me in this House. I would also like to extend my thanks to Doctor Teapa, thank you very much.

Last but not least, I convey special thank you to Pastor Clark Turua for your words of wisdom and prayers to help me get into this House. I would also like to make mention of one of the wisest men from Pukapuka and Nassau, the former Member of Parliament for Pukapuka and Nassau, Tekii Lazaro who decided it's time for new blood to come in this House. He told me this is my time to be in Parliament. To sister Theresa, thank you for your encouragement and support for me to continue working for our people of Pukapuka/Nassau.

I would now like to mention my situation today. I would like to thank my own father, Doctor Tingika Tere. I think he is from the village of Teenui in Atiu and part Pukapuka. However I know he lives in Titikaveka so that makes him a Titikaveka resident. Special heartfelt thank you to you Dad for nurturing me from my early years up to now. Maybe one of these evenings I will stop over at your home for a chat about my new calling.

Secondly to my mother Ratu Elikana, who is my Northern Group connection, she is currently in New Zealand but today in the Chamber to represent her is my younger brother Elikana Elikana. Thank you very much brother for your presence and support.

I would also like to mention two important people in my life, Papa Patana Arama Yala and his good wife, Mrs Teremoana Yala. When I came to Rarotonga for Secondary School, I resided with them in their home throughout my school days and working days until I went for Tertiary Education. Some people are shocked when I call these two Dad and Mum. This is my way of respect for them for being my good guardians in my upbringing.

The last two people I would like to pay tribute to now, are the two people of whose names I carry. These are Elikana Araikonga and Takerepo Araikonga these are the two people that took care of me on Pukapuka and upon my return, they nurtured me and helped me to be the person I am today.

The last group of people that I would like to thank are my own children and they are much bigger than me. When they heard I was entering the politic arena, these are the words of the youngest of them, “Dad, you must be crazy.” They know of my working life and attainments and now I am moving into politics. However when the General Election was over and the results were announced, they were all happy for me.

The most important person that I would like to thank is Tetuanui Elikana, my dearest wife. I never place her behind me because only bad things will go to the back. Maybe that is reason why Selina placed their husbands at the back of them. My wife comes from my side and from my ribs so I always put her on my side, next to me. I do not support the notion that behind a man is a good woman, my life philosophy is that – beside a good man is a good woman. So to my beloved wife, thank you very much for your constant support.

I add to this tribute to you my dearest wife is an apology. I apologise to you because of the heavy burden placed on you now as you become the mother of this great multitude of people. Our home is no longer our home alone. Please do not get angry when someone else drives our pickup truck and our grass cutter has not been returned home. Therefore my dearest wife I apologise for this and beg for your patience and tolerance as we serve the people of Pukapuka/Nassau and the whole of the Cook Islands. Not just for four years but for a long time to come.

Lastly to these young people, Gideon, Jeremiah and the young girl Frear, I have entered this Honourable House to work out a future that will ensure a good opportunity for you all. Maybe a time will come when you will say our grandfather did a very good thing when he was in Parliament, he left behind a good legacy.

I will now come back Deputy Speaker to the Budget before the House and as I said earlier, I give my support to this Appropriation Bill. Before I convey my personal thoughts on the Bill, I would like to speak on the issues raised by the Honourable Member for Ngatangia, Tamaiva Tuavera. As I listened to his comments he seems to be very surprised to learn of this mass of public servants working for the Government on Pukapuka/Nassau.

I am happy because he has stated the large number of people residing on the island and rightly he said, over 500 people. If you think about the number of people living on Pukapuka/Nassau with the other islands of the group, Pukapuka/Nassau is way ahead.

Maybe it is only right that we review the Appropriation for these two islands and separate the allocation for Pukapuka to have its own and for Nassau to have its own allocation. Maybe in the future they will be agreeable to the thought of having two Members of Parliament, one for Pukapuka and one for Nassau. Well what can you say for such a large number of people on these islands?

I want to state this to demonstrate the wisdom of these people in looking after the funds of Government because the people of Pukapuka have been taught with the idea of getting more out of less. Because when you consider the appropriation funds allocated for the workers on these two islands it is over \$765,876. However, when

you divide it amongst the 162 people there's only \$4,000 per person. So we are guilty under the law. It is below the minimum wage of \$7 per hour. However, the wisdom of these people in holding back the people, especially the youth, on the islands this is what they have done. If the work today is carried out by the people in the village of Nato, the next day, those from the village of Ngake will carry out the work. We say in the language of Pukapuka this is a rotation of the work on the island of Pukapuka. That is why the people of Pukapuka have money in their pockets and no other island can follow this.

Therefore Honourable Member from Ngatangiia, when you look on paper, it is a lot of money. However, in reality it is only a small amount of money.

The second point I would like to raise is that the Honourable Member for Ngatangiia is crying because the road work in Ngatangiia has not been done. I totally support your comments my friend because I drove through there last Sunday evening on my big truck turned into a home that I don't know. This is what happens when you go to the night market in Ngatangiia, you have to divert into people's homes for parking. However, this is the only problem.

Like your good friend from Matavera said, the road work must start from the head of the fish until we reach the tail. Therefore my request to you as I see you all sitting together, is to sort yourself out before you go and visit the Minister for Infrastructure so we know where we will start. Do not lay the blame on the Minister. It is up to the three of you to sort yourselves out. Therefore, after our Sitting this evening, you people meet and then discuss your views with the Minister tomorrow.

Thank you very much.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you very much Member of Parliament for Pukapuka/Nassau.

I see on the Floor the Member of Parliament from Atiu, Te-Hani. You have the Floor.

MISS T. BROWN: Thank you Deputy Speaker.

Before I speak on the Appropriation Bill, I would like to take this opportunity to make my round of greetings. To make things easier for our Interpreter, I will speak in English.

Warm greetings to my people of Enuamanu and as customary to us, the three pillars of our island – the traditional leaders of the land, the religious leaders as well as the Government.

Greetings to those back on our island listening in, especially the Title holders – Papa Orometua, Papa Mayor, Papa Paerangi Mataiapo, Papa Ngamaru Ariki, Papa Ernest, Papa Rongomatane. Our Executives – Papa Toru, Papa Kau, Uncle Tapuni to name a few. Please forgive me if I'm unable to mention each and every one of you by name.

I would like to relay special greetings to my constituency and my loyal supporters of Areora/Ngatiarua/Tengatangi listening in today.

Thank you to those who travelled to Rarotonga for my swearing in last week as well as those who wanted to come but had to miss out. I thank you all for the love and support as well as the 1,000 eis that you sew me every time without fail. I owe all the blessings to you all for getting me to this point and for keeping me focused. Never did I ever think that I would become a Member of Parliament. Who can honestly say that they were an MP at 22?

I would like to also say Kia Orana to my grandparents in Atiu – Nana Rima and Papa Tekau and my biggest supporters – Papa Toru and Mama Ben. Special mention also to my great-grandfather, Sir Frederick Goodwin and my uncles – George Maggie, Teina Bishop and George Turia who all came to Atiu for our rally.

Another special mention to our staff at Super Brown, especially our Store Managers for keeping the shop running while we're busy and another one of my biggest supporters, my Papa Brian Baudinet for not only encouraging me but also for your guidance and for keeping an eye on both the business and the kids while we've been busy.

A special Kia Orana to all of you listening in from the Outer Islands, especially the youth. Thank you for your time and your interest.

Honourable Ministers and Honourable Members – Kia Orana to you all. It is a privilege to be here amongst many prominent leaders of the Cook Islands. Thank you to each and every one of you who have made me feel welcome and very comfortable for looking out for me in this new role that I have taken on. Because of you all, politics is not as scary as I thought it would be.

I think it's also appropriate to thank my doubters and the people that gave me a hard time during my campaign. You all know who you are. It would have been a boring campaign without you all. Unfortunately I am my father's daughter, so what you all said just made me laugh.

So finally that brings me back to my parents. I would like to thank my parents for encouraging me to take this on, especially my Dad who is the behind the scenes man in this all. I think it's safe to say that my supporters and my Mum's supporters are all actually his supporters. I thank you both for mentoring me and for keeping me in line.

It is a really big honour to be here today to represent my people especially and for being the youngest Member of Parliament. However, being the youngest in any sort of organisation is not really new to me. I was always the youngest in my year back in school. I was always two years younger than everyone in my year and I started university when I was 16. So I want to encourage all our youth not to use your age as a limitation.

I will now come back to the Appropriation Bill.

It is really good to see the much needed increase in the Health Budget especially considering we need doctors in the Outer Islands, flying doctors but an important thing I want to mention is our mental health standard here in the Cook Islands. I hope

that takes into account mental health because I know most times these people end up going to prison instead.

So this brings me to my next point on page 203 I noticed a subsidy for the youth programme under the Ministry of Police. So this past year's actual budget was only 694 dollars. I am not sure what kind of youth programme that was made for but I am happy to see that the estimated budget has increased to 45 thousand dollars. It is a good start, however I think this is not enough because we all know that one of the biggest problems here is theft and attempted theft and I know that most of this is by young offenders and bored children. This is really damaging for our tourism industry especially since these issues are openly discussed on social media.

So I would like to propose that we think about establishing a juvenile correction centre on Atiu. We have people there that can manage this and look after our children. It also gives them the opportunity to learn new life skills and it gives them a new outlook on life.

Like my fellow member Nooroa Baker said, there's a shortage of labour so why don't we use this as an opportunity to put these young offenders to good use and get them to start planting. I can guarantee you that a lot of these youth won't want to go back to Atiu after they have served their time and I am sure it would discourage them from committing crime. I think this will be a good initiative for our current prisoners. This not only enables a positive impact on tourism but also agriculture and even maybe the Police.

I believe Atiu will be a perfect place for this because it will not really damage our island besides where will they run to when they escape. Not only that what would they steal, the wild pigs. The island is so small and it's so impossible to get away with anything. So we need to use our downfalls and turn it into benefits for us. Like what our Papaa's say when life hands you lemons, you make lemonade.

Another thing I would like to mention is the increase in the subsidy for Government funded scholarships. As a former student I understand how hard it is for students to get money even just to get by while they are overseas so this is a really good thing. Maybe I can use my position to get us to develop maybe better accommodation initiatives for our students overseas that are studying. That is all that I can think of for now. Thank you Deputy Speaker and Madam Speaker.

(Applause)

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Member for Ngatiarua Areora. I think the time is right for our Parliament to take a break for a cup of tea before we return for further debate.

Sitting suspended at 8.26 p.m

Sitting resumed at 9.00 p.m

MADAM SPEAKER: Please be seated Honourable Members. Sitting is now resumed.

Before we went for our break, I believe the Honourable Member for Ngatiarua/Areora has completed her speech.

We will now come back on the Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Interrupted debate on the Second reading of the Appropriation Bill. The Floor is now open to further speakers on the principles and merits of the Appropriation Bill.

I recognise the Honourable Member for Oneroa on the Floor.

MR W. KAREROA: Kia Orana Deputy Speaker and to all the staff members of Parliament. Kia Orana also to our Interpreters and also all Honourable Members who are new in this House. Kia Orana also to all our Honourable Members who have been in this House before. To all our former Members of Parliament who were unsuccessful during the General Election and to the former Ministers for Agriculture and Health who were also unsuccessful in their constituency, I greet you both this evening.

Deputy Speaker, I will now come back to the Appropriation Bill before the House today. I notice there are variations in our budget where some Vote Items have increased and some have decreased a bit.

I would like to talk about the Vote Item for Agriculture. I recall our side requesting for the Vote Item for Agriculture to be increased. We all supported this Vote Item to be increased but when the allocation was put to vote, the former Minister of Agriculture did not lend his support for the Agriculture budget to be increased. However, the former Minister for Agriculture has done a lot for Agriculture during his time. I requested a few things to him and he supported my request. I asked him to reemploy the young growers in Agriculture because their contract has expired so he extended their contract to another one year. These individuals are still working today and they are exporting their produce to Prime Food to sell. They send produce like broccolis but the season for broccolis is over so they can't export broccolis. It is now the season for capsicum. Although the crop is not in abundant, it is an all year round crop.

The growers in Managia have also exported tomatoes here but the season for tomatoes is now over. Our young growers have encountered many problems especially water shortage. This negatively affected the vegetables from growing well. This is a pilot project and I am happy to see in this budget the support given to Agriculture which will benefit the Outer Islands. I noticed in the Vote Item for Agriculture that the seedlings brought in from New Zealand and Australia has decreased. When we look in Book 1 on page 75, there is \$183million for seedlings from New Zealand. I recall in the report for 2009, \$160million was spent on seedlings from New Zealand.

With regards to vanilla, I have been looking for interests in the growing of vanilla. There was an intention for Agriculture to provide assistance to vanilla growers. You can loan \$100,000 and when your vanilla is ready to harvest, you will start paying the loan. The interest for this loan is only three percent. However, our people are not interested in growing vanilla and according to our budget book there are about eight vanilla growers here in Rarotonga. I tried to look for someone to start growing vanilla in Mangaia and the former Minister of Agriculture, Kiriau Turepu, assisted with the set up of this project. Now that we have identified someone, we have a new Minister for Agriculture but I'm sure the new Minister will help us to further develop this vanilla project.

I will now talk about the Vote Item for the Ministry of Health. The Deputy Speaker previously mentioned about the flying doctors in the Outer Islands. I am unsure whether these doctors will stay on the outer islands for one week or one month or four years. However, this is a good start and I noticed their budget has been increased. I hope this increase will be for the duration of one year.

I will now talk about the Vote Item for Mangaia in Book 1, page 213. The trading revenue is \$301,000. When I look at the allocation for other islands, Mangaia has the highest allocation. Our renewable energy is now working so our trading revenue is expected to decrease because we will not depend on electricity run by the generator.

I will now talk about the Vote Item for Tourism. This is one of our biggest incomes. So they should rightly have a large allocation as they bring in a lot of money into the country but the allocation for Tourism in Mangaia is quite small.

Yesterday I met Ewan at Prime Foods and we had a chat. He gave me a photo of Mangaia. Ewan was the one who discovered water in the caves in Ivirua. During our conversation, Ewan told me that he will set up divers to go in the cave. This is a verbal discussions but I believe this will help with the tourism sector in Mangaia.

I will talk about Infrastructure. I saw one day an allocation of \$109,000 for the roadworks on Mangaia. Last year was for \$180,000. I haven't seen any improvement on the roads in Mangaia. This is like money without value and as long as it's in our budget. It's a waste of time submitting to you my request because I have made requests in the past and nothing happened. Although it was approved to carry out the work, nothing was ever done. Therefore, I am unsure whether to support this Appropriation Bill.

I think I have covered most of the important ideas that affects Mangaia, especially Oneroa. I have read somewhere that the allocated fund for the water supply is \$10,000 – I've seen somewhere but going through the Bill I haven't found that information.

I think this is enough. Thank you.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you very much Honourable Member from Oneroa, Wesley Kareroa.

The Floor is open to anyone who would like to speak.

I recognise on the Floor the Honourable Minister from Teenui/Mapumai. The Floor is yours.

HON. R. TOKI-BROWN: Greetings to you Deputy Speaker and all your staff. Greetings also to all Honourable Members in the House. To our Leader the Honourable Prime Minister, to the Deputy Prime Minister, to Ministers of the Crown and also to the Leader of the Opposition and to all Honourable Members in this House especially to all our new Members, Kia Orana in the name of our Lord.

Deputy Speaker, I stand to give my support to the Appropriation Bill before the House. However, with your indulgence Deputy Speaker, please allow me to convey my greetings to our people in Enuamanu. To the three pillars that we normally greet on our island, the traditional leaders, the church and our Government, I greet you all in the name of our Lord.

I also send special greetings to the people in my constituency Teenui/Mapumai, to you all my people, Kia Orana to you all. Kia Orana also to all our people in Areora and Ngatiarua. I have chosen an appropriate verse for us in *Psalms 16:8*, "*I have set the Lord always before me because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.*"

I believe our Lord is our foundation and strength and we will not be moved.

I would now like to greet the people in my constituency Teenui/Mapumai and to thank you all for lending me your support to form Coalition with our Government today. As mentioned by our Prime Minister and also reiterated in the speech from the Throne, the three of us who formed the Coalition Government today, I would like to assure you my people in Enuamanu not to be troubled. Your two Members of Parliament that you have put in this House will push the projects earmarked for our island Enuamanu. Although we are on opposite sides of the House, we strongly believe that you did not vote us to benefit our Party but to benefit the people of our island.

I would also like to greet all our people of Enuamanu residing here in Rarotonga, Kia Orana to you all and to our President who is in our Honourable House today. Finally to all my family and especially to my husband and our children for their support during this past days, I thank you all.

I would like to come back to our Appropriation Bill, even though the allocation for Atiu is not that considerable I am not troubled because I am in the heart of the Government today. Even if some sectors are not represented in this Appropriation Bill you however have heard the full support of this Bill by our Government. All the work that needs to be done on our island and I know you have heard all of these before the improvements on our roads, airport and our water and so forth. The Government has given its full support to improve all these sectors on our island and to complete these during this term.

We obviously see the increase in tourism on the island of Rarotonga. These infrastructure developments are required in the Outer Islands as previously mentioned by the Member from Nukuroa. The need for improving our infrastructure in the Outer

Islands to handle tourism in the future. For on each and every one of these islands are beautiful sights that is yet to be seen by tourists. This also includes the development of agriculture in the Outer Islands. This Bill supports the development of our agriculture sector especially to boost tourism by providing local produce and not depend on imported goods brought in from overseas.

You have previously mentioned your thoughts on Agriculture and Health. There is a project planned for a Master Plan to be put in place. This is already in place before I even became the Minister of Agriculture as mentioned by the Associate Minister of Agriculture, Patrick Arioka. The plan that is already in place and the views and thoughts shared by all the Members of Parliament, this has been gathered to be submitted in a workshop to create a Master Plan. So we actually need all your ideas especially from our growers so we can further develop this plan. This is enough concerning agriculture and when we further go onto the Master Plan then there will be other ideas shown.

Within the health sector we can see the increase allocated to health and I am happy to see your support to increase the allocation for health. Therefore I can see that we are working together and I believe we will not take long in debating this Bill because our people are waiting for the budget to be approved because it has been a long time from the election and the petitions. I stand here and fully support the Budget and when we further go into each Vote Item then we will discuss it further. Thank you very much, Deputy Speaker and God bless us all.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you very much Honourable Minister and the Floor is open to Members who have not spoken yet. I can see the Prime Minister the Floor is yours.

HON. H. PUNA: Kia Orana Deputy Speaker. I would like to thank God for the confidence in all the Members of the House to put you back in that position. Kia Orana to all Honourable Members of this House this evening, the Ministers on the Government side, all Members of Parliament, the Leader of the Opposition and all Members of the Opposition - Kia Orana to all of us this evening.

Kia Orana to all our friends who are listening to the radio in their homes, greetings in the name of our Lord.

Firstly, I wish to convey condolences to the families in Takuvaine. It was during our break when I heard that Papa Eric Ponia have passed away and I believe maybe Wednesday or Thursday he will be buried. I extend our condolences to his wife, children and all the families.

Deputy Speaker, I have listened to the views expressed by Members on the Appropriation Bill and I am happy to hear all the different views. This is what I asked on Friday, and that is for Members to share their views and we can discuss matters in this House.

I want to explain some views that have been shared earlier. My friend the Honourable Member for Ngatangia, I am surprised that he spoke about the Outer Islands, he spoke about Manihiki, Pukapuka, Rakahanga and Penrhyn. I don't think he has lived

on any of these islands to understand what life is like on those islands. I will say that he has the same ideas as most of the Heads of Ministries and they don't know what it is like to live on the Outer Islands. He has many questions but no answers. The problem here is the people here in Rarotonga are taking note of these without realising how the people of the Northern Group are surviving.

Firstly, regarding business. In Rarotonga there are many avenues of making money, there are many opportunities and there are many people living on Rarotonga and coupled with that are thousands of tourists arriving every month so it is very easy to make money. When we go to the Northern Group the way of life is very different. Some islands there are less than one hundred people and some islands there maybe two to three hundred people. Pukapuka have a larger population of over 500. So if we think that these islands can make a living on these islands, we are wrong. Let us not take what is good for Rarotonga to these islands and let us not compare these islands to Rarotonga because we are not the same. There is a huge difference.

So therefore it is the duty of our Government to look after these people on these islands. So I will ask us not to judge because we will be wrong in what we say and think. We are trying to find ways to help our people on these islands but it is not easy.

I think I will say that the Honourable Member for Ngatangiia is only asking questions without any answer. He is asking where this money is as if to say this money is lost in the Government books. He is asking about the money that has been earmarked for projects that has not been completed, where it is and he says it is lost. Government money is never lost and not under the management of this Government.

To show you Deputy Speaker that the essence of his speech is questioning, he is asking about the problems of the road in Muri and especially during the time of the night market. He is right that this is the golden mile of this country and he is right when he said that when the vehicles park on the road it blocks the road. He is asking what the Government is going to do to address this issue.

The problem here is he is asking questions and not thinking of an answer. When we look at the problem of traffic on the road, and if he uses his brain he can find a way to solve this problem. Where is the rugby field for Ngatangiia and why don't they take these vehicles there and park it there and then arrange for a bus or van to take the patrons from there to the market and back again to their vehicles.

MR T. TUAVERA: I have tried.

HON. H. PUNA: Well do it. Don't come here and moan as there is always an answer and he is doing nothing about it. So Members don't come here and moan when there is always an answer. You can ask the Police to close the road or for parking to be on one side of the road and the rest to be taken to the Ngatangiia rugby field.

MR T. TUAVERA: I have tried.

MR H. PUNA: Try harder.

MR T. TUAVERA: I will be the Minister then.

HON. H. PUNA: Deputy Speaker, this is what I am talking about. I want to answer the question raised by the Member of Parliament for Matavera. He was talking about a proposal by Government to establish a High Commission office in Fiji and he was against this proposal. I did not hear any reason why he is opposing this move by Government he just said he is against it.

He should ask the people doing this kind of work as to the reason why an office like this is to be established in Fiji. I think he was not listening to the Speech from the Throne delivered by the Queens Representative last Thursday. It was stated and explained in the Speech from the Throne as to the reason why this office is to be established in Fiji. There are a lot of multi-lateral agencies of the United Nations of the world whose regional office is in Fiji, for example UNDP and so forth.

There are also some countries of the world that do not have an embassy office in Wellington but their embassy is in Suva, Fiji. And we have connections to these nations of the world. I remember this organisation the European Union, their regional office is in Fiji and not in New Zealand. And there are many assistance that we receive from this world organisation. I would say today, Fiji is the hub of the Pacific with regards to international organisations. It is only right for the Cook Islands to have an embassy office in Suva, Fiji. A step closer for our little nation to all these international offices in Suva, Fiji.

We cannot just go to a place without really considering the purpose of our presence. Deputy Speaker I am looking at our time and I see that I have only about 5 minutes before you ask me to sit down. It is sad because I have not finished correcting these Members in the Opposition.

However if we really consider this Budget rightly, it is a good Budget. And I cannot see why you the Opposition are not supporting this Bill. Maybe you do not want any allocations for your constituencies, if that is the case, I want you to confirm it now. Our nation is moving forward and growing well. And we all know that this is the truth. Why are you not willing to admit and declare that this is a good Appropriation Bill? You are looking for the small things for you to scratch these into big things. Do not be like this.

The Government is spending our nation's funds on things to improve our people's livelihood. I am surprised at a comment in our newspapers 'smoke signal' section. Where someone wrote that the Minister of Finance and the Prime Minister are stealing the people's money for their own gains. This is a real bad comment and it is not nice. This Government is not turning its back on the people.

The roads in Aitutaki have been tar sealed. The Member of Parliament for Amuri-Ureia and Vaipae-Tautu has come to Parliament this term but the work of this Government on the tar sealing of the road in Aitutaki has been done already. Aitutaki is greedy enough to keep the young people that went across for the project and have not allowed them to come back to Rarotonga. Maybe the tar sealing will end up in the homes of the people.

The next Outer Islands to be tarsealed is Atiu, then on to Mitiaro. It will be a quick move to Mitiaro because the island is now CIP. Then after Mitiaro we move on to Mauke. The solar power is in Mangaia. Why are you gossiping that no Government project has been done for Mangaia and yet your solar power is installed and completed? There is only one more important project and that is the special bus for the Honourable Member for Tamarua.

I do not know why the Honourable Member for Oneroa is nagging about earlier. I would therefore ask you Honourable Members of the Opposition to support our Budget.

Finally, to my island of Manihiki, I would like to thank you my people for once again putting your faith in me to represent you in this House of Parliament. They were the ones who put this thought in me, it is important to work together in unity. They have shown me their spirit of working together. Peace was seen on our island and it remains even today. May Manihiki remain a good example for the rest of the Cook Islands.

Deputy Speaker our time is up, Kia Orana and Kia Manuia.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you very much Honourable Prime Minister. I believe we had a productive evening.

Our Sitting is adjourned until tomorrow and I would like to ask the Leader of the House to close us with prayer.

CLOSING PRAYER

Parliament is adjourned until Tuesday 25 September 2018 at 1.00 p.m. Good night all.

Parliament adjourned at 10.00 p.m.