



FORTY-NINTH SESSION Hansard Report

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WEDNESDAY 10 APRIL 2019

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER took the Chair at 1.00 p.m.

OPENING PRAYER

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER (T.TURA): Please be seated Honourable Members.

Greetings to us all today.

Thank you to the Reverend for our beautiful message today. Let this be a spiritual guide for us today and for the future.

Kia Orana to all Honourable Members of Parliament, the Clerk and the staff of Parliamentary Services, Kia Orana.

Warm greetings also to those in the Public Gallery and those listening on the radio, here on Rarotonga and the Pa Enua.

Warmest greetings also to Madam Speaker and Papa Colin in New Zealand and also to the Member of Parliament for Akaoa, Nooroa Baker and your good wife Sue. May our good Lord take care of you and bring you back safely in our midst. Be strong and best wishes.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Honourable Members, just a couple of announcements to the Members of this Honourable House.

Number 1. I hope that all Members have taken advantage of the free eye check-up this afternoon offered by the Ministry of Health. Thank you to the Minister and the Secretary of Health for this initiative.

Also, Honourable Members, I have been reminded by Hansard to inform you to read and endorse the Daily Hansard currently being circulated so this can be finalised before uploading on the website later today. Again, be reminded that you cannot add anything you didn't say to the Hansard record. You only have to endorse what you have said and make corrections to the record. In the event of any disagreement to what has been transcribed on the Daily Hansard, please see the Editor of Debates at the end of the hallway on your right.

Speaking on the website, our Sitting for the past three days is being livestreamed on the Parliament Website. There has been a lot of positive comments coming in. Please feel free to check the online. Much appreciation to the Clerk for this initiative, to Byron Brown and the boys: Teui Ahiao, Makiroa Marona, Phillip Tangi for their efforts. Meitaki maata also to the Secretary of Culture, Anthony Turua for the secondment of Phillip Tangi and Makiroa Marona to assist our in-house technician with our Parliament Sitting. Compliments also to the Minister of Culture, the Honourable George Angene for his support.

We will now come back to our business for today. I call on the Leader of the House to move a Motion.

MR T. ELIKANA: Deputy Speaker, I move:

That Standing Orders 64(i) be suspended to enable Government to rearrange the Business of the House under Standing Order 65(1) and Standing Order 310 as follows:
Dispense with Question Time under Standing Order 64(i);
Defer the Presentation of Bills under Standing Order 64(j),
Standing Order 219 and Standing Order 226, and
for this House to move directly to the Orders of the Day

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Do we have a Seconder?

Seconded by the Honourable Minister, Vaine Mokoroa

I put the Question. The Question is:

That the Motion be agreed to?

Motion agreed to

Honourable Members, we shall now move to the Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Interrupted debate on the Second reading of the Appropriation Amendment Bill 2019. Honourable Members, we will continue to speak on the principles and merits of the Bill. Yesterday our last speaker on the Floor was the Honourable Member for Titikaveka. You may continue.

MRS S. NAPA: Thank you Deputy Speaker for the opportunity to complete my speaking time and also to request Government Members to please listen carefully instead of disturbing what we have to say.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: I agree with you Honourable Member.

MRS S. NAPA: I now refer to two points under this Appropriation and one, the establishment of a Ministerial Office for \$50,000. I am very concerned at this allocation of \$50,000 for the establishment of a Ministerial Office. When you

consider this \$50,000 allocated for a new office for the seventh Minister who will be entering Cabinet and on top of that, when you consider another \$100,000 will be spent to pay his salary as well as other perks. Therefore, I object strongly to this allocation under this Appropriation. Because there remains in our country some vulnerable elderlies and widows. Bear with me, I make mention of the elderly as well as those widows who have no spouses as well as no children. They require assistance in their homes because they are sick and old and weak in health. If only these funds would go to assisting our elderly in their homes I would be very happy. Yes, the other side is saying meet with the Internal Affairs. Yes, true. However, there remains parts of their life that is not covered within the laws. This is difficult to offer them help under the current legislation. That is why I pose my great objection to this allocation for a new seventh Minister in Cabinet.

That is not all. For sure, he will be allocated a new electric powered vehicle. When I consider the Parliament Sitting allocation of \$166,000 and as explained here this is for the increase in Parliamentary sittings. Sure the words sound good for increasing Parliament sittings but if this is really happening I have no problem with supporting this. However, as we see today Parliament does not meet regularly so how can this expenditure be justified.

Therefore may I propose that to confirm increasing Parliamentary sittings a Calendar be established for the sittings. When you look at the Parliamentary sittings of other countries they are regular and often.

Those are my thoughts on this Appropriation and may I please express my sentiments to Madam Speaker Niki Rattle and her husband in New Zealand and our prayers go out to our colleague Nooroa Baker as well as your good wife and also our appreciation and thanks from the supporters of the Democratic Party. Those are my thoughts, thank you.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Honourable Selina Napa. Now I can see the Minister George Angene, you have the Floor.

HON. G. ANGENE: Greetings, Deputy Speaker thank you very much for this opportunity given to me to paddle my canoe forward. Firstly, I will say a short prayer for myself.

Deputy Speaker, I'd like to make a request to you first. May I please extend my greetings to a few people? Firstly, greetings to all my people in my constituency Tupapa Nui o Au, this is your Member of Parliament whom you all love. I cannot express how much my constituency loves me because I have won three times in a row now, I am the number 1 on top. To all the title holders in the village of Tupapa, our young ones and everyone, greetings.

May I please extend also my greetings to the outer islands? Greetings to the island of Enuamanu where my grandfather was born. Greetings to the title holders, our children and everybody greetings in the name of our Lord. I stand here also as a Minister for you.

I will now extend my greetings to the Northern Group. I am a son of Manihiki, Rakahanga, Pukapuka and surrounding the whole of the Cook Islands, greetings to you all.

Greetings also to the land of my grandmother, Brown with an “n”. I give greetings to the people of Mangaia. I am in this House to help you and all the people of the Cook Islands.

I come back and extend my greetings to the Honourable Minister Rose Brown for enabling us to be examined by the Eye Specialist. I ask the Minister in the next Parliament sitting that she brings in a specialist for the ear and brain, to ensure that people will listen and interpret what is being said.

I also extend my greetings to the Secretary of Culture, Anthony Turua for the good work he is doing and for allowing these two staff members to enable us to go on air.

Greetings also to the staff of BTIB, Teariki Vakalalabure and your staff, keep up the good work but the last say is mine and not yours. Greetings to you.

Deputy Speaker, turning to my children in custody. I don't like referring to them as inmates but I refer to them as my children. Greetings to you my children and also to your guardians the staff members. I believe you are listening in to me your Minister whom you love, greetings to you all. Just so the Opposition understands why I am saying a lot of greetings to this home is because they are bringing in income to our country. They have been penalised and they are serving time, however I have allowed that they come out and work to pay back all the bad things they have done and on top of that they are also paying tax and not just relying on the taxpayers to feed them.

Greetings also to the leader of the OCI Teina Bishop in Aitutaki. This is the Leader of the OCI in Parliament saying greetings to you.

Deputy Speaker, now I come back to the Appropriation Bill. As I look back over the years I have been in Parliament and up until today I'd like to point out four important parts. Firstly the work responsibilities under ICI so we as Members of Parliament need to support any request for allocations from ICI because this in return benefits us both here on Rarotonga and the outer islands. The spirit here is no matter how much amount is requested by ICI or the Minister of ICI, I urge all of us to give our support because this is a benefit for our constituencies, our people and country.

If the Minister of Finance is concerned about the large amount, it is his problem to look for ways in granting the request from ICI.

Secondly, I would like to speak on our Ministry of Health, our hospital in Rarotonga and in the Outer Islands. For us in this House to support the appropriation for the Ministry of Health and for the Minister of Finance to grant the appropriation allocated.

I would like to speak on the third most important Government agency which is our Police Service. I encourage the House to support the appropriation for this Government department to advance the work necessary to keep the peace and order of

our country. I have many times in the past entered their office during my bad years but today I realised the good work the police does in protecting our people and community, on the roads, public places and our homes. I am convinced that their salary is not right because they are always exposed to danger.

The fourth Government agency I wish to talk about is our prison as I am the Minister of the prison. I have noted the areas where it is lacking in this Government agency and I would like to make a plea that we the House support the funding allocated to our prison. We are aware that when inmates escape from the prison the public becomes concerned and afraid. That is why I refer to our prison as the earthquake household. If the allocation for the prison is appropriate to keep it in order and to pay the wardens good salary I guarantee this House that I will be able to administer this area smoothly.

Those are my views Deputy Speaker on these four important Government agencies which I believe will advance their services. In my term so far in this House, all I have observed are people pointing fingers and accusing each other so the service for our people are spoiled. We should follow the principles of the good book, knock and the door shall be opened, ask and you shall find. I am not quoting the Bible to hide behind it but assure everyone that it is my guide today. I was in the past the right hand man of the devil but today I am a changed person.

There are 24 Members of Parliament and many among the 24 are accusing other Members of not doing the right thing for the people. I want the people to know that the Government gives each Member of Parliament each year \$10,000 for the people of their constituency. For example for my constituency of Tupapa there are 1,300 voters and the \$10,000 allocated for us is enough. I take a portion of this allocation to Chris Vaile as a deposit for his company to upgrade our roads in Tupapa. Members of Parliament can do the same for their constituencies.

Many of the needs and issues in my constituency I pay from my own pocket to address these issues. Deputy Speaker this is how we as Members of Parliament should be doing for our people rather than depending on the Government for funding.

Deputy Speaker I take note of the debate among our people regarding these electric cars. Members this morning would have seen me drive to Parliament on my electric motorbike with no problems. I also own an electric car. The Member of Titikaveka was saying that this big amount of money should be given to the people. My car is always parked under the mango tree and any member of my constituency is welcomed to drive or use it if they needed it. That has been my practice for my vehicle for sometimes now.

Deputy Speaker the Member for Titikaveka has a lot of accusations in the past and she was wrong.

MRS S. NAPA: Point of Order, Deputy Speaker.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Point of Order, what is your Point of Order Honourable Member?

MRS S. NAPA: 173, Offensive. The Honourable Member is accusing me of fault finding in this Appropriation. I am only trying to make proposals as to how to improve our budget for our people. Please can he stop throw bad remarks around?

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you honourable Member and I ask the Honourable Minister to take note and to proceed.

HON. G. ANGENE: Deputy Speaker the Member for Titikaveka was saying that I was pointing fingers, but I was not, my hand was at rest on my side but it was my voice that was heard. We all heard her saying before no, which means she is not supporting the Bill.

MRS S. NAPA: Point of Order.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hold on, there is a Point of Order on the Floor. What is your Point of Order Honourable Member?

MRS S. NAPA: Point of Order, if the Minister can correct himself, that I was objecting this Bill as I was not, Deputy Speaker.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Member, I give the Floor again to you Honourable Minister to correct yourself.

HON. G. ANGENE: Deputy Speaker I have lost five minutes with the Members Point of Order. I would like to ask that I be given extra speaking time because of her interruptions. I did not accused her I was only speaking my mind.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no problem you have another 10 minutes speaking time.

HON. G. ANGENE: And the truth will hurt. Coming back to the electric vehicles I think the problem is not the vehicle itself it is the person that drives it. There was mentioned yesterday of two people that got burnt and it was asked where is the funds allocated by Government for this kind of problem.

MRS S. NAPA: Point of Order

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: What is your Point of Order, Honourable Member?

MRS S. NAPA: For the Minister to correct himself in accusing me that I said yesterday that there was no money from the Ministry of Health to help the two young people. I said the young men paid their own airfares to seek health care overseas.

Would the Minister correct himself.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: You may continue, Minister.

HON. G. ANGENE: The Member is asking to correct myself and my statement is that she asked where the money from the Government is. You have been given \$10,000 in constituency fund and the question to you is, where is that money?

MRS S. NAPA: Point of Order Deputy Speaker. He should be talking about his allocation for his constituency and not my constituency funding.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Can you sit down please. And you Honourable Minister take your seat please. Your time Minister is up.

I see the Minister of Health, Honourable Rose Brown.

HON. R. TOKI-BRWON: Deputy Speaker to move:

That normal extension speaking time of 10 minutes be given to the Minister and any Member that stands to speak

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Do we have a Seconder?

Seconded by the Honourable Member, William Heather

Motion agreed to

You may continue Honourable Minister.

HON. G. ANGENE: Thank you very much Deputy Speaker and to Honourable Members that supported my extension of speaking time on the Bill.

Deputy Speaker the more I speak on this Bill and if I continue in this way there are many things that will be exposed. I have been in the Opposition for 4 years and not a single dollar has been given to me to help my people. I was able to carry out my own work for my people with my own means.

MRS S. NAPA: Point of Order, Deputy Speaker.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: What is your Point of Order, Honourable Member?

MRS S. NAPA: He needs to correct his statement that he was never allocated any constituency funds yet all the Members of Parliament are given constituency funds every year.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Members for your reference please. If there is a Point of Order, you must take your seat and once the Point of Order is completed, then the Chair will advise you to continue.

You may continue Honourable Minister.

HON. G. ANGENE: Thank you Deputy Speaker, I keep rising because of my need and my urge to speak.

The funds I was talking about are the allocations for the Office. I was not talking about the Constituency Fund because I utilise that to help my people and not to buy a carton chicken because that will only end up being human shit. I purchase

equipment such as machineries and so forth. That is my clarification regarding the funds I use when I was a Member of the One Cook Islands.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Minister, can you please withdraw that part of your comments please.

MRS S. NAPA: Thank you.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: And insert a proper nice word.

HON. G. ANGENE: What part of my comments do withdraw Mr Deputy Speaker?

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: You mentioned about human waste.

HON. G. ANGENE: Okay. I do withdraw those comments but what is the terminology? If you eat chicken and then it comes out as a waste, what is that? Is it nice? It doesn't matter. I will withdraw those comments.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: In our local language Minister it's called "*repo*", meaning waste.

You may continue Honourable Minister.

HON. G. ANGENE: Thank you Deputy Speaker.

And to our dear friend and brother, Honourable Nooroa Baker, I would like to express on behalf of Government our sympathy for the situation his wife is in now in New Zealand. Our sincere sympathy to his children in New Zealand, his two children running his business here and as well as to the people in his constituency who put their trust in him to become the Member of Parliament for their constituency Akaoa.

I would also like to convey my condolences to all the family who lost their loved ones in the last past few days. May God comfort them during this time of sorrow.

I also want to thank the Government of today. To the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister and Cabinet Ministers who are all working hard to support our people in the Cook Islands.

Deputy Speaker, over the last two days I am surprised because for the last nine years I've been in this House no question was raised to me. The Member of Parliament from Ngatangia, the Honourable Tama Tuavera is saying everything is fine. Thank you uncle for telling the truth. Therefore, if there are no questions regarding my Ministries, then everything is going well.

Therefore, may I request all Members of Parliament, whether it's in Opposition or Government, if you need any assistance please come and meet with me, meaning if you need trees to be cut or holes to be dug, I can help you.

I would like to confirm to the Member for Titikaveka, the Honourable Selina Napa that four elderly ladies from your constituency sought my help and I helped them. I

do not play politics in my dealings. In my position I consider myself as a Member of Parliament for the people of the Cook Islands. However, my priority is my constituency Tupapa before I offer my help elsewhere. But I do believe the people in my constituency are fine.

To conclude my speech, I would like to greet our daughter, Te Hani Brown. I feel sorry for what is happening to her today. Maybe this is their thoughts and it is happening. I believe Deputy Speaker, for us in this House, women should come together and be united but when I look at it carefully, this is not the case and I can confirm that today. There is a saying in English that, women's worst enemy are women. These are my thoughts Mr Deputy Speaker and if anyone thinks otherwise, that is their own views.

This is what happened to our baby daughter today. The people in her constituency in Atiu made their choice and voted for her to become their Member Parliament, unfortunately, her seat has been petitioned and she will now have to face court. We promised in this House before God that we will be justly and faithful to our people. The Almighty is looking down on us and one day he shall reveal the truth.

To my people on the island of Atiu, it's your decision.

HON. T. PUPUKE BROWNE: Point of Order – 174.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Point of Order. What is your Point of Order?

HON. T. PUPUKE BROWNE: 174. No Member shall refer to any matters on which a judicial decision is pending. Meaning we are not permitted to make mention on any matter on a petition before the court. I would like to request to the Minister to reconsider his comments on this petition and let the petition run its course.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: I uphold the Point of Order. Can the Minister please refrain from referring to the petition while it is before the court.

You may continue.

HON. G. ANGENE: Thank you. I do believe Deputy Speaker that this petition has not reached the Court.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Minister, the petition is before the court. Can you please stop referring to that petition? Thank you.

HON. G. ANGENE: Thank you Deputy Speaker.

I will not mention this again, however, when I am outside of this House I will talk about it. My comments will be much stronger outside this House and I want you to hear this.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: You may continue.

HON. G. ANGENE: This will happen at the night market. I will conclude my comments. If I wasn't interrupted, I would have taken up another ten minutes. Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Minister. I see the Leader of the Opposition, the Honourable Tina Browne. You have the Floor.

HON. T. PUPUKE BROWNE: Deputy Speaker, I rise to move a Motion. I move:

That under Standing Order 37, I seek Leave of absence for the Honourable Member, Vaitoti Tupa who is leaving this afternoon for New Zealand to attend the bereavement of a family member

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Can I have a Secunder please?

Seconded by the Honourable Member, Selina Napa

The Question is:

That the Motion be agreed to?

Motion agreed to

Thank you. We will move on. I see the Honourable Member for Ruuau, the Honourable William Heather.

MR W. HEATHER: Greetings to you Deputy Speaker, the new Clerk and all of us in this House.

Kia Orana also to the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, Cabinet Ministers, Members in Government and as well as to our Leader in the Opposition and all our Members.

With your indulgence Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like to greet the people in my constituency, from Tuoro to Toreaiwa. To all our people in our village, the paramount chief, Tinomana and all the traditional leaders, the different denominations in our village and also Government workers, Kia Orana.

I would also like to greet all the widows and widowers in our village at this time. We do know of the many bereavements that have happened in our village. Please accept my words of greetings and condolences to all of us that went through this.

Yes, Deputy Speaker we can see this good Bill before us in Parliament but at the same time there are some issues we have picked up. Please Government I beg of you to listen so you will be able to help our people.

As you all know I am a grower myself and agriculture is one of my passions. So I'd like to therefore ask the Government to allocate the appropriated amount for the workers for them to be able to carry out the services that need to be carried out.

I remember back in 2010 tractors were given to all the constituencies in Rarotonga and in the Outer Islands. I want to confirm with you Deputy Speaker that there are only about five tractors still running today. The main problem is finding the parts for these tractors. If only the parts could be found for these tractors and they are fixed, I am sure our islands will be planted with food crops.

When I look at the Appropriation, it mentioned about our economic growth and there is no mention that agriculture is contributing towards our economy. Mr Deputy Speaker, if this Ministry is run properly and given the right amount of money, it will become very successful.

Let us look as an example the islands of Atiu, Mauke, Mangaia and Mitiaro we can see Deputy Speaker that animals are roaming all over the island and eating the food crops that have been planted. Is there a way Government can assist?

I have been to Atiu and I have seen the need of the people to grow crops. I am not pointing fingers at the Honourable Member for Atiu as I know she is aware of this. I am helping her to inform the Government that if we control the pest on the island it will become a big help for the island.

I would like to touch on the production of vanilla. This is of importance to our country but I want to mention that this crop takes five years before it can be harvested. The returns from this crop to enable the growers to pay back what they owe to Government is going to take a long time. If only we allocate \$100,000 to ten growers a year, we can control what crops these growers will plant.

That is the spirit that I want to bring to the Minister and the Associate Minister of Agriculture. If one of you come and ask me to grow a certain crop, I will ask you what are you going to give to help me. That is why I am saying to give the money with small interest to our growers and in the end our markets will be flooded with food crops. But this should be controlled properly.

I will now come back to the Vote Item for Marine. This situation is similar to Agriculture. I have looked in the Appropriation Bill and they have nil amount. To me if you go and buy a boat, the machine and trailer and everything and you go fishing, if we do that we will see more fish coming on the market and the cost to our people will be less. This is one of the issues I wanted to raise.

As mentioned by the Minister earlier on about our frontline Ministries. I want to assure you that these Ministries are the frontline because if it is to do with sickness, then it is Health; for cyclones this will be the Police and ICI; when it is boarder control then we know this is Immigration and Customs, those are the frontline people who needs their pay to be increased. This also includes the Corrective Services, when the inmates escape they go out to look for them so they can protect those of us who are sleeping.

I also want to mention something that was said by my colleague the Honourable Selina Napa and that is the issue of the Seventh Minister. Sorry Prime Minister I do not agree with this proposal because I can see that the seventh Minister will be an additional cost to the taxpayers of this country.

We are aware of the issues with the old age pensioners and also the children, they would like an increase so what are we going to do are we going to create a new Ministerial post.

I support this Appropriation Bill but these are the changes I believe needs to be changed and looked at properly for the future.

Maybe I will also talk about the Kaumaiti and the House of Ariki. Maybe you will think because the Kaumaiti is my friend the reason I am speaking about this issue. No, I want to bring a message to the Prime Minister and the Ministers to look at the situation of the Are Ariki. I am happy they have an increase but if we can increase it a bit higher equal to the payment of our workers. Not just for now but for the future and this is a request to the Government.

There is one matter that I have forgotten to raise and that is the road going up to the Sanatorium and for it to be sealed. To me the road is too narrow and when you drive up and a car is coming down we could have an accident.

I would also like to point out that Pokoinu and Arorangi I believe has been forgotten in our Appropriation Bill. I think this money is allocated to Matavera. To the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister, thank you, it is a good Budget but I think it can be improved. Thank you.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Honourable Member. I now recognise the Honourable Minister Vaine Mokoroa, you have the Floor.

HON. V. MOKOROA: Kia Orana Deputy Speaker. Firstly congratulations on your appointment as Acting Speaker and as well as Deputy Speaker of Parliament, two for the price of one. Like previous speakers allow me to convey my sincere condolences for the loss of your grandson and I would like to convey my sincere condolences to all those who had been mentioned that had family members passing away recently. I make special mention of Papa Aukino and Diane's dad, Papa Pito Charlie and these families are in my constituency of Nikao.

Before progressing let me take this opportunity to convey my sincere greetings to the capital of Rarotonga, Oire Nikao. Kia Orana to all the people living in the village of Nikao, from Rangiura, Atupa and all the way to Pokoinu as mentioned by the Member of Parliament Honourable William Heather. Kia Orana to the Reverend Rasmussen who conducted our service this afternoon, to your family and the CICC church in Nikao. Greetings to all the elderlies, youth and the newly born babies living in Nikao.

To the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, Cabinet Ministers and members in Government – Kia Orana. To the newly appointed Leader of the Opposition and all the Members especially to the three newly sworn Members in the House, Kia Orana in the Name of the Lord. On the same token I am rather disappointed in the recent result of the By-election where the decision affecting Tehani Brown which is pending as a petition.

The script by our Reverend yesterday, Daniel 6, whereby the question of what offence Daniel committed could not be faulted. As the matter is before the court we are guided by Standing Order 174.

I would like to thank the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and the Ministry of Finance and under the guidance of Garth Henderson for putting in place a comprehensive and detail appropriation to be discussed and raised within this Honourable House. Over and above that I would like to thank all heads of ministries and public servants for contributing towards the delivering of these work programs as appropriated. Many of these projects and programmes are all about improving livelihoods not only for here in Rarotonga but for the whole of the Cook Islands.

Thank you to the Honourable Member Vaitoti Tupa for acknowledging the good work that is currently being done by this Government especially in the review of the old age pension. I noted that you have made a sound recommendation regarding the categorising of reviewing benefits for the age groups that you have listed.

Honourable Deputy Speaker this Government have promised to increase the old age pension for those over the age of 70 years, to collect \$350 every fortnight or \$700 a month. As mentioned by the Minister of Finance over and above this the Government is also increasing the child benefit age from 14 years to 16 years in the next financial year. Over and above that increasing the minimum wage rate from \$7.35 to \$7.60 in the next financial year. And the financial year after that to \$8.00 per hour.

Mini Games

This Government is also mindful of our national exposure in the sporting arena to the support of the Pacific Games that will be held in Samoa in the month of July this year. Honourable Deputy Speaker this will be one of the biggest contingent of 251 athletes to represent the nation at the Pacific Games. \$300,000 have been allocated in the last financial year and this is to meet all the travel, accommodation and catering needs and the \$200,000 which we will approve in this appropriation will meet all the costs that is expected of all team. This is not to say that the codes are not to contribute to this international event but each and every athlete is expected to pay a certain amount to contribute towards this event.

Not forgetting for us here in the Cook Islands this Government is also working with the Minister Rose Brown, Member for Atiu for the preparation of the Manea Games which will be held in Atiu next October.

Road Programmes

In terms of our road program I would like to thank the Members of Parliament for Muri, Honourable Tamaiva Tuavera, and again the Honourable Vaitoti Tupa, and again the Honourable William Heather Jnr for acknowledging and praising the good work that our staff within ICI that are carrying out not only for Rarotonga but for Aitutaki and Atiu. I would like to ask that we do not criticise our road boys because these boys were disciples of the Honourable William Heather who used to work at Public Works, ICI.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Minister I will interrupt you as it is time for us to take our break. Parliament is suspended until 3.00 p.m.

Sitting suspended at 2.30 p.m.**Sitting resumed at 3.00 p.m.**

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please be seated.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Interrupted debate on the Second Reading of the Appropriation Amendment Bill continues.

Before we took a break, the last speaker on the Floor was the Honourable Minister, Vaine Mokoroa. You have the Floor.

HON. V. MOKOROA: Thank you Deputy Speaker.

Before we left for a break, we were talking about the situation of the roads. Yesterday we heard the issues about the road in Atiu where the tar and chips had come off. Last night I became worried and contacted Atiu as well as Amara from Matavera who confirmed that they do not have any damaged roads today.

Deputy Speaker, this is only stage 1 of 2 Stages of the sealing program in Atiu. I know that the Honourable Maoate's statement yesterday – it's best to do the right things and do things right.

Member of Parliament Travel

Deputy Speaker, one of the statements from the Minister of Finance is in regards to the \$180,000 allocated for Members of Parliament. Our engagement with the world will enable us to step up at the global stage and tap on opportunities to progress our development.

Last month a Green Climate Fund team held a conference at the National Auditorium on the 14th and 15th March. The team visited the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister, the Honourable Mark Brown who expressed interest on private sector engagement and infrastructure resilience. Not to steal the thunder from the Minister of Finance, official visits were also conducted with the Office of the Minister of Finance who has been accredited to be one of distributions within the region.

This Green Climate Fund has also forced us to establish and develop a Cook Islands Country Program which was adopted in Cabinet on the 6th March. This Country Program identified 11 priority areas. These areas cover:

1. Renewable Energy Development
2. Coastal Protection and Restoration
3. Water Security
4. Disaster Risk Management
5. Waste Management
6. Climate Proofing Infrastructure
7. Flood Management
8. Agriculture and Eco-System based adaptation

9. Ocean Management
10. Building Resilient livelihoods of people and communities
11. Knowledge, Research and Innovation.

Deputy Speaker, this Forum have resulted through the meetings, conference and forums that many of our Members of Parliament, Ministers and Leaders have attended or will be attending who will get more information. Hence the request for this extra funding.

In concluding, Deputy Speaker, this Appropriation we have discussed in this Honourable House today will assist in rolling out many of the priority areas that each and every Government Ministry is expected to deliver.

Thank you very much.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Minister for Nikao.

I see the Member from Tamarua. You have the Floor.

MRS T. MATAPO: Greetings Deputy Speaker and to all of us in this Honourable House this afternoon.

Firstly, please allow me some time Deputy Speaker to give my greetings. First of all, I would like to convey my sincere condolences to all those mentioned in this House who have lost their loved ones. I would also like on behalf of all our Members of Parliament from Mangaia, to give our condolences to the family of Ngametua Papatua. The body of his son Papatua Papatua was returned to Mangaia. Therefore, on behalf of all the Members of Parliament from Mangaia, I would like to offer our sincere condolences to the grieving family as well as to one of our Interpreters, Papatua who has left with the family to go to Mangaia. May God bless us all.

Greetings to the people in my village and to the three traditional leaders in the village. To the Church sector, the Government sector and traditional leaders, greetings to us all. To all the people, the titleholders and leaders on the island of Mangaia, greetings to you all.

I will come back to the Appropriation before the House. I will talk about the bus for the island of Mangaia. I would like to convey my appreciation to Government for confirming in this Appropriation that this egg will be finally cracked. To you Honourable Prime Minister, I hope this bus will arrive before the cold weather on the island of Mangaia.

My second issue on the school is that, we have listened to the report from the Minister of Finance about the benefits of bulk purchasing. I also heard the report about the Secondary School for the island of Mangaia as well as all the schools, and I believe for the whole of the Cook Islands. This year, there is a change in all schools for the purchase of books and things for the school for the children to use. I believe the school on Mangaia started this year with nothing to use for their school work. Maybe this is a new issue but I would like to know whether this is the case for all schools or whether Mangaia School is the only school that has been affected.

The second point is on the allocation for the water for Tamarua. I would like to thank Government for this allocation. However, my concern is not the allocation of funds. Yesterday during our afternoon break, the Minister asked me this question. I will translate to my Mangaian language. The Minister asked me if our problem in Mangaia is resolved. I told him we have no problem. I think the problem is him.

Today, two people from ICI went to inspect the water in Tamarua. I know our greatest concern coming through this project is the consultation between ICI and the Island Government. The materials for the project arrived on Mangaia. I asked the Executive Officer for Mangaia what is happening. He told me he does not know and that it is the responsibility of ICI. ICI already have an officer they have allocated to oversee all the work on Mangaia. When the work was carried out, I, as the Member of Parliament for Tamarua, approached the Executive Officer and asked him what is happening. He told me he does not know because there is already a Project Manager appointed. When he tried to contact the Project Manager, there was no answer. He could not find him and it was left to the ICI from Rarotonga to advise us on the Island of Mangaia.

Those are my thoughts. The allocation is fine. However, the relationship between ICI and Rarotonga as well as the Island Government of Mangaia, there are issues here. I leave it to the Minister to correct me on this side.

Right now, I am waiting for the report on whether it is good news or what, on the work that is being done and whether there are enough funds. So a reminder to the Minister, our thoughts remain that all piping on the island be changed because the current pipes utilised on the island are the PVC pipes. They are breaking in certain places.

The third point and the thoughts of the island of Mangaia regarding the Ministry of Health and that thought remains from the people of Mangaia, where is our doctor. Another great concern is the dentist. Right now if you are sick you will be referred to Rarotonga but if you have a tooth ache you pay your own flight unless your mouth was ripped up as you tried to pull out your tooth because of the unavailability of a dentist.

As well as the thoughts to support our people once they are referred to Rarotonga because as we know once you arrive in Rarotonga you find your own way. These are just my thoughts and I understand the amount of money have already been appropriated but these are just thoughts for the future.

The Minister was talking about women and saying that women are their worst enemies. Minister it depends on who you are referring to. I will tell you if my fellow women hear what you have said they won't be very happy.

We have just returned from a meeting in Fiji concerning women and the term integrity became a very important topic for us in that meeting. A question was asked to us whether we knew we were being teased or bullied by men. That was one of the questions asked concerning bullying. I will not speak on that topic and I will leave that to the people to decide whether the men are bullying the women but we are not scared of you.

I have no objection to the appropriation and especially to the increase in the allocation for the Members of Parliament because I travel to Rarotonga.

Some thoughts on agriculture and there are some good suggestions but Minister I will come knocking on your office door regarding agriculture for Mangaia. That's all I have to say. God be with us all.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Honourable Member it's good to hear you. Now I can see the Leader of the Opposition Honourable Tina Browne.

HON. T. PUPUKE BROWNE: Greetings, Deputy Speaker and thank you for this opportunity to be able to speak this afternoon. To all of us in this Honourable House, the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and all Ministers and Honourable Members on the Government side and the Opposition and I would like to make a point with the Honourable Member Tereapii Kavana we are the corrective side. To all our people listening to the radio this afternoon greetings in the name of our Lord.

I would like to give words of condolences to you Deputy Speaker for your loss and also those that were mentioned yesterday and today our words of condolences to you all.

Yesterday at the start of our Sitting Mr Deputy Speaker you gave us Members of Parliament a warning for us to respect the Standing Orders of Parliament and for us not to interrupt a Member's speech. I was happy with this warning because on Monday this happened and I believe that your warning will teach us Members not to do that. Today this has happened again and this is our problem and not yours.

I am unhappy with this conduct because these are laid out in our Standing Orders but I am sure that our people do not want to hear us acting like children in this Honourable House. I am sure that we do not want to waste the taxpayer's money to pay for air time so I ask you Deputy Speaker to get your kikau broom out and smack the Members who act that way especially when I am speaking.

Maybe some of us will ask why I speak like this but it is just so that we Members can respect ourselves. As a lawyer, we are not allowed to speak when a person is talking in court. This is not new as we parents teach our children not to speak when someone is talking. So this is taught to us from our childhood. I do believe this will assist us to respect one another. This is my request to the Members of this House, let's respect each other. This will in turn Deputy Speaker assist you in doing your job if we respect one another.

I will now switch to the Rakahanga language. On Monday, the Deputy Prime Minister presented to Parliament the First and Second Reading of the Appropriation Amendment Bill. My understanding, and I stand to be corrected, when the Minister replied, he said this is the first Supplementary Budget since 2011.

I understand that in previous years, the excess expenditure was covered by Article 70 of the Constitution. If I am right then, I applaud Government for doing the right thing and disclosing to us the Parliamentarians the individual expenditures that has been spent under the Executive Order.

The Bill itself is not a very long Bill but it does contain six schedules and a summary of adjustments to the financial statements comprised in the Appropriation Act 2018. Notwithstanding that the Opposition requested time to consider the Bill and in particular the variances between the figures provided in the Principal Act and that provided in the Amendment Bill. The Bill nevertheless went straight into second reading in the afternoon of Monday.

I was happy however that after the Budget speech we adjourned Parliament so that we did have time to look at the matters referred to in the Appropriation Bill. In the Budget speech the Deputy Prime Minister praised his and his Government's role in putting together or putting in place sound economic and financial management to ensure economic growth and prosperity. I just wanted to add that this is in background of not having the accounts audited for the last 8 years.

I have to bite my tongue because yesterday we had the annual report I think of 3 years tabled. In the limited time that the Opposition has had to consider the areas referred to as justifying the expenditure which parliament is being asked to approve, the Opposition you heard the Members talk about various areas. I want to mention a few other areas.

I agree with the Deputy Prime Minister that tourism remains the key driver in our economy. He refers to the retail and construction and other industries that have contributed to our revenue. We of course should be mindful that at once upon a time we had the offshore trust companies as another contributor to our revenue. We also should be reminded that the pearl industry at one stage contributed quite heavily to our revenue and the agriculture.

I support the comments from outside of the House with regard to putting more money into agriculture. I myself is not a farmer or planter, at least not that type of farmer. But we have the resources and we have the land and we have some experts in our agriculture ministry. And I would ask us to inject a lot of many into agriculture so that agriculture will again feature highly in our revenue earning stream.

And more importantly we need to have some contingency plans in place if a cyclone comes next month, what then? If tourism collapses for whatever reason, what then? So, I see in the Bill that agriculture is going to receive \$999,772. I just ask that in future perhaps we should give some serious consideration to injecting more money into agriculture.

The Deputy Prime Minister makes mention of IMF, they are in country and they are here to assess our position. We look forward to that report Mr Deputy Prime Minister. I am going to speak faster because my time might be running out.

I want to talk about the money allocated in Atiu. I agree that the money should allocated for Atiu to improve the roads in Atiu. Unlike the Minister of Internal Affairs who knows more than me about roads but let me explain to you what I know about roads. We were all in Atiu recently so I am talking from first-hand knowledge. As I understand it all that has been completed in the first phase is 3.3 kilometres of single coat tar seal roads in the villages. So, as the Minister of Internal Affairs was making comments and said there is expectation of a second coat. I guess the

comments from the Honourable Member from Amuri, Aitutaki and the Honourable Member from Arenikau was nothing more but to say, let us do a good job and let us not tar seal roads such that it provides a sealing for the underneath our vehicles.

I am also told that there is a coral in Atiu called dolomites, it is a mineral apparently. I am told that this is the type of mineral that is used in Niue for their roads. I am just wondering why not that mineral being there and Government does have a crusher as I am told over there. Why are we taking all these tar seal that is going to seal the underneath of the cars to Atiu? I guess what I am saying is that if we have \$700,000 perhaps those experts can have a look and see how best it can be used.

With regards to the \$220,000 colour streetlights I am told. Maybe it is not just colour streetlights because that sound really expensive to me. Maybe that money could be spent better elsewhere like providing tar sealed roads for the people who are planting in Atiu to their plantations.

With regards to the \$180,000 allocated for parliamentary travel. I hear what the Minister of Internal Affairs is saying, there is a benefit for some travels – I agree. But we do know and I am hoping you will accept that there is travel that we do not get any benefit from. For me it is a question of priorities and we have been complaining about having no doctors in the Northern Group for I do not know for how long. \$180,000, if you pay a doctor for each of the islands, one for Penrhyn island, one for Pukapuka and one for Manihiki, Rakahanga at \$60,000 a year, that is your \$180,000.

I realise that Government will need to improve the accommodations of these doctors in the Outer Islands because part of the reason why good doctors do not go up north is because the accommodation is not flash.

The establishment of a Ministerial office. The Minister quotes article 13.3 (a) of the Constitution. Ministers are paid \$85,000 a year. The request here is for an additional \$50,000. Now both the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister have already announced who the appointee is. That's no secret. The report of the Law Reform Commission made in 1998 where this recommendation came from recommended that the person that this position was put in place to provide some expert skills to a Cabinet when it is lacking. I think the example given in the report was accounting, legal and so on.

Now we then have to ask what is the skill lacking – what skill does the current Cabinet lack? You have a lawyer. You have someone who is reasonably good in the accounting area. So you need to ask that question.

The second question, I think it is a more serious one and that is Article 14(7) of the Constitution. If that is an Article that allows the Prime Minister to advise the QR to suspend a Minister because he is under investigation, how is it that you are thinking of doing the reverse and appointing one who is being investigated? And this \$50,000 extra, that's money that can be put to assisting the freight for Rakahangans for their cargo to Rakahanga.

Now there is also mention in a very - I don't know how many lines – appointment of Associate Ministers and I think, Deputy Prime Minister, it is included at page 12 right

at the bottom and I'm not sure whether that is part of the funding for the \$50,000 or whether there's a separate funding for that but I'm sure you're going to reply to that. What I am struggling with is the Civil List Act only tells us that there can only be three Associate Ministers and if you've already appointed three Associate Ministers, my calculator tells me 3 + 3 is 6. Now this can only happen, in my view, if there is going to be an amendment to the Civil List Act and I don't see that on the papers during this Session.

Now, finally, the amendment refers to the increase for the Ministry of Justice of \$300,629. This is actually not money that is coming out of MFEM. It is coming out of MFEM but where the source of this money are the filing fees, the money that the Justice earns from the increased fees that have been charged since the fees were raised maybe four years ago. Now previously application fees for succession to a deceased parent was \$5 and now, because it was thought that more revenue should be injected into the Ministry to provide better service, the application fees were raised even up to \$125 an application and the whole idea behind it – and I don't think it's a bad idea – the whole idea behind it is to try and improve the services provided by the Ministry of Justice. But we all know that it didn't quite turn out that way and a very recent example which is known to some of us in this room, the solar land in the north, the solar land in Tukao, Rakahanga and Tauhunu.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: I will interrupt you. Your time is up.

HON. T. PUPUKE BROWNE: Thank you.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Leader of the Opposition, Tina Browne.

I recognise the Honourable Prime Minister, as Seconder to the Motion for the Second Reading of the Appropriation Amendment Bill, and as indicated by you yesterday to be the last Member to speak. The Floor is now yours.

HON. H. PUNA: Thank you very much Deputy Speaker. To you and all Honourable Members in this House, our people listening from outside – greetings to all of us.

I do realise there are many warriors on this end to stand up and speak but I will take the opportunity to summarise and capture all our thoughts.

First of all, I would like to gather all the thoughts of condolences to you Deputy Speaker for the loss of your grandson. I also give our sincere condolences to the family and the households of our former friend and colleague of Arenikau, Pumati Pumati. I am grateful because when our colleague friend passed away in New Zealand I was there with my wife and we were able to visit him quickly at the home in Mangere to express our condolences and present flowers. However, when we arrived there the body was not at home but still at the undertakers. To me, I myself as well as all of us were present for this bereavement.

I would like to give my thanks, first of all, to the Deputy Prime Minister, the Minister of Finance and all the staff of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development for

putting this report together for the Bill we are discussing. This is not a very easy job. However, in the short time they were able to present what we see today.

I would also like to thank our new Clerk who stepped up to this position to replace our former friend, the late John Tangi.

I would like to greet the new Ombudsman of this country, Nooapii Tearea as well as to say thanks to his predecessor, Tearoa Tini who held this position for a while.

Special greetings to the people of Manihiki from the Mayor, the Council, the Churches, the people – thank you very much to the people, thank you very much for taking care of us on our visit to Manihiki. I do know these Rarotongans did not want to return. However, I encouraged them to get on the flight and fly back to Rarotonga. But what is good Deputy Speaker is the confirmation and the resolution reached by the people of Manihiki and Rakahanga. They did not just say they support but they did say hurry up.

Deputy Speaker, I enjoyed listening to the thoughts and speeches by the Members on this Bill. When I listened carefully most of them are in support. Just a couple of them moaning but in the end support. However, I would like to answer some of the ideas and thoughts in those little complaints.

The thoughts and all the ideas brought about by the Minister of Finance concerning this Bill are just not made up. We have experts and people from overseas that travel here to inform us that our growth and economy is doing very well. I should say that we do not really want them to tell us that there is growth. We should be able to see and we know that there is growth in our economy. We only need to travel to the Market on a Saturday morning and see the joy in our sellers.

So I would like to say thank you to the Minister for his beautiful Ministerial Statement.

I feel sorry for what the Member for Ngatangia has said, to say that we don't have any natural resources to better ourselves and yet his business relies on these resources. As previously mentioned by our Minister of Finance, our people are our biggest asset. The young men on his tourist boat are the ones taking these tourists out to sea who entertains them and sings for them and climbs the trees for them and feeds them. These are real assets Deputy Speaker. Maybe it is too close for comfort. But there is no question our people are our biggest asset.

There are experts from overseas that enters our country and sees these natural resources and not as mentioned that there are no natural resources here. You see we don't fit the traditional mould. We are different and yet in being different we are so good.

I am not saying that we the Government are the one that are only doing very well but I'd like to reassure every one of us in here and all the people of the Cook Islands we are sailing on one canoe together and we should all be proud that we are on one canoe and we are doing so well.

Deputy Speaker, I agree that we all have a collective interest to ensure that our country moves forward. I ask all of us here that when experts come into our country for us to come and listen to what they have to say.

The Green Climate Fund Round Table last month was a first and yet I did not see any Members of the Opposition there. This meeting is not just for the Government but it is ours and we had every reason to be proud of it because it's a first such Round Table anywhere in the world and we can see that we are first Pacific Nation to be accredited as an entity direct access to the Green Climate Fund.

We will see that the young people doing our work, they have the capability to take us to high places.

We have big machineries outside of Rarotonga and they are helping the wellbeing of the Outer Islands. The work on the land, the boats and you name it we have the equipment.

On our last trip to the Northern Group I discovered a problem that we should all be aware of. Leader of the Opposition, there are people living on our island of Rakahanga and they are not happy when they don't get their way and they are taking out their anger on the machines that belong to the people.

I have been told that after the last election there is a young man who was angry and he poured water into the petrol tank. Luckily a mechanic from Australia spotted it before the machine was turned on. This has to stop. We Members should make sure that this does not happen again because he is not hurting the Government but he is hurting our people. I think I will put this in the hands of the Police and for this person to be punished so that this does not happen again on our island.

I agree with the thoughts from the Leader of the Opposition and that is your right name to put right but you need to correct yourselves first. I say this because I am getting reports that when you go on workshops you are not representing the Cook Islands. What you are doing is you are taking the political will from our country to that meeting you attend. I have spoken about this two years ago in this House and I have pre-warned you that when I hear this again I will tell the Minister of Parliament and the Speaker that you will not be attending to any workshops for Members of Parliament. You are representing this country, you are representing this Parliament. You have taken an Oath to be loyal to this Parliament.

The Leader of the Opposition has mentioned our responsibilities as MPs, our Code of Conduct. Please be careful. When our sports team travel overseas they don't go individually to represent our country and we should be doing the same. So therefore I will call you Opposition.

Deputy Speaker, I have so many thing to talk about but I want the Minister of Finance to summarise everything up. Thank you very much for your support on this Appropriation Bill. We should be proud our country is doing very well and we should be proud that we are able to distribute the wealth of our country.

My friend the Honourable Member for Tamarua, yes our bus is coming. Please come tomorrow and will go and find out why it is taking a long time. To me we should be working like that and don't just rely on the Government but come and see us and let's work together. May God bless and unite us to work together.

A special welcome to the new Members. By the way one more thought because the Opposition has touched on this topic and that is the seventh Minister. Yes, we did not hide this but I did not like the bad comments that came. There are different needs for the country and our people from time to time.

At this time it is the Government's wish for the work load to be spread out. We know that the world is getting very complicated and we need more to do than what we used to do years ago.

And you understand Leader of the Opposition that what you brought about that's why we haven't done anything. We will abide by the ruling of the Court of Appeal and also our Constitution and that is why this has been held up. We are waiting until everything is sorted out then we will see how we will move forward. I believe I have explained the questions that have been raised and God be with us all.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Honourable Prime Minister. Now I recognise the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance, Honourable Mark Brown.

HON. M. BROWN: Thank you very much, Mr Deputy Speaker. Before I start let me pass on a birthday congratulations to the Member of Parliament for Ngatangiia. I believe you are now qualified to collect our pension and that is why you are happy these days.

My words of greetings go out to the people of Tapuahua whom our Leader of the Opposition forgot to greet and also to our people from the constituency of Areora/Ngatiarua/Tengatangi, the ANT that we call them, greetings to you all and also the whole of Enuamanu on behalf of our Minister Rose as she did not have the opportunity to greet you today, so I give her greetings to you all.

It seems, Mr Deputy Speaker that the use of fake news is not restricted to the Member for Ngatangiia but also extends to the Leader of the Opposition. Let me just correct a statement regarding our consolidated and audited Crown Accounts when she said that it have not been audited for 8 years.

Our Crown Accounts have been completed up to 2014. So, that is not 8 years Mr Deputy Speaker. And currently the crown audit team are working on 3 financial periods for 2015, 2016 and 2017 which are due to be completed and signed by September this year and that leaves then the 2018 year of audits which will be completed depending on the submission of final accounts by all of Government agencies and ministries.

I would like to thank the Honourable Members who spoke to this Appropriation Amendment to give their support and may I remind our Members that this Appropriation Amendment really is to confirm already the approvals that have been legally sort by Cabinet through Executive Orders as according to our Constitution

article 70. And yes it is important that the economy that allows us to expend our money onto our people is driven by the tourism industry. And it is important that we ensure that this industry is resilient and able to produce and provide for our prosperity for years to come.

As correctly pointed out by the Leader of the Opposition, we do have other industries that contribute to our economy but they have been declining in recent years. The financial services industry has been static for a number of years as it battles with compliance requirements imposed upon it by overseas jurisdictions and regimes. And although it has not grown by much as a proportion of our total economy its contribution has declined as the economy has grown.

The same with our pearl industry which is very much depended on one lagoon in our country that has it challenges particularly with regard to the world prices for black pearls. Agriculture Mr Deputy Speaker however should not just be measured in terms of export earnings. Because an economic total evidence from the economic team suggest that as our economic has grown and as our tourism numbers have increased we would expect that imports of agricultural products would also increase. But in terms of agricultural products this has not been the case and this suggest to us Mr Deputy Speaker that gap is being met by domestic productions.

And the call for millions more dollars to be put into the agriculture appropriation in the budget Mr Deputy Speaker I think is the wrong call. And this is because there is a lack of understanding about how much exactly the Government has been putting into agriculture over these years particularly with the large amount of agriculture machinery that has been put out to all our islands through the Chinese grant fund. The small agriculture machineries that went out nearly four years ago amounted to over three and half million dollars' worth of machinery that went out to all of our growers.

The important thing in my view Mr Deputy Speaker is not so much to increase the budget of agriculture but to put the money into the agriculture industry and into the agriculture sector so that the growers and producers themselves are supported directly. Because there is no doubt that agriculture plays a very important role in the livelihoods of many of our people who supplies the domestic market. And I know that our Minister of Agriculture and the Associate Minister of Agriculture are working very, very well to try and find initiatives which will support our agriculture industry directly so that it benefits those growers not just here in Rarotonga but right around our Cook Islands. And that may mean putting some money into the Ministry of Agriculture but it also means putting money directly into the industry which may not be recognised in the Budget.

But there is no doubt if you read the economic report on our country we are regarded as a very narrow based economy, meaning that we rely very heavily on tourism. Which is why this Government is looking at ways to diversify our economy and why we turn to our ocean and look at our fisheries and increase the revenues to our country from our fisheries from just over a million dollars a few short years ago to now close to fifteen and twenty million dollars each year depending on our licensing approvals. And why as an ocean country we look now into our deep ocean even further for more

diversification of our economy and to seek for potential that our mineral resource will have in helping lift the standard of living of our people.

And as the Leader of the Opposition again rightly pointed out we are at risk of natural disaster and the threat to our tourism industry if this occurs. However this Government has taken upon itself to build resilient measures and to protect our people and our country in the event of natural disaster. Our emergency response fund which never existed until we became Government now sits at 1.8million dollars ready to be used in the event of any natural disaster.

We are founding members of the pacific catastrophe risk insurance facility whereby we receive a payment from this particular facility in the event again of any natural disaster. And we were the first county to work with the Asian Development Bank to develop a contingent line of credit whereby we have automatic access to 10million dollars in the event of natural disaster hitting our country. And today we have members of the Commonwealth Secretariat working with our ministries and our agencies looking to find ways again which we can build financial resilience and better response in the event we are hit with natural disaster.

So, we are a country Mr Deputy Speaker that have prepared ourselves well and our people who are involved in the tourism industry have also prepared themselves well and we are reaping the benefits of that and we hope that we will be prepared in the event of a natural disaster. But the best insurance we can have for this Mr Deputy Speaker is for all of us to attend the thanks giving prayer service on Sunday at the Auditorium where we give thanks over this period of the cyclone season that is just ended for the protection that has been accorded to our country over this year. Because at the end of the day man can do what it can but everything is in the hands of our Good Lord.

I would like to just clarify some of the statements made in regards to the funding set aside or appropriated for the roads in Atiu and quite rightly as the Leader of the Opposition said, she's not a road expert. Neither am I an accounting expert. However, I can assure the Members of the House that the road sealing in Atiu was a double coat seal as explained to me by the Minister of the ICI and the stage 1 and stage 2 refers to actually different roads that will be sealed. So the first stage, stage 1 is in the town area. Stage 2 will be the roads that go further out towards the airport and other areas that have been identified for sealing to be done. I can assure you that the roads have been done expertly in Atiu. There is no flying tar to seal the underneath of your car when you drive on this road as opposed to the roads in Aitutaki. It may be that the stones in Aitutaki are different from the stones in Atiu.

And finally Mr Deputy Speaker, just to clarify, that in terms of the appropriation set aside for the Office of the new Minister, the seventh Minister, this is an initial amount required for the establishment of the Office which is yet to be done.

However, in referring to the Political Reform Commission recommendations from 1998, reading those statements in that particular report, I can certainly see the difference in the time which is now 20 years ago compared to today, the needs of the country then as opposed to the needs of the country now.

The Budget at that time Mr Deputy Speaker was \$50 million of which \$20 million was domestic revenue and \$30 million was serious aid funds that were put in for the reform period. In stark contrast to today's Budget Mr Deputy Speaker of \$270 million, we have a very different country today than it was 20 years ago.

The number of diplomatic partners was very low compared to what we have this year and our international and global engagements were very little whereas compared to this time now they are very much significantly more.

So the burden on six Ministers back in 1998 Mr Deputy Speaker, was far less than what it is on six Ministers today with the number of multiple portfolios that each of the Ministers holds and the commitments required by our country to represent these portfolios at various international meetings. And if I recall rightly, Mr Deputy Speaker, the recommendations for a seventh Minister and the qualifications of that person to be in finance or legal or business, to be highly qualified, when I read about it now 20 years later it has a very patronising tone to it. It implies that Cabinet Members are too dumb to know what they know and they need somebody cleverer than them to come into Cabinet and help them out.

I recall during the reform period in the nineties Mr Deputy Speaker, the significant number of ex pat consultants that were involved in our country and were involved in providing input into this particular report which is why I made mention that this particular report has a very patronising tone to it. However, those were the days back then in the 1990s. Today we are in the 21st Century moving on to 2020 – nearly 30 years later now – and things are very very much different from when they were back then.

And in fact I would recommend more than seven Ministers in Cabinet if I was able to, simply because of the workload that is being placed on these Ministers but failing that, additional assistance or Associate Ministers would be required as well.

And as for the statement that this is costing taxpayer's money, well, this is really the crux of the matter whereby when we look at it, the Members of this House haven't had a pay rise for fourteen years. The allowances that are being paid to Members of Parliament for their travel are set on a schedule that was established back in the 1980s and the housing allowance of our Outer Island Members of Parliament in particular, is something that has no relevance at all with the current market here on Rarotonga.

Therefore, not only does Cabinet require more Members in it to be able to do the work of the country more effectively but I think the Members of this House need to be upgraded in terms of their remunerations and also their allowances. I am mindful Mr Deputy Speaker that's not in any of this work that is being done on the Appropriation Amendment so I will leave my statement on the Appropriation Budget there. Thank you very much.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Minister of Finance.

I will put the Question. The Question is:

That the Appropriation Amendment Bill 2019 be now read a Second time?

Motion agreed to

DEPUTY CLERK AT THE TABLE (H. MAUNGA): A Bill Intituled: An Act to amend the Appropriation Act 2018.

BILL READ A SECOND TIME

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Under Standing Order 306, I now resolve Parliament into the Committee of Supply to go through the Clauses and Schedules of the Bill.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

MR DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Honourable Members, I would like to seek leave to go through the Appropriation Amendment Bill by Clauses and Schedules commencing from Clause 1. Do I have leave?

(Leave is granted)

Clause 1: Short Title.

The Question is:

That Clause 1 stands part of the Bill?**Motion agreed to**

Clause 2: Application.

Oh, sorry.

HON. T. PUPUKE BROWNE: Deputy Chairman, just some clarification. If I can point to Standing Orders 308, and in particular to sub clause (3). My understanding of this Clause requires you, the Chairman, to go through the Schedules first. So I am seeking clarification because that's what 308 states.

MR DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Thank you Honourable Member. Thank you for putting me on the right track. We will go through the Schedule.

Schedule 1: Agency Budget Appropriations

The Question is:

That the sum of \$130,938,191 of Schedule 1 stands part of the Schedule?

I see the Leader of the Opposition.

HON. T. PUPUKE BROWNE: Mr Deputy Chairman, my understanding to what that says is that we have to do it – I know it's the long way to do it, but we have to do it Department by Department. That's what 308 (3) says. Whereas the wording of the current Motion is the total. That is not what 308(3) says.

MR DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Anyway, we will continue. I will repeat it again.

Schedule 1: Agency Budget Appropriations

The Question is:

That the sum of \$130,938,191 of Schedule 1 stands part of the Schedule?

(Opposition objects)

Motion agreed to

Schedule 2: Payments on behalf of Crown (POBOC)

The Question is:

That the sum of \$25,473,361 of Schedule 2 stands part of the Schedule?

I see the Minister of Finance.

HON. M. BROWN: Mr Deputy Speaker, I stand to take note of the comments made by the Leader of the Opposition and in order to ensure that we do follow procedure as per Standing Orders, I would like the House to move a motion:

To suspend the Standing Orders necessary to allow the approval of these Appropriations by Schedule

MR DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I call for a Secunder.

Seconded by the Honourable Prime Minister

HON. T. PUPUKE BROWNE: Deputy Speaker, I'm not as familiar with the Standing Orders as everyone else but I'm thinking that that Motion is a bit late. Why? Because you have already started the process before even the Motion is moved. We need to correct that. It is important I think we need to correct it. We are voting against it not because we want to vote against what has been said, it's because it's being done incorrectly and not in the manner that we believe it should be done. The voting might be different if we did this properly.

MR DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, I take note of that but we will continue and go to the Motion. I see the Honourable Prime Minister.

HON. H. PUNA: Deputy Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition has raised a valid point and I think to ensure that there is no question about the validity of this Supplementary Budget that we go back to the beginning of the process and take on board the Suspension Motion by the Deputy Prime Minister, vote on that and then we commence going through the Schedule right from the beginning.

MR DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Parliament is now resumed.

MR T. ELIKANA: Mr Deputy Speaker, I move:

That this Sitting be extended for the time necessary to enable all phases regarding the passing of the Appropriation Amendment Bill to be completed, and also Mr Deputy Speaker, all replacements and appointments of Members on to the Select Committees is completed

MR DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Can I call for a Secunder please.

Seconded by the Minister Vaine Mokoroa

The Question is:

That the Motion be agreed to?

Motion agreed to

MR DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Under Standing Order 306, I now resolve Parliament into the Committee of Supply to go through the new Schedules and Summary of the Bill.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY – DAY 1

Schedule 1: Agency Budget Appropriations.

The Question is:

That the sum of \$130,938,191 for Schedule 1 stands part of the Schedule?

Motion agreed to

Schedule 2: Payments on Behalf of the Crown.

The Question is:

That the sum of \$25,473,361 for Schedule 2 stands part of the Schedule?

Motion agreed to

Schedule 3: Cook Islands Capital Spending.

The Question is:

That the sum of \$47,071,874 for Schedule 3 stands part of the Schedule?

Motion agreed to

Schedule 4: Official Development Assistance.

The Question is:

That the sum of \$53,453,757 for Schedule 4 stands part of the Schedule?

Motion agreed to

Schedule 5 (a): Other Expenses and Financing Transactions.

The Question is:

That the sum of \$7,931,767 of Schedule 5 (a) stands part of the Schedule?

Motion agreed to

Schedule 5 (b) Loan Repayments Fund Appropriations.

The Question is:

That the sum of \$9,362,000 for Schedule 5 (b) stands part of the Schedule?

Motion agreed to

SUMMARY:

The Question is:

That the total Appropriation of \$274,230,950 stands part of the Schedule?

Motion agreed to

The Questions is:

That the new Schedules and Summary stands part of the Bill?

Motion agreed to

MR DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Honourable Members, I would like to seek leave again to go through the Appropriation Amendment Bill by Clauses and Schedules commencing from Clause 1. Do I have leave? Thank you.

(Leave granted)

Clause 1: Short Title

The Question is:

That Clause 1 stands part of the Bill?

Motion agreed to

Clause 2: Application.

The Question is:

That Clause 2 stands part of the Bill as proposed?

Motion agreed to

Clause 3: Principal Commended.

The Question is:

That Clause 3 stands part of the Bill as proposed?

Motion agreed to.

Clause 4: Grants and Appropriation Out of the Cook Islands Government Account.

The Question is:

That Clause 4 stands part of the Bill as proposed?

Motion agreed to

I would like to interrupt the debate to resume Parliament. Parliament is resumed. I call upon the Leader of the House.

MR T. ELIKANA: Deputy Speaker, I thought I had dealt with it, but we will follow through. I would like to move:

That this Sitting of this Honourable House be extended for the time necessary to enable all phases of the Bill to be completed and also until all Select Committees have been appointed and completed

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, we have gone through that. Thank you.

MR T. ELIKANA: That is what I just said.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: We will go to the Address.

Most Gracious Sovereign

We your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects the Parliament of the Cook Islands towards making good the Supply which we have cheerfully granted to Your Majesty this year. We have resolved to grant Your Majesty the sum specified in this Act and humbly ask Your Majesty to assent to the sum and the Parliament of the Cook Islands enact as follows.

The Question is:

That the Address stands part of the Bill?

Motion agreed to

Long Title: An Act to amend the Appropriation Act 2018.

The Question is:

That the Long Title stands part of the Bill?**Motion agreed to**

The Question is:

That the Bill be reported to Parliament without amendments?**Motion agreed to**

I now resolve Committee of Supply into Parliament. Parliament is resumed.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: I now call upon the Deputy Prime Minister, Honourable Mark Brown to report the progress of the Bill.

HON. M. BROWN: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I am happy to report:

That the Bill has progressed through the Committee with no amendment

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Honourable Minister.

The Question is:

That the Report be adopted?**Motion agreed to****ORDERS OF THE DAY**

Third Reading of the Appropriation Amendment Bill 2019. I now call upon the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance.

HON. M. BROWN: Mr Deputy Speaker, I now move:

That the Appropriation Amendment Bill 2019 be now read a Third time

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: I call for a Secunder.

Seconded by the Honourable Prime Minister, Henry Puna

I will put the Question. The Question is:

That the Motion be agreed to?

Motion agreed to

DEPUTY CLERK AT THE TABLE: A Bill Intituled: An Act to amend the Appropriation Act 2018.

BILL READ A THIRD TIME

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Members, that completes the Second and Third Reading of the Appropriation Amendment Bill 2019. I will now go to the presentation of Bills.

PRESENTATION OF BILLS

Crimes Bill 2019, I now call on the Minister of Police, the Honourable Vaine Mokoroa.

DEPUTY CLERK AT THE TABLE: Short Title reads: Crimes Act 2019.

BILL READ A FIRST TIME

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Can the Minister please name the date and time for the Second reading of the Bill?

HON. V. MOKOROA: Immediately after the Infrastructure Bill.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER; Thank you Honourable Minister of Police. The Crimes Bill is ordered for the Second reading immediately after the Infrastructure Bill.

Now we have come to the appointment of Select Committee Members. I call on the Honourable Prime Minister to move for the nomination of the Deputy Speaker onto the Standing Orders Committee.

HON. H. PUNA: Thank you Deputy Speaker. Before I move the Motion, allow me please on our behalf to extend our vote of appreciation to former Members of the Select Committee who did an excellent job in taking the draft Crimes Bill to our people. In particular, I make mention of the former Member for Vaivaitau, the Honourable Mona Ioane who was Chair of the Committee and also the former Member for Rakahanga, the Honourable Toka Hagai.

Deputy Speaker under Standing Orders 318 and 360 I now move:

That (1) the newly appointed Deputy Speaker, Member for Mauke, Honourable Tai Tura replaces former Deputy Speaker, Honourable Toka Hagai on the Standing Orders Committee and that (2) the newly appointed Leader of the Opposition, Member for Rakahanga, Honourable Tina Pupuke Browne replaces Member William Heather Jnr on the Standing Orders Committee and that (3) the Member for Amuri Ureia the Honourable Terepai Maoate replaces the Member Tamaiva Tuavera on the Standing Orders Committee

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is there a Seconder?

Seconded by the Leader of the House, Honourable Tingika Elikana

I will put the Question. The Question is:

That the Motion be agreed to?

Motion agreed to

I call on the Honourable Prime Minister to move for the nomination of a new Member on the Special Select Committee on Bills.

HON. H. PUNA: Standing Orders 318 and 361, I move:

That (1) the Member for Ruatonga/Avatiu/Pamati/Panama/Atupa, Honourable Albert Nicholas replaces former Member Toka Hagai on the Special Select Committee on Bills and that (2) the Member for Vaipae Tautu, Honourable Manuela Kitai replaces the Member Terepai Maoate on the Special Select Committee on Bills

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is there a Seconder?

Seconded by the Honourable Tingika Elikana

I will put the Question. The Question is:

That the Motion be agreed to?

Motion agreed to

I call on the Honourable Prime Minister to move for the nomination of a new Member onto the Public Accounts Committee.

HON. H. PUNA: Deputy Speaker, thank you. Under Standing Orders 318 I move:

That (1) the Member for Mitiaro Honourable Tuakeu Tangatapoto replaces former Member Toka Hagai on the Public Accounts Committee and (2) the Member for Oneroa, Honourable Wesley Kareroa replaces former Member Tehani Brown on the Public Accounts Committee

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you.

Seconded by the Leader of the Opposition, the Honourable Tina Pupuke Browne

I put the Question. The Question is:

That the Motion be agreed to?

Motion agreed to

I call on the Minister of Police to move for the establishment of the Crimes Bill Select Committee.

HON. V. MOKOROA: Thank you Deputy Speaker. Under Standing Order 318, I move:

That the Crimes Bill Select Committee be established by this House to complete public consultations on the Crimes Bill and report all progress and findings to Parliament by December 2019 with the Committee comprising of:
Mr Tingika Elikana – Chairman
Mr Tai Tura – Member
Mr Patrick Arioka – Member
Mr Tereapii Maki Kavana – Member
Mrs Selina Napa – Member
Mrs Tetangi Matapo – Member
Mr William Heather – Member

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is there a Seconder?

Seconded by the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, Tina Browne

I put the Question. The Question is:

That the Motion be agreed to?

Motion agreed to

Infrastructure Bill 2019. I call the Leader of the House.

MR T. ELIKANA: Thank you Deputy Speaker.

I move:

That the Infrastructure Bill 2019 be referred to the Infrastructure Bill Select Committee to be established by this House comprising of the following Members:
Honourable Minister, Robert Tapaitau - Chairman
Mr Tingika Elikana – Member
Mr Albert Nicholas – Member
Mr Patrick Arioka – Member
Mr Tamaiva Tuavera – Member
Mrs Agnes Armstrong – Member
Honourable Tina Pupuke Browne – Member
and the Committee to report on its findings at the next sitting of Parliament due to some urgency on that Bill

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: I call the Leader of the House to repeat that again please slowly and clearly.

MR T. ELIKANA: The composition of the Committee is: The Chairperson is the Honourable Robert Tapaitau.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Can you start from the beginning please.

MR T. ELIKANA: From the Motion?

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes.

MR T. ELIKANA: I move:

That the Infrastructure Bill 2019 be referred to the Infrastructure Bill Select Committee to be established by this House comprising of the following Members:

Chairman – Honourable Minister, Robert Tapaitau

Mr Tingika Elikana – Member

Mr Albert Nicholas – Member

Mr Patrick Arioka – Member

Mr Tamaiva Tuavera – Member

Mrs Agnes Armstrong – Member

Honourable Tina Pupuke Browne – Member

and the Committee to report on its findings at the next sitting of Parliament due to some urgency on that Bill

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: I seek for a Seconder?

Seconded by the Honourable Minister, Robert Tapaitau

I will put the Question. The Question is:

That the Motion be agreed to?

Motion agreed to

I now call the Leader of the House.

MR T. ELIKANA: Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. I move:

That this House adjourn *Sine Die*

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: May I call for a Seconder?

Seconded by the Honourable Minister Mokoroa

I will put the Question. The Question is:

That the Motion be agreed to

Sorry, I see the Leader of the Opposition.

HON. T. PUPUKE BROWNE: Mr Deputy Speaker, I stand here to voice my concern over this adjournment Motion. As we have seen on our Order Paper we have a lot of business to go through. I understand that there are some Bills which are urgent. For example, the Justice of the Peace one, the Law Practitioners Bill, the Infrastructure Bill, the Crimes Bill so I don't understand the intention behind this adjournment. So I stand here to voice my concern. Thank you.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Member for your concern. I call for a Seconder?

I will put the Question. The Question is:

That the Motion be agreed to?

Motion agreed to

I would like to say thank you to everyone for our Sitting this week. Also I would like to apologise for the fastness or the quickness of our procedures in the House. I used to be like that. I was once a red metre sprinter at Tereora College. Thank you all for your participation in today's sitting.

Parliament is adjourned *Sine Die*. I call upon the Prime Minister to say our Closing Prayer.

CLOSING PRAYER

I wish you all the best.

Parliament adjourned at 5.26 p.m.