



FORTY-NINTH SESSION

Hansard Report

49th Session

Fifth Meeting

Volume 5

WEDNESDAY 11 DECEMBER 2019

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER TOOK THE CHAIR AT 1.00 p.m.

OPENING PRAYER

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

Good morning to all of us in the House this morning. Firstly, I would like to express my gratitude to the Pastor that delivered our prayer service this afternoon.

Greetings to all of us again this afternoon. The Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, Cabinet and all the Members of Parliament of Government, greetings. My acknowledgement also goes out to the Leader of the Opposition, your Deputy and all the Members of the Opposition.

Before we proceed with our business of the House this afternoon, I have some announcements to make.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Firstly, on the issue of voting in the House, it has become apparent yesterday that some of us are not putting their votes for or against. Therefore, I humbly request for those of us in the House, once you sit in your seat, you are obliged to present your votes for or against. Some of us yesterday did not do that.

As well, in the last few days it became apparent that some of us are not addressing directly to the Speaker. I therefore humbly request to follow protocol that you do not address each Member directly.

Regarding the issue of mobile phones in the House, I would humbly request that we all put our phones on silent mode.

I would also like to request that while we debate on the issues before the House, there are times when there is a need to pause. Hansard has reported it is difficult to record our debates in writing or in live interpretation because there are no pauses or stops.

These are the comments I would like to put before us before we start our business this afternoon.

My next announcement I would like to put forward is, I would like to express my condolences to the family of the late Tessa Temata residing now on the island of Mauke. I express to the families on Rarotonga and as well as on the island of Mauke my deepest condolences, in particular to Papa Ina Temata and Mama Carmen Temata and all the families. May God comfort you all. I also extend the condolences of the traditional leaders, the Ui Ariki on the island of Mauke, as well as the Religious Advisory Council and all the different sectors on the island of Mauke. Please accept our heartfelt condolences to you all.

Maybe some of you know this lady. Her father is from the island of Mauke by the name of Tiatoa Temata and this beautiful woman from Mauke studied at Victoria University. I was advised that during her time of study there, she was with our current Member of Parliament from Pukapuka/Nassau. I am happy to know that this good lady was able to help the Member of Pukapuka/Nassau with his studies. We also know that Tessa conducted diplomatic services throughout the Pacific including Papua-New Guinea as well as Indonesia.

She travelled to the island of Mauke earlier this year as New Zealand High Commission. She stayed on the island for two weeks and the first week of the visit was for her official duties as New Zealand High Commission. The second week, she wanted to live amongst her people on Mauke so she will have a better understanding of her father's life on Mauke in the 1940s and '50s. She humbly put aside her official title so she may be at the same level as her people on the island of Mauke.

There is a parable from the island of Mauke which says "*for my people, for my paradise*". This good lady has done her services for our people albeit in a very short time.

So let us bid farewell to this good servant. May God take care of you.

I would now like to acknowledge the Government officials in the Gallery today. Welcome to the Parliament and the first one is Alan Taylor. Welcome to the Parliament this afternoon. The second is Fraser Hawkins, Revenue Management Division, (RMD), and Alan Taylor is from the Financial Services Development Authority. I know you people know Alan Taylor was here a couple of years back. Welcome back to the Cook Islands. I hope you two will be helping us in Parliament today.

Now we will go to Question Time.

QUESTION TIME

I can see the Honourable Member for Teimurimotia, Selina Napa.

MRS S. NAPA: Thank you, Madam Speaker, sorry I am used to seeing Madam Speaker in the Chair. Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker, I apologise.

Before we start our question Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like to seek leave from the House to allow the Honourable Member, Tamaiva Tuavera to wear his dark glasses due to medical reasons.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: He may do so but do not fall asleep. Leave is granted.

MR T. TUAVERA: I have a question Mr Deputy Speaker. With the festive season coming up, the warrants for our voluntary Police Officers have been suspended since May this year. I know they have been doing a very good job in Takitumu and stopping all the drunk drivers and people speeding on our roads in Takitumu. We contacted the Minister of Police at the time and we also wrote a letter to the Commissioner of Police, Maara Tetava regarding the reissuing of Warrants to these voluntary Police Officers.

My question is to the Minister of Police. When can we expect or when can we get an answer or a reply from you in regard to our request for their Warrants to be awarded back to them. Thank you.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: I now see the Honourable Minister for Police.

HON. V. MOKOROA: Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. Thank you also to the question by the Honourable Tamaiva Tuavera.

Greetings to everyone in the House this afternoon and to all the people listening to the radio. Mr Deputy Speaker, if you can allow me to answer this question tomorrow, so that I can get the appropriate answer to the question raised by the Honourable Member. Thank you.

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

HON. T. PUPUKE BROWNE: Greetings everyone on this beautiful afternoon. To you Mr Deputy Speaker, the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, Ministers of the Crown and Members of Parliament on the Government side, Kia Orana. To the Opposition side and also the staff of Parliament, Kia Orana.

Yesterday, I asked a question on broadcasting and it was answered. I am not sure if this is the correct answer because, we know when the radio goes off the air, our Sitting is suspended.

Under Standing Order 385 the word used is “shall”. I understand one of the answer is livestream but I am unsure if livestreaming fits under this Standing Order.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, can you ask your question.

HON. T. PUPUKE BROWNE: My question to the Minister of Parliamentary Services is, what is your interpretation of Standing Order 385?

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: I now see the Honourable Minister Rose Brown.

HON. R. TOKI-BROWN: Thank you Leader of the Opposition. Kia Orana to all of us this afternoon. Please allow me to research your question and I will come back to you.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Honourable Minister. Now I can see the Honourable Member for Titikaveka, Selina Napa.

MRS S. NAPA: Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. My question is to the Prime Minister or to the Minister of Finance on the other side. As we are in the six months cyclone season, we

living on Rarotonga know how critical it is for the radio broadcast to provide services for our people especially to those in the Pa Enuā during the times of hurricane warnings.

The Northern Group and Southern Group islands no longer receive the Radio Cook Islands FM or AM broadcast so this leaves our Pa Enuā even more vulnerable during adverse weather conditions in that, they are no longer able to receive weather warnings via radio broadcast that has been provided by Radio Cook Islands. We all know to check the weather online which is not something easily accessed by the Pa Enuā.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please ask your question.

MRS S. NAPA: Can the Minister or can the Government confirm when radio services, I know yesterday he explained that it is Nga-Pu-Toru and Mangaia that do not have the service. Can the Government confirm when radio services will be returned to the entire Pa Enuā to keep our Pa Enuā informed at all times during the cyclone season?

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: I can see the Honourable Deputy Prime Minister, Mark Brown.

HON. M. BROWN: Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. May I say what a wonderful job you are doing at this stage Mr Deputy Speaker.

In answering the question from the Honourable Member, let me just correct some of the incorrect statements that she has made on radio. She said there was no radio going out to the outer islands, that is incorrect and then she said at the end that no radio going to Nga Pu Toru or Mangaia. So which one is it Honourable Member? Thank you, you need to correct your earlier statement.

In answering the question, the Government recognises the importance of good communications with our Pa Enuā particularly during the cyclone season and we recognise that, with the dismantling of the mast in Matavera for the AM signal, the AM signal is now restricted from the Black Rock transmitter, but does not have the same reach as the previous transmitter had. However, working closely with Bluesky and Investment Corporation every island can receive the FM signal.

However, it has been found that some of the islands need an upgrade of their Telecommunications infrastructure, in order to be able to receive the FM signal and also to be able to transmit it throughout each of the individual islands and as a matter of urgency the Government has been working closely with Bluesky and also the New Zealand Company Cordia, to acquire the needed infrastructure, the parts and pieces needed for each island, to ensure that they receive not only the FM Radio signal, but also to improve their television signals on all of the islands. Noting the urgency as we have now entered into the cyclone season, I expect a submission from the Investment Corporation requesting the required funding to purchase the materials and upgrades needed and I suspect to the tune of close to half a million dollars for all of our Outer Islands.

However, in the interim in response to any natural disaster particularly cyclones that may occur in the next few months, Emergency Management Cook Islands working with Investment Corporation and Bluesky, will ensure that all of our islands receive sufficient notification of any hurricane in order to be prepared on any of our outer islands that may be at risk.

In order to get the AM transmitter back to what it was before, the Government needs to find a suitable site to put a mast, high enough to be able to transmit the signals to particularly the Northern Island Groups. That is a long term aim of the government. However, with the advent of the cable coming through there are now other alternatives in order to be able to get a radio signal to all of our Outer Islands. This is part of the plan that we are looking at now to implement, in a very short space of time.

I have every confidence that our Government agencies have this matter in hand and that our people will be suitably informed in the event we are hit with a hurricane. Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Honourable Minister. Now I can see the Honourable Member for Ngatangiia, Tamaiva Tuavera.

MR T. TUAVERA: Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. Earlier you did not see me standing but I still think you are doing a good job in that Chair.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you.

MR T. TUAVERA: I will continue to praise you so you will not stop me and tell me to sit down. I can see the Prime Minister is relaxed and sitting comfortably in his seat so I will ask him this question.

Yesterday, I asked a question in the House regarding the outstanding payment of wages for our people that worked for the Ministry of Culture. Shall I rephrase that and say, people that worked for Culture. This morning, I saw this very topic on the front page of the news article and the comments that were made by the Secretary of Culture.

I will ask my question to the Prime Minister and not to the Secretary of Culture. Mr Prime Minister, can you please tell this House your respond to my question yesterday.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Member. I now see the Honourable Prime Minister of the Cook Islands on the Floor.

HON. H. PUNA: Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker, and thank you Honourable Member of Ngatangiia.

Yesterday, when we took our lunch break, I rang the Secretary of Culture because I was disappointed that this matter has not been resolved by the Ministry of Culture. I did not expect this issue to be in the newspaper this morning.

I was with the head of the Interpreters when I rang the Secretary of Culture. I asked him the reason why this matter was not resolved. As I informed the House yesterday, I called the Secretary for the Ministry of Culture at the first instance you asked this same question at the previous Sitting of Parliament. This is not a big issue. He told me the delay at that time was the checking of the time claimed by the workers to ensure that the payments are made appropriately.

Yesterday on the phone, he told me that an agreement has been reached and confirmed between himself and the lawyer acting on behalf of these workers. I hope the Minister of Culture will

allow me to call the Secretary of Culture again later on today. I am not happy with his response in the newspaper that the outstanding payments will be made next month. Christmas is around the corner and these people concerned need some money for the festive period.

I just want to assure you Honourable Member and the House that this is not acceptable because our people did their part to serve the Ministry of Culture in the work they were assigned to do. It is only right that they are paid for what was agreed to them. This is the problem because it is us who are in Government that will be blamed for the setback and yet it was other people's failure. The money is allocated for the service and I do not know what the delay is.

Never mind I will continue to pursue this matter when we take our lunch break.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Prime Minister. I can see the Leader of the Opposition, the Honourable Tina Browne.

HON. T. PUPUKE BROWNE: Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. I am not sure whom I should ask my question to, to you Mr Deputy Speaker or to the Minister of Parliamentary Service. I am thinking of you Mr Deputy Speaker because you are now sitting in the Speaker's Chair and you are overseeing the Sitting of Parliament.

I have searched through our Standing Orders and I could not find any provision for it which leads to my question. Why are the women Members of Parliament not permitted to wear our flower garlands in the House of Parliament? I ask this question because when we enter our Parliament here, we are not allowed to wear our *eis*. When we enter Parliament Houses overseas we wear our *eis*. This became our trademark when we were overseas and Members of Parliament overseas want to take photos with us.

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

HON. T. PUPUKE BROWNE: Could I finish my question please. These overseas Members of Parliament does not realise that we are not permitted to wear our *eis* in our own Parliament House.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: I will let the Honourable Prime Minister answer your question. I will answer the question after he has finished.

HON. H. PUNA: Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker for giving me the opportunity to respond to this good question by the Honourable Member. This is the thought I would like to share with the House this afternoon.

This Honourable House can change any legislation of this country including our Standing Orders. These are rules made by man but the point is this, we can change those rules. If the thinking by our women Members of Parliament to go that way and wear their head *eis* or to change the rules, what is there to stop us. Time is changing. True, before the rules were very strict in this House.

However, if we feel that the time is right to make changes to the rules to reflect the reality of today, then let us do it. Therefore, it is up to you our women Members of Parliament but please consider the men Members of Parliament also because we also want to wear flower *eis* in our Parliament House.

That is the important point I want to stress. Let us not be bound by rules that we think it is out of date. Let us instead look at what we can do to bring it in line with norms today. I believe this is also your reply Mr Deputy Speaker.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Prime Minister and in addition to that. I agree with the Prime Minister, with wearing of flower ei, no artificial flower on the ei, it must be natural. Thank you.

I think we have run out of questions and we have run out of time. Thank you Honourable Members.

We have come to the Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Income Tax Amendment Bill 2019: Interrupted debate on the Second Reading of the Income Tax Amendment Bill 2019.

The debate was interrupted by adjournment at 4.58 p.m. yesterday. The Bill is now open for debate.

I see the Honourable Member for Amuri/Ureia, Terepai Maoate.

MR T. MAOATE: Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker.

Greetings to us all this afternoon. To those in Government, to the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, Caucus Members and to the Opposition side, to Parliament staff and to the Deputy Speaker, greetings to us all.

I rise to talk about the Income Tax Bill before the House. I believe it is the right time for us to make changes with what has been legislated in the past. It is due time to review and improve the principal Act.

During the workshop for the Members of Parliament last week, it was explained that through the International Companies, a request was received from the European Union.

I believe one of the reasons we are dealing through companies is to enable them to bring funding to our country. Today, we understand that our country has been promoted and is now equal to the status of New Zealand, Australia and other Developed Countries.

According to the specialist, we will lose out with business from these companies. The European Union make demands rather than ask us to meet these standards, not just us but other countries as well. The Prime Minister made mention about this yesterday.

I do not believe our country has reached the New Zealand status, but if we do not comply with the requirements, we will encounter problems with the nations that are helping us.

Maybe one of the things that we should look at is charging the companies with tax to the tune of 20 per cent.

A question was raised whether we will stick to this number or consider lowering the charges so we can retain these companies. Today, they are not contributing to our economy. The benefit goes to the offices looking after the companies that are registered in the Cook Islands.

Therefore, I agree that changes should be made so that our status is the same. The Deputy Prime Minister explained about the number of Cook Islands Companies out there. I was quite surprised to learn this. I have been hearing about this but there has been no proof as mentioned yesterday.

Our status is now almost to that of Developed Countries. My plea to the Government and Government employees is that we need to be vigilant with spending and to ensure that the benefit extends to all the islands.

That is one of the issues we see with the Telecommunications Bill. It is not just this one but there are also other issues. Also with the benefit that Rarotonga and Aitutaki is getting especially from Tourism, we also need to look at ways of obtaining funding from these companies so that we can keep them here.

Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Member.

I now see the Honourable Member from Ngatangiaa, the Honourable Tamaiva Tuavera.

MR T. TUAVERA: Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker.

Before I speak on the Bill, I seek your indulgence Mr Deputy Speaker to allow me to greet and thank my people in Ngatangiaa.

I would like to thank our Church Minister, Papa Tereora Viniki and his family who left us to serve in Oneroa, Mangaia. I was not here when we bid them farewell. I was surprised but thankful to Mama Orometua for gifting me with a tivaevae.

We will be receiving our new Minister, Takaikura Saitu Marsters, from the village of Matavera. I believe my brother on my right side has trained him properly. Maybe there will be more *ature* in Avana and Ngatangiaa.

I would also like to extend my greetings to all the different denominations in Ngatangiaa. To my traditional leaders, Pa Ma Kainuku, to all the Mataiapo, Rangatira and not forgetting the Taunga, to all my people in Ngatangiaa, greetings to you all.

I want to say thank you to the Minister of ICI, to the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister for their support in developing our diamond road in Ngatangiaa, because we have been upgraded from golden mile to diamond mile. I listened to the Member of Matavera and he seems to imply that Matavera will be sealed before us but that is not right. Whatever happens, happens. So thank you very much Mr Deputy Speaker for this short opportunity.

Now I will come back to the Bill before us.

I noticed that there are six Bills before me. The one that I like is the Development Investment Amendment Bill because this Bill opens the door to people from outside our country to invest their money into our country. Last week, we attended the workshop that was held in this House.

I would like to thank Madam Speaker for organising this type of workshop for us because now that we are in session, it is easy to debate on these Bills. Alan Taylor informed us during the workshop that if we do not follow the process, we will be blacklisted by the EU.

When I scrutinised these Bills, I was grateful to find that these are being amended. I am a person who believes in developing and moving our country forward. There is a saying that if you do not have a vision, there is no need for you to be in this House.

I believe that we were put into this House to give support so that our country will advance. I believe that we are here in this Honourable House not for our own personal gain but for the interest of our people and country as a whole.

I wholeheartedly give my full support to the six Bills before this House. Thank you.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Honourable Member. I now see the Leader of the Opposition, you have the Floor.

HON. T. PUPUKE BROWNE: Thank you, Deputy Chairman. Before I present the Opposition's views on these six Bills, I want to thank you for supporting my request for us women Parliamentarians to wear flower ei in our Parliament House. The Prime Minister has also requested for the men Parliamentarians to wear the same. But I think for you Mr Deputy Speaker, I prefer that you do not wear flowers but to remain wearing your Parliament wig.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: You may continue.

HON. T. PUPUKE BROWNE: With regards to these six Bills that are being debated now, first, I want to thank Alan Taylor for attending the workshop last week. I can say for most of us here especially the Opposition, the fact that you made a presentation was very helpful for us to understand each of these Bills and how they relate to each other.

Those areas that we had some concerns or doubt about, you were able to sort that out for us. I can confidently say to the Minister of Finance who is not with us right now, because yesterday he suggested an "in-camera" session. I can confidently say that I do not believe that one is needed because the support that the Opposition will give in respect of all six Bills, will indicate that we understand what it is that we have been asked to do.

We understand that these legislations are to fulfil the third criteria that we have been required by the EU to fulfil and that is for a fair taxation. All these Bills relate to that issue. We understand that we were warned in 2017 to sort out our legislation. We were given up until the end of 2018. For reasons that we do not need to go into, we weren't able to meet that deadline. We got an extension to the end of 2019 that is where we are today.

During the workshop, I have indicated that this was one of the industry or the areas that was earning revenue, great revenue for us and maybe what has happened prior to 2017 and maybe shortly after that has led many of the companies to go overseas. So the revenue that we have been earning from this sector has shrunk considerably. However, I think my understanding in

the past when we have confidential rules in place there would be companies that want to register in the Cook Islands because it is a tax haven. Now with the transparency requirements they may decide to go elsewhere and we should applaud that because, we do not want companies like that on our shore.

Alan has assured us that these six Bills will assist in not getting us blacklisted. So for that reason the Opposition supports the passage of all six Bills. Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Leader of the Opposition. Now, I can see the Honourable Member for Matavera, Vaitoti Tupa on the Floor.

MR V. TUPA: Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. Before I do so, I would like to ask for a few moments to extend my greetings. Firstly, to our Church Minister, Reverend Takaikura Saitu Marsters and his wife and family who have been looking after our Church at Matavera. He has served four years in the Matavera Church. On Friday evening our village will be taking him to the village of Ngatangiia to serve in that Parish.

I have been told that the Ngatangiia Ekalesia are ready to receive the Matavera Ekalesia. I was also told that there will be pork and chicken that will be cooked to receive the Church Minister at 6.00 p.m on Friday, supported by the Honourable Member Tamaiva Tuavera. So to you honourable servant of God, thank you for your service and now you will be serving our people in Ngatangiia for the next four years. To all the different denominations in our village Matavera, and there are five of them altogether, may the Lord provide you strength and support.

I will now come back to the six Bills before the House Deputy Speaker. Firstly, I stand to support the views of our Leader in the Opposition regarding the six Bills before us. She presented our views about the discussions during our workshop last week and also enlarged on the opinions expressed by the officials who came to explain about the Bills.

I like holding these six Bills in my hand because it is like holding a deal of cards. The explanations that was given to us gave a good foundation and understanding of these Bills. I also support the views of our Leader that there is no need for us to have an in-camera session. That is the reason I stood up to provide support to our Leader because we understand what the Bill is about.

The Honourable Member for Ngatangiia also expressed his views in support of the companies coming into our country. What we want to see is for those companies to be protected and including ourselves.

So Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like to give my support to the views expressed by the Leader of the Opposition regarding the six Bills before the House.

Finally, I think I will be the last Member to speak from our side on this matter. I would like to thank all the new employees who are working for Parliament. I did not acknowledge them yesterday when I returned to Parliament. I see the new beautiful ladies in the House today and the handsome men.

Through you Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like to convey my appreciation to Madam Speaker for this change and to welcome all the new staff of Parliament. Thank you.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Member. I see the Honourable Prime Minister. You have the Floor.

HON. H. PUNA: Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. Kia Orana to all of us Honourable Members on this beautiful afternoon and to our people listening to our broadcast.

If I may Mr Deputy Speaker, start with a reminder to our people of our programme set for Friday. Notices are already in our newspaper, television and radio for our combine prayer service at 10.00 a.m at the Auditorium on Friday morning. I do believe we all understand that although there is great human efforts to address this epidemic issue in Samoa, however, we are taking the next best step and that is to ask the good Lord for His divine help.

However, we will not only rely on the grace of our God but we will contribute on a national level and from us the citizens of our humble country. I recall a verse from the Bible which says, "Faith without works is dead." Hence my first remarks to remind our people for our cooperation and support on Friday morning.

I am very grateful for our collective support to rest the House for one day for this purpose. I realise our people are listening in to what we are presenting before them. I thank God for this collective spirit found among us.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to offer my gratitude and appreciation especially to the Opposition for their support of these Bills before the House. It is true, that these are very important legislation for our country. I am grateful that they have reached the understanding of the purpose of these Bills before the House.

However, I might add that as the Minister of Foreign Affairs, I am not appreciative of the spirit behind these Bills because these amendments to these legislations are being forced upon us by outside entities. I would like all of us to know that during discussions within the region about these issues, collectively, we did not support it. To me there is a very important principle at state here. We are a sovereign nation, small yes, but sovereign for sure. Yet our sovereignty is under attack. We are only trying to do what is best for our country. It does not agree with what other bigger countries in the world think we should be doing. Yet we are being forced to accept what they want.

I wanted the record of Parliament to show my discontent as Minister of Foreign Affairs and as Prime Minister of this country, that our sovereignty is being attacked and being compromised. We have to do what we need to do for the betterment of our country and that is why we are doing what we are doing today. Other countries have been blacklisted because they refused to yield to the demands, like Fiji, Samoa, Vanuatu. The funny thing is Honourable Members, other bigger countries in the world are not affected, they are not attacked and not being asked to do what we are being asked to do.

So, we can ask ourselves, why us? Is it because we are small, because we are tiny. We are a small economy. We can only wonder, but that is the reality. I am happy that we understand how this can be to the benefit of our little nation. Just as the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has stated, let us hope that this is indeed to our benefit. For now, I think we are doing the right thing. Hopefully, at some point in time in the future, we can exercise our sovereignty and do what we know is best for our little country, without hindrance or interference from the other major powers of this world.

Those are my reservations Mr Deputy Speaker and Honourable Members. Thank you.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Honourable Prime Minister. I see that there is no further speakers and I call on the Minister Responsible.

HON. H. PUNA: Mr Deputy Speaker, can I stand in for the Minister of Finance, please. He has been summoned to a very important meeting with some officials.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: With my permission, you may do so.

HON. H. PUNA: Mr Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to report:

**That the Bill has passed through the Committee Stage without amendments
and with the full support of all the Members of this House**

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: I put the Question:

That the Bill be now read a Second time?

Motion agreed to

CLERK AT THE TABLE: Long Title: An Act to amend the Income Tax Act 1997.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: I now resolve Parliament into the Committee of the Whole House to go through the Bill.

Honourable Members, I have just been advised that it is time for our break. Parliament is adjourned 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.

Honourable Members, we are now in the Committee. I now resolve Parliament into the Committee of the Whole House to go through the Bill.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE HOUSE

MR DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Clause 1: Title – Income Tax Amendment Bill 2019

I put the Question:

That Clause 1 stands part of the Bill?

Motion agreed to

Long Title: An Act to amend the Income Tax Act 1997.

I put the Question:

That the Long Title stands part of the Bill?

Sorry, we will go back and we will go through the Clauses.

Clause 1: Title. This Act is to be the Income Tax Amendment Act 2019. The Question is:

That Clause 1 stands part of the Bill?

Motion agreed to

Clause 2: Commencement. This Act comes into force on the day after the date on which it receives the assent of the Queen's Representative.

Motion agreed to

Clause 3: Principal Act amended. This Act amends the Income Tax Act 1997 (the Principal Act)

I put the Question:

That Clause 3 stands part of the Bill?

Motion agreed to

Clause 4: Section 2 amended (Interpretation)

I put the Question:

That Clause 4 stands part of the Bill?

Motion agreed to

Clause 5: Section 42 amended (Income whole exempt from taxation)

I put the Question:

That Clause 5 stands part of the Bill?

Motion agreed to

Clause 6: Section 85 amended (Credits in respect of Income tax paid in a country or territory outside the Cook Islands)

I put the Question:

That Clause 6 stands part of the Bill?

Motion agreed to

Long Title: An Act to amend the Income Tax Act 1997.

I put the Question:

That the Long Title stands part of the Bill?

Motion agreed to

I put the Question:

That the Bill be reported to Parliament without amendment?

Motion agreed to

Parliament is now resumed.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: I call the Minister in Charge to report progress.

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

That the Bill has passed through the Committee Stage with no amendments

Thank you Honourable Minister.

I put the Question:

That the Report be adopted?

Report adopted

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: I call the Minister to move for the Third Reading of the Bill.

HON. M. BROWN: Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker.

I move:

That the Income Tax Amendment Bill be now read a Third time

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is there a Seconder?

Seconded by the Honourable Minister, Rose Brown

I put the Question:

That the Bill be now read a Third time?

Motion agreed to

CLERK AT THE TABLE: Long Title: An Act to amend the Income Tax Act 1997.

BILL READ A THIRD TIME

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Members, that completes the First, Second and Third Reading of the Bill.

We will now go to the Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

The Banking Amendment Bill 2019. I call the Minister to move for the Second Reading of the Bill.

HON. M. BROWN: Thank you Mr Deputy. I move:

That the Banking Amendment Bill be now read a Second time

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Do you want to speak Honourable Minister?

HON. M. BROWN: No. We have spoken about this Bill in the past so we will just go through the process. Thank you.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Minister.

Is there a Seconder?

Seconded by the Honourable Minister, Vaine Mokoroa

Do you want to speak Honourable Minister?

HON. V. MOKOROA: That has been done before.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Minister. Are there any other Members who want to speak to the Bill?

It seems there is none. Oh, I can see the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, Tina Browne.

HON. T. PUPUKE BROWNE: Mr Deputy Speaker, thank you. I rise to reiterate our support for the First, Second and Third Reading so we do not have to go through that questioning again.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you for your advice Honourable Member.

I call the Honourable Minister Responsible to conclude the debate.

HON. M. BROWN: Thank you very much to all the Members for their support. We look forward to the passage through the process in Parliament. Thank you.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Minister.

I put the Question:

That the Bill be now read a Second time?**Motion agreed to**

CLERK AT THE TABLE: Long Title: An Act to amend the Banking Act 2011.

BILL READ A SECOND TIME

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: I now resolve Parliament into the Committee of the Whole House to go through the Bill.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE HOUSE

Clause 1: Short Title. This Act is the Banking Amendment Act 2011.

The Question is:

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

Clause 2: Commencement. This Act comes into force on 1st January 2022.

The Question is:

That Clause 2 stands part of the Bill?**Motion agreed to**

Clause 3: Principal Act amended

I put the Question:

That Clause 3 stands part of the Bill?**Motion agreed to**

Clause 4: Section 4 amended (Interpretation)

I put the Question:

That Clause 4 stands part of the Bill?**Motion agreed to**

Clause 5: Section 55 replaced (Certain income not withholding income)

I put the Question:

That Clause 5 stands part of the Bill?

Motion agreed to

Long Title: An Act to amend the Banking Act 2011.

I put the Question:

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

I put the Question:

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

Parliament is resumed.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: I call the Minister in Charge to report the progress of the Bill.

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

That the Banking Amendment Bill has passed through the Committee Stage with no amendments

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Minister.

I put the Question:

That the Report be adopted?**Motion agreed to**

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: I call the Minister to move for the Third Reading of the Bill.

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

That the Banking Amendment Bill be now read a Third time

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is there a Seconder?

Seconded by the Honourable Minister, Rose Brown

The Question is:

That the Motion be agreed to?**Motion agreed to**

CLERK AT THE TABLE: Long Title: An Act to amend the Banking Act 2011.

BILL READ A THIRD TIME

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Members, that completes the First, Second and Third Reading of the Bill.

We will now go to the next Bill, the Insurance Amendment Bill 2019. I call the Minister to move for the Second Reading of the Bill.

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

That the Insurance Amendment Bill be now read a Second time

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Do you want to speak Honourable Minister?

HON. M. BROWN: No thank you.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is there a Seconder?

Seconded by the Honourable Member, Tingika Elikana

The Question is:

That the Bill be now read a Second time

I call the Minister Responsible to conclude the debate.

HON. M. BROWN: The debate is concluded. Thank you.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: I put the Question:

That the Bill be now read a Second time?

Motion agreed to

CLERK AT THE TABLE: Long Title: An Act to Amend the Insurance Act 2008.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: I now resolve Parliament into the Committee of the Whole House.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE HOUSE

MR DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Clause 1: Title.

I put the Question:

That Clause 1 stands part of the Bill?

Motion agreed to

Clause 2: Commencement

I put the Question:

That Clause 2 stands part of the Bill?

Motion agreed to

Clause 3: Principal Act amended

I put the Question:

That Clause 3 stands part of the Bill?

Motion agreed to

Clause 4: Section 8 amended (Categories of and restrictions on licenses)

I put the Question:

That Clause 4 stands part of the Bill?

Motion agreed to

Clause 5: Section 9 amended (Application for license)

I put the Question:

That Clause 5 stands part of the Bill?

Motion agreed to

Clause 6: Section 10 repealed (Appointment of insurance manager)

I put the Question:

That Clause 6 stands part of the Bill?

Motion agreed to

Clause 7: Section 31 amended (Directors of licensed insurer)

I put the Question:

That Clause 7 stands part of the Bill?

Motion agreed to

Clause 8: Section 95 amended (Regulations)

I put the Question:

That Clause 8 stands part of the Bill?**Motion agreed to**

Clause 9: Section 104 amended (Repeals)

I put the Question:

That Clause 9 stands part of the Bill?**Motion agreed to**

Clause 10: Schedule 1 amended

The Question is:

That Clause 10 stands part of the Bill?**Motion agreed to**

Long Title: An Act to Amend the Insurance Act 2008.

I put the Question:

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

I put the Question:

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

Parliament is resumed.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: I call the Minister in Charge to report the progress.

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

**That the Insurance Amendment Bill went through the
Committee stage with no amendments**

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: I put the Question:

That the Report be adopted?**Motion agreed to**

I call the Minister to move for the Third Reading of the Bill.

HON. M. BROWN: Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. I move:

That the Insurance Amendment Bill be now read a Third time

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Minister. Is there a Seconder?

Seconded by the Honourable Member, Tingika Elikana

I put the Question:

That the Bill be now read a Third time?

Motion agreed to

CLERK AT THE TABLE: Long Title: An Act to amend the Insurance Act 2018.

BILL READ A THIRD TIME

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Members, that completes the First, Second and Third Reading of the Bill.

We will now go to the Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

International Companies (Removal of Tax Exemption) Amendment Bill 2019.

I call the Minister Responsible to move for the Second Reading of the Bill.

HON. M. BROWN: Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. I now move:

**That the International Companies (Removal of Tax Exemption) Amendment Bill 2019
be read a Second time**

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Honourable Minister. Can I have a Seconder please?

Seconded by the Honourable Member, Tingika Elikana

There seems to be no speakers to the Bill, then we can continue.

I call the Minister Responsible to conclude the debate.

HON. M. BROWN: Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker, I conclude the debate.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Minister. The Question is:

That the Bill be now read a Second time?

Motion agreed to

CLERK AT THE TABLE: Long Title: An Act to amend the International Companies Act 1981-82.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: I now resolve Parliament into the Committee of the Whole House.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE HOUSE

MR DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Clause 1: Title

I put the Question:

That Clause 1 stands part of the Bill?

Motion agreed to

Clause 2: Commencement

I put the Question:

That Clause 2 stands part of the Bill?

Motion agreed to

Clause 3: Principal Act amended

I put the Question:

That Clause 3 stands part of the Bill?

Motion agreed to

Clause 4: Section 243 amended (Contents of Trust Deed)

I put the Question:

That Clause 4 stands part of the Bill?

Motion agreed to

Clause 5: Section 249 replaced (Application of other enactments to international companies)

I put the Question:

That Clause 5 stands part of the Bill?

Motion agreed to

Clause 6: Section 250 replaced (Exemption of non-resident recipients of income)

I put the Question:

That Clause 6 stands part of the Bill?**Motion agreed to**

Clause 7: Transitional provision

I put the Question:

That Clause 7 stands part of the Bill?**Motion agreed to**

Long Title:

I put the Question:

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

I put the Question:

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

Parliament resumed.

I call the Minister in Charge to report the progress of the Bill.

HON. M. BROWN: Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. I am happy to report:**That the International Companies Amendment Bill has progressed through the Committee Stage with no amendments****MR DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I put the Question:**That the Report be adopted?****Motion agreed to**

I call the Minister in Charge to move for the Third Reading of the Bill.

HON. M. BROWN: Mr Deputy Speaker I move:**That the International Companies Amendment Bill be read a Third time****MR DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, Honourable Minister. Can I have a Seconder please?**Seconded by the Honourable Member, Tingika Elikana**

I put the Question:

That the Bill be now read a Third time?

Motion agreed to

CLERK AT THE TABLE: Long Title: An Act to amend the International Companies Act 1981-82.

BILL READ A THIRD TIME

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Members that completes the First, Second and Third Reading of the Bill.

We will now go to the Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

The next Bill is the Captive Insurance Amendment Bill 2019. I call the Minister to move for the Second Reading of the Bill.

HON M. BROWN: Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker, I move:

That the Captive Insurance Amendment Bill be now read a Second time

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Minister. Can I have a Seconder please?

Seconded by the Honourable Minister, Rose Brown

I call upon the Minister Responsible to conclude the debate.

HON. M. BROWN: Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker and I conclude the debate.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: I put the Question:

That the Bill be now read a Second time?

Motion agreed to

CLERK AT THE TABLE: Long Title: An Act to amend the Captive Insurance Act 2013.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: I now resolve Parliament into the Committee of the Whole House.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE HOUSE

MR DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Clause 1: Title

I put the Question:

That Clause 1 stands part of the Bill?

Motion agreed to

Clause 2: Commencement

I put the Question:

That Clause 2 stands part of the Bill?**Motion agreed to**

Clause 3: Principal Act amended

I put the Question:

That Clause 3 stands part of the Bill?**Motion agreed to**

Clause 4: Section 48 repealed (Application of other enactments)

I put the Question:

That Clause 4 stands part of the Bill?**Motion agreed to**

Long Title: An Act to amend the Captive Insurance Act 2013

I put the Question:

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

I put the Question:

That Bill be reported to Parliament without amendments?

Parliament resumed

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: I now call the Minister in Charge to report the progress of the Bill.

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

That the Bill has travelled through the Committee Stage with no amendments

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: I will put the Question:

That the Report be adopted?

Motion agreed to

I call the Minister in Charge to move for the Third Reading of the Bill.

HON. M. BROWN: Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker.

I now move:

That the Captive Insurance Amendment Bill be read a Third time

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Minister.

Can I have a Seconder please?

Seconded by the Honourable Minister, Rose Brown

I put the Question:

That the Bill be now read a Third time?**Motion agreed to**

CLERK AT THE TABLE: Long Title: An Act to amend the Captive Insurance Act 2013.

BILL READ A THIRD TIME

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Members, that completes the First, Second and Third Reading of the Bill.

We will now go to the next Bill.

I call the Minister responsible to move for the Second Reading of the Development Investment Amendment Bill 2019.

HON. G. ANGENE: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to move:

That the Bill be read a Second time

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Minister.

Can I have a Seconder please?

Seconded by the Honourable Member, Tingika Elikana

I put the Question:

That the Bill be now read a Second time

I call the Minister responsible to conclude the debate.

HON. G. ANGENE: Thank you Honourable Minister. I rise to report:

That this Bill has proceeded well

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: I put the Question:

That the Bill be now read a Second time?

Motion agreed to

CLERK AT THE TABLE: Long Title: An Act to amend the Development Investment Act 1995-96.

BILL READ A SECOND TIME

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: I now resolve Parliament into the Committee of the Whole House.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE HOUSE

MR DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Clause 1: Title

I put the Question:

That Clause 1 stands part of the Bill?

Motion agreed to

Clause 2: Commencement

I put the Question:

That Clause 2 stands part of the Bill?

Motion agreed to

Clause 3: Principal Act amended

I put the Question:

That Clause 3 stands part of the Bill?

Motion agreed to

Clause 4: Section 24 amended (Transfer of shares or interest)

I put the Question:

That Clause 4 stands part of the Bill?

Motion agreed to

Clause 5: Section 27 amended (Investment code)

I put the Question:

That Clause 5 stands part of the Bill?

Motion agreed to

Clause 6: Section 27A repealed (Application for incentives and concessions)

I put the Question:

That Clause 6 stands part of the Bill?

Motion agreed to

Clause 7: Section 29 replaced (Investment incentives and concessions established)

I put the Question:

That Clause 7 stands part of the Bill?

Motion agreed to

Clause 8: Sections 30 and 31 repealed

I put the Question:

That Clause 8 stands part of the Bill?

Motion agreed to

Clause 9: Section 32 amended (Government departments or agencies to be informed)

I put the Question:

That Clause 9 stands part of the Bill?

Motion agreed to

Clause 10: Section 33 repealed (Variations, suspensions, and revocation of concessions)

I put the Question:

That Clause 10 stands part of the Bill?

Motion agreed to

Clause 11: Section 34 amended (Annual filing of information)

I put the Question:

That Clause 11 stands part of the Bill?

Motion agreed to

Clause 12: Section 35B amended (Enforcement)

I put the Question:

That Clause 12 stands part of the Bill?

Motion agreed to

Clause 13: Section 411 amended (Regulations)

I put the Question:

Clause 13 stands part of the Bill?

Motion agreed to

Long Title:

I put the Question:

That the Long Title stands part of the Bill?

Motion agreed to

Parliament is resumed.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: I call the Minister in Charge to report progress to Parliament.

HON. G. ANGENE: I am happy to report:

**That the Bill has progressed through the Committee Stage
without amendments**

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Minister.

I put the Question:

That the Report be adopted?

Report adopted

I call the Minister to move for the Third Reading of the Bill.

HON. G. ANGENE: I rise to move:

That the Bill be read a Third time

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Minister.

Is there a Seconder?

Seconded by the Honourable Member, Tingika Elikana

I put the Question:

That the Bill be now read a Third time?**Motion agreed to**

CLERK AT THE TABLE: Long Title: An Act to amend the Development Investment Act 1995-96.

BILL READ A THIRD TIME

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Members, that completes the First, Second and Third Reading of the Bill.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

We will move to the next Bill. Ministry of Corrective Services Bill 2019.

I now have the honour to call the Honourable Minister to move for the Second Reading of the Bill.

HON. G. ANGENE: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to move:

That the Ministry of Corrective Services Bill 2019 be read a Second time

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Minister.

Is there a Seconder? Oh, would you like to speak Honourable Member?

HON. G. ANGENE: I would like to express a few comments on this Bill.

Greetings to you and all your staff Mr Deputy Speaker. Greetings also to Madam Speaker who is probably sick today, greetings to you and your staff. Greetings also to the Leader of the Opposition, the Honourable Tina Brown and all the Members of the Opposition.

To the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, Cabinet Ministers and all the Members of Government, Kia Orana.

I would also like to acknowledge the presence of the Secretary of the Ministry of Corrective Services in the Public Gallery. Greetings to our people in the Outer Islands and on Rarotonga listening by radio as well as our people viewing on the internet in the Cook Islands and overseas.

I believe you all have some thoughts on this Bill before the House, but I would like to present my thoughts because this Bill came about when I was appointed the Minister of the Ministry of Justice on 9 July 2018. I have many thoughts on this Bill.

I believe because I was determined before I became a Minister, I made a request to the Prime Minister to accord me this Portfolio because I have experienced the life in prison as I have been a former inmate. If you have any objections, I want you to affirm to me what you know about this place and when you were in there? I believe Deputy Chairman we are here in this House to pass a legislation for the Ministry of Corrective Services.

I have asked the Secretary of this Department, because I am not quite satisfied with the name '*akatanotano*' for Corrective Services because we also have the Opposition in this House called '*tuanga akatanotano*'. I think it is appropriate for us to call it, '*tuanga akatikatika*', which means to correct the ways of our youth in prison. I would like to propose to all of us in this House to talk about things that will benefit the people of this country.

Before I became a Minister, work has been done beforehand at the prison. All these were conducted before my time, before I assumed the responsibilities which I believe is right before God and the people of the Cook Islands.

Firstly, Mr Deputy Speaker, it is obvious to me that we in this House and the people of this country are paying for the food, for the meals of these people in prison without any cost to them. So, I made a recommendation to the Secretary of Justice to consider changing the system for inmates to look for ways to earn income to purchase their own food and other things they need.

One good example is our children going to school. Government do not provide money for our school children to buy their food at school and yet, Government is providing financial support to purchase food for these inmates in prison.

Our people in their own homes bathe once a day whereas the inmates in our prison bathe up to five times a day. Therefore, it is not the first time that these inmates go out and work to earn money to buy their own food. This thought has been on my mind from way back and that is to allow these young inmates to go out to earn money to feed themselves whilst in custody.

I would hope Mr Deputy Speaker, that all of us in this House will understand my deep thoughts of trying to seek alternative ways to improve the livelihood of our inmates in prison by letting them work for money for their own up keeping.

Although we all know that they have broken the law, however through this department we are looking at avenues to mend their ways before they come back into society.

Some of these inmates in prison have various talents including construction industry, mechanic, plumbing and other talents, however they are being sent out to clean rubbish which I believe, is totally inappropriate. I request only two things from the inmates, to be respectful to anybody and to speak the truth. They have regretted for what they have done but those of us looking in, we believe it is not adequate.

What is the teachings from our God in this? The heavens will sing and praise for one person who repents. We have all sinned and we have come short of the glory of God. You might be wondering if I read this, look in the Book of Romans Chapter 3 verse 23 in the Bible.

If we look in the Book of Mathew Chapter 7 verse 1, we will see another lesson here. Do not look into the little specs in the eyes of George Maggie, look within your own eyes. Therefore, Mr Deputy Speaker and I plead to the Members of the House, you are not restricted from saying what you have to say however, I will listen to you and please bear in mind if you have not been a prisoner in your time.

I praise God for the Secretary that I have appointed because he is a former Police Officer, a former Chief Probation Officer and above all, he is today preaching the Gospel of God. Thank you.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Minister. Can I have a Secunder please?

Secinded by the Honourable Minister, Vaine Mokoroa

I put the Question:

That the Bill be now read a Second time?

Do you want to speak on the Bill Honourable Minister?

HON. V. MOKOROA: I will reserve my statement.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Minister. The Floor is now open for debate. I now see the Honourable Member for Matavera, Vaitoti Tupa.

MR V. TUPA: Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. Mr Deputy Speaker, at this moment, I seek your indulgence to convey my condolences to a particular family.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like to convey my condolences to Mr Rupe Rima and Tai Rima and also to all the family during this time of sorrow. Only a few days ago Mr Deputy Speaker, we unveiled the headstone of the son of Rupe and Tai Rima. Now a message has come to us Members of Parliament that Tai's father, Papa Nito Kairau, passed away in New Zealand this morning. We will await for the funeral programme for our Papa. On behalf of myself, the Member of Parliament for Matavera, and also the Members of Parliament of this House, to extend our deepest condolences to the family and especially to his daughter Tai. May the Lord comfort the family as we await for the funeral arrangements.

I will now come back to the Ministry of Corrective Services Bill 2019 before us Mr Deputy Speaker. Mr Deputy Speaker, I have read the regulations under the Ministry of Justice relating to the Ministry of Corrective Services. Under this regulation, there is insufficient explanations on the functions and responsibilities of the Corrective Services. That regulation can be found under laws regulating the Ministry of Justice.

Today, we can see a new Bill to strengthen the Ministry of Corrective Services. If we look at Part 2 of this Bill, it is about the functions given to the Ministry of Corrective Services. I feel it is time that we seriously look at improving the Ministry of Corrective Services. As we can

see now, we have a new Secretary that will head the affairs of the Ministry of Corrective Services. May the Lord give you the strength and knowledge in finding ways to assist our inmates in prison.

In this new Bill Mr Deputy Speaker, it lay down the core functions and responsibilities of the Secretary. I can assure you Mr Deputy Speaker that I have experienced these responsibilities when I was working for Government. This is why I am saying, it is not easy to put a Bill together before it becomes law.

When I initiated the legislation for the Environment Services in 2003, it was very hard to put them together. However, the clarifications provided in this new Bill I believe, will help to strengthen this new Ministry today.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I believe the Parts in this Bill is no different to the Parts in previous legislations that we have passed in this House. The intention here is to remove some functions that is stipulated under the Ministry of Justice Act that relates to the functions of the Ministry of Corrective Services under this new Bill.

It also includes former employees of the Ministry of Justice who will be employed by the Ministry of Corrective Services and the responsibilities that they will undertake. This area has been clarified and it makes it easier for these former employees to achieve their functions.

These are the things that we need to build on, as we see in this Bill, to ensure that things work well. I believe we have read the Prison Act 1967 which touches on these because under this Act, it was not very effective as it mainly focuses on the prison wardens.

However Mr Deputy Speaker, under this new Bill I believe everything has been covered. When I look at Part 1 and Part 2 and other areas that needs improving in the regulations, this Bill confirms it can amend and improve any changes in the regulations to be in line with this new Corrective Services Bill. As well as other regulations that will have an impact on the Ministry of Corrective Services, this new Bill will give a great opportunity will provide a robust and resilient piece of legislation.

Therefore Mr Deputy Speaker, I give my full support to this Bill because it is the first time a Bill of this nature is put together to strengthen the functions of the Ministry of Corrective Services. Thank you.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Member.

I now see the Honourable Member for Teimurimotia, Selina Napa.

MRS S. NAPA: Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker.

I stand to seek some small explanations on this Bill because I see that the commencement date of this Bill take effect from the 1st of July 2019. Why is the commencement date taken back to the 1st of July 2019?

Secondly, it is fitting that this Bill also deal with the transferral of obligations and functions and other matters of the Ministry of Corrective Services from the Ministry of Justice.

However, I want to understand why have we waited this long for us to bring this before the House? Why was this not incorporated at the time when the Ministry of Corrective Services was established? It seems to imply that all the functions that were carried out by the Ministry of Corrective Services from the time when the Minister was appointed to this position to this day, everything that took place are not binding as they are still under the management of the Ministry of Justice.

I would like to take us back and reflect on the shooting incident that happened in my constituency because it has been questioned to me the way the Ministry of Corrective Services has been administered, whether it will be a strict control over the Ministry of Corrective Services so these incidents do not happen anymore on our island and in our country. As we all know, there are family still grieving over the shooting incident.

So the transfer of obligations and functions from the Ministry of Justice to the Ministry of Corrective Services, I am asking the Minister of the Ministry of Corrective Services and even to the Government of the day, to let us in the Opposition know what happened to the review of that shooting incident and to ensure that there is tight control over the activities under the Ministry of Corrective Services when the functions are transferred from the Ministry of Justice.

I do agree with the Bill that has been tabled because it is just a transfer of functions from the Ministry of Justice to the Ministry of Corrective Services. However, there have been incidents in the past that have happened relating to the Ministry of Corrective Services and we all know that those activities have been reported in the newspaper. Let us hope that they will be very vigilant in the monitoring of the activities.

Now, I would just like to congratulate the Secretary of the Ministry of Corrective Services that has come on board to look after this Ministry and also all the workers that are really working hard at the Ministry of Corrective Services. I have been up there a couple of times. There were a few of us that were taken through the rooms up at the prison and the Government workers up there, our people working up there are doing a very good job in trying to look after the well-being of our prisoners under such circumstances as we see their living accommodation is very very poor.

I am also aware that our people with mental issues are kept in prison. I believe that in the past we have been discussing about our people with mental issues. Since then, I have not seen any obvious things that we have done to help them especially in terms of a separate accommodation for them. But I know that the name of our Minister for this Ministry is the Action Man. Maybe during his term he will be able to find a place where we can accommodate our friends with mental issues. We in this House all agreed that our prison is not the best place to keep people with mental issues.

So I would like to challenge the Minister of the Ministry of Corrective Services to carry out his duties well and for our dream to become a reality in terms of accommodating our people with mental issues into their own place, and at the same time to improve our prison facility. Kia Orana.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Minister.
I see the Honourable Member from Ngatangia, Tamaiva Tuavera.

MR T. TUAVERA: Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker.

Firstly, I would like to convey my condolences to the family of Papa Nito Kairau because he is also my relative.

I will come back to the Bill before the House. Firstly, in Clause 3, employee transfers in effect to properly manage the Ministry of Corrective Services. I see that Part 2, is the transfer of the functions to the Minister of Corrective Services. I have no problem with the transfer of these functions under this new Bill. However, I would like to ask the Minister to look into the shooting incident report that was conducted by Tevai Matapo and another person. Someone just said his name is McDermott. We need to be very cautious because according to this report, this incident happened when the inmate was taken out of prison to carry out some work. Yes, he had a prison warden with him. Irrespective of that, the incident still happened and we know three people died as a result of that shooting.

Another incident also occurred not long ago. An inmate was released into the public and the offence that he was charged with was manslaughter. It was discovered that the inmate was released unsupervised. He was not very long in prison when he was released unsupervised. This became a major concern for some people in our community. Someone called me to find out why this inmate was released into the public. I did my own investigation and during that time, the Minister for the Ministry of Corrective Services was not in Rarotonga. So I did not pursue the matter until the Minister returns from New Zealand.

I am happy with this Bill because it gives the Minister the authority to decide who can be released from prison and those who must remain in prison. I believe all of us in this House do not want a repeat of the same incident in the future.

For the remaining of this Bill Mr Deputy Speaker, I have no issues with it but to ask the Minister responsible to have a look at the issues that I have just raised. Therefore, I have no problems with this Bill. Thank you.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Member. Now I see the Honourable Member, Nooroa Baker.

MR N. BAKER: Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker.

Firstly, greetings to you Honourable Deputy Speaker and to all your staff. To the Opposition side – our Leader – greetings and also to the Government side.

I would like to seek your indulgence Mr Deputy Speaker, to allow me to convey my greetings because most of the times, I was away from this House to go to New Zealand for family matters. So I would like to extend my appreciation to our side of the House, because I followed the live streaming of our Parliament while I was in New Zealand and I heard my name being mentioned in support of my absence in the House. I also thank the Government side for supporting my absence.

I would like to convey my appreciation to the Honourable Minister, Rose Brown because when I left for New Zealand for health issues, I noticed some changes in the hospital. I am sure the Honourable Minister is trying her best to improve the situation at the hospital.

I would also like to offer my words of appreciation to the Honourable Minister, Robert Tapaitau who is responsible for ICI because of the work he had started in my constituency Akaoa. Thank you very much Honourable Minister.

I would also like to convey my appreciation to the people in my electorate. To Mama Tinomama, Kia Orana and to all those who have given their support and trust in me to represent them in this House, Kia Orana. To all the people of Akaoa, greetings, including the business people in Akaoa and in Puaikura, Kia Orana.

I will come back to the Bill before the House. I am one of the people who constantly provide support to our inmates in prison. I have been supporting them for six years. I have seen some difficulties in this place and earlier on, there was mention about the shooting incident which a report was also prepared. In that report, there was no mention of myself being interviewed because the victim in the shooting incident was my employee. The armed offender was not on the working scheme but he was taken out of prison during the time the Minister was out of the country.

Sorry, the Minister at the time was not the Honourable George Angene. However, the Minister at the time was overseas. I was troubled during the time of the incident because I knew the victim very well. That is why I took the initiative to help our inmates by taking them out of prison and introduce them to a new life.

I know there are some people who sometimes criticise. I understand we have people with that nature in our community, but those inmates that I took into the community is to help them with not only their physical side but also with their spiritual side. I have helped six inmates and today, they are no longer in prison because they have turned their life around for better. I see the good work that the Minister Responsible of this Ministry is doing. So, I am looking at this Bill before this House.

I am happy with this Bill and I would like to give my full support for us to pass a legislation and to be administered by the Ministry of Corrective Services. I believe in doing this, there is no confusion of how things should operate which reduces the burden on the Ministry of Justice by giving the responsibilities to the Minister and the Ministry of Corrective Services to manage.

Therefore, I give my full support to this Bill and I would like to give my encouragement to the Minister in Charge of this Bill.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Member. Thank you very much for your contribution to the Bill. I now see the Minister Rose Brown.

HON. R. TOKI-BROWN: Greetings to all of us in this House. Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker and greetings to you also.

I rise to give my support to this Bill but before I do so Mr Deputy Speaker, with your indulgence, please allow me to convey my greetings to our people listening in.

Firstly, I would like to convey my appreciation to the Honourable Member, Nooroa Baker for your words of encouragement and support to the work that we are undertaking to help our people. I believe we all understand that what we do involves a lot of work and it takes time to do these things to benefit our people

I would also like to convey words of comfort and condolences to Papa Rupe and Mama Tai for the passing away of Papa Nito. I also convey words of comfort to the family in Atiu for the passing away of Mama Ake. To the children, the in-laws and grandchildren, I convey to you all words of comfort and condolences.

I also convey special greetings and appreciation to Rev. Michael Akava who have served in Atiu and now moved to serve in Mauke. Thank you for all the good work that you have done for our people on Enuamanu. We have seen the CICC Conference that was conducted on the island of Atiu and we have also seen the excellent result of that conference which was exceptionally coordinated by Rev. Michael Akava, with the support of the church members and all the people of Atiu. Please accept our appreciation and warm regards love from the two Members of the island of Atiu. To the three sectors of the island, greetings to you all.

At this time, a son of ours Stan Walker from New Zealand, who is a famous singer is now on the island of Atiu as I speak now. I would like to thank the Office of the Prime Minister under the administration of the Pearl Project, which Melanie Tuiravakai is the head, because through this arrangement with the Pearl Authority, Stan was able to travel to Atiu and Stan is also a descendant from Atiu. The people of Atiu are over-joyed for what is happening on the island now.

I will now come back to the Bill before the House. I would like to give my full support to this Bill because we have heard from the officials who came to explain the Bill to us during the workshop that we conducted last week.

I would like to convey my greetings to the new Head of the Ministry of Corrective Services who is in the House now and to the Minister Responsible and also to the Secretary of the Ministry of Justice.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: I will interrupt you Honourable Minister. We have come to the end of our Sitting this afternoon. You can continue with your speech when we return tomorrow.

Parliament is now adjourned until 1.00 p.m. tomorrow, Thursday 12 December.

Can I please ask the Member from Nikaupara to close us in prayer?

CLOSING PRAYER

Sitting adjourned at 4.57 p.m.