



FORTY-NINTH SESSION

Hansard Report

49th Session

First Meeting

Volume 1

WEDNESDAY 19 SEPTEMBER 2018

PARLIAMENT COMMENCED at 1.00 p.m.

OPENING PRAYER

ACTING CLERK AT THE TABLE (H. MAUNGA): Honourable Members, please be seated.

Greetings to all Honourable Members of Parliament. To all those in the Public Gallery, to those under the tent, families, friends and to the people of the Cook Islands listening on the radio – Kia Orana to you all.

The business for this afternoon is prescribed under Standing Order 5 of the Parliament of the Cook Islands.

Firstly, I would like to read to you the Summons.

“Appointment of the first meeting of the 49th Session of the Parliament of the Cook Islands.

Now, to the Members elected to serve in the Parliament – greetings. Whereas the Parliament was dissolved and whereas I have thought fit to convene the first meeting. Now, therefore, pursuant to Article 29 of the Constitution of the Cook Islands, I, Tom Marsters, Queen’s Representative do hereby appoint Wednesday, 19th September 2018 at 1.00 p.m. in the afternoon as the day on which and the hour at which the first meeting of the 49th Session of Parliament shall commence in the Parliament Chamber, Nikao as the time and date of such meeting.

You are now hereby summoned to appear on the day appointed for the dispatch of the business and to take into consideration the state and welfare of the Cook Islands and therein to do as may seem necessary.

Given under my hand and issued under the Seal of the Cook Islands this 12th day of September 2018.”

I will now lay this on the Table.

I will now read the list of the Members of Parliament, following the Election held on 14 June 2018 as follows:

1. Honourable George Angene – Member of Parliament for Tupapa/Maraerenga
2. Mr Patrick Arioka – Member of Parliament for Murienua
3. Mr Anthony Armstrong – Member of Parliament for Ivirua
4. Mr Nooroa Baker – Member of Parliament for Akaoa
5. Honourable Mark Brown – Member of Takuvaine
6. Ms Tehani Rose Brown – Member of Parliament for Tengtangi/Areora
7. Honourable Vaine Tutai Rose Brown – Member of Parliament for Teenui/Mapumai
8. Mr Tingika Elikana – Member of Parliament for Pukapuka
9. Mr Toka Hagai – Member of Parliament for Rakahanga
10. Mr William Heather – Member of Parliament for Inave/Ruaau
11. Mr Wesley Kareroa – Member of Parliament for Oneroa
12. Mr Manuela Kitai – Member of Parliament for Vaivaitau
13. Mr Tereapii Maki Kavana – Member of Parliament for Arutanga/Reureu/Nikaupara
14. Mr Terepai Maoate – Member of Parliament for Amuri/Ureia
15. Mrs Tetangi Matapo – Member of Parliament for Tamarua
16. Mr Vaine Makiroa Mokoroa – Member of Parliament for Nikao/Panama
17. Mrs Selina Napa – Member of Parliament for Titikaveka
18. Honourable Albert Taaviri Kaitara Nicholas – Member of Parliament for RAPPa
19. Honourable Henry Puna – Member of Parliament for Manihiki
20. Mr Tuakeu Tangatapoto – Member of Parliament for Mitiaro
21. Honourable Robert Tapaitau – Member of Parliament for Penrhyn
22. Mr Tamaiva Tuavera – Member of Parliament for Ngatangia
23. Mr Vaitoti Tupa – Member of Parliament for Matavera
24. Mr Tai Tura – Member of Parliament for Mauke

These are the names of the elected Honourable Members of this Honourable House.

I will now lay this on the Table.

ELECTION OF SPEAKER

Part 2 of the Standing Orders of the Cook Islands Parliament, and Article 31 of the Constitution and Constitution Amendment 2001 No.24.

We will now go to the election of the Speaker.

Honourable Members, before I call the nomination for the Speaker, I would like to draw your attention and to take note of the Constitution Amendment No.24.

“The person who shall be elected Speaker of Parliament and no other shall be the person nominated by the Prime Minister.”

We will now commence the election process for the Speaker. At this moment I now call on the nomination.

I recognise the Prime Minister, Honourable Henry Puna, Member of Parliament for Manihiki.

HON. H. PUNA: Greetings Madam Chairperson. Greetings to the Honourable Members of this House. Special greetings to all our new Honourable Members who have been elected by their people to represent them in this Honourable House.

Special greetings to all our relatives, the spouses and the supporters of our Members in this House today. There will be a special time to be given to us to give our extended greetings. We will just take a brief version of the greetings just for today.

Madam Chairperson, to you and the staff of this House – greetings to you all. As our Reverend stated today, we know that you have worked very hard to get things started and ready for today and tomorrow.

Madam Chairperson, as you have correctly stated, in accordance with Article 31 that was amended by the Democratic Party, it is now the requirement that the nomination will be put forward by the Prime Minister.

Therefore, under the stipulations of this Amendment, I would like to move:

**That our distinguished Niki Rattle be appointed
as the Speaker of this Honourable House**

There are various reasons why our Government believes that this lady should be reappointed as the Speaker of the House. The first thing if we look around in this House there are a majority of men. Therefore I believe that we need to appoint a woman to control us and also to give us guidance as we do our work in this House.

Secondly, we are fully aware of the capacity and the judgment of this lady in leading us in the last Parliamentary term and she is well known in the Pacific and globally. That is the reason why we are confident that we should reappoint her into this honourable position.

In the last Parliamentary term we started looking and re-examining the Standing Orders of this Parliament and there are some issues that were identified to be rectified. We know that when the meetings of Parliament are held we need all the Members to be in the House so that the proceedings can go ahead. This world will not be waiting for us. So we need to make some adjustments and amendments so that the business of the House can continue.

And here is the resolution by Amendments that you have stated before us, this is not quite good, it's not right. As you said whatever or whoever the Prime Minister nominates that is the end of it.

I know why this law was amended in 2001. It is not for a good reason but now this has become a burden on us which is weighing us down at this moment. If we look at the Standing Orders it's different to what the Constitution states. Therefore this House needs to deliberate on this issue and make decisions on how we should proceed and I believe that we will all co-operate in this House on this particular issue.

For these reasons I would like to seek your support that we appoint Niki Rattle to become the Speaker of Parliament for this coming term.

ACTING CLERK AT THE TABLE: Thank you Honourable Prime Minister, Henry Puna, Member of Parliament for Manihiki.

Honourable Members, we now have a nomination for the Speaker Elect. Do we have a Seconder?

I recognise the Honourable William Heather Junior.

HON. W. HEATHER: Thank you Acting Clerk. Madam Chair Person, I would like to offer my support to this nomination based on what we have witnessed in our last Parliamentary term. Without doubt, we on this side of the House, provide our support to this important nomination. Therefore, Prime Minister, we all offer our support to the nomination you have put before the House as Speaker for our Parliament.

God Bless us all.

Seconded by the Honourable William Heather

ACTING CLERK AT THE TABLE: There being only one nomination and none other, Niki Rattle is declared the Speaker Elect.

If you bear with me I would like to escort the Speaker Elect into the Chamber.

Honourable Members, the Speaker Elect Honourable Niki Rattle. All stand please.

MADAM SPEAKER (N. RATTLE): Greetings to you all Honourable Members and also to your spouses, your families and your supporters, special greetings to you in the name of our Lord this afternoon.

It is indeed a great pleasure to welcome you all into the Chamber, the Public Gallery and the precincts of this dignified House for the first day of this 49th Session of Parliament. I extend my very humble thanks and gratitude to you, Honourable Henry Puna the Prime Minister of the Cook Islands for according me the confidence in nominating me as the Speaker of this dignified House. I also extend the same sentiments to the Honourable William Heather as the seconder of my nomination and to all the Honourable Members in this distinguished House.

I am obviously extremely honoured to accept the nomination and shall do my utmost to perform my duties to progress many development initiatives that have begun with a vision of new initiatives in ensuring an effective and well functioning institution into the future for good governance and the democracy for the welfare of this nation.

However before these can happen I am prescribed to present myself to His Excellency Tom Marsters the Queen's Representative to subscribe the Oath of Allegiance and to lay claim of all the privileges of this Parliament.

Honourable Members, Ladies and Gentlemen, Parliament is now suspended until such time that we return from the Queen's Representative.

Sitting suspended at 1.30 p.m.

Sitting resumed at 2.50 p.m.

MADAM SPEAKER: Honourable Members, please be seated.

Parliament is resumed.

Honourable Members, I wish to report that I have taken and subscribed to the Oath of Allegiance before the Queen's Representative and that on behalf of Parliament I have laid claim to all the privileges of Parliament and that His Excellency on behalf of the Queen has been pleased to confirm the same.

We will now go on to the next business of the swearing in of the Members. I am sure as we left you behind you've been preparing for this very special event in your being sworn in as a Member of Parliament this afternoon.

As the names of Members of Parliament have been previously read by the Acting Clerk earlier today, what we will do now is that each name will be called out by the Acting Clerk in alphabetical order and you will come up to the front to the Table when your name is being called, to the front here – we will show you. You will take the Oath and you will sign and then you will take your seat again. You will have in front of you the Oath in Maori and in English. You will select which you prefer to use and you will have your hand on the Bible as you take your Oath.

I will now come down to the Table and we will begin by alphabetical order.

SWEARING IN OF MEMBERS

Now we will begin in alphabetical order and you will come from wherever you are to the front here and here is the Oath standing up there or here in English and in Maori, whichever is easy for you and you will read that with your hand on the Bible and then sign when you are through. Then you will go back and take your seat.

We will begin.

1. Hon. George Angene – Sworn in
2. Mr Patrick Arioka – Sworn in
3. Mr Anthony Armstrong – Sworn in
4. Mr Nooroa Baker – Sworn in
5. Hon. Mark Brown – Sworn in
6. Miss Tehani Rose Brown – Sworn in
7. Hon. Vainetutai Rose Toki-Brown – Sworn in
8. Mr Tingika Elikana – Sworn in
9. Mr Toka Hagai – Sworn in
10. Hon. William Jnr Heather – Sworn in

11. Mr Wesley Kareroa – Sworn in
12. Mr Tereapii Maki Kavana – Sworn in
13. Mr Manuela Kitai – Sworn in
14. Mr Terepai Maoate – Sworn in
15. Mrs Tetangi Matapo – Sworn in
16. Hon. Vaine Makiroa Mokoroa – Sworn in
17. Mrs Selina Napa – Sworn in
18. Hon. Henry Puna – Sworn in
19. Mr Tuakeu Tangatapoto – Sworn in
20. Hon. Robert Tapaitau – Sworn in
21. Mr Tamaiva Tuavera – Sworn in
22. Mr Vaitoti Tupa – Sworn in
23. Mr Tai Tura – Sworn in

MADAM SPEAKER: Honourable Members, Ladies and gentlemen, that completes the swearing in of twenty three elected Members of the Cook Islands Parliament. This now gives you the right to take your seat and to debate in Parliament since you're sworn in Parliament.

Congratulation and I would like to ask a hand of applaud to all our Honourable Members.

(Applaud)

Honourable Members we will continue with the business of the afternoon. According to Standing Orders 13, we will go on to the next business which is the election of the Deputy Speaker.

I see the Honourable Minister Mark Brown on the Floor.

HON. M. BROWN: Kia Orana Madam Speaker.

I move:

**That the Honourable Member for Tapuahua, Toka Hagai, be
appointed as the Deputy Speaker**

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you. I see the Honourable Minister George Angene on the Floor.

HON. G. ANGENE: Madam Speaker and to all Honourable Members and guests in the gallery, I rise to give my support and second the nomination for the Honourable Toka Hagai to be appointed as Deputy Speaker of this Honourable House.

Seconded by the Honourable Minister, George Angene

MADAM SPEAKER: Honourable Members, as there are no further nominations I declare the Honourable Toka Hagai as the Deputy Speaker of Parliament.

(Applaud)

As we have no further business but there will be a couple of announcements before we close for the day. With all our guests and families who are waiting outside, I think we deserve to have a bit of lunch for the hard work that we have done this afternoon. So the announcement I would like to make, it is now going on to 3.30 p.m so we can take some times with our families and have lunch with them and perhaps if all the Members of Parliament can please meet at the Auditorium at 4.30 p.m this afternoon. We would like everybody to assemble outside the Auditorium so we can have a practise of what's going to happen tomorrow. It's a big day tomorrow and there's going to be a lot of people. It's going to be a very big function tomorrow, so we need to be able to go down and know exactly what we're going to do so things will run smoothly.

Honourable Members, Parliament will now adjourn until 10.00 a.m tomorrow. Although that is our starting time, all Members of Parliament and your spouse's must be here at 9.00 a.m in the morning but the proper adjournment time for the starting of the business at the Auditorium is 10.00 a.m.

Can I ask someone to say our closing prayer please?

CLOSING PRAYER

Parliament is now adjourned until Thursday 20 September, at 10.00 a.m.

Parliament adjourned at 3.26 p.m.