



FORTY-NINTH SESSION

Hansard Report

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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 this afternoon.

Thank you very much to our Chaplain for the beautiful message this afternoon. May the grace of God continue to bless us all.

Cabinet Ministers, Leader of the House, Leader of the Opposition, the Honourable Prime Minister and all Members of Parliament, the Clerk and staff of Parliamentary Services – Kia Orana.

Warm greetings also to those in the public gallery and those listening on the radio. To our people in the Pa Enea of Pukapuka and Nassau, Penrhyn, Manihiki, Rakahanga, Ngaputuro, Mangaia, Aitutaki and Palmerston, I extend to you all the warmest greetings from Rarotonga.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Honourable Members, I do not have many announcements for you today except to draw your attention to the Standing Order 206 – Members speaking not to be interrupted. When a Member is speaking, no Member may converse loud or make any noise or disturbance to interrupt.

Also Honourable Members, may I request that you all speak clearly into the microphone to enable our translators to hear properly and to interpret exactly what you spoke for the purpose of Hansard recording. Please allow our Interpreters to do their job properly.

Lastly, the Daily Hansard will be circulated to you to read and to endorse. Please ensure that you do your part to get this done to make Hansard's work easy. Be reminded that you cannot add anything you didn't say to the Hansard record. You only have to endorse what you had said or make corrections to the record. You have two days to make the necessary changes before the Hansard regards this as the final version of the Hansard report for this Sitting.

Now we have come to the best part of Parliament. It is Question Time.

Honourable Members, we will now go to Question Time. Our Question Time for today is for 30 minutes. Again, may I remind Honourable Members to be respectful of each other and to please keep your questions clear, simple and easy for Ministers and Members who respond?

May I also remind Honourable Ministers to answer the questions that are being directed to you to the point.

We only have 30 minutes that the Opposition can utilise to get answers to as many questions as they can. Thank you for your understanding. I think you will all agree with me that I am fair.

There will be a presentation by the Prime Minister. I now call upon the Honourable Prime Minister.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

HON. H. PUNA: Thank you Deputy Speaker. Kia Orana to you and also to all Honourable Members in this House. Greetings also to our people listening in to our radio broadcast.

Thank you very much Deputy Speaker for this opportunity to express our condolences from this House to the Government and the people of New Zealand for the tragic event that happened in Christchurch on 15 March.

Honourable Deputy Speaker, I rise before you and the Honourable Members of this House to express on behalf of our Government and the people of the Cook Islands, our most heartfelt condolences to all New Zealanders who have weathered their darkest days following the tragic events that unfolded in Christchurch on the 15 March.

Let there be no doubt but that we stand in solidarity with New Zealand in condemning in the strongest possible terms these horrific attacks.

Our most sincere prayers and thoughts go to those of the Islamic faith and, in particular, the families and friends of the victims of this shocking and callous attack.

I commend the decisive leadership of New Zealand Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern and her sincere empathy and *aroha* towards the victims, the victims' families, their community and the people of New Zealand.

I am sure we all admired how Prime Minister Ardern rose above any attempt to besmirch the good name of the people of New Zealand and the eternal values of brotherhood and fraternity, captured in New Zealand's National Anthem calling for God's defence from dissension, envy and hate, and for God's blessings on men of every creed and race.

Deputy Speaker, Honourable Members, we take this time also to acknowledge the strength and resolve of the people of New Zealand and we stand with them in condemning those behind this crime by saying in the words of Prime Minister Ardern that “they are not us” and neither should their dark shadow be allowed to dim the bright lights of the many good and decent citizens of New Zealand and their Government.

We commend as well the many who came to stand alongside New Zealand with an unflinching and collective resolve that resonated around the globe as well as here. I am certain that as this Honourable House meets for the first time since that tragic day, we wish to affirm our steadfastness as a fellow member of the Realm of New Zealand, tied together by historic links that we will stand with them side by side.

For myself as Prime Minister and my wife, as well as our High Commissioner to New Zealand, it was humbling as well as a privilege to be present at the Day of Remembrance in Christchurch on Friday, 22 of March to demonstrate solidarity as we understood the necessity for our presence, and not just words of comfort, in times such as these. Our presence to clearly demonstrate to New Zealand that we are one, “*Ko tatou tatou*”.

To our people of the Cook Islands, at 6.00 p.m this Sunday, 14 April at the National Auditorium we invite you all as a nation to come together and remember and pray for God’s healing on the families of the victims. We will also pray for the victims’ communities and for New Zealand as a whole. Bishop Donoghue from the Catholic Diocese of the Cook Islands will lead our religious congregations in a service dedicated to Christchurch.

In addition Deputy Speaker, Honourable Members as is our custom as a Christian Nation, we will also come together to offer our thanksgiving to the Almighty for His protection over us during the cyclone season we have just come through.

To the Government and people of New Zealand today, as the scripture declares, “*when you rejoice we rejoice and when you weep, we weep also*”. The Government, the Parliament and the people of the Cook Islands unanimously declare our steadfast and unequivocal support to the people and Government of New Zealand. “*Ko tatou tatou*” – we are one. Mr Deputy Speaker, can I ask that we as a House rise for a minute’s silence.

(One minute silence observed)

Thank you Honourable Members and Deputy Speaker.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Honourable. Prime Minister. We will now go to Question Time.

QUESTION TIME

I can recognise the Honourable Member for Matavera, Vaitoti Tupa.

MR V. TUPA: Thank you very much, Deputy Speaker for your very clear message to us the Members especially on the area of Question Time.

My question is directed to the Minister of Finance. I believe this is a hard question but I believe it will be easy for him to answer and this is regarding “*Mei te vai ki te vai*”.

In the report that I have read, in particular on the area that has been set aside for this, the report proposed the area for gathering this waste will be on land and the second proposal is to be extended out to sea. The area earmarked for this is between the areas of Ngatangia and Matavera.

Therefore Minister, this is the question to you, can this issue be brought back to the communities of Ngatangia and Matavera or other communities for public consultation. Thank you.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Honourable Member, I see the Honourable Minister of Finance.

HON. M. BROWN: Thank you very much, Mr Deputy Speaker. Thank you for this question relating to the project “*Mei te Vai ki te Vai*” which is the national sanitation project for Rarotonga.

This project deals mainly with the protection measures needed to put in to protect our lagoon in the Takitumu area from Muri all the way through to Titikaveka. A lot of work has been done in the last five years Mr Deputy Speaker on pilot projects, on feasibility studies and most recently on scientific report to determine the cause of the algae growth in our lagoon. And while nothing has been confirmed, the report does suggest one way to address the runoff into the lagoon is to look at a reticulation system for all of our sewerage in the Avana to Titikaveka area. This will require a piping system Mr Deputy Speaker to collect all waste water from the septic systems of businesses and homes to take them to a central point for processing. This processing, Mr Deputy Speaker, will result in water being the residual of the processing and the suggestions there again are we have the option of discharging this water that has been treated either into the ocean or discharging this water which has been treated on to land. To date, Mr Deputy Speaker, no decisions have been made on this report and the recommendations as it requires still further public consultation to get people’s views on what they think should be the best way to dispose of this treated water from the septic systems.

However, if I might allude to a project funded by the Asian Development Bank in Apia where a reticulated sewerage system was put in place that collected all of the sewerage waste through the Apia area into a central processing facility. In this particular facility the solid waste was extracted and the phosphates were buried for a period of time to allow it to change into compost and the water that was taken out of this waste was treated to the extent where they were able to release this water into the coastal area in Apia next to their naturally occurring mangrove and this resulted in a renewal growth of their mangrove swamp area.

I believe the next steps Mr Deputy Speaker are now to look at the options that are before us, recommended in the report and again do a further study on what sort of costing we would require for a system to reticulate all of our septic waste from the Takitumu area and once a costing has been determined to get a more detailed planning to get a firm amount of money and then look for the sources of funding that will be able to address this particular issue.

Let me assure the House that the costings for a project such as this would be into the tens of millions of dollars similar to the costings we are seeing for a project like *Te Mato Vai*. However, for a Government that has an excellent track record in financial management and able to find solutions to very expensive issues in our country, I see this as no problem for our country to be able to address this in the near future. Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Honourable Minister and now I can see the Member of Parliament from Tamarua.

MRS T. MATAPO: Greetings to you Deputy Speaker and greetings to all of us this afternoon. I rise because of the sweet words from the Minister of Finance therefore my question is to the Minister of Health.

Today on the island of Mangaia there is no doctor and the only medical practitioner on the island have departed because of ill health. My question to the Minister is what is the plan by the Ministry of Health to address this problem on the island of Mangaia?

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Member. I see the Honourable Minister Rose Brown and you have the Floor.

HON. R. TOKI-BROWN: Kia Orana to all of us this afternoon and to you Deputy Speaker of the House.

Thank you to the Member from Tamarua for your important question. The Ministry of Health is aware of the problem you mentioned and they are working to address and solve the problem right now. Thank you very much.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Minister and I see the Honourable William Heather Junior, you have the Floor.

MR W. HEATHER: Deputy Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Infrastructure of the Cook Islands. One of the Opposition Member have asked a question on sewage earlier today. My question then will be about rubbish and recyclable materials on our islands.

We are all aware that our rubbish dump and the recycling centre in Arorangi is getting full at the moment and the question is whether public consultation has been done and what is Governments plan for the future?

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Member and I see the Minister for ICI and you have the Floor.

HON. R. TAPAITAU: Kia Orana to all Honourable Members and to our Deputy Speaker this afternoon. I was thinking of answering the Members question in my islands dialect but I think most of the House will not understand. Fortunately I am well verse in the English language.

Thank you Honourable Member for the question and to answer your question. Infrastructure Cook Islands at the moment is looking to try and get an incinerator for the Cook Islands. We know that the landfill is coming to its full state and it has another five years to go and we will be in consultation with the landowners if it comes to this. We are also trying to get an incinerator because if we get an incinerator here it will deal with plastic and other waste materials.

We also know that the waste you are talking about which is the human waste. We are attending to that problem as well. So, there are procedures in place and we will be talking to the public and we will never do anything without consulting the public and the landowners. Thank you for the question.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you very much Honourable Minister and I see the Honourable Member for Teimurimotia, Mrs Selina Napa, you have the Floor.

MRS S. NAPA: Kia Orana Deputy Speaker and I have a supplementary question to add to the Honourable William Heather's question directed to the Minister of ICI. I am a Member in this House that has always been in the past asking the Minister of ICI the question on an incinerator for the Cook Islands.

I hear today that this exercise is ongoing looking for an incinerator and I know \$50,000 has been set aside for procuring an incinerator. Surely today this incinerator is here and I am asking the Minister to give a definite date as when this would be put in place.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Member and I see the Minister of Finance.

HON. M. BROWN: Thank you Deputy Speaker. I think I am more suitable to answer the question of the Honourable Member because I was the Minister that went to meet with the company which manufactures this incinerator to negotiate with them in the past.

I am aware of the report that the Member is referring to and it did not recommend an incinerator to be put in place for the Cook Islands. Reading the report Mr Deputy Speaker it was clear that the work done in assessing the viability of an incinerator was not satisfactory. And this report was done by overseas consultancy.

An opportunity at a meeting in Germany that we met with a company that specialises in custom built incinerators particularly for municipal and household waste. And it was here Mr Deputy Speaker that we saw the technology used by these companies to ensure that every toxin is removed during the incineration process and is not released out into our atmosphere.

This company has a pedigree of doing work for large mining companies where they incinerate waste water and they do work for large cities where they incinerate city waste. They do work for corporations where they can incinerate even sewerage. It became very clear that this company is very capable of designing and building a custom made incinerator to suit the needs of Rarotonga and also the Outer Islands waste.

So, at this stage, Mr Deputy Speaker there is no date that we can give on when we can expect an incinerator to come but we don't want just any incinerator to come here. We want the right incinerator to be built to suit the needs of our country. And I am pleased to advise that our discussions with our development partners in particular New Zealand have indicated their willingness to support the Cook Islands in the procurement of a custom built incinerator to address the needs of our waste management at our dump.

The Honourable Member and the Members of the House and the public will be advised in due course once we have a timeline for this to happen. Thank you Deputy Speaker.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Minister and I recognise the Honourable Member for Ngatangia, Mr Tamaiva Tuavera, you have the Floor.

MR T. TUAVERA: Thank you very much Deputy Speaker. Kia Orana to all Honourable Members this afternoon. My question is to the Minister of Finance. Minister you have been telling the world that we in the Cook Islands is graduating to the development countries status.

Now, how can a small country with no natural resources, many miles away from urban markets and no export products can honestly sustain ourselves economically compared to other countries with resources.

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

MR T. TUAVERA: Coming back to my question. How can you honestly tell the tax payers of this country of such a fake story? Yet as described by an economist, Jeff Bertram, in his report of the Cook Islands.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Member and I can see the Minister of Finance.

HON. M. BROWN: Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. Firstly let me correct a statement made by the Honourable Member, it is not me that is telling the country that we will be graduating as a high income country. If the Honourable Member actually read the reports and listened to factual information, he would know that it is the OECD that is telling the Cook Islands that you will graduate to the high income status. And instead, he makes wild exaggerated statements like fake news in this House. I know it is difficult but read the reports that are provided for you that are factual and full of accurate information.

But our country has been on an upward growth trajectory for the last six years. Under the very good policies of this Government and the very sound economic management of the Ministry of Finance and this Government, we have seen our country's prosperity rise to the highest level it's ever had. And as we've mentioned over the years numerous times, Mr Deputy Speaker, our growth and prosperity has been driven by tourism and to understand that in order to earn income, you don't just have to export primary products. As a country you earn income also by providing a service.

And to make a statement that we as a country have no natural resources is again an ignorant statement. We have one of the most beautiful countries in the Pacific, if not in the world. When asked of tourists "What is the most attractive thing about the Cook Islands that brings you here?" their one answer above all others is "the friendly people". And that is a resource Mr Deputy Speaker. The Honourable Member, as a very wealthy business owner in the tourism industry exploiting the Muri lagoon, would well know the growth in tourism numbers by the increase in passengers that he has every year.

MR T. TUAVERA: Point of Order.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is a Point of Order. What is your Point of Order Honourable Member?

MR T. TUAVERA: 97 – Irrelevancy. I do not exploit.

Thank you. I want him to take that out of his speech. I do not exploit.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Minister, do you want to withdraw your statement or –

HON. M. BROWN: Mr Deputy Speaker, I fail to see any wrong in using the word "exploit". It means "to use" and he is using the natural beauty of our lagoon.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: You may continue.

MR M. BROWN: Yes, thank you Mr Deputy Speaker.

MR T. TUAVERA: Point of Order.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: A Point of Order has been raised. What is your Point of Order?

MR T. TUAVERA: This is my livelihood he is picking on. It is private.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: I would like to ask the Honourable Minister to re-word or rephrase what you have said.

MR T. TUAVERA: Or sit down.

HON. M. BROWN: I was merely alluding Mr Deputy Speaker that Tourism is the great driver of our economy which is the reason why we are heading into upper

income status and graduating to a high income country and the Honourable Member as part of the industry would have seen first-hand Mr Deputy Speaker the growth in the number of people that have come through and increased the prosperity, not of just people who are working in the industry who own the industry, but also of the country as a whole.

So do not make silly statements that the Minister of Finance is declaring our country as a high income country. These are statements made by the OECD, the Organisation for Economic Development. These are statements that are made by the IMF, the International Monetary Fund and by various other international organisations.

We are well ahead of many other countries in the Pacific Mr Deputy Speaker, the first one to graduate to high income status so we, as a country, have to be prepared to do business as a country in different ways from what we have in the past and I am prepared Mr Deputy Speaker to provide tutorials to the Opposition Members on how we came about to a graduated status country. At the time of their choosing I will be available.

Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Minister. We have come to the end of our lively discussions on Question Time this afternoon.

We have now come to the Presentation of Papers.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS

I call upon the Minister of Finance and responsible for the Audit Office, the Honourable Mark Brown to present Paper 09 – Report on the Ministerial Support Office and Leader of the Opposition for the period 2015-2018.

HON. M. BROWN: Yes, thank you Mr Deputy Speaker.

I have the pleasure to present:

The Report by the Cook Islands Audit Office for the Ministerial Support Office and the Office of the Leader of the Opposition for the Financial Years from 2015-2018

I now lay this on the Table.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Minister Mark Brown.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Second Reading of the Appropriation Amendment Bill 2019.

I recognise the Honourable Prime Minister.

HON. H. PUNA: Deputy Speaker, I wish to indicate my preference to speak last. Thank you.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Prime Minister.

Honourable Members, the Floor is now open for you to speak on the principles and merits of the Bill.

I can see the Honourable Vaitoti Tupa who is very active.

MR V. TUPA: Thank you very much Deputy Speaker of Parliament. May I please ask your indulgence to convey my greetings?

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: You may do so.

MR V. TUPA: Firstly, I would like to express in the House my words of condolences. An older brother has passed away in New Zealand by the name of Ruapito Charlie. He is also the father of the Secretary of Infrastructure, our daughter Diane. I wish to express my condolences and words of comfort to the people of Araura Enuā for the loss of our son Ruapito Charlie and also to the older brothers, Taia and Fred Charlie. Taia is currently residing in Araura and Fred who has flown over to New Zealand for the family service. My words of comfort go out to them and tomorrow, straight after Parliament, I will be on the next flight out to attend the service.

I would also like to express greetings from my constituency of Matavera. We weren't given the opportunity to express our Christmas and New Year greetings. Please accept my greetings on behalf of the constituency of Matavera, from all the religions – all six of them in Matavera. From all the Ui Ariki in our village and from all the Chaplains and Orometuas that live within the village of Rangiatea and everyone who is now residing in Rangiatea. This includes all the students and all those from Apii Takitumu.

Now I would like to come back to the Bill that's presented here. I'm going through the statements presented by the Minister of Finance. To me, I feel that this is a very appropriate Appropriation but I would like to comments on some areas today.

Firstly I'd like us to look at the Agriculture area. Even if there is an increase within the Budget for the Agriculture in this Bill, I do believe that this is an appropriate time for these things to be done before the next Appropriation, even if the allocation amount is to the tune of \$7,370. However my request to us is, as we have not yet arrived to the Appropriation for next year.

I made a request in this House last year. I requested if the Vote Item for the Ministry of Agriculture can be increased to three million dollars. This was my request to Parliament last year.

I trust our new Budget for the year 2019/20 has considered appropriating this sum of money for the Ministry of Agriculture. I want to raise that now before we debate on the Vote Item for Agriculture.

I would like to say thank you to the Minister of Finance and we look forward to our main Appropriation Bill.

The second matter that I would like to speak about, although he did not mention this in his Financial Statement, is about the Ministry of Culture. I would like to thank the Minister of Finance for allocating an additional \$60,000 for the Ministry of Culture in order to take them to the end of the Financial Year. I also mentioned in our sitting last year to retain the three million dollars that was allocated for the Ministry of Culture last year in the next appropriation this year.

I will now talk about the appropriation for the Ministry of Internal Affairs. I would like to thank the Minister of Finance for increasing the Vote Item for the Ministry of Internal Affairs from \$310,917. I believe there is an allocation because of what we spoke about in the last Parliament. I support the budget and hope that in our next budget for 2019/20, this will be happen.

I would like to request the Minister of Internal Affairs to look into appropriating the money that is allocated at Internal Affairs for the elderly. I do believe this allocation will indeed be a big help to our elderly in the next appropriation.

I have expressed my wish previously to all of us and also to the Minister for the allocation of funds for the old age pension from 60 to 65, 65 to 70, 70 to 75, 75 to 80, 80 to 85 and 85 to the age of 100. I do believe if we come to the end of our term we will all qualify for this allocation. So I would like to thank the Minister of Finance for allocating \$310,000 for the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

I will now talk about the allocation for the Office of the Prime Minister. I see there is no increase in this Vote Item. I am considering the area of Emergency Management Cook Islands under the OPM because there is no allocation under this appropriation for this vote. Therefore I would like to request the Minister of Finance to please relook at this because we have just witnessed the heavy downfall of rain and that is just rain. We see many problems caused on our roads as well as within our homes.

I believe under this increase EMCI will be able to offer help to our people instead of waiting for the cyclone season. Therefore I would like to request to the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance to please seriously look at this.

Now, I would like to talk about the appropriation for ICI. Even though there is no increase in this allocation at this time, I want to also request to the Minister of Finance as well as the Minister for ICI to consider this Vote Item for the next appropriation. As I explained earlier on about our experience from the heavy down pour and the wide range of damages that were caused on Rarotonga as well as the Outer Islands, it is only right that we look at this Vote Item seriously.

I would like to thank the Minister for ICI the Honourable Robert Tapaitau at this stage because the road works in Matavera has been completed today. I also thank him

because not only the main road has been fixed but also the roads that link into the inland and people's homes.

What I like about the Minister for ICI is that he did not just remain with these jobs but he also looked at other roads into the homes of our people. Therefore I request the Minister of Finance for ICI in the next Appropriation 2019/20, because I recall we appropriated for ICI last year 5 million dollars. Please consider a slight increase of 20 million dollars for ICI. Those are my comments on ICI and I would now like to talk about the Vote Item for the Environment Services.

Thank you Minister of Finance for increasing \$80,000 on the Vote Item for the Environment Services and as well as the Vote Item for the Ministry of Health. I can see an increase in the Vote Item for the Ministry of Health of \$15,000. Again, I would like to request to the Minister of Finance to look at the situation with Health and even consider an increase of up to 20 million dollars.

I would now like to talk about the allocation for establishing offices for the Ministers because he has allocated \$50,000 for building a Minister's offices. During his explanation at that time there was consideration to increase the number of Associate Ministers. I am not too sure about this however it is up to the Minister about the allocation of \$50,000. It is not clear to me whether this appropriation is for the office of the seventh Minister or for any other Minister.

Therefore these are the comments that I would like to bring before us. Lastly, I would like to thank this appropriation and I believe that all of us in this House will cooperate in pushing this Budget through this House.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you very much Honourable Member Vaitoti Tupa. I see the Honourable Member for Amuri Ureia.

MR T. MAOATE: Thank you very much Deputy Speaker. Greetings to all of us in the Name of our God. Kia Orana to all your staff, the Clerk and all the staff of Parliament. Greetings to all the Members of the Government, the Prime Minister, your Cabinet Ministers and as well as to all of us on the Opposition side from our Leader and to all the Members.

Mr Deputy Speaker please allow me a short time to extend my greetings to my constituency. But before I do that, I would like to convey condolences to all of our people that have lost loved ones, recently. Firstly, to you Mr Deputy Speaker and your family for your bereavement. As well as to the late former Member for Arenikau, Papa Pumati Isaraela, condolences to the wife, children and family. Adding to these, the loss of a member from the Charlie family that the Member Vaitoti was mentioning before, may the Lord comfort you all.

Greetings to all the people of my constituency of Amuri and Ureia, the three pillars of the community, traditional, religion and Government. To all our community heads from our religious sector, our Aronga Mana and all the Council members and the people of Amuri and Ureia – greetings. To those of us that came through the last general election, both the Democratic and the One Cook Islands – greetings to all of us.

Apologies for not hearing our voices last few months it is because Parliament have not been sitting but I believe we the three Members from Aitutaki will now work in this House for the betterment of the people of our island of Aitutaki.

I will now come back to the Bill before the House today. When I look at the Ministerial Statement from the Minister of Finance, and his explanation on this Bill, these are very clear to understand. When this Bill was handout to us at the minute we entered the Chamber all sorts of thoughts and suspicious ideas came up to each Member of the Opposition as to what is happening. I had points to raise because of his explanation but these has been covered so I will consider other points.

Firstly, I would like to consider the comments made by the Minister of Finance regarding this “beautiful budget” for 2018/19 as compared to the year 2018/17. I support the notion that this is a beautiful budget however I would prefer an audit to be done on this budget to really clarify whether this is really a beautiful budget. Since July we are now in the 10th month of this financial year. We are all aware there is significant increase in debts that is incurred by us for the Te Mato Vai project. We want to be cautious about this so that the report that will come out for the end of the year 2019/18, will be good as well.

Regarding the appropriation for the roads in Atiu, I recall when the road works in Aitutaki were being done. There were some issues and difficulties which presented a bad example and not because the roads were not completed. When the roads were being constructed we headed into the hot months of that year. The people of the island were driving on the road through melted tar seal. Today the problem still remains even though they have attempted to do something about it. There were areas that have been resealed and this cost extra money for the project.

I know that from now on, every hot season that we go through in the future, we will experience this melted tar on our roads in Aitutaki. Let this be an example for all of us that when we seal and upgrade our roads, let us not rush the work because we will end up spending more money on fixing the problem just like in Aitutaki. I am not pointing fingers at any particular person because I do realise that the current Minister Robert Tapaitau came after this project was done. Since the roads in Atiu were mentioned in this statement, I trust the problems experienced in Aitutaki will not reoccur on the island of Atiu.

Let us not rush the job because of a potential By-election and for political reasons. This will only cause problems and more senseless spending of public money.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: I will interrupt you Honourable Member because it is time for us to take our break. We are now going to suspend this Sitting and we will return at 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. Speaking on the Floor before we suspended for lunch was the Member from Amuri, Terepai Maoate. The Floor is yours.

MR T. MAOATE: Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker.

I would now like to talk on the Vote Item for the Ministry of Health. I would like to thank the Minister of Finance and also the Minister of Health for contributing \$30,000 for the water tank on our island. This is a big assistance to our people. However, I believe it is possible to provide more than \$30,000 for this purpose.

There are still some issues at the hospital in Aitutaki such as purchasing the right means to assist our dental health. I would like to encourage us to look into this. I believe there is a replacement for the retired dental officer. So many times we hear comments made that there are no dentists available. We all understand that toothache is a major problem if it is not treated.

I am always concerned every time the issue of lack of doctors in the Outer Islands is brought up so I would like to encourage Government and especially the Minister of Finance to again increase the budget for the Ministry of Health.

I also take note from the Financial Statement delivered by the Minister concerning the travel by our Members of Parliament. I would like to ask us to look at the allocation of \$180,000 to help fund the travel of Members of Parliament. I have trouble in supporting this allocation. When I look at this area, we have always had an allocation but I noticed there is another increase in this area. It is not just a hundred per cent increase but up to 200 per cent increase. This is why I said earlier on that the Vote Item for the Ministry of Health should receive an increase of two hundred percent like it is given in the allocation for travel for Members of Parliament.

I would also like to comment on the allocation of funds for our sports personnel. I am unsure if this amount is sufficient but maybe it is for the time being. So, I say that there should be more money allocated here from the Members of Parliament Travel Fund.

Concerning the establishment of the Ministerial Offices, there is a current rumour circulating and I don't understand why this is brought into this allocation. Under Article 13(3)(a) of our Constitution, it provides that the Queen's Representative can appoint a seventh Minister who is a non Member. We did not expect Government to appoint a non Member as the seventh Minister but to appoint from within Government.

So if I am right in saying that the seventh Minister is the person that has been mentioned on the radio and television, this is an indication of a possible Snap Election. This is my views so bear with me.

However, I am concerned of this allocation because it should have been given to important Ministries such as the Ministry of Health to assist them.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, your time is up. I can now see on the Floor the Honourable Member for Ngatangiia.

MR T. TUAVERA: Deputy Speaker, I move:

That normal extension of speaking time be granted to the Honourable Member for Ureia-Amuri, Terepai Maoate

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Can I call for a Seconder please?

Seconded by the Honourable Member for Teimurimotia, Selina Napa

I will put the Question. The Question is:

That the Motion be agreed to?

Motion agreed to

Honourable Member, you may continue speaking.

MR T. MAOATE: Thank you Deputy Speaker and all the Members.

I will not make further comments on what I previously mentioned but what is important is the Budget for our country, therefore, I would like to encourage Government to manage our funds well because we want to see our Budget increase all the time. Please consider our business people also Honourable Minister.

I would like to make time to meet with the Minister for BTIB and talk about protecting our own business community. Our biggest revenue as we all understand is tourism. It is one of the biggest contributors to our economy and not just for the people on Rarotonga but also in Aitutaki. There are many benefits coming to our people and to people doing construction work, tourist accommodations and also people returning home to improve their homes. We want to help our youth who would like to partake in this type of business, not just the youth but also other people out there who can be of help to these youth. Most of the people in the Outer Islands do not see the benefit from this until it actually gets to the Outer Islands.

Sometimes when Government officials travel to the Outer Islands, there is not sufficient time to dialogue with the business people in the Outer Islands. There are people out there unable to understand the explanations, or at times of meetings are tied up with their employment jobs or even leads busy lives.

I want to highlight this from BTIB as there was some allocated funding shown to us through a workshop held last week here in Parliament. These are soft loans available to our people who want to set up a business as explained to us Members of Opposition. The person who made the presentation had travelled to the outer islands but I am not sure which islands, however came to Aitutaki. I have asked the people of Aitutaki interested in joining and the reply was they weren't aware. I don't understand where the breakdown is that some weren't aware of the visit.

The situation here is that the allocated fund can easily be loaned to set up a business as opposed to getting a loan from a bank. This is an easy way to assist our people to start or manage a business and this can be an incentive in giving back to Government through paying taxes.

My problem on this funding is I believed at the start the funding is to go to our people and the charge on interest is 3 percent. The purpose of this fund is to help our people and not to make money over money. The interest rate for this fund is now 5 percent. I don't understand the reason why and he did not explain why this interest was increased from 3 to 5 percent. So I now ask the Minister of BTIB and Minister of Finance to look into easing the repayments if there is an excess amount of surplus, also not enough has been allocated to assist our people.

I will leave my other thoughts when we go into Supply. Thank you.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you very much Honourable Member for Amuri Ureia. I see the Honourable Member for Ngatangia, Tamaiva Tuavera.

The Floor is yours.

MR T. TUAVERA: Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. I can see that we all look a little bit tired and maybe a bit sleepy, so I invite you if you want to stand before I speak, do so and shake loose.

If you may Deputy Speaker give me time to address my constituents.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please do proceed.

MR T. TUAVERA: Greetings to all in Ngatangia. All of us today I can see that we are all awake. Firstly our league team is going ahead, we have created history. This is a very proud moment for myself the executive as well as the elders of Ngatangia and Matavera. On top of that our road in Muri is now being upgraded. Thank you to the Minister of Finance and to the Minister of ICI. Our people right now are clapping for you. I realise that we are all tired of listening to me asking in this House time and time again about the progress on my roads. Because my friend from Matavera boasted about how his road is now completed and my one is not even addressed.

Therefore to you my people of Ngatangia, I am very happy and proud that one, our Sea Eagles Rugby League team is doing very well, and second, our road is now being fixed, and third, I am certain that there are other roads where the Minister of ICI can consider for development. So greetings to all our people listening in to our radio today.

I will now come back to our main agenda today which is the Appropriation Amendment Bill 2019 that we are deliberating. I will start on the Capital Distribution Fund as mentioned by the Minister in his statement. My only concern on this matter is the Renewable Energy that he talked about. Today there are many people who would like solar to be installed on their homes to reduce the consumption of power usage because there are many people building homes today. As advised by Te Aponga Uira they have stopped all installations of solar energy on homes today. May

be the Minister can advise us in this House today as to a date when this will be re-opened again.

He also mentioned and I might say to the Minister that I also want an electric car because you mentioned that these will be given to and trialled by all the Ministers. We also on this side want to trial these vehicles but I do not want the cycle driven by the Member for Tupapa because he also has an electric bike. This is a good idea but please also give some for us to trial.

But this is my major concern as you have mentioned the redundant fossil fuel vehicles because these are old and outdated vehicles and when you drive around the island you will see ruined vehicles in the back and front yards of homes. Maybe you can consider in this Capital Distribution funds of yours for funds to be allocated for somebody to remove these ruined vehicles.

I also acknowledge that the General Transport Company is doing their best to remove these outdated vehicles from our island because we all know upon the arrival of the cargo ships into our ports we will all see the vehicles being piled on top of the containers. This is dramatic because up to 50 to 60 cars per vessel will arrive on our islands. My request to the Minister is please consider how we will remove these wrecked vehicles from our islands because we consider our islands a paradise in case it might turn into a paradise for rusted, ruined vehicles on our islands.

I am glad that we are mentioning the improvement on the roads on the island of Atiu and the power upgrade on Atiu. My only concern is whether this is the right time to introduce this into the House because there is a pending by-election on the island of Atiu. These are the things that we make mistakes outside of this House. This is a warning to all of us who are saying these today.

I hear some of the talk in Atiu that in some areas the tar seal has broken off because there is no core base on the road. The outcome of this is that we have to seek for funds again to repair the road. We will end up looking for \$700 to \$900,000 to renew this road again. Although we will say this is small stuff but these funds if they are not being utilised they could be used somewhere else to improve our country.

I look at the Ministry of Health because I have been up to the hospital. I take note of the people at the window of the dispensary of medications. I witnessed two elderly people trying to get their medications. One when he presented his prescription he was advised that the particular medicine was not available at the dispensary but it is available at the CITC Pharmacy. The concern here is that the elderly person has to buy this medication from the Pharmacy. And that is not the only problem up at the hospital. There are other problems and issues but I am certain that the Minister of Health will be able to address these.

I now come to the subject of parliamentary members travels. When I consider this subject we in the Opposition are not utilising this funds. I travelled to London and my travel was funded by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA). I travelled to Wellington on parliamentary travels, three times, I was funded by the CPA. I do not understand the reason we are increasing this appropriation. These are my concerns. Why the increase in this allocation. There is a separate allocation for

the Members from the Outer Islands and it is not included in this appropriation. I would like a clarification for this increase of \$180,000 in this appropriation.

If only the Minister of Finance presented this document yesterday. Then I would not have asked him about the school bus for Mangaia. It is after I have posed the question that this document was presented to me. I have no choice but to thank the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance for this allocation of \$87,307. I am certain our Member from Tamarua will be happy that she will be receiving her school bus soon. The term here is, “will receive” but I am sure when she receives it, then she will be very happy.

I now look at the allocations to support our sports people of our country especially in preparation for the South Pacific Games. I see a good support from Government for our teams travelling to the games. I am not certain whether NCD as reported in your report Minister is correct because there is a big difference between NCD and a group of team travelling to a game. If you want to mention NCD in this report then you have to give money to the Ministry of Health to combat NCD. I think that is more appropriate than including it in this report for the game.

I pose the question of the establishment of a Ministerial Office. I note \$50,000 allocated for this new office to be established. I believe that this money is much more needed by the Ministry of Health. Therefore, Deputy Speaker I am running out of ideas to speak on this Appropriation. But before I take my seat, I want to commend our Leader, Honourable Tina Browne because yesterday she was asked to sit down as she was not sworn-in yet. We know that two of our Members in the Opposition were not sworn-in yesterday before the election of the Deputy Speaker.

I just want to tell this House, if she had asked us to walk out of this House, we would have walked out, but we did not, we humbled ourselves and remained in our seats. Therefore, I commend our Leader for what she demonstrated yesterday.

This Appropriation required by our Government, I am saddened at times Mr Deputy Speaker when I consider it. On one side I am happy because it will benefit our Outer Islands, but on the other side, I as well as the Minister George Angene are not happy because this allocations are not coming to us. As if we in Rarotonga are being punished and no funds are coming our way.

Those are my comments on this Appropriation Amendment Bill, Mr Deputy Speaker. I have no objections to it.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you very much Honourable Member for Ngatangia. I also wish to thank the Leader of the Opposition for yesterday. If it was you in her place there would have been a problem.

I see the Honourable Member for Arenikau, you have the Floor.

MR T. KAVANA: Thank you very much, Mr Deputy Speaker for this opportunity to speak before this House.

I stand to support our Appropriation Amendment Bill. Before I speak to the Bill, if I may be allowed to convey my greetings to the people of my island, Aitutaki.

Kia Orana to the Prime Minister, Cabinet Ministers and to all the Honourable Members of the Government. I convey greetings to the new Leader of the Opposition and may I add that this is your third Leader in a matter of 10 months into this term of Parliament. I will not be surprised if in a few months you will have a new person as your Leader. I hear Mr Deputy Speaker that the Honourable Member for Ngatangia is thinking of being the Leader of the Opposition. Please accept my greetings to all the Opposition Members.

I would also like to make mention of the young lady from Atiu, Tehani Brown. I understand what you are going through together with your family and the people of Atiu. May God continue to keep you strong and it will not be long when we will meet again in this House.

Kia Orana to the people of the Cook Islands listening to my voice this afternoon and to my people of Araura Enea. Kia Orana to all those in leadership, the Mayor and Island Councillors, Executive Officer and others with titles. Special greetings to the people of my constituency – Arutanga, Reureu and Nikaupara.

I greet the two traditional chiefs in my constituency, Teurukura Tiura and Teurukura Makirau this afternoon and the three Council members. Thank you for your hard work in our villages. Greeting to my CIP committee. Thank you for electing me to be your representative in Government and I will endeavour to be the most hard working MP that was ever elected to the House of Parliament.

I would also like to make mention of those that have passed away recently, firstly to Mama Tutai John Jessie, to her husband Papa John Jessie residing here on Rarotonga and the children back in Aitutaki. May you all be comforted by the warmth of the Lord.

Also to the former Member of Parliament, Papa Pumati Iseraela, who passed away last week, I convey my condolences to Mama Rima, the children and family. May the Lord comfort you all.

I would like to make mention from my constituency of Arutanga/Reureu and Nikaupara, the combination of groups that comes together to include the growers and also fishermen. They are very active in their own right and I as Member of Parliament is supportive of plans for my constituency and we have a plan this year planting. Later on in the year we will be doing an inspection of the planters' planted area. Don't be troubled my people. I have put in a request for machines to help with our planting.

Therefore, you see all the good work that the Government has carried out on our island, not just the one constituency of Arenikau but the whole island of Aitutaki. As we all know, with the completion of tar-sealing of our roads, started off by our previous Member of Parliament and now we can see the beauty of the road. As mentioned by the Member of Amuri/Ureia and with the issues he's pointed out, he is

right. If you want your car under-sealed, then drive on this road and it will be under-sealed by the runny tar.

In regards to the solar power the panels are up and erected, we are waiting for the contract workers to hook them up to the main generator and then we will see the benefits the Almighty has provided. This will in turn assist us in paying lower power rates. We are on Stage 1, soon we will move onto Stage 2 and then Stage 3. Thanks to the Government, we are moving forward, as reported by the Minister and our Prime Minister in this House.

However, I heard that stage 2 and stage 3 has been put on hold until a later date but I say no, Stage 1 is completed let's move on to Stage 2 and 3. I believe the energy we are talking about in Araura will be completed at all stages of the solar energy project.

I would also like to make mention of the project by Government to improve the water in Aitutaki. The construction and this work have started however there's further work to be done. I would like for you to be aware that this is one of our biggest problems, the water in Aitutaki. I am grateful and would like to make mention from the Minister's report that the water tank for the Aitutaki Hospital is being finalised and that is eventually going to be done.

My aim as Member of Parliament alongside with my other Member of Parliament colleagues is to complete these projects on our island Araura Enea while we are Members of Parliament. Fortunately I am on the Government side so I can drive this to completion, if I was not in Government I don't think this is going to be completed. I would like to point out to my people of Aitutaki that be aware of all the good things that's happening on our island.

I therefore ask for our support on the Appropriation Bill tabled today. I won't go into it individually but I stand here to support this.

I have come to the end in standing to support the Bill Mr Deputy Speaker. So God bless us all.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you to the Honourable Member for Arutanga/Arenikau.

I now see the on the Floor the Member from Vaipae/Tautu, Manuela Kaitai.

MR M. KITAI: The right name is Manuela Kitai.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. I speak in Maukean. Apologies.

MR M. KITAI: Thank you very much Deputy Speaker.

Before I go on to our Appropriation Bill, please to give me an opportunity to greet my people.

Greetings to us all in this House this afternoon. My words of condolences to all those who lost their loved ones during this week. To Mrs Matina Ioane, she is from my

constituency. She passed away in New Zealand and her body will be brought back on Thursday. Therefore my words of condolences to the family, to the children and may God bless you during this time of hardship.

Also to our friend, Pumati Iseraela who passed away a week ago. To your wife and children and family. May God bless you all and give you strength.

To my constituency Vaivaitau, I would like to give you my Christmas and New Year greetings. To all the Chaplains and Orometua and all your different denominations – greetings to you. The Councils in Vaivaitau – greetings in the name of our Lord. Also my Chief, Manarangi – greetings in the name of the Lord.

To all my committees, Demo/OCI – greetings in the mighty name of God. May God continue to bless you and keep you strong and just to wait on the Prime Minister's order.

I would like to say thank you to the Minister of Finance. I would like to make mention of the water intake in Aitutaki. There is an allocation of up to \$418,000. As we now know, it won't be long until the end of the fiscal year so I would like to know whether this funding is going to be carried forward. So therefore when the Budget of this amount is joined on to the next Budget, there should be more money allocated. As aforementioned by my friend, there is talk that there are some water works people coming to Aitutaki. Thank you very much Minister for those kind thoughts.

I would like to also highlight, as mentioned before by the Member from Arenikau, if you want to under seal your car you drive on the tar-seal road.

I would like to commend him because for us in Aitutaki we are all working together and nobody is going their own way. I thank the Lord especially for the three of us uniting in our work.

I think this is sufficient. Otherwise I might end up boasting later on. Thank you.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Member. Now I see the Honourable Member from Murienua. The Floor is yours.

MR P. ARIOKA: Thank you very much, Deputy Speaker. Greetings to all of us in the mighty name of our Lord. To all of us in this Honourable House of this nation, Kia Orana. Greetings to the Opposition, from the Leader of the Opposition and all your Members in the Opposition, greetings to you today.

To the Prime Minister, Members of Cabinet and all the Members in Government, greetings in the name of our Lord. Greetings to all our people who are listening in to our radio broadcast today. I believe you are satisfied listening to the radio and all the major discussions we deliberated in this House since yesterday.

With your indulgence Mr Deputy Speaker, please allow me to address my people of Puaikura as well as my constituency of Murienua.

Greetings to Tinomana Ariki, all the traditional leaders of Puaikura, to all the people of Puaikura from Tuoro to Toreaiwa greetings. To the seven Mataiapo of Rutaki who are responsible for holding our constituency together, and to all the people in Murienua greetings to you all. To all the people and especially the youth of Puaikura and Murienua, greetings to you all.

Greetings to all the different churches in our constituency of Murienua for holding our faith within our community for the betterment of our people.

Greetings to the Queen's Representative as you reside within my constituency, I give you my greetings today.

To Rutaki School, from the Principal, the teachers the students, as well as the parents, greetings to you all.

I offer my deepest condolences to the family of Papa Ben Tamarangi who passed away recently. May the love of our God remain with your family as well as your children throughout this time.

We remember a very long time hard worker servant of the Ministry of Agriculture for many years, Papa Tom Tangimetua George Henry Lockman who passed away recently. He passed away in Australia and we do know that he was in ill health and he was not able to recover.

However, I was able to meet him in Auckland before he flew out to meet his family in Sydney. I believe that God have granted him the time to be able to visit and meet his families including his grandchildren these last few days. Therefore we offer our deepest condolences and also to advise that I believe his family service will be conducted at the Manihiki hostel on Friday evening. Therefore I ask us to attend his family service and to pay our last respect for this long time servant of the Ministry of Agriculture. Therefore greetings in the name of our Lord and Saviour for those of you that have gone through bereavement these days.

I will now come back to the Appropriation Bill before us, Mr Deputy Speaker. I believe that what the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance in his statement yesterday I am sure we are all very clear of the benefits of this appropriation.

This Bill enables us to help and support our people in areas that are required today. This Bill enables us to hasten as well as to confirm the improvement of our nation today.

I like the comments made by the Deputy Prime Minister yesterday that, this is a continuous growth of our economy but as well as our social obligation to meet the needs of our people. We will say that this is a Government who has so much compassion for our people where it is needed.

Therefore Mr Deputy Speaker I would like to commend the Ministry of Finance led by the Financial Secretary, Garth Henderson, in the hard work they have done to hasten the development of this Bill so we could move forward. This is not easy work,

this is not work that just happens by chance but is a very deliberate work to tabulate this report so that we can move the work of this country forward.

So I am thankful of the comments of support by the Members including the Members from the Opposition because they can see that work is being done and things are happening today. Thank you to all of them because work is progressing in our country as we carry on.

I'd like to make mention of the work conducted to improve the beach area before the Sheraton Hotel in Vaimaanga. This is a clear example of how fast the Government is working and today work is completed in the protection of this foreshore area.

I also believe Deputy Speaker that the next phase of work to be done is the improvement of the foreshore from there towards Rutaki. I believe there will be consultations with the people of Rutaki to look at the completion of this work towards Rutaki.

I do support the comments for machines for the Pa Enuā with the belief that adequate support is being spent on the Outer Islands to improve the lives of our people. Between myself and the Minister of Agriculture we are working very hard to improve the situation of our growers in the Outer Islands.

I commend the Minister for appropriating and improving the financial situation of our Ministry here on Rarotonga today. It is only appropriate this is done on the island of Rarotonga because there is much work taking place in the Outer Islands and it is only right that the agencies on Rarotonga be strengthened so they are able to support work on the outer islands.

Thank you Honourable Member from Matavera for supporting the developments and the allocation for the Ministry of Agriculture because I know you are also a grower yourself and support the growers on the Outer Islands.

Although we are looking at the appropriation for Rarotonga but I also believe that it is adequate that we support the administration of the work on the Outer Islands. We should be aware Honourable Members a significant consultation was conducted with the people of the Pa Enuā to improve agriculture on the Outer Islands. The notion today is to improve the situation here of all our markets here on Rarotonga. It is obvious that the available land for agriculture is decreasing and there is land available in the Outer Islands for agriculture to market here to Rarotonga.

Last month, all the Mayors, Executive Officers and Agriculture Officers from the Outer Islands were here in Rarotonga for consultations on improving agriculture in the Outer Islands. I was very happy with their closing remarks at the end of this meeting because this is what they requested. Minister let not just talk about this it is time for us to do the work.

Therefore to the people of the Outer Islands it is heart-warming to know that what is being planned and conducted this is happening and work is progressing and moving forward for our country today. Honourable Members and our people we will witness a change in the near future when we will be able to feed our own people on our

islands with our own agriculture produce because there is improvements of agriculture in the Outer Islands.

I now want to share my views on the Ministry of Health appropriation. We are all aware that recently in the last few months we had a medical issue and that we had to conduct 'Operation Namu' program. Last night there was a report presented that the work of the Ministry of Health is progressing especially to protect this diseases from affecting our people in the Outer Islands.

That is because Deputy Speaker the Government took necessary steps to make sure that we stub this problem as soon as it eventuated at that time.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: I recognise the Honourable Minister George Angene.

HON. G. ANGENE: Deputy Speaker, I stand to move:

That the Honourable Member and other Members that may speak be given normal extension of speaking time

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: I call for a Seconder.

Seconded by the Honourable Minister, Rose Toki-Brown

I will put the Question, and the Question is:

That the Motion be agreed to?

Motion agreed to

Honourable Members, that goes for all Members from now on. Honourable Member you may continue.

MR P. ARIOKA: Thank you Deputy Speaker and to the two Honourable Members that have extended my speaking time.

Earlier I was speaking on the matter of Operation Namu which was a successful program by the Ministry of Health. Last night the Ministry of Health was delivering a public announcement for the public to ensure there are no breeding places for the mosquitoes around the homes especially during these rainy days. Cabinet and Government have received a request especially for clearing bush areas, neglected wrecks of motor vehicles. I would like to report that the Ministries of Health and Environmental Services are working hard to remove the old vehicles.

The Ministry of Finance did not have any difficulties getting these funds to move the work of Government forward. I would like to thank the Minister of Finance for advancing the economic situation of our country. We are all aware that our standard of living at a high standard but I would like to caution the people that there are still work to advance us forward. Because we are leading as a developing country and a development status we will soon be a developed country, no longer at a developing status.

In the meeting of the agriculture community on Rarotonga this is one of the subject discussed because the funding and foreign assistant that we received in the past will decrease overtime. We are therefore to prepare ourselves for the future changes. There are still many countries and overseas agencies that are eager to assist us in the future despite our change in status. This is due to our advances in economic stability and confidence in governing ourselves. This should bring us comfort because this shows that we as a nation are able to govern ourselves.

Therefore I support the \$5.3 million presented in this Appropriation. The allocation of this Appropriation is rightly distributed to all the Government agencies to support the many programs of our Government for our people.

Secondly, the money allocated is to continue to improve the infrastructures on Rarotonga and the Outer Islands. We the people should also understand and be happy that our country is moving towards a developed status.

Therefore Mr Deputy Speaker, this is my views on the Appropriation before us, thank you and God bless us all.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Member. I see the Honourable Member for Teimurimotia. You have the Floor.

MRS S. NAPA: Greetings to us all in the name of our Lord. Firstly, congratulations to you Mr Deputy Speaker for being elected as Deputy Speaker.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you.

MRS S. NAPA: With your indulgence Mr Deputy Speaker, please allow me to greet my people in Titikaveka.

We may have heard about the big rainfall in the past weeks that caused damage in our village Titikaveka and I heard in Ngatangia as well. A lot of homes were damaged by the flooding. Two homes had to leave their homes and find elsewhere to stay due to the flooding. This is not a new experience but always been the case when there is bad flooding in Titikaveka.

It does not mean because I am a Member of Parliament I am not doing anything. I have been looking for assistance by holding discussions with the Ministry of Internal Affairs to help the homes affected by the flooding. Two homes that were affected by the flooding were pensioners with families and children who have left to go overseas to look for better opportunities. These pensioners live on their own.

So I would like to encourage the people in my village to help and support each other during the time of flooding and also to help clear the streams.

The Honourable Member for Murienua also mentioned about the disease dengue that is now around therefore I would like to ask and encourage the people in our village to help clean our homes especially those who have lands overgrown by weeds.

We should be grateful that the mosquito carriers are not in our own village at the moment but in the village of Murienua.

To the people in my village from Tikioki to Vaimaanga, to all our children and our elderly and all the people in my constituency – greetings to you all.

Now I would like to speak on the Supplementary Appropriation Bill before the House today. I listened to the Financial Statement presented by the Minister of Finance and it sounds flat. It sounds like a recorded player repeated every year during the Budget.

I would like to make some comments on the Minister's Financial Statement presented in the House yesterday. In his statement he mentioned about improving the services that is being delivered to our people. My question here is, how can you improve the services that are being delivered to our people when right now the number of Government agencies has increased? In fact, it's gone up to more than 50 and I am hoping that this is not going to be a repeat of the 1996-1997 crisis. It is good to see the other side making noises right now so they must be awake after their heavy lunch.

I would now like to talk about the Vote Item for the Ministry of Health, the Marae Ora. It is right that the allocation of the Ministry of Health needs to be put back in there because I believe that the services up at the hospital need to be improved. I have been a party to a couple of incidents that have happened up there.

I just want to talk about my sister in this House when her daughter was having problems. It was pending on the provision of the tablets that was given. However, because of her very persistent ways, this case managed to be referred to New Zealand and I see there is an amount here that has been allocated for the approval of patient referrals to New Zealand.

At the time also, there was a case in Titikaveka whereby a patient had 30 per cent degree burns and the policies of the Ministry of Health is that if you are a foreigner and you get into an emergency situation, you have to find your own way to travel overseas to look for medical assistance. This was one case I really felt for because they were a young couple and his partner was a Cook Islander. I really felt for her and her children.

We tried our best to find ways how this case can be referred overseas and in the end they ended up finding their own way to seek help in Fiji. This is an area that I would really like the Government and the Opposition to seriously look at. How can we assist our people who have served this country, even though they are from overseas and married to a Cook Islander and have children and have made the Cook Islands their home, how can we assist them?

The Minister also, in his statement, spoke about Government being a transparent Government. From what I have seen of some of the actions of the Government, it's more like a discreet Government. When he says "transparent", they've just had a chartered flight up to the Northern Group. Are they going to come clean and tell us what that chartered flight was about and why weren't all the MPs for the Northern Group included on that flight?

HON. H. PUNA: Campaign.

MRS S. NAPA: And why are consultations being done without a Member from the Opposition?

Now that they are saying on the other side that we are objecting to this appropriation, I want to correct the Member for RAPPa for his comments on the radio today because what he said went public around the Cook Islands of our position as Opposition when it comes to the Budget. What he said out there was we want money for this and that but when it comes to the debate on the Budget, we are number one in objecting the Budget.

I want to assure our people that when it comes to the debate on the Appropriation Bill, we do not object to the expenditure. Our job is to seek out the secrets hidden in the Budget by Government and make sure you, the people of the Cook Islands, will know these.

I will come back to Financial Statement that was presented yesterday regarding these electric cars. Yes, it is true that we do intend to get to hundred percent of renewal energy. I wonder if they have considered the business sector if they have considered those in the area of selling fuel.

Like the statement by the Member of Parliament for Ngatangia. If electric cars will be shared out amongst the Ministers then what about the cars they are driving today. I am requesting that these cars be shared out amongst the elderly people who have no mode of transport to share it out to them as free gifts for their service to our country.

Regarding Head of Ministries administered payment of \$208,000, I don't see that amount that it should be given to the HOMs because he is saying that these funds should be allocated for these HOMs to encourage them to return back to the Cook Islands. I believe when they are given the positions, it should be given on merit and that they are already experienced in what these positions are. I really believe that amount of money should be given towards the workers, the public servants who are at the mercy of the HOMs. At the end of the day we need to look after our workers, that's why our workers are leaving our shores because their wages are not adequate. This increase that Government is proposing in their consultations, well I can't even afford a loaf of bread with this. That is just my example to back up this \$208,000 administered for the HOMs and I really would like to see this put back into the wages of workers.

I return to the vote on the Sheraton foreshore protection. True that this allocation for the improvement of this foreshore area in Vaimaanga, at the time when we on the Rarotonga Environment Board inspected this area my wish really were to improve the whole of the Sheraton frontal area. The area that was damaged the last high seas, this is the area that has not been improved. But still the decision by the Rarotonga Environment Board stands.

I did try to inquire why the Government did not do one area first in front of the Sheraton before moving to Rutaki but the answer I received was, my dear, funds have

already been allocated for a small area in front of the Sheraton and a small area in Rutaki.

I don't have qualification in engineering but when I consider the work done, you don't have to be a rocket scientist to understand if you complete one area of the project first and not come back and re-do it again before you move on to the next one.

Lastly, I see in the Budget Book for 2018-19 and there is allocation for Rarotonga for road maintenance. When I sought help to repair roads in Titikaveka, I tried all sorts of ideas requesting for assistance to improve the backroads of Titikaveka.

The answer given to me that they were repairing the roads in Nikao and yet I do not see an allocation for Nikao only before the roads of other areas.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I will have to interrupt you. We have reached the end of our meeting today but before we finish I have an announcement before the House.

I have a request to all of us to arrive here before 12.00 p.m. tomorrow. This is a request from the Ministry of Health. They will be here to inspect your eye sight. I really wanted them to come and check your hearing and your brains and thinking but they only allocated for eyesight because right now on Rarotonga are specialists for eyes. I believe this is a good time for all of us in the House as well as the workers to conduct this exercise.

So I ask for your co-operation to arrive here before 12.00 p.m. to do this. I ask the Honourable Member for Titikaveka to close us in prayer.

CLOSING PRAYER

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Honourable Member. Parliament is now adjourned until 1.00 p.m. tomorrow Wednesday, 10 April 2019.

Sitting adjourned at 4.57 p.m.