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MADAM SPEAKER TOOK THE CHAIR AT 1.00 p.m.

OPENING PRAYER

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER (T. TURA): Honourable Members, please be seated. Kia Orana to everyone. Kia Orana to our Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and all our Ministers and the Leader of the Opposition, your Deputy and all the Honourable Members of the Opposition. Kia Orana to all our people listening on our radio and watching us on our livestreaming online – in the Northern Group, Southern Group and all around the world.

Kia Orana to all the hard working staff of Parliament during this Sitting and some working late at night – May God help you with your services to our Parliament.

I would like to extend my condolences to the two families that are going through this grieving time. Firstly, to Apii Matai; this is a young man that was working under my management of the EPS, I extend my sincere condolences to his wife, children and family. My apologies for not being able to attend the funeral here in Rarotonga.

Secondly, to the family of my Aunty Tere Aperau who passed away last week, I extend sincere condolences to all the family. Lastly, to Papa Tiki Matapo for the loss of your wife. I extend to you sincere condolences from your families in Akatokamanava – may God comfort you, the children and all the family.

To all the families who have gone through time of grief due to the death of their loved ones, my sincere condolences to all of you and may God comfort you all.

We have now come to our Question Time.

QUESTION TIME

I would like to open the Floor to any Honourable Member that wants to speak. I see the Honourable Vaitoti Tupa; you have the Floor.

MR V. TUPA: Thank you Deputy Speaker. My question is to everyone in the House today. Mr Deputy Speaker I have a question especially as we have a media person in this Parliament. I believe he has sought a pass through the Office of the Speaker for him to be in our Parliament today.

My question is to the Minister of the House of Ariki. As we are all aware that next week is the Ui Ariki Day which is a public holiday. My question to the Minister is in regards to the Marae Teatupare. There are only six more days to the Ui Ariki Day holiday.

The question to the Minister is, will the Marae be ready for the opening on Ui Ariki Day?

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, and I see the Honourable Minister George Angene.

HON. G. ANGENE: Thank you to the Member for Matavera for your question regarding the situation about the Marae of our Ui Ariki.

This Marae is not ours, it is for the Ui Ariki. The work is progressing steadily. The work on the Marae is not made for the Ui Ariki Day. The Ui Ariki Day programme will be held at the Are Karioi Nui in town. But we have set the date of the 3rd August for the opening and dedication of the new Marae. If my team working on this project will commit to working overtime and through the night, we will be able to meet the Ui Ariki Day to dedicate the new Marae.

However, the work is progressing well and it will be ready for the 3rd August dedication and I would like to invite all in this House to be present on that day. This is my commitment to the Ui Ariki and our people to build this Marae. Again I invite all to come to the opening and thank you for the question.

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

MRS S. NAPA: Thank you Deputy Speaker. I am not sure as to whom I should direct my question, maybe to the Minister of Finance. Recently when I travel to town, I see a lot of Government vehicles on the road. My estimation for the price of these vehicles are above the \$60,000 mark. There are Government Agencies that must have these types of vehicles like ICI, because it goes with the job.

There are however some Ministries who needs to justify them having a Landcruiser or Pajero. We all know that these land cruisers are not energy efficient and not aligned with our environmental sustainable goals. I see the use of these vehicles from the side as showcasing power and status.

So, my question going out to the Minister is. Why are Government Ministries driving around in these big, big ghastly vehicles? Why cannot they have just a small electrical vehicle? Or why are we not having environmentally friendly vehicles to actually suit the Ministries who do not have jobs like what ICI is doing.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you and now I can see the Honourable Deputy Prime Minister Mark Brown.

HON. M. BROWN: Thank you Deputy Speaker. People, we should realise that we are paying for five dollars a minute and \$300 an hour to the Radio Station, to

broadcast our Parliamentary Sitting. I would like to suggest to the House if you pose a question, please ask a very important question. Do not ask a question that is worth three pence.

Deputy Speaker to clarify, all vehicles for each Ministry is under the responsibility of the Head of the Ministry. They have been granted the authority to decide as to what vehicles will suit their purchase. And they are the ones that will know what is appropriate for their work.

I am surprise because I am driving an electric vehicle. When we received these electric vehicles the Opposition complained because we were driving these electrical vehicles. I see now they are supporting the use of electric vehicles.

We have been requested and have discussed in Cabinet to review the use of vehicles. Maybe when we look at the Office of the Opposition, maybe we will purchase them some new electric bikes because there is no need for use of fossil fuel. Therefore, if you want to change your vehicles to bicycles, put the request in, it is easy to grant you your request. However, for the Government Agencies and Ministries like ICI, Health, Education, the responsibility is for them to decide what vehicles are appropriate for their use. Thank you Deputy Speaker.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Minister. Is that a Supplementary Question? Thank you, you may continue.

MRS S. NAPA: If the Minister of Finance considers this not an important question, I am telling you it is an important question because these vehicles are being seen used out of working hours.

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

MRS S. NAPA: I would like to clarify before I ask my second question. My question to the Minister of Finance is, if he could list out the number of vehicles worth \$30,000 to \$70,000 that is being utilised by agencies of Government or in the next few days so our people will know how many vehicles and how much is being utilised.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Minister, you have the Floor.

HON. M. BROWN: That is a very simple question to answer. I can request the listing of vehicles from the Ministry of Finance as well as from the different agencies what vehicles they have under their use.

I do know as Minister of Finance, before when agencies look at the vehicles that they need, the first thing they look at is the price. It was found out later on that when they purchase cheap vehicles they do not last that long. It was better for them to purchase quality vehicles even though the price is high but quality and their life is longer. This is what we see today the vehicles that are of high quality also have high price.

The vehicles that we used to purchase maybe up to six years ago and sent to the Outer Islands, they did not take long before they deteriorated. Therefore, we received the

recommendation from the Ministry of Finance to consider the purchase of quality, long lasting vehicles regardless of their high price. Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Minister. I see the Honourable Member from Tamarua; the Floor is yours.

MRS T. MATAPO: Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. Yesterday, I acknowledged the Minister of Health. My question is concerning the health of people. My question today is to the Minister of Health.

In the past few months, we heard in Mangaia that we will have a dentist for the island. My question is whether what we heard is true or not? Thank you.

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

HON. R. TOKI-BROWN: Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker and greetings to you, Madam Speaker and to all of us in this House. Thank you to the Honourable Member for this good question. Yes, we have had a look and we are still discussing the proposal regarding dentists for the Outer Islands as well as doctors.

Yesterday I was happy when you thanked the Ministry for the doctor that has been stationed on your island permanently. As for the dentist, I cannot assure you now that a dentist will be sent to your island or when this will eventuate. We are still in discussions about this matter because it is not only for Mangaia but also for all the other islands. So therefore, Honourable Member if you can leave this for the moment and we will confirm this later. Thank you.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Minister.

MRS T. MATAPO: Greetings again. I have a Supplementary Question. Thank you to the Minister for your answer. My question here is, if a person really need the services of a dentist, will the Ministry of Health pay for their airfare to travel to Rarotonga? Thank you.

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

HON. R. TOKI-BROWN: Thank you for the good Supplementary Question. As we understand within the policy of the Ministry of Health, the referral of patients for dentistry services is not included. However, the people in charge of making the policy are looking into it and trying to see how this can be included in the future.

We understand we have people in the Outer Islands who have bad teeth and they need to be flown to Rarotonga for operations and therefore, Honourable Member the discussions are still going on but we will come back to you for that.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Honourable Minister and now I see the Honourable Member for Matavera; you have the Floor.

MR V. TUPA: Thank you Deputy Speaker. My question is to the Associate Minister of Agriculture.

Mr Deputy Speaker, in the past, we the Matavera Growers ordered things from New Zealand. Before the Associate Minister entered Parliament, we in Matavera used to order our own materials and products and we did not receive any assistance from the Ministry of Agriculture. However, when we got the new Minister for Agriculture, the Honourable Rose Brown plus the Associate Minister for Agriculture, Patrick Arioka, I want to confirm in this House, that we received assistance through the process when we made our orders as they were able to assist in some areas. My question is then, is this continuing to day?

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Member. I now see the Associate Minister of Agriculture.

MR P. ARIOKA: Thank you Deputy Speaker. Kia Orana to all of us this afternoon. Kia Orana to the Honourable Member for praising myself and the Minister of Agriculture because this is not the first time he had asked this question. The Deputy Prime Minister already answered that very question.

So the simple answer is, because you have been registered as a non-profit organisation under the registered Incorporated Society, then you qualify for these assistance, as mentioned by the Member of Parliament's question.

However, they are pre-warned that they are required to provide their report and financial account every year. Failing to do that, they will lose their registration with the Ministry of Justice and they will no longer qualify to that assistance. It will stop there.

I commend the Honourable Member for raising this issue because this is an ongoing issue with other associations. Let us not be too hasty in registering ourselves but cannot meet the obligations under the rules of association.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Associate Minister. I see the Honourable Member for Ngatangia.

MR T. TUAVERA: Today, our water programme is taking place through the installing of new water pipes to replace the old ones. This is called the back wash system. These water stations has been tested and the result of the test is telling us that the drinking water standards are the same that is required like those in New Zealand. This is very good because I see that we have opened the big reservoir up in the valley and they have not been out through the new pipes. The water tested that is going through the new pipes to the new drinking stations is from the old intake.

There have been questions raised as to why Government did not install these water stations throughout the villages. I am happy that these new intakes are providing quality water for our people. I know that Government want to put good drinking water in the homes. However, I think these new drinking water stations are portable.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Can you please ask your question because we are running out of time.

MR T. TUAVERA: The question is, if we want to reduce our expenditure on providing clean portable water, why cannot we install these water stations throughout the villages because they are providing the same standard to New Zealand.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Member. I see the Honourable Minister. Can you please provide a brief answer?

HON. M. BROWN: This is that same three pence question I mentioned earlier on. The answer is simple.

Deputy Speaker, these new water drinking stations were put in place by To Tatou Vai as an interim measure because it was seen that the previous water stations were faulty and the water was not clean. With these water stations, you need to clean their filters and need to replace the UV bulb every year. To supply drinking water right around our island Mr Deputy Speaker, is much more costly the way that this Member of Parliament is proposing. Thank goodness we take our advice from water engineers, qualified people, the Ministry of Health and the best science available through WHO and not from sudden thoughts coming from the Member of Parliament.

For more than thirty years, our people on Rarotonga have been crying out to improve our water going to their homes. Putting a water station at Turangi and a water station at Tupapa is not going to solve that problem, which is why this Government invested in upgrading our water intakes up in our water source in the mountains of Rarotonga, so that every house gets clean water and not just people who can afford to go to water stations at night and fill up their bottles and bring it back to their homes. That is not the way we want to live. That is not a solution Mr Deputy Speaker. The Mama living at home; when water runs out of her bottle, who is going to get her water when she can just get it from the tap?

This Government is making it, that water is a right of every person on this island, not just water but clean drinking water is a right in every household on Rarotonga. It is not just for those who can find their way to a water station either on their car or on their bike or on their two feet. No, our people demand a higher standard of living and they deserve it, which is why this Government is delivering to them and not looking at half measures like setting up a little water station where you can run there and fill your bottles with water.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Minister.

HON. M. BROWN: You are welcome Deputy Speaker.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Seeing that we have consumed twenty minutes of the Appropriation Bill, we might extend our Sitting today to cover that.

We are now on the Orders of the Day, interrupted debate on the Second Reading of the Appropriation Bill.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

The last Member speaking on that yesterday was the Honourable Member for Tamarua, Tetangi Matapo. You have fourteen more minutes.

MRS T. MATAPO: Thank you Deputy Speaker. Kia Orana again to all of us this afternoon.

Yesterday, I touched base a bit on agriculture in Mangaia, maybe my colleague will elaborate more on that. Going back to the books and the Statement from the Minister of Finance on the assistance allocated to Agri-tech. These are commendable things that we heard and when I look at the allocation for Mangaia or the Outer Islands, I could not find any link that will improve the standard of agriculture as I believe Mangaia soil is good for planting crops. However, some ideas need to be brought up and given to the Ministry. People who have knowledge on the soil and understanding as to the right plant to be planted by the growers and the use of fertilisers on the plants.

As well as our fisheries and we know in the past month the applications for grants to the Marine funds have gone through. Many of the young people have entered into this area and have submitted their applications for this funding. I believe over 50 applications on Mangaia have been submitted but I think only 5 out of these will be approved to receive funds. Included in the submitting their own application for a grant, are the Mamas and Papas. Therefore, Minister I would like to request for future consideration, if this could be increased to help our youth and older people in the Outer Islands, especially in this area.

I come to the Education Appropriation. I note the difference between the allocations in 2018/19 to this year's allocation that there is an improvement of two percent. On page 43 and compare this with the GDP and in this section some recommendations for this area – the teacher aides for the Outer Islands. A lot of our children on Mangaia and the Outer Islands are missing out in this area because there is no teacher aide in the schools. Maybe it is because there are no properly trained people for this area. The request here is for us to consider this for a better future.

I come to the Ministry of Health Appropriation. We have a doctor on our island. My request here is for a good home for the doctors in the Outer Islands especially on Mangaia. Our request is for a good house or accommodation for our doctor in Mangaia.

I come to the assistance appropriated in the Ministry of Internal Affairs allocation. There are some great ideas for improvements in this area especially for an accommodation for our elderly people, home for all the old people on the island. Today in Mangaia, we are looking at building an accommodation for our old people. This project is progressing steadily and smoothly. The plea here is this, if we put through a request for assistance in this project, please help us.

Coming back to Telecommunication Appropriation. If you have been to Mangaia recently and you use your mobile frequently, you will be lost on the island. I see an Appropriation in this Budget to improve the communication infrastructure in the

Outer Islands. Thank you for this and I believe that this will be of great help in this area. My intention for this is, as soon as Budget is approved please start the work and do not wait for another two years.

Mr Deputy Speaker, this is all I have for this time even though I have more to share. This is enough for now and God Bless us all.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Member. I now see the Honourable Member George Angene and you have the Floor.

HON. G. ANGENE: Thank you Deputy Speaker. To all of us in this Honourable House, greetings to all. To the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and all our Ministers – greetings to us all. Deputy Speaker, if I may take some time to give my regards to people who I feel I should recognise.

First of all, to those of our people watching us through the television into this House. My regards go to all in my electorate of Tupapanui-O-Au. May God help us through the days ahead of us. To those of us that has gone through bereavement in our village, my condolences and comfort to you all. If you need any help please do come and ask.

I will take time to give my regards to my portfolio Ministries and first of all, to the Ministry of Cultural Development and your head of Ministry, Anthony Turua and all you staff, Kia Orana to you all. And also to the BTIB agency, to your head, directors and staff, greetings to you all. To the House of Ariki, the workers on the Marae project, Kaumaiti and Clerk of the House of Ariki, greetings to you all.

I refer my regards to the Corrective Services, your Head of Agency, the clerk, the workers and all the young people you take care of, greetings to you all.

To all of us Members of Parliament in this Honourable House, Kia Orana to us all.

My focus amongst all the Portfolios that I administer, is the Corrective Services. It has now been two years since I have been the Minister for this Department. I go to this place daily, four hours in the morning, four or five in the evening to lend my support, my knowledge, my wisdom to assist these young people.

The words from our Scripture says, the Heavens will celebrate for one person to repent. Deputy Speaker, my words of greetings.

I return to the Bill before the House but before I do this, Deputy Speaker I ask for your permission. I am just laying some cover on my desk to prevent any Point of Order on me for reading. Just to warn you on the other side, there is no written items on my black cover because this is the colour of my village.

Deputy Speaker and to all of us, I will not mince my words. This is my third term in this Parliament and this is the first year that I can see there is such high amount of finance for our people on Rarotonga and throughout the Cook Islands.

However, Deputy Speaker in this Appropriation I fully support it. I have only one request to the Minister of Finance which is to find another avenue of assistant revenue for Tupapa because this is the biggest taxpaying constituency in the Cook Islands. The reason I say this is, when I look at Mangaia, there are three Members of Parliament, there are three constituencies and there are three lots of constituency funds, how can this be. If I was one of the Members of Parliament on this island I will step down and allocate my funds for the people.

I will leave them and return to my electorate. I have been talking about a stadium and a good netball courts for my village of Tupapa because when I consider the high amount of budget that we have before us, it is right that Tupapa should be in there.

Because during the period of Constitution celebrations, Te Maeva Nui, we have the Outer Islanders using the field not far from their hostels. I want a stadium for Tupapa because I am one of the landowners and I believe Government is part landowner on this area.

The whole idea behind this is to create a stadium for us in town because it is too far to go all the way to Nikao. However, if only there was a bus service to transport us to Nikao. For the budget and support given to me by Government, I am utilising these and achieving things in my village.

A friend spoke to me Deputy Speaker, the words were, when you have reached the top, you forgot about us. This friend do not understand the amount of work that I do for our people seeking help, asking for budget from the Minister of Finance and all sorts of avenues for support.

My thanks go out to the Ministers for granting approval for my request for assistance. I look at the Opposition side and I have asked them if they need help, come to Government to request and I will grant the assistance.

The Member of Parliament for Akaoa have asked for help, Matavera as well as for Ngatangia and I have been able to provide help to them as well as through the Appropriation before the House.

Deputy Speaker, I want to confirm before us that there is an amount of money, funds that we the Members of Parliament expend to assist our people. When I consider in Tupapa upwards of \$125,000 have been expended to help my village. My thanks to the Minister of Finance, Cabinet Ministers, Government today for providing this help. This was not only granted to me but I am also sharing it out to other Members of Parliament.

I thank the Minister of ICI for the roads. He is also providing assistance for all Members around Rarotonga not only on the roads but all other areas.

Deputy Speaker, I have come to the end of my full support for this Appropriation Bill before the House as presented by the Minister of Finance. I do believe you all understand my situation when I see that there is something not right in this House, I will fight for it for my people. I cannot let this go because this is help that is given for the people.

Deputy Speaker, to end my thoughts and comments, my sincere acknowledgement and regards to the people of this country from wife and my children, to express our words of regards to our Prime Minister who will travel on to where he plans with the belief that he will be able to provide assistance for us wherever he is going to. I also want to tell us the Member of Parliament that the Prime Minister is an elder brother of mine. Maybe in past years you all thought this was a joke. Our elder women folk are an older and younger sisters. So, farewell my brother and May God take care of you and guide you on your departure and your return.

I turn to my right and sitting beside me is my younger brother, Deputy Prime Minister Mark Brown. His grandfather and my grandmother are brother and sister. Greetings to you Member of Parliament for Takuvaine, Deputy Prime Minister and Prime Minister for the future. Those are my words of greetings and to all of us, may we be surrounded and guided by love and peace. Greetings and Kia Orana.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Minister and thank you for covering your computer. I now see the Honourable Member from Vaipaka/Vaipae/Tautu, the Honourable Manuela Kitai; you have the Floor.

MR M. KITAI: Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. Before I give my speech, my statement to this House, may I be allowed to say some words to my electorate? Greetings to my people in Ngavaitau. From big to small, greetings in the name of our Lord. Those who hold positions, those who do not, greetings to you too. Greetings also to my Committee supporters. The work that you are doing in cooking and preparing food to sell tomorrow to support our people. It is not an expensive plate of food, it is only five dollars. I believe it will be sold out to support our activities.

Deputy Speaker, I will return to the subject before the House. Concerning the statement and what is presented by the Honourable Deputy Prime Minister on the accounts, the Appropriation before this House, I agree with it and I am happy. I have no objection to it. However, towards the end of the Deputy Prime Minister's statement, I got confused.

This is the reason. On page 10, line 16, paragraph two is where I am confused. The Minister of Finance named this budget as the "Budget of Blessing". I asked myself, what does this phrase means or what blessings is there in this name. When we look at the paragraph that he stated and I would like to read that paragraph. It says, "showing the teeth to begin exploring the mineral out in our ocean that may increase our income and sowing the seeds here today that will continue to provide blessings to all our people and we have been blessed."

Mr Deputy Speaker, I am asking this question in this Honourable House. Are we being blessed? The reason I asked this question is because my understanding of the word "blessing" is that it is something gifted or given to you, and you will thank God for that blessing.

I believe the Minister of Finance is emphasising that the blessings we will receive will come from the nodules. We have not reaped this benefit and neither certain whether we will reap this benefit. That is why I asked the question, are we being blessed. I will leave this question to each one of you to answer. My interpretation of this phrase

is that the Minister of Finance is dreaming and of course we can have dreams but we must dream about good things and not a ghost. In English, it is called, “a nightmare”. This is a scary type of dream.

Mr Deputy Speaker, when we read Jeremiah 29:8, it says; “*For thus says the Lord of host, the God of Israel, do not let your prophets and your diviners who are in your midst deceive you, nor listen to your dreams which you cause to be dreamed.*” Like I mentioned before Mr Deputy Speaker, this is a dream by the Honourable Minister because Jeremiah is declaring before all of us. Therefore, I am saying before this Honourable House that this is not a Budget of Blessing. It is a Dreamer’s Budget.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I do not want to talk a lot, so thank you and that is all I have to say about this Dreamer’s Budget.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Members. You should be in Takamoā. I think we have some vacancies there.

I can see the Honourable Member for Nikaupara, Tereapii Maki Kavana.

MR T. MAKI KAVANA: Thank you very much Mr Deputy Speaker for this opportunity to speak in this House. Greetings to all the Honourable Members in this House. To all our people listening to the radio this afternoon and also those who are able to see our live stream, I extend a very warm welcome to you all.

With your indulgence Mr Deputy Speaker, please allow me to greet the people in my constituency, Arenikau. Kia Orana to all the people in Arenikau, I greet you all this afternoon. To our elderlies, our children and to mothers carrying their unborn child, greetings to you all. I will rest my greetings here before I exhaust my speaking time.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: I will interrupt you Honourable Member, our time is up for recess. Parliament is suspended until 3.00 p.m.

Parliament suspended at 14.26 p.m.

Sitting resumed at 3.00 p.m.

MADAM SPEAKER: Please be seated Honourable Members. Parliament is resumed.

Before the House suspended, the Honourable Member Tereapii Kavana was speaking and I give you this opportunity to continue.

MR T. MAKI KAVANA: Thank you Deputy Speaker. I speak on behalf of all of us together, to thank the Government for the support that they have given to my island of Aitutaki.

Firstly, the Manatua Cable that was connected to Aitutaki last year. But due to the COVID-19 we were not able to complete the project in May to finally have this work completed on our island. Secondly, the blessing on Araura Enea with the opening of

this new water gallery on the island which will take place this coming Wednesday. This has been the many blessings that has been placed on the island of Aitutaki.

During this time of COVID-19, we have reaped the many blessing with agriculture of which includes the small agriculture and fishing business on the island, which during this time the Government have supported by providing grants to help them. This financial assistance did not only go to bigger business people on the island, it also went to the smaller entrepreneurs on the island.

Concerning these two Budget books that was presented to the House on this new Appropriation. In Book one, page 272, two dollars have been allocated for the Aitutaki Islands Plan and Orongo Development project. I do not believe that this is only a dream that will not come into fruition. I have not forgotten the words of one of our past leaders, Sir Dr Terepai Maoate. His picture hangs in this Chamber – he said, “a man without a dream is dead.” This is a sure statement by one of our past leader.

I am encouraged for the blessings that has come to my island of Aitutaki and I am wondering whether my two colleagues from the island of Aitutaki cannot see this as blessings for our Aitutaki people – we should be excited about this. In this book that was given to me on Friday and I have spent time studying the books carefully. Deputy Speaker my book is still clean with no markings in comparison to my colleagues which is covered with markings. The reason why I have not marked my book is because these people who had prepared this, I have the same academic background as them.

There is something that they have discovered which I am not aware of. I know that these people who have collated these two Books together, have further knowledge and understanding in putting these together than I have. Let us not use this House as a House of throwing stones. We should rather proclaim and declare the blessings that was given to us by God for our people. The Deputy Prime Minister have mentioned that the Cook Islands was the first in the region to step into this and provide support for its people.

He did not withhold but rather bold in standing forward in giving this back to our people. The seeds that have been sown to the correct places or soils have grown. I believe, if some of these seeds were planted in bad places or soils we will not gather the fruits today. So, therefore we should thank and praise our leaders for leading our country through out those uncertain times and even today.

To end my statement before the House, I would like to thank our Deputy Prime Minister today, to Garth Henderson and his team for preparing this for us today. Your knowledge, ability and intelligence throughout the years for bringing us this far is being seen. I am a Member of Parliament for my island and this is my duty to strive to support that the money that has been allocated for my island should be used for the people of the island.

If I as a leader for my people who sleep, then the allocations by Government for my island will also sleep. To my two colleagues from Aitutaki Enuu, I ask them for us to work together so we can knock the doors of the Government so that they will be moved to supply the needs for our island. Or else this will not happen. Maybe they

are not supportive because most of the planned development in this Budget is targeted for my constituency of Arutanga-Reureu-Nikaupara.

The year 2021 is an important year for the island of Aitutaki. I would like to ask the Government and all Honourable Members of Parliament please give the blessings to the island of Aitutaki because we will be celebrating the 200th year for the arrival of the Gospel to the Cook Islands.

Thank you very much Deputy Speaker for giving me this opportunity to speak to my constituency, the whole country and the whole world.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Member and I see the Honourable Member Wesley Kareroa from the constituency of Oneroa, Mangaia. You have the Floor.

MR W. KAREROA: Deputy Speaker, all Honourable Members of the House and all the staff of Parliament – greetings to you all. I see the Honourable Minister George Angene has spread his coat on his desk and I was going to ask for his necktie to blindfold myself. I know he has a photographic memory and have a printer in his head.

If I may offer my appreciation to the ladies that prepare our lunch meals because no Honourable Member has thanked them so far. When I go home I do not need to eat, I just say good night to my household and I go to sleep.

Let us come back to the Appropriation before the House that is referred to as the Book of love. I think we should always put love before us and improve on it. I just want to bring some things out of these books of love. In Book one page 43, there is a graph here and the GDP listed here is two percent and that graph mentioned accommodation which is 15 percent. Today, the accommodation is suspended because of the closure of our borders and no more tourism.

The idea behind this is the GDP of 15 percent for tourism, accommodation be utilised for agriculture to reduce it down to 13 percent, for this short period as we go through the situation where revenue for the country has dropped. In Book one page 318, it states that tourism has been suspended. So, I consider this as one area that can be turned around to support agriculture. It also mentioned that since last year, this allocation was not utilised in agriculture. When the allocation was considered in this Appropriation, there is \$1.3 million, compared to last year's \$1.2 million. I would say there is only \$100,000 increase for this year.

When we return back to the pie graph and look at the area of fisheries there is no GDP in this area. When we look at agriculture which is 15 percent, this can be half for both of them 7.5 percent for agriculture and 7.5 percent for fisheries because the revenue we are receiving from fisheries is about \$14 million. It seems to me we do not know where this revenue is being expended.

Maybe, these small funding are at the Marine and the minimum allocated to about \$3,000 per person but there is no confirmation who will receive this assistance.

However, I cannot speak against this Appropriation, in my mind we should all support it.

When I look at the allocation for Mangaia in the area of trading revenue. When you look at it, \$301 has been returned. It has been returned to support our Budget of love. I believe in this area the biggest allocation is for Mangaia. When compared to Aitutaki they returned \$62,000. Some are just below that but to my mind I consider that Mangaia has greatly assisted this new Budget Appropriation because much of it has not been utilised.

When I look at the expenditure ceiling for Mangaia and when I look at agriculture there is \$1,038. When I look at tourism, it is at \$36,000 and that is a reduction. I do not recall last year's Budget allocation, but I think it is about \$45,000.

Under public utilities the figure is \$143,000. We were fortunate in this area as the revenue we generated was returned to support Government. Their allocation is on \$270,000 and the rest of them is just below that until we reach \$301,000.

In the area of health, it is only right we support this area because during the Corona pandemic, I know in our area, there was not enough safety gear like gloves and sanitizers and so forth. But I was able to seek assistance from my colleagues at Air Rarotonga for some hand sanitizers. It was fortunate we could then use this to support us.

Because of the lack of knowledge of health, we were advised that you will be immunized before you come to Mangaia. Afterwards I learned that this vaccine was for measles and not COVID. That is why I am saying in my right hand is a bit numb and yet I was injected on the left hand side. Never mind we will have a holiday next week so I will go to the hospital to find out what is happening.

So those are my thoughts to support our Budget of love and God Bless all of you.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Member it is not for love, it is for the blessing. I now see the Associate Minister of Agriculture, Honourable Patrick Arioka; you have the Floor.

MR P. ARIOKA: Thank you Deputy Speaker. Greetings to everyone this afternoon. Please allow me to give greetings to my constituents listening in to our debate this afternoon.

Greetings to all the people of Puaikura from Tuoro to Toreaiva, the three Pillars within Puaikura, greetings to you all. Special greetings to the Queen's Representative, your wife and your family as you are in my constituency. I send to you a special Kia Orana and greetings.

To all our Traditional Leaders within Puaikura, greetings to you all. Kia Orana and greetings also to all the different denominations within Puaikura, your committees and organisers within, greetings to you all.

Kia Orana and greetings also to all our elderly within our constituency because I do know that you are all listening in to the messages that have been given out.

I would like to extend a very special greetings to Rutaki School because Deputy Speaker, I am one of the teachers teaching agriculture there. I am a substitute teacher. So therefore greetings to all the teachers, the Principal and students of Rutaki School, Level 5 and 6.

Greetings also to all my workers and supporters within Murienua and the hard work that you are doing and continuing today. I will praise my constituency because we were the first Puna to open for COVID-19 and did some great work and is still open today. The main reason is because they are looking for the extra work within the constituency to be done. Just a few minutes ago, I received a text that they are at Rutaki now working on the water station at the Meeting House. I can imagine the times these people are freely giving their time to serve our people during these times.

I will leave this aside and I will move on to the Financial Statement that is provided by the Deputy Prime Minister.

I really wanted at the time, when the Deputy Prime Minister presented his financial speech at the Budget Breakfast session at the Islander for the Opposition Members to be there for that presentation.

However, on that day only two Opposition Members were present and we can see today that they are the ones who has a fair understanding of what was presented. Yesterday I was saddened when I heard a message presented. As if, it was only yesterday that they understood the essence of what was presented by the Deputy Prime Minister. A saying goes like this – miss by millimetre and you will miss by a mile at the end of the line.

I am saddened because I feel that we do not realise how far we have come through to where we are today. How far are we going to go forward and this is why this Financial Statement was prepared for us in this House.

Deputy Speaker, I was so taken away and I would like to give my great congratulations to the MFEM team who have put together a very good financial paper for us to be debated on. The merits and principles of this Financial Statement Deputy Speaker is based on information, statistics and analysis and it was driven by a number of our economist and our own people who has been part who put this together.

I congratulate Garth Henderson and his team for a wonderful analysis as well as a plan that puts us on the right, as we move during uncertain times. There was no other reason why we had gone through this hard time, it happened and it is not us that made it happen but it was there and it happened to us. More to the point, that there are other Nations around the world who are experiencing and taking the right steps as we are taking today.

So, there is no other reasons why we should be concerned and there should be no other reasons why we should be cutting back on some suggestions to try and put this and say that this is a dream. I think as a Government, when we are in times of

challenges, we should be looking for opportunities in those challenges to pave the way forward for the years to come. That is what a responsible Government should be doing.

There are three areas that the Deputy Prime Minister listed for us to consider in this Budget: lifeline, recovery and transformation. So, while we are in these challenges we can see that we are putting more opportunities to upskill our people.

In the Lifeline, you have seen the continuation of the wage subsidy like unemployment benefits and emergency hardship fund. But the need to reduce superannuation contributions is so that our people have more money in their pockets during these times. An increase in tax free threshold, again putting more money in the pockets of our people. Cash exchange to help our traders so that they can earn a living and continue with their livelihood.

The interest relief scheme, business continuity credit facility, all these are lifelines to ensure that our people continue business. That is what a responsible Government should be doing.

Then you look at the recovery that allows us to give opportunities for our businesses and our people; our very own people to be part of a growing economy. It is not just about training to be upskilled but training to climb up the ranks within their own businesses. I think one of the biggest one that our people wanting to hear is the business growth loan program. That is what our people are waiting for, wanting to know what directions is Government going to take and how much of their time and effort needs to contribute to the betterment of the economy and this country.

The last part of the Phase II is the transformation need. There are three areas that we have talked about transformation and those are – the smart economy initiative, smart Agri-tech and green economy incentives.

I heard on the Floor, Deputy Speaker about the need for agriculture to play its part right now. I am happy to say Deputy Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture and I, we are comfortable to say that we are ready to take on those challenges. Why I say that, because in 2018 we knew where we were and we were not ready. That is why the focus of that year was to improve the capacity of our Pa Enuā and our growers here in Rarotonga. I am sure that all the Members in this Honourable House had heard me talk exactly on those key points.

The second one in 2019 we looked at our systems which is the biosecurity and of course you have heard of the introduction of the Ministry of Agriculture Bill that need to be passed in this Parliament. In the Budget book you will see that the completion of the agriculture strategic plan has come to a complete. Those three documentations and the plans and budget behind them were put in place so that we can embark on smart Agri-tech programs and continue on embarking on green economy incentive.

The Minister of Agriculture and I did not sit on things, we did our work and did our homework and we got ourselves ready. I am so glad to see online that our nurseries on the Outer Islands.

But I want to make some comments on the issue that this budget is the Budget of blessings. Like the Minister and I, we prepared ourselves for it and now we understand that we are at the level that we can take opportunities to the next level. With two things in mind, to make sure that we are committed and to make sure that it will work.

I would like to leave with this House Deputy Speaker, that although this is a blessing and I am sure my friend from Aitutaki will need to read the sentence before the Budget of blessings that says, “do not just raise your standard of living but raise your standard of giving”.

I therefore give this Budget the name that it deserves which is the Budget of blessing. Let us not just celebrate because of the amount of this funding and then we forget about it later.

What it means here is, that we have to commit to the plan of the Budget together so that we can ensure that the growth of our economy is at hand and thank you, Deputy Speaker.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Patrick Arioka. I see the Honourable Member for Pukapuka-Nassau.

MR T. ELIKANA: Kia Orana Deputy Speaker this afternoon. All the Parliamentary staff and both sides of this Honourable House – the Government and the Opposition. I can see that Madam Speaker is still in the House and greetings to you. I was thinking not to stand and speak on this Bill before the House. However, two things have taken place lately that made me want to stand and speak.

We all know that we are going through a hard time that is unprecedented. We heard the comments by the Prime Minister on the Appropriation to the House. As he mentioned we are going through unprecedented times. Therefore, what should transpire and take place are unprecedented.

But before I touch on the Bill Deputy Speaker, I just like to mention what took place yesterday. Yesterday I was at home watching television. I saw a former Member of Parliament who has been in this House many years ago – Papa Iaveta Short on television. It was wonderful to witness what he presented of his experiences and what he went through during his time as Member of Parliament. When I listened to his comments Deputy Speaker, it was almost similar to how I grew up.

He mentioned that he is a lawyer. The difficulty that he went through his studies was because he was not fluent in English. This was the case with me because I am from the island of Pukapuka and some people look at me that I was not fluent in English. But I will not dwell on that Deputy Speaker because he said something on that programme that pierced my heart when I recall what is happening to us today.

When he was asked about our leaders and their status. It really touched my heart when he said the leaders of our country, before they were good leaders. Maybe they remained too long on those positions and then bad things overcame them. We see

some were betrayed or deserted and some were mocked by the people. I then recalled what happened last Tuesday.

Deputy Speaker, like I mentioned we are going through unprecedented times. This is the first time it happened in the history of our country. One leader at the top and the strength of his leadership of our country. He put all those aside to sacrifice for his Nation and that is our Prime Minister today. What a great thought and how amazing is this kind of intent, to sacrifice his love for the rest of the people, akin to what our Lord has done for us all.

Therefore, Prime Minister Papa Henry, you should know that what you have done will remain in the history of this country for a long time. Maybe to serve as an example for all of us in this House. Not to look at the benefit of only one person but to consider the benefit and goodness of all the people in this country. Just like the former President John F. Kennedy said to the American people. “Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country”.

My only concern is that you could have waited a little bit longer for me to be strong in this House before you leave. I do understand the trust you have placed in this team to carry on and lead our country forward.

Secondly, as to what has taken place. I woke up this morning and was reading the newspaper and I looked at the front page. I was not sure whether Marine Resources were being commended or criticised but when I read it, somebody was commending and praising fisheries. The recommendation to the Pacific countries and all over the world is to follow the lead of what the Cook Islands is doing in fisheries.

My body felt funny, because of the many criticisms you hear about this Ministry and I thought maybe there is something wrong with this person that wrote this article. Maybe it is those who criticise that are the ones with the damaged brains. This shows the nature of our people, because this Ministry is headed by one of our own young woman. It has been our own young people that have been heading this Ministry up to today.

My thinking now is, if their leadership is good and if the Pacific region and the rest of the world is looking at how we are doing this correctly, then why are some of our people not understanding this wisdom among our own people. Then why do not some of our people have the trust in our own people to lead the good works in fisheries. Because Deputy Speaker, today we are hearing all the criticism about fisheries and Seabed Mining and our water, Te Mato Vai.

When I look at all these areas, it is all our young people that is doing the work. I think it is time and appropriate we should change our thinking and trend of thoughts and confess in public that we support our young leaders. Our support and trust we place in these young people and what they are doing, is good in the Eyes of God and our people. I doubt if they will do things that will not benefit our people and our paradise. Because they are the blood and bone of this country.

Those are my comments for now and I return to the Bill. I have never seen a Budget Appropriation like this since I have been in Government and now in Parliament.

Well, the interjection from the Member for Ngatangia.

If I may address our people. Firstly, to the Paramount Chief Pakitonga of Pukapuka and Nassau, greetings to you and all the families of traditional Leaders on the island.

To the Mayor, the Island Council, all the workers of the Island Government of Pukapuka and Nassau and all our people, greetings to you all. And our hospital under construction please work properly so it will be finished soon. With our ferry that is coming I assure you, it will not be long, it will be finished. And maybe you have heard of talk about our tractor, do not worry, it is coming to the islands.

Maybe you heard your Member speak in Parliament about all these tractors. This is to confirm, it is coming; three for Pukapuka and one for Nassau.

I will return to our Appropriation, and as mentioned by the Deputy Prime Minister, these are unprecedented times and we have to do things that are unprecedented. But we should commend our Deputy Prime Minister. I liken him to Joseph during the time of the children of Israel in Egypt. Knowledge, intelligence, understanding in reading the stars. I am not sure Deputy Speaker, if he already knew what will happen to us because at the right time when you do the right thing for the people and the Nation.

To you Deputy Prime Minister, and as mentioned by my colleague from Tupapa Maraerenga, Prime Minister in waiting, you be commended for your foresight in knowing what will happen to the country. You did not waste the funds of this country in times of plenty. Even though the pressure from people to utilise our funds for the Nation you allocated reserve funds for times that are unprecedented and for that, this is what is taking place in this Appropriation this year. For what you have done, we did not go through very hard times that our people throughout the Pacific are experiencing.

When I look at our Appropriation I cannot describe how happy I am because our people's life today is not as bad. We did new things to cushion the shock on our people. We gave funds to assist businesses, we gave support funds to businesses to be able to pay for their workers.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I have to interrupt you. I see the Honourable Member Patrick Arioka.

MR P. ARIOKA: Deputy Speaker, if I may, I would like to grant another ten minutes for the – move a Motion for granting ten minutes for the Honourable Member for Pukapuka.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Before I seek a Secunder for the Motion, may I please ask you to amend your Motion so that it will cover all of us so we do not have to keep going through this Motion to extend speaking time for Members.

MR P. ARIOKA: Thank you Deputy Speaker. I thank you for your wisdom. I stand to move:

To extend time for all the Members of Parliament who wish to have more time

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Member. I am looking for a Secunder.

Secundered by the Honourable Minister, Rose Brown

I put the Question:

That the Motion be agreed to?

Motion agreed to

Thank you Honourable Members. I would like to ask the Honourable Member for Pukapuka to carry on.

MR T. ELIKANA: Thank you Deputy Speaker. When we look at the Appropriation before the House, the thing I am most happy about the allocation of funds to make real the big proposals for the country. Because we look at what is happening for example the bridge at Avatiu, the road works, what is being developed in the Outer Islands and this has served to retain our people with employment and through has strengthened our revenue development in our country.

When I see the allocation for us in the Outer Islands, this is significant assistance. Therefore, Deputy Speaker that is the reason I was happy with this Appropriation.

Secondly, we did not follow what happened to us in 1996 and that is to lay-off a lot of our people from their employment. We know the Appropriation today as stated by our Deputy Prime Minister in the media, newspaper, television and on radio. In this Honourable House the intent is, that our people should not lose their employment. I feel Deputy Speaker, this is one of the most important things in our Appropriation. This is a proof to show the knowledge and experience of our Minister of Finance but I know what is the secret in this Appropriation because it is common for us to mention in this House behind a strong man is a good woman. Behind a very good Minister is a good supportive Minister. So this is the secret of our Appropriation this year because that good Minister is a very strong supportive Associate Minister and this is me speaking.

That is my main message in this Budget which is my heartfelt thanks that our people were not laid off from their employment during this time. Before I sit, Deputy Speaker I just like to reinstate my comments in support to the Minister of Finance, the Secretary of Finance, Garth Henderson, your staff, Natalie Cook and to all of you, Kia Orana and best of luck.

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

HON. R. TOKI-BROWN: Mr Deputy Speaker, Madam Speaker and all staff of Parliament, greetings to you all. To the Prime Minister of this country, Deputy Prime Minister, Cabinet Ministers, supporters of Government and the Opposition side, your

Leader and all our people listening to the radio, greetings to you all and a special one to our spouses at home with our children, listening to the radio.

Like what the Honourable Member from Pukapuka/Nassau had mentioned earlier on, behind a good woman or man there is a stronger supporter giving support to his or her job. So again to our spouses, our husbands, wives, children and family who have supported us throughout the years, we thank you and greetings to you all.

To our Queen's Representative, Lady Marsters and your family and household, greetings to you all.

A special greeting to the women of our country, to all the women who represents their Constituency in this House; you are the beauty, you are the flower, you are the beautiful aroma in this House, God's Blessing upon you as we serve our country together.

A special greeting also to all our people all over the country listening to the radio and those around the world watching the livestream, we extend a very warm welcome to you.

A special greeting going to my people of Atiu in New Zealand, Australia and around the world this is a special greeting for you, especially those of my people who are wanting to come home but you are not able to do so, so I extend a very warm greetings to you all.

Mr Deputy Speaker, may I be given the opportunity to address my people in Enuamanu together with the Honourable Member for Areora/Ngatiarua/Tengatangi, in greeting our people and the three divisions on the island. To the Church, to the Government workers and to the Traditional Leaders. To the three divisions, as you are capable of supporting and moving our island ahead and to all our people on the island from the old and the young, greetings in the name of our Lord.

A special greeting to our people who are doing a special job on the island of Atiu tar sealing our road. We can see that you are doing a good job on the island so therefore, we would like to thank Government, the Minister for ICI for supporting this so that this goodwill, will go to our people. To all our Government workers on the island, to our Mayor, to the EO and Island Council together with all our people for joining together to do this good work for our island, thank you.

Deputy Speaker, through me I would like to thank our people and country for helping us to get through this problem of the COVID-19. You have heard the praises that was given before to our Leader, again I would like to reiterate and to say thank you for the spirit of unity that we should work together, all the three Pillars of our country joining together, working ahead as we go through this difficult time and all the instructions that was given to us by the Ministry of Health. The leader of the Ministry of Health, Dr Aumea Herman and all the workers in the Ministry of Health. Our National Emergency Task Force and all the individual Puna, all our people who are paid by Government and above that those who have volunteered themselves to support; I give a big thank you to you all.

We know we have not been touched by this virus however, we are not clear of this problem so we should be prepared for the days ahead.

Deputy Speaker, I would like to come back to the Appropriation Bill before the House, this Appropriation is to make us better. As mentioned it is a Budget of blessings. There are many blessings in this Bill and I thank the Minister of Finance and all his staff in MFEM for the intelligence that they have since the COVID-19 started to grow around this world and throughout that time to today.

Like what have been mentioned earlier these are unprecedented times that we are going through. It has never been a part of our plan to prepare for this. I believe that we were all scared of this. We are afraid because our dreams and our plans that we have for our constituencies we are not sure whether it will still go ahead. But we thank God.

I speak for my people of Enuamanu. The reason why I said I am scared because our road was in preparation to be sealed. The first part of it was done and the second part at that time was not started. But let me tell this House that before I had mentioned that the tar sealing of the road have started today and the people are full of joy. You will also see that on face book, the spirit of the people being united to come together. It started with an opening Prayer for the starting of the sealing and moreover the workers before the start of the work were fed. Because this is a common practice that we always do before we do something big. We don't just let our workers start working without filling their tummy with food before they carry out a big task for the benefit of the island.

So I would like to thank this Government, I would like to thank the Minister responsible for ICI and for the whole Government for allowing this project to go ahead for the island of Atiu.

There are other parts that I need to thank but when that time comes then I will continue to speak to them. Above all we should be happy because we are not hungry, we are not moving ahead without anything but we are blessed, especially our people in the Outer Islands because their primary income is with Government and most of them do work for Government. Some of them collect pension and the welfare for our children. We will discover that none of those benefits have been withdrawn from them and we should continue to thank God.

I think that's another spirit that has been discovered when we came through this virus, we have seen a new spirit and a spirit of unity giving thanks to our Lord because the blessings continue to come upon our people. I believe it won't stop because our Minister of Finance and all his Officials as already mentioned they are intelligent people chosen to give us a direction of where we should go.

So my people, all of us listening I am speaking on behalf of my people and as representative from Teenui/Mapumai Constituency we give our strong support to this Appropriation Bill before this House. Because we will see in our Pacific region it is sad to see the condition of the people living in these countries. As for our country and people we are much better. I am sure that it is obvious to us who are these countries that I am talking about.

So, I would like to suggest that we should not criticise this Appropriation because this virus that came upon the world it was not brought upon us by this Government and it is not only affecting our country but it is the whole world that has been affected and the whole world is suffering. We have a high standard of living when we see other countries fighting and the suffering in comparison to us.

There are countries that are fighting this virus and it still continuing among the people of these countries. I stand before this House and I declare my strong support to this Appropriation before the House. I also give my regards to our Prime Minister and your good wife and for this opening that you want to step up. We all know that if you get there the benefit will come back to our country and people.

May God always lead you and guide you because we know for sure that you are capable to carry this load when you get there. What you have and what we are anticipating for, we will continue to paddle forward our canoe. Is our Deputy Prime Minister and all of us in this canoe – let us be united as we move forward for our people and country.

May God richly bless us – Kia Orana and Kia Manuia.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Minister. I now see the Honourable Minister Vaine Mokoroa.

HON. V. MOKOROA: Honourable Speaker, let me start with a Scripture verse from the following passage for our disillusioned Members in our Opposition.

Yesterday we heard the Honourable William Heather use the word deceit. We also heard the Honourable Member Kitai use the word dreamers. When you come to think about it, you can only conclude that they are definitely disillusioned. So, this verse is to the two of them and to those who are not there physically.

This verse is taken from James 1:3, *“Because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete not lacking anything. And if any of you lack wisdom you should ask God, who gives generously to all whether finding fault. And if you ask it will be given to you. But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt because the one who doubts is like the wave of the sea blown and tossed by the wind.”* So, have faith my friend.

Kia Orana Honourable Deputy Speaker and Madam Speaker and all the staff of this Honourable House. Kia Orana to our Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, fellow Ministers, Members of Government and all those in Opposition.

Deputy Speaker with your permission let me greet our host village Oire Nikao. I say Kia Orana to the Aronga Mana, Ui Mataiapo, Ui Rangatira, Pu Tapere, our Orometua Papa Oirua Rasmussen and your family – greetings, may the Good Lord continue to bless you and reward for the efforts you are undertaking in Oire Nikao.

Honourable Speaker in February 2019, we opened the new CICC missionary house and this year the Papa Orometua was instrumental in the upgrade and renovation of

the Oire Nikao CICC church. I also understand that this Papa Orometua was responsible for the upgrade of the missionary house in Mitiaro. Renovated and upgraded the church in Atiu and instrumental in the commissioning of the CICC Sunday School in Matavera in his humble profession to serve God.

There are many blessings that our village of Nikao is receiving. Please note that I have only commended and complimented the blessings pouring on Nikao in our church. I have not started on the Government side of our blessings because my colleagues have truly spoken convincingly. Overall, there are many blessings received not only for Nikao but for the whole of the Cook Islands. And there is a common saying that the Lord help those who help themselves.

So, to all the Mamas and Papas in our village of Nikao as well as our youth and newly born babies, Kia Orana to all the different denominations in our village, Kia Orana. To all our people in the Outer Islands listening in, Kia Orana. To those who are watching on Facebook on our livestream session, thank you for watching and Kia Orana

MRS S. NAPA: Point of Order Deputy Speaker.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is a Point of Order, what is your Point of Order?

MRS S. NAPA: Standing Order 159, he is reading.

HON. V. MOKOROA: If I can explain, I am not reading from a speech, these are my notes, bullet points.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, you may start again.

HON. V. MOKOROA: I can email a copy to the Honourable Selina Napa after this. It is also appropriate for me to convey my sincere condolences to Papa Tiki Matapo and the family for the passing away of Aunty Mii. To all of our other families that are going through these dark clouds, our deepest condolences for your loss.

Coming back to the Appropriation Bill before us today, Deputy Speaker let me thank the Deputy Prime Minister for the Bill before the House appropriately called the Budget of Blessings and like my previous colleagues and speakers I would also like to acknowledge the Financial Secretary Garth Henderson, your good staff within MFEM that has spent long hours in preparing this Bill for the House today. I would also like to thank all the Heads of Ministries for contributing towards this Bill in terms of aligning your priority areas for the next financial year.

Deputy Speaker, I also understand that each and every Government Ministry has been asked to re-prioritise their core areas not only for this next financial year but for the next couple of years.

I would also like to thank the EO's for the Outer Islands for preparing their respective business plans to be submitted in time for this Sitting. My question to the Honourable Member William Heather is where is the deceit in the preparation of this Bill before the House? My question to the Honourable Kitai is where is the dreams that he is

quoting in this Bill that we are seeing today? I can only ask that you put your faith in not in the Deputy Prime Minister but into the very people who is producing this Bill for us to look over today. These are your very own people. These are heads of Ministries who have been selected to lead their particular sector within their Ministry.

These are EO's and Mayors in the Outer Islands who have been selected to lead the development within their respective islands. There is certainly no deceit and dreams in this paper.

Deputy Speaker, this Budget is and would be one of the most challenging Budget ever to be tabled in our history because of COVID-19. COVID-19 has been a real eye opener for all of us in this House. All of us in this House have had our fair share of experience and our stories to tell and on that note I again would like to reiterate my personal thanks to all of the ten Punas and more so the volunteers who gave up their time willingly to contribute towards the response phase during COVID-19. May God continue to bless each and all of you volunteers in this time of desperate measures.

Deputy Speaker, I am more thankful to the Government for the speed and ability in realigning all of our efforts to provide an economic response package to the community and those affected during COVID-19.

As you will no doubt been hearing that the Minister of Finance have, together with his colleagues in MFEM, tailor made to address the three thematic areas to the Economic Response Plan Packages in Phase 2.

Like previous Speakers, this Budget needs to be commended because it gives a lifeline. It is giving a lifeline to those who have been affected especially in the private sector, those of our migrant workers whom of no fault of theirs is no longer employed and those within our community who are vulnerable.

As mentioned these comes in the form of wage subsidy, Te Aponga Uira discount, interest relief schemes and low interest short term loan. These are not deceit or dreams my good friends. This is a lifeline given to our people and for our people to look up to.

In terms of our recovery package I am encouraged to hear this morning that the Deputy Prime Minister will be talking to Winston Peters, the Deputy Prime Minister of New Zealand to seriously reconsider and open up our borders.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Minister I have to interrupt you. I have some announcements to put to all of us. Firstly, if a Member is speaking please don't be disruptive and mumble where you are seated, myself and the Speaker want to hear what is being spoken in this House.

Secondly, to all of us in this House, our Hansard Report from last Thursday and Friday I want those returned into this House before we finish today. A request to all of you if you read the Hansard Reports of what you said in this House, please sign it and return it to the Clerk of this House. We believe we are all adults and you cannot take the reports home. This is a reminding notice from our staff in the Hansard Division. Therefore, please bear with this humble request to all of you.

I think that is our last notice. Our time is not really up however, we should finish today. Even though I said maybe we shall extend but because of the wonderful debate I think we should end. I will ask the Member for Nga Vaitau to close our Sitting with a prayer.

CLOSING PRAYER

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: Parliament is now adjourned until Wednesday, 24th June at 1.00 p.m.

Sitting adjourned at 4.55 p.m.