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MADAM SPEAKER TOOK THE CHAIR AT 1.00 p.m.

OPENING PRAYER

MADAM SPEAKER (N. RATTLE): Honourable Members please be seated. What a good message from our Pastor this afternoon and we trust it will guide our work in the House today. Kia Orana to all the Honourable Members who have entered this Honourable House this afternoon.

On behalf of all my Parliamentary staff, I extend to you all a warm welcome into the House this afternoon. To all our people listening in to Parliament on the radio, greetings to you all. I would like to extend a special welcome to those who are in our public gallery today.

I would like to inform you that after our last Sitting, the paperwork was prepared and delivered to the Media Council and so we will wait to hear as to what their decision will be.

Honourable Members I have no further announcement so I will now open the Floor for Question Time for half an hour.

QUESTION TIME

MADAM SPEAKER: I see the Honourable William Heather; you have the Floor.

MR W. HEATHER: Kia Orana Madam Speaker this afternoon. To the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, Cabinet Ministers, Members of the Government and on our side, to the Leader of the Opposition and all our Members of the Opposition, Kia Orana.

Madam Speaker, if I may ask you to give time to the Deputy Prime Minister to read a clause in the Budget Appropriation Book that he has written. If you do, I would like him to read a paragraph that I want him to read.

MADAM SPEAKER: Is this an arrangement Honourable Minister because it is Question Time.

HON. M. BROWN: Yes, I would prefer the Honourable Member to ask me a question. Thank you Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Honourable Member this is Question Time. If you have a question, please ask.

MR W. HEATHER: Madam Speaker my question relates to the Audit Report as promised by the Minister of Finance which has been stated in the Budget Book that we will have and to be shared to the Members of the House on the 30th June.

Therefore, my question Madam Speaker is, where is this Audit Report, thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: I see the Honourable Minister of Finance, Mark Brown.

HON. N. BROWN: I believe Madam Speaker the Honourable Member is asking about the current state of the Audited Government Account. I am very happy to report Madam Speaker that after a number of years of audited Crown accounts that have been delayed, we are in the process of bringing those right up to date.

In fact, my last meeting with the Head of the Audit Office, indicated that we have now completed 2017, 2018, 2019 and ready for sign off very shortly. These were ready to be signed off by the 30th June this year.

Subsequently, Madam Speaker the Head of the Audit Office has told me that there is a couple more things that they need to do and they now expect the sign off to be in September this year, three months late. Nonetheless Madam Speaker, this is a tremendous achievement by the Audit office who have been supported by the New Zealand Government in providing resources to allow the office to conduct two years' worth of audits every year.

An essentially Madam Speaker, as a result of their very hard work over the last three years, this office will now have our Crown accounts more or less up to date. One of the main reasons that people may not be aware of why the overall consolidated crown accounts are not audited on a timely basis, I can explain.

Out of the 30 odd Government entities that require auditing Madam Speaker, it only takes one to delay their own audit and that delays the overall auditing of the consolidated accounts. Many of these outstanding audits come from the Islands Administration accounts where we acknowledge that the strength of finance management and the ability to be able to produce timely accounts has not always been there.

But we worked very hard with the Ministry of Finance and with the Audit Office firstly to centralise the financing on these small island account entities. But also to make them more timely so as not to delay the auditing of the consolidated accounts. Even more pleasing Madam Speaker is that the results of audits now being completed particularly on our larger departments more and more are coming through as fully unqualified audits.

Those who may not understand the financial terms, an unqualified audit means you have ticked all the boxes and you have done all the right things.

I would like to thank the Honourable Member for asking this question and for giving me time to respond as to the status of our audit operations in our country and they are in very good hands, Madam Speaker. Thank you very much.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you Minister and I see the Honourable Vaitoti Tupa and you have the Floor.

MR V. TUPA: Thank you Madam Speaker. My question is to the Minister of BTIB. Madam Speaker my question is regarding the news I heard of the Chairperson of the BTIB Board resigning from the position.

My question to the Minister of BTIB is, can you please clarify why the Chairperson for the Board resigned or retired from the position. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, I give the Floor to the Honourable Minister George Angene.

HON. G. ANGENE: Thank you Madam Speaker. Thank you for the question raised by the Member for Matavera on why the Chairman of the BTIB Board resigned?

The answer to your question, it is because of her desire to retire because I disapproved some of the proposals or ideas that she brought to me. All my Portfolios I don't work along family lines. I conduct my work true and right before my God and my people.

Just to confirm Honourable Member, I did not force her to resign, she advised me she was resigning and I said if you need to, then do so. That is the truth I say before our people, thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you and I see the Honourable Tamaiva Tuavera, you have the Floor.

MR T. TUAVERA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Greetings to all of us this afternoon.

Madam Speaker, on top of the \$19 million allocated to the Sustainable Management of Water and Sanitation I see in Book 1, Page 218 and I will read – the Government is allocating \$15.6 million in 2020-21 to Capital Expenditure such as Te Mato Vai Project and other programmes.

My question is, how much of this \$15.6 million is going to Te Mato Vai?

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you and I see Minister Mark Brown.

HON. M. BROWN: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I must confess I don't have my Budget Book in front of me but I do know that in terms of Te Mato Vai we brought forward expenditures for this financial year into the year just past because the work was progressing quickly and what we had appropriated was \$9 million in the 2021 Budget Book and we expect Te Mato Vai to end.

Just to be clear, Te Mato Vai is a project that has a life and we expect the life of that project to end once the Te Mato Vai Project is handed over to the Government. The

balance of those monies then shifts to To Tatou Vai and To Tatou Vai is currently the Company that is responsible for the management and operations of our water reticulation network and indeed before this House Madam Speaker, is the Bill that will shift To Tatou Vai from a Limited Liability Company into a Statutory Corporation, in other words into an SOE.

I think the sums of money that the Honourable Member refers to, Madam Speaker there is approximately \$11 million that has been allocated to To Tatou Vai capital from the years 2021 up to 2024.

In this year alone in the Budget that we have just appropriated, there's \$3.2 million appropriated to To Tatou Vai and I may have mentioned previously in the House that as a result of the upgrades of our water intakes and the upgrades of our ring mains, it is becoming apparent that our old secondary water distribution network also requires an upgrade and these are the pipes that deliver from the ring main into the secondary network and into the households. That Madam Speaker is what the sum of money that the Honourable Member refers to and it is broken down over a space of three years. Thank you Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Minister. I see the Honourable William Heather you have the Floor.

MR W. HEATHER: I have a supplementary question, Minister of Finance. What are we going to do with people on high ground seeing we are all going to pay for this water upgrade and the people who do not get the water to their homes? What is Government going to do for these people? These people are paying \$200 for a trip of water to cart the water to their homes.

Last Friday before the rain started, three homeowners from the Blackrock area rang me and told me they had no water in their tanks and I told them that during the dry season they will not get any water. I met with these homeowners but luckily it rained on Saturday. So, Minister what are we going to do with these homeowners seeing they are paying taxes.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you and I see the Minister Mark Brown.

HON. M. BROWN: Thank you Madam Speaker. This is a good question from the Member for Ruaau. Yes, we know last week before the rain started our water started to slow down and the message from To Tatou Vai was for people to conserve water and not waste water. Leave your cars and don't waste water washing the vehicles.

We know when the rain came the water started flowing through the pipes and it was dirty water. This is the situation with our water today, that water that flows into our homes are coming straight from the intakes into our homes. We have not yet started using the new intake where we will get clean water. So Honourable Members, let us not hold up the work so we can get clean water for everyone.

Regarding the question about homes on high ground, if the water will get into their homes, this is what I have been told by the people working on this project that when

the new intake is in operation and the big tanks are put in use then we will see that the pressure will be high and this will reach the homes on the high ground.

This system is called gravity feed and the tanks that has been built at the intakes will be able to push the water that flows from the hills and push them into the homes on the high areas.

But if you build your house above the height of the water intake, then this water will not be able to reach your home. But the company To Tatou Vai can find ways and means to help the homes that have this problem because this is one of the problems that we can see now. They are looking at how we can overcome this problem so that everyone get clean water when the Company To Tatou Vai commences work.

Thank you Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you and I see the Honourable Tamaiva Tuavera you have the Floor.

MR T. TUAVERA: Thank you Madam Speaker. The answer to my question earlier on is a bit watery, however, I will see the Minister later on during our break.

I have a question. When I read the newspaper this morning Madam Speaker, it says, *“Faster, stronger, and in red, not cheaper”*.

MADAM SPEAKER: Honourable Member, can I just remind you that anything that is public that is from the newspaper or anything like that is not a business of the House.

MR T. TUAVERA: Definitely Madam Speaker but I want to ask a question to the Minister.

MADAM SPEAKER: Is it to do with his responsibility as a Minister?

You may continue.

MR T. TUAVERA: When the cable arrived in Rutaki, I was there that day. I heard the comments made by the Minister that day. Maybe because I didn't have a drink of water, but I can see that his statement that day is a reflection of what is in the paper today. The author of the article in the paper is an Economist.

My question to the Minister then is, can he explain to this House and also to our people listening in why the word “not” is integrated with the word “cheaper”. Can the Minister please respond, thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Member. I see the Minister Mark Brown.

HON. M. BROWN: Thank you Madam Speaker. To ensure that all our people understand, I shall respond in the Manganian language.

Before I do Madam Speaker, I recall last week, you provided a telling off to the Editor of this newspaper for putting misleading headlines in the paper, and you told him not to do it again. Well, on the weekend, there was a huge public outcry over the headline regarding the Mayoral elections and what term that he used for one of the candidates, a real successful business woman, to say that a grandma was running for the Mayor of Aitutaki. It was a condescending and patronising term Madam Speaker that he used in his headline but nothing that I didn't expect from a person who is not from here.

Of course, he couldn't help himself and put another headline in there that again is misleading. If you read through the contents of that, people will see that what they are getting in terms of what they are paying for now the same price, they will receive far better quality and far better service through the provision of the cable than currently what we are getting through the satellite. In other words, people will be getting more for the same price of money.

Therefore Madam Speaker, the Member mentioned that I made a statement at the landing of our cable when it arrived earlier this year. There were a number of statements that the Government made in January this year regarding our graduation and the way that our economy was blooming. But welcome to the COVID-19 world that we all live in now.

I am aware the business plan of many companies including Vodafone were based on the arrival of over a hundred and seventy thousand tourists a year. Now, every company has to change their Business Plan. Our whole economy has been affected by this. Now is not the time to say, oh you said this and you said that. We have to look at what we need to do now and get on with it. I am sure Vodafone like many other companies in the country that have been affected are getting on with the job of trying to survive and trying to operate in this COVID-19 world.

However, what is pleasing Madam Speaker is the comments made by the Economist that was commissioned by our Regulator and also the comments by our Regulator himself that he has no doubt that the cable being commissioned and in operation will provide significant benefits to the people of our country. While Vodafone is now scrambling to adjust its Business Plan, other companies are looking at the opportunity that the cable brings to our country. Already, the competitive element is being discussed who can come in and provide similar services and that in itself will affect the pricing that is made available to consumers.

In addition Madam Speaker, other types of business that will use the technology are already starting to emerge and had discussions about how they can utilise this particular piece of infrastructure to provide the service that previously we could not.

The one industry that has grown and boomed during this COVID-19 period globally Madam Speaker has been the technology industry. Therefore, we are very fortunate Madam Speaker that we were able to get our cable landed earlier on this year and we are able to get it commissioned I believe on the 15th of this month to enable our people another avenue to look at being be part of the digital economy, being part of the growing knowledge economy.

So, let the Editor put his headlines which maybe literally true but factually untrue. Thank you Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Honourable Members, that completes our half hour of Question Time.

I now call on the Leader of the House, the Honourable Tingika Elikana to move a Motion.

MR T. ELIKANA: Thank you Madam Speaker. In accordance with Standing Order number 4, I rise to move a Motion:

That Standing Order 224 which relates to notice to be given of introduction of a Bill, be suspended to enable the To Tatou Vai Authority Bill to be introduced today

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you. I call a Secunder for the Motion.

Secundered by the Honourable Minister, Mark Brown

I put the Question:

That the Motion be agreed to?

Motion agreed to

As per Motion that was agreed, we will now go to the Presentation of Bills.

PRESENTATION OF BILLS

I call the Minister Responsible for the First Reading of the Bill.

ACTING CLERK AT THE TABLE (J. DANIEL): Short Title Reads: To Tatou Vai Authority Act 2020.

BILL READ A FIRST TIME

MADAM SPEAKER: Can the Minister please name the date and time of the Second Reading of the Bill.

HON. M. BROWN: Forthwith Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: To Tatou Vai Authority Bill 2020 has been named for Second Reading forthwith.

We will now go to Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Orders of the Day is To Tatou Vai Authority Bill 2020. I call the Minister to move for the Second Reading of the Bill.

HON. M. BROWN: Thank you Madam Speaker. I move:

That To Tatou Vai Authority Bill 2020 be read a Second time

MADAM SPEAKER: You may continue Honourable Minister.

HON. M. BROWN: Thank you Madam Speaker. As alluded to earlier on in our discussions, the Te Mato Vai water project is nearing its completion. Once the project is completed and commissioned, it will be handed over to the Crown. Managing this new water network will be a very complex task. That's because the quality of the water will be far better than what we currently have and it will be constantly monitored and tested by qualified people. For this reason, the Government through the Cook Islands Investment Corporation established the wholly owned subsidiary To Tatou Vai Limited.

To Tatou Vai will be the entity that will be responsible for the operation and maintenance of our water network here on Rarotonga. The company has been in operation for nearly two years or more than two years Madam Speaker. We have employed a significant number of Cook Islanders most of them returning from overseas who are well qualified and experience in water management.

We have also taken on those people previously employed under ICI who were responsible for water. The formation of the company TTV was only intended for an interim purpose and it was always intended by the Government to convert this company into a statutory corporation or into a state owned enterprise. So it will have similar authorities, obligations that our other SOEs have like Te Aponga Uira, Airport Authority and the Ports Authority.

That Madam Speaker and Members of the House is the purpose of this Bill. It is to establish the, To Tatou Vai Authority. It will be a self-funding not for profit statutory corporation govern by a Board and a CEO.

Over the last 6 and 7 years Madam Speaker the Government has taken great pains to engage with the landowners of our water intake valleys. Every step of the way Madam Speaker I have consulted with landowners and sought their consent and approvals to take the next step from the initial idea to the planning, to the mapping to actual construction.

It is no different with this step Madam Speaker the Government fully intends to refer this Bill to Select Committee but I myself will be conducting again various landowner consultations to brief our landowners on the next steps in establishing this corporation under its own Act.

There are ten valleys Madam Speaker where we have built new water intakes. And it has been pointed out to our people the largest infrastructure project our country has embarked on since the construction of our international airport. And rightfully so

Madam Speaker because we have for the last 30 years heard the cries of our people wanting improved water into their homes.

Our people are sick of having air running through our water when it is dry weather and sick of having mud run through our taps when it starts raining just as we say during the weekend. So, the system that we have up and running Madam Speaker is world class and it is considered best fit for purpose for our country.

Above the actual intakes and the tanks Madam Speaker is what is considered the catchment area. When it rains water runs through these lands to the stream and the stream runs down to the intake where the water is captured. Our engagement with our landowners Madam Speaker is captured in this Bill. Not just the landowners of where the structures are built but also the landowners of the wider catchment area.

This Bill will establish a catchment committee for each valley made up of persons appointed by the landowners of those catchments. So these catchment committees Madam Speaker made up of landowners will in effect allow the landowners to regulate their own lands to preserve the quality of the water derived from these lands to benefit everyone living on Rarotonga.

So we met a number of the governance from the landowners during our previous consultations quite a number of years back. But the Government will not take the land it still belongs to the landowners and that people are entitled to free water. This Bill acknowledges that water is a fundamental human right. It will be captured in here that each person, every domestic household will be entitled to a free allocation of water, and that will be determined by the Authority once it has the formula or appropriate measure to determine what that allocation will be.

However, again as a result of our consultations with stakeholders and landowners anybody who makes money from this water network should be prepare to pay for that water and anybody who waste water and lets water run without control should also be prepare to pay for that water.

This Madam Speaker was a result of my attendance at a Koutu Nui meeting some 5 years ago at the Pukapuka hostel I recall. When the question was asked about the people who let their water run and waste it. The overwhelming response from our Koutu Nui is that they should pay for that water.

Madam Speaker, To Tatou Vai does not expect to be charging for any water for at least two years. The first thing that we need to do Madam Speaker is to install meters at every water outlet. These has two purposes Madam Speaker it lets the household know how much water is being used but secondly it will also identify if there are leaks that are occurring on their property. Either in their house or under the ground in the pipe leading to their house.

And it will have two outcomes the first being to encourage people to conserve their water and secondly it will encourage people to attend to any leaking pipes or taps on their property. Thirdly, Madam Speaker this legislation will fall under the mandate of the competition and regulatory authority.

Members will recall last year, we passed the Competition and Regulatory Authority Act and we have appointed a Regulator who is now part of the authority. And his first task of course was to play the role of Regulator for the telecommunications pricing. We also added on to his responsibilities to look at the electricity pricing by Te Aponga Uira. To make sure that the pricing that is being priced to consumers is fair and reasonable. And we have included, To Tatou Vai their charging regime will fall under the umbrella of the Regulator.

The quality of our water Madam Speaker will be determine under the Public Health Act. Every water test so far Madam Speaker from our water outlets has indicated our water is contaminated with e-coli. The Ministry of Health has put out an official bulletin saying that the water is not safe to drink unless you either boil it or treat it.

Those same water standards, Madam Speaker will need to be adhered to by To Tatou Vai Authority. At the end of the day, Madam Speaker we all want clean water running into our homes. We all want consistent supply of water running into our homes.

I recall in the 1980's, Madam Speaker those of us who have been alive that long, the continuous power blackouts that we used to have with the Power Company which essentially forced the Government of the day to invest heavily in upgrading our electricity power system.

Today, we have the same situation with our water but I am very pleased to report to the House, Madam Speaker that our consultations with landowners to commence the trialling of our sedimentation tanks and the use of the packale elements will be underway very shortly and I am hopeful that we will be able to use this investment that our country has put in to provide clean drinking water to all of our households.

This Bill, in time will also extend its Authority to cover Aitutaki but as yet there is no fully reticulated system in Aitutaki but we are looking to the future and what our people want and if they do have a system that is put in place then this Authority can provide the operations and management as well.

This is no different, Madam Speaker to what we have done today with the Power Supply in the Outer Islands. All of the Outer Islands Power Supply, nearly all of them are coming under the Operational Management of Te Aponga Uira. Each of the Island Governments have signed MOU's to enter into this Agreement to better facilitate the management of their solar systems but also to utilize the skills and capabilities of Te Aponga to train their staff in the Outer Islands and to be able to monitor and repair any work that needs to be done in a timely manner.

I am aware that we do have people who are against the water supply system that we are proposing with To Tatou Vai and there will always be fundamental opposition by people who do not believe in the use of any chemical. However, we have based our decision making Madam Speaker on the best science available on the advice of our medical and health authorities on what we believe is the best thing to do for our people.

I know some of the detractors of this water system that we are proposing, Madam Speaker they are people that can filter their own water at home and that's fine, they can do that. This Bill does not compel anybody, any household to compulsorily link up to

the Government water supply but if the Government water supply runs on to your land you will have a meter on that pipe but there is nothing to stop people turning off their water and having their own water tank and catching their own water.

The way that this water system is operating, Madam Speaker and from what we have been able to obtain from our experts, people will be able to connect to the Government water system far more cost effectively than setting up their own private water system and if people do not want chlorine in their water. Madam Speaker it's a very simple matter to do what people in New Zealand do and install a very simple chlorine filter at their kitchen tap which takes the chlorine out of the water.

What I am concerned with, Madam Speaker in my constituency a number of elderly people who rely on the Government's water. They rely on family members to run to the Water Station and fill up their water bottle. When there is no one to run and get their water they rely on their stove to boil their water and use their gas to boil their water. We want to be able to provide clean drinking water into all our households particularly the households of our vulnerable so they do not compromise their health by drinking water contaminated with e-coli and that they can be assured that every time they turn their tap on they get clean water and not muddy water.

These are the people we do this project for, Madam Speaker and we are confident that with the advice that we have received that this Government is doing the right thing and it's about doing the right thing, Madam Speaker not doing the popular thing. That's what a real Government does, thank you Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you very much. I call a Secunder for the Motion.

HON. G. ANGENE: I strongly support this Motion but I would like to speak, Madam Speaker.

Seconded by the Honourable George Angene

MADAM SPEAKER: You may continue, Honourable Minister.

HON. G. ANGENE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Thank you to all the staff of this House and greetings to all the Members of this House and all our people listening to the radio.

May it please you, Madam Speaker for me to give greetings to a few people. Firstly, I thank my God for giving me the breath of life that I can work and for all of us to be here in this House.

May I also be allowed to say greetings to the four corners of the world? Firstly, to my island people of Rakahanga and Manihiki, to the parents to children and greetings to you all, this greetings is coming to you from your son George Angene.

Secondly, greetings to the Nga Pu Toru islands, because I am also from those islands, greetings to you to. And again greetings to my island of Mangaia, greetings to you all.

A special greetings to the island of my wife Aitutaki and Mitiaro, greetings to you all. And now I return to my constituency of Tupapa those who have enabled me to stand in this House for them. I carry over 500 people on my shoulder to ensure that their voice are heard in this House.

To our Chief Vakatini, the two Pu Tapere, George Matutu and Tekeu Framhein and to our Traditional Leaders in Tupapa I extend a very warm welcome to you from old to young, thank you for putting your trust in me to be your Member of Parliament.

All the things that you have asked from me to support you I have provided without any interruptions. Those who love me and those who don't love me, greetings to all of you. So what is the lesson for us from God it is to love your enemies. When you open the Word of God it tells you that let not the bad overcome you but for you to overcome the bad. I will not tell you where but I will give you a path it's found in John Chapter 5 go and look for yourself.

Greetings to the Opposition Side to your Leader and all the colleagues, greetings to you all. As the Minister was speaking at the start of this Sitting I heard the Minister mention about the Opposition and I didn't really like that word because what we have learned in this House is the correction, the Maori word akatanotano. We have the Government side and I do forget about the correction side because I am speaking for them.

I am really happy and proud of you because a lot of times, you always support us and as we come to this point of the water you will also support this because this is clean water coming to your homes. Why did I say it's clean water? It is because it has been proven by the Ministry of Health. I can confirm this to you because I stand before the leaders of this country. There were four well educated former leaders of our country that I know were doctors and I know they will agree with me for our water to be chlorinated so that our people receive fresh clean water. Every time I look at their photos, they are happy with us and they know what we are doing and why we do things.

Let me assure this House that if there was something bad in this Bill, I will object it. When I was elected to come into this House, and when you look at your name tags, there is no political identification on it such as Cook Islands Party, Democratic Party or One Cook Islands Party. I stand here to represent my constituency Tupapa Nui o Au, Tupapa Maraerenga. I believe I am speaking in this House as a representative for the people in my constituency who voted for me. During some days, we see that the condition of the water is not good.

I installed a water station in my village on the 4th of February 2011. From that day to today, people have been coming to get water from this water station that I built. If I count the number of people that comes to get water from this water station every twenty four hours, more than eight hundred people I would say gets water from this water station.

I would like to thank the Government because today, they will install a new water filter on my water station. I believe this is not the only water station that will receive a new water filter but also the rest of the water station on the island which was supported by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Honourable Mark Brown. This water filter will also be installed at the prison complex, which is under my portfolio. I

believe that has been installed now. Therefore Madam Speaker, the issue about water, and the intent and spirit of this Bill, I strongly give my full support to the Bill and also my people in Tupapa.

I will now come back to the condition of the water intake situated inland in Tupapa. Three years ago, the Mataiapo George Taraare was here and he is one of the biggest landowner at this water intake. During that time when we had our meeting at the Tupapa Nui o Au Meeting House, and because I am also a landowner at this water intake, it was agreed in that meeting that evening the proposal by the Mataiapo George Taraare for me to be the Chairman because I am a Member of Parliament and also a landowner to the water intake. He believed that I am the rightful person to represent the family and the people of Tupapa in this House. This is the reason Madam Speaker I mentioned earlier that I speak on behalf of the people of Tupapa Nui o Au.

Now Madam Speaker, there are people who disagree with this water issue and also those who support it. I thank the Government because they did not shut away those who objected this water scheme but the Government had ways to show those who objected that their intentions are also considered. There are ways where Government has outlined that if you don't want chlorinated water there are also other options available. What is pleasing is the fact that those who supported chlorinated water will have free water and will not pay the water. However, if you waste the water over what has been allocated to you, you will pay the water. If you have knowledge in utilising the water, the better it is for you but we need to take care of the water not only for us but also for our future generation.

In my department of the Corrective Service, because there are a lot of us in prison, I will look at ways to conserve water because I am sure Madam Speaker there are many of us who let the water run while having shower and singing away. How did I know? I know this because my children does it but I have taught them to learn how to conserve water and not to waste it because there will come a time in the future where we will be charged for wasting water. Maybe in the future when the opportunity comes for me to go overseas, I will look for a water meter and when you use the water for two minutes it shuts down. I want to trial that system on the prison premises so that we can conserve water.

Around Rarotonga, if you have difficulties by not having water, see your Member of Parliament but it is better to go and see those responsible for our water supply to help you.

This is my small contribution to the To Tatou Vai Bill Madam. I strongly support this Bill and also my people in Tupapa Nui o Au. We also support Government today for this Bill before us. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you very much. Well timed Honourable Minister. Honourable Albert Nicholas, when we return from the break, you will be first on the Floor.

In the meantime, Parliament will suspend until 3.00 p.m.

Parliament suspended at 2.27 p.m.

Sitting resumed at 3.00 p.m.

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

Before we suspended the Honourable Member Albert Nicholas had the Floor but just before I give you the Floor. That is to propose the question for the Second Reading of the Bill. And you may have the Floor, Honourable Member

MR A. NICHOLAS: Thank you Madam Speaker. Because I can't wait to go home and finish cutting Mama Mata's kuru tree, I will make this a very brief talk. Firstly, Madam Speaker to all of us that have gathered together under the roof of this Honourable House. To all our people around the country listening to our radio broadcast and to my constituency of RAPA from top to the bottom around about – Kia Orana to all.

Madam Speaker I rise to share my thoughts on the Bill before the House. Madam Speaker a Bill in my view brings to the fore the Governments social responsibility to provide clean and constant water for its people. A Bill that brings to the fore Madam Speaker, Government and landowner partnership and relationship during this particular project. In my view the Government being the service provider and the landowners being the landlord if I may use that analogy.

Madam Speaker the Bill brings to the fore the recognition and respect that landowners of these catchment areas will be given during the terms of this relationship. As a landowner myself for one of these catchments and not just for one for a number of these catchments Madam Speaker. You can pretty much say I am lobbying on behalf of the landowners.

Madam Speaker this relationship one that this Government intends to prioritise being this relationship between the Government and the landowners and as well as its responsibility to provide clean, constant flowing water to its people. Madam Speaker the proposed Bill before the House also puts in place the necessary formulas, the necessary formulas in ensuring that the Authority tasked with management of these crucial resource. One that is financially sustainable and financially independent.

This particular sector will not be a sector for profit gain Madam Speaker and that is also highlighted in the Bill before the House. The Bill also tasks the Authority for the day to day running and maintenance of this multimillion dollar investment. Madam Speaker it will be unthinkable to think that we will make such an investment and only to walk away from such an investment and neglect it.

So the Bill pretty much brings total responsibility to the Authority that is going to be tasked with the day to day maintenance. Madam Speaker there are other items in the Bill that I would like to share on public radio. But since this Bill will be going to Select Committee I look forward to hearing constructive and meaningful dialogue. Once we do our rounds of public meetings to gauge your thoughts and ideas.

Once again Madam Speaker, Mama Mata is waiting for me to finish cutting her kuru tree so I will end it here and thank you very much.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you very much Honourable Member and I see the Honourable Vaitoti Tupa, you have the Floor.

MR V. TUPA: Thank you Madam Speaker. A short message for my constituency, to all the different denominations in Rangiatea and we all know that there are 6 different denominations in Rangiatea and I greet you all. Our traditional leaders and title holders and our elderly people and the many people in Rangiatea. My special acknowledgement to our health Puna in Matavera thank you for holding our community in your care over these past months.

Madam Speaker I would have preferred our two nurses – Rosa and Parau to remain in our Puna because they know the people and the need of the people but it seems the Ministry of Health have other plans. To all the landowners of the water catchment areas of Matavera I acknowledge and greet you. My special condolences going out to Mama Puretu, children and family for the passing away of your husband, Honu Ben as I am aware the Prime Minister was present when he was laid to rest.

Madam Speaker I come back to the Bill before the House. I am happy to hear as mentioned by the Honourable Albert Nicholas that this Bill will be referred to a Select Committee. Our people we read in the newspaper are requesting for this Bill to be referred to a parliament select committee. Our people will then be able to submit their views to the Committee during the public consultations.

Madam Speaker although we have limited time in reviewing this Bill however I have read the whole content of the Bill. I have worked together with my colleague the Honourable Member for Ngatangia.

One area about the Bill that I am pleased about is the inclusion and recognition of the landowners and they are also recognised for the Committee and they will elect their representative for all the intakes around Rarotonga. I am also happy that the landowners and their representatives on the Committees will be paid allowances. Therefore, I am of the belief that my Papa Motu who is a major landowner will be on one of these Committees.

However, Madam Speaker when we seriously consider the views of our people it indicates that they want this to happen. There are areas that they reconsidering and these will be brought to the attention of the Select Committee. In this Bill also we find that a Board will be established for our water system. This Board will be responsible to appoint the person to head this department. And they will be working together with the Committee established under this Bill.

I believe Madam Speaker that we will not be debating this Bill too long because it is going to a Parliament Select Committee. That is where our people will submit their views for the Committee to consider.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you very much and I see the Honourable Tereapii Maki Kavana and you have the Floor.

MR T. KAVANA: Thank you, Madam Speaker for the opportunity to speak in this Honourable House. Greetings to all the Honourable Members of this House and may God bless us for the good work that we are doing for our Cook Islands people.

Madam Speaker, I would like to say a few words to the people of my island and my constituency. To the whole island of Aitutaki who are listening to the radio and also watching on livestream, greetings to you all.

I want to give special greetings to my constituency of Arutanga/Reureu/Nikaupara, to all the six denominations thank you for your Prayers for us the Members of Parliament of this House. I want to greet the three Council Members of my Constituency and all the people working hard in our electorate.

Four Members from Rarotonga have spoken on this Bill, I am also from Rarotonga so I want to support this Bill before this House. My ancestor is from Tupapa the Anguna family and if you are a member of this Anguna family, this is your son speaking. Thank you to my Rarotonga family for giving me a piece of land to build a house for my family and future generations to come.

Madam Speaker, I cannot just sit down and say nothing especially on this water issue. Last Wednesday our Minister for ICI travelled to Aitutaki to open the New Water Gallery in the Constituency of Tautu/Vaipae/Vaipeka. Thank you to our Government for this new water project on the island of Aitutaki. Even though this has been established, but this will not be enough to bring the standard of water supply up to a good standard for the island.

Maybe in the years to come as per the Bill that we are looking at and we will be required to pay for water but I am happy with the arrangements of this Authority they will not be out to make a profit but just enough to maintain the system.

This Bill that we are discussing, Madam Speaker I can see that this is for Rarotonga and it will also affect Aitutaki in the future. I am happy that this will be given to a Select Committee to look at before it goes to our people and then maybe other good ideas will be brought back to the House.

I want to tell you that our water in Aitutaki is already treated naturally because at times our water is mixed with sea water, this means that there is already natural chemical in our water given by God. Our water is from underground and not like yours which comes from the mountain and it is very dirty and it is only right that chemicals be put in.

A Health Conference was held in Aitutaki last year and a Doctor spoke on the subject of water being treated on Rarotonga and this is what Dr Joe Williams said, if a person tells you that the water on Rarotonga should not be treated, punch him because they don't know how good this chemical is when it is used to treat the water.

I am looking at this Bill, Honourable Members and I think the time is right for this to happen. On my way to work I rang the workers at To Tatou Vai to go and fix a broken pipe in Tupapa as a lot of water was gushing out of the pipe.

Our Deputy Prime Minister is saying the water on Rarotonga is good as it goes round the whole island. I am a grower and I have been checking the planting areas on Rarotonga and there is plenty of water wastage on Rarotonga. I feel that a number should be put on so that water is not wasted. Our people here on Rarotonga should not waste water.

In Aitutaki there are areas where there is no water. Most households have water tanks on the island of Aitutaki and most of our drinking water is the rain water that God has provided for us. The water that we get from underground we do not drink that but we use it for the household cleaning and also agriculture.

So, Madam Speaker I give thanks to the Government of the day for this Bill before the House and for the standard of water to be improved for the good living of our people on Rarotonga and also in the Outer Islands. I support this Bill, Madam Speaker for the good of our people today, tomorrow and forever.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Honourable Member and I now give the Floor to the Honourable Tamaiva Tuavera.

MR T. TUAVERA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Before I start can I have a little moment to say Kia Orana to my village?

Kia Orana to Pa and Kainuku in the village of Ngatangia and all our Traditional Leaders and supporters, greetings to you all. Our elders and our children, greetings to you.

Last week we had a cloud overshadowing our village, our daughter Ngatuaine Pauline Maoate Kirikava passed away. I would like to thank the three or four families who have come together in the laying to rest of our daughter and that is Ngati Maoate, Ngati Manavaroa and Ngati Nicholas. And to the families who have supported a special one to Ioteva Kirikava, your two sons Fili and Atai and may the Lord give you comfort during this time.

I also want to give my condolences to the family of Papa Honu in Matavera because when I was growing up as a child in Matavera, Papa Honu was a leader looking after us especially in the Life Boys, the Boys Brigade and also the Matavera Ekalesia. There were three of them Aneru Tautu, Noo Ngamata and Papa Honu. The sad part is all of them have passed on and Papa Honu is the last. So to you Mama Puretu and your children, may God give us comfort at this time?

Let me say something short about Papa Honu because they are not sure which island he was born on but the speaker of family told us that he was born on a ship so he is not sure which island that he can claim from the Northern Group. Anyway he was a very good man, a gentleman and a scholar when I was growing up in Matavera.

I now return to the Bill before this House. In Takitumu, we have five water catchments. I will start from Matavera, the Matavera intake, Turangi, Avana, Totokoitu and Papua. Honourable Minister, I think most of the water is coming from Takitumu to supply Rarotonga but I am not sure why our water is always shut.

Reading through this Bill, the first thing I want to talk about is Clause 63 on Part 8 because it says if there is an interruption in the supply the Authority is not responsible. My question therefore is, who is responsible? So let me remind those appointed on the Select Committee to take note of this question.

I think for the totality of this Bill, it is not good for us to debate everything in it because it will go to a Select Committee and then it will be brought back to Parliament. Maybe that will be the best time for us to contribute what have taken place with the discussions of this Bill.

Before I take my seat, I would like to acknowledge the presence of these two ladies in our public gallery because they have been present in Parliament since last week regarding their petition on the chlorination treatment of water. I take my hat off for you two ladies because you are persistent and you are still here today. It shows the Takitumu spirit. Thank you Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Member and I see the Honourable Patrick Arioka and you have the Floor.

MR P. ARIOKA: Kia Orana to all of us present in this Honourable House. Kia Orana to you Madam Speaker and all your hard working staff. Kia Orana to our Government side of the House, the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and all the Honourable Members of Government. Greetings to the Leader of the Opposition, and all the Honourable Members of the Opposition.

I see the Member for Rangiatea and the Member for Ngatangia wants me to give them special mention so I greet you both.

Madam Speaker if I may have time to address my people of Murienua. Kia Orana to the people of Puaikura, the leaders, the three sector of the constituency. Tinomana Ariki, all the Ui Rangatira, Ui Mataiapo and all the people of Puaikura, greetings to you all. The different denominations in Puaikura I thank you for your part in praying for us in our work as Members of Parliament. I thank God for your service to the spiritual lives of our people. I extend special greetings to the Ministers of the different denominations in our Vaka.

Special greetings to the people of my constituency of Murienua. The Queen's Representative, your good wife and family, greetings to you all. To all the people of Murienua and the three pillars of our community and to all our elderly people listening to our radio. Our youth and little children, greetings to you all. Kia Orana to all the workers in our Puna since the beginning you are still working strong, greetings to you all. I believe the doctors have taken a survey of our village people and they have found some health concerns but I believe as we move forward, we can settle those problems and support our people. It is only right for me to say thank you for your good service for our people's health.

I also greet my Committee supporters, our Patrons and each member of the Committee and for our meeting last Monday. As we have discussed together we will work together as we move forward. I thank you for your support and guidance for me as your Member of Parliament and that I do a good job as your representative in Parliament.

Madam Speaker, I stand to support this Bill before the House. I have to say Madam Speaker that this has come quite a long way that we have an opportunity to appreciate the fact that our water is going to be available not only a necessity but also not going to be wasted. As I look around in the room, I can see a number of my own fellow Members of Parliament that we have come from a time of history where water was so precious.

I know a lot of my colleagues here we have lived together in Tutakimoa and we have faced a lot of difficulty in those days. We have faced a number of diseases, diarrhoea and as many as possible that I can count. The many families and friends who have suffered through that period.

Since that time to today, things have improved but we are still continuing to experience those difficult times. So if you lived in that period, you would know how important water is, and how important this Bill is going to be to make sure it is not going to be repeated for our children of tomorrow. It saddens me Madam Speaker when I see special groups that has their own interest but never have experienced the struggle our people have come through.

As a young man at a very young age, I have gone through countless times of difficult drinking water in those days. I know every one of us in this Honourable House has gone through that. The Government of the day is looking into this very important issue and that we are not going to repeat in years to come. As we look into this Bill, it is providing public services for our people.

Government is recognising its social responsibility to supply good, clean, water for our people. This Bill has gone beyond that now Madam Speaker, to look at the role that the landowners will play is going to be critical as well. Take a role of ownership to drive the intention to help our people so that autonomy Madam Speaker is shared across not only within Government and its agencies but within our people as well to be part of the decision process.

This Bill Madam Speaker not only sets the rule that the, To Tatou Vai is going to follow but it also prepares the strategic goals that will be intended for the years to come. So to you our people, this Bill that is prepared will strengthen our footing on improving the supply of water on Rarotonga today. In all the things that we are establishing let us not just stay there but to move forward and improve our water and make it better.

Let me remind our people that this Bill is to help strengthen and support our water supply. This Bill is not to make money or business to make profit but to improve the lives of our people. May I remind us that there are many parts in our lives that requires water to maintain it. When we talk about water it supplies our needs in tourism, in agriculture and in our homes and everywhere.

This Bill will also prepare us for the future and times we are not expecting things to happen. In troubling times like cyclones, pandemic and this Bill will give us a strong foundation to make us ready for those times. I have read this Bill from top to bottom and right through. These are the two intentions I find in this Bill and it reads, “the importance of this water is for necessity of life and to ensure quality and value not wasted.”

We know that water is necessary for our lives and let us be reminded that this water is very precious and important and we should not waste it. Because that is one of our bad sickness that we have today. May we be reminded that there are other countries that do not have water like us today.

In Singapore Madam Speaker, they don't have reservoirs of their own and they don't have catchments and water drains that they can rely on as a water source to supply for their population. But they have taken lots of steps forward to invent technologies to help provide water to feed their population. Keeping in mind the population of Singapore is 5.5million and that is a lot of people to get water for.

I brought this up Madam Speaker because I had the opportunity to be told that their vision was to make sure every drop of water counts – that was their vision. And I think as this Honourable House looks into this Bill we should take the same approach and make sure that every water and every drop counts. I think this is what this government is also trying to achieve. And that is to move away from bad practice that we got use to into better ways of preserving good quality water for our people.

I say this Madam Speaker because as an agriculturist as well as a practitioner I have seen too much waste of water in the agriculture industry. Nearly every pigs pen that we find on the island they have taps with water running and not turned off. And I was reminded by CIIC that 74 percent of wasted water is from this industry. As the Deputy Prime Minister raised earlier on we have two more years and agriculture will be working with, To Tatou Vai to invent programs that can better help our growers preserve better water for agriculture purposes.

Whatever the agriculture levels are today, whether it is subsistence or semi commercial water is always going to be critical. We have already advanced the thinking of our farmers that cost of water has to be factored in if they want to consider a sustainable agriculture. To our people we have not forgotten about our planters and we will try and incorporate them into this Bill as we move forward. This is not just for Rarotonga we have considered other factors to helping our people in the Outer Islands.

Therefore, Madam Speaker I stand to give my support to this Bill and above that I am happy that this Bill will be referred to a Select Committee and there will be more issues that can be raised there. I would like to ask our people to come to these meetings and put your views to the Committee to make the Bill better. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you very much and I see the Honourable Prime Minister and you have the Floor.

HON. H. PUNA: Thank you Madam Speaker and Kia Orana to all of us Honourable Members in this Honourable House and all our people listening in to our broadcast. A special warm greeting to my people of Manihiki and very happy to know that soon we will meet and dine together.

Madam Speaker I just cannot sit down and not stand to share my thoughts on this important Bill. I say that Rarotonga is very fortunate because in the history of our country water has taken a lot of expenses for it to supply to the people. I think it is right for us to do that as Rarotonga is the mainland or capital of our nation. But sometimes

we tend to forget of the expenditure that has been allocated especially for us here in Rarotonga.

It has been repeated and mentioned over and over again the importance of water to our life and people. It has been repeated many times of those past generations the problems that they experienced the lack of water. It is not just a problem in our country and even today in Auckland they are short of water supply. They are proposing to recycle their water. It is fortunate that the Waikato river is not far and they are going to cart water to Auckland.

Madam Speaker when we talk about the need and lack of water it is not a problem isolated to us only but a problem even in the big countries of the world. However, when I consider the history of the water supply here in Rarotonga. It was a dream by our forefathers and leaders. I remember before we came into government in 2010 we had discussions with the government of China of how we can improve the water supply here on Rarotonga.

Sir Dr Terepai Maoate searched ways to help us in this area. In fact, he has already prepared an MOU between our government and the government of China. One thought and one vision and that is to address the problem of water to be fixed for good. However, he was laid to rest and this vision did not eventuate then.

This is one of the vision that we adopted and we are determined to reach this target. Let me reiterate that this water project our country has spent a lot of money towards it. I am amazed at the people criticising this expense on our water and we are supposed to be happy that this will improve the quality of our lives.

We crabbbed this project and I went to China in 2012 and that was the main issue that was discussed with the government. How we can make this vision to happen and how can China help us to make this happen. There are many things that happen for this project that was never reported to our people. But there are big matters that was discussed with China which will bring the benefit to our people.

We discussed the money that will be spent of these big water pipes and no guarantee that these pipes will be full of flowing waters because we had not considered the matter of water intakes, water catchment. So that was one of the things that was discussed with the officials for that to be incorporated in the plans. And to ensure that this problem will be overcome and that water will be filling the pipes to supply water to our homes and people.

Second, we all know how the Chinese Government operate, they will bring their materials and all their workers to establish what they have to do. There was no discussion and agreement for our people to be included to do some of those projects. That was what we were arguing with the Chinese Government because they wouldn't even wish to give part of the contract work to our people. But we never let them go, we were persistent and then they broke and this is what we discovered in 2012 after the Forum, the Minister from China arrived and the Prime Minister of New Zealand was here and during that time for the first time, it was exposed to the world that there is a project between three Governments in partnership.

That was history in the making, the first time China has been involved in a tri-partite development project and it had to be here in the Cook Islands and it was the water project for Rarotonga.

So, we have come a long way since then and yet it is true that we need to talk to our people so we will all move together. But there have been challenges. I don't know whether that's our attitude today to object, object, object. Yes, some of us have a right to say we have spent so much money in building this project but let me remind you maybe it is us who is causing further cost. We should know that in business, time is money but we are now where we are and I can safely say we've come a long way. But if we look at this project compared to projects like the Solar, we will discover the high cost of this project so we really need to value this project and I am sure that we in this House acknowledge that we do.

Right now, I would like to thank all the landowners of the catchment areas and to me they are the most important part in this project. They have come to accept the fact that water is a gift given to our forefathers and a gift from heaven to us today. So we thank you for that good spirit but we are not taking them for granted because from all our speakers that has spoken ahead of me in thanking all our landowners for the catchment lands so we would like to thank all our landowners who have given these lands for the catchment of this project.

Madam Speaker and Honourable Members, yes we are happy that this Bill is being taken to our people for discussions and I support this and to give you a warning. We are not revising back to the beginning how we started with water. This Bill is for the Authority who will manage this project. Other matters in relation to the treatment of water and so forth, that is complete.

I saw a notice in the Cook Islands News calling for this Bill not to be presented before this House and for it not to go into the Second reading today. What is this? It's too late we are pressing ahead.

This is what the Deputy Prime Minister said for those who are objecting to the chlorination of the water that's your choice. You are not forced to connect to the main supply of water. So you can buy your own water tank and install it and drink from your own water tank but for goodness sake don't hold up progress of this project. The vast majority of people here in Rarotonga support this project and we must push it ahead. We are not going to allow a handful of people objecting to this to hold this project up and end up costing our country more money.

You won't be the first to have your own water supply. We in the Northern Group have our own water supply. We capture our water and store them in water tanks and we have no complaints. We are fine, give us enough containment and we will be happy and we are happy but for goodness sake don't get in the way of the rest of our community enjoying clean, portable and safe drinking water.

I am so pleased that on the Select Committee that will be confirmed soon in this House are Members who have either involved in this project from the beginning or who know very well what is happening. With those few words, Madam Speaker and Honourable Members, I stand to strongly support this Bill.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you very much Honourable Prime Minister. Are there any further speakers? I see the Honourable Member Selina Napa.

MRS S. NAPA: Greetings everyone in the Name of our Lord. Madam Speaker and all your staff, greetings. To the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and your Members in Government, Kia Orana and also the Leader of the Opposition and our Members on this side, Kia Orana and the two ladies in the gallery, Kia Orana.

Madam Speaker, before I give my short opinion on this Bill, may I be permitted to greet the people in my constituency and give greetings to my people from Tikioki to Vaimaanga, greetings to you all in the Name of our Lord.

I will come back to the Bill which will establish the Authority to manage our water. I want to thank an employee at To Tatou Vai, Amy Walton and also the workers who have worked hard to improve the water stations around the island of Rarotonga. The reason why I thank Amy is because since To Tatou Vai took over the management of these Water Stations, she is always giving update information on the status of these Water Stations.

I also want to thank the people of the Village because they are responsible for keeping the areas around the water stations clean especially in my village of Titikaveka. What I know in the past there are people who ruin the water stations but through messages and telling the people that this is the property of the village and it is there to give the people clean water, now it is okay.

I will come back on the Bill and I want to say that I am happy that this Bill is being given to the Select Committee and to be send back to our people. Maybe this is the time that we will know exactly what people want and if they want the water to be improved.

There was a time when Te Mato Vai Project was brought into the village and explained to the people, especially on the treatment of the water, I will say that the people was not really clear of what was happening because there was conflicting thoughts amongst the people. So maybe when it goes through the Select Committee then the people will really understand what really is happening.

But as mentioned by the Member for Murienua earlier on, this is a request to the people when this Bill comes back to the community, please come to the meetings and give your views.

We on the Opposition have no desire to hold the work back on projects which will benefit our people but it is our job to make sure that we put right the areas that our people are not happy about.

So at this time please bear with me as this is Cook Islands Maori week and I am speaking in our Maori language. When I look at Clause 60, it says a customer must not resell any water received by that customer from the Authority. Maybe while this Bill is going through the Select Committee it can be explained if this will affect those in the business of selling water.

Before our break, the Deputy Prime Minister mentioned that it is up to you if you wish to connect to the water main and that is your choice what to do. I am a bit confused with that because there is a Clause in the Bill because when you go to Clause 66 (c), it says to prohibit or create rules about the installation and use of any well, artisan water supply, desalination plant, underground water table, rainwater, water tank, river or stream.

When I look at this section, this is why I am confused when the Minister expressed his views that it is up to you what choice you want to make to improve your water supply.

My last thought is on the growers, if we have to pay for our water, how are we going to assess who will pay and how we are going to make payment. I am looking at the growers, the business people and the households.

As mentioned earlier, the growers are the main users of the water especially now that we are encouraging the growers to plant the land but because we don't have to pay for our water for the next two years, maybe this is an area where the Ministry of Agriculture can see how to help the growers on the costing of the things that they will purchase because the area of water will be included in the costing of the crops that they will sell.

The Bill on To Tatou Vai Authority, I support this Authority to be formed because I can see there are many local people working in that Authority and when I read in Budget Book 1 which we passed last week, the area of To Tatou Vai, it was shown that they are looking at increasing the workers in this Authority up to twenty people. But at this time, I support that this Bill be sent to the Select Committee to be able to put some areas right and to listen to the voice of our people.

My only issue with this Bill is the treatment of water with chemicals but that this matter should be given back to the people to give their views when we go through the public consultations because if we put the wishes of the people first and their life to improve then we will not go wrong in the decision that we make in this House. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Member. I see the Honourable Tina Browne, you have the Floor.

HON. T. PUPUKE BROWNE: Greetings to all of us in this Honourable House this evening. Those of you watching on television, listening on radio, greetings to you all in the mighty Name of our God.

Madam Speaker, I rise but maybe I am a bit late as I have sat here and heard everyone speak on the Bill and it was my understanding that there was going to be a Motion and within Clauses 229 to 235 on where the Bill will be referred to a Select Committee before we debate it. However, that's happened and may I please request, Madam Speaker if you could clarify the process from here on.

Madam Speaker, I am looking at Standing Order 234 and 235. What I understand it says after the reading of the Second time it will stand committed to the Committee of the Whole unless on Motion it is referred to a Select Committee. That Motion shall be made immediately after the Bill has been read the Second time and maybe proposed by any Member.

And then Standing Order 235 says, when it is intended to refer a Bill to a Select Committee, the Second reading may be moved pro-forma and in such case there shall be no speech by the Mover or Seconder and no debate.

Because early in this afternoon's Sitting, a Motion was circulated, a Notice of Motion was circulated that signalled to all of us that there will be a Motion that's going to be moved. But the Motion was not moved, hasn't been moved and instead there's been a debate.

MADAM SPEAKER: Would you like me to clarify that for you?

HON. T. PUPUKE BROWNE: Yes, please.

MADAM SPEAKER: It has been the practice of the House that after the Second Reading of the Bill, then a Motion is put to refer the Bill to the Select Committee.

Yes, that is according to 234 so what we are about to do soon is when everybody has debated, I will then put the Question on the very first Motion that was put by the Minister Responsible for the Second reading. Yes, at the very beginning after the first reading when it was presented a Motion was put for the Second reading which then was seconded after the debate by the Honourable Minister which then I proposed a Question, a Question on Proposal is to allow you to debate on the matter. What would you debate to if there was no proposal for you to debate so that's the process which you are debating now.

So when you have completed your debate I will then put a question on the Motion that the Bill be read the Second time which you will vote and give a decision and that would be 234 completed and there would be Second reading would have been done then a Motion will be then moved as you rightly say there was a Motion passed around and that will be to refer the Bill to the Select Committee.

But before I do that I will be asking the Minister to conclude all of the debate that has happened on the Bill. So will you debate, you have time to debate.

HON. T. PUPUKE BROWNE: Could I ask, Madam Speaker can you take some advice on those Standing Orders please. I just find it a bit confusing, certainly for me. It doesn't affect what we are doing today because it's gone past that stage. I just want to make sure that we are doing it the correct way going forward. It seems very clear to me that it's either there's a speech by the Mover and the Seconder and a debate which is what has happened today and there's also the 235 which is moved immediately after the Second reading where there is no speech and no debate.

Now one of my concerns is this, we've had this debate and people had indicated their support or non-support, mainly the support and this is before we are even going to hear what the result of the Select Committee is going to be. So we ask ourselves what is the point in going out to public consultation when we've already, or some of us have already supported or indicated their support for the Bill and shouldn't we wait until that has happened before we express a view.

The reason I ask this is because it makes it meaningless for us to say, ok let's go and have public consultations when we have already expressed a view in this House and that is why, Madam Speaker I didn't rise earlier to debate this issue because my preference would be to wait to hear what the result of public consultations will be.

And I also want to make it absolutely clear that we are all of the same mind, we want to choose what is best for our people. We want to choose the best options for them so that we can have clean water and how we go about that maybe the issue and let's not shut our ears before we even go out to public consultation. That is all what I wanted to say, Madam Speaker thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you very much, Honourable Member for voicing your concern. The only Bill that I can remember that did not go through this process before it went to Select Committee was the ICI. ICI used a different version of doing it and they didn't do the Second reading. They came back and there were only two debate or one debate I can remember the Honourable Tamaiva Tuavera debated on that and I wasn't here at that Sitting but what I can tell you is that every Bill has we have referred to the Select Committee has gone through this process and your opportunity when you, this is for Members to be able to do the Principles and Merits of the Bill and then have the Second reading and then refer it to the Committee and then when you come back when you go into the Committee of the Whole or when you bring your Report and present it and your Report has decided that your consultation has made some amendments or changes to the Bill, then they will be inserted into the Bill before it comes back to us with amendments.

But you will find that every Bill that we have had, this is the process and this is the process I was taught when I came to Parliament. But one thing that we need to accept, all of us is that our Standing Orders are not always as clear as they should be and hence the review that we are going through.

Are there any further speakers – if there are no further speakers I will invite the Minister to please round up the debate.

HON. M. BROWN: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'd like to thank all the speakers for their comments that they have made on the tabling of this Bill. I look forward to the Motion, Madam Speaker that will refer this Bill to the Select Committee and I know that this Bill will be extensively consulted throughout our community here on Rarotonga and in fact the Committee Members that Government has recommended on its Select Committee side are all made up of landowners in various intakes on Rarotonga.

There will be various stakeholders who will be invited to comment on the Bill and I am personally very committed to ensuring that our landowners in particular have a special awareness of this Bill and I am confident that with the time allotted to us that we will be able to report back to Parliament in September on the basis of this Bill. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you very much Honourable Minister. I will now put the Question:

That the To Tatou Vai Authority Bill 2020 be now read a Second time?

Motion agreed to

ACTING CLERK AT THE TABLE (J. DANIEL): Long Title Reads: An Act to establish To Tatou Vai Water Authority.

BILL READ A SECOND TIME

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you and I see the Leader of the House, the Honourable Tingika Elikana.

MR T. ELIKANA: Thank you Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker I rise to move a Motion.

That the To Tatou Vai Authority Bill 2020 be referred to a Select Committee established by this House and that the Select Committee consist of the following Members:

Minister Honourable Mark Brown as Chairperson,

Honourable Albert Nicholas

Honourable Patrick Arioka

Honourable Tehani Brown

Honourable Selina Napa

Honourable Agnes Armstrong

Honourable Terepai Maoate

That the Select Committee report to this House no later than September 2020. The, To Tatou Vai Authority Bill Select Committee shall review the, To Tatou Vai Authority Bill 2020 hold discussions with relevant entities, communities and key stakeholders concern with water issues, take note of potential legislative changes that may be necessary to put into effect any policy recommendations then consider any report recommendations to Parliament.

MADAM SPEAKER: I look for a Secunder to the Motion.

Seconded by the Honourable Deputy Speaker, Tai Tura

I put the Question:

That the Motion be agreed to?

Motion agreed to

I call the Leader of the House, Honourable Tingika Elikana.

MR T. ELIKANA: Thank you Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker I rise to move a Motion.

That this Honourable House adjourn Sine Die

MADAM SPEAKER: Can I have a Secunder for the Motion.

Seconded by the Honourable Albert Nicholas

I put the Question:

That the Motion be agreed to?

Motion agreed to

Honourable Members that completes our work for today and thank you very much.
Can I please ask somebody to close us with a word of prayer.

CLOSING PRAYER

Parliament is adjourned *Sine Die*.

Parliament adjourned at 4.48 p.m.