

PRACTISE WHAT YOU PREACH

From previous page

It is time for the members of both Houses of Parliament to clean up their act. They cannot expect anyone to take a serious view of their bluster on cost cutting and the need for improved productivity while they continue to squander other people's money while piously calling for greater efficiency.

□ *Editorial in The Fiji Times on 30 September 1997.*

Hard-hitting editorials

THE PUBLISHER and the editor of *The Fiji Times* appeared before the Fiji Senate Privileges Committee on 8 October 1997. Publisher Alan Robinson and editor Samisoni Kakaivalu were called to answer allegations that the newspaper breached parliamentary privilege by allegedly misrepresenting the Senate's proceedings.

After their appearance, the Privileges Committee resolved that one of its members, Senator Afzal Khan, and the lawyer for *The Fiji Times*, Richard Naidu, would meet to discuss further the concerns raised in the Senate.

The issue was over an editorial in *The Fiji Times* on September 30 (*see previous page*) criticising the Senate and parliamentary spending. On October 3, the Senate decided to refer *The Fiji Times* to the Privileges Committee over reports and the editorial saying that the Senate sitting on September 29 lasted not more than 20 minutes. *The Fiji Times* editorial, headlined PRACTISE WHAT YOU PREACH, questioned the cost to taxpayers of the 20-minute sitting and said it was hard to take seriously calls by senators for others to cut costs and improve efficiency. Under Fiji's Parliamentary Privileges Act, the Privileges Committee could recommend that the Senate jail for up to two years those found to have breached parliamentary privilege.

However, the newspaper refused to apologise and when *PJR* went to press in November the issue had not been pursued any further. *The Fiji Times* followed up with a further editorial on October 2 (*on the next page*) criticising Senator Filipe Bole's condemnation of the foreign ownership of the newspaper.

— IFEX and PMW