

Teachers union head 'happy with turnaround'

By WANSHIKA KUMAR

IF the Education Ministry had only bothered to get their facts right from the beginning, they would not have ended up in this "embarrassing" situation, says Fiji Teachers Union (FTU) general secretary Agni Deo Singh.

He was referring to Education Ministry permanent secretary Dr Anjeela Jokhan's statement that

they were not getting rid of all their unqualified teachers and were instead urging them to continue developing their professional skills.

Mr Singh also called on the ministry to restore teachers' starting salary to \$21,000 - as it was in 2018 - which would allow them to upgrade their skills.

"We are happy to note the complete turnaround in the statements that had been made by the honorable minister and the learned permanent secretary from the beginning on this matter," he said.

"Initially, both the permanent secretary and the minister had stated that only 49 per cent of the

teachers are qualified and that all those who are unqualified will be replaced if they don't upgrade their qualifications.

"When we challenged their statement on the percentage, they have then come around and considered that all those who have certificates from Naisinu Teachers College, Lautoka Teachers College, Advanced College and all those with diplomas are fully recognised or are recog-

nised as qualified teachers.

"They have now considered that there are only 1000 teachers out of the 13,700 that need to complete the education component of qualification to be fully qualified and that actually, in percentage, will work out to about eight per cent which is far from the 51 per cent that they had initially said.

"And this is exactly in agreement with what we had said right from the beginning."



Agni Deo Singh.

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