

DISCLAIMER

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Tuesday 23 January 2018
9:20am

DAY 1

I. NOTICE FROM THE LEADER OF THE HOUSE:

Pursuant to Standing Order 76 the Notice by the Hon PM introduced the following bills:

1. National Health Service Amendment Bill 2018; and
2. Constitution Amendment Bill 2018.

II. PAPERS PRESENTED:

There were a total of 10 Annual Reports tabled in Parliament, these reports were from; Public Trust Office; Samoa International Finance Authority; Development Bank of Samoa; Parliamentary Pension Scheme; National Provident Fund; Scientific Research Organisation of Samoa; Samoa Airport Authority; Samoa Senior Citizens Benefit Fund; Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Labour; and the Ministry of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

III. PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE REPORTS TABLED:

A total of 12 Committee Reports were tabled in Parliament; 2 from the Standing Orders, Electoral, Petitions and Constitutional Offices Committee; 2 reports from the Finance and Expenditure Committee; 3 reports from the Infrastructure Sector Committee; 4 reports from the Social Sector Committee; and 1 from the Economic Sector Committee.

IV. WITHDRAWAL OF A BILL

The Hon Speaker informed the House that there was a Bill to be withdrawn from the Economic Sector Committee.

The Hon Minister for Revenue, TIALAVEA Fea Leniu Tionisio Seigafolava Hunt who introduced the Bill stood to move a motion to have the **Income Tax Amendment Bill (No.2) 2017** withdrawn; the motion was seconded and approved.

V. MOTIONS FROM PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES

1. Parliamentary Commission

Pursuant to Standing Order 170(g), The Deputy Chairperson for the Parliamentary Commission, NAFOITOA Talaimanu Ketu moved a motion for the Assembly to approve the Sitting Schedule for the year, which is as follows:

- Tuesday 23 January
- Tuesday 20 March
- Tuesday 29 May
- Tuesday 19 June
- Tuesday 2 October
- Tuesday 18 December
- Tuesday 22 January 2019

The motion was seconded and the Parliamentary Sitting calendar was approved.

2. Standing Orders, Electoral, Petitions and Constitutional Offices Committee

The Hon Chairperson AEAU Peniamina Leavaseeta moved a motion for an extension period to allow further consideration of three papers referred to the Committee; motion seconded and approved.

3. Finance and Expenditure Committee

The Chairperson, Afioga ALIIMALEMANU Alofa Tuuau moved a motion for an extension period to allow further consideration of two papers referred to the Committee; the motion was seconded and approved.

4. Infrastructure Sector Committee

The Chairperson, Afioga TAFUA Maluelue Tafua moved a motion seeking more time to complete their reports on three papers referred to the Committee, motion was seconded and approved.

VI. GOVERNMENT ORDERS OF THE DAY – Reading of Bills**1. National Health Service Amendment Bill 2018 – first reading**

Hon TUITAMA Talalelei Tuitama, Minister of Health moved to have the Bill read a first time; motion was seconded and the National Health Service Amendment Bill 2018 was first read.

2. Constitution Amendment Bill 2018 – first reading

The Hon. PM, TUILAIPA Lupesoliai Neioti Galumalemana Dr. Sailele Malielegaoi, moved to have the Bill first read; the motion was seconded and the Constitution Amendment Bill 2018 was read a first time.

3. Supplementary Appropriation Bill (No.1) 2017/2018 – debate on second reading**1. Hon. LAULI Leuatea Polataivao Fosi, Member for Gagaifomauga No.3**

The Member for Gagaifomauga No.3 sought leave from Mr. Speaker to allow him to speak from another member's mic as his mic was not working due to technical faults; leave was granted by the Hon. Speaker.

The Member acknowledged the Prime Minister and Cabinet for their efforts to set-up Samoa's Airline (Samoa Airway) as this has hugely impacted airfares offered by other Airline companies such as Fiji Airways and Air New Zealand. He spoke on the importance of patriotism and encouraged Samoans to support our local Airline. He then recalled the period when he was the Minister of Agriculture, where Samoa's taro export exceeded those of Fiji and Tonga, and this was owed to local farmers getting behind, supporting and pushing for our local product to succeed. He said that Samoa's success was dependent on our people; through support and working together our Airline will be successful.

The Member spoke on the new project to construct a new prison, he queried the architectural designs, as they were never presented to Parliament; he also queried whether the change in project costing meant a different contract or that the conditions of the current contract would be changed. The member queried whether the additional 3.7 million requested in the Supplementary was a variation.

- **Hon. TIALAVEA Fea Leniu Tionisio Seigafolava Hunt, Minister for Prisons and Corrections Services**

The Minister clarified that the 3.7million in the Supplementary is not a variation; it was part of the overall funds approved for the project.

- **Hon. PM, TUILAEPa Lupesoliai Neioti Galumalemana Dr. Sailele Malielegaoi**

The Hon. PM spoke to further clarify that there was a Tenders Board responsible to propose the best-suited bidder for any project. The PM stated that if at any point the Board discovers that a certain requirement is not met by the chosen bidder then the contract ends; these practices and procedures are in place to ensure there are no corrupt practices in the process.

Hon. LAAULI Leuatea Polataivao Fosi, Member for Gagaifomauga No.3

The member then moved to the taxation of religious ministers and stated that as the voice for his constituents, it was his duty to voice the concerns and requests of his people in regards to the issue. The member requested to delay the enactment of the taxation of religious ministers until after the Malua Conference in May.

- **Hon. PM, TUILAEPa Lupesoliai Neioti Galumalemana Dr. Sailele Malielegaoi**

The Hon Prime Minister explained that it is the Parliamentarians role to voice the concerns of the people, however it is also their duty to clarify and make concerned citizens understand why laws are made and altered; for the benefit and development of Samoa. He then advised the member to separate politics from religion as the two do not mix.

Hon. LAAULI Leuatea Polataivao Fosi, Member for Gagaifomauga No.3

The member apologized to the Speaker and the Members of Parliament and concluded his statement.

Proceedings were suspended at 10:34am

Proceedings resumed at 11:24am.

2. FUIMAONO Samuelu Teo - Member for Falealili East

The Member stated that he supported the Supplementary Bill and only wanted clarification on the costing for the construction of the new prison. He noted additional funding for the project in the Supplementary Bill and queried whether this was the final amount for the project or would there be more funds required to complete the new prison.

- Hon. TIALAVEA Fea Leniu Tionisio Seigafolava Hunt

The Minister spoke to clarify the costing of the project and noted that the construction of the new prison is a complex task; it has various factors other than the prison facility itself. Access roads need to be dug; water and pipelines need to be set-up, electricity needs to be connected, gates and other requirements are all needed to ensure the facility is complete and secure. However during the bidding process, the only requirement listed was the construction of prison-cells. The plan failed to include an administration block, the fencing and gate cost, the rehabilitation area, an area for shift workers to rest in the late hours of the night, when officers are in between shifts, as well as other costs for establishing water and electricity connection.

The Minister stated that if all other factors are considered then the realistic total cost of the project is \$20million; however due to the economy's limited funds disbursed to all Ministries and Corporations, 10million was the only amount that the project could attain; thus the decision by the Tenders Board to carry out the project in instalments, to allow more time to accumulate the required amount to complete the project. Furthermore, the Minister stated that a 500,000 litre water tank is also in the pipeline as the Tafaigata prison water was transported via cars. Minister noted that currently there are 40 prisoners per cell at Tafaigata raising another problem of overcrowded.

The Minister mentioned the government's drive to sustain the new prison and explained that 470 acres of land at Vaiaata will be used for commercial farming to enable the sustainability of the prison.

FUIMAONO Samuelu Teo – Member for Falealili East

The Member raised the issue of minimum wage stating that there should be a slight increase given the constant rise in the cost of living nowadays. The member acknowledged the efforts of the current Minister of Agriculture and his predecessor with boosting the growth of Taro. The member stated that the 1,000 tiapula for every village was a good challenge to increase the supply of taro. The member also noted that the services provided by the PUMA office and the MWTI were similar, and suggested that the two merge to avoid duplication of services.

3. FAUMUINA Asi Pauli Wayne Fong – Member for Urban West

The member acknowledged the Ministries who have lowered their expenditures, such as the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. He thanked the Minister of Prisons for his clarification of the additional 3.7million in the Supplementary Bill and queried whether another contract would be drawn up to factor in other additional tasks which were not included in the original plan. The Member then noted the shortage of police vehicles in the Tuanaimato Police Post; he stated that when police arrive late to an emergency it is because there was no available vehicle. The member concluded with reminding the Minister for Works that the roads in Tuanaimato are getting worse.

4. OLO Fiti Afoa Vaai – Member for Salega East

The Member began with the Land Transport Authority’s policy which disregards all vehicles over the 2009 manufactured year to be registered as Taxi’s. The Member expressed his concern for the families whose livelihood depend on the income earned from taxi’s.

- Hon. TUILAEPA Lupesoliai Neioti Galumalemana Dr. Sailele Malielegaoi – PM

The Hon Prime Minister assured the member that the matter he has raised is being taken care of; the Minister for Works has already instructed the Land Transport Authority to prepare the paper work to reverse this action

- Hon. Papaliitele Niko Lee-Hang, Minister for Works, Transport and Infrastructure

The Hon Minister further clarified that the rationale behind the restriction was due to the increase in traffic violations caused from taxi’s. However, due to the increase in public concern

and opinions raised, the Authority is now in the process of reversing the restriction to ensure commercial license are granted to all vehicles fit and road worthy.

OLO Fiti Afia Vaai – Member for Salega East

The Member queried the standard time for road maintenance, stating that every 3-5 months he would come across workers carrying out road maintenance. The Member stated that although the roads were being maintained constantly the condition does not improve. The member explained that the reason why the roads easily get damaged during the rainy season is because we do not follow international standards such as those used in New Zealand and Australia.

- **Hon. PM, TUILAEPA Lupesoliai Neioti Galumalemana Dr. Sailele Malielegaoi**

The Hon Prime Minister stated that the problem the member is pointing out is not a problem that only Samoa is facing but all people around the world.

- **Hon. PAPALIITELE Niko Lee-Hang, Minister for Works, Transport and Infrastructure**

The Hon Minister rebutted the members statement and explained that most of the roads are more than 10 years old, and although we would like to repair them based on international standards, we do not have the means (money) for such a project, maintenance at the current level is what we can afford. He informed the member that the project to repair the roads from Apia to the international Airport is also carried out in installments depending on available funds.

OLO Fiti Afia Vaai – Member for Salega East

The Member queried the transparency of the Tenders Board in regards to the additional 3.7million funds for the construction of the new prison. The Member queried why the additional funds were necessary.

- **Hon. SILI Epa Tuioti, Minister of Finance**

The Minister clarified that being a member of the Tenders Board, he wanted to confirm that the construction of the new prison has no variations; however, the 3.7million is the remaining balance to complete the first phase of the project. The Minister explained that the project will be carried out in installments and that is how the funds will be released (in installments). The

Minister then confirmed that there will also be another funding in the Main Estimates Budget for the FY 2018/2019 for the same project to factor in the costs of the other necessities which were not included in the original plan.

- **POINT OF ORDER – SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE**

The Hon Speaker in a point of order instructed the member for Salega East to never speak with disrespect or use statements that imply a different meaning in the Chamber.

OLO Fiti Afoa Vaai – Member for Salega East

The Member was apologetic and that his statement did not have a dual meaning. He then queried the Minister of Finance as he mentioned that the project to conduct a new prison was carried out in phases, and wondered whether there would be different contracts for the different phases or whether the same construction company will carry out the different phases.

5. TOLEAFOA Ken Vaafusuuga Poutoa – Member for Lefaga and Faleaseela

The Member reminded the Minister of Health of his previous request for a clinic in his constituency; acknowledged the Minister of Health's contribution in responding promptly to the member's request for medical assistance. He then acknowledged the contribution of the previous Minister for Agriculture and his efforts in boosting taro exports to overseas markets. The Member acknowledged the incumbent Minister of Agriculture and his contribution. He concluded with a request to the Minister of Works, Transport and Infrastructure to put in place a program for a two year maintenance period of all roads instead of maintaining whenever potholes appear.

6. SULAMANAIA Fetaiai Tuiliili Tuivasa, Member for Vaimauga East

The Member expressed his support for the Supplementary Appropriation Bill and addressed the Minister for Revenue in regards to the transparency of conducting tenders for government projects; he stated that these processes should be done justly without favouritism.

- **Hon Prime Minister TUILAIPA Lupesoliai Neioti Galumalemana Dr. Sailele Malielegaoi**

The Hon Prime Minister stood to inform the member that transparency was not the issue. He stated that Parliament cannot please everyone; regardless of providing a detailed explanation with costing and specification of the project, there will still be people who refuse

to understand and question the system because that is human nature. The Prime Minister elaborated that due to the increase in the number of prisoners and the constant prison-break, this project is a priority.

SULAMANAIA Fetaiai Taviliili Tuivasa, Member for Vaimauga East

The member concluded by reminding the Minister of Works Transport and Infrastructure that the access roads for the mountainous paths in his constituency need improvement to ensure that families who sole means of income is farming; therefore the access to their plantation and farms need to be improved as their livelihood is dependent on it. The Member also informed the Minister of Natural Resources and Environment that the the seawalls in the village of Laulii are weak and can no longer serve its purpose to hold and break heavy waves from damaging the roads.

7. ILI Setefano Tafili Taateo – Member for Aana Alofi No.2

The Member acknowledged the Minister for Public Enterprise on the launching of Samoa's Airline (Samoa Airway) as it has helped appease problems of high airfares from other Airlines. The Member reminded his fellow Parliamentarians to support the national carrier. Member commented on the poor state of the hospital at Leulumoega singling out the poor state of the waiting area.

Proceedings were adjourned at 1:00pm

Proceedings will resume at 9:00am on Wednesday 24 January 2018.