

DISCLAIMER

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Day 3: Thursday January 2018

9:00am

I. GOVERNMENT ORDERS OF THE DAY – reading of Bills continued

1. Supplementary Appropriation Bill (No.1) 2017/2018 – debate on second reading (Government Responses continued)

vi. Minister for Revenue, Hon TIALAVEA Fea Leniu Tionisio Hunt

The Hon Minister noted that few Members raised issues pertaining directly to his Ministry. He then clarified the relationship between the Ministry of Finance and Revenue, noting their interdependence. The Hon Minister noted the concerns raised by some Member regarding the taxing of religious ministers, stating that the Ministry was currently working together with the Village Council to determine the number of church ministers on island.

The Hon Minister then commented on the prison development, stating that the majority of Members who spoke on the Bill raised various issues regarding the project. He stated that the project was initially set to commence in August 2017; however, works did not begin until October. He stated that to date 60% of the project was complete, which utilised less than 40% of allocated funds. He also confirmed that there had been no variations to the contract to date. He assured the House that the project spending was within allocated limits, despite building work being behind schedule.

In regards to contract variations as raised by several Members, the Hon Minister states that at times varying a contract is unavoidable; changes must be made to account for unforeseen factors.

A Committee was said to be in place to consider possible variations, which is headed by the Ministry together with a Board of Directors.

▪ **OLO Fiti Vaai Afoa, Member for Salega East**

The Member stated that variations are alterations which affect the original costing of a project.

▪ **Minister For Revenue**

The Hon Minister commented on the rehabilitation programs in place for juvenile offenders. Noting that the majority of incarcerated youths were early school leavers, therefore the program aims to provide inmates with employable skills and better social skills to ensure ease of integration back into the community. These skills will also ensure that released youths will be able to make contributions to their respective families. In terms of the process for the weekend release programme, the Hon Minister stated that inmates are assessed by corrections officers to gauge the appropriateness of releasing them to their families in the weekends. This is done on a case by case basis. In regards to food, the Hon Minister stated that there was an ample food supply for the prisons; however, the Ministry's aim was to develop food crops so that the prisons may be self sustainable.

The Hon Minister continued by acknowledging the Samoa Land Corporation for leasing 420 acres to the prison for a plantation. He also acknowledged the contribution by the Ministry of Agriculture, namely in the form of 1,000 bananas to help the Ministry begin its prison plantation in March.

▪ **Hon LAUOFO Fonotoe Nuafesili Pierre Laufofo, Anoamaa West**

Hon LAUOFO noted his support for the move towards food independence. In terms of the project, the Member noted a discrepancy in the responses provided by the Minister for Revenue and the Minister for Finance – who seemed unsure as to whether the project cost was 15, 20 or 25 million. He further commented that, in his personal view of the prison plans, the allocated funds were insufficient. He therefore queried the Minister for Revenue as to the likelihood of the entire project costing a total of 30 million or more.

▪ **OLO Fiti Vaai Afoa, Member for Salega East**

Member sought clarification as to the total cost of the prison facilities.

▪ **Mr Speaker – point of order**

Hon Mr Speaker reminded Members that they must seek leave of the Chair before speaking.

▪ **Minister for Revenue**

The Hon Minister stated that the initial costing for the facilities totalled 10 million; however, he reiterated that these figures are merely estimates.

▪ **Hon PRIME MINISTER**

The Hon Prime Minister noted that the Members for Salega East and Anoamaa West were asking the same question, at the same time. He reiterated the point that the tabled figures are merely “estimated-guess”. He stated that the building process is complex, particularly given the landscape of the building site. He stated that the need to excavate existing rocks and so forth, have added extra costs to the initial estimates. He further stated that the Ministry of Finance was being flexible in terms of costs and that the Government had sought assistance from China. He re-emphasised the need to build a secure facility, given the increase of escaped inmates as was seen in 2017. The Hon Prime Minister also noted that building a comfortable facility is necessary, as the State has a duty to look after its inmates, despite their crimes –as they too have human rights.

The Hon Prime Minister noted that after Cyclone Ofa, the road from Falevao to Apia required extensive and costly repairs. He stated that the initial estimate for the project was valued at 13 million; however, at the completion of the road, costs had added up to 36 million. Using another example, the Hon Prime Minister stated that the estimated costs for the original airport at Faleolo were 2 million; however, the final cost was 47 million. He then reaffirmed the Government’s commitment to implement policies they saw fit, when necessary in order to move national developments to completion. Finally, he also noted that the initial prison plans did not include the costs to excavate and construct the prisons roads; that has since been an additional cost.

▪ **Mr Speaker – Point of Order**

Hon Mr Speaker reminded Members that once the Government has provided an answer to a query--that signifies the end of questions on that specific matter.

▪ **OLO Fiti Vaai Afoa, Member for Salega East**

The Member commented that if the Government provided precise figures at the outset of a proposed project, Members would not have many queries. Regardless, he noted his support for the need to build a more safe and secure facility.

▪ **Hon LAUOFO Fonotoe Nuafesili Pierre Laufo, Member for Anoamaa West**

The Member again requested that the Minister provide an accurate estimation of the project costs.

▪ **Minister for Revenue**

The Hon Minister stated that total costs at present time were estimated at 20 million. The Hon Minister concluded by stating that the programs at the Oloamanu juvenile centre were proving to be successful and that many of the youth work with and receive support from local clergy. He then thanked his constituency for their continued support.

vii. Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries, Hon LOPAOO Natanielu Mua

The Hon Minister stated that holding a Ministerial portfolio is not for the faint hearted; it requires a lot of hard work, patience and determination to see projects through to completion. He stated

that when he was appointed as Minister on 31 August 2017, he first decided to travel around Manono to observe existing agricultural practices. He stated that this trip proved the adage 'you reap what you sow' to be true. The Minister also noted the majority of plants in Samoa were useful, and that the SROS were continuing to research ways to improve or develop new forms of crops to boost Samoa's agricultural profits. The Minister then stated that the contribution of fisheries to Samoa's economy was less than 17%.

In regards to various queries regarding the tiapula scheme, the Hon Minister stated that in collaboration with the MWCSO, 1,000 tiapula were provided. He stated that this equated to an approximate NZD\$1,000 if the taro were to be exported. The Hon Minister encouraged families to utilise the natural resources available to them, stating that there are riches in our land, if people were to recognise it and work for it. In regards to comments made by the Member for Salega East, the Hon Minister stated that Quarantine has already made public the need for people to check their fine mats 24 hours before intending to depart with them overseas. He also thanked the Member who proposed a cash scheme for the collection of rhinoceros beetles, stating it was a good idea; however there could be no promise of cash rewards.

In terms of Nonu development, the Minister stated that there were 2 Nonu companies currently exporting Nonu; one was based in Vaivase Uta and the other at Vaitele. The Hon Minister stated that the Nonu tanks were currently filled to capacity; however, when the need arises, the public will be informed. He then stated that a new Nonu company was looking to begin its operations within the next month. In response to a Members query as to the possibility of interbreeding international and local cattle, the Hon Minister stated that the Ministry currently had 307 cows, 174 sow and 278 sheep

The Hon Minister commented on the banana farming developments, stating that there were 20,000 bananas from South Africa on route to Samoa; a variant which was noted as being easier to grow and maintain. The Hon Minister also explained that the Ministry was still negotiating possible banana exports to New Zealand, noting that a total of approximately 60,000 bananas were needed. In terms of taro exports to New Zealand and the United States, LOPAOO stated that exports were running smoothly; however, Australia had yet to accept Samoan taro. In terms of egg supply, the Hon Minister stated that the owner of the Frankie's Supermarket chain was considering establishing a poultry farm. He further noted that chicken farming projects were also in the pipeline. In concluding, the Hon Minister acknowledged TV 2 and the EFKS TV for their assistance in the Ministry's Awareness Programs.

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

The Hon Minister acknowledged the many comments and requests made by Members in regards to roads, water and electricity supply. The Hon Minister urged Members to be patient with the Ministry as it was attempting to deal with all issues, within allocated funds; however, he assured Members that all requests will be considered in due time. In response to the Member from

Vaisigano No.2's request for trucks, the Hon Minister stated that there is presently an Act in force which provides for the conditions of all vehicles, which must be met to be road worthy. He stated this ensures that older cars do not contribute to pollution via excessive carbon emissions.

▪ **TAPULESATELE Mauteni II Esera - Member for Vaisigano No.2**

The Member expressed concerns over green house gases; however, he noted that many families now rely on revenue from taxis for their livelihood.

▪ **AUMUA Isaako Lameko**

The Member stated that the access road at Saleilua School was in urgent need of repair.

▪ **Minister for Works, Transport and Infrastructure**

The Hon Minister stated that in its efforts to minimise carbon emissions, it has prohibited the importation of cars manufactured before the year 2000.

Proceedings were suspended at 10:45am.

Proceedings reconvened at 11:24am.

▪ **Minister for Works, Transport and Infrastructure**

The Minister stated that the request has been received from various taxi drivers, and the LTA were now reviewing it. The Hon Minister addressed issues raised by the Member for Faasaleleaga regarding enabling flexible ferry bookings. He explained that flexibility is currently provided but with that, a penalty fee must be paid. In regards to issues raised by the Member for Palauli le Falefa, the Hon Minister stated that the Government has not fully utilised allocated funds, and that relevant processes must be adhered to before funds may be disbursed.

▪ **Hon FAUMUINA Tiatia Faolatane Liuga**

Hon FAUMUINA clarified that his concern was the timeframe for executing projects, as delays incur more costs. He stated that 5 years had elapsed since funds were granted for repair work to the Vaisigano Bridge; however it has yet to be completed and the costs have since increased.

▪ **Minister for Works, Transport and Infrastructure**

The Hon Minister stated that these delays were out of the Ministry's control, and spoke to clarify the processes in regards to the said project. The Hon Minister elaborated that project designs were altered by the architect to factor in climate resilience this was another contributing factor to the delay.

▪ **Hon FAUMUINA Tiatia Faolatane Liuga**

The Member stated that he had spoken with the Vice President of the World Bank in 2013, wherein the VP informed him that funds had already been approved; however, the delay was in

receiving final designs from Samoa. The Member stated that he queried the Minister and the Ministry of Finance on this issue, but was informed that this was the responsibility of the PMU. The Member stated that the primary delay was the lack of terms of reference; not a lack of architectural plans.

▪ **Minister for Works, Transport and Infrastructure**

The Hon Minister stated that during the 5 year period as noted by the Member, the allocated funds were not utilised. He then stated that as the Minister of Finance at the time, why Hon FAUMUINA did not himself take appropriate and necessary action. The Hon Minister again reiterated that the Parliament was aware of the processes for grants and projects, and the applicable requirements. He then stated that these processes themselves often cause more delays. Hon PAPALIITELE stated that all relevant conditions must be satisfied, and all surveys have to be completed before submissions are made to the Development Bank. In terms of projects that the Government of Samoa fund; a counterpart is paid to see the projects through from start to finish.

▪ **LEANA Ronnie Posini, Member for Safata West**

The Member noted that issues were reoccurring at the Savalalo drain and requested that the issue be addressed as Savalalo continues to be a regular area which floods.

▪ **Minister for Works, Transport and Infrastructure**

The Hon Minister stated that all concerns had been noted and elaborated that the drainage project in Savalalo is a 2 phased project. Phase 1 was complete with the second phase soon to be rolled out.

▪ **Minister for Tourism, HON SALA Fata Pinati**

The Hon Minister commented on the continuous works of the Ministry to make Samoa Beautiful and encouraged Members to work collaboratively in this regard. In response to issues raised by the Member for Falealili and Saleaula, he noted several issues regarding access roads to beaches and resorts.

▪ **AUMUA Isaia Lameko, Member for Falealili West**

He rebutted that their constituency does not ask for fees to use the road and stated that the road was the Government's road.

▪ **Minister for Works, Transport and Infrastructure**

The Hon Minister stated that the Ministry will visit the site on Saturday and will include Aumua's constituency.

▪ **FUIMAONO Samuelu Teo, Member for Falealili East**

The member requested that the Hon Minister also visit his side of Falealili.

vi. Minister for Health, Hon TUITAMA Talalelei Tuitama

The Hon Minister noted that 13 members had raised issues pertaining to his Ministry, stating that this was a reflection of the importance of the services provided by the Ministry. The Hon Minister noted that several Parliamentarians discussed the need for district hospital and clinics. The Minister stated that the requests had been noted. The Hon Minister stated that negotiations were in progress with the World Bank regarding constructing additional clinics around the island. He then noted the importance of primary/basic medical care in villages, which must be carried out effectively to try and ease the pain and seriousness of illnesses before proper treatment is received at the hospital.

In regards to the issue of Hygiene Committees, he stated that they were integral and a vital part to village life; stating that these committees should be revived to assist with primary first aid care. The Hon Minister further stated that the Ministry will offer hands-on training for women who reside in the villages for first-aid care. In regards to doctor salaries, the Minister stated that in Samoa all doctors have no choice but to work for the Government or set up a private practice. He did however note that there is a salaries tribunal who deal with setting appropriate salaries depending on the nature/requirements of the job; furthermore, the Ministry will look at other incentives for doctors to work in the rural areas.

The Hon Minister stressed that 70% of people in Samoa have died from NCD's. Minister stated that they are looking at living the "Fa'aSamoa" way, and stated that there are talks in place for an outreach program to identify those with NCD's. Hon TUITAMA recounted past events whereby there was free screening for those who contracted Tuberculosis. He then commented on the topic of Poultry (Eggs) stated that the MFAT had a role in this as a part of the Trade sector.

▪ **LEALAILEPULE Rimoni Aiafi, Member for Faleata West**

The Member stated that the issue he had raised was in regards to health and safety; namely to find ways to extend the expiry date of local eggs to 60, as is the case in Pago Pago.

▪ **Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries**

The Hon Minister clarified that presently, eggs are still being imported from New Zealand and Fiji.

▪ **LEALAILEPULE Rimoni Aiafi, Member for Faleata West**

The Member clarified that his issue concerned the expiry dates of eggs, as there was no official verification from a doctor (scientific evidence) in regards to the expiry dates, i.e., 60 days or 30

▪ **Minister of Health**

The Minister stated that the accepted international standard for expiry dates was a minimum of 30 days. The Minister noted that the storage temperature has to be 4 or 7 degrees Celsius, noting that Samoa's standards were the same as New Zealand's. The Hon Minister then stated that in 2011 an Act was passed to prohibit importing turkey tails for business purposes (resale);

however in 2013 Samoa became a member of the WTO which prohibited Samoa from discriminating goods between countries provided under its Non-discrimination principles. The Minister continued by stating that turkey tails were only allowed back into Samoa for personal consumption rather than commercial purposes.

▪ **LEALAILEPULE Rimoni Aiafi, Member for Faleata West**

The Member stated he had raised the issue so that Parliament could make a firm decision on the matter.

vii. Minister for Public Enterprises, Hon LAUTAFI Fio Selafi Purcell

The Hon Minister addressed the issue raised by the member for Vaimauga No.1 in regards to land in Vailele and Letogo to be sold only to and between residents of Vailele and Letogo; the Minister stated that this cannot be done because there have been countless requests from other people (not of Vailele descent) who also need land for their homes. He also informed the Member that currently these quarter acres in Vailele and Letogo were valued at 35,000 which was a fairly reasonable price compared to the market price of 75,000-80,000 for 1/4 acres.

The Hon Minister advised the Member to come into his office and further discuss the matter and understand government's plans. He then mentioned that the Samoa Land Corporation is prioritising the development of the Salelologa Township this FY. In regards to the issue of minimum wages; the Hon Minister stated that although income need to reflect the increase in the cost of living, there are factors that would be affected which must also be taken into consideration.

The Hon Minister then addressed the members who commented on Samoa Airways stating that this venture was not an overnight vision. The Hon Minister clarified to the Members who were concerned about transparency, that there was a Committee in place to deal with ventures and finances. This committee report directly to the Legislative Assembly. The Hon Minister pointed out that the Samoa Airways airfares have caused a domino effect in the market, as both Air New Zealand and Virgin Airlines have also lowered their fares.

- The **Hon. PRIME MINISTER** moved that the sitting times be extended until the Supplementary Appropriation Bill (No.1) 2017/2018 was third read with the sitting to resume the following day; the motion seconded and approved.

▪ **Minister for Public Enterprises**

In regards to the plane lease, the Hon Minister stated that Samoa was currently on the wet lease for 6 months and that the purchase included not only the cost of the aircraft but made provisions for air hostesses, engineers, the pilots, technicians etc. In terms of the cost of the lease, the Minister stated that this was confidential and cannot be disclosed to the public due to contractual agreements and for competition purposes.

▪ **Hon LAUOFO Fonotoe Nuafesili Pierre Lauofo**

The Member queried whether once the duration of the wet lease expired, whether there were plans to move to a dry lease?

- The Hon Minister affirmed this and stated that once moved to a dry lease, local employees will be recruited to take over the various positions.

▪ **ALIIMALEMANU Alofa Tuuau, Member for Alataua West**

The Member questioned the timeframe of the lease.

viii. Minister of Natural Resources and Environment, Hon FIAME Naomi Mataafa.

The Hon Minister stated that Gagaifomauga No.3 land surveying was underway, noting that they were awaiting the verdict of the land boundary case to determine accurate village boundaries. She stated that this was a positive move as it would provide clarity to the Alii and Faipule in regards to what land rightfully belongs to which village. She stated that the Government would fund 75% while constituencies contribute 25% of the total costing of the land survey project.

In regards to sand mining without permits, the Hon Minister stated that this would require a collective effort to ensure policies are followed by companies, villages, and individuals. The Hon Minister then commented on the law which makes bio plastic bags compulsory, and stated that this issue has resurfaced. The Hon Minister stated that non-biodegradable bags are an environmental threat.

The Hon Minister clarified that the PUMA, LTA and MWTI have different functions and therefore cannot be merged (as suggested by one member); she then stated that a merge could not be justified based on convenience and easier access for the public.

▪ **TAFUA Maluelue Tafua, Member for Aleipata Itupa i Lalo**

The Member commented on the overlap and duplication of responsibilities of the SOE's and the PUMA and LTA. The Member urged the Assembly to put in place regulations to consolidate who is responsible for what.

▪ **Minister of Environment**

The Hon Minister noted the different roles of Ministry's; the LTA deal with road traffic issues; the Ministry of Environment dealt with environmental issues and the PUMA dealt with building related permits.

ix. PRIME MINISTER & LEADER OF THE HOUSE - HON. TUILAEP Auelua Fatialofa Lupesoliai Aiono Neioti Galumalemana Dr. Sailele Malielegaoi

The Hon Prime Minister noted that it had been noted in the Main Budget that there would be no supplementary, this appears to be the reason why this statement is being questioned by Members. However, that statement was on the effort to ensure all relevant parties prepared the necessary funds. The Minister noted that this was the Government's goal for the future, and to utilise Supplementary Bills for natural emergencies only. The Hon Prime Minister went on to state that the current Supplementary Bill was not a large sum compared to previous years.

The Hon PM made mention of the rationale behind changing Samoa's Financial Year period from January - December, to July – June. He stated that this ensured ample time for reports to be prepared as Samoa usually receives its aid at the end of the calendar year. Furthermore, he stated that it was not a good image for Parliament for Members of Parliament to argue over the budget close to and during the festive season.

The Hon Prime Minister clarified several pointers regarding the Supplementary Bill:

- Statutory Expenditure need to be cleared (these include international and local loans) as it is important to pay a portion of these loans to ensure Samoa's continued good reputation.
- Salary payments were of the utmost importance;
- 199 million was set aside for Samoa's development. The Hon Prime Minister stated that the Government was seeking other ways to lower expenses.
- The Hon. PM stated that 279 million was used to implement development projects. He then explained that Samoa is fortunate to have special conditions from the international financial institutions. He also noted that interest rates offered by the World Bank, ADB and IMF were below 1%; these interest rates were accorded to countries with the least development.
- The Hon Prime Minister stated that the task of the Finance CEO was crucial as his responsibility is to make sure of the following:
 1. there is sufficient cash flow
 2. foreign reserves are stable; and
 3. continued growth in the GDP

The Hon Prime Minister stated that these three factors determined the advice given to the Minister for finance, who then advises Cabinet on the best possible direction for the State. In closing, the Hon Prime Minister reaffirmed that Samoa adhered to the principles of good governance.

The question was put and the motion for the second reading was approved; the Supplementary Appropriation Bill (No.1) 2017/2018 was read a second time.

2. SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION BILL (NO.1) 2017/2018 - consideration in detail

- MCIL 102,915 – Approved.
 - MESC 700,000 – Approved.
 - MOF 5,660,000 – Approved.
 - MJCA-60270 - Approved.
 - SPS - 5,200,000 - Approved.
 - MPMC-112,758 - Approved.
 - FESA-131000 - Approved.
- Total 119, 669, 43**

- MAF- 100,000.
 - MCIL-696,024.
 - MPMC-120,304.
- Total - 916,328**

3. SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION BILL (NO.1) 2017/2018 - third reading

The Hon Minister for Finance moved a motion for the Bill to be read a third time; the motion was seconded and approved. The Bill passed the Legislative Assembly and will become an Act of Parliament once assented to by the Head of State.

**Proceedings were adjourned at 2:21 pm.
Proceedings will reconvene at 9:00am, Friday 26th January 2018.**