

DISCLAIMER

This Report provides a brief of the Proceedings of Parliament on Wednesday 20th June 2018. While all efforts have been made to provide an informative brief, this information must not be relied upon as an alternative to the official Hansard record of proceedings of Parliament. If you have any specific questions about the Proceedings of Parliament on Wednesday 20th June 2018, you should consult the official Hansard or seek assistance from the Office of the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday 20 June 2018

3:13pm

[Part B]

Pursuant to Standing Order 28: Deputy Speaker May Take Chair When Requested

In the absence of the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker NAFOITOA Talaimanu Ketu took the Chair and presided over the Assembly.

OLO Fiti Afoa Vaai, Member for Salega East (cont.)

- Minister of Communication and Information Technology

The Member noted the amount of \$23 million appropriated to the Ministry and requested the cost of internet to be reduced. The Member stated that he is of the opinion that the cable will be commercialised, raising the importance of proper monitoring to ensure the economy attains the return and benefit it should.

- Minister of Finance

OLO requested for consideration of cryptocurrency as another means to generate revenue; he then reminded the Minister of proper management and repayment of the 52million allotted to Aggie Grey's, noting that change in management.

INTERJECTION – Hon Prime Minister

The Hon PM explained that the issues raised by the Member have already been noted by Government, he elaborated that Tourism is the largest contributor to Samoa's economy, and its benefits trickles down to the entire community thus the continuous support by Government (40million appropriated in the budget).

On a point of clarification, the Hon Prime Minister stated that the House is not accustomed to Members moving motions to extend time for fellow parliamentarians, stating that businesses of the House is operated by the Standing Orders which provide 30 minutes to each Member.

(v) TUIFAASISINA Leleisiua Palemene Aiolupotea – Member for Gagaifomauga No.3

The Member acknowledged Samoa in all her honorific salutations and made the following requests:

- Requested the Minister of Natural Resources and Environment for a seawall in his constituency;
- Requested the Minister of Works for maintenance of the bridge at Vailoa as it has been constructed for more than 40 years;
- Requested the Minister of Agriculture to secure more export markets for agricultural products; and
- Reminded the Minister of Education of his written request for the needs of his constituency.

(vi) ALAIASA Sepulona Moananu – Member for Anoamaa East

The Member noted that he was of the opinion that the economy was stagnant. He then raised his concern with public servants resigning from their posts then returning, questioning their loyalty and motives. ALAIASA requested for road upgrades for his constituency as it has been more than 56 years since repairs were carried out. A request was made to the Minister of Health for a site visit to assess the state of district hospitals in his constituency. The Member queried how cryptocurrency operated and noted his support for the inclusion of Early Childhood Education as a formal learning.

(vii) TAFUA Maluelue Tafua – Member for Aleipata Itupa i Lalo

The Member acknowledged the Cabinet members for their efforts in developing the economy; He stated his support for the drive to have Early Childhood Education mandatory and requested the Minister of Education for more teachers to cater for Primary Schools and Colleges. TAFUA requested the Minister of Natural Resources and Environment to implement a strategy to eradicate mosquitoes and funding to develop proper conservation of mangrove conservation areas. TAFUA sought the assistance of the Minister of Health for a permanent doctor to cater for the Hospital in Aleipata. He addressed the Minister of Finance requesting the minimum wage to be raised.

The Member for Aleipata Itupa i Lalo requested for renovations for the public toilets at Saleaumua; TAFUA noted the Samoa Water Authority's process in laying pipes should be properly monitored, as there have been instances whereby once the pipes are laid, the Authority makes no attempt to return the road to its original form before it was dug. The Member queried

programs implemented to combat Non-Communicable Diseases. The Member addressed the Minister for Fire and Emergency Services requesting for additional outposts to be established at Lotofaga and Tiavea.

(viii) FONOTOE Laufo Pierre Laufo – Member for Anoamaa West

FONOTOE noted the increase of quarantine funds by 15% querying the necessity of such an increase; he explained that the x-ray machine at the Fagalii airport is malfunctioned and requested for the increase of funds to repair or purchase a new x-ray.

Proceedings were set aside at 4:46pm; and resumed at 5:30pm

FONOTOE Laufo Pierre Laufo – Member for Anoamaa West

FONOTOE requested the use of hotels/motels to accommodate the athletes participating at the Pacific Games which have been appropriated the amount of 11million. He then requested clarification in regards to the different appropriations for the different Phases of the prisons project, seconding the comment made by the Member for Salega East that there was no Master Plan (referred to page 43 of the Budget).

(vx) LEALAILEPULE Rimoni Aiafi – Member for Faleata West

The Member conveyed his pride in Samoa hosting the 2022 Commonwealth Nations meeting, commending the political stability and financial stability of Samoa; additionally he noted his pride in Samoa's high ranking of press freedom. LEALAILEPULE stated that Samoa's foreign-debt standing is much better than any other Pacific nation.

He then noted the importance of religion in the Samoan culture and in all aspects of Samoan life and pleaded to the church leaders for their support. The Member for Faleata West stated that the current student-teacher ratio at Vaitele Primary school reflected an imbalance. LEALAILEPULE spoke on the increasing price of electricity; He further mentioned the overlapping roles of the Land Transport Authority and the Ministry for Works, Transport and Infrastructure.

(x) Hon. AEAU Peniamina Leavaiseeta – Member for Falealupo

The Hon Member spoke to express his gratitude to Parliament; Speaker, Prime Minister and Cabinet, and his fellow Parliamentarians for the work in the previous financial year.

(xi) ALIIMALEMANU Alofa Tuuau, Member for Alataua Wes

The Finance and Expenditure Committee Chair raised the following queries:

- The rationale for reducing funds allotted to the National University of Samoa when an increase in revenue was recorded by the University;
- How losses will be covered by Ministries with increased revenue whilst appropriations have been reduced;
- Queried the appropriation of funds for the new prison as there have been changes to figures, noting that 3.7 million was recorded for Phase 1 and 1.5million for the completion of Phase 2, what is the 7.5million for?
- Whether the CSL payments were monthly or annually;
- Queried the lack of emphasis on access roads so as to bolster the agriculture developments;
- 64% of funds allocated for tourism development and only a mere 11% appropriated to farmers for DBS loans, requested more emphasis on the Agriculture sector;
- Request the possibility of raising the minimum wage and pay rises;
- The possibility of utilising remaining funds from previous financial years to fund pay rise for employees who have worked tirelessly throughout the year.

The Member further challenged the following Ministers:

- Ministry of Communication and Information Technology

Although there has been new cables installed the internet continues to be slow, noting not much difference to when there was no cable.

- Minister of Education, Sports and Culture

The Member acknowledged the initiative to use tablets as another means to engage and gain the attention and interest of students; however the effectiveness should be assessed, as some teachers are either using these tablets at their personal leisure or have relied on the tablet and neglected their role as a teacher to engage with the students.

- Minister of Health

The Committee Chair requested that another procurement process to acquire pharmaceuticals be sought out as the current process is too costly.

ALIIMALEMANU requested for proper management and administration of the District Project Development plan to ensure the funds are implemented accordingly; the Member reminded the Ministers for Education and the Minister of Works of her previous requests for the establishment of a school for her constituency and the access roads in her constituency to be developed.

Hon Prime Minister – STATEMENT

The Hon PM expressed gratitude to all the Members who spoke on the Bill, provided recommendations, challenges and general comments on the tabled budget. He spoke generally in regards to the Member's speeches noting that project plans are not possible without funding; the obtaining of funds is timely, therefore patience and perseverance from Members is appealed by the government.

He spoke on Government's commitment to developing agriculture, as is reflected by the thriving taro exports additionally organic farming is at its peak. He stated that the taro whiskey is another milestone in the agricultural sector.

The Hon Prime Minister stated that generally, 2.2billion is the amount circulating the economy of Samoa asserting that budget figures are not exact but rather estimates, therefore increase of reduction exists, hence the purpose of the Supplementary Appropriation Bill. He then emphasised the importance of capacity and expertise stating that those assigned to perform certain tasks must be capable of carrying out/satisfying what is required of them.

Proceedings were adjourned at 7:25pm; and will reconvene at 9:00am on Thursday 21 June 2018.