

DAY 4: FRIDAY 20th FEBRUARY 2015

TIME: 9:11am

I. GOVERNMENT ORDERS OF THE DAY

1. CITIZENSHIP INVESTMENT BILL 2014 (debates on the second reading continued)

i. **MUAGUTUTAGATA Peter Ah Him, Member for Sagaga le Usoga** conveyed his support for the Bill's primary objectives in terms of national revenue acquisition and employment creation. He also noted that the Bill will facilitate additional export opportunities. He referred to SROS's scientific developments in organic produce such as avocado oil, breadfruit flour and perfume. The member made reference to newspaper advertisements in which SROS were requesting local businesses to take on the production of these goods. He claimed that the Bill would enable overseas companies to set up production factories in Samoa for these products which will encourage Samoa's export trade and in turn, national income.

The member discussed the disadvantages of the Bill but did not directly elaborate on the citizenship issue; he again reiterated his support for the Bill's investment objectives. A separate concern the Member raised was in regards to the apparent stereotyping of Chinese business owners and operators. He noted that there are also German and European businesses in operation in Samoa which are not mentioned by Members. He then conveyed his disappointment at the widespread public ignorance as to Chinese ethnicity. He claimed that any person who physically

appears 'Asian' is classed as being Chinese despite being a national of another Asian country such as Japan.

ii. ***TUSA Misi Tupuola, Member for Falealili*** began his address by emphasising the fact that Samoa is held dear to the heart of each of her citizens. In quoting the lyrics from the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa hymn "Lo ta nuu", he expressed his belief that the importance of the Bill goes to the heart of the Samoan identity and patriotism. He then continued by commenting that despite the many negative opinions already expressed by members, this Bill reflects brave leadership. The member acknowledged both the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister for their explanatory remarks on the Bill but asserted that there are certain provisions within the Bill which the Committee must carefully reconsider. For example, it may prove beneficial to investigate whether or not some countries may be barred from citizenship applications. The member asserted that there should be an emphasis on granting citizenship to countries which are similar to Samoa, particularly in terms of their religious beliefs. However, the main objective of the Bill (to create jobs) is important as there is indeed an employment recession in Samoa. This has been evident by the many people who continue to request employment from Members of Parliament.

As an aside, the member commented on the increase of vehicles in Samoa. He stated that a possible solution is to construct shopping malls in different villages to limit the need for people to travel to Apia. This would also aide environmental issues by decreasing carbon footprints. Other comments made by the member included his request that the Government pay attention to the possible negative effects of the Bill, specifically in regards to the Samoan language and lands. He also recommended that it be a requirement that prospective investors learn English to avoid the need to utilise translators. Language barrier issues could prove

detrimental when investors provide information to the Committee which may affect their decisions. He made particular reference to the Arab States and Asia.

The **Hon PRIME MINISTER** interjected and commented that similar issues were raised in the House over the *Casino and Gambling Act 2010*. Concerns included that the establishment of casinos in Samoa would result in the increase of illegal services such as prostitution. However, it should be noted that these are issues which every country faces; they are not unique to Samoa or consequent to laws which Parliament enacts. The Hon Prime Minister reiterated the fact that because Samoa is a country founded on God, our faith will counter any fears that are generally associated with change.

iii. **Hon MAGELE Mauiliu, Minister for Education, Sports & Culture and Member for Faasaleleaga No.1** noted the importance of the Member for Falealili's comments on the Samoan language. He stated that a Language Institute will be operational in two weeks which will teach Samoan, English, Chinese and Japanese and other languages.

iv. The **Hon Deputy Prime Minister** noted that it would be difficult to exclude nationals from specific countries from applying for Samoan citizenship under the investment program.

v. **TUSA**, commented that there needs to be sufficient representatives from various Ministries on the review Committee. Heavy reliance should be placed on the Attorney General to oversee matters which fall within the ambit of the Bill's provisions.

vi. **AVEAU Nikotemo Palamo, Member for Faleata East** stated that it appears as if the Member for Falealili supports the “selling” of Samoan citizenship.

The **Hon PRIME MINISTER** asserted that comments such as those made by the Member for Faleata East create unnecessary tension within the House. He again emphasised that it is not the aim of the Bill to sell citizenship and cautioned members to be mindful of their speeches in the House.

Mr Speaker reminded the Member that the Bill is not “selling” citizenship as has been explained numerous times in the previous sitting. He instructed the member that individual clauses should not be interpreted in isolation but against the Bill’s overall context.

The **Hon Deputy Prime Minister** stated that the Bills provisions will provide the appropriate means for the inclusion of additional Committee members.

vii. **TUSA** commented that even after 50 years of independence, much of Samoa has yet to be developed. He stated that his constituency of Falealili still go without many of the privileges which those in the urban areas enjoy such as access to running water.

viii. **The Leader of the Opposition** stated that Falealii is already well developed.

The **Hon PRIME MINISTER** stated that over a period of approximately 30 years, there was a move by the Assembly to include additional member seats in the House. The one of the main advocates for this move was Pule Lameko. This particular MP

worked tirelessly to ensure that this constituency was well developed, the positive results of which are now enjoyed by his successors from Safata.

ix. Hon TUILOMA Lameko, Minister for Revenue and Member for Falealili noted that the proposals (as mentioned by the Hon Prime Minister) were made between himself and the member for Safata. He recommended that if the Opposition Party desires to one day occupy the seat of Government, it would serve them well to replace their leader.

The **Leader of the Opposition** commented that his actions were solely in an effort to develop his constituency of Safata; contrary to claims made by the member for Falealili.

The **Hon PRIME MINISTER** stated that the most evident development to date in Safata has been the addition of a member seat, which is also the case for Salega.

x. Hon MANUALESAGALALA, Minister for Works, Transport and Infrastructure and Member for Safata disagreed with the Leader of the Opposition's comments that Safata is well developed; noting that there are still many improvements to be made. He reminded the House that the Leader of the Opposition has been a Parliamentarian for over 20 years and should have done more for the constituency by now. The Leader of Opposition also strongly opposed the Road Switch yet the Road switch has enabled his constituents to purchase vehicles resulting in the taxi service which is now operational.

The **Leader of the Opposition** elaborated on the development of Safata and in doing so asserted that if the Minister for Works comments are true that there have been no developments in Safata, that would be the result of his personal inaction.

This is taking into account the fact that the Minister is a Cabinet member and part of the ruling Government and should prioritise Safata's development now that he is in the position to do so.

The **Hon PRIME MINISTER** noted that the Leader of the Opposition had previously stated that the Government should undertake developments in Safata last.

The **Leader of the Opposition** reasserted the factual nature of his comment, however with the qualification that the developments he referred to would be enacted this year.

Hon MANUALESAGALALA sought patience from his constituency and assured them that these developments would soon be underway.

xi. TUSA many developments have already been undertaken in the named constituencies; however the delay is a result of insufficient resources necessary to complete these projects.

xii. LEVAOPOLO commented on the issue of insufficient resources and stated that the increase in LTA fees for licences should suffice to support these types of developments.

xiii. TIALAVEA Fea Tionisio Seigafoloava, Member for Vaa o Fonoti noted that since Independence, the roads at Fagaloa have yet to be tar sealed. In terms of the Bill, his primary concern was the effect on citizenship. He did however acknowledge the Minister for Works efforts in Uafato. The Member commented that the short title of the Bill should be reviewed. He stated that the inclusion of the word "citizenship" has resulted in a lot of controversy. If, in his opinion, the Bill had

simply been titled the “Investment Bill”, the controversial issues now discussed would have been avoided.

Other points raised by the member included the possible utilization of Fagaloa Bay as Port if a seawall and access roads were built. The member concluded by stating that the success of the Bill will essentially rest on the Committee’s ability to carry out its functions effectively.

The **Hon PRIME MINISTER** replied that due to its unfavourable rocky terrain, Fagaloa Bay remains to be a difficult area to develop. He did however state that it could be a possible tourist attraction owing to its unique and unusual location. According to the Hon Prime Minister, the Government is at present considering such a development and that the draft engineering design for Fagaloa’s upgrade is in his possession. The main setback as is generally the case with well many of the Government’s well intended plans is the lack of donor funding. If such funding can be secured, these developments will commence in due course.

xiv. TIALAVEA noted that Faleapuna also needs an access road and acknowledged the Minister for Works for work completed to date.

xv. TOEOLESULUSULU Cedric Pose Salesa Schuster, Member for Aana Alofi No.3 supported the Government’s efforts to enact a Bill which will attract foreign investors, create additional employment opportunities and increase national revenue. Issues which the member urges the Government to keenly consider include the effect of the Bill on land and overall national development. He asserted that there is a large Samoan population residing abroad in countries such as New Zealand and the United States of America with approximately 600,000 people worldwide identifying as Samoans with only 180,000 residing in Samoa. He

further stated that 30 – 40% of land in Samoa cannot be developed due to their rough natural state, for example, the presence of lava. Further to this, more than 100,000 hectares of land are currently being used for Government developments. The member recognised that the use of land varies in different villages, for example the vast majority of land in Vaitele is freehold land.

The member then referenced the issue of foreign companies, providing an example from Fiji. He stated that Fiji had given incentives to offshore companies to invest in Fiji, but to date the majority of local businesses are owned by these very same investors (this was during the 1970s and 1980s). He asserted that if Samoa had followed Fiji's example, there would at this time be more hotels in various villages across Samoa.

The **Hon PRIME MINISTER** claimed this to be the sole purpose for the establishment of UTOS; to permit large companies to take up shares in local Samoan companies. The recommendations offered by the Member have already been considered by the Government and he also noted that similar concerns were raised during the initial establishment of Yazaki and the Lemana Investment Group. The Hon Prime Minister stated that SAT\$0.5 million was given by UTOS to the Government to aid its budgetary requirements which is prime proof that the institution is achieving its established objectives. He concluded by informing the House that only small hectares of land were required to set up Yazaki.

xvi. Hon FAAMOETAULOA Ulatino Faale Tumaalii, Minister for Natural Resources and Environment and Member for Gagaemauga No.3 commented in response to the member for Aana Alofi No.3's remarks in regards to the percentage of land used by the Government. The Hon Minister asserted that land

in Samoa is approximately 80% customary land and 3-5% freehold land. He noted that Government utilised land cannot be purchased but may be leased for tourism and industrial purposes, for example the land leased by the Lemana Investment Group.

Proceedings adjourned at 10:35am for morning recess

Proceedings resumed at 11:00am

MOTION: The **Hon PRIME MINISTER** moved a motion that Standing Order **31(1)** be set aside to extend the scheduled the Assembly's sitting hours. This is to ensure that the debates on the *Citizenship Investment Bill 2014* be completed. He urged the House to ensure that debates on the Bill are completed today to permit immediate referral to a Parliamentary Committee. The Hon Prime Minister went on to note that the Assembly will sit again in 3 weeks which affords the relevant Committee a limited timeframe to investigate the Bill. He then noted that at the Assembly's next meeting, all incomplete Parliamentary Committee reports will lapse and the Government does not intend to move a motion for an extension. The motion was seconded by the Hon Deputy Prime Minister and subsequently approved by the Assembly.