

DAY 3: TUESDAY 23rd JUNE 2015

TIME: 3:10pm

[PART C]

I. GOVERNMENT ORDERS OF THE DAY

1. SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION BILL (No.2) 2014/2015 and APPROPRIATION BILL 2015/2016 (debate on second reading resumed)

i. *Hon PRIME MINISTER*

The Hon PRIME MINISTER stated that one cannot find fault in the exaggeration of “dreams”. All great developments begin this way. In response to the Member’s request to use the water sources at the Mailoilo River and Mata o le Alelo River to service Salelologa, the Hon PRIME MINISTER stated that it would be difficult. Samoa is also on the verge of using the desalination water system as used by developing countries such as America.

ii. *Hon TOLOFUAIVALELEI Falemoe Leiatua, Aana Alofi No.2*

The Hon Minister remarked that the Member’s requests were “easy to say, but hard to do”. He compared the delay in water supply to the situation experienced by Palauli when they awaited water while the borehole was being drilled.

iii. *Hon FAUMUINA Tiatia Faaolatane Liuga, Palauli le Falefa*

The Member pointed out that appropriation has been set aside for the borehole in question. He also noted that the tsunami evacuation road leading to the local

school is need of an upgrade. He also requested an access road be built at Sili. He stated that Sili is now a certified organic village and therefore villagers need to have easier access to their crops.

The Member addressed the Minister for Police and Prisons and encouraged them to work collaboratively with the Ministry for Education to ensure a Police Academy is established. He stated one of the benefits of an Academy being that locals will be able to work overseas, thus increasing remittances to Samoa. The Member noted that Kiribati and Tuvalu have a high number of qualified sailors due to their Academy. In regards to the current employment hours, the Member noted that a usual work day consists of 7 to 8 working hours. He asserted that such long hours are unnecessary and that Samoans need to “work smarter, not harder”. He recommended that the work day be reduced by an hour or 30 minutes; it would also decrease operational costs and overhead costs.

iv. TAFUA Maluelue Tafua, Aleipata Itupa i Lalo

The Member for Aleipata Itupa i Lalo informed the House that the Commission (PSC) is currently undergoing a functional review; he noted that the Commission’s biggest expense is public servants salaries.

v. Hon FAUMUINA Tiatia Faaolatane Liuga, Palauli le Falefa

The Member clarified that he was not requesting a reduction in salaries, but rather a reduction in working hours per day.

vi. Hon TUISUGALETAUA Sofara Aveau, Vaimauga East, Minister for Communications, Information and Technology

The Hon Minister queried how it is possible for an employee’s work hours to be reduced without it affecting their salary?

vii. LEALAILEPULE Rimoni Aiafi, Faleata West

LEALAILEPULE commented on a Bill recently passed in Japan which enforced public servants to utilise their leave entitlements. In France, working hours have been reduced to 7 hours. The Member claims that this trend should be modelled by Samoa and noted his support for FAUMUINA's request.

viii. Hon TOLOFUAIVALELEI Falemoe Leiatua, Aana Alofi No.2

The Hon Minister stated that the Government encourages employees to adopt an honest and effective work ethic. If the Member's statement that he golfs during work hours is true, then he is guilty of "stealing" (time theft) and dishonesty.

ix. Hon PALUSALUE Faapo II, Safata, Leader of the Opposition

The Leader of the Opposition lent his support to the proposal to reduce work hours and stated that it would indeed encourage employees to work smarter.

x. Hon TUISUGALETAUA Sofara Aveau, Vaimauga East, Minister for Communications, Information and Technology

The Hon Minister commented that the Opposition have revealed that they support the reduction of salaries despite their Manifesto stating otherwise.

Proceedings were suspended at 6:49pm and resumed at 7:31pm.

xi. Hon FAUMUINA Tiatia Faaolatane Liuga, Palauli le Falefa

In continuing the debate on work hours, the Member stated that for an employee to spend more than 7 hours in an office is counter-productive. If the work hours are reduced, workers will be happier and therefore work effectively.

xii. Hon PRIME MINISTER

The Hon PRIME MINISTER noted that in terms of contract work, the total number of hours spent on a project (completion/delivery) is not important. However, “deadlines” in this context are of the utmost importance.

xiii. Hon FAUMUINA Tiatia Faaolatane Liuga, Palauli le Falefa

The Hon Minister stated that the Member’s interpretation of his previous statement was incorrect. To clarify, the Hon Minister stated that he was referring to “disloyalty”. He further clarified that the request was to reduce the total work hours for employees as this would increase productivity and decrease instances of errors due to exhaustion (referencing the recent mistakes in the Budget report).

After further questions from both the Minister for Communication and the Leader of the Opposition, the Member clarified that professional (such as Accountants) cannot be classified as support staff but rather, “clerical staff”.

xiv. Hon TUUU Anasii Leota, Siumu

The Member noted that Hon FAUMUINA mentioned that appropriation has been allocated for specific access roads. However, to the best of his knowledge, no access roads have been constructed in his constituency. He requested Hon FAUMUINA to appropriate some funds to build access roads in Siumu.

xv. Hon FAUMUINA Tiatia Faaolatane Liuga, Palauli le Falefa

In response to TUUU's comments, the Member stated that the key to one's request being successful is your "personality". He also encouraged TUUU to present his request to the Minister for Works.

xvi. Hon MANUALESAGALALA Mati Tuigamala Enokati Posala, Safata, Minister for Works

The Hon Minister stated that at present, the Ministry is overseeing many projects. He then noted his support for the Member for Sagaga le Falefa in terms of requesting a large development load to fund these projects.

xvii. Hon PALUSALUE Faapo II, Safata, Leader of the Opposition

Hon PALUSALUE accusations which have been made tonight in the House against the Opposition are serious. They do not, as a party, oppose the utilisation of loans. Their only advice is that the Government do so cautiously.

xviii. LEALAILEPULE Rimoni Aiafi, Faleata West

The Member stated that in retrospect, national developments have been a deciding fact for eligible voters at the time of general elections. He noted that Member's who have fulfilled their duties to their respective constituencies should not be worried about being re-elected. He then thanked the Leader of the Opposition for his efforts and reiterated the need for a strong Opposition as a means of strengthening the Government. He noted that 133 have been tabled and passed during this parliamentary term; noting that this is a commendable achievement.

The Member then expressed his gratitude for the water supply to the areas of Falelaunui and Vaitele. He also acknowledged the relocation of the prison and stated that it was positive move. LEALAILEPULE then reminded the SLC as to requests regarding land in Toamua as previously requested at the outset of his

parliamentary term. The Member then thanked the Leader of the Opposition for appointing him to the Finance and Expenditure Committee as it was a beneficial learning experience.

The Member then stated that the Assembly should not shy away from employing new and strategies and processes, if they have been proven to be cost effective and beneficial. Legislation should not be used as an excuse to shun change. If a law restricts a certain action; discretionary powers may be used in such cases. He then addressed the Deputy Prime Minister on the issue of legislation for wholesalers and retailers.

xix. *Hon FONOTOE Nuafesili Pierre Laufo, Anoamaa East, Deputy Prime Minister*

The Hon Deputy Prime Minister stated that the Bill in question has with the Secretariat for translation, but is complete.

xx. *LEALAILEPULE Rimoni Aiafi, Faleata West*

The Member continued with his address and raised several issues with various Ministries. He stated that the current legislation governing child labour is limited to children up to 14 years of age. The Member advised that this age requirement be increased to 16 years of age.

The Member encouraged international investment initiatives in Samoa. He noted the rise of Chinese workers in to Samoa and raised an issue with the effect of foreign competition with local businesses. He also expressed gratitude for the Regional Insurance Scheme funded by Japan for natural disasters; he recommended that appropriation for this be increased.

LEALAILEPULE stated that if Samoa's secondary industry is not developed, Samoa will again rely on its primary industries. He also suggested that subsidies should be provided for local products developed for export. In terms of Health, the Member queried the Minister for Health if the CT Scan has arrived in Samoa. Furthermore, he stated that laboratory testing should be done locally as opposed to overseas. This would lessen issues with incorrect medical treatments. In terms of products which have been deemed unfit for consumption, he acknowledged the work of the Ministry and SROS in testing these products.

The Member urged the Ministry to focus on the Motootua Hospital and not the smaller branches in the rural areas. He also queried the MCIT as to the broadband in Samoa and stated that the \$40 million investment funds have not been fully utilized by the Ministry. LEALAILEPULE then spoke on the PSC's salary scale and noted that there is a difference amongst various Ministries. He noted that at the Principal level, the salary scale for PSC employees has been raised to \$55,000.00 whereas other Ministries continue to pay \$45,000.00. For CEO and ACEO positions, the Member asserted that it should be the responsibility of Cabinet to select the candidates for these positions. He also suggested that CEOs, General Managers and technical advisors be able to sit in the House as is the practice in some overseas countries. For ACEO level positions, the Member noted that candidates should be given the right of appeal. He also noted that due to PSCs major organisational restructuring, a Commission was established. The Member queried the structure of the Commission and noted that funds are being wasted on the Salary Tribunal when their tasks should be given to the Commission to execute.

In electoral matters, the Member claimed that there is a lot of confusion surrounding the registration process. The kinship requirement/limitation is confusing in that it permits familial voting in some relationship but not others. The Member also noted

that candidates with wives who hold matai titles should not be eligible to vote for her husband.

xxi. Hon PALUSALUE Faapo II, Safata, Leader of the Opposition

Hon PALUSALUE noted that matters raised in regards to the electoral system are important; however, the responsible Ministers are not present.

xxii. Hon PRIME MINISTER

Even if the Minister for Justice is not in the House, the Government is listening to the Member's speeches. However, the Hon PRIME MINISTER stated that the Member (for Faleata East) is merely speaking on issues that are in his own self-interest.

xxiii. LEALAILEPULE Rimoni Aiafi, Faleata West

LEALAILEPULE noted his appreciation for the work of the Minister for Police and Prisons and the Fire Emergency services for assisting in dispersing a crowd of youths that were fighting in the town area. In regards to escaped inmates, the Member noted that should have an IT technician to take photos of all prisoners as a means of tracing anyone who has escaped. Broadcasts should also be made when an inmate has escaped, but also when they have been apprehended for the public's information.

xxiv. Hon AEAU Peniamina Leavaiseeta, Falealupo, Deputy Leader of the Opposition

Hon Aeau expressed his gratitude for the work completed by Cabinet as well as work in progress. He stated that the road in his constituency needs to be re-sealed as currently, there is no tar. He also noted that access roads in Falealupo Tai need to be repaired. The Member requested a seawall be built at Falealupo Tai as it is a high risk area due to the rising sea levels and erosion. He also noted that

historical sites must be protected. In regards to the SIDS conference, he stated that it was an enormous financial burden, but one that was worthwhile. The conference promoted Samoa to the international community and proved that we are capable for hosting such events.

xxv. Hon PALUSALUE Faapo II, Safata, Leader of the Opposition

The Leader of the Opposition stated that there should be a single national vision aimed at benefitting Samoa. He asserted that Samoa is not impoverished and there is food security and the State is financially stable.

xxvi. Hon PRIME MINISTER

The Hon PRIME MINISTER informed the Leader of the Opposition that 4 roads are to be opened this coming Thursday. Furthermore, a road at Aleipata was opened last week and the week before, a road at Magiagia and Moataa. He stated that these projects are proof that the country is in fact developing. Other evidence to support this claim is that many families now own two or more vehicles. The Hon PRIME MINISTER stated that all developments are implemented as a result of the Budget we (the Assembly) approve in the House. He noted that in the late 70s and 80s, there was no food security and the PSC strike was due to public servants being unsatisfied with their salaries. This, however, is no longer the case as there have been substantial developments in Samoa.

xxvii. Hon PALUSALUE Faapo II, Safata, Leader of the Opposition

Hon PALUSALUE clarified that he left the HRPP because he did not trust the Hon PRIME MINISTER's leadership, not because he opposed the importation of vehicles.

xxviii. Hon PRIME MINISTER

The Hon PRIME MINISTER stated that he did not draft the legislation in question, but rather it was a result of a Cabinet Directive; the very same Cabinet the Hon Member was a part of.

xxix. Hon PALUSALUE Faapo II, Safata, Leader of the Opposition

Touching on the budget theme, Hon PALUSALUE noted that there is a limitation in terms of resources and finances due to the tsunami devastation and other natural disasters.

xxx. Hon PRIME MINISTER

The Hon PRIME MINISTER claimed that the Leader of the Opposition should understand that these millions he is referring to were used to develop the roads he uses when travelling to Safata. He stated that one cannot expect developments to be carried and at the same time, expecting that funds will still be available: “you cannot have your cake and eat it too”. In response to a further comment, the Hon PRIME MINISTER then noted that ordinary revenue, grants and soft term financing are funding these developments and that the Leader of the Opposition should be aware of this.

Proceedings were suspended at 9:00pm and resumed at 9:34pm.

xxxi. Hon PRIME MINISTER

The Hon PRIME MINISTER clarified that the principle behind budgeting is that when a budget is in its preparatory stages, it should be analysed against the 3 forms of revenue as stated earlier. Additional request should be put forward in the next parliamentary term if it is not mentioned in the current budget.

xxxii. Hon PALUSALUE Faapo II, Safata, Leader of the Opposition

The Leader of the Opposition claimed that the budget does not state that additional requests be reserved for future consideration.

xxxiii. Hon PRIME MINISTER

The Hon PRIME MINISTER stated that it was unnecessary for the Member to mention the 2017 Budget as the Assembly is currently debating on the 2015/2016 Budget.

xxxiv. Hon PALUSALUE Faapo II, Safata, Leader of the Opposition

The Leader of the Opposition claimed that the Budget states that expenditure exceeds revenue.

xxxv. Hon PRIME MINISTER

The Hon PRIME MINISTER noted that requests as outlined in the Budget do not exceed expenditure; it is budgeted for the financial year under consideration.

xxxvi. PAPALII Lio Faavaivaiomanu Taeu Masepau, Faasaleleaga No.2

The Member rose to offer clarification as the Chair of the Finance Committee. He stated that there is truth in the statement that there are insufficient sources of revenue to support developments. However, requests for loans to support major developments may be made.

xxxvii. Hon PALUSALUE Faapo II, Safata, Leader of the Opposition

Clarified that he was referring to the 3 million as stated in the report.

xxxviii. Hon PRIME MINISTER

The Hon PRIME MINISTER supported the Chair's statement and stated that the budget contains 'estimates'. He also stated that the developments outlined in the

budget are projects to be implemented during this fiscal year only. Collectively, constituency requests total in the billions. However, the Ministry for Finance has refined these requests, resulting in the Budget now before the Assembly.

In response to Hon PALUSALUE's comment that there are not enough government developments to improve the economy; the Hon PRIME MINISTER directed the Member to refer to part XIII of the Estimates. Part XIII lists the various sectors and their corresponding financial allocation; these developments will be financed by soft term loans. He also noted that the Committee was given 3 weeks to read the report but it has become apparent that this Member has not read it.

xxxix. Hon PALUSALUE Faapo II, Safata, Leader of the Opposition

The Leader of the Opposition compared the budget to a piece of meat with too much fat, the consumption of which would result in illness. He noted that many developments do not produced beneficial results but rather are a financial liability for the country.

xl. Hon PRIME MINISTER

The Hon PRIME MINISTER referred the Member to page X and XI of the Estimates which explains the various funds used for national development. For example, foreign aid and cash grants assistance. He noted that these pages contain the necessary information according to Ministries.

xli. Hon PALUSALUE Faapo II, Safata, Leader of the Opposition

The Leader of the Opposition did not accept the Hon PRIME MINISTER's explanations and referred to the Satitoo Wharf. According to Hon PALUSALUE, the wharf is an unnecessary yet expensive development. He noted his support for the

appropriations to develop the education and health sectors but not the wharf or similar developments.

The exchange between the Hon PRIME MINISTER and the Leader of the Opposition continued. Issues included the merits upon which a Government is judged by the nation and a Government's inherent duties to its nation.

xlii. Hon PALUSALUE Faapo II, Safata, Leader of the Opposition

Hon PALUSALUE thanked Cabinet for their achievements within the past year before thanking the Hon PRIME MINISTER for bringing the All Blacks on to Samoan soil.

xliii. LEALAILEPULE Rimoni Aiafi, Faleata West

In response to the overall tone of the Leader of the Oppositions closing remarks, the Member for Faleata West asked if Hon PALUSALUE was stepping down as the Tautua Samoa leader.

xliv. Hon MANUALESAGALALA Mati Tuigamala Enokati Posala, Safata, Minister for Works

The Hon Minister stated that he would gladly accept the Leader of the Opposition's constituency votes.

xlv. Hon PALUSALUE Faapo II, Safata, Leader of the Opposition

In response to the Minister for Works, Hon PALUSALUE remarked that the constituency will decide who is to sit in parliament with their votes.

xlvi. Hon PAPALIITELE Niko Lee Hang, Individual Voters, Chairperson – Finance and Expenditure Committee

Hon PAPALIITELE reassured the House that despite there being a cut back in spending, this will not mean the provision of key services will be compromised. He emphasised that the theme of the budget meant that priority will be given to key services. He also clarified that figures contained in the Budget are merely ‘estimates’; in his experience actuals are generally higher than the estimates.

PAPALIITELE then clarified various issues raised by Members in the House:

- \$500,000.00 has been appropriated for the demolishing of the Maota Fono from the Ministry of Finance with a similar appropriation for the Secretariat;
- The funds appropriated for the Secretariat are to services new parliamentary committees; the relocation of the office and the dissolution of Parliament (etc.). The Chair noted his disappointment with this amount as he is aware of the many obligations (particularly to Committees) the Secretariat has to meet in its service to Parliament.
- The Committee made recommendations for the Ministry for Prisons and Corrections; however there appears to be no commentary under this sector. There is an appropriation for the Juvenile Centre at Oloamanu which will include housing for officers and an office for the Commissioner at Tafaigata.

In terms of requests for his constituency Hon PAPALIITELE noted that the road alongside Letava is in need of repair. The roads at Malololelei also need repair as there are new schools in the area which means that the current road pose a potential safety hazard. He also noted that like there are plans in the pipeline to construct a river bank along the Vaisigano River to prevent water overflow due to torrential rainfall. The Member acknowledged his constituency for accepting his

leadership and having faith in his ability to effectively represent them for the past 2 parliamentary terms. He asked for their continued support despite the fact the roll has now been divided in to two rolls.

xlvii. Hon PRIME MINISTER – [GOVERNMENT RESPONSES COMMENCED]

The Hon PRIME MINISTER acknowledged the Opposition and their important role in scrutinizing the Government and its budget. The normal practice in the House is to discuss issues candidly which reflects the close relationship between all Members, regardless of individual political affiliation. The noted that the issues which have been raised indicate that thorough consideration has been given to the budget by all Members.

In terms of the budget process, the Hon PRIME MINISTER stated that the call for budget submissions is given in April. Ministries are then able to put forward their estimated expenses and revenue for screening. Requests for projects are either approved or declined at this stage. The Budget is then referred to Cabinet for further consideration. Once it is tabled, it stands referred to the Finance and Expenditure Committee. Requests were put forward which exceeded the billion dollar mark, as a result the budget theme was born; “to live within your means”. As an aside, the practice whereby CEOs for Government bodies had to be present during sittings began in the 80s. It was instituted to ensure that if Government or Opposition members raised issues in the House, the relevant people were able to provide accurate answers.

In terms of revenue, there are 3 streams: ordinary revenue, soft term finance and financial aid/grants. Principal loans incur interest and that interest is spent over a period of time (for example, the loan for the national hospital). Unforeseen expenditure accounted for 1% of the budget, but now accounts for 3%; however,

this does not compromise any developments that may require financing. There is also a provision for estimates. Due to the fact that no one person can predict the future, this is the reason for supplementary budgets. They permit a review of the finances and whether there is a need for readjustment and also provides for a monitoring phase. For example the Committee visits which have been cancelled by the Ministry for Finance due to insufficient funding. The international guiding principles dictate that all sectors within a country must be developed.

The Hon PRIME MINISTER also noted that essential services are being made available which include the fire and police services within the rural areas. Water and electricity are also being supplied to the rural areas; all of these initiatives and services are proposed to be available now. The Salelologa township is also being developed so that Savaii locals need not venture off the island as is the current practice. The Hon PRIME MINISTER referred to the Potlach logging Company which used to be in Savaii but left due to disagreements over the permissible logging limits. Holand experts were also brought in to test the lava quality at Asau bay during the Tupua Government. Development of the Asau wharf ceased due to expert advice that the lava could not be removed for a wharf to be constructed; however a wharf has since been constructed. In October this year, negotiations will begin with *Bumble Bee Foods* with the hope that the factory will soon be established. The future of Samoa's economy lies in Savaii due to its various advantages, in particular its land mass.

xlvi. Hon SALA Fata Lisati Pinati

The Hon SALA questioned if the cars that have been imported in to Samoa were acquired through finance (loans). If there is insufficient funds, people should not make excessive demands. All requests put forward by Members in the House will

be addressed, so long as the funds are available. In regards to the request for a Police Academy, if students are not honest then their goals will not come to life.

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