

PART B

Wednesday 22nd January 2020

6:00pm

Pursuant to S.O 18 in the absence of the Speaker, Deputy Speaker, Tofa NAFOITOA Talaimanu Ketii took the Chair and conducted the proceedings.

2. SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION BILL (NO.1) 2019/2020- debate on second reading continued

vi. ALAIASA Moefaauouo Malagaitutogiai Sepulona Moananu- Member for Anoamaa East-cont

The Member continued his speech by reiterating on his request for road developments and pinpointed that there are a lot of funds allocated for the Lands and Transport Authority. Further he noted that there are more than 40,000 vehicles in Samoa; with this number of vehicles obligated to register annually which then amounts to millions of tala which can fund the road development needs of the country. The Member went on to correct the Minister for Prisons statement that was made in the earlier sitting by stating that he did not oppose or make any complaint against the Prisons Services Ministry.

Minister for Customs and Revenue and Prisons- TIALAVEA FEA LENIU Tionisio Hunt

The Minister clarified that he was only trying to correct the Member's accusation seeming to pose government to prioritise the prisons and not other integral matters. The Minister then corrected the Member that the Government prioritises Education and Health and this is reflected in its budget.

ALAIASA Moefaauouo Malagaitutogiai Sepulona Moananu- Member for Anoamaa East

The Member concluded by advising the Minister of Works to implement development projects fairly (level playing field).

v. MULIPOLA Leiataua Laki- Associate Minister for Finance

The Member addressed the House, the Office of the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly. He expressed his appreciation to the responsible offices and officials during the measles crisis that affected our country and commended the Hon PM for his leadership as it is not an easy task to shoulder the country's worries.

He also acknowledged the Deputy speaker for working together with his constituency in order to get his constituents vaccinated in which he stated that they are the chosen heroes of the country.

The Member stated that we are all educated people and we all know how to differentiate wrong from right therefore, he does not have to put forth any suggestions. However, only wishes good health for his constituency.

vi. LEANATAI Victor Faafoi Tamapua- Associate Minister for Customs and Revenue

The Associate Minister greeted everyone in the House and acknowledged funds available to assist with development of the country. He further thanked private companies that have shown their support by funding some developments within his constituency. In November 2018, a district plan was launched which prioritised the healthy living for his constituency. Through this program several donors have assisted through equipment and recommended plants so as to achieve the goals of the initiative.

The Member acknowledged the assistance rendered by a particular tobacco company (for their initiative to encourage subsistence living within the constituency. He also mentioned that JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) is also willing to fund the construction of a Secondary school for his constituency.

The member mentioned a fund called the Green Climate Fund (GCF) can assist with developments that counter climate change and queried whether funds from the GCF to fix flooding areas. He specifically gave an example of an area that is always prone to flooding regardless of how much rain there is a day (road at Vaipuna in front of the LMS Church). Added to that families near the Apia Park should also be considered as they usually get affected when there is flooding.

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

The Minister of Works clarified that the development in regards to the Vaipuna road as mentioned by the member can be funded from the GCF fund. The Apia Park roads however have been noted and the Ministry will visit and inspect the concern raised.

LEANATAI Victor Faafoi Tamapua- Associate Minister for Customs and Revenue

He further proposed to establish a Price Control Board again in order to monitor the prices and the quality of products sold to the public. He concluded by acknowledging the support of his constituents.

vii. TOFA Foleni Lio Tama Galue- Associate Minister for Health

Addressed the Office of the Clerk, the Hon PM and Cabinet, CEOs of Government Ministries, SOE and private sector and thanked them for the hard work thus far. He commended all government Ministries and Private Sector for the remarkable results and achievements throughout the previous year as he noted the numerous developments which have been implemented (both in Upolu and Savaii) during the parliamentary term.

The Member commended the Minister for Work, Transport and Infrastructure for all the developments established in his constituency and highlighted that his constituency is one of the vulnerable areas to high waves and requested the following to be implemented:

- The need for seawalls as the impacts of wave crashing along the coastline is a current problem;
- Access roads in the constituency need to be maintained and fixed;
- Roads in Saipipi, Sa'a'sa'ai and Faga need immense reconstruction as well as side road lights;
- The Tuasivi hospital continues to need renovation work, particularly the health facilities and the morgue need major repairs since it is the main hospital catering for the health needs of the people in Savaii.

The Member concluding by acknowledging his constituency for their support.

viii. FAASOOTAULOA Pati Taulapapa- Associate Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries

The Member commenced his speech by thanking the Lord for removing the measles from Samoa and admitted that he was worrisome when the outbreak began. He expressed his disappointment with the new electoral boundaries arrangement and advised the Minister to look into the new boundaries for his constituency.

The Member concluded by requesting to the government for construction of seawall for his constituency to combat sea level rise.

ix. SEIULI Ueligitone Seiuli- Associate Minister for Works, Transport and Infrastructure

The Member began by addressing the House, PM Cabinet, Associate Ministers and government ministries. In regards to the Appropriation Bill (No.1), the Member congratulated the Minister for tabling the budget and conveyed his support.

He applauded the Government for new road repairment from Toamua to Malua and towards the Airport as well as major projects in progress such as the Vaisigano Bridge, the Sapapalii bridge and the new bridge at Maliolio.

x. TUIFAASISINA Misa Lisati Leleisiuao Palemene- Associate Minister for MCIL/MPE

The Member firstly stated his support for the Budget however, stated a few concerns and requests to the following Ministries:

- MNRE- seawalls are needed for Faala Palauli due to its vicinity being close to strong sea waves approaching the shore;
- MWTI- there is a need for road development in Vailoa and Faala;
- Tourism- stated that there are a few tourist attractions in his constituency and made known the Assembly that there is one new tourist development in his constituency which is shifting of rocks where stories are being foretold;

- In regards to Traffic congestion- the member suggested to solve this issue that occurs every morning on the strip roads of Vaimoso through to the town area by establishing mini bus stops whereby instead of having to go to town to catch further buses, the buses that come from Vaitele can go straight to the destinations without going to the central bus station. He further queried the government whether it is possible to rearrange lanes to prevent traffic;
- MOH- commended the Hon Minister and her Ministry for their endless support and efforts during the measles outbreak for his constituency and boasted that none of his constituents were affected.

xi. TAEFU Lemi- Associate Minister for Natural Resources and Environment

The member greeted the House, Le Ao o le Malo and his good lady and Samoa in all her honorific salutations. He then requested for road developments and encouraged the responsible Ministry to prioritise these road works.

To the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture- in regards to teacher registration, the member queried whether there is a simplified process for long term service teachers so that they do not have to provide a reference for their registration.

The Member concluded his speech by expressing gratitude to his constituency for their support.

xii. PESETA Vaifou Tevagaena- Associate Minister for Prime Minister and Cabinet

The Associate Minister greeted the Cabinet, Members of Parliament, representatives of respective Government Ministries. He expressed the fact that his heart still aches when he thinks about the effects of the measles outbreak on our people especially our beloved children and questioned whether this was a sign from heaven. He urged the members that now is not the time to point fingers and blame our local health staff, nor do we need a Commission of Inquiry into the issue as it was a god given curse.

He then compared the local tragedy to that of Africa where the region itself lost at least 6,000 lives from measles. The member concluded by stating his support for the Bill.

**Proceedings were adjourned for
normal Parliament recess at 8:12pm and resumed at 9:06pm**

xiii. FAUMUINA TIATIA FAAOLATANE Liuga- Member for Palauli le Falefa, Deputy Chairperson for Finance and Expenditure Committee

The Deputy Chairperson commended his constituency for their support and prayers; acknowledged the Hon PM, his Cabinet and respective Ministries for their collective work throughout the years.

He then spoke towards the Ministry of Health in regards to the measles outbreak and stated that everything happens for a reason, and from this, plans can be developed and formulated from it for the future. He then conveyed his condolences to affected families.

The Member commended the Associate Minister for Women Community and Social Development in regards of the useful survey that was undertaken by the MWCSO during the measles outbreak; he apologised for the postponement of an opening ceremony of a project as it happened nearing the General Elections at the time and did not want to seem as it was part and parcel of his campaign for the elections. He advised the Minister to let the Member know when they are about to open a project in their constituency so they can be more prepared for it (at least 2 weeks prior to the planned event).

The member then referred to the budget as being easy to read as they are just numbers however the reasons behind them are important. For instance:- the allocation of 64,000 to the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Labour is to facilitate the operations of the regional seasonal employment Office in Australia; \$92,000 is to assist with the relocation of the MJCA from Tuasivi to Salelologa (a very valid reason for easy access of residence in Savaii); another important appropriation is to increase the number of Judges for the Lands and Titles; \$10,000 appropriated to the MCR to install a new system to assist with collecting information on taxes earned by individual businesses so as to increase revenue collection for government; \$250,000 to pay out scholarships for families who cannot afford school fees; provided that the student meets the criteria's to attain a scholarship; the Member spoke on the amount of \$158,073 appropriated to the Ministry of Police to fund the Police Academy at Tafaigata (this is useful to cut down costs from Peace keeping missions). In regards to recruitment of Police, he perceived that the majority of applicants are usually people looking for employment and requested to strengthen the criteria's of qualification.

The Member advised the Minister of Works on the appropriate categorization of requests for access roads; as there are certain roads which can be funded by the Climate Change Fund such as the roads for Vaiaata and Patamea.

OLO Fiti Afoa Vaai- Member for Salega East

Recalled what had been mentioned by the Member of an approximation of \$100million, whether these amounts are estimates because we have several developments yet there seems to be a lot of money there with government.

FAUMUINA TIATIA FAAOLATANE Liuga- Member for Palauli le Falefa, Deputy Chairperson for Finance and Expenditure Committee

The Member responded that he is recalling an amount of savings that was found when he was part of the Committee and the funds calculated amounted to approximately 100 million. He further stated that the Minister of Finance should give the surplus amount from the previous year budget to fund the many requests for access roads. He further urged the Minister to construct these access roads as this is a means to increase development within constituencies; he requested to develop the access roads for Sili due to the fact that the village has fertile soil for the productivity of more organic crops that can be marketed to earn more revenue.

In regards to funding from donors to build school buildings, donors assistance of 300,000 not sufficient as there are additional classrooms for computing, etc.; with regards to the road at Tanumalala, the member suggested to the Minister of Works to reconstruct a shorter route rather than having to take the long route because it is a cost saving measure. The member relayed options to the relevant Minister to do this- either allow SLC to not pay dividend and assign SLC to construct the road or give LTA the duty to fix the road. He also admitted that there are too many potholes on the roads of his constituency and this will greatly affect the number of tourists visiting tourist attractions in that area.

The member referred to an electoral ad aired on television seeming to blame the Member of Parliament for not resolving the issue of potholes and questioned what can a Member of Parliament do when numerous requests are being put forth but still no response from government. He further suggested that an appropriation should be given directly to the Tourism industry to develop roads which lead to historical sites rather than including such funds under the budget of the Minister for Works because once funds run low for the Minister then he will use the appropriation to develop the roads for historical sites for other urgent development needs.

xiv. ALIIMALEMANU Alofa Tuuau- Member for Alataua West, Chairperson for the Finance and Expenditure Committee

The Chairperson of the Finance and Expenditure Committee asserted that the deputy chairperson for their committee already gave a summary of the budget therefore, she will not further speak on this matter. however, she would like to firstly acknowledge the work implemented by the respective Government Ministries. She then acknowledged her constituency including the clergy because it was their support and prayers that calmed the storm.

Aliimalemanu stated that during trying times the question often asked is, "who is to blame?" as leaders of the nation chosen by its people - the blame therefore falls on its leaders. however, our people should not forget that we are a nation always in God's favor- lessons were learnt from the tragic outbreak which Samoa faced.

She then urged the government to formulate and implement a Quality Parenting Program to teach young mothers from protecting their surrounding such as physical danger and encourage them to get their children vaccinated. Furthermore, such a program will aim to inform and educate mothers/parents/guardians of the importance of immunization, healthy living, healthy eating choices and simply give children the best start in life.

She reverted to Supplementary Bill and stated its importance and the opportunity to scrutinize whether government spending was in line with what they intended to do - it is also an opportune moment to ensure checks and balances of the State were in play (Committee scrutinizing Government) to ensure transparency and accountability. Furthermore, she acknowledged the Ministry and the Minister of Finance for the foresight in preparing a well-thought budget. The overall budget indicates that it continues to improve which is a splendid trend. Pleasant to note that the level of debt has also decreased to approx. 46%.

She addressed some of the requests from her constituency: acknowledged the road works at Neiafu, as well as thanked the government's initiative to add another vessel travelling in

between Upolu and Savaii and suggested whether passengers during the two days of general election can travel to Savaii to vote without payment given that it will be difficult to differentiate the purpose of their travel from Upolu to Savaii. The Chairperson noted the concern raised by the member for Salega East regarding its road works which were included in the budget for 2017/2018 however this has yet to be implemented. She then noted that in the past the LTA provided a list of the roads which were scheduled for development, this has not been done since and suggests that this practice continue.

She addressed the need for a new school building for her constituency and noted that the distance for the poor children to get to school is quite a far and requests the Minister of Works to look into a way to minimize the distance and to make it easier for the children to get to school. She also suggested whether it is possible for the Minister to ask the banks for the provision of ATM machines mainly for their rural villages in Savaii to avoid teachers travelling from her constituency to Salelologa just to collect their salaries during pay days.

She noted that there is a decrease in loans and therefore requested whether another top-up can be made to ensure funding for the developments needed especially new school buildings for her constituency. She concluded by addressing her constituency and thanked them for their support and urged them to look forward to what the future will bring for their constituency.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE- HON PRIME MINISTER- Susuga Hon. Tuilaepa Dr. Sailele Malielegaoi

The Leader of the House commended the members for their useful thoughts and stated that this budget is only allocating 23.6m to accommodate developments from to date until June 2021, and it is minute. This practice was established in 1999 in order to simplify the format of our budget which was amended from Jan- Dec to Jul - June.

The Hon PM stated that there has never been a time when the main budget is the only budget needed for development of Samoa - a supplementary is commonly prepared because during the financial year unforeseen circumstances [or sometimes natural disasters] occur which take a toll on the budget and therefore raising the need for more funds to complete a project. He asserted that the Government has two objectives when compiling the budget: i) the Government always make sure that there is enough money to pay debts and fund government expenditure and ii) to run the country in terms of its development because development creates employment opportunities and income.

He then stated that if there are any unforeseen circumstances that was not noted in the budget, there is a reserve amount within the budget which the Government can utilize for unexpected situations such as the measles outbreak. The Hon PM noted that the Constitution of the independent State of Samoa provides Parliament or Government the authority to utilise funds from the reserve.

The PM went on to clarify that the funds we ask to fund specific projects, these funds goes straight to funding these projects, we do not use these funds for other projects that are not covered under these funds. He then elaborated on the importance of the principles of accountability and transparency (thus the importance of providing reports to Parliament for

Committee scrutiny to ensure monies spent and earned is accounted for and clearly explained as to where it came from and where it went. He also mentioned the importance of the independence of the Office of the Auditor General in its role to check and confirm all of Government's spending; there was also mention of the Ombudsman Office which is another means to seek justice and remedy from corrupt practices within the workplace.

He noted that the majority of Members put forth requests that were repetitive- noting the need for road construction and access roads and compared this to a record that repeats itself. He then attempted to clarify that there are two major things one should consider when thinking of developments: balancing economic development with social development and both are interdependent- for instance one needs to develop roads to enable other developments. He pinpointed to the importance of donor assistance and that Samoa needs them- we cannot live on our own. Acknowledged government partners who lend assistance to government such as AGRA and other international partners- EU, WB and etc.

The Hon PM stated that there are various donors and assistance from overseas nations, some assistance is not included in the budget as it is directly from JICA for development projects in certain villages or constituencies. He asserted that cabinet and Government will not rest, they will keep on working and seeking more opportunities for Samoa's development.

He then addressed the word "One party state" mentioned by some of the Members during their speech is not a nice word- Samoa has a unique system of government. He mentioned that the mindset of needing an opposition party to effectively perform the functions of parliament in terms of checks and balances is incorrect - as it is evidenced in the current parliament whereby regardless of whether the member is from the HRPP party, benefits such as vehicle, phones and others (which are afforded to Associate Ministers) are not provided to these members who will become Committee members and scrutinize the government. He mentioned that there was a Committee established which introduced the formation of this democracy: after the PM and his Cabinet members were elected, the rest were identified as Associate Ministers however, this did not look democratic thus the current formation whereby all those Members belonging to the HRPP Party without government portfolio will be Committee members who will scrutinize government. He stressed on the Separation of Powers whereby the three branches of government: Executive, Parliament and Judiciary each are given powers however all act as check and balances for one another- this is what Samoa continues to maintain.

Proceedings were adjourned
at 11.04pm and will resume on Thursday 23rd January 2020 at 9:00am