

DISCLAIMER

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DAY 5

PART B
5:58pm

Monday 31st January 2022

v. **Afioga VAELE Paiaaua Iona Paiaaua Sekuini** - Chairperson for Finance and Expenditure Committee and Member for Gagaifomauga 2

The Chairperson noted that the Supplementary Appropriation Bill only provides for eight Ministries. He then expressed gratitude to donors for their continuous financial support to Samoa's further development. He noted some members commenting that the Supplementary was "small money", however, that was not the view of the Finance and Expenditure Committee. The Supplementary contains millions of tala and numerous developments can be made from this money. It is \$1million and many things can come from this so called small money. The Chairperson noted that the Supplementary reflects Government's initiative to counter the effects of the Pandemic. He further noted that the Government is adamant that its services continue under these trying times thus the Supplementary Bill.

The Chairperson then continued to note the following appropriations for the specific Ministries and Government Offices provided in the Bill:

SCHEDULE ONE:	MAF -	\$320,000
	MCIL -	\$20,000
	MOF -	\$4,339,713
	MFAT -	\$516,129
	MNRE -	\$493,719
	POLICE -	\$480,410
	MWTI -	\$4.1Million
	OCLA -	\$10,349,971

The Committee recommended to approve the appropriation of \$320k for the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries; he also urged the Ministries to manage finances well as well as to be accountable for all its financials, encouraged ministries to practice transparency and accountable practices.

The Member concluded his speech by acknowledging his constituency for voting him in and for their support. He also addressed his church minister and faletua for their prayers and the encouragement to have faith and forbearance. He then wished everyone best of luck

Government Responses Commence

i. Afioga Hon FIAME Naomi Mataafa – Hon Prime Minister

The Hon Prime Minister greeted all who were present and those listening in to the proceedings of Parliament. Conveyed appreciation to the Finance and Expenditure Committee for their report.

Hon FIAME suggested to the Hon Speaker that usual order of business in the Assembly affords the report to be read during Consideration in detail stage, however it may be an appropriate time to change this procedure and read the Committee report before second reading deliberations commence. The Hon PM addressed the recommendations put forth by the leader of opposition and the process involved during the process of state of emergencies. Hon PM highlighted that the Supplementary Bill only provides for eight ministries and further asserted that the respective Ministers for the Ministry's in the supplementary will only respond according because while all other Ministers may take note of all requests pertaining to their Ministries.

Hon FIAME stressed the importance of adhering with policies and following due process. She then urged members to express fruitful ideas to build upon the core policies of the Government. Rather than making requests for road developments, seawalls, etc (which is the usual speech Members make during Main Budget and Supplementary). The Hon PM did not discourage Members from voicing their constituency request however urged to consider the percentage Government invests into Infrastructure such as setting priorities and assisting Government in setting priorities.

In regards to issues raised and requests made to the Minister for Women, Community and Social Development, the Hon PM noted that she will be speaking on behalf of the Minister who is seeking medical treatments overseas. On the issue of the million tala project, jested the leader of the opposition now holds the paper for any query about it. She then stated that given the short time for the government to prepare the budget an allocation of 200k is provided for any developments for respective constituencies, noting that the rational reason behind this initiative was to assist with developments within constituencies.

ii. Susuga Hon LAAULI Leuatea Polataivao Fosi – Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries

The Hon Member thanked Mr Speaker for the opportunity to speak and greeted the House. The Hon Minister reiterated that it is important for Samoa to hear the findings and recommendations of the report by the Committee in regards to the Supplementary appropriation. He iterated that the agriculture and fisheries sector is a pivotal source of income for Samoa. Hon Minister noted that in uncertain times, it is important for our people to revert to cultivating the land and fishing our seas for daily consumption and to earn a living as we have the source needed to cater for our needs. He expressed gratitude to all Members for their comments and recommendations regarding his Ministry.

The Hon Minister noted that there were queries regarding the utilization of the 200k in the Supplementary Bill, which he confirmed that it is envisaged to fund the packing and warehouse site in Savaii to store goods awaiting export. The Hon Minister was pleased to note the success of the Talomua program in certain villages. The Hon Member commented on the issue raised by the Member for Vaa o Fonoti in regards to the planting and marketing of kava, therefore other villages can hold Talomua while this constituency can hold Avamua. In regards to the center in Otahuhu, the Minister clarified that the Ministry continues to look at markets overseas to secure a stable market for local crops to be sold.

- **Interjection – Afioga LUPEMATASILA Galumalemana Tologata Tile Leia – Member for Falelatai & Samatau:**

The Member reminder the Hon Minister on compulsory testing for illicit drugs and relayed gratitude to the Minister for pointing out that SROS is able to conduct these testing. He then informed the Minister that SROS also requires Government to take the leading role in initiating this important practice.

- **Interjection – Afioga FUAAVA Suluimalo Amataga – Member for Aleipata Itupa i Luga:**

The Member reminder the Hon Minister on the issue of using harmful chemicals for fertiliser and for clearing land, the Member noted that these chemicals threaten the quality of soil, which will in turn take a toll on the quality of vegetation and crops grown on the land.

- **Interjection – Afioga Hon LAUTAFI Fio Selafi Purcell – Member for Satupaitea**

The Hon Member conveyed gratitude to the Minister for reconsidering the feed mill initiative and iterated that it was a practice done in the past but due to the lack of raw materials it was unsuccessful. He then mentioned the Manioka fruit which was high in

supply, however, due to the mice destroying the crops, the farmers gave up. The Hon Member then queried the Minister whether there was a plan to reaffirm that the supply is consistent so as to ensure the sustainability of the feed mill.

**Proceedings were set aside at 7:45pm;
and resumed at 8:20pm**

- **Interjection - Afioga MAULOLO Tavita Aмосa** - Member for Sagaga 2

The Member requested if his constituency is included in the appropriation of the \$120k as they have a market.

- **Interjection – Tofa Hon LAUOFO Pierre Laufo** – Member for Satupaitea

The Hon Member noted the importance of a testing place where community can be tested to keep the public informed. The Hon Member also noted the efforts of the SROS in finding a testing method and advised to have this free testing.

Susuga Hon LAAULI Leuatea Polataivao Fosi – Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries
(cont.)

The Hon Minister continued by making known the developments of the SROS Office. He also touched upon the feed mill as mentioned by certain members, and asserted that the Nuu nursery will stock the resources needed for the feed mill. Hon Minister iterated on the importance of commercialisation and mechanisation. Also noted that a shipment from New Zealand is scheduled to bring in 10,000 chicken for the Frankie poultry farm.

On the issue of testing from SROS, the Minister noted that certification is in progress and the Office is awaiting instant testing to ensure results are received in efficiently. Hon Minister noted that there are plans in the pipeline to separate the two sectors, Agriculture and Fisheries. Hon Minister explained that there were 2 canneries at the Matautu Harbour from China which have also proven beneficial to the Government. He also acknowledged the Afega village with the fish market and asserted that the ministry will support and collaborate with the development of the fish market. In regards to a black bug which was also mentioned by some members, Hon minister asserted that the Ministry will look into this. The Hon Minister then acknowledged all the efforts of the Offices and Ministries within his portfolio.

iii. Tofa Hon OLO Fiti Afoa Vaai - Minister for Works, Transport and Infrastructure

The Hon Minister addressed the House, acknowledged all Members who spoke on his portfolio and asserted that he took note of all requests, issues and concerns raised by Members. He also assured Members that he will continue with visits around the island to inspect road works which are needed and will prioritize accordingly, noting that there are certain villages who have no access roads.

In regards to water supply, noted that there are four districts that have received water supply here in Upolu and one in Savaii; from these districts, approximately 5,000 people now have access to water. The Hon Minister reminded Members that his ministry did not receive an appropriation in the Supplementary, so they can only do so much. There was also mention of a borehole in Moamoa which reserves water for the Apia area. He touched upon villages who use Independent Water Scheme (IWS) that are now requesting to use the water provided by SWA due to health and safety reasons. The IWS is not safe for consumption especially during heavy rainfall, the Authority welcomes this requests and hopes that the Village Council are in unison with the Ministry.

In regards to the wharf in town, although few members spoke on this, the Minister noted that 3million dividend was received in 2020-2021 mainly from the trans-shipment of empty containers. The Hon Minister noted the request by the Deputy Speaker and asserted that marine floating wharf will be placed for Manono as it is suitable when considering the high tides.

The Hon minister provided an update from the Samoa Shipping Services; there is currently 350 Samoans working on oversea ships while 29 are awaiting to go overseas in February and March. Furthermore, there were 77 students who recently graduated from the Maritime School. The Minister further confirmed the decrease in fares by the Samoa Shipping Corporation, while also highlighting a favorable return in their revenue. Also noted that one member queried the replacement of the Lady Naomi and confirmed that this will take place towards the end of the year.

The Hon Minister commended the MWTI for their on-going work and projects such as; the waterfront, Vaisigano, Sinamoga, Moamoa bridge which assists with controlling the river flow during torrential rain. In regards to the Samoa Airport Authority, the Minister asserted that the Authority currently has a machine mainly to scan the human body which also assist the hospital with detecting the temperature level of passengers coming into Samoa.

Hon Minister provided an update on EPC, and clarified on the issue raised by one of the Member's specifically regarding the process on setting electricity prices. The Minister clarified by citing several provisions in the Electric Power Corporation Act which mandates the Corporations practices. Hon Minister also clarified on the Smart Meter initiative and asserted that Corporation are awaiting a response from the American company that operates the software that fixes this issue. he reiterated that the Smart Meters are on hold as the company needs to explain and be

transparent with their software in order to show units rather than just the dollar value as what we have now. Hon Minister further clarified that if the smart meters are not up to standard, then there is no harm in going back to the old system of Cash power.

Hon Minister also noted that there are four (4) free-phase transformers which have been distributed to 4 factories for the generation of power. Stated that in order for a factory to acquire a transformer, payment of 50,000 must be made. Hon Minister recalled conversations with the current CEO of the EPC regarding the feasibility of a 20% reduction of electricity; to which the CEO responded that it is a move which has been much delayed. With regards to street lights, Hon Minister noted that 2million allocated to pay electricity of street lights is not enough since there is an increase of street lights.

- **Interjection – Afioga LUPEMATASILA Tologata Tile** - Member for Falelatai and Samatau

The Member who was also the former CEO for EPC asserted that he too knows of the provisions of the legislations which mandate the EPC, with regards to the smart-meters project, the Member commented that since the inception of this project he has not experienced any problems with the new system.

- **Interjection - Afioga Peseta Vaifou Tevagaena** - Member for Faasaleleaga No. 5

The Member noted that there are numerous projects however with the supplementary, it will not be able to cater for all. Further reminded the Minister about the 10% retention policy he mentioned during his address.

- **Interjection - Afioga Hon Lautafi Fio Purcell** - Member for Satupaitea

The Hon Member raised concern regarding funding for a similar climate change fund such as the Green Climate Fund for climate adaptive projects such as seawalls. The Hon Member queried any similar assistance for seawalls as his constituency is vulnerable to coastal hazards. Further queried the PASO guidelines and was unsure of the changes in their report during the previous government and current government. In relation to aircraft, called to present the papers on the reason why we could not bring the aircraft so that everyone will understand.

**Tofa Hon OLO Fiti Afoa Vaai - Minister for Works, Transport and Infrastructure
(cont)**

The Hon Minister confirmed that there is a climate fund for projects as mentioned by the Member. On the issue of the PASO report, the Minister read aloud the report by the PASO noting that due

to certain factors, a certificate of 'air worthiness' cannot be given to the Samoa Airways. On the issue of 10% retention as mentioned by one of the Members, the Hon Minister asserted that this will be taken into consideration in due time.

- **Hon Prime Minister – Interjection:**

The Hon PM sought further clarification from the Minister as to why there is currently a 10% retention rate on maintenance work with outside contractors; then went further to explain that the rationale of 10% retention is to ensure contractors work is durable, to avoid continuous costly maintenance, hence the 10% retention to factor future costs for maintenance.

- **Afioga PESETA Vaifou Tevagaena – Member for Faasaleleaga No.5**

The Member further clarified on his intention to impose a 10% retention for the Government as it ensures the Government can also claim maintenance costs from projects funded from overseas donors or grants, case in point was the Alaoa Dam Project of 100million, the retention of 10% will equate to 10million for the Government's maintenance costs which can be utilised to cater for any defects the project may have.

**Proceedings adjourned at 10pm; and
will reconvene at 9:30am on Tuesday 1st February 2022**