

DISCLAIMER

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Wednesday 22nd June 2022

PART B
6pm

- I. GOVERNMENT ORDERS OF THE DAY – Reading of Bills (DAY 2)**
 - 1. SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION BILL (NO.2) 2021/2022 – debate on second reading**
 - 2. APPROPRIATION BILL 2022/2023 – debate on second reading**

Tofa FESOLAI Apulu Tuigamala – Member for Aana Alofi No.1

The Member requested for a fishing boat to help his constituency; furthermore, he requested for road repairs as proper road marking for school crossing, for the safety of children. Moreover, the need for more access roads in his constituency. Then requested for proper water supply for certain villages in his constituency

Tofa Hon. OLO Fiti Afoa Vaai - Minister of Works

The Hon Minister clarified that there are new projects which the Ministry will implement in the next FY, additionally the Hon Minister asserted that the Government will only focus on repairing and maintaining of the main roads.

i. Tofa FESOLAI Apulu Tuigamala – Member for Aana Alofi No.1

The Member highlighted the need for a sporting field and requested land under the Samoa Land Corporation to provide a sporting field for his constituency.

ii. Afioga AIONO Tile Gafa - Member for Aana Alofi 2

Addressed Samoa in all her honorific salutations, Members of Parliament and those listening in. He then put emphasis on the rationale behind their calling as Members is for the betterment of our country especially during these unprecedented times with the pandemic. He accentuated that the cost of living has also increased especially the price of fuel.

- Minister of Health

The Member highlighted that Samoa had plans to prevent any diseases from entering our country; however, we are currently living with Covid. The member further stressed that although we are living with COVID, we should continue to find ways to help eliminate the virus and minimize more affected passengers from entering our shores, as well as opening our borders to other viruses. The Member queried whether the government will take the same approach when other variants of covid enter our country. He highlighted that the other variant of Covid is worse than the omicron that we have been affected with, therefore questioning the preparedness of Samoa as a nation to combat the spread of these virus.

- Minister of Education, Sports and Culture

The Member commended the Minister and Ministry for their work. The member mentioned the promise to increase teachers' salaries, further queried when this will take place. In terms of money appropriated for sports, he questioned why there is no money appropriated for rugby, specifically the improvement of our national 7's team. The Member commended the management of the Samoa 7s and the players for their efforts in the previous tournaments and encouraged them to win in the remaining legs.

The Member further highlighted the increase in cost of living taking fuel as an example where bus drivers expressed their concerns of not gaining any profit from their operations. In this regard, the Member stressed to the government and the Assembly about the importance of Living Responsibly and living within ones means. The Member also commended the Minister of Finance for the hard work in preparing the budget. He then continues to acknowledge the support of his constituency. He then requested the Minister of Works for road works in his constituency. He addressed the Minister of Natural Resources and Environment and informed him of poor conditions in his constituency which needs attention.

iii. Afioga LUPEMATASILA Galumalemana Tologata Togia Tile Leia - Member for Falelatai and Samatau

The Member addressed the house, all members of parliament and addressed Samoa in all her honorific salutations. The member highlighted that his constituency's requests have already been announced last year thus, he will not cover them again also, their requests were sent to ministers via letters.

The Member commended the Minister and management of Finance as well as all CEOs and management of Ministries and SOEs for their efforts in budgeting and distribution of the overall budget. He emphasized that Samoa's economy has drastically dropped and expressed his concerns regarding the reasons behind the effect of the rise of the cost of living.

In regards to the expected revenue which the Government hopes to increase when borders officially open next month; however, allocations for tourism in the budget has decreased. The Member queried the reduction, posing a question how the Authority will be able to get more tourists to come in the country if they do not have enough appropriated to the Ministry for marketing purposes. The Member further highlighted the increase by 20% of the airfares declared by Air NZ which is expensive for our people, further posing why an airline for our nation was important. The member stressed that Air NZ recently publicized the increase of airfares by 20%. In addition, the USD is expected to increase in value/worth. This will make it harder and more expensive for our people to travel and afford flights overseas.

The member continues to explain that we are living off remittances from overseas, and this is helping our families and communities especially contributing to the economic growth of Samoa. He then advised the Government to continue on with the RSE projects as this is another source of income not only for families but for our country. The member further queried whether it is an appropriate time to transfer traffic from Police to LTA, emphasizing that it is more expensive if this service is under a corporation. Insisting that the government should still run this service through the Ministry of Police.

The Member also touched on the new virus called the 'monkeypox' he explains, that there is not enough research to state whether this is a severe or minor virus; however, Samoa should be prepared and vigilant with its safety and precautionary measures. He stated that if an outbreak of this virus were to occur, Samoa will most likely go on lockdown, thus the importance for Government to be prepared. The Member asserted that there is another tax on top of imported food and products from overseas called 'sin tax' the Member expressed concern on imposing another tax in such challenging time.

The member queried the government on how they will address the problem of inflation which is 3% caused by the pandemic.

Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries – Interjection:

The Minister on a point of clarification, interjected to inform the Member regarding the sin tax.

Tofa Hon LAUOFO Fonotoe Nuafesili Laufo

The Member clarified that in the Minister of Finance Budget Address, Sin tax is mentioned which is tax on junk/unhealthy food, noting that this was a way to address health problems in the country.

Minister of Works, Transport and Infrastructure – Interjection:

The Minister clarified that with the pandemic and war between Ukraine and Russia, has affected the world and Samoa, with the high cost of living and also tax on imported goods from overseas. He then stated that the 3% inflation, the half of this which is 1.5 is from the shipment or (importations) of products to and fro and this includes Samoa. He then stated that this is happening because of the pandemic.

Speaker's Ruling:

To remove the words 'agasala' as a translation for SIN tax. The speaker read out the samoan and english version of the Sin tax from the Minister of Finance's report. Further clarified that Sin tax is to combat communicable disease and there is no mention of the word agasala.

Minister of Finance – Clarification

The Hon Minister clarified to members that the term Sin tax was taken from the WHO, used for taxes on alcohol and tobacco products.

Afioga LUPEMATASILA Galumalemana Tologata Togia Tile Leia - Member for Falelatai and Samatau (cont.)

The member advised the minister for EPC to encourage the use of 'renewable energy', taking into account the current situation of global oil/fuel supply thus, we should encourage the usage of renewable energy so we won't be so dependent on the global supply of oil/fuel for electricity.

OLO Fiti Vaai - Minister MWTI

The Minister clarified that the previous government halted numerous projects, including those mentioned by the Member.

Afioga LUPEMATASILA Galumalemana Tologata Togia Tile Leia - Member for Falelatai and Samatau (cont.)

The Member concluded his speech, and queried the salary of front-line employees and advised that the funds received from donor countries through COVID, must be used to pay for employees' salaries with nurses as priority. Furthermore, the member queried the status for the payment of salaries for the 3 additional women seats who have not received their salaries.

iv. Afioga PESETA Vaifou Tevagaena: Faasaleleaga No.5

-The member commended the Minister of Finance, and the ministry in preparing the tabled budget. The member queried the Government on plans to counter the increasing cost of living. Then suggested the creation of more job opportunities for our people. The Member recommends the Cabinet to initiate the projects which were planned by the previous HRPP Government, to push for more opportunities for our people. Afioga PESETA advised to look at the increasing the salaries of the public servants to match the cost of living, thus the need to bring in our own airline for cheaper travelling options.

Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries – Interjection:

The minister clarified to the member for Faasaleleaga No.5 that the government cannot do anything with the increasing cost of living and airfares, it is inevitable because the fuel for aircrafts are from war-torn countries like Ukraine. Also stated that the 20% increase in the cost of airfares announced by Air New Zealand is out of the Government's control. Further, advised the member for Faasaleleaga No.5 to refrain from making statements implying that the new Government is not introducing programs/projects to address the cost of living. The Hon Minister highlighted that the government signed the 20% decrease in water and electricity bills to assist families with the increase cost of living, however, the airfares are out of our control.

Afioga PESETA Vaifou Tevagaena: Faasaleleaga No.5 (cont.)

The Member queried an update of the bee program which was initiated by the Minister for Agriculture; to which the Hon Minister stood to clarify, that the 'Bee Project' is in progress highlighting that there are boxes in Gagaemauga No.1 for hive bodies to make honey. Not only that the bees are for honey but also help with the production of other agriculture products as these bees contribute to pollination and reproduction.

The Member mentioned the million tala project and acknowledged the Minister for Women on the initiative. He then reminded the Minister for requests to repair roads at the villages of Puapua, Lago and Masaga, as well as, their request to build a seawall at Pu'apu'a considering climate change and sea level rise.

**Proceedings suspended at 7:45pm; and
resumed at 8:32pm;**

9. Afioga PESETA Vaifou Tevagaena – Member for Faasaleleaga No.5 (cont.)

The Member corrected the claims on the debt of Samoa, noting that the previous Government operated within set debt ratio and did not exceed 20% (1 billion) during the previous government, as it has been regulated that debt should not be more than 20 percent.

In regards to the issue of tax, the Member noted the importance of everyone paying tax, it is vital that everyone in the country pays tax considering the impacts of the increasing cost of living. The Member further stressed that the government should be mindful with their approach on how to assist and develop our nation during such challenging times. The Member further pressed that global challenges are inevitable and out of our control, thus the government should consider mandatory taxation on all paying employees and individuals earning an income as this is beneficial for the country.

Afioga NIUAVA Eti Malolo - Chairman Economic Sector Committee (Clarification)

The Chairman clarified that the Committee deliberations are nearing completion then a report will be submitted to Parliament with recommendations

Afioga PESETA Vaifou Tevagaena: Faasaleleaga No.5 (cont.)

In regards to the Ministry for Justice, the Member touched on the current delay in carrying out court cases (LTC) because of issues discussed in parliament. The member urged the Minister to review this issue and to resume with court cases especially matters involving land and titles. The Member advised the government to consider the impacts of the increasing cost of living on our people; noting the increase in fuel prices affect the taxi and bus operators. He then suggested to increase the minimum wage to allow the public to adapt with the cost of living.

v. Afioga AGASEATA Valelio Tanuvasa Peto- Member for Aana Alofi 3

The Member commended the Minister of Finance and her Ministry for the tabled budget and for prioritizing the people. He then continued by addressing specific Ministers:

- Minister of Works, Transport and Infrastructure:
The Member recommended a law that would provide for the development of solar panels for renewable energy on office buildings, school buildings, churches, etc...
- Minister of Women Community and Social Development:
The member commended the Ministry on the 1million initiative for the development of constituencies and their people.
- Minister of Education Sports and Culture:
The member encouraged the provision of TVET schools to educate students with the use of machines and equipment that will assist each constituency with agricultural projects

implemented from the 1 million project. He further encouraged the apprenticeship programs to be offered in all schools. The Member urged the public to make use of opportunities to further enhance their skills and knowledge, as the development of the nation is a collective effort.

- Accident Compensation Corporation:

The Member queried the deductions made by each employee and employer to the Corporation, and queried the possibility of gifted members a portion from his/her contribution. The Member asserted that the member contributes every pay, yet cannot be rewarded if he/she has never been in an accident. The member mentioned NPF as an example of policies which provide benefits for its contributors.

- Samoa Land Corporation:

The Member made known to the Minister that his constituency has limited land space for projects and developments to utilize the 1 million initiative.

The Member queried the 10k allocated for fale komiti/ womens committee, and whether this is 10k per committee house, noting Leulumoega has 3 Committee House.

vi. Tofa Seuamuli Fasi Toma - Member for Gagaemauga No.2

The Member greeted all Members of the Assembly, His Highness the Head of State, Council of Deputies, the Judiciary, Clerk and Office of the Legislative Assembly, and Samoa in all her honorific salutations. The Member then addressed specific Ministries.

- Minister of Finance

The Member acknowledged the Minister and her Ministry for compiling the tabled budget. He then reminded the Minister for their request for a bus for his constituency, and queried on the government assets for Vaipouli college, as it has been 8 years since the closure of the school. The Member requested to demolish the building and utilize the materials (such as roofing iron, foundation, etc) for development purposes in his constituency.

- Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries

The Member commented on the importance of developing our lands and fishing our seas for essential needs as well as a means to counter the increasing cost of living. He further urged the Minister to consider other methods to encourage the people to replant coconuts. Furthermore, the Member asserted that the replantation of coconuts is important as it will help our economy and can be a good product for exportation. The member commended the Talomua program, as it has encouraged people to work on and develop their farms/plantations.

- Minister of Health:

The Member informed the Minister that there is no doctor assigned to the Vaipouli district hospital, then expressed disappointment with the condition of the NKF building in Moto'otua which does not reflect a healthy environment. Acknowledged the efforts of Doctor Fuimaono Aleki who travels to Savaii to look after the patients in critical condition.

- Minister of Police:

The Member reminded the minister of the timely process involved in waiting for a police report which are required for travel, and queried whether there was an easier and more convenient way for people especially those in Savaii to obtain their police reports.

Tofa SEUAMULI Fasi Toma - Member for Gagaemauga No.2 (cont.)

The Member acknowledged the previous Works Minister, for road repairs for his constituency, specifically the road from Satoalepai to Le Lagoto resort in Savaii. He then requested a speed hump to be constructed in front of one of the churches in his constituency, for the safety of Sunday school children. The Member also requested to have 2 trips between Savaii and Upolu and on Sunday.

Hon Minister of Works, Transport and Infrastructure - Clarification

The Minister clarified that there are different dimensions for speed humps, depending on where they are constructed; dimensions vary for schools, churches and families.

Tofa SEUAMULI Toma Fasi - Member for Gagaemauga No 2 (cont.)

The Member concluded his speech by commending several Ministers. He commended the responsible Minister for the RSE Scheme and its assistance to families. He then addressed the Minister for Justice and advised for proper processing of requests/records as it is quite complex when compared to the previous processes which were in place. The Member then commended the Minister for Women for the 1 million fund appropriated for the development of constituencies.

12. Tofa FUIONO Tenina Crichton - Member for Falealupo

The Member began his speech by asserting that the cost of living has increased, especially since Samoa relies heavily on imported goods; he then stated that the solution is in our hands, had we relied on our agricultural crops, developing the land and fishing our oceans, the impacts of the global economy would not be felt severely by some families. The member further commended the Minister of Women for the newly constructed Committee House for his constituency and the availability of necessary resources for the Committee House and related projects. Acknowledged the efforts of the Minister and her Ministry in preparing the budget, and noted the decrease in revenues owed to factors

outside our control. He reminded the House, to remain steadfast and faithful to God who is the source of all good things.

- Minister of Education, Sports and Culture:

The Member requested for a school in his constituency, noting the transportation challenges for students of his constituency, who have to travel to and from Asau for an education. The Member asserted that having schools in each constituency, will counter the challenges associated with students travelling far distance to be educated as well as ensuring the students' safety and security, especially Samoa's daughters.

- Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries:

The Member acknowledged the Hon Minister for his dedication in building the agriculture and fisheries sector, as well as efforts taken by the Ministry to encourage and empower people to earn an income through farming and fishing.

- Minister of Health:

The Member commended the Hon Minister and his Ministry for their tremendous work, and acknowledged the doctor assigned to his district hospital. Then mentioned the need for proper water and electricity supply as there are families without access to water and electricity. He the concluded by acknowledging his support for the tabled budget.

**Proceedings were set aside at 10pm;
And will reconvene at 9:30am on Thursday 23rd June 2022**