

DISCLAIMER

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Wednesday 19th June 2019

7:00pm

PART B (7:00am – 11:00pm)

SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION BILL (NO. 2) 2018/2019 and APPROPRIATION BILL 2019/2020- Debate on second reading (cont.)

i. LEALAILEPULE Rimoni Aiafi, Member for Faleata West (Associate Minister of Communications and Information Technology)

The Member continued his speech that the most integral point that Members should look into is Debt services vision similar to Banks when assessing those eligible to borrow, is whether one can pay their loans. He pinpoints to current statistics of debt percentage for Samoa is at 9 per cent, way below the set standard of 14 per cent for developing countries, meaning that there is much opportunity for Samoa to borrow however this shows government's wise budgeting as they borrow only to fund integral projects. The Member stated that there has been a significant increase in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) since 2006 where it was only 1.3 million but to date it amounts to approximately \$2.6 billion.

The Member addressed the issue with the Lands and Transport Authority (LTA) recent reforms. The fact that the Traffic Division has been removed from LTA to the Police, is a right move, however the member suggests that the licensing and registration of vehicles should remain with the Authority whilst Police focus on law enforcement. In regards to roads, road standards should be raised. In rural areas, the roads are too narrow compared to those in Apia. He added that roads should be standardized which is common sense. The Member also queried, when were engineers employed in the Ministry of Works, Transport and Infrastructure (MWTI); they should be removed as there are engineers employed by relevant Ministries.

OLO Fiti Afoa Vaai, Member for Salega East

The member interjected by stating that the suggestion put forth by the Member to remove engineers from MWTI is invalid given that they are the core Ministry that

implements such activity.

PAPALIITELE Niko Lee Hang, Minister of Works, Transport and Infrastructure

The Minister also interjected on a point of clarification that even though the Lands Transport Authority has its own engineers, it is still required for the Ministry to have engineers.

Tofa LEALAILEPULE Rimoni Aiafi, Member for Faleata West- cont'd

The Member clarified that from his observation, the Ministry's engineers are only there to supervise LTA's engineers, which is an implication that the Ministry lacks trust in their own people. The member commended the work carried out by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF) for exporting good products and fresh vegetables; as well as the work implemented by the Tourism Ministry and suggested that having two airplanes would help increase the number of passengers in our country. The member requested the need to repair the road at Falelauniu.

He spoke to the Minister and the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture and commended him on the work in preparation for the Pacific Games. He noted that there is a lack of teachers and suggested if the Ministry cannot find more teachers locally, perhaps they should look for volunteers from overseas.

To the Minister for Ministry for Revenue, the member noted the issue of escape prisoners and pinpointed that his constituency is the most affected area when it comes to this problem, thus the need to solve this.

ii. TAFUA Maluelue Tafua, Member for Aleipata Itupa i Lalo

The member addressed the issue in regards to the water supply for his constituency and noted that the CEO has assured that this will be considered thus his conveyance of appreciation. He also noted that MWTI does not have enough engineers specialized in monitoring roads and suggested support from overseas to train our local engineers.

Prime Minister- interjection

The PM interjected and stated that the issue raised regarding the need for more engineers is an important matter however, Samoa has numerous engineers but the problem is honesty in their work. This is a similar case with the fact that we have a lot of doctors, lawyers and auditors but most lack commitment. He then suggested that the administration should do conduct follow-ups on the assigned engineers to determine and measure their performance against their given task. The PM stressed the importance of following up on work undertaken by engineers to ensure their effectiveness.

FAUMUINA TIATIA FAAOLATANE Liuga, Member for Palauli Le Falefa

The Member for Palauli le Falefa interjected and supported the suggestion by the Prime Minister stating that local engineers need guidance in their work.

TAFUA Maluelue Tafua, Member for Aleipata Itupa i Lalo- cont'd

The Member requested water supply repairment at Tiavea near the Catholic church; he requested for an emergency test-run in order to be aware of the safe zones during a natural disaster; there is also water supply needs at Satutoa, Samusu and other villages in the member's constituency. The Member also noted that some residents in his constituency still do not have access to television and requested for the Minister of Communications to address the issue. The member also queried whether a set amount has been put aside in the budget to fund the repairment of the road at Saleaumua; he queried that the Finance and Expenditure Committee stated in their report that the CSO from government is \$2 million for EPC and \$2 million for SWA, what are they planning for these funds?; In regards to the Airline, it has been noted that during low peak days, the Samoa Airway plane is almost less than half full, the Tourism Authority should look into ways to ensure that off-peak days for the Airways is still worth the travel; the member complimented the MAF for the \$3,000 that was given to his constituency as part of eradicating rhinoceros beetles project.

PAPALITTLELE Niko Lee Hang, Minister of Works, Transport and Infrastructure

The Member responded that the Ministry is planning to repair the roads and pipeline mentioned by the Member.

AFAMASAGA Lepuiai Rico Tupai, Minister of Communication & Information Technology

The Minister responded that the Ministry is prioritizing its digital project and advised the constituency to have patience, as they will have access once the digital project is implemented.

ALIIMALEMANU Alofa Tuuau, Chairperson of the Finance and Expenditure Committee

The Chairperson responded to the query put forth by the member, the amounts put forth were recommendations for the long run to consider so that the Corporation and the SWA would cater more to the community.

iii. AMITUANAI Fagaivalu Kenrick Samu, Member for Aleipata Itupa i Luga

The Member commended on the development of our airport; He requested the need for water supply in his constituency which was an issue since 2009; the member applauded the Minister of Education and stated that his only request is to provide certificate of commitment for teachers; he expressed gratitude to the Minister of Justice for the Act regarding general elections and requested that the office should enforce one of the provisions in the Act that requires voters to cast their votes where they are residing.

The member further requested to the Minister of Health for a doctor to be based in the rural clinics for 5 days (Monday – Friday); he commended the Police for the work during traffic hours since the reshuffle of duties was implemented; the Member also urged the public to use the services offered by the Public Trust.

Prime Minister

The Prime Minister interjected and stated that the issue the Member is talking about in regards to the issue of Public trust is important. He clarified to the members that when a client who has an account with the Office passes away, the amount will be held by the Office unless there is a will. However, there have been several cases where the deceased client does not have a will and family members would visit me and ask me to use my power as a Prime Minister to attain the deceased client's assets that are rightly theirs. That cannot be done and I simply cannot do that. That is why it is important that all of us should understand this process and how the Public Trust operates, to be more prepared for unforeseen cases.

**Proceedings were set aside at 8:45pm
for recess and resumed at 9:30pm**

iv. LAUOFO FONOTOE NUA FESILI Pierre Laufo, Member for Anoamaa Sisifo

Greeted the members and commended the work put together by the Minister of Finance and his Ministry. The Member noted 3 major projects that were highlighted in the Minister's Budget address and wished to speak on them. The member noted that the project of the construction of a 5 storey building in Savalalo so as to house the Ministries currently at the old government building is a great initiative as it will provide an opportunity for some private sectors thus increase employment opportunities; the member noted that the National Provident Fund's percentage contribution will be increase thus lead to the increase in Soft loan (entitlement) for the public.

The member also noted government's project to build a flea market at Sogi, although this is another good project however roads at Sogi should be widened so as to cater for the population who will be coming in to use the flea market; he also suggested to the Samoa Land Corporation

(SLC) to renovate the Salelologa market as well as refurbish vacant houses for businesses to lease. He spoke on the issue of the Samoa Airways and noted that if our aircraft is well maintained and operated it will help with the developments of our country; commended on the new installed aerobridges given that this was one of the main issues/concern with the current Airport; he noted that the Airport Authority had purchased a system to make international bookings easier for international airlines, although costly (\$300,000) it is very benefitting for the Airline.

The member concluded by advising the responsible Minister to set aside resources to fund the operation of our aircraft and improve its services and commended the CEO and the staff for getting another fleet in such a short time when the current planes were grounded due to international casualties that had occurred at the time.

v. SALAUSA John Ah Ching, Member for Faleata East

The member noted that his speech will focus on the overall budget. The member expressed his confidence in the economy, based on the report from the Ministry of Finance. For instance, when scholarships were not offered to our students, the government immediately stepped in to help and appropriated \$600,000 for scholarships- this is an indication that the government has sufficient funds in its reserve.

The member complimented on each Chief Executive Officers and their staff for their commitment and conveyed his support of the Budget.

vi. PESETA Vaifou Tevaga, Member for Faasaleleaga No.4

The member noted that each clergy has its own laws to abide, however laws proposed by the Government should be followed by the people. The member stressed on the importance of respecting legislation put forth by government. He recommended the Minister for Health to relocate her Office to the Ministry of Health's headquarters so as to make it easier for people to get her approval on matters.

The member concluded by complimenting on the Samoa Airways services as well as offering affordable fares.

vii. TUIFAASISINA Misa Lisati Leleisiuao Palemene, Member for Palauli East

The Member commended the Minister and the Ministry of Finance for the budget, as well as the Finance and Expenditure Committee for their report, thus the support of the budget. He expressed his appreciation towards his constituency for their continuous support and requested road maintenance for Palauli.

Upon commending on the projects implemented by the different Ministries, the member specifically highlighted the Ministry of Education's project called the 'school net' has not been rolled out in his constituency and requested that such project is needed. He acknowledged the impacts of climate change on the country and urged the Minister for Natural Resources and

Environment, to continue to seek projects that will fund efforts to counter the impacts and perhaps diminish the effects of global climate change.

viii. MULIPOLA Leiatava Laki, Member for Aiga i le Tai

The Member noted that his constituency needs proper roads as at the moment, the villages have aligned the roads with limestone until the Ministry can fix it. He recounted an Officials trip where he travelled with the Minister of Tourism and staff for the purpose of observing tourism in Fiji and what can be applied in Samoa, he noted that from the Airport onwards, he was greeted kindly and seems that Fijians are very hospitable people. This is quite the contrast from our local staff at the Airport. The member went on to suggest to the Minister of Tourism to initiate a customer service programme for staff working at the local Airport so as to improve their customer service to visitors, as this is the first impression of our country.

SALA Fata Pinati, Minister of Tourism

The Minister agreed with the Member's statement and further added that he is a strong believer in hospitableness and it is something that the Authority is working to improve.

MULIPOLA Leiatava Laki, Member for Aiga i le Tai- cont'd

The member went on to propose that there should be a representative for Women for part of his constituency as there are now a lot of people living there. He also stated that at the moment he is currently acting as one so as to ensure that village preparations and decorations for the Pacific Games are being rolled out effectively in his constituency.

***Sitting was adjourned at 11:10pm
and to resume at 9:00am, Thursday 20th June 2019***