

**DISCLAIMER**

This Report provides a brief of the Proceedings of Parliament on **Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> February 2021**. While all efforts have been made to provide an informative brief, this information must not be relied upon as an alternative to the official Hansard record of proceedings of Parliament. If you have any specific questions about the Proceedings of Parliament on **Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> February 2021**, you should consult the official Hansard or seek assistance from the Office of the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly.

**Day 12**

**Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> February 2021**

**9:27 am**

Pursuant to S.O 18, in the absence of Mr Speaker the Deputy Speaker presided over proceedings of the Assembly.

**I. GOVERNMENT ORDERS OF THE DAY**

**1. SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION BILL (NO.1) 2020/2021- second reading & Debate on the Bill cont.**

**i. FAAULUSAU Rosa Duffy Stowers, ADDITIONAL MEMBER FOR GAGAIFOMAUGA No.3 (Article 44 (1B)) cont.**

The Member greeted the House, the Clergy and Samoa. She then mentioned the methamphetamine shipment seized by the Ministry for Customs and Revenue, and the Ministry of Police, and urged the Ministry to amend the relevant legislation to increase penalties and fines for such crime to reflect that this Parliament takes such matters seriously. Conveyed support for the Budget, acknowledged the work of NEOC (frontliners) to ensure a safe and Covid-free Samoa.

She concluded by acknowledging her constituency for their support. Acknowledged Mr Speaker for appointing her to be in the Special Inquiry Committee, the Chairperson for the Committee she was assigned to for the term 'Infrastructure Sector Committee', Afioga Tafua Maluelue Tafua. She also acknowledged the Chairperson for the Inquiry Committee, Afioga Gatoloaifaana Amataga Alesana Gidlow and congratulated her for the success of the passing of the 3 controversial Bills.

**TUILAEPA Dr Sailele Malielegaoi, PRIME MINISTER- Point of clarification**

*The Hon PM recalled upon past events in the 1980's whereby Members upon speaking on the budget are afforded speeches free from interjections from the Government. The Hon Prime Minister then noted this was amended as Ministers would be indicted of theft and severe allegations of wrong doings during speeches of Members. PM asserted that as per Standing Orders, when a Member speaks, it should be on a point of order or clarification, however, in regards to Ministers there are no limitations, they may rise and clarify on any matter because that is their responsibility as policy makers for the nation. Emphasized to the House the right of clarification afforded to the Government.*

*The PM noted that he has stressed to CEO's of government to meet media obligations as it is principles of good governance, that there be accountability and transparency in the work of Government. He also stressed on the importance of operating with the highest degree of love in all works.*

*The PM clarified that the opening of government projects as we draw near to elections is not a means of campaigning as it has been the practice in past Parliamentary terms. He further stressed to the House on the importance of working their way up i.e. through Parliamentary Committees to Ministerial posts. Touched upon the interdependent roles of all Parliamentarians i.e. importance of Parliamentary Committee work, the roles of Associate Ministers, Ministers to the PM. He asserted regardless of this term being a one-party state, the effectiveness of oversight by parliamentary committees has not been an issue as evidenced during heated deliberations in Chambers.*

*Reasserted to the House that this Cabinet operates with an Open-door policy for all. He then stated that logging activities had been stopped for the villages of Sasina and Letui in Savaii, while the government is trying to solve the matters between these two villages in regards to these logging activities. Hon PM spoke on the global issue of climate change, and clarified a taboo particularly for the cutting down of trees for timber industry, made specific mention of the rainforest area in between Sasina and Letui as this has catastrophic impacts to our nation and Samoa's efforts to combat climate change.*

*In regards to the Member suggesting to increase penalties for offences of narcotics. The PM advised the current AG (as with other Former AGs) to monitor the situation and advise what is necessary to deter such offence. The Hon Prime Minister expressed his concern with the judicial decisions where a number of offenders are granted bail yet the offence they are charged with is serious. This is a mockery to the work of Police whose duty is to put these offenders to jail and protect those affected and the public as a whole.*

**ii. TAFUA Maluelue Tafua, MEMBER FOR ALEIPATA ITUPA I LALO**

*The Member for Aleipata Itupa I Lalo commenced by acknowledging his fellow Parliamentarians. Noted that the theme of his speech is "gratitude". Addressed his*

Constituency in her honorific salutations. Conveyed sympathies for the Late Member for Lefaga & Faleseela and the mother of Faleata West. Conveyed well wishes to Parliamentarians whom are retiring this Parliamentary Term- Speaker Toleafoa Faafisi, Hon Tuitama, Hon Faasootauloa and Mulipola. Acknowledged the three (3) Arms of government.

The Member touched upon budget support from foreign donors and asserted that the reason behind foreign nations' continuous assistance to Samoa is owed to our effective reporting of the use of funds afforded to different projects, he then conveyed thanks to relevant bodies and authorities responsible for monitoring these funds and compiling the reports.

He posed to the Member why there are differences in opinions in regards to the Standard of living in the Country and queried why opposition members sensationalize when Samoa is in good stead. He acknowledged the Land Transport Authority and Ministry of Works, Transport and Infrastructure (MWTI) for the rehabilitation of the roads at Matautu and their efforts in trying to ameliorate flooding in town.

Touched upon the works of their Infrastructure Committee during the Parliamentary Term i.e. wharf visitations etc.

**Mr Speaker interrupted the Member's speech as it was Parliament's recess. The member would continue after recess.**

**Proceedings were suspended at 10:49 am**

**Proceedings resumed at 11:46 am**

**TAFUA Maluelue Tafua, MEMBER FOR ALEIPATA ITUPA I LALO cont.**

The member continued his speech by touching upon the past Pension amount of \$145 to \$160 and called for more increase. Acknowledged developments implemented in his constituency, the water supply has been complete; The airport has been completed, which is a worthy development for Samoa. He noted the garden toilets already completed in his constituency which is an initiative by the Tourism industry. In regards to telecommunication, the Member acknowledged the Minister for Ministry of Communication, Information and Technology (MCIT) for improving the connection of broadcasting outlets in his constituency. Government' festival of lights initiative, the member acknowledged the initiative and noted that different opinions on matters are inevitable. Stated the initiative was a good to reinstate morale in this time of gloom in the world and what had happened in Samoa in 2019.

Acknowledged the Cyber Concert initiative in boosting morale. Acknowledged the RSE initiative in uplifting standard of living for the people. The member then

quoted the late Prime Minister, Hon Tofilau issued on 23 November 1998, "Peace and Respect are the pillars of the Samoan Culture" and called on Samoa to not take heed of the opinions of Samoans abroad.

The member then sought to clarify on erroneous claims implying that Samoa is exhausting its borrowing capacity and pointed out that loaning donors do not issue loans to countries if they do not have the capacity to repay.

He then continued by acknowledging the Maritime School of SSC, Oceania University of Medicine and the Faculty of Medicine of Samoa. Acknowledged the vision by the Government for instilling the means to establish these schools for our children. Acknowledged the Government in striving to create jobs. He noted to the House that there are always means of acquiring wealth, i.e. work the land and one will earn money, go to school and you will also earn money.

Acknowledged his Committee members whom deliberated the Alienation Bill now the Leasing of Lands Act. Requested that there should be more scrutiny involved in the sale of freehold land. He commented on the process for sale of land (freehold land) being easy/simple, the Member noted that the process should be more complex with criteria such as, the applicant was a taxpayer for 15 years, as opposed to intermarriages between locals and foreigners, which would then make the couple eligible to purchase land, however we cannot determine whether the marriage was genuine but the land has already been sold. The Member acknowledged the Samoa Water Authority (SWA) as the people living in the inland areas of his constituency finally have access to water. Acknowledged all the Ministries placed under the scrutiny of the infrastructure Committee. Acknowledged the 50,000 Government assistance for his constituency aimed at the construction of a playing field.

**PAPALIITELE Niko Lee Hang, MINISTER FOR MWTI**

*The Minister responded that the requests put forth by the Member have been noted.*

**OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER**

*Mr Speaker announced that the Minister of Education, Sports and Culture has requested a leave of absence due to personal commitments.*

*Advised the Member currently speaking to not mention names as stipulated in the Standing Order.*

**TAFUA Maluelue Tafua, MEMBER FOR ALEIPATA ITUPA I LALO cont.**

The member addressed the Minister for Customs and Revenue and queried the rationale of increasing the excise tax by 8% for sugary drinks, (perhaps it was due to health reasons) and then recommended that the overall tax imposed on essentials such as rice, sugar, flour and chicken be controlled as these are the

affordable choices for the majority of our people. In regards to the 3 Bills, the Member noted to the House that he had asserted to his constituency that the 3 Bills are to ensure that our culture does not erode and reiterated the late Hon Prime Minister Tofilau's sentiments of love. The Member responded to dissidents whom refuse to change the Constitution by stating that the Constitution is a living document and should be amended as often as it should to accommodate the current circumstances. This same notion was shared by our ancestors during the Constitutional Convention in the 1960s. The member then lastly stated to the MCIT that mobile plans for internet are expensive and suggested that these be reviewed. He concluded by addressing his constituency in their honorific salutations and thanked them for their support.

**TUILAEPA Dr Sailele Malielegaoi, PRIME MINISTER- Point of clarification**

*The Hon PM noted in May 2000 whereby there was a coup in Fiji. Recalled the LOME Agreement which they signed, now the Cotounou Agreement a trade and aid agreement for which Samoa had lobbied to have this agreement signed in Fiji of which was rescheduled due to the Coup. Hon PM noted that it was agreed at 3am this morning that the signing of this Agreement will be signed in Samoa (this will take place sometime in July - December).*

*Reiterated that grants and loans are only approved if the applicant is respectable (referring to the Samoan Government having a good relationship with their donors). Noted that Samoa also assisted with these coups by sending police peace-keeping volunteers to Solomon Islands to support the process of restoring power to Government. Emphasized the importance of being present and partaking in the village council affairs.*

**Hon AFAMASAGA Lepuiai Rico Tupai, MINISTER FOR MCIT**

*In response to the Member for Aleipata Itupa I Luga's comments about mobile plans being expensive the Minister clarified that he purchases bundles first and not browse the internet on mobile credit.*

**Proceedings were adjourned at 1:06pm  
Parliament will again reconvene on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> February 2021 at 9am.**