

DISCLAIMER

This Report provides a brief of the Proceedings of Parliament on **Monday 8th 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 **Monday 8th February 2021**, you should consult the official Hansard or seek assistance from the Office of the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly.

Day 14

Monday 8th February 2021

9:27AM

I. NOTICE FROM THE HEAD OF STATE

Pursuant to S.O 76 a Notice is given to permit the introduction of the following Bills:

- i) *Ministry of Women Affairs Amendment Bill 2021; and*
- ii) *Internal Affairs Amendment Bill 2021.*

II. NOTICE FROM THE LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Pursuant to S.O. 100 (2) the following Bills will be considered under Certificate of Urgency (COU):

- i) *Ministry of Women Affairs Amendment Bill 2021; and*
- ii) *Internal Affairs Amendment Bill 2021.*

III. AMENDMENTS TO THE STATE OF EMERGENCY ORDERS

State of Emergency Orders for Covid-19 issued on the 4th February 2021 was read by the Clerk as follows:

- 17 April 2021- Flight to repatriate Samoan citizens from the United States, Hawaii, Canada, Alaska and Europe via Auckland;
- 7 May 2021- Repatriation flight from Australia and New Zealand for RSE workers as passengers from Asia including patients who were in India for treatment;
- 28 May 2021- Repatriation flight from Australia and New Zealand including the repatriation of RSE workers; and
- 18 June 2021- Repatriation flight from Australia and New Zealand.

The following Orders were made pursuant to Article 21 of the Constitution of the Independent State of Samoa, 1960

IV. PRESENTATION OF PAPERS

4 Papers were tabled in Parliament (2 Annual Reports, 1 Corporate Plan and 1 Statement of Corporate Objectives)

V. GOVERNMENT ORDERS OF THE DAY**1. SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION BILL (NO.1) 2020/2021- second reading & Debate on the Bill cont.****i. Hon FIAME Naomi Mataafa, MEMBER FOR LOTOFAGA**

The Member for Lotofaga greeted the House, Speaker of the House, Leader of the House, all the Members, Clergy, Office of the Legislative and Samoa who are listening near and far. Expressed condolences to the Poutoa Family for the loss of a beloved Member of the House. Acknowledged fellow Parliamentarians who will retire from their seat this term, especially the Hon Speaker and conveyed well wishes for all future callings. She then expressed her support for the Supplementary Appropriation.

Touched upon the impacts felt globally by the Covid pandemic and noted that Samoa is not immune. The member made specific mention of the 'budget support' from overseas donors to assist with funding development projects in Samoa. Hon Member noted that this support is crucial and very much needed by our nation, especially when the predicted amount of tax collected by the Ministry is not met, when other areas of the economy have been impacted.

The Hon Member continued to speak on the importance of budget support, grants, and loans (from international financial institutions with low interest) to Samoa's development. The Hon Minister asserted that because the amount is large, can there be any way that this amount is provided in detail, to identify where it was from and how much was pledged, so as to ensure a more accurate analysis can be made on the actual money made and circulated in the economy 'through collection of tax' and that which is provided by foreign donors.

She noted the drop in revenue of the Country due to the pandemic, it has affected job opportunities that has resulted in laying off workers/employees. Hon Member noted a project currently implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries which targets individuals who have been laid off due to the pandemic and expressed her support for such initiatives which assist the individual with means to stay afloat during times of uncertainty.

The Hon Member noted the problem that we are facing is climate change and the drop in revenue; these are the major issues currently faced by various nations around the globe. Because of this, is it not time to revisit our government policies to formulate a better stance on climate change and the impacts of revenue. Hon Member stated that she became aware from the Hon PM's statements that there have been minor changes made to the process for seawalls. The Hon Member simply asked the Minister of Finance, to look into policies that allows us to work on possible ways to solve the issues of climate change and how it is affecting our country.

LEAANA Ronnie Posini, MEMBER FOR SAFATA

Recalled that the Constituency visited Fiame (Former Minister MNRE) but she did not relay the "policies" for constructing a seawall. The Member stated that the Hon Member has mentioned new changes made to the process for seawalls while not mentioning the old process when she held office, as the only advice given to the Member for Safata was to relocate the villages to higher grounds. The member suggested that when he said the word 'tala pelo' he isn't lying, villages from his constituency actually sat down with her, and she told them, that it is about time that the Government work on their seawalls and this was when she was a Minister

Hon FIAME Naomi Mataafa, MEMBER FOR LOTOFAGA cont.

The Hon member clarified her statements made to the Member for Safata as his constituency is in between the ocean and mountains, therefore common sense would be applied- due to sea level rise impacts, the villages should move to higher grounds, it is something that can be considered, perhaps not immediately, or in the near future.

Hon FAUMUINA Tiatia Liuga, MEMBER FOR PALAULI LE FALEFA

The Hon Member stood to clarify the remarks made by the Member for Lotofaga stating that 'Government protects its own assets' this is not the case; it is Government's intention to protect all assets, the Member for Lotofaga also requested a seawall for her constituency which was implemented for Vavau and Lotofaga, and numerous other seawalls were made to protect all assets including customary land of families which have been affected by heavy waves.

OLO Fiti Afoa Vaai, MEMBER FOR SALEGA EAST

The Member explained that the Hon Member for Lotofaga was merely trying to explain the process afforded to requesting for seawalls. He then stated that the Hon Member for Palauli le Falefa is also aware of procedures as he was a Former Minister for MNRE.

Hon FAUMUINA Tiatia Liuga, MEMBER FOR PALAULI LE FALEFA

The Hon Member commented on the Member for Salega East's comments and clarified that the Member requested for a seawall for Saleaula and it was done thoroughly with the intention to protect the assets of all its constituents. Hon Faumuina asserted that all seawalls requested in his time were implemented, with the exception of Safata, as they requested a seawall to be constructed where the mangrove conserve area is located, which is not necessary as the mangrove is a natural seawall and breeding area for marine ecosystem. Hon FAUMUINA clarified that the rationale of prioritising seawalls near roads is to protect other government assets which also cost hefty amounts to develop.

SULAMANAIA Fetaiai Tuiliili Tuivasa, MEMBER FOR VAIMAUGA EAST

On the matter of seawalls, he recalled that on the matter with seawalls that he raised in Parliament, he recalled that Fiame stated for them to move to higher-grounds and the point of him standing up is to thank the PM for accepting their request for seawalls in his constituency. It is crucial for them to have the seawalls as it protects them from the sea.

Hon TUILAIPA Dr Sailele Malielegaoi, PRIME MINISTER

The Hon PM noted that Government's policies are malleable and done so in accordance with what is favourable for the Public. The Hon PM reaffirmed that Government operates with Common Sense as the theme of operations. In regards to aid as mentioned by the Member for Lotofaga, the PM asserted that donors seek to ensure that their funds are used according to what it was appropriated for. There is no guarantee with foreign aid, it can only be assured when the recipient nation follows and adheres to requirements and conditions made by the foreign donors.

Hon FIAME Naomi Mataafa, MEMBER FOR LOTOFAGA cont.

In response to the Member for Palauli le Falefa; the Member noted that the development he raised and the benefits for the nation were the policy then. In response to the Member for Safata, the Member for Lotofaga asserted that he had indeed sought assistance for seawalls. She acknowledged the Hon PM for his clarification.

Hon SILI Epa Tuiofi, MINISTER OF FINANCE

The Hon Minister asserted that there are Climate Change priorities. Negotiations are on-going with the Green Climate Fund(GCF), to allow Samoa to become an agent of the GCF so that Samoa can also be a beneficiary of this Fund specifically for constituencies along the coastal areas. Also noted that the GCF is funded by the World Bank. Furthermore, the Hon Minister noted that Government are executing a

case by case analysis to identify areas whom require urgent tending to in matters pertaining to Climate Change. The Hon Minister is positive that if negotiations go well, the GCF and World Bank assistance will greatly assist with such requests (i.e. construct seawalls).

Hon TUILAEPa Dr Sailele Malielegaoi, PRIME MINISTER

The Hon PM pointed out to Mr Speaker that the Member for Lotofaga spoke without seeking permission and called to enforce adherence to Standing Orders. Hon PM mentioned that the American government has changed, thus the nation has re-entered into the global drive to combat the detrimental impacts of climate change which is important as these are the powerful nations who have a bigger say with changing international policies. Asserted that change holds leverage when implemented by bigger nations.

ALAIASA Moefaauouo Sepulona Moananu, MEMBER FOR ANOAMAA EAST

The Member pointed out that all statements and sentiments issued in the House hold leverage with their respective constituency's as they are tuning in to see what their representative has to say.

Hon FIAME Naomi Mataafa, MEMBER FOR LOTOFAGA cont.

The Hon Member recalled the assistance for Political Parties. At least \$200,000 that was appropriated for Political Parties was returned by HRPP. Member agreed that the intention was good i.e. to boost the economy of Samoa. Noted that it is imperative that there is an appropriation for these funds in all budgets. Pointed out that to date, Samoa has been a one-party state, ruled by the HRPP party, which begs the question of monitoring and regulating this fund. Noting that \$800,000 was appropriated to the only party for the current Parliamentary term through the Office of the Legislative Assembly. The Hon member then posed the rhetoric to imply such practice helps keeps HRPP in power and called that this be looked into. She recalled instances in the past where it was Cabinet v. Chamber. Posed the possibility of elections being candidate-based and not based on the principles of a party.

The member then addressed the Ministry of Health and noted that she had attended a Cancer Society Memorial service for those whom have lost their lives last week. She noted that only the Minister & Member for Faleata East attended. Expressed disappointment with the lack of attendance shown by Cabinet and Health Workers. Labelled them hypocrites for not placing urgency on attending as the Cancer Society is an incorporated society of which Samoa is in partnership with.

Hon FAIMALOTOA Kika Iemaima Stowers, MINISTER OF HEALTH

The Minister confirmed that she had attended the memorial in question by the Member for Lotofaga. Noted that the CEO of the Ministry of Health was also in attendance but was unsure whether the rest were invited. Hon Minister clarified that the Director General for Health was also occupied with other matters, especially with monitoring the situation of keeping Samoa Covid free. The Minister refuted claims and pointed out that this Ministry works 24 hours and stated that these individuals are sleep deprived and are basically operating in a lucid dream state. She then conveyed acknowledgement for their service and dedication.

MR SPEAKER POINT OF CLARIFICATION

The Honourable Speaker sought to clarify the issue raised by the Member for Lotofaga regarding appropriation for Political parties as he is the head of the entity tasked with the disbursement of the appropriation for Political parties. Mr Speaker asserted that the fund is only allocated when the party is legitimised via elections and attained the minimum threshold of 8 Members of a party in Parliament.

Proceedings were suspended at 10:53am

Proceedings resumed at 11:44am

Hon TUILAEPa Dr Sailele Malielegaoi, PRIME MINISTER

Hon PM addressed Mr Speaker and suggested that the Hon member for Lotofaga be afforded the chance to continue her speech to its end.

Hon FIAME Naomi Mataafa, MEMBER FOR LOTOFAGA cont.

Acknowledged the Leader of the House for asking to extend her time to speak. In regards to the Ministry of Health, the Hon Member queried the status of the Health Foundation which was established in previous times, with the intention to assist health work in villages/constituencies. In regards to the Cancer Society capacity and qualifications; the Hon Member noted that the staffing is open and are not medical professionals she then called to draft a regulation which stipulates that only those with qualifications in the medical field be allowed to work in this Society.

Hon FAIMALOTOA Kika Iemaima Stowers, MINISTER OF HEALTH

The Minister clarified that there is a strong partnership between these health sub-sectors of which the Ministry of Health appropriates assistance for these incorporated societies i.e. Cancer Society. Stressed that she is the representative of the Ministry of Health and she attends on behalf of all the Medical Professionals and Cabinet.

Stressed that the Ministry of Health prioritizes ensuring a healthy Samoa. Acknowledged the role of Cabinet in procuring funds to fund Samoa's Ministry of Health's aim to ensure Samoa is healthy.

SALAUISA John Ah Ching, ASSOCIATE MINISTER FOR MWCSO & MEMBER FOR FALEATA EAST

The Associate Minister stressed emphasis on the importance of "Partnership" as suggested by Member for Lotofaga. He briefly touched upon the incorporated efforts of the Ministry of Women and other incorporated societies i.e. Red Cross, Fia Malamalama, Faataua le Ola, and other organisations who all collaborate to offer an informed awareness program to our communities and this is an ongoing partnership.

Hon SILI Epa Tuiofi, MINISTER OF FINANCE

The Hon Minister clarified that it not just Cancer Society that is in partnership with the Ministry of Health and the government supports. The Government also assists the Red Cross Organisation and METI (Matuaileoo Environment Trust Incorporate) Sleep clinic which is afforded 200,000 annually to assist with the operations of these organizations.

Hon FIAME Naomi Mataafa, MEMBER FOR LOTOFAGA cont.

The member addressed the Minister of Health and stated that members of these societies possess the knowledge and expertise of health physicians and nurses - hence the reason of the original question, whether it was relevant to empower these individuals to carry out detection and preventative measures for cancer patients, rather than solely relying on doctors and nurses employed by the Ministry of Health. Addressing the Covid-19, the member expressed feelings of gratitude to the Omnipotent in Samoa remaining Covid Free.

Acknowledged the Government for Repatriation flights. Acknowledged the Border protection efforts. In the manner of Constructive Criticism, the Member queried whether Samoa has a Contingency Plan in place in light of everything going on. The Member noted that measles was a defibrillator which resuscitated the Health Sector into proactive mode. Noted the 83 deaths was the catalyst of which re-emphasis was placed on Prevention.

Hon FAIMALOTOA Kika Iemaima Stowers, MINISTER OF HEALTH

The member reaffirmed that Proactive measures in the planning of the course of engagement for Samoa's health sector. Stressed that there was nothing that the Ministry could have done to avert the measles crisis and identified the cessation of

vaccinations ordered by WHO upon the tragedy of the two infant mortality cases from Safotu. Reiterated that the Ministry remains vigilant.

Hon FIAME Naomi Mataafa, MEMBER FOR LOTOFAGA cont.

The Member stressed that if there is any takeaway from the tragedy it is the lack of capacity to read red flags. The Member noted that there were two meetings which the Ministry attended whereby Samoa's low vaccination rates were raised, that was one red flag. Further the New Zealand government warned Samoa of its low vaccination rates, that too is another red flag.

Hon TUILAIPA Dr Sailele Malielegaoi, PRIME MINISTER

Hon PM asserted that the issues raised by the Member for Lotofaga have already been addressed in Cabinet. Mentioned that regardless of Government policies, the public have the freedom of choice whether or not they want their children to be vaccinated.

Hon FIAME Naomi Mataafa, MEMBER FOR LOTOFAGA cont.

The Hon Member stated that red flags simply mean 'warning/alert' had we paid attention to these red flags we would have spared the lives of our babies who were lost during the measles outbreak. Samoa is a Christian nation, almost 60 years since independence and nothing catastrophic has ever occurred during General Elections. She conveyed well wishes to Samoa and all candidates contesting in the coming elections.

Hon TUILAIPA Dr Sailele Malielegaoi, PRIME MINISTER

The Prime Minister recalled the instance whereby he was called to speak at a Cancer Society event whereby they came to look for financial support. The Hon Prime Minister noted that males are highly susceptible to develop prostate cancer and noted that one of his Former cabinet ministers passed away due to prostate cancer. The Prime Minister then explained that he was appalled at the call by the member for Lotofaga that all Medical professionals should have attended the Cancer society event. He then called to Ministries that all events should be held on weekdays and not Sunday. The Hon Prime Minister reiterated that Government seeks to ensure that their Ministry of Health is fully equipped and staffed to treat diseases. The Hon Prime Minister stressed that the Member of Lotofaga had successfully sown the seeds of strife between the society and the Ministry of Health. He then called upon the Cancer Society to refrain from Politics.

**Proceedings were adjourned at 1:07 pm
Parliament will again reconvene on Tuesday 9th February 2021 at 9am.**