

DISCLAIMER

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Day 18

Friday 12th February 2021

9:26am

I. PRESENTATION OF PAPERS

2 Parliamentary papers were tabled (1 Annual Report of the Office of the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly 2019/2020; 1 Annual Report of the Office of the Electoral Commission 2019/2020).

II. GOVERNMENT ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

Hon TUILAEPA Dr Sailele Malielegaoi, PRIME MINISTER

Hon Prime Minister greeted the House and thanked the Almighty for another day. The Prime Minister stated that in due time the Supplementary will progress to the consideration in detail stage to specify the allocations of the budget for transparency and accountability. The Hon PM stated that donor nations, and international financial institutions offer assistance and grants to our nation, as there is expertise and knowledge to transparently utilise these grants accordingly. The Prime Minister stated that this was proof that Samoa has the capacity to utilise grants with proper reporting thereafter of the use of such funds'. The PM responded to false accusations spread by individual members during their campaign, that Government has allowed Chinese to take ownership of customary lands, and corrected that customary lands are safe, and cannot be sold, the Chinese are merely leasing on these lands.

Hon PM explained that in previous parliamentary terms, all parliamentarians seek opportunities to address their constituency and speak on issues for their constituency. These proceedings were conducted in the manner which the Hon Speaker would see fit, as the

supreme authority of the House is vested in the Speaker. Hon PM noted his disappointment towards individual Members whom have used the media to make false accusations that the prolonging of proceedings is a 'dirty political strategy' by the Government. Hon PM asserted that this is the last session for the 16th Parliamentary Term, and Parliamentarians are simply making use of the opportunity. Hon PM felt it was important to correct the matter, to ensure the public were not misled.

Hon PM recalled when FAUMUINA Tiatia Liuga was appointed into Parliament, which was at the time when Government was undergoing its reform and outsourcing of development projects (specifically road works to cut back on unnecessary spending). Hon PM asserted that reforms are usually difficult especially with the downsizing of any Ministry or Government Office; Hon PM stated that such action requires 'political courage/will' and therefore commended the Hon Member for Palauli le Falefa for having the willpower to make 'tough decisions' during the reform. He then mentioned protests on the controversial bills which have seen been passed by the Assembly. He noted that the lack of understanding caused the public to reject the changes proposed by the Bills. The Hon PM noted the importance and high status of international forums, such as the ACP-EU and asserted that this is the first time Samoa has been selected Chairperson to the ACP-EU and the IPU Forums, furthermore, the Samoan Ambassador in Brussels has also been elected as Chairperson for the Ambassador's Commission, a forum of 79 countries from the Pacific, Caribbean and Africa.

The Hon PM accentuated that these Forums oversee the procedures and systems for democratic parliaments. Further noted that the selection of individuals as Chairpersons is not taken lightly by these international forums. Mentioned the separation of powers, the 3 arms of Government which scrutinize each other. Similarly in the international arena, the Hon PM elaborated that the Parliamentarians Forum for ACP-EU oversees the Ministerial Forum for ACP-EU. The Hon PM recalled that after his time in the Ministerial Forum for the ACP-EU, Hon Joe Keil represented Samoa, thereafter was Hon Fonotoe Lauofo, and currently the Hon PM is seated in this Forum, while the Hon Member for Palauli le Falefa is chairing the Parliamentarian Forum for ACP-EU. Hon PM thought it was important to highlight as this is the first time Samoa is Chairing all different Forums. The Hon PM elaborated further on the terms of appointment and stated that appointments were rotated amongst the sub-groups within the Forum, i.e., A-African, C-Caribbean, P- Pacific. The Hon PM then informed the House that this rotation has since been changed as the forum holds Africa in higher esteem, hence the current rotation (AAP, AAC) which afforded the African representative to Chair the Forum twice.

- **Afioga Hon LOPAOO Natanielu Mu'a, Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries**

The Hon Minister clarified that the matter as spoken by the Prime Minister was very important and explained he has a file of a research regarding the matter for Government properties or lands being sold by the HRPP. Stated that the rumours are

being spread by the FAST members however, they are not present today. The Hon Minister stated that in 2019, a sum of \$250,000 was distributed to the villages of Sasina and the Ministry has records of companies and the owners and stakeholders. The Hon Minister stated that the Member for Gagaifomauga No.3 was behind the large amount of money that was distributed. The Hon Minister mentioned that the Member for Gagaifomauga No.3 associated himself with the group called 'The Uso's' in partnership with the Company Sunglory, and the amount was for 500 acres of land and stated that the agreement was signed at the time when the Member for Lotofaga held the Minister of MNRE.

- **Afioga ALAIASA Moefaaouou Sepulona Moananu, Associate Minister for Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture**

The Member noted the absence of the FAST Members in Chamber and urged the Speaker to enforce Standing Orders to avoid the ridicule of Parliamentary proceedings.

- **Afioga Hon AFAMASAGA Lepuai Rico Tupai, Minister for Communication and Information Technology**

The Hon Minister accentuated that all customary lands are safe and cannot be sold, he then challenged the individual members who were spreading false statements to the public, to present any proof of customary lands being sold. Hon Minister clarified that the Government is not using customary lands from Palauli West or Palauli le Falefa to pay for any government debts to China.

MR SPEAKER – Other Announcements

The Hon Speaker urged Members to be patient and pay no attention to the unnecessary debacle going about in the community by the FAST Members. Mr Speaker stated that the Chair was being lenient to Members given that this is the last session for the parliamentary term. He then reminded Members that permission to take leave during parliamentary sittings must be sought and approved by the Speaker and that prolonging the sitting was not a political strategy but, merely a courtesy afforded to the Members to be well-rested before the next sitting day.

Hon PRIME MINISTER – Clarification

The Hon PM clarified why the Government has supported no night sittings this session, as he recalled an incident whereby he was admitted to the hospital from over-working and having not enough sleep and rest, thus the importance of being well rested to ensure the affairs of the nation progress.

Proceedings were suspended at 10:41 am

Proceedings resumed at 11:25 am

- **Hon LOAU Solamalemalo Keneti Sio, Minister for Education, Sports and Culture**

The Hon Minister rectified false claims made by the FAST members, regarding government lands at Tafaigata which will be given back to Aele and Faleula. The Minister exclaimed that he will visit his village tomorrow to determine their position for the upcoming general election; i.e., whether they will support FAST or the HRPP? The Hon Minister recalled last Saturday with the FAST roadshow reached his constituency; the Minister explained that the FAST made false accusations which have impacted his candidacy and caused a division in his constituency. Expressed his disappointment on the claims falsely made by the FAST party, that is, lands belonging to Malietoa will be returned.

Hon PRIME MINISTER – Clarification

The Hon PM addressed the matter at hand and stated that there are some Samoans living abroad who entertain themselves by making false statements about the Government, and that FAST has presented nothing of substance in and outside of Chamber. The Hon PM asserted that the FAST Party is causing a division in our country and have dragged those living abroad into this misfortune by spreading false statements regarding the Government.

- **Hon LAUTAFI Fio Selafi Purcell, Minister for Commerce, Industry and Labour**

The Hon Minister moved to withdraw the Speaker's statement from official records as he generally mentioned Savaii as a whole, implying that all of Savaii are in support of FAST Party, yet there are numerous Savaii Members who are loyal supporters of HRPP.

Mr Speaker – Point of Order

Mr Speaker approved the motion to withdraw his statements from official records.

- i. **Afioga LEALAILEPULE Rimoni Aiafi – Associate Minister for Communication and Information technology, Member for Faleata West**

The Member addressed the House.

Proceedings were adjourned at 12:05 pm

Parliament will again reconvene on Monday 15th February 2021 at 9 am.