

DISCLAIMER

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Day 20

Tuesday 16th February 2021

OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS BY MR SPEAKER

The Clerk read out the amendments to the State of Emergency Orders, which extends from 15 February to 14 March 2021

I. GOVERNMENT ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

Statements by Hon Prime Minister

The Hon PM greeted the House and acknowledged Mr Speaker and all Parliamentarians for making the effort to attend Parliamentary Sittings. The Prime Minister asserted that reaching a balance between our consideration for our Samoan people stuck abroad, wanting to return home, and our consideration towards our local people who will be vulnerable if borders re-open is a matter which weighs heavily on the Government, and every single detail and factor is considered by the NEOC and Government to ensure our people are returned home and that our people are safe.

The Hon PM then stressed on the importance of attendance in parliamentary sittings which seem to be neglected by FAST Members who are currently conducting their Roadshow. The Hon PM mentioned the asymptomatic young boy who recently tested positive for Covid19 and stated that he together with his mother are currently isolated and monitored by respective medical officers.

i. Afioga ALIIMALEMANU Alofa Tuuau, Member for Alataua West & Chairperson for Finance and Expenditure Committee

The Member addressed Samoa in all her honorific salutations, clergy leaders and called upon her constituency for their support as she presents their final speech for the 16th Parliamentary Term.

Madam Chairperson mentioned that at the commencement of the Parliamentary Term, there were only three requests made in the House for the development of her constituency, as she was well aware of the limited funds available to our Government. The member stated that there were additional requests and continuous follow-up, which were made directly to respective Ministers.

The Member acknowledged the following Ministers for the developments carried out in the constituency.

- Minister for Communication and Information Technology
Afioga ALIIMALEMANU expressed gratitude for the complete coverage made for the people residing in Alataua West; they can now watch television and listen to different radio stations.

- Minister for Works, Transport and Infrastructure
 - Land Transport Authority
The Member conveyed appreciation for the road developments for Neiafu Tai and noted that the project costed \$1.2million. The Member stated that this road is now utilised by those travelling to Tufutafoe and Falelima.
 - Samoa Water Authority
The Member noted that the people of Neiafu are grateful for the water supply which was made by the Samoa Water Authority.
 - Electric Power Corporation
The Member commended the EPC for the development of street lights for Tufutafoe.

- Minister for Commerce, Industry and Labour
The Member was pleased to note the numerous developments seen in Samoa, the new building structures, new vehicles and new businesses, specifically for the 35 RSE opportunities for Tufutafoe; additionally there were also opportunities for Sailors afforded from the Samoa Shipping Services, which have all provided a means of earning an income for the development of families, villages and constituencies.

- Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries
The Member commended the Ministry for lending Alataua West the opportunity to export ava to overseas markets. The Member acknowledged efforts made by the Ministry to develop the Samoa Agri-Business in their constituency, as ava is one of the strengths for the constituency, specifically in the village of Neiafu.
- Minister for Women, Community and Social Development
The Member acknowledged the selection of her constituency to pilot the development projects, which aimed at developing the skills for women as a means of income; programs that were chosen by the women included sewing and gardening.
- Minister for Natural Resources and Environment
Acknowledged efforts to improve and revive natural sceneries within her constituency. Afioga Aliimalemany also noted that the Samoa Tourism Authority is currently in the process of constructing garden toilets for the Neiafu scenery.
- Minister for Health
The Member acknowledged the Minister for the provision of a doctor to cater for the sick constituents as well as the improvement of medical supplies at the Sataua Clinic which has provided ease of travel to Tuasivi Hospital for medication and treatment.

The Member also mentioned the projects which are in progress and those which have been penned down for this FY.

- The access road for Falelima – bidders are currently in underway
- Priority for the Asau No.2 which has now been renamed to the Alataua West College which will be constructed in Neiafu, the appropriation has now been included in the 2020/2021 budget for the progress of this project pursuant to government policies.
- There are 12 families who will receive water supply by the Samoa Water Authority.

HON TUILAEPÄ - point of clarification

The Hon PM addressed the matter of 'shortage of teachers' for the colleges or schools as mentioned by the Member for Alataua West. He asserted that there are not enough Science and Math teachers in schools which is a contributing factor to the high number of students failing math and science in schools. The Prime Minister asserted that he advised the Ministry of Education to assess the situation and formulate the best approach to deal with the

situation. The Ministry then initiated a 'mark-up alternative' to raise marks for each student to provide a higher average for these students. The Prime Minister became aware of the consequences of the markup alternative and wrote to the University and the Ministry to formulate a solution, as it was their responsibility to ensure students had enough teachers with the necessary capabilities to teach the students of Samoa.

The Hon PM explained that the former Minister of Education and the CEO for the Ministry informed him of an expensive solution, which required the University and schools to select a total of 60 teachers for Math and Science to be sent overseas to upskill these teachers who will return and give back to respective schools and the National University of Samoa. The Hon PM stated that other Pacific nations followed suit and also sent their teachers for upskilling. The Prime Minister noted the importance of Samoa taking lead on such an initiative for the betterment of students. Hon Prime Minister advised the responsible agencies and school committees to alter policies to provide for retired teachers to commence employment to counter the shortage of teachers.

ALIIMALEMANU Alofa Tuuau - Member for Alataua West & Chairperson for Finance and Expenditure Committee (Cont.)

The Member continued by noting the development of the access road in Tufutafoe to provide ease of supply for ava as they are known for this development. The Member for Alataua West mentioned the impending project (Asau Wharf) with numerous benefits which her constituency and Savaii will gain. Afioga ALIIMALEMANU mentioned that she has highlighted the projects completed for her constituency and on-going projects to be achieved in the current FY. She iterated that despite a low appropriation for the supplementary budget to cater for all developments in Samoa, the government has ensured to provide an allocation for each project.

HON TUILAIPA - point of clarification

The Hon PM noted the development of the Asau wharf and township as mentioned by the Member and clarified that this is the key to the development of the entire island. The Hon PM stated that an America company conducted an assessment in Samoa to determine the best way to extract iron-wood from Samoa to foreign markets as it was highly sought by foreign nations. At the time, we extracted the trees and sold the trees with little return, whereas we could have opted to make the timber and then sold it to overseas markets which would have afforded a much higher return for Samoa.

The Hon Prime Minister mentioned that Asau did not have a natural sea channel, to allow boats coming in and provide the transportation of the ifilele wood to overseas markets. The locals then used fishing dynamites to create a man-made sea channel to ensure boats can access the site at the time. The Hon PM elaborated marine engineers from Holland were

employed to test the mafic rocks under the sea bed, the report findings stated that fishing dynamites were pointless, then Cyclone Ofa hit and did not make it any easier for the development of this project.

The Hon PM recalled a meeting he had with the Governor of Pago to build a wharf at Leone to cut costs of transportation between Samoa and Pago; decreasing the duration of travel to an hour and a half from Aleipata to Leone; and subsequently decreasing costs and saves time. (Hon PM iterated that this is one of Government's intentions to develop sustainable developments for the long term). The delay of commencement for this project is owed to covid19.

ALIIMALEMANU Alofa Tuuau - Member for Alataua West & Chairperson for Finance and Expenditure Committee (cont.)

The Member continued her statement, and expressed gratitude to the PM for clarifying the matters raised in her speech. She then asserted that during her maiden speech she stated that “Samoa is a blessed nation” and confirmed that this stance remains true to this day, although the impacts of covid19, Samoa is managing and progressing much better when compared to other nations. The Member for Alataua West expressed her gratitude that regardless of global impacts of climate change, Samoa is not severely affected when compared to other nations in the Pacific region.

The Member acknowledged the Government for the stimulus packages 1 and 2 to counter the impacts of covid19, further noted the projects initiated in her constituency which has benefit the people of Alataua West.

The Member then provided an outlook of the past 40 years of Samoa’s budget.

1980:

Statutory Payments which caters for the payment of the Executive, HoS and the 3 Arms of Government; payment for public servants, daily expenses for all other ministries which amounted - 25.7 million

fund for development projects - 7.7 million,

Total expenditure - 33.4 million,

Estimated Revenue -31.3 million,

Loans - 2 million,

Grants - 220,000,

1990/1991:

Statutory Payments - 44.6 million

Developments - 53.3 million

Total Expenditure - 97.9 million

Estimate Revenue - 67.8 million

Grants - 18.8 million

Loan - 11.4 million

2001:

Statutory Payments - 243.7million

Developments - 93.9million

Total Expenditures - 337.6 million

Estimate Revenue - 232.2million

Grants - 74million

Loans - 31.8million

2011:

Statutory Payments - 522.1 million

Developments- 224.8million

Total expenses - 746.5 million

estimate Revenue - 472.4 million

Grants - 123.8million

Loan - \$149million

2020-2021

Statutory Payments - 851.2 million

Development Projects - 125.3 million

Total expenditure - \$976.5 million

Projected Revenue - 593.1million

Grants- 255.8 million

Loan- 11.4 million

- **Afioga FUIMAONO Samuelu Te’o, Member for Falealili East**

The member expressed gratitude to the Chairperson for the Finance and Expenditure Committee for the clear explanation on the budget support and comparison throughout the years, stated that the FAST members should be present to listen and be educated on these facts as they often query ‘budget support’ regardless of having been in Parliament for quite long and still spreading false information on these matters.

HON PRIME MINISTER - Point of Clarification

The Hon PM applaud the Member for her preparation and asserted that he also took over the Ministry of Finance for more than 20 years and also has a good

understanding on finance matters. The PM stated that the FAST members who are not here, are spreading false information and their poor understanding on matters regarding the government. The Hon PM expressed his sincere gratitude to the Member (ALOFA) who represents them all in matters regarding Finance and Expenditure of the country and her preparations this morning. Hon TUILAEPa stated that the Central Bank of Samoa is responsible in monitoring the finances and revenues of the country to ensure there is sufficient money to for Samoa's operations and trading.

Proceedings were suspended at 10:59am

Proceedings resumed at 11:43am

- **Afioga LEALAILEPULE Rimoni Aiafi - Member for Faleata West & Associate Minister for Communication and Information Technology**

The Member spoke on the allocation for Members allowance included under Statutory Payments in the Supplementary and called to consider Members absence who are not attending the sitting.

Hon PM - Point of Order

The Hon PM clarified that it is not only the Parliament as it also includes other esteemed duties and also money set aside for expenses. The PM stated that it all represents the 3 arms of Government and our inability to pay these expenses is a poor reflection on the leadership. The Hon PM emphasized that it is a collective responsibility and not just Parliament alone. The PM stated that it is very important to understand these matters because it includes all Samoa and not just the Government. The Hon PM mentioned that there were queries on IDA and clarified that IDA is a part of the World Bank then iterated that the allocation of the supplementary have been continuously clarified to those who raise queries towards such matter.

ALIIMALEMANU Alofa Tuuau - Member for Alataua West & Chairperson for Finance and Expenditure Committee (cont.)

The Member stated that if and when there are queries, the Ministry is available to clarify on all matters regarding the nation's stimulus packages and revenues. She reminded the people that the financial year has yet to complete, and therefore the report on the stimulus package will be compiled after 30th June this year.

Hon Prime Minister – Point of Clarification

The Hon PM clarified that there are two divisions; one to prepare the budget address while the other conducts auditing of accounts. Further noted we have enough auditors assigned to audit government ministries and SOE financial statements. Hon PM noted that private auditors are available to outsource the workload to ensure deadlines are met. The Hon PM clarified that this financial year, the audit will provide a report on the actual figures on expenditure and revenues utilized for the reporting period 1 July 2020 - 30 June 2021.

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

The Hon Minister clarified on the literacy rate raised by the Member for Faleata West.

- **Afioga LEALAILEPULE Rimoni Aiafi, Member for Faleata West & Associate Minister for Communication and Information Technology**

The Member noted the 91.9% literacy rate of students and commended the Minister and Ministry.

HON Prime Minister – Point of Clarification

The Hon PM asserted that the Member raised an important matter, however should have made his statements in our mother tongue language, to ensure Samoan understands what Members are speaking of in Chambers. The PM noted the importance of culture in everyday living and emphasized the importance of sitting in village meetings and sitting in parliamentary proceedings as these are the forums of decision making in Samoa.

- **Afioga ALAIASA Moefaaouou Sepulona Moananu**

The Member expressed gratitude to the Chairperson for the Finance and Expenditure Committee for the clear explanation regarding the financials of the nation for 40 years ago, which allows for comparison of figures.

HON Prime Minister – Point of Clarification

The PM commended efforts by the Ministry of Education to improve the literacy rate for Samoa. Hon PM noted that the Samoan alphabet was unique and greatly aided his learning in his early years of schooling. The letters together with pictures helped students memorize and learn quicker.

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

The Hon Minister touched on an issue raised by the Member for Anoamaa East, whereby the FAST party have been making statements, such as once elected into Government they will change the pensioners' years from 65 to 60years. Hon Minister noted his disappointment with such misleading statements.

- **Afioga SALAUSA Dr. John Ah Ching, Member for Faleata East**

The Member spoke on the issue of literacy rate and asserted that modern times has differentiated the types of literacy, such as accounting literacy, computing literacy and others. Then stated that Samoans should all be well prepared and educated.

HON Prime Minister – Point of Clarification

The Hon PM clarified that loans from international financial institutions and donor countries have increased and this is owed to the accountable and transparent reporting of the grants afforded to projects for the overall development of Samoa. The Hon PM also touched upon the amount of loans and stated that the ability of a nation to pay its loans (debt ratio) is also considered. Hon TUILAEPa clarified that Samoa cannot solely rely on its revenue to fund the numerous developments for our country. Assistance is very much needed to ensure Samoa's economy is developed.

ALIIMALEMANU Alofa Tuuau - Member for Alataua West & Chairperson for Finance and Expenditure Committee (cont.)

The Member stated that the Samoan alphabet is important as laid the foundation for her learning which has now lead to reading and understanding figures for Samoa's economy. The Member mentioned the increase of grants from donor countries which has now amounted to \$255.8 million, which shows that our development partners trust Samoa in terms of managing the finances for development projects. The Chairperson further stated that understanding figures is imperative to achieve good governance and provide accountable and transparent reporting.

The member asserted that it is not merely the budget which this Parliament determines, rather creating a safe and improved economy and nation for the future generations (our children). The Chairperson commended the government for rapid response during times of natural disasters. She then acknowledged the increase in grants over the years as mentioned earlier.

**Proceedings were adjourned at 1:06pm
Parliament will again reconvene on Wednesday 17th February 2021 at 9am.**