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FRIDAY, 19 JUNE 2020

The Speaker took the Chair at 9:14am.

Prayers.

MR SPEAKER: I announce that Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly has now resumed.

OTHER ANNOUNCEMENT BY MR SPEAKER

AMENDED STATE OF EMERGENCY ORDERS

I respectfully announce the dignitaries of Parliament that I have in my hand the Amended State of Emergency Orders Number 18 for Covid-19 as officially commenced on Thursday 18th June 2020.

This Amendment repeals the State of Emergency Order Number 17 on the 16th June 2020, and I wish to call the Clerk to read out the 4 Amendments received.

I call the Clerk.

The Clerk read out the Amended State of Emergency Orders.

Amended Orders for the COVID-19 and the details as follows:

1. Travels Between Samoa and Amerika Samoa

Resume travels between Samoa and American Samoa on Thursday 18th June 2020.

These travellings will utilize the service of the Samoa Airways and Talofa Airways to return the citizens of American Samoa that are here and to bring back our local citizens that are stuck in American Samoa given the following terms:

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- i. For Samoan nationals wanting to return, they must self-isolate themselves for at least 14 days in American Samoa;
- ii. This group will not be quarantined upon arrival to Samoa but will head directly to their homes;
- iii. Consultations of traveling schedule for sea vessels and normal trading with the American Samoa Government was spearheaded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade;
- iv. Suspension of these changes when the borders of American Samoa are opened for trips to Hawaii.

2. Travels between New Zealand and Samoa

Travel arrangements schedule for returning Samoan nationals and seasonal workers will adhere to the following grounds:

- i. To utilize a large Air New Zealand aircraft to maximize the number of traveling passengers;
- ii. For the scheduled flight on the 26th June 2020, a large aircraft that can hold a capacity of 300 passengers must be acquired;
- iii. Hold dialogue on the possibility of obtaining a chartered flight will repatriate seasonal workers (RSE workers) and to finalize funding.
- iv. Resume ongoing COVID tests 3 days before departing New Zealand with medical clearance, and the traveller will have to pay its own immunisation costs. (NZD\$250.00);
- v. Given the current shortage of jobs, it is compulsory for those with symptomatic signs to get vaccinated.
- vi. To look at the process of terms for swaps send to New Zealand for verification as implemented initially.

3. Facial Masks must be encouraged

- i. Facial masks is encouraged for everyone.

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- ii. General hygiene like washing hands at all times is encouraged.

4. Birthdays, Title Bestowals and Building Dedications or Umusaga

- i. Lift restriction and allow 50 attendees (50 couples) to Cultural Ceremonies like Saofai, Umusaga and Birthdays.

Revoke the State of Emergency Order Number 17 on the 10th June 2020.

Other Orders for the State of Emergency remain in force.

This Order shall commence on the 18th June 2020.

Signed on this day 17th June 2020.

Tuimalealiifano Va'aletoa Sualauvi II
O LE AO O LE MALO

MR SPEAKER: I call the Hon Prime Minister.

Susuga Hon Tuilaepa Auelua Fatialofa Lupesoliai Lolofietele Neioti Aiono Galumalemana Dr. Sailele Malielegaoi (Prime Minister): Mr Speaker after hearing the State of Emergency Orders tabled, I feel that I should make an additional statement.

Before I do so, I would like to convey greetings to the distinguished members of this Assembly, with you Mr Speaker and respectable representatives. The public are tuning in and it is a cause to be thankful to our Lord for enabling us to gather here again to engage in our calling at this Legislative Assembly.

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You have just heard the (SOE) Orders and it does mention our consultations with the American Samoa government regarding the possibility of allowing the operations of sea vessels and trade between the two countries.

I am happy to announce that we have been engaged in dialogue and I have been informed by my counterpart that he is inclined to resume our trade by opening the sea route but with provisions which must be adhere to so in due course this will continue based on provisions of trade between our two countries as you are all aware of the continuing trade with overseas countries which brings in products for our consumption. I am delighted to make this announcement which would be applauded by farmers engaged in the cultivation of crops for export.

Not only that but we may also need products from our brothers in American Samoa. That is my congratulatory remarks to the Governor of American Samoa for I know that they are tuning in to this broadcast of our Proceedings.

Mr Speaker that is the addition pursuant to the Orders that has been heard by this House.

MR SPEAKER: Thank you, the Assembly is well aware of your additional comments concerning the State of Emergency Orders.

We do depend on the Lord to fulfil our plans. We are only able set out our goals but it is God who will eventuate them. Well done thanks.

**SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION (NO.3) BILL 2019/2020 &
APPROPRIATION BILL 2020/2021 – resume debate over the second
reading**

MR SPEAKER: Debate on the mentioned Bills will now resume. During the adjournment of Proceedings last night, the statement of the Chairperson for Revenue and Expenditure Committee was finishing. With great respect I call the Chairperson of Revenue and Expenditure Committee for your statement.

I call the member for Alataua West, honorable Chairperson.

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Afioga ALIIMALEMANU ALOFA TUUAU (Alataua West, Chairperson of Revenue and Expenditure Committee): With all due respect I convey greetings on this wonderful morning to the honored members of this House, and also acknowledging the support of the public at large in your honorifics.

Before I make my statement on the matter under discussion. I must admit my conscious of the dignitaries of this Parliament with the presence of the Hon Prime Minister and Cabinet, Associate Ministers, Chairpersons and Deputy Chairpersons and the dignity of Parliament. I must also recognise the Chief Executive Officers of Ministries and Public Enterprises.

I appreciate the opportunity to present the contribution of Alataua West on our Financial Estimates and to present an overview of the Finance and Expenditure Committee Report and to address some of the questions relating to our Financial Estimates 2020/2021 and the Supplementary Estimates (No.3) 2019/2020. The overall summary of the Main Estimates 2020/2021 of revenues acquired domestically from taxes and excise duties has resulted with our usual revenue earnings at \$588,654,287.00. The first action is payment for our debts which is \$89,328,161 and also \$51,651,457 for statutory expenses. The total cost of statutory expenses is \$137,428,197 which is deducted from our total revenue before doing anything else. After covering our debt payments and statutory expenses we are left with \$451,226,090. Grants from our partners is \$249,575,571 which makes up \$700,801,661. What we get from soft term loans is \$11,423,792. The total cost for our programmes other than our debts and statutory expenses is \$828,412,612.

If we deduct that amount from the funds we have remaining, we end up with the additional deficit of \$116,187,159 to implement our projects for the year 2020/2021. There is also other funding from our partners which they pay directly into the projects and are classified as in kind contributions and the reason why it is not mentioned in our Financial Estimates is because there is no finance that comes under it, these projects are paid directly from our overseas partners at \$135,542,173. These projects include the Vaisigano Bridge, the road renewal project and scholarship which is \$27million, as well as the harbour construction and the purchasing of the new ship to service the route between Saleleloga and Mulifanua. Our surplus spending over our revenue is \$116,187,159. Which we call deficit. If I may remind you of the advantage of having a deficit budget. The....

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MR SPEAKER: I beg tolerance to the Chairperson, I allow the Minister of Works, Transport and Infrastructure.

Susuga Hon Papaliitele Niko Lee Hang (Minisita mo Galuega, Felauaiga ma Atinae Eseese): Mr Speaker, I wish not to interrupt the wonderful speech of the Chairperson, just a point of order. The vessel which the Chairperson is talking about is not the one for Salelologa and Mulifanua. It is actually the Lady Naomi travelling to American Samoa which we did receive assistance on from Japan. The ship she is talking about however has not been finalised. With due respect.

MR SPEAKER: I call the Chairperson.

Afioga ALIIMALEMANU ALOFA TUUAU: I appreciate the corrections concerning the content of the Report given the importance of this ship. So it is not the ship from Savaii but a ship for Tutuila and Apia. Coming back to what I was saying about the advantage of spending more than what we receive for it really encourages employees to collect the funds that should be acquired from within the country.

Secondly the more we spend on developments the greater the boost to our economy. Thirdly, it makes us frugal in spending wisely and focussing on developing the economy. Fourthly, it causes the public service to rethink before spending whether to spend or reshuffle our resources. The normal practise when countries have a deficit is to raise taxes as mentioned by a fellow member that VAGST should increase to fill the gaps in the budget, but that is not happening. I am merely referring Parliament to the previous 5 year budget while this term is not yet over.

The appropriated Budget for 2015/2016 was \$11,308,235 deficit. However, at the end of the year when public accounts statement was received that had already been audited, a surplus of \$28, 902,62 was indicated.

In 2016/2017, \$84.3 million was appropriated after receiving a surplus of \$63,849,496. In 2017/2018 a deficit of \$2,142,895 was estimated for that year. At the end of the year after receiving audited statement of accounts, a surplus of \$30,978,148 was indicated.

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In 2018/2019 deficit forecast for that budget was \$12,871,317 and after receiving audited statement of accounts by the auditors there was a surplus of \$47,639,967. The ending of this current year, the deficit is \$72million and it is the same trend for the new year with \$116,187,159 deficit.

This is the process for budget preparation for any country though it seems that it indicates a possible drop in amount and that it may not meet the requirements, at the end of the financial year which is the focus of the public service, there is a surplus. Everyone understands the plight experienced by the whole world due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The strategy development for Samoa 2020/2021 towards 2024 and 2025 has firmly established the conservation of the economy's backbone to ensure there is minimal effect on our economy. So there are now minor alterations to the Government's financial policies with 5 parts instead of the usual 6.

The first financial policy of the State is to maintain the deficit within 2% of the economy of expenditure over revenue. With the \$116 million deficit being forecast for the year 2020/2021 compared to our economy of \$2.37 billion that is only 5%. We are still within the 2% threshold of the economy.

The second policy is that the total amount of spending on outputs must be within 25% to 30% of the economy. The usual output cost of \$612 million is only 26% of our economy.

The third financial policy of Government is that foreign reserves for the public service salaries must remain within 35% and 40%. For the upcoming year \$279,886,129 will be appropriated for salaries which is 33% expenditure.

Fourthly, ensure that Government's total borrowing remains below 50% of the economy. At the end of December 2019 our debt was at \$1,000,028,000 which is \$47.1million of our economy. As one member put it last night, there is still chance for additional borrowings.

Fifthly, we must ensure that our debt repayments remains below 20% of revenue and expenditure in total which excludes grants from our overseas partners. The revenue of \$588million which I mentioned earlier covers our debt repayments of \$89,328,161. Therefore, only 15% is spent on our debt repayments. These are the policies which the Public Accounts Committee must focus its review on to see whether it was adhered to during the preparations of the Budget.

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In the third Supplementary Estimates, \$3,741,430 of additional revenue was from the kindness of our partners and our very own people who gave because of the measles and it was \$2.6million including \$1.3million for taxes on petrol and oil, of which \$6,905 was deducted from additional expenses...

MR SPEAKER: My apologies to the Chairperson but I will allow the member for Salega.

Tofa Olo Fiti Afoa Vaai (Salega East): Mr Speaker, I wish to offer an explanation on one particular area. I applaud the Chairperson of the Public Accounts Committee for their thorough undertaking for it is no easy task. She has given a detailed account of debts and related matters. I gather from her remarks that our debt repayment is steady at below 50% of the GDP.

My question to the Chairperson is, considering the information of our accounts from the Ministry of Finance report of April which is a month ago. It showed that the information presented in Parliament differs from what they are divulging to IMF. This is my question since what they tell IMF is that our debt repayments are way over 50% of our GDP whereas what we are hearing here is somehow different. Now I apologise to the Chairperson as I wonder whether it is wishful thinking on her part but after listening to the Chairperson her remarks actually seem factual.

My second point is, the Chairperson is using the word deficit. But my limited knowledge from my pancake stall at home is such that once the accounts have been audited, there is no longer a deficit, rather we use the term profit and loss. Yet the Chairperson seems to be emphasising that term, with respect.

MR SPEAKER: I here you, I call upon the Chairperson.

Afioga ALIIMALEMANU ALOFA TUUAU: I will try to respond although it is very annoying when the orators are in discussion.

With regards to the Report of the Ministry of Finance, because Parliament has not yet discussed it. The Public Accounts is discussing the reports that have been audited which has the opinion of the Chief Auditor. If this was a report from April, let us wait until we receive it as no such report has been submitted by the Public Accounts Committee.

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The term profit and loss has been mentioned. We accountants are familiar with these things, once expenditure are more than revenue, we call it deficit, when it is a loss, then we call it bankrupt. Such stage brings uncertainty not knowing whether it can stand up or not. Whereas for deficit, it is flexible because there are avenues in place to fix it. But the query of the member, commerce books are different from government accounts. Because unused capital may be carried over for projects of the next financial year. These unused funds are called revenue or profit. Most of this fund in our view is reserved for projects continuation.

Just as well that the Chiefs of Ministries are present and I do wish to say something about that. That is my explanation, for unlike your business where you are free to do whatever you like. But with these funds they have already been committed elsewhere for the purpose of continuing other developments.

Mr Speaker, now I do not know where I am up to...

MR SPEAKER: I call upon the Prime Minister or the honourable Chairperson.

Susuga Hon Tuilaepa Auelua Fatialofa Lupesoliai Lolofietele Neioti Aiono Galumalemana Dr. Sailele Malielegaoi: Whilst the Chairperson gathers her notes, it is best that I assist her with her huge workload. I must congratulate the Chairperson in clarifying the matter and emphasising the notion of in kind donation which is not in monetary form, but once the ship arrives well let us just say that it costs \$60million. In other words, the cost for Japan to build the ship is \$60 million, that figure will be noted as their grant, which will reflect in the budget, although no money was given at least they donated us a ship. One time I was listening to the radio and someone asked what in kind means? Well that is the answer, we do not see the actual money but tangible assistance given. It is why we put it down as grant, it is a gift.

The vital thing here honourable Speaker, because unused funds were read out last night. Such is reason for excess and unused money left hence some of these are in kind donations which have not been received due to unforeseen circumstances like COVID-19 which has delayed 3 projects to be done by China involving a school and a Police Academy.

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Now it is cancelled. If it can press through this year, whatever funds that are needed to spend, the Chinese can directly use it to bring in materials to build this academy. These funds will reflect directly under reserve funds. The view which says that there should be a balance, well there is no need for that. Because these amounts are carried forward and projects are done within a specific timeframe as I explained before, our airport is underway for the next 2 to 3 years since the contract has already been signed with funds to be allocated by them to implement it.

On that note, the public need not be concerned, we have reserve funds, I suspect that the HRPP is using it to do their campaign or perhaps have distributed them. That is impossible. Funds were meant to go directly to where it was proposed to be spent. That is the importance of the clarification made by the Chairperson to clear the air on unused funds. Projects will continue to next year just like businesses continuing on in the following year with profits they make. The contrast between Governments profits and small businesses is that you get to earn your own profit from your own business. It is your own business and you have the freedom to do whatever you like with your profits as it is no one else's business. Whereas for Government projects, there are many people that can question these aspects and in doing so, you must have a good understanding rather than getting up futilely and rant about this and that.

So that is the significance of the clarification made which has indicated the boundaries that are in place. Once we get there, we get the alert light from the State, through their recommendation from the Minister of Finance to us. Therefore, we should not be doing this. Laauli is very familiar with this process. The advice from Ministry of Finance is always obtained. Whatever status of our finance there is? The Cabinet will make its decisions accordingly.

Mr Speaker that is my assistance to the query from the member although the details from the Chairperson was wonderfully stated highlighting the boundaries which we should not overstep and repayments and debts from one year to another and our credit limit.

For deficit this year well, the Chairperson has spoken that part of it is grants of \$107 million. Most of our budget come directly from in kind donations. Majority of what is needed for project requirements which they are putting up themselves makes up a great portion of our budget. But getting up disrespectfully and say this is an awful thing.

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So in other words the member for Salega East is saying to reject all the grants given to us because it causes the deficit in our budget. I do like the clarification from the Chairperson, and it was here in this House where a member got up and said. What were St Paul's words? Love binds everything. Love is patient. Love is not getting up often to ask questions. That is my assistance.

Tofa Olo Fiti Afoa Vaai: Mr Speaker, I do understand the term in kind very well, but the reason why I have said this is...

MR SPEAKER: I did not give you a chance, that is why your statements are not fully recorded because you did not press the red button, and at the end you will blame the Office of the Clerk. Because the next time you stand up angrily, lack patience, without pressing the red button in front of you. Then your statement becomes incomplete...your statement cannot be recorded, because you did not press the red button. Another thing, the red button will come on if I allow you to stand up. As such, I call the member.

Tofa Olo Fiti Afoa Vaai: Mr Speaker, I beg tolerance, but I do understand the phrase in kind. I raised this because of the Report from the Public Accounts Committee stating the \$20 million given by Japan in the form of in kind. This was wonderfully stated to have been given to us for free. But when it got to the procurement of the ship in which the Minister of Works got up, it was mentioned to have been bought. This has totally brought upon me so much confusion...

MR SPEAKER: I call upon the Minister of Finance. My apologies to the Minister but will get this other member out the way first.

Susuga Hon Laauli Polataivao Leuatea (Gagaifomauga No.3): Mr Speaker, I have no intention honourable Chairperson...

MR SPEAKER: Well the Minister of Finance feels that the point of order towards the member for Salega must take precedence, I allow the...

Afioga Hon Sili Epa Tuioti (Minister of Finance): Thank you Mr Speaker I wish to assist by clarifying this in kind phrase.

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Now as the Hon Prime Minister had said, this grant from Japan is that they will build the ship. It is not a debt nor money rather they will build a ship and send it to us.

The other point that was raised relates to our debts and GDP. Just recently when we became affected by the measles and COVID-19 that IMF started making projections. It was their view that if we borrow up to 70% of our GDP it would have an influence over us. Their understanding is that we are seeking financial assistance from the World Bank or ADB or wherever we approach for assistance to our stimulus package. However, the Ministry of Finance and the Government does not accept the need at this time to make new loans. Currently it is all been contained below 48% which is also the aim of the Government aims and not to allow again 60 or 70%. So right now our debt compared to our GDP is at 48%.

The World Bank and other institutions asked Samoa whether they wanted to defer the payment of our interest rates to say 12 months. The dialogue we had at the Ministry of Finance is that it was unnecessary to accept the request from IMF as we felt that we had the financial capability through the in kind grants and the many love from international organisations to assist us with grants in financing our projects at this time which are also in line with the recommendations of the Ministry of Finance.

MR SPEAKER: Well done, I call again the Prime Minister.

Susuga Hon Tuilaepa Auelua Fatialofa Lupesoliai Lolofietele Neioti Aiono Galumalemana Dr. Sailele Malielegaoi: I wish to make an additional statement on top of the Ministers remarks. You must remember that since 1983 we have been commissioning officials particularly from the Ministry of Finance to observe at IMF, the World Bank and the Asian Development bank in the capacity of management officials to observe the strategy applied to managing the economies of the world.

Now that our very own people have gone over and have returned putting Samoa in a very significant position. So when these missions arrived here some of the delegations are former employees at the World Bank, or even IMF or ADB. They are met by some of our best and brightest now within the Ministry with wealth of experience and trainings in managing money. These prestigious organisations now have established offices here, and guess who have taken up these positions?

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Our very own people whom have worked within these establishments. So whenever they visit our shores they hold discussions and are briefed on matters which they do get understanding from their counterparts and have a clear view of how things are done here. Their recommendations are reviewed by the Ministry of Finance considering in detail how significant the recommendations are. After making their decision a report is prepared on their stance on things for the information of government. That is the purpose of these reports recommendations to the government whether it is viable. That is the report Olo was reading. They are not decisions and must I remind you that some of us here once held posts in management and director's offices within these large financial organisations looking at decisions by these members whom are American and New Zealand nationals, people from Britain and Europe deliberating over these major economic issues and with these folks present inside.

Mr Speaker, that is why I say do not be concerned if you have look at that report because you are looking at plans but you should really look at what is happening and who do you talk to? Talk to the Chairperson of the Finance Committee. The other point raised is loans which we discussed.

The Asian Development Bank was established in 1966 and we were the only South Pacific country to become a founding member.

Samoa became a member of the International Monetary Fund IMF in 1971, 1972, and later became an active member. Meaning we have shares in this organisation. This means to say that we govern these organisations. Any country that holds shares for an organisation, like the local companies we have like Vodafone, once our people hold shares in here, they become the owners or shareholds.

Mr Speaker the reason for the confusion is because we are looking at the totality of loans starting from that time period when we were taking borrowing from the ADB and IDA or the International Development Association which is the soft window of the World Bank. These organisations were specifically established to provide service to developing countries like us with weak economies. They allow us up to 30 years to pay off these loans at very low interest rates. You do not find these bank institutions at any commercial bank anywhere.

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In 1991 a mission from IMF came here, they came in the month of September and said to me, “Tuilaepa, devalue the Samoa currency by 25%” I asked “why must we devalue our currency?” Just look at where our foreign reserves is at, this is reserved for our import trading which is slipping and is at a stage that is jeopardising the position of government and I must remind you that this is the same situation which caused our economy to collapse before HRPP took over. We then put in place major strategies which we regularly change this was clearly outlined by the madam Chairperson of the Finance Committee. They said to me to note this down as their recommendation, I said to them to leave it with me and they should remember that the bulk of the funds is generated from our foreign reserves which is tourism and remittances which families receive during Christmas time of which its equivalent goes towards our foreign exchange. The foreigners do not understand that aspect which only we ourselves understand, so our currency will not be devalued. Sent them a message to say that your decision as Minister of Finance is that our currency will not be devalued and that there are certain aspects which they do not understand.

In September of the following year we had a delegation travelling overseas on meetings and we first met with the IMF and World Bank. I said to them, “you came over last year and recommended that we devalue our currency by 25% to contain the problem which is affecting our foreign reserves and foreign exchange. You would have received our correspondence relating to this matter, as there are issues that you do not comprehend pertaining to our traditions and culture. Such is the explanation on this report, our foreign exchange did not take a dive but actually made a surge.

Mr Speaker that is the nature of negotiations. These foreigners will not turn up and tell us what to do. We must also consider our culture and way of life for this factor has a huge contribution to the development of Samoa. It is the encouraging factor behind the conviction of this House except for 1 or 2 members whom are the reason for this legislation being deliberated to emphasise our traditions and culture. Since its contribution to the development of the country and to maintain peace and stability within communities.

Mr Speaker that is my input so as to realise that there is a vast difference between situations. If we are to pay off our loans at 1% within a period of 30 years that is the extent these banks can go with their lending terms.

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By the time we have paid off our loans the turn over from the developments done with this money would be huge. It will also enable us to implement more projects which will generate more money into our economy and ultimately making us less dependent. It is why these countries are assisting us as they realise that our strategic planning and implementation is very advance.

When Governments are in deficit as it did with the depression of 1930, this is the avenue they take. It is no longer necessary to balance the books, but spend as much as we like as New Zealand did. They deliberately pushed up their deficit so as to create employment and to compulsorily employ people to plant pine trees although it was not needed at the time. New Zealand are now reaping the rewards from the pines they grew in 1930. With money once a State realises they are in crisis, they tend to spend more and more but there are boundaries which it must consider. It cannot over spend carelessly but it must be done in prudence which is why polices are important.

It is the reason for seeking the Ministry of Finance recommendation on the direction we must take before passing any policy. When it comes to the desirability of a law the Office of the Attorney General is approached. For the information of the public the only legal counsel mentioned in the Constitution which the Government adheres to is the Office of the Attorney General.

Mr Speaker those are the only lawyers specified within the Constitution which the Government takes advice from. It is why there are so many of them within the Office of the Attorney General. There is currently about 50 of them including the counsels within the Law Reform Commission. They are all competent professionals which the Government rely on. Furthermore, every Ministry and Public Enterprise has a legal counsel so when the Government do ask for a piece of legislation they are required to cooperate with lawyers at the Office of the Attorney General.

Mr Speaker, that is to further enlighten members on the huge workload done by the Chairperson and the Public Accounts Committee which clarifies their roles and responsibilities on works relating to their line of work and our addition of the Government's part. Because when it comes to matters relating to policies, those are the issues pertaining to the Government. Once these sort of issues raises questions of policies they are matters of government. Whereas the review of reports, those are the jurisdiction of the Committees.

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When it comes to policies it is why Ministers are quick to take the floor to clarify matters since the implementation of law and the appropriation of funds is dictated by policies which Cabinet deliberates.

Mr Speaker that is further assistance to the matter.

MR SPEAKER: I call upon the Chairperson.

Susuga Hon Laauli Polataivao Leuatea: Mr Speaker please I was pleading for an opportunity...

MR SPEAKER: I beg tolerance of the member but I will allow the opportunity to the Minister of Works, Afioga Papalii.

Susuga Hon Papaliitele Niko Lee Hang: Thank you for the opportunity. I would like to discuss the phrase in kind, since the member's criticism stems from the printing of the statement. It was very clear in the Chairperson's statement that in kind refers to donations which includes ship.

I like to refer to it as buying and that is what you call using your common sense. But it is understood that it was donated. But selling the ship would be wrong because that will not happen as the ship was donated to us. I thought I would clarify this as Olo does not seem to understand.

MR SPEAKER: Well done, I guess the clarification from the Government is now fully understood and also the statement from the Prime Minister. I am of the view that we should not prolong our work. Our Standing Orders also prohibits a debate on a matter raised by a member and has been dealt with. But if two members intend to debate the same issue, I must not allow it as it will delay our work...

Susuga Hon Laauli Polativao Leuatea: Mr Speaker with all due respect the matter I wish to raise is different from the issue Olo is driving at.

MR SPEAKER: Make it short.

Susuga Hon Laauli Polativao Leuatea: Madam Chairperson the concern which I was hoping you would enlighten us on with a clarification regards the \$588 million estimated to be our revenue.

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What concerns me is the fact that we are in the midst of COVID. Would we be able to acquire this amount?

MR SPEAKER: Why do we not...

Susuga Hon Laauli Polativao Leuatea: We are currently discussing our revenues and I am proposing that we exercise prudent in spending that is what I am trying to put across because what is certain is that we will not get this \$588 million depicted.

MR SPEAKER: Alright let me clarify this
I call upon the Leader of the House.

Afioga Hon Tuilaepa Auelua Fatialofa Lupesoliai Lolofietele Neioti Aiono Galumalemana Dr Sailele Malielegaoi: Laauli, you were part of Cabinet and understands Cabinet procedures. The Ministry of Finance calls other Ministries normally in April to submit and discuss their Ministerial plans. Dialogue pursues and the questions are asked, where will this and that come from? What is your opinion on this? Is it possible to achieve this?

In other words, the Minister and the Ministry of Finance cover every topic in their consultation. After their inquiry it is submitted to Cabinet where the Chief Executive Officers all appear before Cabinet. This is the second consultation with Cabinet which always results in more changes. Cabinet will meet once more after this stage to make its final decision and then the budget is submitted before Parliament. After the Ministers gives its Ministerial statement it goes to the Committee. Why? Because the Budget is under the Budgeting law which is only a proposed document, then it is transferred to that group then the current Chairperson taking the floor and her committee calls every Ministry to justify before them whether these proposals can be confirmed.

We have always known the concept of justification. The Committee has the power to remove anything but never to propose more. Once they understand that something is way too much, they will slash it to indicate the need to reflect integrity. But let me remind you that we are making estimations. It was said this morning that we make our plans but God turns it to reality.

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We only make the plans as we do not know what tomorrow will bring. It is also the reason we prepare Budget Statements, One and Two. Once adversities strike we proceed to prepare Supplementary Estimates to consider other avenues.

I had thought that you would not asked this. If our estimations are out of proportion due to disasters, well there is an opportunity to present another supplementary estimates be it lesser or substantial in figures.

How many Budgets have we spent so far this year, is it 3? There have been 3 Supplementary Estimates and the Main Financial Estimates for next year and consultations continue to reach the actual amount that was initially estimated. At the same time projects are considered as to which should go ahead which consequently creates savings. There are projects which cannot proceed due to COVID, which is savings transferred into the Supplementary Estimates No.3, now we have three.

Mr Speaker the question proposed was whether these are true and that is our response. If there maybe irregularities, there is our budget where we make these right. We make the proposal but God fulfils it.

MR SPEAKER: Well done, my apologies...

Susuga Hon Laauli Polataivao Leuatea: Mr Speaker, it is sad that we are hoping to acquire an opportunity but are consistently denied.

MR SPEAKER: My apologies to you...

Susuga Hon Laauli Polataivao Leuatea: If I am off line, I will leave it at that, respectfully.

MR SPEAKER: I beg tolerance of you but you may have interpreted our attempt in the wrong way. The Prime Minister has clarified the point you raised and you were a Cabinet member and so understands the concept of equality and fairness. When something has been screened by a group of intellectuals it goes to the Attorney General before it goes to Cabinet who then will pass it to Parliament then it is passed to the Committee whom then will invite every Chief Executive Officer of Ministries and Public Enterprises to screen the Budget.

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The issue you raise will be discussed when we get to the consideration of individual items. We are at the stage where the budget is considered in its entirety concerning the economy and policies. We are not depriving you of the opportunity, the Government aims to clarify whilst I am merely applying Standing Orders to guide our Proceedings.

I call upon the Chairperson of the Committee to continue. I would think that every aspect concerning the Budget Appropriation is now clear.

Afioga ALIIMALEMANU ALOFA TUUAU: Yes we will now consider the Supplementary Estimates No.3 2019/2020 which indicates our additional revenues of \$3,731,430,00. I did mention this funding allocation we acquired as donations for our efforts to contain the measles epidemic and taxes for petrol and oil. The Additional Expenses for the Supplementary Estimates No.3 is \$6,905,724,00 which brings our Additional Deficit for the previous year ending this month 2019/2020 at \$3,164,294.

I commend the Minister of Finance for his address noting policies which this Committee based its findings on whether they were applied or not. I also applaud the Executive for we are now certain that preparations of the Budget Appropriation 2020/2021 as well as the Supplementary Estimates was dictated by the financial procedures and policies of the Government.

I am also appreciative of all the Chief Executive Officers of Ministries and Public Enterprises and everyone that played a part in the compilation of the budget despite the headache from some of you, otherwise you are doing a great job. Thank you for your positive response, we like how you have included the outputs for projects which were normally not included and it has completed our work.

The other factor mentioned is delivery since we have noticed that the percentage achieved is rather minimum but you all understand the reasons behind the obstacles which consequently slows the progress of projects where remaining funds come from at the end of the year. I believe that you are now equipped with the plan to implement your role to full capacity. But I am filled with gratitude for there have been constructive improvements which is evident during this 5year period now ending.

I also want to acknowledge the Chief Executive Officer and staff of the Ministry of Finance for the performance of their arduous functions. You will notice that the list of every Ministry and Public Enterprise projects are now within the Public Accounts Committee Report to ensure that they adhere to implementing them within the time frame given.

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The theme of the budget for 2020/2021 Mr Speaker is ‘Weaving a Prosperous Future for a Better Samoa’ which hails from the belief that our endeavours must be done in a collective manner. The intention is *ogatasi le futia ma le umele* as there is always a mutual cooperation between the instigators and the executors as we can elevate the state of our economy to a much higher level as long as we initiate cooperation. This is our calling as Leaders of Samoa, to solely develop our economy and to maintain the dignity and security of Samoa for the future.

Mr Speaker, just a few comments on behalf of my constituency of Alataua West. Members expressed quite a number of wonderful opinion concerning the state of our economy as it is our collective responsibility. I myself will not focus on the beginning but the end product which is imperative to Alataua West.

The real interesting speech this week was on our history that the House had reflected upon regarding the Appropriation Budget of Parliament and the minimal appropriated Budget in the past years, our debts were quite small too which relied on cocoa and coconut.

The importance of this reminder is that it is a lesson for us all on the events occurring in Parliament and the appropriations that we were able to appropriate at the time. The real vital factor for this constituency of Alataua West and so it should be with every member representing the various communities around the country is the opinion whether there has been changes since 40 to 50 years ago. Each member must make its own analysis based on age. How is Samoa at this age and its economy? Whether the measure of its current economy is lifted or whether it is measured in terms of its Appropriations? Or whether to use its GDP as alluded to by the member for Faleata No.1 last night?

I recall when I would prepare for my schooling in Apia back in the day. The bus from our village leaves at 9pm and it takes 3 to 4 hours travel due to the poor road condition. We would then wait in the night breeze at the wharf.

There was a building at the time to store bananas and we would use it as shelter whilst waiting but on rainy days we would become soaked and would be that way until we get to Apia the next day.

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The ferry boats at the time were Petilu and Sulimoni and it took almost 3 hours to travel from Savaii. When the sea becomes rough we would become wet by the swells right from Salelologa. But the service was unable to bring everyone at once so we would be out there in the sun all day before going into Salelologa and Faasaleleaga to find a family to stay for the night and by the early hours we would be at the wharf again.

I also recall the single water tank next to the pastor's house at our village where everyone go to for water and when there was a dry spell we would then use the well for drinking water. There was normally one lucky student from each constituency to receive a scholarship. It was the same situation with colleges around Apia where very minimal opportunities were available. But when I would be sent home for not paying school fees, I would go looking for someone to take my letter informing my family of my situation as there were no means of speedy communication. Radio telegrams was however available but that was not an option as everyone would find out about not being able to pay up the fees and also there was no money to pay for this service.

Our population was relatively small but those are a few factors I have brought up as examples, but there are tonnes of situations we can use to justify bringing up the past to compare with the present particularly this point in time. Each member must come up with its own assumption of what the state of their respective constituency is in relation to the economy compared to 40 to 50 years ago. There were no hotels in Savaii back then but it is now booming with hotel businesses being established throughout the country.

I also recall that there were only two stores at our constituency and village, the Eveni and Nelson retailers.

Currently in Savaii there are more hotels around with beach fales accommodations which families can make a living off. Hotels were a priority area of development in the Government's agenda to raise our....

Susuga Hon Tuilaepa Auelua Fatialofa Lupesoliai Lolofietele Neioti Aiono Galumalemana Dr Sailele Malielegaoi: Mr Speaker...

MR SPEAKER: I call the Prime Minister.

Susuga Hon Tuilaepa Auelua Fatialofa Lupesoliai Lolofietele Neioti Aiono Galumalemana Dr Sailele Malielegaoi: Let me ask the member.

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What is your view of these hotels? Is it smooth? Is it being developed right? In your view of these developments, do they give you an impression of a development in which Baal would have been responsible for? As one member has stated that all of this was done by Baal. Can this member state whether these developments were of some assistance to the constituency?

MR SPEAKER: I call upon... I beg tolerance of the member...I beg tolerance of the member...

Tofa Olo Fiti Afoa Vaai: Mr Speaker, the question I want to ask concerns the member...

MR SPEAKER: My apologies to the member

Tofa Olo Fiti Afoa Vaai: I want to ask the member what her view is of 1970 when the money we got was only \$4million with the population of Samoa at 115,000 compared to \$800million+ and the population is still at 100,000 plus in Samoa.

MR SPEAKER: Pardon me, you seem like your are making another speech...

Tofa Olo Fiti Afoa Vaai: Looking at the percentage, what is the difference? Samoa was better off economically back then compared to the present.

MR SPEAKER: I beg tolerance of the member but you must address the points which you raised. Now you did not bring up the total population of our country. The question from the Prime Minister was to clarify the statement from the member. Pardon me as...

Tofa Olo Fiti Afoa Vaai: Mr Speaker, I did raise this matter...

Afioga Hon Tuilaepa Auelua Fatialofa Lupesoliai Lolofietele Neioti Aiono Galumalemana Dr Sailele Malielegaoi: Mr Speaker...

Tofa Olo Fiti Afoa Vaai: I am the rightful one the Chairperson is referring to.

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**Afioga Hon Tuilaepa Auelua Fatialofa Lupesoliai Lolofietele Neioti
Aiono Galumalemana Dr Sailele Malielegaoi:** Point of order...

MR SPEAKER: Very well we shall...

**Afioga Hon Tuilaepa Auelua Fatialofa Lupesoliai Lolofietele Neioti
Aiono Galumalemana Dr Sailele Malielegaoi:** I was asking the Chairperson whether the good deeds done are the actions of God or could they be constructive things by the pagan god Baal? That is how we conduct our Proceedings. Instead of my getting up to ask the member for an explanation and I end up being interrupted. I was not asking you, do look at our Standing Orders and abide the Chairs ruling.

I was asking for an explanation whether the wonderful developments implemented by its constituency stems from Gods amazing grace whispered to the good people responsible for these developments or is it the work of the pagan god Baal?

MR SPEAKER: Pardon the member but let me say this...

Tofa Olo Fiti Afoa Vaai: Baal is HRPP. That is exactly what I was saying. I was referring to you as Baal.

MR SPEAKER: I beg tolerance of the member but I do not recall a member mentioning Baal. But I do remember now that it was you that referred to us as worshipping Baal.

Tofa Olo Fiti Afoa Vaai: You are both Baal.

MR SPEAKER: I had thought that your statement should be omitted from Hansard. But then again leave it there for future generations to read. But we are worshipping the God Samoa is founded upon. Your statement applies that Samoa worships Baal.

So I suggest that we no longer continue the exchange on this matter. I for one am getting emotional. Our village has two wells which the whole of Fasitoo drink from. One is in front of my house and the other one is located in the front yard of Tuilaepa Aiono. At this stage some families have two water taps. There is now hot and cold water available. It is like you are in America.

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Listening to the Chairperson giving an account of Samoa 40 years ago puts a tear in my eye. Because it reminds me of the hardship our forebears went through. How are we now? Some families have 8 vehicles and no one is in employment.

I call on the Chairperson and please make it brief as I am in tears...

Tofa Olo Fiti Afoa Vaai: A point of order. The interpretation of Baal which I mentioned is incorrect.

Afioga ALIIMALEMANU ALOFA TUUAU: Alright...

Tofa Olo Fiti Afoa Vaai: No, I think if Samoa were worshipping God, we would have received a response already. Samoa would not be poor. But currently we are still poor, and yet he is getting up again.

Afioga Hon Tuilaepa Auelua Fatialofa Lupesoliai Lolofietele Neioti Aiono Galumalemana Dr Sailele Malielegaoi: Mr Speaker there is a saying...

MR SPEAKER: Does that mean until...

Afioga Hon Tuilaepa Auelua Fatialofa Lupesoliai Lolofietele Neioti Aiono Galumalemana Dr Sailele Malielegaoi: There are those that rave and those that take notice. The anxiety to comment inside this House and so I am picking on it. Since the objective of the claim is that all the constructive developments stems from the fact that we are worshipping Baal. Now just look at how serious the statement is, made in a country that is founded on God. When we take our place in this House we must be mindful of what we say.

There is an element of dignity about this House and this nation is founded on God. Mr Speaker when a member makes absurd claims, you will be pursued by your own assertion. My statement to cover Cabinet matters will focus on Baal and the whole development of this country. Just to let your constituency understand about the kind of member they have put here, they worships Baal.

Tofa Olo Fiti Afoa Vaai: Mr Speaker...

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MR SPEAKER: I beg tolerance...

Tofa Olo Fiti Afoa Vaai: My constituency are well aware of the antagonizing done here.

MR SPEAKER: Let us move on to a different matter.

Tofa Olo Fiti Afoa Vaai: My constituency understands. You are wasting your time deceiving my constituents, but come next year I will be strolling this way again.

MR SPEAKER: I beg tolerance of the member but do not raise that again. I also advise the Chairperson to quickly change the subject. You will notice that most of us are in tears due to your speech. As no one wants to relive in memory the hard times our parents went through. They had to struggle to find bus fares and so on. But you are absolutely correct, except for someone that was raised overseas and returned an adult that would not understand about the struggle our lives were. I call upon the member.

Afioga ALIIMALEMANU ALOFA TUUAU: Thank you for the opportunity but I will now come to the good stuff. There was a question concerning hotels which I will now speak about. This is an area which our Government gave priority to which consequently elevated the state of our economy. As I have stated there is a high number of hotels around Savaii and Upolu and moreover there are also numerous accommodation businesses giving families the opportunity to make money.

The records we have from the Ministry of Tourism is, \$347.5 million was recorded during 2014/2015 from hotels to pump into the economy. In 2015/2016 it was \$385.1 million. In 2016/2017 it was \$387.6 million. In 2017/2018 it was \$454.2 million and in 2018/2019 it increased to \$514.1 million. This is what we achieved from this important sector which the government placed emphasis on. I have provided details of this sector since it is now greatly affected and our economy was heavily depending upon it. At this stage this revenue earner is no more or we are receiving very little from them. Which raises thought provoking questions for everyone and also Cabinet.

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Mr Speaker a response from you is not necessary but it is thought provoking. The first question is. Do we have a future in hotels? Do we still have a future in hotels? Do we still have hopes that hotels can boost the economy? I do not know it is mere speculation but it is important that we remain vigilant.

The second question is. Did we embrace with delight the surge in our economy due to hotels, accommodation businesses, beach fales and tourists? Or did we over invest in hotels or not? There is an English adage which the Prime Minister sometimes quote, “don’t put your eggs in one basket”. It is thought provoking.

The member for Anoamaa West spoke about our airline, a subject which raised a lot of concerns in the House when reflecting on the issues that evolved from Polynesian Airline. My constituency supported this vital development due to the service it gives to the country with our recommendation that it would be nice to have two planes.

Now that we are in this situation affecting flights I am thinking now, oh thank goodness that we did not procure two planes. No one starts up a development with the intention of going broke, for we all want the country to prosper. But what is important is our service to the country. Alataua West is on the same page as the member for Anoamaa West considering our aircraft which will...

MR SPEAKER: I respectfully interrupt the speech from the chairperson but as we have approached our usual recess hour. You may continue your remarks when we return from our break.

I announce that Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly be suspended for usual recess.

Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly was suspended for its normal recess at 10:45 and continued at 11:30 am.

MR SPEAKER: I announce that Proceedings and orders of the Legislative Assembly now resume.

I take it that the refreshments have invigorated members and Chief Executive Officers to continue with our orders for the day. Before the Chairperson resumes there is a motion from the Leader of the House.

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MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT

Susuga Hon TUILAEP AUELUA FATIALOFA LUPESOLIAI LOLOFIETELE NEIOTI AIONO GALUMALEMANA Dr. SAILELE MALIELEGAOI: Mr Speaker I wish to convey to you my commendation and also to members having resumed our duties after indulging in the light refreshments provided. We are now heading into the final stage of our work for today. This is the last day of the week and we have engaged tirelessly day and night since this Sitting started. I am of the view that we should reserve our energy as God will provide us with more days.

At 12:00pm we should adjourn and continue in the following week. The urge to bond and converse with members is simply irresistible. It would be constructive to prolong our Sitting so as to really pour out our ideas and really dig deep into our intellect. Cabinet will endeavour to address the matters raised when it is our turn. The motion is now before you and that is the desire of myself and Cabinet, that at 12:00pm, we should adjourn.

Mr Speaker I move, that Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly be adjourned at 12:00 pm this afternoon until Monday of next week the 22nd of June at 9:00 am.

That is the motion for the approval of the House.

Seconded by the Minister of Works, Transport and Infrastructure, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Labour and the Minister of Women, Community and Social Development.

Motion approved

Debate resumed on the second reading of the Supplementary Appropriations Bill (No.3) 2019/2020 and the Appropriation Bill 2020/2021.

MR SPEAKER: We shall accordingly abide the motion moved by the Prime Minister or the Leader of the House.

I respectfully call upon the Chairperson of the Public Accounts Committee.

Afioga ALIIMALEMANU ALOFA TUUAU: Thank you Mr Speaker. I guess the refreshments has energised everyone.

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Before the suspension of Proceedings for our refreshments I had provided two thought provoking questions. The third question is how do we respond to continue the development of hotels in situations like COVID-19 which may again strike in future. Those are some inspirational thoughts for members and Cabinet as we have spent a lot of money on our projects. Just because we are not getting any investments from it does not mean that we should ignore it and focus on other projects. The Government has spent a lot of money on developing these businesses to build our economy. The bible says in Galatians, “Carry each other’s burdens and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ”. Those scriptures conclude our questions.

In the Budget Appropriation 2020/2021, 15.1% is spent on Health, 14.7% is for the Ministry of Education, 8% goes to the Ministry of Works which includes LTA, 2.3% is for the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Labour which also covers Tourism, 2% is allocated for the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries and 3% towards the Ministry of Natural Resources.

Most of the members emphasised the importance of reviving agriculture and fishing considering the effect on our economy. I appreciate the taro shoots from the Minister of Agriculture which was distributed to our community and every family received 3 each. Our recommendation is making this a community project and that way everyone is involved and at the same time can put together their resources. I have noticed in rural communities that as long as those in position of influence and power become committed to cultivating the land, the whole community particularly the untitled men naturally become dedicated themselves. This does not include the individual farmers currently supplying farming products and fish for overseas markets.

That is my opinion, as long as the chiefs and orators managing communities advocate their people to cultivate the land this could really improve through community projects. Another thought from Alataua West concerns districts. For example, say from the Asau region towards Falelima appoint someone as the representative to encourage commercial farming within the 4 constituencies and arm them with tools. This agent can be their door to the outside market and will be responsible for exporting farming products particularly people residing further out from the main centre. They are mere thoughts which hopefully will encourage the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

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I congratulate the Minister of Health and the Ministry for your patience and the service you provide. We are all pleased with the quality service implemented by the Ministry and especially the Committee responsible for our safety and making recommendations for the protection of the country.

I express here special praise to the Controller and Chief Auditor as we have noted with elation that all accounts are now up to date, in other words you have been able to audit them as one member put it.

It is the first time that accounts from the previous year have been submitted to the Finance and Expenditure Committee for their consideration before tabling it in Parliament before the next budget is compiled. We are so ecstatic with that reality that there is no longer a backlog and all accounts are up to date. The other thing is Annual Reports which are gradually coming in, I think there are maybe 3 or 4 left to complete. My appreciations to the Executive of the Trust Estates Corporation for the measure to sell local farming products at our building in Papakura and your initiative to produce electricity through your bio-mass project now going. There is \$1 million provided in the Budget to pay for people whom will be employed in these plantations at the same time providing opportunities for those out of work. I am of the view that it would be nice to employ these very people at the Trust Estates Corporation since they have brought the Corporation back to life. I applaud the Minister and employees particularly the Executive.

My congratulations to the Minister of Works and the Management of the Land Transport Authority, I salute you on your perseverance and sharing nature especially the Chief Executive Officer and Management of the Land Transport Authority. We are all seeing the predicament with the hotel business and yet you continue moving along at a steady pace doing our roads which is providing income for our people in these road contracts generating our economy. Thank you to you all.

The CDC site visit to major projects around Upolu and Savai'i gave me a sense of gratitude to God for the intellect our sons and daughters have achieved after viewing the huge projects done with the assistance of our partners overseas for assigning personnel to assist in these projects. My observation of the bridge at Mali'oli'o and the Hydro at Fagaloa and also the lake providing drinking water for Lepa and nearby communities, it just amazes me with the level of knowledge our people have accomplished to implement these massive projects.

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It is this reality where we must emphasise the state of education since the level of knowledge in our people is improving and we need them for the development of macro projects for the prosperity of the country.

Thank you to the staff of the Ministry of Finance for this is the first time as these accounts have been presented before Parliament before the compilation of our financial appropriations.

Such notable achievements make it possible to understand how well a project was accomplished. I commend you all for your service and I am grateful to the Prime Minister and Cabinet for it is times like these when enterprising people stand out. Since I gather that our foreign reserves are sufficient for orders of products in the next 7.5 months.

I do not see today the Ministers of Finance and Education but I want to remind them of the school building for our constituency school. I have seen with delight the 100 teachers graduating with our program which ...

MR SPEAKER: Orator Toeosulusulu the Minister for Communications, Information and Technology will take the floor.

Afioga Hon Afamasaga Lepuiai Rico Tupai (Minister of Communications and Information Technology): Mr Speaker I respectfully rise on a point of clarification. The general public are tuning in and since the Minister of Education is engaged with the Deputy Prime Minister in an urgent meeting of the University of the South Pacific Board concerning an issue which has surfaced.

So the bald head guy behind me, Afioga Lealailepule has been instructed to record all this down...

MR SPEAKER: The Minister of Women, Community and Social Development will take the floor.

Afioga Hon Tuitama Talalelei Tuitama (Minister of Women, Community and Social Development): Mr Speaker, I appreciate this opportunity as I have been waiting for the chance to discuss a matter which the Chairperson raised concerning the council of alii and faipule. I was anticipating the possibility of matters raised regarding our Ministry covering the issue that was mentioned.

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Although the matter was directed at the Ministry of Agriculture, I do wish to discuss it as it is a feature of my Ministry roles being publicise and the member may have come across this program by our Ministry currently being floated around the community especially the rural areas and is called the district development plan. Which focuses on developing constituencies by coordinating community committees which comprises of their respective representatives including their members of Parliament. We do have guidelines which was mentioned during our proceedings which has been discussed and deliberated with the Ministry during the programs currently rolled out into the 48 constituency covered by this program. These guidelines were embraced by all communities and so began the necessary developments of priorities so that the Government can help out with their needs and demands.

The sole purpose of the initiative is allowing the communities to take charge of their affairs and make it their very own and our people are recommended to take ownership of it. That is the whole purpose of this endeavour, to drill a sense of belonging and ownership within communities so that they can create their own needs which is highly in demand from time to time, then recorded down. The Ministry makes a record of it and will share it with our donor partners which will ultimately look for ways to make it happen.

At a later stage I will elaborate on the whole picture but this is just an outline of the program. So at this moment, 21 constituencies have already launch their own guidelines, which does incorporate the point made by the Chairperson regarding their intentions to develop her constituency and I would think it would be the case with other constituencies. 14 constituencies have already drafted their guidelines but have yet to announce it. The other 14 are currently working on it in collaboration with the Ministry to compile their guidelines. After being announced they are presented to organisations like UNDP for financial assistance to fund the implementation of the program as desired by communities through the assistance of the Ministry.

Two weeks ago we met with the Ambassador of Japan to discuss other strategy for the rest of the community and it requires a substantial amount of money which our Government are unable to come up with, hence our plea to our partners from overseas.

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On that note may I remind members, and I do not mean to instruct you but in support of these programs, members are required to take up the position of chairman in committees where projects desired by the communities are initiated. The Ministry can certainly help out, and the Government and our overseas partners can also make it happen through their support.

That is a brief outline for now since the administration of alii and faipule has been mentioned. Later on when the Government gives its response I will present this matter in its entirety. Mr Speaker thank you for the opportunity with respect.

MR SPEAKER: Well said. Is your clarification complete. I call upon the chairperson and I would think that you too have a little bit to go but we must be considerate of our working hours.

Afioga ALIIMALEMANU ALOFA TUUAU: I am almost done, appreciate the clarification from the Minister now that we know that DDP's in rural communities must undergo review, and it has been 3 years since it started. Thank you to the Minister of Education's secretary for noting down our demands. The only thing I would like to remind you is the school for our constituency and that of Falealupo.

There is also one other request. Hon Minister of Finance, there is matter concerning our Financial Appropriation and trainings for women. I am overwhelmed and grateful for the huge amounts handed out to women in communities. But I wonder whether it would be possible to specify the funds the appropriations of this money to rural communities to ensure that everybody and particularly the women living further away from the centre of communities. I have noticed that the majority of women are well educated but have gone ahead to take advantage of the opportunity. But it may be an idea to specify this in the Budget Appropriation to allocate this to people living in rural communities that have yet to receive this project. That is my suggestion.

Before closing my remarks, there were questions raised about the Committee's Report. It was asked whether it was not appropriate to increase the number of employees at the Ministry of Corrections. The answer is 14 new positions as well as two Assistant Commissioners with the appropriated sum of \$368,000 is provided for in the Budget, which increases the funding for the Ministry of Corrections at Tanumalala.

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There was a query concerning the sum of money spent on improving internet service SNPH and where this is paid to. That sum of money is \$246,000 and is paid to CSL which manages that infrastructure for the Government.

The third question relates to the \$4 million appropriated for the Development Bank. It was asked what this was for? The answer is it is reserved for borrowing at very low interest rates and is specifically tailored for the farmers. There is currently dialogue which is yet to be determined for the allocation of funding to hotels but it will not be much.

The last question on the Committee Report concerns entry points relating to the Ministry of Police whether it should not be at the same level. The Report itself clearly states the way things are currently at with salaries. But the Committee asked the Board responsible for the consideration of Government employees salaries since this role was given to....

MR SPEAKER: I interrupt the member speaking on clarifying matters. I am of the view that since we are yet to consider the individual items, I suggest that it may be best to leave it to individual members to raise these when we get to that part of our work. But as far as your general remarks is concern, well I am not sure whether you would be able to fit it all in to the 5 minutes or 3 remaining. I am not saying that you should take that avenue that is purely up to you but we do cooperate in our duties with the assistance of the Chair.

Afioga ALIIMALEMANU ALOFA TUUAU: Thank you Mr Speaker. That was all the questions that were raised concerning our Report. I appreciate your assistance. I am mindful of the time and so I think the speech of Alataua West will now conclude. If I may have erred or may have offended anyone, I beg tolerance of you.

Mr Speaker may the grace of the Good Lord give you strength in whatever area your service maybe needed. May you continue to possess wisdom in your duty to control Samoa's House. To the Hon Prime Minister and Cabinet may you continue to possess the energy and intellect from God to assist and guide you in your calling. May our Lord also grant the Associate Ministers strength in their supporting role to Ministers. I wish the same for the members on this side of Chambers, may we have spiritual wellbeing to guide each one of us in our duties.

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May God’s grace be upon the Chief Executive Officers of Ministries and Public Enterprises. I extend the same to the Clerk of this Assembly. I acknowledge the support of our people tuning in from the clergy right down to the little children. Whatever adversities awaiting us may they be cast away so that Samoa’s ship sails forward in freedom and tranquillity.

I respectfully recognise my constituency of Alataua West and the dignitaries pertaining to them from the point at Siuosave towards Faatoatoa. I salute you for your support. Whatever my shortcomings may have been, my apologies. But let us glorify God for what I was able to deliver as our contribution towards the development of the country. Thank you.

MR SPEAKER: Thank you and well done. The matters raised by members is understood as it is your duty as Chairperson to cover it. Other single items raised by members shall be address when the Government gives its response.

As such, I respectfully call upon the Hon Prime Minister.

Susuga Hon TUILAEPA AUELUA FATIALOFA LUPESOLIAI LOLOFIETELE NEIOTI AIONO GALUMALEMANA Dr SAILELE MALIELEGAOI: Mr Speaker I rise to convey my commendation to the members of this Assembly as they have all taken the floor to address the House.

It is now the Government’s turn to address in a specific manner the matters raised. I applaud the Chairperson of the Parliamentary Finance and Expenditure Committee. She had done a huge job covering the major areas of their work. You are after all members of Parliament who checks on the role of Cabinet.

Now that it is our turn we shall start with Afioga Afamasaga at the other end of this table and if there are still matters left to cover I will attempt to clarify them. But with all due respect let me say that when Ministers do address matters raised. It is evidently clear that the emphasis on the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries is still very high.

The claim that we should revive the cultivation of our land is absolutely incorrect. And the Minister of Agriculture will fully address this next week. The Minister has given you a glimpse on pulenuu women and men or sui o le malo within communities will be paying great attention to the Government’s emphasis on farming and growing cocoa will be re-enforced.

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The big problem with our coconuts right now is the prevailing rhinoceros beetle. You have all heard the programs relating to coconuts laid out to eradicate the beetle. There was a matter I was speaking out on which stressed this development which stops the export of baby coconuts but to contain that product domestically. Since it is prevailing and consequently we will not be seeing any more coconuts. This is one of the vital issues handle by the Minister in charge of community administration with the authority of alii and faipule and their role in containing people from excessively obtaining baby coconuts. This was the norm in villages in the past. When people would sometimes excessively indulge themselves in something, the community are instructed to stop gathering coconuts for a month or so to ensure their growth and having an abundance supply of coconuts and also to stop folks from stealing coconuts off other peoples land. You have also heard the vigorous encouragement of our government to our company SROS. In carrying our scientific research. The reason is that it is not just growing plants but the marketing factor is equally important. The other important factor is ensuring there are ships to ship them out just like when Yazaki was operating. All these factors are interconnected as in a union.

It is the very reason Government stepped in and bought the bankrupt Forum Line. We bought it and now we have a Shipping Company collaborating with other shipping companies. Preparing for the shipping of these products abroad. We have just held talks with the governor of American Samoa regarding the marketing of our taro and other products to American Samoa. SROS is committed to the secondary production of goods, instead of raw materials which in a sense avoids the effect of laws which prohibits the exportation of goods to countries like New Zealand and Australia due to the common pesticides and disease which may reach their shores.

You would recall the arrival of the beetle in Samoa which was through the procurement of coconut shoots with dirt from overseas which is how the beetle was introduced to Samoa. It is currently developing again and the Government is moving to eradicate this indicating our emphasis on agriculture continues. We never ceased prioritising this and in the past export surged and was affected once again by the blight, cyclones and the decision of a former Government which ceased the export of coconut and cocoa which was sold to Germany and Britain for the production of chocolate.

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Samoa was one of the 14 countries that supplied high flavoured cocoa for the production of chocolate. These are facts which most people are not aware of as it was many years ago. Even with bananas which reached a million boxes exported to New Zealand right up to 1962 when we became independent. What is the situation with that? We are not stopping that. We are continuing trials and experiments in order to revive banana export. I like the suggestion from Toomata, for our Research Office to focus on our very own type of banana. We have brought in palagi banana and banana from Israel which does show that is one of the most easily affected banana to disease.

Mr Speaker the Government will elaborate in detail our long term strategy currently rolled out. But it seems that some members feel that there is no vision in terms of cooperation of all the major projects being done. But it is worth noting these for the benefit of the country at large tuning in since it enlightens them on where our long term goals are at. These initiatives are not done in isolation but they all connect.

So next week the Assembly and the country will hear about the collective endeavours of the Ministers and Ministries in their effort to encourage education, health, agricultural development, the projects for our shores and rural communities will all be under the microscope which will all be addressed by Ministers in the coming week. May we all have a blessed Sabbath. Soifua.

MR SPEAKER: Thank you. You have just heard the statement from the Prime Minister or the Leader of the House elaborating matters raised by members of this Parliament. The intention is that the future is secure. The Government is now preparing to respond with the Prime Minister kicking off. I beg tolerance of orator Toeolesulusulu and the dignitaries which you represent.

But come tomorrow morning you will have your opportunity to thoroughly respond on Monday. It is best that you prepare yourself for Monday as we only have a few seconds remaining until the adjournment hour. So that is why the government expresses its apologies, I mean the Speaker.

Afioga Hon AFAMASAGA LEPUIAI RICO TUPAI: I will abide your ruling. But Toeolesulusulu is one of the chiefly titles of the Sa Tuala family. Its address is Afioga Toeolesulusulu and Toalepai is the eldest in the decrees of the Sa Tuala family. That is to clarify the matter, thank you.

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MR SPEAKER: Well said, the important thing is getting the honorific salutations of your constituency correct for the country's highest forum.

But before we adjourn I call upon the member for Falealili East to conclude our meeting in prayer. He is one of Mormon bishops.

Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly were adjourned at 12.15 pm until 9.00 am on Monday, 22 June 2020.