

FRIDAY, 23 JUNE 2017

The Speaker took the Chair at 9.00am.

Prayer.

MESSAGE FROM THE AO O LE MALO

The Speaker read out the Message from O Le Ao o le Malo.

“MEMORANDUM for:

Mr Speaker:

Pursuant to Article 59 of the Constitution of the Independent State of Samoa and Parliament Standing Order 95, consent is hereby given to the Legislative Assembly to proceed upon the consideration of the following Bills:

1. Income Tax Amendment Bill 2017.
2. Excise Tax Rates Amendment Bill 2017.

GIVEN UNDER this Hand on this day 22 June 2017.

(Signed): **Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Efi**
O LE AO O LE MALO.”

NOTICES BY THE LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Speaker read out the Notice by the Leader of the House.

MR SPEAKER: Pursuant to Standing Order 100(2) the Notice is now before the Legislative Assembly to review the following Bills under Urgency.

1. Income Tax Amendment Bill 2017.
2. Excise Tax Rates Amendment Bill 2017.

GIVEN UNDER this day 22nd of June 2017.

(Signed): **Susuga Hon Tuilaepa Dr. Sailele Malielegaoi**
LEADER OF THE HOUSE.

23 JUNE 2017

APPROPRIATION BILL 2017/2018
– debate over the second reading

MR SPEAKER: Before adjournment yesterday, Government Responses were in progress and the Hon Minister of Finance had the floor.

I call the Hon Minister of Finance to resume.

Afioga Hon SILI EPA TUIOTI (Minister of Finance): Mr Speaker, I first of all exalt God for another new day and new health restoration upon us to resume our business today. One of the raising matters is the development of the Salelologa market. There is Government intention to relocate the Government Ministries and Offices to Salelologa as it will be convenient for the public such that it will provide ease of access to the availability of various services. Furthermore, there were plans in the pipeline to lease employment opportunities for the public. There was also particular mention of development works needed for the Salelologa wharf and in response to that, there is ongoing negotiations to determine the best strategy to implement that as well as the identification of possible partnerships between foreign donors and the Government to finance such project.

In relation to imposed levy on electricity units, I can assert that there is no impact on the cost of electricity. I wish to congratulate the Hon Prime Minister for the numerous advices given to us and the Ministry in ways to create surplus, and also wish to acknowledge the Minister of Revenue and Finance for adjusting tax rates to earn revenue for the country.

MR SPEAKER: Pardon the Hon Minister of Finance we have an interjection. I call the member for Vaisigano No.1.

Tofa Lopaoo Natanielu Mua (Vaisigano No.1): Thank you Hon Prime Minister and Cabinet. I wish to follow up if appropriate and recommend the lending rate to companies operating the Tuisamoa and in accordance to the Minister of Communication he said its 1%. Because for commercial banks I think their rate is about 7 or 8 and another thing, note the blood pressure of the two partnership companies we have with the Tuisamoa cable lest we are affected. With respect.

MR SPEAKER: Nice. Thank you. Just a reminder the Minister will only respond to the raising matters of members and will only allow queries accordingly. In saving the Minister's time, we have an interjection, go ahead.

23 JUNE 2017

Appropriation Bill 2017/2018
– debate over the second reading

Afioga Leaana Ronnie Posini (Safata West): I do not intend to intervene; I have mentioned \$23.6% surplus as the year is almost over. The current year 2017/2018 has a surplus of \$21.3 million and therefore the total surplus comes to \$44.9million because the Chairperson stated that there is no surplus. We need \$10 million of this surplus to complete our road fix around the country as our overall budget amounts to \$934+ million. Personally, most of the Ministries will not be able to utilize their proposed budgets and that most of our public vacancies will be made available. In truth we will have some money left in addition to this surplus. With due respect.

MR SPEAKER: Very well thanks. I only wish to remind you about our Standing Order, interjections, point of order and point of clarification and raising matters during our general deliberations, they should be on point. Pardon the member we are trying to finish our business. I call the Hon Minister of Finance.

Afioga Hon SILI EPA TUIOTI: Thank you Mr Speaker. I wish to briefly respond to a query on submarine cable costs and on lending as the Hon Minister clarified, this is one of our very resourceful developments in our economy. The main focus for the time being is the money allocated to fund our cable and contract of services as currently, there is no plan yet for on-lending service rather a review to generate revenue plans will be undertaken as soon as communication costs is a go in the future without excluding government rights and once the company and procedures are in place. The operating company for the submarine cable hopes to invest approximately 60% to UTOS, NPF and SLAC to get dividends to pay for these costs. Currently, there is an interest increase from the Asian Development Bank or the World Bank.

Our revenue collection is based on expenditures including deficit. I think how we get this surplus is based on other development funded by money laundering. And before the year is over, some of the Ministries' budgets, majority of the Ministries are requesting for full utilization of their budgets to complete other works that have not been achieved for their Ministries. Some have requested repayments using these budgets and this is why there was no need for supplementary estimates given our existing policies and procedures in terms of virements as most of the proposed budgets have been utilized.

Mr Speaker, great job to everyone who participated in all the preparations for this Budget from Government heads to staff members. If it wasn't for your collective effort we would not have this good amount.

23 JUNE 2017

Appropriation Bill 2017/2018
– debate over the second reading

All in all and again I appreciate the efforts of the Chief Executive Officer of the Ministry of Finance and its staff since they have been working on this Budget from October. May God bless you for your great achievement this year.

Mr Speaker and the esteemed members of Parliament I wish to extend appreciation to all your assistance in improving our Budget and services for the sake of our people.

I also take this chance to thank our Constituency for your support. May God bless the Speaker and Members of the House. Have a blessed Sitting, thank you.

MR SPEAKER: Very well thank you Hon Minister of Finance. Now we come to the Hon Minister of Women, Community and Social Development.

Tofa Hon FAIMALOTOA KIKA IEMAIMA STOWERS (Minister of Women, Community and Social Development): Greetings to everyone from the Hon Prime Minister and Cabinet and members of the House, and let praise and glory be unto God for His blessings upon Samoa and today's Sitting. I also greet all the Government heads and the Private Sector in all your efforts for the welfare of the nation.

I also greet the lady Clerk of the Legislative Assembly tasked with serving the Legislative Assembly, well done.

I greet the Church Ministers who are praying for Samoa's welfare.

I also greet Samoa in all your honorifics.

Briefly I wish to respond and clarify some of the few raising concerns from this Ministry.

Mr Speaker we have carried out a pilot test programme in four constituencies that extended their appreciation namely the member for Lefaga and Faleaseela and the member for Alataua West or the Chairperson of the Parliamentary Committee for Finance. I thank these constituencies for the reports received and their appreciation in support of this programme which is something that should have been achieved long ago.

The main objective is for ease of public awareness that we are currently undertaking trusting that Upolu and Savaii are tuning in to our Sitting session this morning. The main focus of this five year plan programme by the Ministry is to develop our village communities and individual districts from young children to youth age groups to the matai level or village council including senior member groups or the elderly.

23 JUNE 2017

Appropriation Bill 2017/2018
– debate over the second reading

Part of the proposal is the appointment of members of the constituencies to spearhead this programme for the constituents. In this role, I ask for your support upon this programme as we are representing our constituencies in Parliament and we are their voice to their requests for the benefit of everyone in the districts.

The Ministry has suggested the collective responsibility for all members to enjoy and become caretakers of these proposed developments instead of the Ministry. This is to say that members who are aware of the human resource strengths and resources that can be developed with the assistance of village committees/councils and village government representatives and the works committee can focus on 4 to 5 village per constituency to look after any new development in the districts.

The Ministry also has local and international partnerships to improve and bear assistance from in promotion of our local developments. That is the clarification on this pilot test programme that has the support of these four constituencies.

On to the comment of the member for Vaimauga East about the Nofotane Programme, this programme is spearheaded by the Samoa Victim Support Group who is working in partnership with the Ministry in countering all sorts of domestic violence and issues by looking at solutions or remedies to minimize these problems in the country.

I wish to speak for the minority of women in this Parliament and on behalf of these women, I wish to voice my concern of the obligatory roles of women in the in-law's household in regards to such derogatory comment because as a woman myself, I value the roles and contribution of these women to the development of different families, churches and villages.

I turned my cell phone to silent mode...

Afioga Sulamanaia Fetaiai Tauilili Tuivasa (Vaimauga East): Mr Speaker I wish not to interrupt the Minister

MR SPEAKER: Pardon the Minister I call the member of Vaimauga East.

Afioga Sulamanaia Fetaiai Tauilili Tuivasa: The main intention is for the women to gain benefits and bear fruits from the works they are doing. Now that we have it, this money is not going into the accounts of the organization that is the intention.

23 JUNE 2017

Appropriation Bill 2017/2018
– debate over the second reading

The fact of the matter is not that these financial assistance is being received by these women rather why these women were used as a means of gaining such funds, but do not benefit from it, as they do not directly receive any benefit as the Hon Minister clearly stated, the UNDP grant does not go directly to the *fafine nofotane* (women in-laws).

You should oversee these funds Hon Minister for these projects to press through and bear appropriate spending for these women or *nofotane* to reaping these benefits. Have a good Sitting.

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 the funding received from donors were for the purposes of conducting consultations and awareness programs in villages, targeting women who have been abused. Otherwise our meeting is becoming nonsense due to emotions or baseless thoughts. Funds from the United Nations are not meant for distribution.

These grants are mainly used to fund their tea whilst carrying on with their talks and tales. I have observed these women and discovered that they are only producing talks whilst the donors are granting them more because they (donors) are interested in our culture.

I then said to the women, be keen in doing that otherwise you will not get any funds to build up our forum reserve. Otherwise this fund was not meant to distribute rather it is the knowledge of these women that enabled us to get these funds.

That is why I ask the member not to be disrupted by these contacts and get too emotional and to say that the works of these women are not properly acknowledged is too serious. These women are now ruling the villages through their good works and all those who are married to women from abroad, if the women says that if you do not do what they want, you will never have them back to your evening devotions, that is to say (to the member), do not be misled or give in easily but do get on with your speech as it is getting late.

MR SPEAKER: All good, I guess the interjection is well clarified, thank you Hon Prime Minister, you may resume Hon Minister.

Tofa Hon FAIMALOTOA KIKA IEMAIMA STOWERS: Very well thank you to the Leader of the House for his clarification on money because I am no financial expert. I respect everyone and their services and contribution to the development of our country.

23 JUNE 2017

Appropriation Bill 2017/2018
– debate over the second reading

The only intention for me is the words made ‘I do not support this programme, an in-law is an in-law because if no work then out is the answer’. That is what I was after, I will now conclude, thank you Hon Minister Laauli who was invited by the Samoa Victim Support to give a keynote address in the launching of this programme for *nofotane* or in-laws.

Mr Speaker and the Leader of the House and the dignified members, I beg indulgence if I have said anything irritating that sounds offensive to your ear, we are all *nofotane* or in-laws. We are *nofotane* (in-law) and you are *faiava* (in-law).

Afioga Sulamanaia Fetaiai Tauiliili Tuivasa: Mr Speaker I wish not to interrupt the wonderful speech of the Minister whilst on the subject of *nofotane*, because she affirmed that we are all *nofotane* when the Prime Minister is not a *nofotane* himself, wish respect.

The clear response has been given by the Prime Minister, a *nofotane* are those who carry out duties in the villages because men lead the village council whilst the women carry out domestic duties. This is worrisome as the member is saying we are all *nofotane* when the *Sao Faapito* (the Deputy Prime Minister) was never a *nofotane*.

MR SPEAKER: Very well.

Afioga Hon Fiame Naomi Mataafa (Minister of Natural Resources and Environment): Thank you very much. Mr Speaker, I guess this is called fight that suddenly involves other people. Truthfully and reference to the member of Vaimauga East, perhaps that is the reason why I am not married due to the troubles you are carrying, I pity the *nofotane*. Have a blessed Sitting.

MR SPEAKER: Thank you for that. The statement by the Hon Prime Minister is now understandable; well I guess the Deputy Prime Minister comes in both categories. Henceforth, Hon Minister you may resume.

Tofa Hon FAIMALOTOA KIKA IEMAIMA STOWERS: Thank you respectable member, our companionship here is based on respect although there are times when we have our jokes making us forget we are amongst the observers or witnesses to our words and statements. Thank you Hon Minister for your assistance and I guess this terms sounds appropriate to our hearing, we are *maupaolo tamaitai ma paolo alii*, rather than *nofotane* and *faiava* which refers to low status/stature terms, I will move on.

23 JUNE 2017

Appropriation Bill 2017/2018
– debate over the second reading

On to the member of Alofi Aana No.2 and his comment on scattered rubbish in public areas and around the village communities, well as reiterated, we are all responsible in beautifying our country specifically the Sui o Nuu and Sui Tamaitai o Nuu or village representatives who are still being reminded of this role and that they are being paid to keep the villages clean.

Recently a notice was given by the Ministry to have a look into your village councils and the representatives that you appointed because we have piled up issues and concerns relating to rubbish. After a submission is being approved by the Cabinet for these representatives and the next month, the old men of the same village would approach me and say, ‘please Hon Minister we want to remove our pulenuu, he is not doing anything. These are the same words I say repeatedly and during consultations with Savaii and Upolu, I heed the effort of the Associate Minister of this Ministry for your important role played here, we are always asking for good, fit and keen representatives for those people who can take over the pulenuu role otherwise your village will never bear any good benefits.

The member of Anoamaa West requested if possible to get direct actions by consulting with the parents of children vendors in the streets. Last year we started a pilot test programme for the Supporting Samoan Childrens Initiative by the Ministry. Parents of child vendors are responsible for taking direct action to control, monitor and teach their children acceptable behavior and conduct in the community. So far we have consulted eleven households and fortunately enough, children are now able to go back to school whilst the Ministry is now assisting the families of these children on ways to start small business operations through the small funds from partners of the Ministry to help them out, and so far, the families are doing pretty well. Otherwise, we have received various explanations from these families and the Ministry is trying to deal with them.

On to the member of Faasaleleaga No.2 who mentioned water source requiring improvement and assistance within its constituency. Site visits are conducted on a weekly basis by the Ministry. I request the head of the Ministry and staff to look into this development and report back for improvement

In response to the member for Falealili West, the Village Fono Act was established to empower the Village Council to enforce punishments on misbehaving villagers.

23 JUNE 2017

Appropriation Bill 2017/2018
– debate over the second reading

So far the Ministry has seen a slight change in the harmonizing spirit within the villages including the villages of Savaii however due to the shift of people towards the urban area well that is why we have the assistance of the Police and the works of the religious leaders noting a very positive impact for some villages that have had this problem.

In conclusion such as the saying by the member for Aleipata Itupa i Lalo, I appreciate all your assistance as you have mentioned you have met and have consulted the matter with your village. The Ministry is also preparing to meet with them on the objective of finding peace and love within the villages. I trust that is all the raising matters by the members...

MR SPEAKER: I call the member for Safata East pardon the Minister.

Afioga Leaana Ronnie Posini: Thank you Mr Speaker I have talked about beautification of our township area and the Matautu wharf. Whenever we have cruise ships in the country, majority of these tourists or visitors would walk from the Matautu area and the biggest eye-sore is littering in this part of the town especially near the Matautu harbor where cruise ships dock and therefore a suggestion for the restaurants and night-clubs near this area to take into consideration rubbish cleaning. With respect.

MR SPEAKER: I allow the Hon Minister.

Tofa Hon FAIMALOTOA KIKA IEMAIMA STOWERS: Thank you for the reminder. There was one time when the village mayor or pulenuu of Apia, Tuiletufuga avowed that this is the normal activity they used to do which is collecting rubbish in this part of the town. The Liquor/Alcohol Committee should also assist with this issue of littering in regards to receiving reports on scattered rubbish after clubbing in the night.

Mr Speaker, those are all the matters for this Ministry and I wish to conclude by thanking our Ministry for your ongoing works and support. I further wish to acknowledge my constituency may God's merciful grace be upon you especially the church ministers who are praying for blessings upon Samoa.

Mr Speaker, bless the Sitting of Samoa. Soifua.

MR SPEAKER: Very well thank you for your speech Hon Minister, we now come to the Hon Minister for Revenue.

23 JUNE 2017

**Appropriation Bill 2017/2018
– debate over the second reading**

Afioga Hon TIALAVEA FEA LENIU TIONISIO HUNT (Minister for Revenue): Thank you Mr Speaker for the opportunity, greetings everyone this morning. We shall precede accordingly essence to the raising matters by the members.

Seven members brought up matters in relation to the Ministries under my portfolio - the Ministry of Prisons and the Ministry for Revenue. The Ministry of Prisons now has \$8million set aside for the development of a new prison facility however this amount is not enough. I wish to acknowledge the efforts of the Ministry to decrease the number of escaped prisoners although there was an emerging issue of overcrowding in prison cells due to an increase in the number of prisoners.

On to the Ministry for Revenue, I wish not to address the issue of taxing religious leaders as the bill is yet to be introduced to Chamber. One of the members who speaks highly of his 30 years service with this Ministry has experience in this regard for revenue collection however we shall talk about it when we have this legislation. The need for a prisoner facility in Letogo...

Afioga Sulamanaia Fetaiai Tauilili Tuivasa: Mr Speaker I do not attempt to interject the Minister's speech.

MR SPEAKER: Pardon the Hon Minister, I call the member for Vaimauga East.

Afioga Sulamanaia Fetaiai Tauilili Tuivasa: I raise my disappointment given that this is only your first year in office yet you have already strategized to tax religious leaders, isn't there any other possible option to earn revenue for Samoa.

MR SPEAKER: I call the member.

Afioga Hon TIALAVEA FEA LENIU TIONISIO HUNT: Thank you for the raising concern. I have here evidence of the huge works dealt by the former CEO and the former Minister for the Ministry for Revenue. In the year 2011 we had a total revenue of \$420million, in 2012 - \$377million, 2013 - \$409million, 2014 - \$421million, 2015 - \$431million, when this member resigned we had \$485million, and currently we have \$450million within a period of twelve months. Such is the great appreciation to all those who deserve this acknowledgement working day and night as this was not because of my strength nor the Associate Minister's, no it was the effort of the Ministry head and staff including the nightwatchmen and everyone who contributed to this preparation.

23 JUNE 2017

**Appropriation Bill 2017/2018
– debate over the second reading**

The only job we are providing is give advice and assistance in finding ways to earn more revenues for the development of our country. Not one member avoided talks on the Ministry of Works, requests...

Afioga Sulamanaia Fetaiai Tauiliili Tuivasa: Mr Speaker because we have accusations saying that as soon as I left, revenue collection has gone up. This does not sound nice because this accusation is a bit too serious.

MR SPEAKER: Pardon the Hon Minister that is a bit too much. Go ahead.

Afioga Sulamanaia Fetaiai Tauiliili Tuivasa: I wish to query the head of the Ministry because the Customs Service Office had a revenue collection of \$1.5million from one of the payments. The Customs Service currently has this record and this is one of the achievements by the former member and in querying this...

MR SPEAKER: Very well. This record may no longer be found.

Afioga Hon TIALAVEA FEA LENIU TIONISIO HUNT: The member is correct.

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

MR SPEAKER: Go on Hon Prime Minister.

Susuga Hon Tuilaepa Auelua Fatialofa Lupesoloai Lolofietele Neioti Aiono Galumalemana Dr. Sailele Malielegaoi: This is nothing for us to dispute about, the old man did mention his reasons, he refuses to speak about others. That is the problem, there are people the member did not mention.

MR SPEAKER: Go on Minister that is fine until we have that legislation.

Afioga Hon TIALAVEA FEA LENIU TIONISIO HUNT: I wish to acknowledge the member for his \$1million project although the target was not achieved. Well done. I am speaking of statistics from 2016 when the member became a Parliamentarian yet he is now able to collect \$485million. I did not that is a mistake no, 30 years of hard service with the Ministry for Revenue yet as I said, I will move on to the next matter.

23 JUNE 2017

Appropriation Bill 2017/2018
– debate over the second reading

However, in regards to the recommendation of switching cans for alcohol beverages as opposed to using bottles, I value the contribution of beverage companies to the development of Samoa as these companies are already utilizing bottles to store alcohol for consumption and therefore the change will be costly.

In physical disputes where beer bottles are involved, the beer bottles are not the problem but the individuals who consume alcohol and bartenders who continue to sell beer to individuals who are already intoxicated. It is the exact judgement made by bartenders and bar operations which can be probable causes to the disputes that arise later on.

Tofa Olo Fiti Afoa Vaai (Salega West): Mr Speaker....

MR SPEAKER: Pardon the Hon Minister I recognize the member for Salega West.

Tofa Olo Fiti Afoa Vaai: I only raised this matter as we are moving forward. Yet the pub owners are now being accused. Pardon the member for Faasaleleaga No.2 and the Minister's statement, I see that you are only focusing on the member for Faasaleleaga No.2 lacking a thorough view of me.

MR SPEAKER: I call the member for Faasaleleaga No.2.

Afioga Pau Sefo Taumata Pau (Faasaleleaga No.2): With respect, this is why I am no longer interested in pub the license has been passed to my children because I don't like it anymore it will cause trouble and will defame me, I have retired from it. The member should also be terminated instead of and let them go and set up their pubs. With respect.

MR SPEAKER: That's a good advice whoever wishes to set up a pub must resign now. Go ahead Hon Minister.

Afioga Hon TIALAVEA FEA LENIU TIONISIO HUNT: Thank you Mr Speaker I see that there are three beer operators on that side. As suggested no these beer is stored in bottles and is controlled by the night club owner. I thank the member for Faasaleleaga No.2 for giving up his pub and he looks very well whereas the member for Salega East look sick. Thank you for the advice.

Any other member wishing that queried pacer plus.

Afioga Pau Sefo Taumata Pau: Mr Speaker...

23 JUNE 2017

Appropriation Bill 2017/2018
– debate over the second reading

MR SPEAKER: I call the member for Faasaleleaga No.2.

Afioga Pau Sefo Taumata Pau: The Minister has spoken about the bar owners we have now. I confess that we only have two more whereas for me, I have cleansed my hands like the old man Pilate or whoever. With due respect.

MR SPEAKER: Very well.

Afioga Hon TIALAVEA FEA LENIU TIONISIO HUNT: Thank you. Thank you. The Minister will respond to the pacer plus agreement. The \$50 million was from excise on petrol; \$28million from diesel; \$4million from kerosene; and \$19million collected from unleaded. And together this makes up this total of \$51million revenue earnings for the Ministry in addition to the GST on top of this revenue that is the total cost for petrol supply in the country.

In regards to land being sold to Asian investors the only process we are involved in is Capital Gain for revenue generation to control land sales. Most of these lands are now owned by foreign investors with Samoan citizens. However, our main objective is to seek revenue to create job opportunities.

The control/alert systems for the safe consumption of the public are the responsibility of the Ministry of Health for cartons of tinned fish after a long circulation on family faalavelaves like funerals etc.

Everytime we meet with the Alcohol/Liquor Board Committee we always receive reports from the Police about the bad influences of alcohol on the youths. So many wasted lives are produced from excessive drinking of alcohol.

Teen drinking is always a common issue and the Ministry is looking at ways to try and control the fast-paced sale of imported spirits such as Boom Vodka, Maso and the likes as these spirits are affecting us highly and are purchased at a cheaper price. Although this is an alarming issue in the country that is difficult to control/avoid, the Ministry is working closely with other Ministries such as the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Police in minimizing these concerns.

The continued challenge faced by the Ministry is finding different ways to generate revenue in Samoa. The Ministry was currently looking into procuring an x-ray equipment for the Border and Protection Division to assist with finding all forms of illegal dealings that may be smuggled in. There are also plans to have K9 dogs trained to pick-up the scent of money and other illegal substance brought into the country.

Mr Speaker that is all the raising matters on this Ministry by the House, thank you.

23 JUNE 2017

Motion for Adjournment

MR SPEAKER: Very well thank you. We are now on our recess hour we will go to a break before we have the chance to the Minister of Agriculture and for further queries, you can use this break to ask the Minister.

I now declare that Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly suspended for normal break.

Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly suspended at 10.31am and resumed at 11.07am.

Deliberations resumed over the second reading of the Appropriation Bill 2017/2018.

MR SPEAKER: I announce that Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly resumed. I trust everyone has been rejuvenated from our break.

During our break the Hon Minister for Revenue was speaking. Before the Hon Minister of Agriculture has the chance I first of all give the Hon Prime Minister the chance to speak.

MOTION FOR ADJROUNMENT

Susuga Hon TUILAEP AUELUA FATIALOFA LUPESOLIAI LOLOFIETELE NEIOTI AIONO GALUMALEMANA Dr. SAILELE MALIELEGAOI: Mr Speaker I move, *That Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly adjourned at 12:00pm until Monday next week.*

Seconded by the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Labour, Minister of Tourism and the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Motion approved.

MR SPEAKER: We will resume our work according to the set motion at 12.00pm and reassemble on Monday at 9.00am God willing.

I call the Hon Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

23 JUNE 2017

**Appropriation Bill 2017/2018
– debate over the second reading**

Debate resumed on the second reading of the Appropriation Bill 2017/2018.

Susuga Hon LAAULI LEUATEA POLATAIVAO FOSSIE SCHMIDT (Minister of Fisheries and Agriculture): Thank you Mr Speaker. We have been rejuvenated from our break to resume our work. Thank you God for guiding us to this Sitting day this morning.

Thank you honorable Speaker for your far-sighted knowledge and perseverance in managing our sitting today.

I greet everyone in all your traditional honorifics.

Greetings Samoa tuning in to our session, His Highness O Le Ao o le Malo and your masiofo, Member of the Council of Deputy, Judiciary and President and Judges of the Court as well as all Government heads gathered to witness and hear the tabling Budget and our services for the Government of Samoa.

Finally, I also greet my constituency who are praying and supporting for me and this Ministerial role I am undertaking.

Mr Speaker our service to Samoa is not easy hence I congratulate all of you who have raised issues and concerns in regards to the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries and the Scientific Research Organisation of Samoa or SROS. Thank you for your advice, addresses, services and complaints. We accept everything with gratitude. That is the norm we exchange views to manage and improve our tasks moving forward.

Based on reliable source, the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries is one of the very reliable revenue sources for this country and it not new. The crux for me is to send the message across about our agricultural products. Samoa is an agricultural nation with 80% of its land utilized for agricultural purposes. The wealth of our nation lies in farming our lands and fishing our oceans. In the 1970, 1980, 1990, 65 to 70% of our economy is from our lands, agriculture and fisheries purposes.

I wish to acknowledge the members who raised issues/concerns with the Ministry in regards to our taro.

Thank God for another chance to revive our taro products after 20 years since the outbreak of taro leaf blight in 1990-1993 whereby our economy was greatly affected. I wish to acknowledge the countless efforts of the Ministry spend on finding new markets for our taro and creating ways to build the agricultural sector.

The Australian Market has high standards and proud to extend great acknowledgement and credit to the Scientific Research Organisation of Samoa (SROS) for introducing the ‘freezing’ method of preservation which assured the quality/texture of the taro was not spoiled.

23 JUNE 2017

Appropriation Bill 2017/2018
– debate over the second reading

In previous years Samoa used to export 40 containers of taro to Australia, currently we are only shipping 20 containers, which give us the chance to grow and strive for best quality taro that would increase the supply to our export markets. I wish to extend appreciation to Nanai Sua Tanielu who was the first to initiate commercialization in selling our frozen taro to Australia at a range price of \$6 and \$4 per kilo. This will benefit us, an initiative that was never done before

The New Zealand Markets takes a total of 150 containers per year from Samoa. In the past New Zealand paid \$8.00 per kilo, today they are only paying \$3.00/kilo, because the competition is high, Fiji and Tonga are also exporting their taro to New Zealand. Samoa needs to work together to oust the competitors. Farmers need to work together and provide taro that meet the standard of our export markets.

The American Market is one of Samoa's highest dependant markets owing to the fact that the value of the US dollar is higher than NZ and Australia. The Ministry continues to find ways to strengthen the relationship between Samoa and America.

Our markets in American Samoa have cut off our taro supply exports with their country due to the taro leaf blight although this issue is nothing new. Despite written exchanges we had with them, this is their own decision.

The whole purpose for all this is for the benefit of our local farmers and exporters. I have also consulted our Ministry to take heed of the procedures and policies in protection of our agricultural products whilst vying with other markets.

80% of taro consumers in this world are Samoans in New Zealand and Australia, in fact majority of them would still purchase taro from other countries. Well that is their choice as we are new in the market. I beg all the Samoans living abroad, please buy the taro from home that is the whole objective of the Ministry, we are powerful.

In regards to our banana produce, Jewish banana from Israel has been chosen as the best species to be grown specifically for the export market. We have had 10,000 banana suckers that were taken in Savaii to be frozen whilst another 20,000 is in preparation. This priority took place to initiate a partnership program with commercial farmers to observe this type of banana.

The good news is that Cabinet has had its first taste of this banana and we are now having our first trial shipping to the New Zealand market. Ongoing awareness programs were being conducted to inform the public on the different standards required by the overseas markets. On the 11th July 2017, Samoa will showcase these frozen agricultural products (Taro, yam and banana) in New Zealand.

23 JUNE 2017

**Appropriation Bill 2017/2018
– debate over the second reading**

Our stimulus package is still ongoing on the approved \$4 million bonus by the Cabinet. So far we have grown over 300,000 cocoa plants. We have had a rough time in the past with production challenges never mind we should not look back now.

Additionally, we were able to receive \$4.8million from the Prime Minister of New Zealand, Bill English for the development of the agricultural sector, and this donation will be distributed between the constituencies of Vaisigano No.1 and No.2 as these constituencies have the largest cocoa farms in Samoa. One of the strongest commercial farmers in the country is Tupai Saleimoa Vaai who is currently looking after small farms for both Upolu and Savaii. He went and sought the market and returned with wilgus chocolate we see today receiving a huge benefit out of this within Asau and Vaisala.

For Upolu I wish to mention the service of Saena Penaia...

MR SPEAKER: I beg indulgence Hon Minister of Agriculture, since we have technical difficulties with our sound system and broadcasting, we will leave it with the technician team to fix this before we can resume in a minute.

I therefore announce that Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly be set aside until broadcasting have been improved. Thank you.

Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly set aside due to technical difficulties with the broadcasting sound system for 2AP at 11:38pm and resumed at 11:40pm.

MR SPEAKER: I announce that Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly resumed after fixed undertakings with the sound system for the sake of the Samoan listeners. I now call upon the Hon Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Sususga Hon LAAULI LEUATEA POLATAIVAO FOSSIE SCHMIDT: Thank you Mr Speaker for recognizing my call because the farmers should really hear me out. Majority of these men are not farmers, they only send messages but I think greatly of the farmers. I will start again. Then I come to the President of the Farmers Association in Upolu, Saena Penaia, who is one of the professors in farming in the country, he never went to a university, he learns by mistakes.

23 JUNE 2017

Appropriation Bill 2017/2018
– debate over the second reading

This fellow is one of the number one cocoa exporters together with Toleafoa Afamasaga. Although New Zealand and Australia are selling our cocoa at a cheaper price however majority are demanding cocoa bean which is why we still export.

For our coconut products we are also looking at this significant product which has a huge contribution for our virgin oil in the future.

In regards to Savaii coconut cream product or Savaii popo this is one of the top products we have so far which began two months ago. One man from Australia came to me and said 'Laauli I want to take my containers to Savaii to pack the Savaii coconut creams. The ports people find it very difficult to await the coconut products so I said very well let us do it. This is what we have been working with the head of the Water Authority in taking the containers to Savaii and so far, we have had 15 containers from Savaii for the past 3 months. Although it is troubling because the packing house is currently under construction thus in the meantime, this is in dire need.

One of the members stated the importance of organic certification. One of the Ministry's main objectives is to push the organic/natural products. The cocoa sold in Savaii is now 800 per tonne. After organic certification in Savaii, farmers are now selling at 1,400 to 1,500 per tonne. The new price set up for organic farming is one of the very good initiatives that the farmers are now encouraging hence great acknowledgement to the WIBDI or the Women in Business Development Incorporated.

On to our coconut trees that backed our survival several years in the past, through stimulus package by the Ministry the registration is \$100 and the Ministry are able to supply coconut trees, cocoa, coffee and other vegetables with monitoring inspections to take place and you should be able to collect \$4,000.

This ongoing 4 year program can earn you \$4000. The coconut tree planting has been initiated by the Ministry in order to acquire more coconuts, cocoa and coconut cream. In regards to coconut oil production for export we need to encourage this coconut development on a 200 acre land by the STEC.

Others mentioned farming chemicals to protect our agricultural products in assistance to our local farmers and their crops/produce.

In regards to SACEP which started in 2012, we were given \$14+million from the World Bank and I encourage all farmers that we learn these farming skills and experiences. In regards to the \$6 million query in the budget, that allocation is for ongoing undertakings. This remaining financial allocation has been allotted to other remaining programs upon the Minister of Finance's approval before this phase 2 for this development is a go. In that case, phase 2 must be approved in order for this programme to press through.

23 JUNE 2017

Appropriation Bill 2017/2018
 – debate over the second reading

Our China and Samoa vegetable garden program and a request was given to the Cabinet for this programme to continue. So far Phase 4 was officially launched last week. A total of \$7.5million has been endorsed for China to come and train us in this vegetable garden programme. Some of the necessary tools they brought were tunnel houses, socks etc for this demonstration. Currently we have here 9 specialists in the country, five in Upolu and five for Savaii. One of the processes for this programme is meganization and so far I have requested Cabinet's approval on plows for landscaping, bedding to work this development in the country.

In the mean time and in accordance to the advice received from the scientist who came the first time, he said, Laauli, you need to plow, you need bigger plows to dig and level up the pipeline instalment and build tunnel houses to counter the rain and sun for sustainable supply, that request is now in the pipeline. That is the response for the sake of this House.

Someone mentioned plow, for the sake of the members for Vaimauga East and Falealili, we have three plows already, your obligation is to see the Ministry and pay \$200 per four hours to do your job. That is the clarification as this is not a preview nor cartoon but plow...

Tofa Olo Fiti Afoa Vaai: Mr Speaker point of clarification...

Susuga Hon LAAULI LEUATEA POLATAIVAO FOSSIE SCHMIDT: This member did not speak on this Ministry.

MR SPEAKER: I beg tolerance to the interjection of the member and the Hon Minister, we have arrived at our adjournment time, may the Minister respond to the interjection of the three upstanding members.

Before we adjourn, I call the member for Falelatai and Samatau to end us with a word of prayer.

Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly adjourned at 11:58am until 9:00am on Monday, 26 June 2017.

