

*22 JUNE 2020***MONDAY, 22 JUNE 2020**

Mr Speaker took the Chair at 9:03am.

Prayer.

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

I take this opportunity to respectfully welcome the dignity of Parliament, the Hon Prime Minister and Cabinet also to the Chief Executive Officers of Government Ministries and Corporations this morning. Before we proceed with the Orders of the day, I would like to call upon the Hon Prime Minister for his Ministerial Statement.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT BY THE HON PRIME MINISTER

Susuga Hon TUILAEPA AUELUA FATIALOFA LUPESOLIAI LOLOFIETELE NEIOTI AIONO GALUMALEMANA Dr. SAILELE MALIELEGAOI (Palemia): Thank you Mr Speaker for the opportunity for me to present a Ministerial Statement. Mr Speaker and respectable members of the Legislative Assembly of the Government of Samoa. You have already offered praise, glory and thanksgiving to the Lord Almighty for his daily provision of life, thus bringing us all to another day of Parliamentary Proceeding; a new, glorious and destined day.

I greet Mr Speaker and dignified Members of Parliament as you all awake to calls of blessings this new day. I acknowledge the honorable support of the Ao o le Malo, Council of Deputies, Religious leaders of all Christian denominations in Samoa, who continue to provide spiritual guidance and encouragement for a peaceful and harmonious coexistence of our people, and therefore calling us the children of God as clearly stated by our God in his sermon of blessings on the mountain.

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Before the Ministers of Cabinet proceed to respond to matters raised by members of the House. I thought I would take this opportunity with respect to clarify a serious issue raised by one of the members, who questioned the disposal of Government assets back in the time of former Prime Minister Hon Tofilau Eti Alesana and us who were making decisions of Cabinet together with the father of the member who questioned the House.

He was part of the Cabinet that approved this new policy, as well as other Government decisions, which is still being implemented now. The strong language used by the member to show his objection, is the same as the form of language used by the former Leader of Opposition to attack Government at that time. I am not overly nervous anymore because I am used to it. It is like a song that keeps playing over and over again, with the same melody and lyrics.

Mr Speaker, it is the policy of Government, to dispose of certain assets or assets including some of the shares of these companies held by the Government, this is a result of the new policy by Government to reduce the loss of funds that the Government should have received. The English term for such policy is privatization policy of Government. But other economists refer to this policy as right sizing of the Government structure to reduce waste of Government funds. The privatization of assets was set up to prevent unnecessary spending through corruption and abuse. That is the brief response on the new policy which is a result of privatization of assets as criticized by the member.

As the saying of the orators goes, practice changes but foundations remain. What are these policies? Cut the loss and save funds from being wasted. Such is the example of the Samoa Trust Estates Corporation, it was a thriving farm during the New Zealand Administration, some called it the garden of Eden, there was a lot of cattle, lots of coconuts carried by donkeys, cocoa, and coffee, there was immeasurable wealth that Samoa has benefitted from this farm, which was eventually exported to New Zealand and Europe, as I mentioned in some of my interviews. Samoa is one of the 14 countries in the world that produced high flavored cocoa to make chocolate, which was shipped to Hamburg, Germany. Copra and mango were also exported to Britain

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In earlier Government administrations from 1962, the Trust Estates was thriving, a lot of copra and cocoa was exported overseas. After that Government of our forefathers who had foresight, it was followed by traits mentioned by the member of Salega as virtuous, enabling members to loan making it like a bank for committee members of the Trust Estates, to build their houses, churches, exploiting the administration and those looking after cattle, cocoa and coconuts. When HRPP was crowned in 1982, the Trust Estate was in a cancerous state. There was no cure for the disease that had plagued the Trust Estate, followed by the onslaught of cyclone Ofa in 1990 and cyclone Val in 1991 and other cyclones that followed. If we look at the severe climate change in the world, it has reduced coconut yields, some coconut, cocoa and coffee trees were all uprooted, so what should the new Government that has just taken the helm do, the HRPP? Use the wisdom given by God, do the best we could with what we had. *O le aso ma le filiga, o le aso foi ma le mataigatila, fuata ma lona lou.* Solomon the wise said, "There is a season for everything under the sun."

There is morning and an event, in 1990 to 1991, a Government corporation was established, the Samoa Land Corporation. They are responsible for the proper use of Government lands or assets, the assets owned by the country, Savaii, Upolu, Apolima and Manono, it was chaired by the Hon Minister of Finance, the first Chairperson which was me. Some said it was Tuilaepas company, they do not understand the policy of Government, once a Corporation is set up the Minister of Finance and Secretary of Finance sign their names, they own the shares on behalf of Government. Their work is to develop the efforts of our people and keep only 6000 acres of land or asset of Government to continue the Trust Estates, while Government consider ways to rehabilitate these plantations, the big plantations that are close to the airport. The gateway to the entry and exit of travelers, not only our people but tourists as well, it is where the wealth flows in to develop our country, it may be necessary to expand the airport in the future to further promote tourism development in Samoa. It is an important economic development, especially as these successes will be channeled through the improvement of the airport as well as the revitalization of our airlines, for the development of hotels and restaurants, the development of taxis, buses, shops, handicrafts and miscellaneous items.

Farmers and fishermen strive to make the most of their efforts in hotels, as hotels require food, meat as well as fruits and vegetables for preparation of meals for tourists. This means tourism development will benefit the country as a whole.

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Mr Speaker that is the importance of this collaborative development between the airport and hotels. Prior to Covid19, the country received about \$.5 billion from the tourism industry in a year, which is a major contribution to our reserves for trade. The suspension of air travel due to our restrictions on the prevention of corona virus, made the majority of the country aware of the importance of tourism, aviation and airport development in all countries of the world which was looked down upon by some, saying who will be doing such things. It has left many businesses in turmoil and has resulted in many layoffs.

The privatization and outsourcing of some assets and properties of the Government which has also been criticized, is a strategy to reduce debt, hence the division of several acres of the Trust Estate lands in Apia and urban areas, sub-divided into quarter acres, and have allowed families from the rural areas and from Savaii, Manono and Apolima to attain a piece for their families, especially being closer to schools and employment, such areas include Falelauniu, Tafaigata, Vaitele, Vailele. It has also afforded many retired church ministers with a land of their own near employment and schooling for their children, as well as the two members who continuously criticize the Government, they have also purchased lands to run their personal businesses such as restaurants, clubs, venues for wedding ceremonies, large businesses, petrol stations, bingo supply services. They have reaped the benefits and later criticize, *ua maua ula futifuti*, based on their ill-will towards the Government. Some of these members do not hold only quarter acres, rather, 2, 3, 4 acres, you see? Others who are wealthy have also purchased land from their families as it yields higher profits, costing \$150,000, or \$200,000, absolutely neglecting land given by the Government for them due to the greed to make fast money, and then seek the Samoa Land Corporation again for another piece of land, there are records showing such dealings. Others have numerous quarter acres, because they apply under different names, and the SLC has completely overlooked such applicants.

That is why the Government has reversed its decision to lease these lands to keep the land so that it can no longer be sold. And for that reason it has been advised not to bury family members on these lands, there is 20 acres of land at Tafaigata to house families, keep these lands free, if they are unable to pay it back the lands will be returned to the authority, to find other people to lease it. This is a way to prevent people from being greedy.

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This is why, for those who are listening in and want to buy it permanently, this is exactly the reason why lands are not allowed to be sold permanently but on lease, because once the rich come with thousands of tala, families will make wrong decisions and the rich will have more lands.

This is the same practice for those listening in who wish to purchase the lands they are leasing permanently, this is the reason the Government has put a stop to the sale of lands rather put it on a lease-basis, because once the wealthy individual shows up with hundreds of thousands, it affects our better judgment, and we are left without land while the wealthy continue to have more land to themselves.

These policies of Government are well understood, but there are others who do not want to understand, especially those who have been deceived by the power of the devil, small knowledge is indeed dangerous knowledge. Mr Speaker this is the new system of the HRPP from the time of Hon Tofilau Eti Alesana, Hon Polataivao Fosi and others including me, I was in the position of Minister of Finance trying to allocate the limited funds of the Government. The whole purpose, is to avoid bankruptcy, Samoa is not the only country using the privatization policy, it is implemented by all countries of the world, they are aware that public developments invested by Government it is bound to go bankrupt. Why? Because this is our nature, humans have weaknesses which cannot be hidden; not only in Samoa, whereby those in positions of power, when leading public assets/property we tend to have the mind-set to abuse our power while we are in a position to do so. It occurs in Samoa, New Zealand, Australia, America, and in Britain, Russia, and all countries of the world, because it is in our nature. If it is public property, we tend to not be fully committed, unless it is something personal then we give our all and work honestly. This is the exact reason why the Trust Estate went bankrupt and why HRPP had to input drastic measures. It was criticized at the time, and because the Minister of Finance was at the forefront to defend Government's policy. This is precisely the reason Hon Mr Speaker and Hon Members of Parliament, why the major changes which are criticised today came about, the privatization policy extended to the Vailima Brewery, Hotel Tusitala, Bank of Western Samoa, SamoaTel and others which were mentioned in this statement, these were all under the same Government Policy, because these were the Companies who held the majority of Government's interest.

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There have been additional thoughts, that Samoa Airways should be visited later to begin divesting a portion of its capital shares, so that shareholders can contribute by bringing in funds through capital injection for operation of our airline, as it has been done by other Governments that preceded with similar initiatives, like New Zealand, Australia and other major countries. This is typical of such business practices, there are also other investors who have requested for shares in the founders stock of the Samoa Airways company the carrier of Samoa. This is good, bringing in investors to support our carrier instead of swaying the carriers of other countries.

Mr Speaker, there are thousands of different things that can be done to keep a Government alive. As long as people understand the reasons for each policy.

The adversary of all these efforts is that many of us are very ignorant, just as many protested when the Government introduced another policy, for people to easily get cars in our country. There are families in Australia and New Zealand who are banned from bringing it in, because we have to change our rules to allow cars to drive on the right than on the left side. Mr Speaker, the witness said for example, the Parliament Committee who are responsible for consideration of the Bill. In their online interviews there are still a few who are deeply caught up in the preaching of the adversary. They said, that they understand the purpose of protecting the authority of Alii and Faipule under these three Bills of the Constitution. But to please reaffirm our opposition, opposition of understanding and happiness in these new provisions, proposed in the Bills. The only thing is freedom, freedom of the individual to not accept anything good. The Christian is not surprised, nor is the coming of the Lord, and His gospel. Most of the priests, however, were preaching the Old Testament, because up to that time there were no books of the New Testament, it was written later. And they know, the coming of the Messiah. But they rejected it, they also rejected the Messiah in their day. Mr Speaker, it is not a new thing, it is not a new thing that there are still some who oppose the good that is being planned. There are still such people in the world. It is also their right to freely oppose any good done by our Government.

In response to the Tusitala Hotel which was also criticized. The hotel was built in 1970 to 1973, 50 years ago. The current position of the hotel is that of the old Casino Hotel, built by the Germans, however the Government, Hon Tupua Tamasese Lealofi IV, decided to demolish the old hotel and build a new one.

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A committee of 3 workers was then appointed to discuss the demolition of the old hotel and the construction of the new hotel, 50 years ago. The new hotel was named the Tusitala. The Chairman of that Committee is the late Tuiloma Ann Slade. He was a senior officer at the Office of the Attorney General that year. Hans Kruse is the surviving General Manager of the Ministry of Development, and I from the Treasury. This hotel was built with the intention that it will potentially collapse in the first 3 consecutive years.

Then mountains of surplus started to flow in that Government did not know what to do about. Because it was the only hotel better than the Aggies at the time. But this was not the case. Millions of tala a year were lost from the beginning. From the year it opened, until the last year I was Minister of Finance. The Government contributed millions in the beginning to save it. These are millions a year, given the exchange rate fluctuations, which are probably equivalent to 5 to \$10 million, in the current tala. When I was appointed as a Minister by His Excellency Tootooalii. I was the one that recommended, that this hotel should be privatized, because there is only loss after loss, without saving Government funds. The Bank of Samoa, Vailima and SamoaTel mentioned also went through the same, a decision of Cabinet was made to transfer Government assets in the same spirit. If bankruptcy was avoided it will save Government funds. The objection from the Opposition in those days was, these public companies are still making profits why sell them again? My response then as Minister of Finance was, which up to now is still accurate, let us not be fooled by the peanut packets that came out at that time. Look ahead at the vast benefits that can be earned. Behind the peanut packets that was available in those days, when business was growing, it brought in additional funds from overseas branches. Also attained experts in these fields of international business, which have not yet had the expertise of our people, particularly these organizations, which have large branches in major countries of the world. These businesses, in times of global crisis, also generate a lot of revenue from their large branches, located in major countries of the world.

The Vodafone Company currently holds founding shares in the UTOS, which was established specifically for such purpose, to hold shares in the SamoaTel which would be sold. The UTOS is a means to provide saving for our local people, and those who would like to purchase shares in different companies such as Vodafone, and other foreign companies which will be established in Samoa. These companies will be constructed in Samoa with the administration of the UTOS management, for these beneficial services.

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Mr Speaker, the Vodafone Company, is a business which many locals have purchased shares through their investment and savings in the UTOS which was established by the Government, to afford our Samoan people the opportunity to acquire shares in large businesses as such. The return on investment is much higher with UTOS than those interests earned from savings in the banks.

The Cabinet Ministers will further expand and enlighten on other privatization issues which have been criticized by certain members; the privatisation policy had one purpose, to cut back on wasted funds, and save government monies, to improve efficiency of business and increase employment opportunities for our children.

These large companies contribute to the economy of Samoa, with its long service, and enough earnings as well as expertise and knowledge in technical fields. We appreciate the criticisms made and the ill-will of the 2 members who raised this issue; I also do not intend on letting such critics pass by without correcting the issue.

Mr Speaker and Members of Parliament, this is the conclusion of my statement to clarify the issue raised, as it is a government policy, God bless this session, Soifua.

MR SPEAKER: Very well thank you, that is the statement of the Leader of Government or the Hon Prime Minister, to clarify some of the views on issues raised by some members of Parliament. The matter has now been clarified with the response given on issues raised.

Our Government orders of the day the reading of Bills...

Susuga Hon Laauli Polataivao Leuatea (Gagaifomauga No.3): Mr Speaker with all due respect. I just want to reach out on our policies. Yes, we spoke in a manner of respect and voiced recommendation on the Budget, but it has been observed that the Ministerial Statement has been implemented to restrain us from responding to the serious allegations.

MR SPEAKER: I will not allow it....

Susuga Hon Laauli Polataivao Leuatea: I only rely on the authority of the Chair. This is not honest and fair. We cannot respond to the serious allegations that have been made. Please Mr Speaker, we were accused since yesterday on Sabbath, yet again this morning.

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MR SPEAKER: Pardon the member, I appease the member of Gagaifomauga No.3 and the member of Salega who looks like he wants to stand. That is not the case, the Hon Prime Minister spoke since it is a Ministerial statement, but until a motion is moved then it will be tabled in the House. I also gave the opportunity for a Ministerial statement to clarify some of the issues raised, before proceeding with Government's response. As such, there is still an opportunity to question the response of Government and Ministers of Cabinet when it is time. Even for individual matters, there are two opportunities given for 15 minutes. I would like to remind the member of this, for the protection of our Standing Orders.

Susuga Hon Laauli Polataivao Leuatea: Yes Mr Speaker, the matter has touched upon my parent who is long gone. This is what you call digging the grave, trying to ruin someone.

MR SPEAKER: Pardon me...I apologize.

Susuga Hon Laauli Polataivao Leuatea: Mr Speaker I am sorry, but this is a serious matter for the family and country who are listening.

MR SPEAKER: It is mutual respect which is why I am trying to placate the matter. I have yet to enforce our Standing Orders. But in this regard, the Hon Prime Minister mentioned your father because he was part of this, together with his contribution and hard work. He is one of the most respected members who served the Government well. This is all, now their good work has been recalled, as they have sat in Cabinet. The member is fortunate to be present here, hence your father was part of this Parliament. He is someone who is trustworthy, when I first came into Parliament, I would listen to the old man. This was one teacher, because those who came last asked those who came first. It is a very positive aspect that has now been reminded by the Hon Prime Minister, the old man is not being harmed. They were the ones that were involved in the making of these policies of Government.

Our orders today is reading of Bills...

Afioga Hon Faumuina Tiatia Faaolatane Liuga (Palauli le Falefa): Mr Speaker, I would like to move a motion, *that the Ministerial Statement of the Prime Minister be tabled before the House.*

With all due respect.

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MR SPEAKER: This is the normal procedure.

Seconded by the Minister of Communications, Information and Technology and the member of Gagai fomauga No. 3.

Motion approved.

MR SPEAKER: These are the orders of our work. I call upon the Hon Prime Minister.

Susuga Hon Tuilaepa Auelua Fatialofa Lupesoliai Lolofietele Neioti Aiono Galumalemana Dr. Sailele Malielegaoi: I rise to apologize to the member. If he reads the situation as an accusation, all I intended to do is to clarify. Even last night, my response is, you sing while I explain. Therefore you should say, thank you Tuilaepa you have told us some of the good work implemented by Hon Tofilau Eti, my father and all of us implemented. I am not ruining your father, however I am praising him, why? Look at the outstanding decisions made, which is a result of the land you got to set up your business. Mr Speaker, he is now blessed with the things we did with his father. It was not a bad measure to take the floor, it was a good thing to make everyone understand. However you are the only one that is trying to plot bad things. I am only trying to assist in clarifying the false statements you are voicing to the country. You must be prepared that whenever you make such false remarks, no matter where it will be, I will correct and explain it.

Susuga Hon Laauli Polataivao Leuatea: Mr Speaker, with all due respect, the Hon Prime Minister is now taking advantage of the opportunity to convey accusation.

Susuga Hon Tuilaepa Auelua Fatialofa Lupesoliai Lolofietele Neioti Aiono Galumalemana Dr. Sailele Malielegaoi: That is the point, but it is not a beating, it is a clarification. It is the reason why I stood to clarify the matter, it should not be clarified by anyone else.

Susuga Hon Laauli Polataivao Leuatea: Do not look down on my opinion. Do not under estimate it. Yes, not everything you do is right. It is not right.

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MR SPEAKER: I apologize to the member, but it is misconduct if you do not follow the word of the Chair. I thought the matter could be carried out with respect. Our duties are being admired by the country. Yes, I am trying to clarify these matters. It is the duty of Government to clarify issues that are raised in speeches. This is why I advise respectable members of Cabinet, to convey responses lightly, because pardon me for any foul language. Tuivalea is not here in Cabinet with the Prime Minister, they have their own records. Yes, this is the matter, speak while thinking of what is before you. Do not spit, as the word of the country goes, do not spit to the wind because it will come back. But speak with consideration, he was my teacher...

Susuga Hon Laauli Polataivao Leuatea: I apologize Mr Speaker, Hon Toleafoa Faafisi, I am saddened. I humbly ask that you advise the Hon Prime Minister to be cautious of what he declares. How can you say this to me, when the statement made is not considerate. I cannot, I am not a God, my constituency and family are listening in, hearing such unpleasant words.

MR SPEAKER: Pardon the member speaking...

Susuga Hon Laauli Polataivao Leuatea: Hon Toleafoa Faafisi, only you can keep me safe. Speak to the Hon Prime Minister to stop being rude.

MR SPEAKER: I apologise, our Proceedings are guided by our Standing Orders. However the Chair first implies the use of our customs and traditions, of mutual respect. Because even though we intend to apply our Standing Orders we also think of our cultural traditions. This is why I...

Susuga Hon Tuilaepa Auelua Fatialofa Lupesoliai Lolofietele Neioti Aiono Galumalemana Dr. Sailele Malielegaoi: Mr Speaker, I rise to forgive the member. However let us proceed with our orders, Susuga Laauli Fossie Schmidt I forgive you.

Susuga Hon Laauli Polataivao Leuatea: God knows the heart, I have already forgiven you Hon Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi. Unfortunately, this morning I have been criticized again, I have turned the other side and the other, but it is still the same. I am accepting the bitterness of what you do. But I have already forgiven you a long time ago.

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**Supplementary Appropriation Bill (No.3) 2019/2020 &
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MR SPEAKER: Very well thank you. The Bible states, our Lord Saviour spoke not once, but seventy seven times and so on. Therefore, let us now proceed with our orders.

**SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION BILL (NO.3) 2019/2020
& APPROPRIATION BILL 2020/2021
- continuation debate on second reading**

MR SPEAKER: We have arrived at the time for Government responses, the Hon Minister of Communications, Information and Technology will speak first. With respect I call upon Afioga Toeolesulusulu, Afioga Matua o Usoalii to take the floor. The respectable titles of the constituency have all been mentioned, you may proceed.

Tofa Olo Fiti Afoa Vaai (Salega East): Mr Speaker, just a minor point of order. The Hon Minister did not come here with the title Toeolesulusulu, he is using the title of Afamasaga. Or is he not happy with the title of Afamasaga or is it something else.

MR SPEAKER: Well I believe it is the same constituency. This is how it is, our laws... I call upon the Hon Prime Minister.

Susuga Hon Tuilaepa Auelua Fatialofa Lupesoliai Lolofietele Neioti Aiono Galumalemana Dr. Sailele Malielegaoi: This is how it is, the Bill has been amended, if you have a 100 matai titles in the constituency, you can bring them all in the House and be acknowledged. Perhaps the member has forgotten since he is too old.

MR SPEAKER: The reason why I did not mention Levaopolo, is because it is from another constituency. Now you are using the title Olo, which is from Salega. As for the member he is both Afamasaga and Toeolesulusulu from the same constituency and village. This is the clarification.

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Tofa Olo Fiti Afoa Vaai: There is no controversy on the matter it is clear. But it will be great to first acknowledge the title Afamasaga since it is the official title the Hon Minister was introduced. It seems the title Toeolesulusulu is acknowledged first and the other last, because I am also related to Afamasaga, and it makes my heart ache.

MR SPEAKER: Alright, even though you have ordered me, it is alright. This is how we are, if there are matters left out by the Chair, remind me, the titles are the same. I call upon Afioga Afamasaga Toeolesulusulu to speak.

Afioga Hon AFAMASAGA LEPUIAI RICO TUPAI (Minisita mo Fesootaiga, Faamatalaga ma Fesootaiga Vavave Faaneionapo): The important aspect Mr Speaker this morning, is that the title is very important, it is why the House debated the matter.

The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Our words of thanksgiving have already been voiced. May our prayers conveyed this morning be fused to the altar. We thank God for His presence and holiness in this Parliament, which has begun with its second week of Proceedings. I greet the Chair, the Hon Prime Minister and this Cabinet, also to Associate Ministers, and respectable members of Parliament, those of you who have been divided in the name of God, and chosen to lead Samoa over the past 5 years which is nearly complete. I also extend my heartfelt greetings to the Chief Executive Officers of Government Ministries and Corporations as well as to all of you who are represented this morning, especially the Clerk and the Office of Legislative Assembly and everyone serving this House. I acknowledge the dignity of Samoa this morning. From the east side of the rising sun to the west where it sets every day. These are the respects of Samoa that cannot be hindered and be resonated. Therefore I say, *tulou, tulou, tulona lava*.

I greet all Samoans tuning in to this broadcast of the four parts of the globe. Especially the silent worship of a few elders' grandmothers and grandfathers from their homes. Also the holy servants of God who are praying for our duties. I believe, the first speech has been made this morning, by the Hon Prime Minister in leading the response of Cabinet. There has been a number of requests, together with a few recommendations made by each constituency. Not only to the various needs of the constituencies but also the advice given to uphold the development of Samoa going into the future.

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**Supplementary Appropriation Bill (No.3) 2019/2020 &
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Greetings to my beloved constituency of Aana No.3, now No.4 since the Bill was amended. I recommend that you be prepared for now I will be responding to some of the queries.

Mr Speaker and respectable Parliament, I stand with respect to begin the response of Government. This is the core sector of communication, information and technology. On its behalf is the Associate Minister and the 3 Ministries, the Ministry of Communication, the Office of the Regulator and the Post Office. I wish to convey a response this morning on the requests made together with recommendations voiced.

Before I start, the foundation of our work, is to live happy and with a pure heart. This is founded on the scripture of God in Proverbs 17 verse 22. A cheerful heart is good medicine. The word of Jesus preached on the Mountain. Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God, such is the environment in which this Ministry operates. It is a pleasure for me, the Associate Minister and all of those working in this sector, even the employees. This creates a happy environment and a lot of good work is done for the Government. As the words of one of the most beautiful composers in our country, we can be satisfied with a smile.

This is also why when you see me and the Associate Minister and the Chief Executive, not only do we live happily and cheerful but also we are forever young. I am fortunate to have such an intelligent Associate Minister, who works hard day and night, who gives advice and inspire to do what is good. And no matter where I go, I am not worried.

Your strength comes from God and from those behind you, you have a good body, and baritone voice, which people are afraid of when they hear it. Nonetheless I will now respond to some of the issues raised by members in their speeches.

Tofa Lealailepule Rimoni Aiafi (Faleata West): Mr Speaker...

MR SPEAKER: I call upon the Associate Minister.

Tofa Lealailepule Rimoni Aiafi: What a wonderful morning. Although there were a few minor arguments, these are the norms of our sessions.

I stand to respond to the Hon Minister, I got a call from my son on Friday saying, ‘dad I went to the bank today to get a loan at the Samoa Commercial Bank, I asked the guy for a loan and he said I cannot get one. Unless I find someone to guarantee it.’

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However he asked, ‘who is your fathers name? Then he told him. The tellers response was, that person is impressive. My son came home and said, ‘Dad you are awesome.’ Why? ‘No matter where I go people are always talking about you. I went to do a loan and the man said I needed a guarantee. He said, to ask you to call then I can get my loan. This is why Dad, once you call them I will get my loan.’

I told my son, when I wake up in the morning, I try finding someone to trick. I taught you how to trick other people, but now you come and trick your Dad.

Hon Minister, we have been acquaintances for a long time now, but this is the first time you have tricked me. Thank you.

Afioga Hon AFAMASAGA LEPUAI RICO TUPAI: These are the funny traits of the Associate Minister that make people laugh.

MR SPEAKER: I call upon the member to continue, these are the characteristics of the member tricking the other.

Afioga Hon AFAMASAGA LEPUAI RICO TUPAI: The situation with the virus that the world is facing nowadays need no explanation. Everything now requires the connection of internet and cell phones. Therefore, there is no need to travel for business conferences as that can be done here using the availability of advance internet connection we have here. Majority of these video conferences are way better now than traveling as it used to be in the past.

Not only does it use family group conference, they are also able to meet and watch them through online videos using cell phones and internet. For Samoa, during school break, internet was always used on cell phones for school particularly online learning on Television.

Notwithstanding, some of the public servants are able to rest at home and are still able to work from home using the internet connection. Internet connection has never disrupted work during the serving of the country using cellphones.

These things for your information, truthfully speaking if it was not for Tuisamoa cable, all these would not have been possible. And it was appropriate for the month of February 2018, whereby our cable was brought just in time when we had these problems, otherwise, internet access has now been of high speed.

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Internet and cellphones has covered the entire country, and this is the truth. Although there are areas where the Digicel connection works but not Vodafone, there are also areas where Vodafone works but Digicel does not work the same with Netvo. These are companies that are serving us with internet and telephones.

The cost of the internet for us today is getting more cheaper. Since 2018 when we had our Tuisamoa launching, the cost of communication had dropped significantly to 80%. These are the records received from the Bureau of Statistics.

When traveling to New Zealand right now, you would buy a Sim Card at \$49.00 for only 4 Gigabytes. If you come to Samoa, you can buy a \$20 Sim Card and get 10 GB. That is the measure when looking at internet using. If you also discover a lot of ongoing promotions today, there is the 58GB, 100 GB for another company. That is how cheap our internet is for your information. Lest you think it is expensive but in comparison with other countries today, Samoa is more cheaper in the Pacific region.

The SchoolNet, a time will come for the response of the Hon Minister of Education who is in charge of this role. I am referring to connectivity and communication and those schools which comes under this project, there are more than 200 schools that are connected to this SchoolNet network through the Samoa National Broadband.

Majority of the schools are now using this SchoolNet for their research and education. Except for a few schools that do not have any computers, or that computers have been damaged, well those schools are in the process of making improvement.

One of the issues faced by the Ministry particularly the Ministry of Education is the senior teachers. It is difficult for them to pursue learning for computer skills and internet using for the sake of educating students.

With the situation today and the impact of the virus, our children were able to use cellphones. Not only are they using cellphones but they no longer come here to use the SchoolNet, as they now use the Google from America. And other special programs which contains millions and millions educational reading materials and several explanations on various teachings and learning.

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True is one of the programs by the Ministry of Education being broadcasted on TV about children talks on internet using. The children are extremely happy with the advantages of using the internet and its fast speed, particularly the free sim card they are using from Digicel and Vodafone, and in the end they said, this is what the teachers do not know while we do. Then I thought, the teachers are still trying, so there is advance education for the children to be in line with what they know.

With regards to the use of cell phones, as raised by the majority here, they refuse to allow their children to use them. However my plea, leave the cell phones to the kids to play. There are areas which are unavailable in classrooms which they can access for learning. Credit thinking and critical thinking for children's learning, except if parents will need to supervise them on the limited amount of time and make sure they go back to their studies and never leave them unsupervised. This is therefore their job in the homes.

Our SNBH, there is a huge advantage of internet usage through the Samoan National Broadband Highway or SNBH. Online trainings are currently underway for teachers in Savaii, teachers in Upolu from here in Apia with a training on the Samoa National Broadband. The same with the hospital, except for the delay in the arrival of machines which have just come in because of the pandemic virus. Now that we have these machines, therefore time will soon come for its installations, before talks can be resumed on this initiative.

Tofa Olo Fiti Afoa Vaai: Mr Speaker, I need clarification on this bit...

MR SPEAKER: Pardon the Minister, I call the member of Salega...

Tofa Olo Fiti Afoa Vaai: Thank you, pardon me Hon Minister, the presentation is well taken. With regards to connectivity and School Net and Samoa National Broadband Hub or SNBH when conducting meetings, I testify Mr Speaker that our Primary School up to College level has not received such connection.

It has been two weeks since I got back from Savaii, I also went to research about this SchoolNet connection, and so far, there are only two schools that has it. Majority of the schools there have computers but no internet connection but this is a really good initiative, but I have never heard of online meeting with teachers using this network. That is the explanation.

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Personally if there is anyone in the House that can correct me on this matter, then I trust this is the true testament. That is the testification on this matter, have a look into it again with respect.

MR SPEAKER: Very well the correction is well taken.

Afioga Tafua Maluelue Tafua (Aleipata Itupa i Lalo): Mr Speaker...

MR SPEAKER: Pardon the Minister I call the member of Aleipata i Lalo.

Afioga Tafua Maluelue Tafua: I now have the chance to praise the Hon Minister and acknowledge him with regards to our TV and our school. That is all, you did mention 200 schools are now receiving the School Net. Not only that but also the teachers.

Possibly the Minister will respond on that matter when it comes to it, the query is whether there is a training for teachers on this School Net and the Samoa National Broadband Highway or SNBH?

Our site visit and our committee with Olo, since the hospital, and the undertaking of this SNBH, when we visited Motootua, the doctor there reported that it has taken 2 and a half years later. The reply made was that they have no knowledge of these things and there is a need for a refresher course from other countries and a response from the Hon Minister of Health, the work in Safotu health service is not so good, as there is absolutely no connection there.

Such is the question posed, my question for future reference and for the smooth running of our work, it is excellent now, the only thing is whether there is a capacity building course for teachers as well as doctors with respect.

MR SPEAKER: Very well thanks, I permit the Minister.

Afioga Hon AFAMASAGA LEPUAI RICO TUPAI: Thank you for your views which have been noted, to ensure that another visit is undertaken to check if this connection is not made with the schools and the district health clinics.

The SchoolNet requires no internet connection. It is connected to the National Broadband but we will progress with this connection sometimes soon and your thoughts have been noted.

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The health, you have just heard that equipment have just arrived. They will be distributed to rural health clinics for educating people there, it will also teach the teachers that requires trainings to broaden the knowledge of the Hon Minister of Education about these endeavors.

The coverage area so far is now 85% for digital TV. Sometime at the end of the month, we will have digital boxes to secure this service around the entire country, given the mentality and view of the Ministry particularly the Regulator.

If we receive these boxes by the end of the month or the start of July, then we will have to switch off the analogue system although there are still a few televisions that are using this system right now.

If you are watching us live on TV and are unable to get a clear view, then buy a box from SSAB or Bluebird and they will tell you how to install it. Also get a new antenna outside. If you are using an inside antenna, then that should be good. But if it is an outside one, then it requires a horizontal one. It no longer requires a vertical one. That is the slight clarification. There will be time for the Ministry to come to the public and provide assistance through their IT Association for this ongoing job together with this box to be installed in the homes.

This is a good opportunity to express our sincere appreciation to the partners of this private telecommunication company and the Television companies including our overseas stakeholders who are supporting this endeavor to increase and improve developments from time to time.

Mr Speaker this is one of those matters that was raised during the Prime Minister's Ministerial Statement, it is the purchasing of the SamoaTel company which was not only done by the State. It was also implemented together with the Consular of the World Bank.

When SamoaTel was purchased at that time there were no cellphones then. There was only the service called homezone. I still remember the first homezone installation in Gataivai Savaii. There was a lot of traditional gift exchanges from the village to SamoaTel on that day. The SamoaTel company was returning here and the old men of the village were travelling to Salelologa and upon switching on their cell phones, it was off. When they contacted Samoa Tel, the officer Ofoia clarified that the connection was only limited to the village of Gataivai. That was the strength of the connection by SamoaTel back then.

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There were no cell phones before. The speed level was only at 2, 2G. The purchase cost at that time was only 75%, as heard, 25% is now being reserved for our people at UTOS.

So in the meantime after Bluesky was bought in 2017, there is so much upgrading. Firstly, it was not only the Bluesky that was bought. The same price was used to buy the Bluesky in American Samoa and the Bluesky in the Cook Islands. As for Samoa alone, during the purchasing of this company at that time, the speed level was at 4G. From 54 posts we had, there are 90 new post installations we now have so far. So, as you have attained, we have been upgraded from 2 to 4, and therefore all antennas have been upgraded particularly in Offices and so as the advance speed level.

Meantime, if there is poor connections with the Vodafone, the connecting tests are now upgraded after the purchasing of the Vodafone company from Bluesky in 2017 which had just been completed last year.

Now that you have heard the reasons and strategic vision of the State on the establishment of the UTOS. The UTOS is an organisation which gave our unemployed people the chance to make shares. All public servants go to NPF. For this one, not only did it gave 25% share from UTOS to Bluesky they also went and set up a Bluesky in the Cook Islands. Such is the UTOS Samoa we have now and the shares being made between the Bluesky Pacific and Bluesky in Cook Island.

But when the ATH company had bought the Bluesky company, this gave UTOS the chance to create partnership with ATH and right now for the information of Parliament, UTOS has implemented shares with ATH company in Fiji. This included the shares of the NPF with this company.

The ATH Company for your information....

Tofa Olo Fiti Afoa Vaai: Mr Speaker pardon me, may i have a chance, since i did raised the...

MR SPEAKER: You did mention that in your speech...

Tofa Olo Fiti Afoa Vaai: Let the Hon Minister have a break...

MR SPEAKER: Go on.

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Tofa Olo Fiti Afoa Vaai: Thank you for the opportunity and the main point submitted on the sale of the SamoaTel, good. If that was the plans of the State, good. The only thing in my observation with regards to the Budget and SamoaTel in 2009 going backwards, our revenue had reached \$10million plus per annum. And currently, the dividends we get from Bluesky is only a million or 2 million.

With regards to the will of the State on the Bluesky sale or the Telecom at that time, and the saying that there was no expertise or knowledge from us. If you consider it Mr Speaker the dignity of the House and the listening public, Samoa is all in it for this Vodafone service starting from Bluesky. All hiring employees were Samoans and they all hold expertise with this company. Even with Digicel company, all workers are Samoans.

That was the thought given at that time, due to the many assets here and their costs. For consideration too, we had just completed the laying out of fibre objects at that time. Those items were very pricey at the value of almost \$40million. But it was cheaper when we had the \$1million sale of....

MR SPEAKER: The statement is well given...

Tofa Olo Fiti Afoa Vaai: I wish to ask, just this one matter, with the existing infrastructure, can you clarify whether all that is covered in that purchasing? Or is the Vodafone on lease? With due respect thanks.

MR SPEAKER: Very well, go on Minister.

Afioga Hon AFAMASAGA LEPUIAI RICO TUPAI: I thank the member for the question. For the sake of the public, the revenue was this small, and the expenditure was this huge. The problem that cannot be obtained is the millions and millions expenditures with very slight revenues we had incurred from this service since the start.

During that time expenditure would increase to \$10million. As of the current and the Ministerial Statement given by the Prime Minister, on reasons why the State had released these services. As you can hear now, the only thing we were able to do is the homezeone at that particular time.

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What now? Samoa is now in line with the rest of the world on this service, if the State had not implemented this, we would not have made it to this standard. This is the real fact your honour. Digicel company began in 2006, and the speed now is very advanced. It starts from here all the way out in the Pacific. And for the information of this Parliament, Digicel has 20% share with the State, through the NPF and the employees of CSL.

Mr Speaker, the thought and query and an announcement which says that we bring it in and sell it, it is a liability, that is the truth. Money will be a waste. The respectable members have spoken. Our locals are now being employed there and that is the critical part to the State. Almost the entire workers, except the upper level and some other vacancies are held by expatriate workers. Employment is being shared amongst our people.

And since the year 2011 there was the purchasing of...

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

MR SPEAKER: Alright, let...

Tofa Olo Fiti Afoa Vaai: Pardon the Hon Minister, we do not want Bluesky or Samoa Tel. The only aim we submitted is the gateway and the controlling by the State. That is all. Whereas the layout, that is the business of Digicel and Vodafone alone, with due respect.

MR SPEAKER: I call the Minister.

Afioga Hon AFAMASAGA LEPUIAI RICO TUPAI: Very well thanks. We have 3 gateways. The connectivity from Samoa American Samoa and American Samoa Hawaii all goes through this gateway here. Another gateway is the Tuisamoa cable.

And so we cannot just go ahead and utilize all these gateways. There are conditions from the American Government, the Federal Communications Commission or FCC to officially approve these things before using. With information going in and out, there are procedures to follow in order for us to obtain approval. In the meantime as clarified, with regards to shares with the ATH, UTOS and NPF.

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This partnership is beginning to spread out to other countries of the Pacific including our own people. If then you are receiving the reasons why the UTOS was set up, it is so that senior members of the country are able to hold shares.

Susuga Hon Laauli Polataivao Leuatea: Mr Speaker, perhaps the Hon Minister is moving on from from this...

MR SPEAKER: Pardon the Minister...

Susuga Hon Laauli Polataivao Leuatea: Thank you for the opportunity, perhaps the Hon Minister is moving away from this topic on gateway as I too had raised it. What is the update with the internet cost? And the slow connection it brings? I wish not to say any further, I am not objecting your statement, let the country judge on the latest about this matter.

I wish not to state anything on the purchasing of the Samoa Tel Bluesky. It is observed that the profit was more than \$200 million. Such is the talk on this gateway, pardon honorable Afamasaga, it is the cyber security of the country. You explicitly explained that the ATH belongs to Fiji, and is controlled by Vodafone, with our share of 60%. There is complexity in this issue, I plead, consider the long run.

These 3 gateways are no longer controlled by Samoa. It is up to Digicel how their gateway is controlled and so as Vodafone, and Netvo. However the concern here is the cyber security of the country. Government entity is everyone's business. Information is being spread freely accross the globe without any protection, and the entire world is receiving what we are doing, pardon me.

MR SPEAKER: The statement of the member has been received...

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

Susuga Hon Laauli Polataivao Leuatea: We now have our connecting cable to Fiji for their view.

MR SPEAKER: I call the Prime Minister for assistance on a clarification about this matter.

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Afioga Hon Tuilaepa Auelua Fatialofa Lupesoliai Lolofietele Neioti Aiono Galumalemana Dr Sailele Malielegaoi: I think 3 years ago, an announcement was made by one of the people in New Zealand, it is a pity that the entire world has known about the talks between Samoa and New Zealand. And I was even questioned about it.

Is it possible for us not to be affected? Then I can say, if any white guy spies on us, then perhaps it could be 99%, could I have \$1000 for my church offering (alofa). Can I have something to buy me a smoke. Can I have some money for a funeral.

That said, it is a real headache for the people to hear our talks, when it is our own business. Especially when the old man is talking outside in Samoan. Just something like that then finished.

Mr Speaker, leave it, what you are referring to is what the State has long been doing and there is nothing to worry about those things.

MR SPEAKER: Alright. The clarification has been explicitly given...

Susuga Hon Laauli Polataivao Leuatea: I will conclude my thought, it is not about anything else. Pardon me Afamasaga, the declaration of your meekness with your Associate Minister is different with this attempt. Support the aim I am after. Which are attire and necklace.

MR SPEAKER: Your thought has been received...

Susuga Hon Laauli Polataivao Leuatea: That is the intention, our talks are unprotected, Fiji and Bainarama are receiving our talks, which is a concern.

MR SPEAKER: Pardon the member. Well I do not think they are interested in talking about those matters? Well let us have the Minister, as the Prime Minister avowed that there is no need for the country to be concerned on this matter.

Afioga Hon AFAMASAGA LEPUIAI RICO TUPAI: Thank you for the raising concern, however I clarify that your statement is not verified, our information is being secured as these are all the areas that the State has looked into since the start when we had the purchasing of our cables.

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As I said before, our connections does not go through Fiji, the connection to Australia goes through Fiji, however, this cable from Australia has a connection to Fiji. If then Fiji is watching us now when the cable is connected from Australia to Fiji, then that is what we should consider, our communication is well secured, there is no such thing as Fiji listening to our communications. No, the cyber security is well secured as Australia is also giving us a hand and a research team will be set up soon.

MR SPEAKER: Very well. Pardon the respectable member...

Susuga Hon Laauli Polataivao Leuatea: Yes Mr Speaker I am only reminding, there is no such intention.

MR SPEAKER: Pardon the member...

Susuga Hon Laauli Polataivao Leuatea: Please, set up a Law to protect our information, we have nothing to protect our communication. Draft a legislation on cyber security for Samoa. That is a caring recommendation for you and the country.

MR SPEAKER: With regards to debates and raising comments, I beg tolerance to the member, do not have urging desire for the State to take in your view. If that is your own opinion then the State has responded, and that is it. Rather it is not about instructing the State that is must be done and that. There are thousands of those whom are experts in what they are doing, although your recommendations and suggestions are useful. But it is unnecessary for you to say that we do this and that, as that is your own view. I beg forbearance to the member because...

Susuga Hon Laauli Leuatea Polataivao: Yes, I do not have any ill-feeling to instruct the State, I am only giving advice. I have no right nor any bad attempt. The aim is to bring friendly advice.

MR SPEAKER: Very well thanks. I leave this recommendation to you. Until...

Tofa Olo Fiti Afoa Vaai: Mr Speaker to save the statement of...

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MR SPEAKER: I beg your pardon, I call the Prime Minister.

Susuga Hon Tuilaepa Auelua Fatialofa Lupesoliai Lolofietele Neioti Aiono Galumalemana Dr. Sailele Malielegaoi: Mr Speaker how can that love oppose this love? Saying to do things based on no love. We have here people who are way better than you two standing there. Leave it to them as that is their job. There is nothing to be concerned about, if your advice has been made, then leave it to us, the final say is the Government's.

Let me just say this, if you stand a thousand times, we will stand a hundred and one times. If the State makes its decision, then you abide by it and leave us with your suggestions for us to look at whether it is useful.

MR SPEAKER: Pardon the member of Salega, let us abide with my orders so that we can continue our work together. Your thoughts have been made, and so let the State deal with it. Yes, I allow the Minister, note down the views of these men.

Tofa Olo Fiti Afoa Vaai: Since the honorable Minister has gotten on to another topic without giving a response to my question. Whether the cost of the infrastructure is covered in the Blue Sky cost? Just that one matter as you are moving away and who is this company? Thank you.

MR SPEAKER: Very well go on...If the response is done... Then...

Afioga Hon AFAMASAGA LEPUIAI RICO TUPAI: I am not finished, we will get there. May I also remind that we have experts here. When we speak of cyber security, it is not about your opinions alone, we too do not want our talks to be affected by bad people and those who want to hack our communications. This Legislation is almost finished, however this matter does not have to wait for it, the job has long been undertaken. Perhaps in a future sitting then we will have a Legislation although public policies have already been approved. That is the attempt from Australia for them to implement the funding on the cyber security office for this Ministry in order to protect online communications given existing policies. They are looking into it, such is the great joy, although the Legislation will be submitted.

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I will respond to the question on infrastructure and whether it was purchased or leased, looking at the purchasing of SamoaTel and the low price set out, possibly if the cable was excluded the price would not have come to \$11million or a just an expense of \$7million at that time. Such is the explanation, but that was the effect of the Samoatel sale at that time and the State did not have to stop them from undertaking the full purchase, as such, it will not take long and money will be required to do maintenance work for improvement. It takes millions on expenditures and the State therefore does not need that anymore. Such is the attempt of the State to avoid expenses and focus mainly on revenue collection. Meantime, we are not working hard, we are working smart. Our investment is working for us, the same with the Cook Islands, American Samoa, Fiji but revenue collection is the main thing we are focusing on. The ATH Company is on lease on the South Pacific Stock Exchange. The total asset there is \$1.3million. That said, if the UTOS was set up for our fisheries and our cocoa roasting, there is an old lady that says, I am the boss of the Vodafone Company in the Cook Islands, I too am the manager of the ATH Company in Fiji through shares contributed to UTOS. For those of you who are listening and do not have shares with UTOS, then this is your time. It will begin soon, you have heard that partnership will commence soon and more revenue will be gained. So you must buy shares now from UTOS. With regards to our communications protection, we have said it, protect our communications.

Then I come to the protection of our Tuisamoa cable. UTOS has shares from the Tuisamoa, NPF and Samoa Life Insurance Company or SLAC. Furthermore, there is also the CLS, Bluesky or the Vodafone and 25% shares from the Government, including Digicel, 20% shares comes from the NPF. Therefore, we have 74% returns to us. Just 26, 25% is divided amongst these Communication companies.

If the setting up of this company since the start had the consular of the World Bank who negotiated the costs to all this, then by recommendation, buy \$250 US tala for 1 cable. Whilst our local company argued no that is too expensive. For you information, up to now, 1 cable wire has been bought for \$15USD, which is different from the advice given by the foreign consular, since there is knowledge with our own local experts on these areas.

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The recommendation they gave was that companies will be bankrupt. The consular stated that your company will be bankrupt if this is the price you will use. Perhaps we will start gaining some profit by the year 2024. You have seen it in the previous year, we had a profit of \$1.9million that was gained from recent shares...

MR SPEAKER: Pardon the current Minister speaking I allow the member from Falealili East.

Afioga Fuimaono Teo Samuelu Teo (Falealili East): Mr Speaker, thank you for clarifying some of these matters. The only clarification that was needed. You have talked about the 70% usage for the Tuisamoa Cable, and observing it, perhaps we only have 4 Internet Service Providers or ISPs under distribution. So despite the large usage by companies through this cable, if there are 1 or 2 terabytes, what then is the allocation for these companies and what are the terms and conditions? Because by observation, there is a concern with having an ISP representative in the Board who is in control of the cable given that there seems to be a conflict of interest as they are the ones who own these companies yet they are also the ones who are using our cable. Such is the query here, and if the cable is not fully utilized as you speak, then there will be less...because I am unaware how many ISP allocations there are for the remaining capacity. Whether possible to permit the remaining capacity to other companies through a competition so that they can utilize it because we seem to rely on the slow network but since the traffic is tight with the ISP and therefore, they should be able to limit the amount of Gigabytes allocated to them. With all due respect, that is just a matter for clarification.

MR SPEAKER: Well done. No, what matters is, has it been mentioned in your public speech?

Afioga Fuimaono Teo Samuelu Teo: That is correct, I did asked them. Thank you very much.

MR SPEAKER: Because if it was not mentioned in your public speech, you would not respond to it. Yes, that is our Standing Order, which is how it is. But you will speak and explain the situation when we return from our recess.

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Motion to Amend Sitting Hours

Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly will be set aside for its recess.

Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly were suspended for its usual recess at 10:45am and will be resumed at 11:32am.

MR SPEAKER: I announce the resumption of the Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly. There is a belief that Leaders of the country have received additional strength to continue our work.

Before I call upon the Hon Minister for a continuation of his speech, I will first call on the Hon Prime Minister.

MOTION TO AMEND SITTING HOURS

Susuga Hon TUILAEP AUELUA FATIALOFA LUPESOLIAI LOLOFIETELE NEIOTI AIONO GALUMALEMANA Dr. SAILELE MALIELEGAOI: Mr Speaker and the dignity of the House, I stand with respect to move the motion, *Meetings Hours of the Assembly Proceedings are to be restored back to 9:00am to 1:00pm.*

Seconded by the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Women, Community and Social Development.

Motion approved.

Debate continued on the Supplementary Appropriation Bill (No.3) 2019/2020 & the Appropriation Bill 2020/2021.

MR SPEAKER: Well, with respect I call upon the Minister of Communications, Information and Technology.

Afioga Hon AFAMASAGA LEPUIAI RICO TUPAI: Thank you Mr Speaker, as the Parliament has reconvened in this House for the continuation of our debates. Thank you to member for circumstances stated, but I would ask and recommend that you wear your headphones because there are a few things that you missed, it is 86%. The 76% I had mentioned or 74% these are the shares, it is not the use of our cables.

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Similarly, at this time I want to remind our assembly, when we sit down for a long time we should try to shake our bodies, shake our hands, shake our heads, move the body because it affects us all...

Afioga Fuimaono Teo Samuelu Teo: Mr Speaker...

MR SPEAKER: Well... the statement of the Minister is not directed to the member. It is a recommendation to all the honourable members of Parliament.

I call on the member for Falealili East.

Afioga Fuimaono Teo Samuelu Teo: I was the one who asked the Hon Minister. The reason why I do not use headphones is, because my hearing is very good. But the 76% of the shares we have, it is correct, but the issue that was questioned because the situation of our cable was mentioned. This is the only reason why I questioned, because this cable in the allocation no matter how big the GBs are our ISP will purchase it as its been found out that the cables are not fully used, there is still more than half of the cable available.

MR SPEAKER: Thank you.

Afioga Fuimaono Teo Samuelu Teo: So that is the question; if it is not fully utilized, I know, these cables also have life spans. If it is 20 or 25 years, but then after 20 years it is still not used, that is a lot of money wasted, but it should have been allocated to other ISPs to be completed.

MR SPEAKER: Thank you. I call on the Minister of Communications, Information and Technology.

Afioga Hon AFAMASAGA LEPUIAI RICO TUPAI: Thank you to the member. It seems like you are starting to get it. In this case, the Samoa Submarine does not go around distributing cables to the ISP and other cable companies, as you have to come and buy your own cable that is enough for you. For the information of the Parliament and all the Samoans listening, there were predictions or foresight by experts who observed how Samoa uses these, because the usage by Samoa does not amount to a single GB.

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According to their observation, by 2022, Samoa's consumption will reach 8 GBs. As of this time I joyfully testify that we have exceeded our consumptions. But the member is correct, we have not yet used all of the cables, the cables are huge, but we are still waiting for companies to come and buy them when needed, because there is no need to buy too much when it is not needed and it is non-profitable, as they first buy it from here and then they buy it again, and now it is being processed and many of the questions have been answered.

In terms of the situation in questioning the conflict of interest in the formation of this Samoa Submarine company, which I have already presented, let me just finish my explanation because it was asked as to who profits from these things, which seems like the phone companies are being blamed as they are said to be benefitting the most from these things. There were words used in one of the speeches but I do not want to bring it up. But as I have said, in terms of the distribution of the percentages of shareholders in this company, as 74% will be returned for the prosperous Government, with the exception of the other 26% which is divided between these two phone companies.

As you all know the profit made by Samoa Submarine is \$1.9 million, which means that \$1.4 million of that money is for us, it is used by Samoa through the shares of UTOS, NPF, SLAC and CSL and the shareholders in Vodafone and Digicel telecom mobile, as \$500,000 is split between these companies. This means that they have not yet calculated the \$1.3 million of their shares that have been put into these funds, as they have just started to receive funds to pay for their shares in these phone companies.

The conflict of interest, there are 3 provisions that are those in the table of the Council, the Board and these shareholders in order to control and classify and distribute these cables. So in addition to the following 3 provisions to ensure it does not collude, but it is also overseen by the Regulator. They are the ones who provide and also monitor all areas to ensure there are no conspiracies between people from within. Before covering these provisions, Hon Members, the 3 needs of the Government are different from the 3 needs of the current companies, because these 3 that the Government has, is their income from selling the cables. That is their determination, to sell the cables at a great price, so they can make money quickly.

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As for the desire of the telephone companies, to lower the price of the cable to decrease the cost spent on their services, so that many people are able to use it, that is how they will make a profit. Notice, the company is still regulated in the shareholding before the addition of the 3 conditions which I have mentioned, with the addition of the Regulator.

That is the situation so that we are well aware and also have a peace of mind if such circumstances about the table off council and the Board are in doubt.

Also for your information, our Manatua cable will arrive soon, which will be launched at the end of this month or next month, unless there are still materials left and then it will be set aside for when the cables arrive. As for the current situation of the Tuisamoa, you may have heard it was not too long ago in 2018 when the cable in Tonga was severed.

This is another question that was always raised in regards to the gateway. We cannot rely on a single gateway, so we have to have a gateway of redundancy so that when these cables are cut, ours will still be operational. This is the other area the Government is examining and the designation of these things, in addition to that, there should be other ways for it to make it overseas, in case of accidents, 2 cables may be cut by there is still a way for it to make it overseas.

It has arrived, and we now have 3 cables, the American Samoa cable that is being used by Vodafone, the Tuisamoa cable, and this cable will be arriving soon.

So what will the Government look at for its next move? This was the question raised by the honourable member. To be used. How will it be used? Well that is what the Government's plans are moving towards, as it has started to build a, which include all the areas that were mentioned by the member, as we are trying to create a conducive environment for our economic benefits with these cables to grow our economy, to create an environment, to attract foreign companies, to come and use these cables. That is why it was built with the vision of the Government to construct these telecommunications cables, and this has made Samoa the centre of telecommunications in the Pacific as it now has 3 cables, but in addition, it also has a satellite.

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Now we have started setting up incentives or promotions to attract foreign companies into our Country. We have companies that have started like our Call Centre and the Government is considering their application, they want their service to reach 300 employees as soon as possible before the end of the year, but the Government is still looking at all the aspects to speed up the process especially this time with many people being unemployed. There is also another company, which makes it 2 companies. The other company is an Accounting Company, which is working locally, but they do accounting for overseas companies, they do not do accounting of companies or audit the documents of companies within Samoa, they are dealing with overseas only. The Government is looking at this to attract companies into our country. As it is now, the needs of our people will continue to grow and the number of companies in our country and revenues will also grow. So we are now looking at using these cables to allure foreign companies and to add to our economic growth, to increase opportunities for our people. But from observation as we talked about at the beginning of this speech, as of now the internet is being used, as we are all using the internet but the Government is still looking at security measures to ensure these ways of communications are safe. As you all know, there is a big building at the harbor where all the cables used for communications from Singapore to Hawaii are stored, whenever a communication cable is being built in the Pacific, this is where they get the cables as well as any spare parts from, which provides revenue for our Government through our SPA, but it is similar for many other businesses that have also benefitted from this.

And if ships were to dock here, we will receive a lot of money. But for now, cables are being hauled to Papua but it is supplied from here, these cables are built here and it is shipped to Papua to be used. This means that the world is starting to notice Samoa and seeing that, because our infrastructures are in place, and we have our communications are complete and fast paced, so they do not need to work abroad, they are able to work from within Samoa, but they are being paid from overseas. Such is the vision of the Government.

This time, as it was raised in our previous Assembly we set up our Digital Transformation Authority, which is also overseen by the Hon Minister, the Hon Prime Minister, who is also the Chairperson of our ICT in Samoa or our Digital Transformation Council.

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Now we are moving to establish an electronic service in the country starting with E-Health or our Health Sector, we are starting to establish communications to be done using the cables for the Samoa National Broadband as well as internet usage. Then it will make it easier for our people rather than standing in a queue when they go to the hospital, they do not need to make documents of their records, but you will keep your own records, and only you can view it at any time. Whether you go to the hospital, or you go to the outer clinics, your records will always be available when you need it right away. You do not need to get documents from the hospital. It is the same for x-rays and other such things, getting answers will be made easier. Also, if these services are accomplished, you only need to ask for your passport from your home, you will not have to travel to Apia, the only time you are required to come is when you have to sign and to pick up your passport. Also, payments will be done online, as our services will be paid using the internet. These are all the things we are starting to move towards accomplishing. For E-commerce, as you can all see now, consumers are becoming less mobile than before, as they are using the internet to purchase their goods and it is delivered to their homes, and so you do not need to go to town like we were accustomed to.

Many of these services are the aspects to why we now value the National ID, because at the centre of all these services, you can only access and use them when you use the National ID.

And in the Government's view, especially when I stated that the outside world is examining the situation of Samoa in terms of such services, as that is the reason why the Government is trying to expedite this service and to implement our National ID at this moment.

Mr Speaker, it has now emerged as most of the views of the esteemed members have been explained on a number of issues that have been debated...

Afioga Faumuina Asi Pauli Wayne Fong (Urban Seat West): Mr Speaker...

MR SPEAKER: I beseech the member...

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Afioga Faumuina Asi Pauli Wayne Fong: Thank you for the opportunity. It seems that the wonderful speech by the Hon Minister is coming to an end. But there was a segment which was mentioned in the speech by the Hon Member, in regards to the Ministry's plan to the Board of Directors which was devastated by the disaster, because of the importance of that Ministry within that Ministry, but the infrastructure is useful for the protection of the equipment as well as the condition of the staff. With all due respect, thank you.

Afioga Sulamanaia Fetaiai Tauiiili Tuivasa (Vaimauga East): Mr Speaker, can I please get an opportunity to save the Minister's time.

MR SPEAKER: Apologies to the Minister as I give the opportunity to the member for Vaimauga. I call upon the member for Vaimauga East.

Afioga Sulamanaia Fetaiai Tauiiili Tuivasa: I suspect that the Hon Matua o Usoalii is concluding his speech. It was a pleasure to hear. As for the member for Vaimauga East, many things were stated in my speech but nothing was said in your speech.

First of all, the TV that this member mentioned, we should have televised channel. Of course we already have a channel which is on the internet, but because of the interest of this member, because we saw the situation on Saturday night, with the desecration of that Catholic Church in regards to the broadcast shown on TV1 with a member or the pastor who gave his sermon, which stated the affairs of the Church.

Hon Minister, so I pray that you look into this TV. That was also authorised by the Government. The speech by the Prime Minister is interesting, as these assets were released for them to be implemented. But when you look at it spiritually, for Samoa when it concerns the Church, there is no one that does not want to die for it. When the Church discredited, there will be conflict amongst Samoans. But what this pastor said on Saturday night, he was badmouthing the sacred affairs of this Church, which is beyond his understanding. That is the concern, and yet you have yet to mention the TV in your speech.

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Secondly, in regards to purchasing of Bluesky which I also requested. I am very interested in things that can be profitable, as it was stated in this House the purchase of \$11 million, but it will be sold off for \$86 million, as the country is listening. Whatever the case is in this situation, the Ministry or Revenue should receive a profit in terms of capital gain if it was bought for a low price and resold. The Hon Minister has to look at this.

The other is Digicel, it has also been said that, if we look at this company, the services they provided were good. But they came to work on phones, what now? It has implemented other services like a hotel service. Where does the money come from? I ask the Hon Minister to look at this situation. As a lot of money is made from it. I have also talked about this issue, with the opinion of the Hon Gafatasi. As mentioned in terms of this situation it is .8, it was also noted in your speech that we have 3 cables that come from the satellite. A lot of communication are received, but it is not shared throughout the country, so that is can become cheaper and easier for the public to receive the service. The thing is, you have bought many cables, but it is still expensive for the country. Take a look at this issue.

That is the case, as I am aware that your speech is nearing its conclusion, but you still have yet to mention the importance of the TV, which I was ambitious about for us to have a televised channel reserved for school broadcasts and Health broadcast, and exclude the advertisement competition between businesses. But it has been noted; the groups that provide these services have been advised to take a good look, to screen the people properly, and not to be used to make a profit, but to look at the services that have increased in cost, as the country and Samoa are listening to these matters. Mr Speaker that is the point I wanted to convey to the Hon Minister, as he has not responded to the needs of this constituency.

MR SPEAKER: I call on the member.

Tofa Olo Fiti Afoa Vaai: Mr Speaker, there is a small question that I want to understand. Given that the Minister spoke on the issue of the national IDs, I believe that this is a good situation. But the only question is, why is a person paying \$50 to come and make their ID? My second thought on this issue, the ID is an electronic ID, there was also some concerns, the access of the user on the network to the information of the individual themselves. But clarify it clearly, if we are safe from these situations with due respect.

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MR SPEAKER: It has been noted, there is a suggestion that this \$50 should not be mentioned again in your speech. It has already been explained before as well. I beseech the honourable member; do not bring up this issue anymore. The Government has already clarified that point. It is because your deliverance of the issue was too demanding, which means we will have to go back to this issue. As your statement will initiate disagreements and causes discomfort, but the context is clear as stated in the speech of the Minister of Finance. So, please speak directly on the issues raised by the members.

Afioga Hon AFAMASAGA LEPUIAI RICO TUPAI: Mr Speaker, you are correct in that regard. And I was not prepared to answer again. The issue raised by the member for Vaimauga East, no, the Government TV is on that channel and it is being watched.

The situation we are currently facing, unlike before when we had analogue, every TV station has its own advertising system. No, there is only one platform or service on which transactions can be done, but it is used by all the TVs. The only thing is that TV1 created its own channel, followed by TV2, TV3 and the Catholic, they each have a channel. Our Government also has a channel that has already been set up, but business advertisements are not shown on it, which was what you were concerned about. It only shows Government matters, through Health, Education, community and social issues, as well as the current levels of education, especially clarifications given by the Government through the Hon Prime Minister, and the Ministers and also Chief Executive Officers of the Ministries which are being aired. Commercials are not broadcasted on this channel, and it cannot compete with companies that provide these services as determined by the Government.

For Digicel and the hotel, it is one of the important Acts enacted by the Government over the years. And the holiday tax was dissected, to build this hotel, because we did not have enough hotels at that time. It has now emerged that the Act has been repealed. The Government also thinks that we have more than enough hotels to be used for world conferences within Samoa, as well as plans for tourists coming into our country. The capital gain that you had mentioned, it is true that you had raised it in your previous speech, we do not have any capital gain in this case, because as I explained, from Bluesky to Vodafone, that is the same company.

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The only thing that is changed is the flag and the symbol and the name. But this is the same company that bought the Bluesky Company. You have also witnessed the important conditions through which we are granted. It is important and had blessed many of our people.

The situation in question...

Susuga Hon Laauli Polataivao Leuatea: Mr Speaker, it is noticed that the speech by the Hon Minister is moving away from an issue stated in my speech.

MR SPEAKER: The member for Gagaifomauga No.3.

Susuga Hon Laauli Polataivao Leuatea: Thank you for the opportunity. Because this is the hotel owned by Bluesky, Le Lava Hotel, perhaps our Government should also have a share. Because all the funds used to build this hotel, it is the shares of the contributors, it is a credit. Should there have been a share of our Government? If there is or if there is not, that is thought provoking. These funds were provided by the Office of Revenue, the money owned by the contributors that have yet to be paid. But it is sadly noticed, the situation is different. The spirit is for our Government to receive shares, to generate revenue for the future. That is my question to the Hon Minister.

MR SPEAKER: The statement made by the member has been received. I call upon the Minister.

Afioga Hon AFAMASAGA LEPUIAI RICO TUPAI: Mr Speaker, if it was received by the member if he had heard my explanation on the shares for the Digicel Company, as we own 20% of the shares. That is the answer to the question. The hotel is owned by Digicel, the only thing is that it is named Le Lava, but the hotel is owned by Digicel. This means that in the future, when this company receives its shares and profits, we will be able to acquire some through our shares within the company. This is the clarification of this matter.

MR SPEAKER: Thank you. I call upon the Hon prime Minister.

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Susuga Hon Tuilaepa Auelua Fatialofa Lupesoliai Lolofietele Neioti Aiono Galumalemana Dr. Sailele Malilegaoi: As such, the assistance given by the Government to motivate the hotel owners. I am uncertain if it has been more than 10 years since the Act was amended. This will allow for aid to be used to drive the hotel business. So we use this tax credit. And now there will be a time limit to end this assistance by the Government. It was implemented during the time when we were trying to advertise some of our hotels due to the many efforts of the Government these results were not achieved. Especially given the rapid increase in the number of visitors to Samoa, and so the Government has noted that the number of hotels is enough.

There is an intention to end this assistance. There is a time frame, as this situation will no longer be prolonged, and it is also useful for the hotels that are listening, because this is what we are trying to endorse to assist. Even for the fundraisings that are being done for the games overseas, when approached the companies would make demands. They want to be credited, this means, the Government is also be funding the assistance offered by the companies. It is always the Government every single time. When we sponsor these games, and this has to stop, it should not, if any company wants to offer support to the rugby team, they should do it openly. But not say that unless they are given tax credit, many of the Government Corporations are becoming too dependent on the Government.

The issue stated by the member in relations to the types of churches that are ridiculing other churches, this is one thing that makes me sad, the instigation of distress. These churches, and the reason why the council of churches was formed, are for them to consult with each other. For issues that cause conflict, they try to find a level of cooperation. Because this is the nature of the churches, they preach peace, but then a church arises and stirs up the nation. That is one of the very important issues inscribed in the Constitution, regarding agitators. Perhaps this church is listening. Let each church plants its own beliefs within its own premises, instead of attempting to ruin the other churches. I have noticed, this church has been doing this repeatedly. I had just received it, maybe 3 weeks ago. And then I wrote a letter of counsel, because it did not only happen once or twice but multiple times. A church is where God resides, they should take the lead in maintaining peace and harmony as there is a council of churches, which they can use to settle their differences.

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For it to be shown before the country, but now it is given to the TV stations, they oversee these things, and they work for themselves as they continue to ruin other churches. This has long since stopped happening in Samoa. But for it to be happening now reflects the leadership of the church and its followers. There is a wealth of messages given in the Bible for church leaders to consultations, to create peace and not to incite hatred. And to use their wisdom to interpret the Bible, as each church has its own interpretation of the Bible.

The issue that was raised is important, but it is worth mentioning in here, to be used as a thought-provoking remark for the TV stations, from which these things are conveyed. After all, in this world, the wars that are occurring in the world, when investigating the cause it all leads to religion. Even in wars between Israel and its neighbours, it is caused by religion. Some things are traditional related, but when it comes to religion, we know exactly what happened 900 years or 700 years ago, as far back as 1500 years ago, the clash of churches. We do not want to see things like that happen in a country centred on God. I pray that the leaders of that church will consider this properly, if this country is founded on God, they should take the lead in setting guidelines for internal peace among the churches.

Mr Speaker, this is my answer.

MR SPEAKER: Well done, I call upon the Minister to speak.

Afioga Hon AFAMASAGA LEPUIAI RICO TUPAI: Thank you to the Hon Prime Minister for the clarification of this issue. The last thing I will respond to is the Office of the Regulator, which was raised by one of the members. Of course this is very important, as the Ministry of Finance and the Government Audit Office are currently conducting investigations, while waiting for a response from the insurance company, the company that insured the building of the Regulator. But for now, they have a very nice office building shared with 2AP, because most of the building is occupied by 2AP, so they were given some space, as they work happily together at Mulinuu.

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This is a response with respect to all the issues that were raised by the dignitaries in their speeches. I also believe, I would like to say something to the shareholders of the private sector of the Government. Thank you very much to the telephone companies, television companies, ISP services, especially those who are dealing with foreign partners who are constantly helping the Government whenever we make pleas for assistance, thank you so much for your support, especially to the Samoa IT Association, as this is one important aspect that the Hon Prime Minister set up for our Ministries, to form another association to be included, to conduct such work, as you have seen with the free trainings that were done for schools.

Schools are now using the platforms provided by the IT Association, and so I offer congratulations to all the companies and public servants involved in this matter. I offer praises to the Chief Executive officers as well as the staff of this branch, thank you for your service, may you continue to enjoy your work and have strength to do so.

Mr Speaker, my beloved constituency of Fasitootai and Vailuutai in all its honorific salutations, as well as my village of Satapuala in all its honorific salutations.

And also to my village of Faleatiu in all its honorary salutations. My church and my village in Sagafili thank you for your support, thank you for your prayers for the work of the Government and the office position held by your representative for services in all aspects, which is enhancing and developing the economy of Samoa. God bless you all.

Mr Speaker, I remember my father, who just passed away last month. All I have left is my mother who is alive and in support. There was a life of contention and poverty that existed at that time, while coming up. We grew up in the woods, living in poverty in those days without telephones. The roads are defective as it goes for 2 kilometres before reaching our home. I still remember the other day when our neighbour got sick, and then my father instructed me to use the horse, because that was the only way we can travel at that time, as cars could not travel there because of the poor conditions of the road. But there were also no telephones to call the hospital to send an ambulance. So then I rode the horse, pardon the House and Samoa listening. As I carried the sickly neighbour on my back. Due to the poor conditions of the road, it was on the third time when the horses legs was punctured that it fell and we crashed, but when I glanced back at the patient I was carrying, he had already fallen off. When I visited recently, the road going inland had already been paved and the old man was riding in his car.

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The only thing he said to me was, “son, thank you”, that was it. But I could see the gratitude of the parents for the changed that have taken place, especially in terms of the services of this Ministry. But my statement is heading in this direction, because of my father as I am reminded that he has gone to heaven.

Mr Speaker, thank you very much for leading our Assembly. Thank you for your patience and endurance, bless you. May you always have the strength to serve God through your appointment as Speaker of this House. Distinguished Members of Parliament, the Hon Prime Minister and the Cabinet, honourable members as well as Chief Executive Officers and all those who are serving our Assembly, God bless you all. May you have the strength to serve Samoa. Samoa, keep up the good work, continue with the prayers to support our efforts, with the work that is being done, as it is being conducted wholeheartedly, for the benefit of Samoa.

Thank you for this opportunity.

MR SPEAKER: Thank you to the Minister of Communications, Information and Technology for your speech. The turn now comes to the Hon Minister of Justice and Courts Administration and the Office of the Electoral Commissioner.

I call upon the Minister.

Afioga Hon FAAOLESA KATOPAU T. AINUU (Minister of Justice and Courts Administrations and Office of the Electoral Commissioner): Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity. First of all, I would like to offer greetings to the esteemed members of the House, with the presence of the Hon Speaker, the Hon Prime Minister, the Cabinet and the Associate Ministers. I also express greetings to that side of the House, with the presence of the Chairpersons and all the respectable members of the Samoan Parliament.

I also take this opportunity to offer salutations to the Chief Executive Officers of the Ministries and Private Corporations, as we are gathered here today. Congratulations on your endeavours congratulations for your patience.

I also acknowledge the support of His Excellency the Head of State and His Good Lady, the Deputy Head of State and his Good Lady, as well as the support of Samoa.

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Let us not forget the prayers of God's anointed servants at the many altars who are longing for the betterment of Samoa.

I offer special salutations to the support of my constituency of Vaimauga West No.2 with all its honorific salutations.

Mr Speaker, not many members mentioned the Ministry of Justice and the Office of the Electoral Commissioner. Many of the members conveyed blessings on the emergence of our new Chief Justice. And I would like to take this hour to express gratitude to His Excellency the Ao o le Malo for his appointment. In particular, the Hon Leader of our Country, the Hon Prime Minister, and his recommendation for this high ranking position, as bestowed upon the Chief Justice, Afioga Satiu Leatigagaeono Miti Simativa Perese. There were a few minor issues raised by the members.

There is an issue raised by the member for Falealili East, Afioga I le gafatasi. I tried to give a response, but the answer given was incomplete. The member had questioned, the cost for performing adoption. The member noticed that the fees of the lawyers who are performing the adoption are quite high and expensive. If the Government has any assistance in regards to this, as the Prime Minister also stood up and gave an explanation on the matter. I also replied that lawyers determine their own fees, and that is the case at the present time. But during the recess on that day, the Attorney general and the Registrar of the court gave me a reminder. There are Acts that were approved in 2014, 6 years ago, which talks about the legal fees. But the problem as of today, it has not been enforced. There are legal conditions that must be met before the Act can be enforced. That is the full answer to the question raised by the member for Falealili West. The Government has already enacted Acts to address the concerns you have shown, it only needs to be implemented.

But there is an issue that is more important, which was also addressed by the Hon Prime Minister. The question is, should we continue and simplify this part of the adoption process of our children as it is now? As the dignified and sacredness of Samoa is listening, a thought arouse because I remembered, about 2 years ago, it was stated by the Hon Prime Minister, to consider an appropriate amendment to this Act.

I attended a meeting in Bali Indonesia in 2018 and the theme was Human Trafficking or Modern Slavery. Now considering the main purpose of that meeting and the simple process now taken by people to adopt children in Samoa. I would think that Samoa are pretty close to the realities which evoked the recommendations during that meeting. To avoid this practise.

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It is the reason the government has considered looking into the law which dictates the process of adoption. Since there have been too many parents seeking assistance from the Prime Minister. The outcome is somehow different.

It is certain that the motive behind parents seeking adoption for their children is an avenue to search for prosperity overseas. With no glue of the problems that may surface. There is now an amendment to this Adoption Law which has been drafted by the Office of the Attorney General and the Registrar of the Courts and we hope to table it in Parliament in the upcoming sitting for enactment.

Afioga Fuimaono Teo Samuelu Teo: Mr Speaker...

MR SPEAKER: I call on the member for Falealili.

Afioga Fuimaono Teo Samuelu Teo: I acknowledge the Minister for clearing up the matter I raised. My concern is this, since the Minister responded when asked. I have just read Hansard again. The Minister announced that Parliament has no power to regulate the fees imposed by a lawyer. But he is also saying that there is a law which was passed here. Hence my taking the floor. I am of the view that Parliament is where laws are passed. But I now understand, thank you.

Afioga Hon FAAOLESA KATOPAU T. AINUU: Mr Speaker, the only correction that I will say right now is I never said that Parliament does not have the power.

Afioga Fuimaono Teo Samuelu Teo: Mr Speaker, I will not go into an argument. But it was I that asked and that was the response from the Minister which I am pursuing.

MR SPEAKER: Pardon the member the Prime Minister will take the floor.

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Susuga Hon Tuilaepa Auelua Fatialofa Lupesoliai Lolofietele Neioti Aiono Galumalemana Dr. Sailele Malielegaoi: I guess the important point made by the Minister is to leave it to us so we can find out why there is a delay in getting this done. Who is responsible for this role and I am thinking it is the lawyer's responsibility which is way overdue but they refuse to do it. So we must follow this up. The reason I am taking the floor is because there have been a lot of criticisms towards the Government on this and the reason for the enactment of this law. What is the real reason behind the delay and who is responsible?

MR SPEAKER: I call upon the Minister of Justice.

Afioga Hon FAAOLESA KATOPAU T. AINUU: Thank you to the Prime Minister, for the matter is now understood. This exchange points to one thing, and that is the Government are not sitting back without doing anything. We are trying to respond to the demands brought to us to seek assistance. The Government sorts out the difficulties that is its job.

The member for Lefaga and Faleaseela asked about how Samoan Judges are selected. The members view is that it should be selected from throughout the constituencies or the respective villages of Samoa. The policy is now in place courtesy of the President of the Land and Titles Court. This is the first time it has prioritise the ability and general knowledge through written test. Once passing this test one would then be eligible for an interview.

The Public Service Commission is assisting in this area. In other words, the required expertise of our Samoan Judges has gone up a level. This is the motive for this policy, which is to select Judges from different villages to avoid the situation of Judges becoming subject to conflict of interest. Causing delays in court cases. We have realised the practicality of this concept for there are no more cases being delayed due to conflict of interest from Judges and the matters before Court.

The member for Faasaleleaga No.2 asked for a solution from the Commissioner of the Electoral Office concerning the public that are required to cast their votes in Savai'i. The Commissioner of the Electoral Office and the Minister of Finance are currently sorting out a form of assistance. Since the Minister of Works has already said that no one travels for free. Everyone pays their fare to travel. We will notify you in the near future when a resolution is final. A building for the Electoral Office like the one at Mulinuu to be done at Savai'i was also requested.

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For your information it has been 2 months since construction of the new Electoral Office started here at Mulinuu which faces us from the coastal side. This is the first time that a Central Building for the Electoral Office has been built since Samoa became Independent.

This is one of the Government's goal for this term. Not only that, but there are numerous other achievements that have been done by the Electoral Commissioner within this term. For instance, the reformation of legislations through the enactment and passing of 3 laws which are The Electoral Act 2019, The Electoral Constituency Act 2019 and the Electoral Commissioner Act 2019.

The second aspect is the use of technology which was donated from the Government of South Korea at the cost of \$3 million and is currently used by the Electoral Office for the registration of voters. This began after the elections of 2016. The purpose is that all eligible voters get the opportunity to register and to vote.

Fourthly it is observed by the Bills Committee that the Electoral Commission which is a statutory body and the submission of their annual reports to Parliament is currently up to date and being done within the specific timeframe allowed. It does make the Committee's role much easier. So constructions for a building in Savai'i is definitely a long term goal once the Budget becomes attractive.

The member for Gagaifomauga No.3 voiced his concern about the seat of Saleaula and the Leader of the House has shed light on the matter. The member for Saleaula has also addressed the issue. But I will stress that these new electoral constituencies established by law are merely that. They are not traditional constituencies. We have adopted this system because the people feel that we should use this European style of system as a means to elect our representatives to become members in this House.

Tofa Hon Faasootauloa Pati Taulapapa (Gagaemauga No.2): Mr Speaker...

MR SPEAKER: I call upon the member for Gagaemauga No.2,

Tofa Hon Faasootauloa Pati Taulapapa: I appreciate the Minister confirming that this constituency is an electoral one.

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I am full of respect and am very cautious, like I said before Samoa's protocol have already been determined and was not done in the manner of elections. It was through decree, Tumua and Pule. With all due respect this is how I feel about it and I have discussed this with the Prime Minister where he shared the view that it is a trial to see whether it would be appropriate or not.

Mr Speaker, I would steadfastly hold on to my conviction that our protocols were not done through the election process. It was decided on the conditions of Tumua and Pule e Ono in Salafai.

It is the very reason that I will urge you and will put it to you the Government and I will not sit by but will continue to pray considering our protocols that it is the arrangement of Tumua and Pule and I pray to you respectively to reinstate my constituency to its former order. Most respectfully.

MR SPEAKER: Thank you. I advise the senior member that the Leader of the House has clarified this matter. Every aspect of it is understood by the public. It is not simple to drag matters towards our culture when this is simply the exercising of our vote. Our culture will remain, and whatever our status requires of us. Who is senior? Who is younger? Who was left with what? Who was decreed to become messenger? It is like that. Samoa has already been sort out. This should not mix with our electoral process because it will destroy Samoa and our national decrees. Set aside our honorifics because we are discussing our election process. In saying that I apologise to the member.

Tofa Hon Faasootauloa Pati Taulapapa: Will the honourable Speaker speak with dignity. Do not be negligent with your words.

Afioga Hon Tuilaepa Auelua Fatialofa Lupesoliai Lolofietele Neioti Aiono Galumalemana Dr Sailele Malielegaoi: Mr Speaker I guess what you have point out is important since Leulumoega, Tumua and Lufilufi are present. Who is representing Lufilufi? It is Alaiasa of Falefa. Who is representing Leulumoega? Someone from Nofolii.

It is the reason I said to leave it at that for it is understood. Let us move along to other remaining matters.

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MR SPEAKER: That is also the view of the Speaker, that we continue with our remaining matters. I call on the Hon Minister.

Afioga Hon FAAOLESA KATOPAU T AINUU: Thank you Mr Speaker, now that the matter is understood.

Tofa Namulaulu Sami Leota (Faasaleleaga No.2): Mr Speaker...

MR SPEAKER: It is...this matter...

Tofa Namulaulu Sami Leota: I was waiting to hear whether the matter I raised would be addressed. I want to thank the Minister and my business is different. The Minister of companies gave a clear answer that it was not possible. But I am grateful to the Minister though for it seems that the Electoral Office of the Commission are wanting to make it compulsory for everyone to vote.

It is the very reason I was asking for a decision to make it possible for voters to travel to Savaii at no cost to vote. I appreciate the Minister giving a precise answer that he will look into it as the Government had already said that it cannot happen since the Shipping Company is looking to make money. So I accept the Minister's response that the Electoral Office will look into this.

So my concern here differs from the other contentious issue. The Pule is known by everyone and that is the only Pule is Safotulafai. Thank you.

Afioga Sulamanaia Fetaiai Tauilili Tuivasa: Mr Speaker in order to save time...

Tofa Hon Lopao Natanielu Mua (Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries): Mr Speaker with respect, I will say that I do not appreciate the idea of creating a friction between the Six Ruling Authorities. There are 5 other authorities as well as the authority of Aiga and Salafai which was gained through the spilling of blood. So do not make statements that will divide the Union. We are in peace and have mutual respect. We have been patient for quite some time Mr Speaker, but let us leave it at that.

Afioga Hon Lautafi Fio Selafi Purcell (Minister of Commerce, Business and Industry): Mr Speaker...

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MR SPEAKER: Well since the Minister is upstanding...

Afioga Hon Lautafi Fio Selafi Purcell: This is the kind of thing that makes Satupaitea's stomach churn because we are the sixth Authority. My Associate Minister is not here and he represents Palauli another Authority. All Authorities are of equal status, so do not put one before the other in these modern times. The Authorities of Salafai are six and are of equal status with Satupaitea slightly above every other. Thank you.

MR SPEAKER: I call upon the lady Minister of Health.

Tofa Hon Faimalotoa Kika Iemaima Stowers (Minister of Health): Thank you Mr Speaker. I have been listening carefully to this debate. My concern is the fact that my constituency are listening. Now the honorifics of my constituency states, the Speech of the Orator, the one that no one interrupts and is the first to gain Authority. I will just put it out there since it does stir up arguments as the public is listening in. Bless this Sitting.

Afioga Fuimaono Teo Samuelu Teo: Mr Speaker...

Susuga Hon Laauli Polataivao Leuatea: Mr Speaker with respect. Since my constituency was mentioned by the Minister. I have no intention to pick a fight as Saleaula has spoken and we have said our bit. Let us show perseverance and may I say to Safotulafai, be patient. It is not necessary to divulge our status here in this House. Whatever we may say will not change the fact that the founding Authorities have been establish. So patience and show perseverance for we do not need to discuss this matter as our status and relationship is intact. I am concerned that the country may question, who is prominent over who. We are all of equal status. The only thing we need to salvage is the seat of Saleaula.

Afioga Fuimaono Teo Samuelu Teo: Mr Speaker....

MR SPEAKER: Thank you. I call on...

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Afioga Fuimaono Teo Samuelu Teo: It seems that the search for the authority in the House is on. Yet the orators of Tumua are calm. I suggest that you wait until you are in Salafai then determine who are the founding authority, whom were decreed to be authorities and the additional authority. For the information of Leulumoega, Tuisamau and Lufilufi whom are all very steady. The man of Vaimauga the keeper of this land is not saying a word.

MR SPEAKER: Well done...

Afioga Sulamanaia Fetaiai Tauilili Tuivasa: Thank you honorable Speaker,

MR SPEAKER: Well done, let me...

Afioga Sulamanaia Fetaiai Tauilili Tuivasa: Thank you Mr Speaker. Now that it is being reminded since Lufilufi and Tuisamau have the titles Susuga, well Tuisamau is being very steady because this land belongs to me. Take your debate to Savaii. The statement from the Prime Minister is aimed at causing friction since he only mentions Leulumoega and Lufilufi not Tuisamau.

The Minister mentioned what I urged the first speaker, member for Faleaseela. I shared with him the matter on members of the Court since he asked me if he could take the floor first. I said that I will give him my salutation of speaking first. Every Budget debate he shall speak first but when it gets to the most serious issues that is the duty of Tuisamau.

The purpose of this legislation is because I advised him as he is shy and respectful to the Minister. The Minister is a Vaimauga through and through. Not only that but he just so happens to represent Vaimauga. So I advised the member for Faleaseela to raise this matter concerning matais with no educational background and they are most appropriate to conduct village affairs as well as family matters but would be weak in terms of writing. It is the reason I requested through the member for Faleaseela to inform matais who did not have good education but in terms of our culture and genealogy and the heritage of families and are all prepared for the handling of court cases. That was the reason Mr Speaker...

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

MR SPEAKER: My apologies to the member but the Prime Minister will take the floor.

Afioga Hon Tuilaepa Auelua Fatialofa Lupesoliai Lolofietele Neioti Aiono Galumalemana Dr Sailele Malielegaoi: I had thought that the Ministers clarification would have sufficed. But the question raised by the member for Lefaga and Faleaseela is important, which is the official announcement as the Minister explained. There is the opportunity so when the publication comes out everyone should apply. Do not look down on the senior folks because when they grew up they were taught the reading alphabet. Have you forgotten about that? Do not underestimate that aspect.

The important factor with the question which I have explained is that every Samoan is free to apply. It is not a terrible thing if there are 400 to 500 applicants. That is important and we now understand that the application should be in writing. So no one is restricted from applying and everyone has equal opportunity here. The question raised is just as important as the response. Mr Speaker this should not create disorder.

MR SPEAKER: Well said and I now put a stop to...Namulauulu I note that you seem...

Tofa Namulauulu Sami Leota: I apologise Mr Speaker, this is what I was afraid of. I was discussing the fares of people travelling to Savaii and however Pule has been brought up. I am worried since Tumua are now becoming modest when there is the court at Fuifatu where we can meet. Come next week we shall congregate at Fuifatu. Thank you.

MR SPEAKER: This issue with fares, the problem is you have requested the Minister of Justice after the Minister responsible for Shipping said it was not possible. Yet it has been raised again causing a quarrel. I advise that you be mindful of statements that irritates another person. In saying that I will disallow any further debate on this matter. I call upon the Hon Minister of Works.

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Susuga Hon Papaliitele Niko Lee Hang (Minister of Works, Transport and Infrastructure): Thank you Mr Speaker. I had thought the issue will not surface again as I have responded to the member in clarity. The request cannot be made to the Minister of Justice but the Minister in charge of Shipping. I have given a precise response which is, that cannot eventuate as it will only contribute to the company's losses. It is not in a good position. If this goes ahead it will definitely put the Shipping Company into deficit.

MR SPEAKER: Did you get that Namulauulu...

Tofa Namulauulu Sami Leota: I heard the Minister's position that his Office will look into it. That is the Electoral Commissioner's Office, and whether they can squeeze this demand into their Budget. Go on and give assistance. It is known that Papalii is in charge of Shipping, but the expenses will be covered by the Electoral Office.

MR SPEAKER: Be committed to....

Susuga Hon Papaliitele Niko Lee Hang: Mr Speaker, no, but the member was requesting the Ministry of Justice for assistance towards the staff of the Electoral Office. So I said to leave it with us as the Ministry has provisions to cover expenses such as the conducting of elections. So I have yet to discuss this with the Minister as to how their budget is right now. If they do not have sufficient funds, the Shipping Company can then assist in such situations. But I have not discussed this matter with him yet, with respect.

MR SPEAKER: I call upon the Minister of Justice to resume with his speech.

Afioga Hon FAAOLESA KATOPAU T AINUU: Mr Speaker what I can confirm is the statement I have made, which is the Electoral Commissioner and the Ministry of Finance are in consultation so as to give the green light for the public to travel for free courtesy of the Electoral Office. To be confirmed by...

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Susuga Hon Laauli Polataivao Leuatea: Mr Speaker, I gladly accept the statement from the Minister of Justice. If it does eventuate, all your shortcomings will be forgiven.

MR SPEAKER: Well do...

Afioga Hon FAAOLESA KATOPAU T AINUU: I do not know what I have done wrong. They have been arguing over the Ruling One and yet has got me into a position of wrong doing. Members have also been talking about the construction of a new Court House planned for Salelologa. The design for the building is currently being done and there is intention to start construction at around maybe December due to the Covid-19 restrictions which has delayed the go ahead.

The Ministry of Justice do have a lot of objectives concerning the implementations of its proposals. For the first time the Ministry of Justice are now using video link to connect to the Corrections Facilities at Tanumalala. That means the court proceedings may continue using this source to have Judges speak directly to those being charged whilst they remain at Tanumalala.

The benefit of this is minimising the hassle of transporting prisoners considering the safety of the public. All the court schedules of matters to be called week in and week out can now be posted online. The construction of the new building at Salelologa will be completely furnished in the manner so as to facilitate all the services which I have talked about.

Everything I have spelled out are the efforts of Government to have in place some of the services to facilitate good healthy living and contentment of Samoan nationals. After all the measure of prosperity for the public is having sufficient means of sustainment and being able to implement their demands. A thought provoking idea is we are living in a constantly changing world. The other role of Government is searching for concepts which can connect with our demands and the environment since every region of the world has their own individual style of democracy.

My suggestion to members of this Assembly is that we keep an open mind to matters of debate before us. Whichever angle an argument is presented let us embrace it. Put aside our personal differences but let us argue in the spirit of debate based on our lives, the best democratic process for Samoa today and the future.

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That is the very purpose at the heart of the 3 controversial legislations. Placing emphasis on our culture and the authority of alii and faipule. But I can say that it is God's will for Samoa. This is the type of democracy that is good for Samoa. May I say to the ladies and gentlemen of the Law Society and Judges of the Supreme Court, to not apply the cunning knowledge which you gained through your academic learning but to attend the house of matais of your respective villages and communities. Use your learned wisdom to capture constructive concepts and do away with negative ideas. That is the type of democracy this Government is adopting rather than the unnecessary objections, wisdom is adaptable *o le uta a le poto e fetalai*.

Have you notice our economic growth from 1980 to 2020? Samoa is no longer called a least develop country which simply means a country with a very weak economy. The Prime Minister and some members have spoken about GDP which is the result of sound positive projects done by the HRPP since 1982 up until now. In other words, the developments implemented including the 3 legislations are all done with the intentions to elevate the standard of living for everyone. The objectives of the Prime Minister and this Party should never be doubted considering the state the economy is at right now. I congratulate the Chairperson and the Committee for their handling of the dialogue over the 3 Bills. You were not randomly chosen but selected by God. I salute you for your courage and only God understands your laborious effort day and night.

Tofa Olo Fiti Afoa Vaai: Mr Speaker, my apologies.

MR SPEAKER: I call on the member for Salega...

Tofa Olo Fiti Afoa Vaai: Since the Minister is now talking about objections and the likes. As far as I am concerned, the Minister does not understand what he is talking about. He is speaking as if he is the Minister of Finance and I know his understanding of the matter is limited. You will remember that the Minister is advised to convert into percentage the difference in the past and the present which will give him a result of what the GDP is, be it good or bad. I guess that is it.

Tofa Lealailepule Rimoni Aiafi: Mr Speaker...

MR SPEAKER: All right...

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Susuga Hon Laauli Polataivao Leuatea: Mr Speaker....

MR SPEAKER: I call on the member for Gagaifomauga No.3.

Susuga Hon Laauli Polataivao Leuatea: I am a bit unsettled with the mentioning of the Law Society since this group cannot defend themselves, and yet the Minister is even giving instructions to the council of matais. I beg tolerance of the Minister but our Standing Orders stipulates that we cannot make statements towards people that cannot be here to respond. I suggest that it ends now because the rights under the Constitution for those people to voice their opinion is just such. I suggest that the Minister continues his remarks in a general context since the Law Society cannot be here to defend themselves along the statements that they should not show defiance and so on. I beg tolerance of the Minister he is a lawyer after all and so should be protective of his brothers and sisters outside of Parliament. It is their right to express their assistance for Samoa. That is my advice with respect.

MR SPEAKER: I guess...

Afioga Hon FAAOLESA KATOPAU T AINUU: Mr Speaker what I said was a recommendation not an instruction, for the information of the House.

MR SPEAKER: I call on the member.

Tofa Hon Lauofo Fonotoe Pierre Lauofo (Anoamaa West): Mr Speaker, it will be brief please.

Tofa Hon Lauofo Fonotoe Nuafesili Pierre Lauofo: Mr Speaker I will be brief. Well it is the reason this lawyer is remaining in his seat, because I am concern that you may think what I said last week was an objection. I thought to myself that I should not give a statement on this since the Minister is a lawyer himself and is a member of the Law Society. So he should understand these things. When you talk about democracy and the role of lawyers it is all within the frame of democracy. It is their right to express their opinion and knowledge.

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So everything is important and this is the advantage of considering all factors before deciding on where a matter should stand. The Committee are currently engage in this process and there is a fair bit to cover. But in due course, I would think perhaps August they will present their report for Parliament. That is the opportunity for us to consider whether there maybe areas that need be amended so as to have the matter in its fair context.

That is what I wanted to say thank you Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER: This is the last member to speak, from Faleata West.

Tofa Lealailepule Rimoni Aiafi: Mr Speaker I did speak on this legislation. What I heard was the Minister voicing his recommendation. He is not stopping anyone and we all know that democracy was never denied. But my advice to the Minister is that he attends village councils which will expand his knowledge consequently giving him a balance opinion and justice in his recommendation.

My one question to the Minister due to the significance of the legislation and so he must give an explanation, is the connection of Samoan land to the legislation. This is one of the areas that those opposing this legislation is dragging their argument to, claiming that customary land would be affected by this legislation. I thought I would put that question to you for a clarification. With due respect.

MR SPEAKER: I gather that. I advise the Minister that with novel matters raised and if you are not prepared to respond then do not and if you are good.

Afioga Hon FAAOLESA KATOPAU T. AINUU: Mr Speaker I am quite easy to respond as I can.

MR SPEAKER: But if you are wrapping up your Minister address then very well as our adjournment time is drawing near.

Afioga Hon FAAOLESA KATOPAU T. AINUU: Land will not be affected. I am concluding.

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MR SPEAKER: Alright wrap up your remarks. But do have regard for the recommendations of Parliament. I apologise to the members but it is the Ministers recommendation. Those of us with law degrees and have never attended village council meetings must do so. Because it will arm you with that philosophy which is part of democracy. This is the advice, but do conclude with your remarks.

Afioga Hon FAAOLESA KATOPAU T. AINUU: There are members objecting to this Legislation. My advice is if you cannot make time to go before the Committee, well my door is open for you to come around for Samoan koko and to discuss this and it may enlighten you.

Mr Speaker I think that about covers all the matters raised.

Tofa Olo Fiti Afoa Vaai: This just confuses people even more.

MR SPEAKER: My apologies Olo but the Minister is concluding his remarks.

Afioga Hon Loau Sola Keneti Sio (Minister of Education, Sports and Culture): Mr Speaker I can respond to Olo when it is my turn.

MR SPEAKER: Yes that is how.

Afioga Hon FAAOLESA KATOPAU T. AINUU: My response to matters raised by members concerning the Ministry of Justice and the Electoral Office is complete. Thank you for the opportunity. May God bless you Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER: Thank you, we have now come to our adjournment hour. May I take this moment to convey my appreciations and commendations to Cabinet for your role to clarify and enlighten this Assembly on matter raised by members.

I must also apologise to members but there have only been two Ministers that have spoken. So if there are any unclear matters, well the Prime Minister will cover them all when it comes to his turn at the end of the Cabinet addresses.

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We will now conclude with a prayer. I call upon the Lay Preacher from Faasaleleaga No.3, Afioga Tofa to end our meeting in prayer.

Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly were adjourned at 12:58pm until 9:00am on Tuesday, 23rd January 2020.