

THURSDAY, 23RD OCTOBER 2014

Mr Speaker took the Chair at 9.00am.

Prayer.

MR SPEAKER: With gratitude this morning, I believe we have again gathered to resume our orders as programmed for this month. I applaud the House for your patience in all you honorific salutations; Leader of the Government, the Cabinet, and the dignity of the House. We have rejuvenated in strength from our work and duties yesterday.

Our Meeting has continued to this day because there are many orders that need to be addressed from the Table. We are progressing as usual with our Meeting and in accordance to our Standing Orders.

Our program for today as stated in our Standing Order and the order of business is set aside for Thursdays. This is a rare opportunity for questions to the Government. This is provided for and is an official procedure. The Chair humbly requests that this opportunity be used wisely and that the Members questions are prepared accordingly for the Government to respond and not make unfounded or inappropriate questions. Our Meeting days has reached Thursday and we should use this time according to its stipulation in the Standing Orders.

URGENT QUESTIONS (S.O.59)**QUESTION FOR THE HON PRIME MINISTER/MINISTER OF FINANCE**

MR SPEAKER: Questions to the Hon Prime Minister and the Hon Minister of Finance. I call on the Member, Afioga Afualo Wood Uti Salele to stand.

Afioga AFUALO WOOD UTI SALELE (Salega): I thank Mr Speaker for the opportunity.

- QUESTION** 1. **Afioga AFUALO WOOD UTI SALELE:** I wish to ask the Hon Prime Minister/Minister of Finance; what are the Governments plans for the buses, vehicles and other assets that were used during the SIDS Conference?

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2. **Afioga Hon PALUSALUE FAAPO II:** When will the Government respond to the Officers of Parliament Committee Report on the Controller and Chief Auditors Report?

MR SPEAKER: I call on the Hon Prime Minister to respond to the question.

Susuga Hon TUILAEPFA FATIALOFA LUPESOLIAI AIONO NEIOTI SAILELE MALIELEGAOI (Prime Minister): Mr Speaker, with respect, I will respond beginning from Question 1.

- RESPONSE:**
1. The Government response to the Officers of Parliament Committee Report on the Controller and Chief Auditors Report is being prepared by the Government Ministries and Corporations. It should be completed by the next ensuing sitting. As is known, these responses are not prepared by the Minister but the government officials, particularly the Heads of the Ministries and most of them were involved in the preparations of the SIDS conference which has just ended.
 2. Regarding the question relating to the Governments plans for the vehicles, buses and the assets that were used; the Committee that deliberated on this matter have presented a report with their recommendations. Firstly Mr Speaker, there are major conferences occurring consecutively towards the end of the year with participants ranging from 800 to 1,000. Hence, the vehicles and assets like furniture will be used. This conference will take place consecutively with the Commonwealth Youth Games. There is a total of 54 nations attending the Commonwealth Youth Games including Britain, Australia and New Zealand. These countries will increase the number of visitor arrivals in Samoa and vehicles are a requirement, but some vehicles will be released. The Committee will negotiate and discuss which vehicles will remain and which should be released and at what selling price. Up to date, we have received over 20 requests from the Government and private organisations particularly schools.

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Hostels and organisations such as the Red Cross, rugby union associations, and tourism operators have all submitted letters of requests mainly for the shuttle buses. There is a Committee that will manage these matters. Before this is implemented, the matter is referred to Cabinet for their final decision and endorsement. Such is the existing Governments plans for these shuttle buses and other assets which will be released, whilst most will be reserved for the hosting of the conferences and games at the end of the year and next year.

QUESTION FOR HON MINISTER OF EDUCATION, SPORTS & CULTURE

Afioga Hon PALUSALUE FAAPO II (Leader of Opposition): Mr Speaker, I apologize for the absence of Tofa Aveau due to unforeseen circumstances but I will read out the Question for the Hon Minister of Education, Sports and Culture on his behalf.

QUESTION: 1. **Tofa Aveau Tuala Lepale Niko Palamo:** What is the Governments plan for increments to teachers salaries as we have witnessed that some have left for American Samoa and when do you intend to schedule this increment?

MR SPEAKER: I call on the Hon Prime Minister.

Susuga Hon TUILAEPA FATIALOFA LUPESOLIAI AIONO NEIOTI SAILELE MALIELEGAOI: I respond with all due respect Mr Speaker.

ANSWER: 1. Currently before Cabinet is a report concerning this particular matter. If you recall Mr Speaker, with such matters, including the 40% increment for teachers in 2006, 2007 and 2008, there are always errors in the Ministries preparations and they need to be addressed. As per the normal process within the Ministry of Finance, any recommendation cannot be carried immediately given the 'salary scale' particularity, which requires the Governments full attention to ensure the scale is structured accordingly leaving no room for error. This is why up until today, the private sector is still complaining about the 40% increment I mentioned earlier. There is a process which causes the delay, which is a matter that needs to be clarified by the Ministry of Education.

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Therefore, we are awaiting some reports but the document is before Cabinet for approval as soon as everything is cleared.

For your information and as rightfully known by the Leader of the Opposition, this kind of matter cannot be immediately dealt with. We should not be intimidated by the assumption that the teachers might all migrate to American Samoa. This is unavoidable given the individual rights of a person who wishes to migrate to another country to seek employment due to the attractive salary. It should not happen but it is what must be done. You were in this Cabinet before and we went through the same decision together. We will not go through the normal practice as it was in the past; some Ministries waited extensively and did not receive any salary increase or increment. This is the sole cause of the strike that took place in 1981, where we decided to set up a Special Tribunal which was established to deal with matters of this sort. For such a matter, wisdom and vision should be used and not act on impulse. We should be extra cautious in case a swift response may cause additional burden on us which we cannot handle.

Mr Speaker, the Member understands what I am talking about.

MR SPEAKER: Thank you.

Afioga Hon Palusalue Faapo II: Mr Speaker....

MR SPEAKER: There is no deliberation Palusalue.

Afioga Hon Palusalue Faapo II: No there should be questions....

MR SPEAKER: The question has been responded to. There is no deliberation.

Afioga Hon Palusalue Faapo II: In accordance to Parliamentary practice, follow up questions are permitted if I am unsatisfied with the response.

MR SPEAKER: No. It is not done according to your will.

Afioga Hon Palusalue Faapo II: What is the purpose of questions if there are no follow up questions?

MR SPEAKER: The Government response is final.

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Afioga Hon Palusalue Faapo II: If the response is deficient is it left as is?

MR SPEAKER: It is you who does not want to accept the response but it was clear. Leave it with the Government. The answer is final.

Afioga Hon Magele Mauiliu (Minister of Education, Sports and Culture): Mr Speaker....

MR SPEAKER: I call on the Hon Minister.

Afioga Hon Magele Mauiliu: The Hon Prime Minister has responded to the matter regarding salaries. The question is double barrelled and I stand to respond to the second part regarding teachers going to American Samoa. Before I respond, I wish to consult the Standing Orders. It states that the questions should be submitted 1 day before but the questions were received at 12.30pm and it has not been a day. Do we still respond to the questions or not?

MR SPEAKER: The Hon Prime Minister was transparent in his response. I apologize to the Hon Minister regarding the timeframe but we have only just practiced this process and we are trying to cater to the questions but I note that they are not well prepared. I call on the Hon Prime Minister.

Susuga Hon Tuilaepa Fatialofa Lupesoliai Aiono Neiote Sailele Malielegaoi: Mr Speaker, that is why the Hon Minister queried the timing because this Cabinet is always prepared. Despite the inaccuracies, we are still responding.

MR SPEAKER: Yes.

Afioga Hon Palusalue Faapo II: Mr Speaker, I will respond to the Hon Minister. We ask questions and he has asked the question. Our questions were prepared on Tuesday.

MR SPEAKER: His question was not addressed to you but to me. I understand....

Afioga Hon Palusalue Faapo II: Well reply then to the exact time.

MR SPEAKER: The Clerk of the Legislative Assembly tried to restructure the questions that were received. The intention of the Chair is our process. This is where your questions are asked instead of taking them to the TV and newspapers which has caused more confusion. I am trying to guide our debates and questions into the House. This is the first opportunity for questions and it should be used wisely for it is the last opportunity. The Chair asks that the queries be of substance.

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The Standing Orders provide for 5 questions to be submitted to the Clerk and there is time for the Minister to reply. The Hon Prime Minister has stated that the Cabinet is always prepared.

The question for....

Afioga Hon Palusalue Faapo II: There is no purpose for questions if we do not fully understand. As is the practice in overseas Parliaments, and I am not instructing the Chair, but there are follow up questions of supplementary oral questions. That is why I beseech....

MR SPEAKER: Leader of Opposition, your point is noted. Leave it alone and we will continue. There is only one question and the response is clear. That is our procedure.

The question for....

Susuga Hon Tuilaepa Fatialofa Lupesoliai Aiono Neioti Sailele Malielegaoi: Mr Speaker....

MR SPEAKER: I call on the Hon Prime Minister.

Susuga Hon Tuilaepa Fatialofa Lupesoliai Aiono Neioti Sailele Malielegaoi: Since I entered Parliament, every effort has been made to regulate this same matter; when the response has been made and the Member still persists. Mr Speaker, the Government response has always been the final response.

That is the assistance to the Chair regarding the matter.

MR SPEAKER: That is the same point that I am trying to put across regarding our questions. The supplementary question Leader of Opposition should also be written and submitted to be tabled. That is the procedure. Read Order 57, 58 and 59 regarding urgent questions.

The question....

Afioga Hon Palusalue Faapo II: Mr Speaker, this is a milestone for many other Speakers did not chair such a practice. The only recommendation is that you follow through completely and allow the questions.

MR SPEAKER: Your view is noted. It will be complete if you prepare well instead of submitting unbalanced information.

The question for the Hon Minister of Works, Transport and Infrastructure.
I call on the Member for Gagaemauga No. 2.

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**QUESTION FOR HON MANUALESAGALALA ENOKATI POSALA,
MINISTER OF WORKS, TRANSPORT & INFRASTRUCTURE**

Tofa LEVAOPOLO TALATONU (Gagaemauga No. 2): Mr Speaker, I ask the Hon Minister regarding the concrete bridge at Leone or Vaisigano which is important for short cuts for the working public as well as students...the question is:

QUESTION 1: When will the bridge at Leone which was destructed by cyclone Evan be reconstructed, as it is known, there is a budget already appropriated for this development?

With respect.

MR SPEAKER: There is a question from the Leader of Opposition and I ask first whether there is evidence to support this question? Are there any official documents to validate this question and where are they? I cannot allow this question because we cannot query based on rumours. We will not waste time considering this. For future reference, questions should be submitted and official. I sought the assistance of the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly this morning. A future opportunity will be granted when evidence is provided.

I call on the Hon Minister to respond to the question regarding the bridge and do not respond to the other question.

RESPONSE 1: **Afioga Hon MANUALESAGALALA ENOKATI POSALA (Minister of Works, Transport and Infrastructure):** Thank you Mr Speaker, I will not touch on the dignity of this House and it is with great honour to witness God's love and kindness.

I have commented on the EPC query, but after reviewing the questions presented, some of these should be discussed with heads of these Corporations to seek further clarification, but they are not serious issues that should be submitted to Parliament.

It seems that there are hidden intentions with these questions when the clarifications can be provided by the heads of the Ministries and organisations. When the queries are indirect, then this is similar to a thief entering through the window.

As for the bridge, the designing phase is currently underway; the contract has been signed with the architects to design the bridge and that is the current status. Just to note, these developments funded by the World Bank, are not...this kind of assistance is quite substantial.

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This assistance also has specific requirements and conditions that have to be met before funds are released commencing from the initial planning stage to the designing stage. During the designing stage, a term of reference is required and the World Bank Organisation has specific conditions that need to be achieved. All this should be completed before the tendering process. Hence it is a process which takes approximately 3 to 5 months of preparations. I believe that this is already known and understood; those are the requirements. This is why our partnering countries provide assistance for Samoa; why? Because the Administration manages the funds efficiently and there is good governance and enhanced supervision of projects which results in the substantial financial assistance to fund and assist us... An example is the construction work that is currently undertaken on the West Coast Road from Samusu to Lalomanu funded by the World Bank. This is a major project upon completion.

After 2012, this entire World Bank funding scheme was revamped and these projects now come under the ERAP or the Emergency Road Access Projects. The change is in place so that projects are immediately implemented and such a project includes the road currently under construction. Another project includes the four lane road connecting from Vailoa to the boundaries of Saina and Vaitele. Evaluation by the contractors for this road calculates the cost at over \$20 million and this has to start by the end of this year carrying on to the new year. This is considered one of the major developments that are funded by the World Bank.

The reason for the substantial financial assistance is due to good management and administration hence these opportunities. We should be patient as our national revenue is used to execute our routine maintenance of these infrastructures. The recent Conference that we hosted enabled us to earn profit that was arranged by the Government and the Land and Transport Authority and used to implement our developments. Reserved funds were used to fund our access roads. Such is the entire program that is being executed and is considered by the World Bank also assisting with other projects.

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Afioga Hon Palusalue Faapo II: Mr Speaker, the Hon Ministers response was very long and the only question was when will it be established?

MR SPEAKER: The Hon Minister has responded and explained for clarity the reason for the delay which is because of the World Bank.
Conclude....

Afioga Hon MANUALESAGALALA ENOKATI POSALA: The intention of the response is to clarify and explain the matter as well as other probable questions as we progress forward with the plans.

I wanted to respond to the matter regarding the EPC but I am grateful that you have addressed it. The submitted information was incorrect and evidence to support these accusations is needed but I will not respond with all due respect.

MR SPEAKER: I beg tolerance of the Hon Minister. The intention of the Chair is similar....

Afioga Hon Palusalue Faapo II: Mr Speaker....

MR SPEAKER: Be seated Leader of Opposition. I cannot let the matter fester and I am trying to guide our Meeting to be in line with the Standing Orders. I beseech the Hon Minister not to take heed to the comments but the opportunity is still given because it is important to explain the reason for the delay. It is not rushed and the World Bank has many requests from around the word. To those with questions, there are many other days and the response is final.

I call on the Hon Prime Minister.

Susuga Hon Tuilaepa Fatialofa Lupesoliai Aiono Neioti Sailele Malielegaoi: Mr Speaker, if our proceedings were not being broadcast and we were conversing casually, we would answer the questions straight away. The reason the Cabinet responds generally is so that the reasons for the delay are explained and there are preparations needed by those that own the funds. If these are not done, the work will not progress. I understand the view of that side for it to be done today and completed tomorrow. If it were just us, the responses would be over in five minutes. The caution is that our deliberations are being broadcast so that the public also understand because after our deliberations, Palu would speak with the media and then the information will be incorrect. The explanation by the Cabinet is very important for the understanding of Samoa.

Afioga Hon Palusalue Faapo II: Mr Speaker, with respect....

MR SPEAKER: Our matter has been clarified.

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Afioga Hon Palusalue Faapo II: It is clear but the Hon Minister stated that the first question was inaccurate, but it was rephrased which means it is not inaccurate but I will respect your decision.

MR SPEAKER: Be seated. I withheld this question because I believe that there is insufficient evidence to support it and that is the reason I will not accept this question.

The question for the Hon Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries. I call on one of the members for Salega, Tofa Tapuai Toese Ah Sam. What is the Question?

Afioga Hon Palusalue Faapo II: Mr Speaker, I assumed the Member would have an opportunity to explain....

MR SPEAKER: I call on the Hon Prime Minister.

Susuga Hon Tuilaepa Fatialofa Lupesoliai Aiono Neioti Sailele Malielegaoi: Mr Speaker, I see the Member is surprised. I do not know then if it is the Leader of Opposition that writes the Question and then distributes it amongst his party without notifying them. The Member was asked but he seems to be surprised and Palu is upstanding to read out the Question that he wrote.

MR SPEAKER: I call on Tofa Tapuai Toese because it is your name on the list.

Tofa TAPUAI TOESE AH SAM (Salega): Mr Speaker and the dignity of Parliament, I firstly give thanks to our Heavenly Father. For the information of this Parliament, these Questions were discussed in our caucus and we are prepared. This side is unanticipated and all we want is a forward exchange of questions and responses. We discussed our Questions. The question was assigned to me as I am the Shadow Minister for the Ministry but I requested to the Leader that he speak on my behalf. That is the explanation with respect.

Leader of Opposition, I have chosen you. If we were guided by our culture, the Leader instructs me, but if we use Christianity, I instruct the Leader, so stand and present my Question.

MR SPEAKER: I call on the Hon Minister of Women, Community and Social Development.

Tofa Hon Tolofuaivalelei Falemoe Leiataua (Minister of Women, Community and Social Development): Mr Speaker, I am wary of our work because this House is guided by Standing Orders. The Member is being arrogant but is inconsistent with our Standing Orders. If it were me, he would be ordered to leave the House but we are respectful of the Reverend.

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However that is no reason to fool around in the House. He should stand because his name is near the Question. The Question should not be read out then because the Member is present. Only if he were absent then another may read out the Question on his behalf. The Standing Order is clear on this with respect Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER: Your stance is understood. I beg tolerance Afioga Hon Palusalua, let me speak because the Hon Minister has addressed the Chair and the administering of our Meeting. I do apologize but as the Hon Prime Minister said, the Member seems to be surprised at the mention of his name. He has explained their deliberations within their caucus and his instruction to the Leader to read out his Question. I believe it is not an issue as we are all aware of the situation with the Member, Tofa Tapuai who only just made his maiden speech which is also the first time he has addressed the House. I believe that there is no intention of arrogance.

I call on the Hon Prime Minister.

Susuga Hon Tuilaepa Fatialofa Lupesoliai Aiono Neioti Sailele Malielegaoi: Mr Speaker, would you afford an opportunity so that we may applaud?

MR SPEAKER: I call on Afioga Hon Palusalua for the Question.

Afioga Hon PALUSALUA FAAPO II: Mr Speaker, I beg tolerance of the Members of this side. The Member for Salega, Tofa Tapuai Toese is correct. All our Questions were discussed in our Party caucus before they were submitted. The Member is concerned that he has not made his maiden speech and yet he will be asking a question. However, I will obey your instruction and read out the Question.

MR SPEAKER: I beg tolerance as the Member for Salega, Tofa Tapuai Toese Ah Sam is upstanding. He owns the instruction.

Tofa Tapuai Toese Ah Sam: I stand again because I was waiting an instruction from the Chair because I have respect for you Mr Speaker. If you had instructed me to read the Question, I would have. However you have made your response and that is an indication that you are a man of God. Thank you Mr Speaker and the Hon Prime Minister for accepting my humble request. This is my Maiden Speech, thank you.

** Maiden Speech on Tuesday 21 October 2014.*

MR SPEAKER: Put your hands together in applause. The House has heard this morning. If we had not tried our Question Time, the opportunity would not have been available for one of the Members for Salega to speak.

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I call on the Hon Minister of Women, Community and Social Development.

Tofa Hon Tolofuaivalelei Falemoe Leiataua: Mr Speaker, I interjected the Member as he was about to present the Question but he has stood to speak. The Hon Prime Minister has also accepted that the Leader of Opposition be a servant and read out the question.

Afioga Hon Palusalue Faapo II: Mr Speaker, I have been patient with the disrespectful comments by the Hon Minister as if he wishes to be the Speaker but he was not chosen. The country is taking note.

MR SPEAKER: That is the norm with our Sittings I beg tolerance.

Afioga Hon Palusalue Faapo II: Be respectful of our relationship and do not be rude, but...

Afioga Afualo Wood Uti Salele: Mr Speaker, the words spoken by Leulumoega should be removed they are inappropriate. Thank you.

Tofa Hon Tolofuaivalelei Falemoe Leiataua: Mr Speaker, for the information of the Leader of Opposition, I resigned as Speaker because I wanted to be a Minister. See a person who is blessed? Do not speak as if this side decided not to use me as Speaker. I resigned. As for what Afioga Afualo Wood Uti Salele said, there is no harm. You would not mind if I said you were the servant for Sagone and Salega. The Member may now stand to read out the question.

Afioga Afualo Wood Uti Salele: Mr Speaker, I am astonished at Leulumoega who is an orator but is rude. Remove these words for this House is where the meeting of minds is held and the country is listening in. Thank you.

MR SPEAKER: I apologize to the dignity of the House for the upheaval this morning but we are all trying to use this rare opportunity.

The only request Leader of Opposition and that side of the House, the purpose of this day is to award you the opportunity but we are straying because of your unpreparedness. When you submit your Questions again, discuss them thoroughly because it is not pleasant when come the time for questions and members are absent or unprepared and then it is referred to you.

I pray that you use this opportunity wisely. This side does not take lightly to unpreparedness. We intend for the Meeting to progress.

Stand and read out the Question.

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Afioga Hon Palusalue Faapo II: Mr Speaker, you reprimand us but it is that side that has made awful comments that we request to be removed from the record. It is as if we were the ones that were in the wrong when the words made towards us are dire.

MR SPEAKER: You are now addressing me when I have not yet addressed Leulumoega. Be seated while I make my comments. I call on the Hon Minister of Women, Community and Social Development.

Tofa Hon Tolofuaivalelei Falemoe Leiataua: Mr Speaker, this matter has been emphasised too much this morning which reflects the type of person that does this as mentioned by Vaai, it is a fish of the shallow waters. However Mr Speaker, I am careful with the descendants of Malietoa Taulapapa because they originated from me.

Afioga Hon Palusalue Faapo II: Mr Speaker, the rudeness persists. Is this the womb from which I came?

Tofa Hon Tolofuaivalelei Falemoe Leiataua: Seek your genealogy then you will know all the descendants of Malietoa Taulapapa.

Afioga Hon Palusalue Faapo II: You are being rude. You are the fish of the shallows.

MR SPEAKER: I beg leniency and tolerance of the Hon Minister of Women, Community and Social Development. I believe that peace can be attained through you. I am cautious as the country and the House is listening and observant of these comments and there might be an assumption that we are not acknowledging that side. I beseech that you tread lightly.

Tofa Hon Tolofuaivalelei Falemoe Leiataua: I apologize Mr Speaker. I believe that I hold a higher position than anyone of that side. I am a Deacon Elder and so I must be patient and I believe that side will not be offended. As are the words of our Meeting, it will be buried here in Mulinuu, with respect.

MR SPEAKER. Thank you. I call on the Leader of Opposition to continue with the Question.

QUESTION FOR HON LE MAMEA ROPATI, MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE & FISHERIES

Afioga Hon PALUSALUE FAAPO II: Thank you. This is why there is error because you bring in your religious callings into this. Leave it for when you go to Church.

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- QUESTION 1:** **Tofa TAPUAI TOESE AH SAM** – What is the status of the \$5 million assistance for the farmers that were affected by cyclone Evans as it is now 3 years and the farmers are still waiting?
- 2: What is the status quo of SACEP? How much has been distributed and how many farmers have received this assistance?

MR SPEAKER: I call on the Hon Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries to respond to the question regarding the bridge and do not respond to the other question.

Afioga Hon LE MAMEA ROPATI (Minister of Agriculture & Fisheries): With respect, I stand to respond to the Questions.

As the Hon Minister of Education, Sports and Culture mentioned, it is good that the Questions are submitted quickly so that an accurate and complete response can be made. I was happy to see that my brother Tapuai had a question. I assumed that this would be his Maiden Speech and he would ask the question and I would reply. I applaud you and the House as well as the country and your constituency has heard you. Congratulations.

RESPONSE 1: Regarding the first question, it seems that the wording seeks clarification? Those involved in the consultation with the World Bank and those implementing the project are two different groups. Do note that after consultations and negotiations, vacancies were advertised for project officers. Some applicants were ineligible and positions were re-advertised and this prolonged the process.

In response, project plans of the World Bank endeavours to set up an e-voucher system using IT which is being introduced to hardware companies such as BlueBird, SMI and others before the interviews are carried out with the affected farmers. There is a long list of hardware demand by farmers.

If a farmer has \$4,000 worth of destroyed property, a voucher is processed and he will then approach a company of his choice to place his order and purchase timber, cement, nails and such, but money is not exchanged instantly.

The beginning of this process commenced two months ago and a total of 100 farmers were compensated. Distribution to the rural areas has completed, whilst 200 are currently in progress, and such will be carried out for the rest.

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That is the reply but note that these are the answers I can recall after our consultations a few weeks or months ago but they are not official written responses due to your late queries. But the project is currently in progress and is developing well. A 100 is now complete and another 200 is in the process and this will resume until the allocated fund of \$5million is fully distributed.

In relation to SACEP, I have already elaborated on this during previous parliamentary proceedings. The total fund is \$31.5million. Similar to the system I just mentioned, consultations on this Project were implemented by a different group in the beginning upon receipt of funds and a different group dealt with the implementation of the project. The same process applies and vacancies were also advertised. A coordinator is sought or a leader for this team, as well as a staff. A total of 10 people per team are considered. I guess this is one reason why this process is prolonged. As known, 20% is personal equity such as land, 30% is personal contribution and 50% is a grant. If an applicant applies for \$15,000, 50% of this request is given as a grant. The way this is operated, there has to be a personal contribution and if the applicant cannot obtain any funds to make up for his/her contribution, he/she can apply for a loan at a low interest rate. This amount will be repaid in portion by the applicant to the bank, whilst 50% requires no repayment.

The project is currently in progress and 50 farmers have registered. Majority of them are from Savaii. Another lot of 200 are in the process and is going well. There are however issues arising. The project begins with the 30% contribution and at the first stage of your development, you bring your receipts and submit them to the respective officers then a site visit will be conducted. If they observe that your development has begun then you will receive a portion of this fund. However, it has been noted that while the project progresses, farmers who have applied for this loan take too long to submit their receipts.

Therefore, some seek loans to fund other obligations such as family commitments. We cannot release this grant if receipts are not obtained and an inspection is not carried out.

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These are some of the visible issues right now. This does not apply to all farmers, only a few who request for the loan with soft interest but use it to finance personal commitments. So if farmers are listening in, that is one issue that is affecting this assistance. As of 30th June, expenditure has reached approximately \$4.9million. Since June, shipments of sheep have come in from Fiji. A portion of the fund is allocated for this which amounts to \$297,000. Plans are in place for a cattle shipment from Australia that will arrive hopefully in the beginning of next year. All the systems are in place and these programs are operating smoothly.

That is the brief response to the Question submitted with respect.

QUESTION FOR HON TUITAMA TALALELEI TUITAMA – MINISTER OF HEALTH

MR SPEAKER: A Question to the Hon Minister of Health. I call on the honourable member.

Tofa MOTUOPUAA UIFAGASA AISOLI VAAI (Vaisigano No. 2): Thank you for the opportunity Mr Speaker. I have a minor question.

QUESTION 1: **Tofa MOTUOPUAA UIFAGASA AISOLI VAAI -** Is there a plan by the Government to obtain another CT-SCAN for the Motootua Hospital as this is in very high demand?

Afioga TOEOLESULUSULU CEDRIC POSE SALESA SCHUSTER (Aana Alofi No. 3): Thank you Mr Speaker for the opportunity. This Question is also to the Hon Minister of Health.

QUESTION 2: **Afioga TOEOLESULUSULU CEDRIC POSE SALESA SCHUSTER -** What are some of the Ministry's preparations in protecting Samoa from the EBOLA virus as we may have suspected cases?

Tofa Lealailepule Rimoni Aiafi: Mr Speaker with respect. Is there a time limit for the responses please?

MR SPEAKER: I request the Hon Minister to keep his response brief.

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Afioga Hon TUITAMA TALALELEI TUITAMA (Minister of Health): Mr Speaker, I will obey your instruction. There are only two words to answer these questions however I will use the opportunity to make an explanation because....

MR SPEAKER: Hon Minister, with respect, there are many other orders to progress and you have the wisdom and foresight. Just clarify the concern on the suspected EBOLA cases.

Afioga Hon TUITAMA TALALELEI TUITAMA: I will try and keep it brief.

RESPONSE 1: I wish to extend my gratitude to my fellow colleague, Tofa Motuopuaa for his query on the CT-SCAN. He speaks on behalf of the majority of the country who are questioning from outside without approaching the hospital where an immediate response would be given. We are all aware that our current CT-Scan at the hospital was donated from China. This CT-Scan has served its purpose for a long time now and it has reached its expiry term. During the construction of the new hospital, there was a proposal for a heavy-duty machine to compliment the improved quality of the health service standards, similar to that of other countries. This is why we sought assistance from other health funding partners for a CT-Scan, however, as is known, these sorts of machines are very expensive, roughly costing millions, which is just too significant. Hence is the reason we kept searching for assistance to provide this machine. The responses from our usual donor partners have long been awaited however, we are grateful to the Accident Compensation Board for granting the request that I will attempt to clarify. There are provisions under their services in which assistance can be offered in this regard. I also wish to commend the Chairman and the Board of Directors of the Accident Compensation Board for accepting the request of the Ministry of Health.

A request was made to the Government to accept an agreement between the Ministry of Health and the Accident Compensation Board. Cabinet approval was given and plans were undertaken to obtain this machine. The proposal of the agreement as set out in the Memorandum of Understanding that was signed in July of this year, enables us to receive a total amount of \$1.5million to purchase this machine.

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Do note that the signed agreement does not imply that we can obtain the machine immediately. The machines required specifications have to be sought out first for the bidders tendering advertisement. The tender notice was advertised on 15th August this year and the deadline was on the 15th of September. Tender bids were reviewed on 15th September, and three bids were submitted. The selection process was undertaken for these bids on 16th October. The determination of the successful bidding company is still ongoing. On 27th October, the successful bidder will be advertised and they will be given 90 days or 3 months to process the purchasing of the machine. This means that by January 2015, this newly purchased CT-Scan should be here, ready for instalment and in operation. This is the response to your queries regarding the CT-Scan.

Regarding the EBOLA virus, I am grateful for the opportunity to explain the preparations while the country is listening in. There are various preparations of the health services given the rising death toll in West Africa and our Ministry is able to provide information. As soon as the EBOLA virus spread and after the health scare to those working in America and Spain, it was a threatening situation for the entire world. The truth is, there is a small chance for the EBOLA virus to reach the Pacific Island countries including Samoa, but if it reaches our shores, we will definitely have serious health issues given our weak economic status to counter these kinds of diseases.

For the information of the dignified members, this contagious EBOLA virus that is advertised and broadcast in newspapers, television and on the internet, is a very serious and deadly virus that has taken so many lives in West Africa. At this point in time, there are signs of the virus in America and Spain and as broadcast by the media, it has claimed more than 4,000 lives. There is a small chance for the virus to reach Samoa when referring to the guidelines provided by the World Health Organisation on the EBOLA virus.

Yet, such diseases are extremely and dangerously fatal if a carrier enters Samoa. Plans and strategies are in place by the Ministry of Health in response to these infectious diseases. Note that this is not the first health scare that has threatened our country.

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In 2003, there was the SARS scare and 2009 there was the H1N1 and the Ministry was also on high alert in providing preventative measures at the airport to avoid such diseases from reaching Samoa. The Ministry was also prepared for the Chikungunya outbreak this year. Considering the preparations for the infectious diseases that have affected our country, they were already available – and they only need to be promoted and encouraged again in response to the protection of Samoa from the effects of EBOLA. These strategies and health standards are provided for under local health policies and international policies such as the International Health Regulations including the Asia Pacific Strategy for Emergency Diseases or APSED.

These are the preparatory health measures by the Ministry to protect Samoa from EBOLA. First, National Health Sector Emergency Disaster Management Committee has begun its work.

Second, preventive healthcare services are in operation for border control at the civil aviation areas and ports; Faleolo International Airport, Fagalii Airport, Matautu Wharf.

Third, fortnightly meetings of a special committee or the National Communicable Disease Control Committee are now encouraged to monitor infectious diseases in Samoa.

Fourth, there is enhanced surveillance and response to disease outbreaks.

Fifth, there is progress in preparing the bio lab to research required specimens to be referred to international laboratories or the WHO Collaborating Centre Bio Security Lab Level IV.

Sixth, there is now available equipment for an isolation facility to cater to affected patients.

Seven, personal protective equipments have been provided for the health service workers. We hear that most of the health workers are affected by infected patients. In America, a country with high economic status, two of its female doctors were infected from an EBOLA patient...infection prevention and control training.

Valu, o lo o ua faagasolo nei tulaga manaomia mo le faataatiaina ma le faatinoina o aoaoga mo le pui puiga o le aufaigaluega faapea le mamalu o le atunuu, pe a masalomia ua aafia i le EBOLA, infection prevention and control training.

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Ninth, implementation of education and health awareness programs as well as risk communications.

And tenth, a request has been submitted to the World Health Organisation Office in Samoa to Dr Bao Ping Yang seeking other possible ways for them to assist Samoa and its preparations to counter EBOLA.

These are the planned strategies and those in the process of implementation. The request is made to the World Health Organisation, the international community, the Hon Prime Minister and the Cabinet for support in its implementation.

These are the services currently being executed. The first protective measure is awareness information on EBOLA or risk communication. Secondly, reduce travelling abroad, particularly to countries where there is an EBOLA outbreak such as Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Republic of Congo, America and Spain.

Thirdly, work to ensure border control. These include, firstly, health declaration forms for all the arrivals to be attached to the Immigration Declaration forms, or forms that are distributed inside the aircraft to be filled when travelling to Samoa. Secondly, collecting these forms and providing passenger health checks carried out by National Health Services officials. Thirdly, increasing the number of the Health Services officials at the airports and border controlled area.

Fourthly, there is an allocated inspection room at the airport for doctors' to inspect a suspected EBOLA case or any passenger arriving from infected countries before proceeding to the clearance area. There is a room at the airport that was set up during the SIDS as a precaution for suspected EBOLA cases which is being used at the moment to refer suspected cases before referring to clearance.

Fifthly, proper aircraft waste disposal and border control forms. Knowing that travellers utilize cups and tissues onboard, such litter is collected during aircraft cleaning for the next flight. The intention is that these wastes are disposed immediately and should not be kept too long to prevent the disease from spreading.

Sixthly, collaboration with other Ministries in providing border control services at the airports and seaports.

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These Ministries include the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Samoa Tourism Authority, the Ministry of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Samoa Ports Authority and the Airport Authority as well as Shipping and Civil Aviation Companies.

Seventh, a health clinic has been established at Faleolo to detain a suspected EBOLA case. If the case is confirmed, they will be transferred immediately to Faleolo and health controlled requirements/services are in place for not only the general public but also the health workers.

And finally, there is surveillance through the Pacific Public Health Surveillance networks or PacNet.

Mr Speaker, I am grateful for this opportunity because these preparations and activities are not being broadcast in the newspaper. The only news items in the newspapers are of problems but not of the good preparations and initiatives by the Government for the safety of our people. They only seek out the problems and print them in the front page to disrepute the Government.

Mr Speaker, that is the status, God Bless this Meeting.

MR SPEAKER: Thank you for the distinct explanation Hon Minister. The opportunity was given because of the importance of not only the clarification but also the Question as we are in the season when these deadly diseases arrive in our country. I believe the concerns have been clarified and these may also be the concerns of the country. Thank you Hon Minister for the clear explanation. The Ministry is not negligent in protecting us from these diseases. Thank you and this is the end of this part of our orders today.

As for our Standing Orders, I apologise for an err on the part of the Office, it is important for the future. I advise the Leader of Opposition and all those that wish to submit questions, prepare them thoroughly and with substance and evidence to reflect matters that would be profitable to our country. Rome was not built in a day and we should build our ship together but I am grateful for today.

MEDIA COUNCIL BILL 2014

– second reading debate resumed from 22/10/2014

MR SPEAKER: Our orders were adjourned yesterday and the member for Faleata West was speaking. I give this opportunity to the member to conclude his remarks on the Bill. I call on the member for Faleata West.

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Tofa LEALAILEPULE RIMONI AIAFI: Thank you Mr Speaker for the opportunity. I greet the dignity of the House this morning. We have lifted our praises to our Heavenly Father. This is an important morning for the Parliament of Samoa and I am proud. This morning is pleasant with the opportunity. See how simple it is. Just one hour for Questions on matters that were unclear to the members and Samoa but now they are clear. Thank you Hon Prime Minister and the Minister that responded. This sides concern is clarified and it is important because we preach of transparency and accountability.

Our Parliament has aged. Thank you Mr Speaker, this is a memorable day for not only yourself but also one of the members for Salega and we applaud him this morning. Personally, one answer that was not complete was the last question regarding the preparations for Ebola.

I spoke yesterday with a Police Officer that was in Africa and he said he has been back for 2 weeks now. I asked him, ‘Did the hospital call you in?’, and he replied “Yes, they did a week after I arrived”. I said “ohh if you had come with the virus, we would all be dead”. But thank you Hon Minister, we are clarified with regards to the work in the preparations for this disease. We are worried about this disease and yet we are dying from over eating and no exercise and other diseases.

I now come to the Bill...

MR SPEAKER: I beg tolerance of the member, I call on the Hon Minister of Health.

Afioga Hon Tuitama Talalelei Tuitama: Mr Speaker, I did not intend to interrupt the Members speech but I stand because I forgot that this was part of the Question submitted. Those who worked in Sudan, one of the Officers from the Ministry of Police and Prisons that was in Sudan arrived on September 1st. The fact is, now that it is October, he would be dead if he had Ebola. The Officer suffers from diabetes and he had a wound on his limb so the Ministry monitored this and it was treated and it has been confirmed that it he does not have the Ebola virus.

With respect.

MR SPEAKER: Thank you. Please comment on the Bill.

Tofa LEALAILEPULE RIMONI AIAFI: Thank you Hon Minister. Before I say anything else, I support this Bill but there are concerns to the Hon Prime Minister and Cabinet. I believe that Susuga Papalii contributed greatly to this Bill and I applaud you. The main objective of the Bill is to enhance journalism and the integrity of those in the profession to respect others rights. I believe the Media Council should be established by the journalist because this is not new.

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Each country in the world has a body that monitors the work, code of conduct, code of practise for the media. I think the reason the Government has initiated it is because it has been in its consultation stage for a long time and it seems that the journalists cannot consolidate the Society or an organization such as this. This Bill establishes this Council or a sort of advisory board for the journalists. The only concern is the funding of this Council because once public funds are used to fund any Organization, it must then report and be accountable because it is the countrys money. Also, will the work be independent if the Government funds and administers it. It seems as if the Journalists cannot consolidate funds, is there a provision that this body will be established to be privatised and they raise funds to maintain it. The Bill seems to have two main parts, first for the establishment of the Council, and Second, the establishment of the Society or JAWS which, as some mentioned, should be JAS because we are no longer Western Samoa. The Bill should be corrected. If the Government wishes to establish the Council, why is it not established? There should be a body to regulate and monitor the work of the Journalists and the journalists be left to establish their society which I believe existed before. Every time the newspapers remind us of transparency and accountability but it should begin with them. However it seems that they cannot cooperate to establish a body to monitor their work.

Therefore I advise the Government look again at the establishment of the body. An Office should be established first where the public can refer their complaints and the Society can be established later. This is just an opinion on the matter because that is how Councils overseas are established and self-funded.

In my opinion, if you have been slandered by a journalist, the process for complaints is too lengthy because you are given 12 days to draft your letter of complaint. If the journalist does not reply, another 20 days is allowed and it continues like this until the Council meets and then you are called in. The process is too long in my opinion. Can there not be adjustments to acquire a quick response? If after a month you are still waiting for an opportunity for the matter to be heard, throughout that whole month, the slandering continues. Us Members are respected people and the saying is ‘innocent until proven guilty’ but for us, when something is said about us, we are guilty in the minds of the public ‘guilty until proven innocent’. There are many impacts such as what I mentioned yesterday and what happened to me. It may seem humorous but it is a very sensitive issue. It should have been investigated thoroughly by the television station and newspaper reporters if their sources are accurate. I approached them yesterday, thankfully the Hon Prime Minister spoke, perhaps you heard it, and they were apologetic. These children come with their ads and we are unable to screen what is being done because it is not a story. I did not sleep well last night Mr Speaker. People called out to my family and village.

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Some called that I should forgive but some called out that something should be done. That is the way of life. I am grateful for one of the men of our village, Pula and other elders that visited me this morning and apologized...also for the support of my parents. My father called me in the evening to visit with him, because I was unhappy that my father was also mentioned. I went. The only time my father calls me is to have a drink with him. But this was a different evening. My father is elderly and all the constituency knows of him, he was a *matai* before I was born, he said 'Leala, go to the back house and get my fishing spear, I have the strength to do what should be done'. I was thankful for my mothers words, she said 'we have lived together for 50 years and I have not eaten a fish from that spear and yet you want to use it now...Leala, when I see you raise your hands on TV on Sunday during your church services I am very happy, be humble and forgive'. I will leave it at that and not acknowledge it but do not do it all the time we are not angels.

That is the process I mentioned for complaints, also....

Susuga Hon Tuilaepa Fatialofa Lupesoliai Aiono Neioti Sailele Malielegaoi: Mr Speaker....

MR SPEAKER: I beg tolerance of the member I give the opportunity for the interjection by the Hon Prime Minister.

Susuga Hon Tuilaepa Fatialofa Lupesoliai Aiono Neioti Sailele Malielegaoi: I stand to request another hour for the member to sort out the matter and we will leave the Bill aside.

Tofa LEALAILEPULE RIMONI AIAFI: Thank you I am done. This village is well-known by all. Afioa Toi was a key player within the village and then he passed and we were at peace. I do not need to dwell on this as the Hon Prime Minister understands all of it.

Back to the complaints to the Council, they would ask if you wish to have your issue dealt by them and if you are satisfied with your complaint. If you decide to have them deal with your matter, you sign off and then it will not reach the Courts. It is better that way but it is the process. Also, when a decision is made on the matter, you cannot make a warrant of appeal and it should be reconsidered. Another matter is membership. A Journalist is not picked off the road. We have just completed deliberation on the Lawyers and Legal Practice Bill. Any lawyer that enters Samoa must register with the approval of the Society, the same goes for plumbers, doctors, engineers and it should be the same for journalists. They should be registered so that they are officially recognised. There should also be a minimum requirement or qualification for an official member of the Society. Also, the legislation has the power to make it compulsory for all journalists to register in the Society.

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If a journalist does not want to be a member of the Society or this Council, does the Society or Council have the power to handle the consequences of their stories? The Society should also be given the power to seek out integrity. Some have tried to establish newspaper stations but after 2-4 months they fail. Is there an official status for journalists because their work is important? Yourself and your Ministry have also started a newspaper so you are not only Speaker but also the Editor in Chief but do you understand how to operate a newspaper?

MR SPEAKER: You are beginning to head in the wrong direction. I am not an Editor of a Newspaper, there are staff responsible for this. Comment directly on the matter at hand.

However since we have reached our normal recess time, we will have a break and resume deliberations after breakfast.

I announce that the Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly will be set aside for its usual recess.

The Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly were set aside for its usual recess at 10.43am and resumed at 11.29am.

MR SPEAKER: I applaud everyone for their patience at this time of the day. I believe we have felt a change after the refreshments. I thank you all for your support as we continue with our work.

Before our break, the member for Faleata West was concluding his comments. I believe you have made most of your point and the House has heard enough to offer a response.

I call on the member to continue.

Tofa LEALAILEPULE RIMONI AIAFI: Thank you for the opportunity especially for the refreshments provided. I am certain that after our Sitting we will have gained kilograms from our meals.

There is not much to comment on. I only stress the separation of the Council and the Society and the funding as well the membership. If it were left to the freedom of the journalist whether to be members of the Society, how official will that be? The legislation should oversee that all collaborate because they will not have to worry about how they carry out their work but the only insistence is that it is done with integrity and balance. This is also the best opportunity for their complaints and issues to be referred to the Council which will reduce the Courts cases. The opportunity is now available for the Council to handle these matters. Also Mr Speaker, there is one more medium that is not included which is social media. Each morning the member for Aana Alofi No.3 sends messages about morning tea and lunch at the MTEA.

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That house is where many lies originate. I would come with a clean heart and when I leave I would be tainted by all the conversations there. No matter they are the norm with politics.

Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity. Those are some recommendations to the Hon Prime Minister and the....

Tofa Hon Tuuu Anasii Leota (Siumu): Mr Speaker a point of order.

MR SPEAKER: What is it you want to correct?

Tofa Hon Tuuu Anasii Leota: Mr Speaker, the member mentioned that that building is where incorrect statements are made. I am one of those at that building and I do not know where the Member comes with these statements.

MR SPEAKER: I think these incorrect statements are from the Seana Bar.

Tofa LEALAILEPULE RIMONI AIAFI: I did not mention the member Mr Speaker. If I sit long in this building, I want to leave to do chores but I am worried because if I stand to leave they will talk about me. When Alo comes he says to me “Leala, I am afraid to sit with you because I come happy but will leave unhappy. To the honourable member, if there is a new party forming, then do it but do not live in doubt.

I beg leniency to Samoa, what you have heard is the norm for members of Parliament.

Thank you for the opportunity and this Bill. God bless our meeting, thank you.

MR SPEAKER: Thank you. The only correction by the Chair is in regards to the Palemene Newspaper. It is not a newspaper that reports on international news, it reports specific on matters regarding Parliament. It is important for when you make your speeches as we head into our Elections.

I will give the opportunity to the member for Alataua West followed by the member for Faasaleleaga.

Afioga LAFATELE PATRICK LEIATAUALES (Alataua West): Mr Speaker, I rise with all due respect at this part of the day to present my views on the Bill before us. I will be brief with my comments on the Bill.

This Bill should have been presented long time ago.

Mr Speaker, this is one service that is important. The country and any country cannot understand if there is no body as this. I support the comment by the member for Faleata West. There should be checks on the standard achieved by those that implement this service so that there is balance in the information broadcast to the public.

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Mr Speaker you cannot loiter in the market and become a journalist. This is one important part of the Bill so that broadcasts are done with integrity. Also, many of the reports have two sides but when broadcast, it is one sided. Also, for the information of this Parliament, the Hon Prime Minister is correct, this country is connected by lineage so if a broadcast impacts someone from the family lineage then it is fragile. Thank you Hon Prime Minister for this Bill. The Hon Minister of Health also mentioned that when something bad happens then the media is happy to broadcast. There was a trip that I went on and I visited Queensland to visit a relative but I went first to a Samoan supermarket that had my picture with the caption that I was removed from Government because of alcohol intake. The reporter that wrote this is a senior reporter and I know the member for Saleaula knows him. Then I returned with this newspaper and my constituency asked me ‘What is this drinking Lafai that has caused your removal?’ Luckily the constituency has the wisdom not to listen to rumours, if it were not so, I would be removed. I explained to them....

Mr Speaker I fully support this Bill. Also a rock decomposes but the word of mouth does not. I do not refer to all those in the profession. There are those that are good but some of them love to twist the information. Both sides of any story should be reported on. The member for Faleata West also stated that they should be present when the event occurs....

There is no intention to disrepute this profession, it is important. As I said, this is one profession that can cover the country with recent events. But if this is the case, I do not need to say it, this country is chosen but if you are not quick, you can be beaten by the family of those you are disrespecting.

That is our submission Mr Speaker and we fully support this important Bill. God bless this meeting.

MR SPEAKER: I will give the opportunity to the member for Faasaleleaga No. 4.

Afioga PESETA VAIFOU TEVAGA (Faasaleleaga No. 4): I first would like to express my gratitude Mr Speaker for the opportunity to contribute on this Bill. I also thank the Hon Prime Minister for this Bill and as some Members mentioned, this Bill should have been tabled long time ago. I believe that this Bill is consistent with the current Government policies. As the Hon Minister of Justice and Courts Administration mentioned yesterday, any Organization or Corporation should have a legislation to guide it. At the moment, the right to freedom of speech is naked. But I thank the Hon Prime Minister for they have clothed this freedom; the freedom of truth and honesty. When a case is called before Court an opportunity to testify or not is given. So the courts give you the freedom.

In the Bill, the freedom of the Media is being clothed because at the moment it is undisciplined. One of the members mentioned not long ago that much of our public monies are spent on establishing Societies and Councils.

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But personally, I also mentioned this in my speech on the budget, there is never enough money expended on the impacts on people; impacts on the person, on the village, the constituency. What about the impacts on the reputation of a name?

I am grateful for the Bill that has provided the armour for this freedom. Some journalists preach freedom of the press but the fact is that this freedom is without protection. The Government has now provided armour for this freedom to guard it. Only the truth and the whole truth will be broadcast. It is like the oath that is done in the court houses “I swear that I will tell the whole truth and nothing but the truth”.

There is an issue with the current situation which is my personal view as a Member. I also know that the newspapers made a substantial profit. If nothing eventful happens then they do not sell newspapers. The problem is that journalists do not broadcast the truth. Recall the reports on the matter I was involved in recently, as well as another matter not too long ago. The newspaper printed that a member of Parliament has again been charged after being charged for causing death and they mentioned the name of the constituency.

The result was that it was withdrawn because the charges brought by the Police were incorrect. See how unbalanced it is? But these are the reports which influence the constituents and they will only have one view; that the member is bad. If they had mentioned that the charges were withdrawn, that would have been preferable and balanced. Reputations are tarnished as a result and as a member said, if it was in another part of the paper perhaps it would be alright, but it was the front page which is the cause of my distress. This is why I totally support this Bill so that the broadcasting of information is regulated and guided. We cannot live this life without safeguards and guidelines. Currently, reporters say they have the freedom forgetting the consequences on the person involved. We also witnessed that sometimes after complaining about somebody, the next day an apology is printed. What good is the apology when the person has been disreputed in the eyes of the public? An apology will not repair that. I reiterate my support for this Bill.

Also, newspapers should not report on events that are past. It is alright for cases that have been proven in court but for cases that have been withdrawn and are invalid it should not be reported.

Mr Speaker, I am grateful and applaud this Bill. With respect, thank you.

MR SPEAKER: Thank you. To this side. member for Faleata East please stand.

Tofa AVEAU TUALA LEPALE NIKO PALAMO (Faleata East): Thank you Mr Speaker. I appreciate this Bill Hon Prime Minister.

First I congratulate Susuga Papalii who has passed away; he spearheaded the efforts in making this Bill reality. He also clarified this Bill in a past seminar and I am grateful to him for his service.

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What should be clear is that this Bill is not to protect the person involved in a news item but to protect the journalists. If you look at the objective of the Bill, there is nothing that mentions protection of a person reported on by the journalists. The Parliament should understand that. The Bill is for the Media Council to protect the Journalists in the case that something happens as well as providing for the processes to resolve or negotiate these cases. The Court is still available also and that is your right. That is what should be clear. For the information of the Parliament and Samoa listening in, the Media is powerful, more powerful than Parliament and any country because Media can make things happen. They can also resolve issues. We have witnessed that the Media can also topple Governments. That is the power of the Media that we are trying to protect. We all are aware of the uses of the Media to watch rugby or international news.

You can also become a millionaire because of the media because they can raise your status with publicity and I am sure that no one would ever complain about it nor will they thank the Media for the publicity. When we are slandered, then we go to the Courts but there is no need because the Media Council can sort it out after you sign an agreement that your complaint will end with the Council without being referred to the Courts.

Within the Bill, it protects the Media because the only penalty mentioned is to publish or broadcast a reply, correction or apology and to undertake training or education in the particular area related to the breach. There is no imprisonment sentence.

There is a matter I wish to touch on Part 4: Code of Practice. I believe that the Code should be provided for in this Bill because the Association is given the authority to develop, approve and amend the Code. This Code also guides the work of the newspaper, television, internet and other media service providers.

My question is whether this Code should be incorporated within the Bill so that the Parliament can consider it. It just says that the media must abide by the Code but it should be within the Bill or at least mention what breaches they are answerable to because if the Code of Practice allows the Media certain privileges, it would eventually end in court hearings.

Regarding complaints, the procedure is the complainant must within 10 working days the material is publicised write a letter to the member of the media. If after 10 days the complainant has not received any response, then the complainant may re-send the complaint within 20 working days from the expiry of the 10 working days. The question is why? Why does the complainant have to re-send the complaint when there is no fault on their part for the non-response of the member of the media?

This is another provision that protects the media if you want your matter to be referred to the Media Council, you must first go through this process of writing within 10 days and then re-sending the complaint within 20 days after and if you do not go through this process, the Council will not consider your complaint. Why is the complainant being punished in this way?

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That is all Mr Speaker. Many of our questions were directed to the Afioga Papalii during the briefing on this Bill but looking at it again, it protects the Media and not the complainants. This is why we should always remember that the Court is still an option with respect.

MR SPEAKER: Thank you for the reminder and the clarification.

I call on one of the members for Salega, Afioga Afualo Wood Uti Salele after the opportunity given to the Hon Prime Minister.

Susuga Hon Tuilaepa Fatialofa Lupesoliai Aiono Neioti Sailele Malielegaoi: Mr Speaker, before the member stands, I wish to correct the comments of the member that just took his seat. The comment that this Bill protects the Media is clear and this is what happens when you do not read the Bill properly. The forum for complaints is set out for the Media to be answerable for their actions and there is also a fine of \$5,000. This comment is erroneous but I will clarify further after the speech by one of the members for Salega, Afioga Afualo Wood Uti Salele.

Tofa Aveau Tuala Lepale Niko Palamo: Mr Speaker, if the Hon Prime Minister wishes that I read out the provision I am referring to, I will.

MR SPEAKER: Your point is understood.

Susuga Hon Tuilaepa Fatialofa Lupesoliai Aiono Neioti Sailele Malielegaoi: It is clear Mr Speaker. Just read the Bill and do not be arrogant. Clause 28 clarifies the matter if you read it. You are cosyng up to the Media without reading the Bill.

MR SPEAKER: I believe it is clear.

Tofa Aveau Tuala Lepale Niko Palamo: It is not arrogance; it is what is in the Bill.

MR SPEAKER: Member for Faleata East, your speech is understood. The Hon Prime Minister is the Minister responsible for the Bill. The Bill is related to the Media as well as others that are affected.

I call upon...

Afioga Lafaitale Patrick Leiataualesa: Mr Speaker, I stand because I am getting confused. Where else does the member propose that the public can refer their complaints?

Tofa Aveau Tuala Lepale Niko Palamo: Honourable member, you seek assistance from the Courts as I stated in my speech.

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MR SPEAKER: This is the opinion of the Member which was clear. The Hon Prime Minister also responded. Afioga Hon Palusalue, the matter is understood.

Afioga Hon Palusalue Faapo II: Mr Speaker, I am standing because of the insolence of that Member to this side.

MR SPEAKER: I beg tolerance Afioga Hon Palusalue...

Afioga Lafaitale Patrick Leiataualesa: I was not referring to you, I was referring to the Member for Faleata East.

Afioga Hon Palusalue Faapo II: Mr Speaker, the Hon Prime Minister...sit down you were not given the opportunity...

Afioga Lafaitale Patrick Leiataualesa: Do not call me insolent because it was not your speech I was addressing, it was Tofa Aveaus speech. Where would the public seek assistance?

Afioga Hon Palusalue Faapo II: That is your opinion. Be cautious with your words. Do not start with what may cause an argument.

Afioga Lafaitale Patrick Leiataualesa: What did you say that I commented on when it was Aveau I addressed? Do not...

MR SPEAKER: Be seated Afioga Lafaitale. There is no reason for the House to be in uproar. The Member for Faleata East was clear. The Hon Prime Minister stood to correct the speech which was inaccurate because the Bill involves the Media and those affected. There is nothing else to debate. The Bill protects all parties involved. The matter is closed.

I beseech the Leader of Opposition; the matter is now on the right path. Do not be concerned...

Afioga Hon Palusalue Faapo II: The disappointment is that this side is trying to contribute but when such statements are made...

MR SPEAKER: This is not new. That was not the intention.

Afioga Lafaitale Patrick Leiataualesa: Such views are foolish. The Bill also affects us that would complain. I am not saying to protect the Media but where is another alternative for refuge?

MR SPEAKER: I beg tolerance of the member, I note your concern.

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Tofa Aveau Tuala Lepale Niko Palamo: Mr Speaker...

MR SPEAKER: I apologize Tofa Aveau, I have ended the matter. Be patient, I have explained the matter.

I call on one of the Members for Salega, Afioga Afualo Wood Uti Salele.

Afioga AFUALO WOOD UTI SALELE: Thank you Mr Speaker for the opportunity. I stand because of the importance of the Bill. I wish to thank Papalii Ualetenese for the preparation of the Bill despite him not being here. This Bill is for the benefit of the public. Our Methodist church has a song that I am fond of “Spread the Word. The word of our Lords love.” The meaning of the song, only the truth is needed. The lyric of the song speaks of a truth of the death of Jesus. That is the objective of the Bill, to not seek out the errors in the work of the Media but to protect the rights of those that will be mentioned in the media.

Mr Speaker, compared to other services, this service is very important to notify and inform as well as publicise the occurrences in other political jurisdictions. Many countries rely on the media for information and economic development. This information is also used to prepare for the future development of a country which is dependent on military strength. It also acts as a monitoring system on other countries therefore this service is very important. This Bill should have guidelines for the service. It is true that there are three arms of the State; Executive, Parliament and Judiciary but there is also a fourth estate; the Media. This House is aware of the Media because we cannot know what is happening in the world without information. However because of issues in the past, this Bill will help regulate the service. This Bill ensures that the truth is broadcast with the exception of the editorial which is an opinion. It is because there have been many disagreements because of publications and rights have been violated thus the establishment of this Council to ensure that there will be a code of conduct for the media.

I support this Bill which not only protects the media, but also our rights so that the truth is publicised.

Thank you Mr Speaker for the opportunity.

MR SPEAKER: Thank you for your contribution. I call on the member for Gagaemauga No. 2.

Tofa LEVAOPOLO TALATONU: Thank you Mr Speaker for allowing me this opportunity and I will be brief. I wish to express my gratitude for this Bill and I support it as it is necessary at this time with the many issues occurring. Many of the views were focused on the need for the truth to be publicised.

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As is known by many, I have also been the subject of attacks by the Media. The court case was successful and the Media then had no more to say. Hon Minister, are there measures to ensure that inaccurate information is not published?

Also, there may be factors affecting the ability of the Media to acquire the truth and so they add their opinions or use other sources. The reason for this practice is because there is no evidence to support what the Media wants to report on the Government and individuals.

In addition, another important aspect of the Bill is the publishing of qualifications. Parliament should consider a media officer similar to other Parliaments because they can interpret the speeches made by the members.

Some remarks that we make are sarcastic at times and the media interprets these remarks incorrectly which often results in confusion. I do not demean the work of the media, they have the knowledge but to move forward, they should have knowledge on Parliament but also medicine and other specialist areas.

Facebook, which is also media, should be regulated because of the language that is used by users. They are grotesque and inappropriate and I beseech the Hon Minister that measures should be in place to control the use of language.

Finally Mr Speaker, there are too many bodies to deal with grievances. There is the Ombudsman and the Community Centre, and the Court. There are too many.

That is all Mr Speaker, God bless our Meeting.

MR SPEAKER: I thank the Member but as you mentioned communications, I wish to clarify regarding media and Parliament.

This is under the Parliamentary Strengthening Program. Before the end of this year there will be seminars for the Media. You have mentioned a valid point so that the work does not overlap. As Speaker, I have tried to also explain to the Media the procedures and parliamentary privileges. There will be a time when the Clerk will call upon the Media to attend a seminar to clarify the Standing Orders as well as the Legislative Assembly Powers and Privilege Ordinance.

The final opportunity will be granted to the Member for Aleipata Itupa i Lalo followed by the response by the Hon Prime Minister.

Afioga TAFUA MALUELUE TAFUA (Aleipata Itupa i Lalo): It has been a long day and I thank you Mr Speaker. Before I comment on the Bill, I wish to offer my condolences for the passing of the Afioga Tama a Aiga, Afioga Tuiatua Mataafa Tupuola Lui. My sympathies go out to Tauiliili and Usoalii, Tamapaa and the family of Mataafa and Sa-Leavalasi.

Also, I wish to offer my heartfelt condolences to the family of Papalii Uale who was the Chairperson of the Media Council. Also to Lealailepule who I just read about in the paper.

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The member for Faleata West is correct regarding the inconsistencies in the newspapers. Mulinuu should always be consulted for accuracy before any publication is made.

Mr Speaker, I support this Bill and its objective which is to promote professional journalism as well as provide for a code of conduct that protects our fundamental rights mentioned in Part 2 of the Constitution; the Supreme Law.

The Hon Minister mentioned that JAWS was registered on August 13th but my interpretation of the Bill is that it enforces and promotes Samoan values and customs. The metaphor “Those who live in glass houses should not throw stones” is relevant in this case.

The Bill suggests that journalists should exercise discretion, common sense, honesty and balance. There should not be favoritism in the writings. Journalism is an important skill area and it is a pleasure to read the work of the pen but discretion must be highly exercised in consideration of relationships and respect.

I spoke in the past about our customs and that respect should be the utmost priority and not be controlled by the gliding of the pen over paper. To illustrate, a journalist may write about a kiss in a way that can conjure imagery, for instance, ‘the boy kissed the girl’ but a journalist can draw into detail and it may describe the kiss as ‘and he pulled her in to his arms, their cheeks drew closer to each other. Their bodies turned slightly to each other and their fingers wrapped into each other as their lips touched’ and that is how a simple kiss can be described by a journalist.

The gist of my remark is that there are different styles of writing.

Tofa Lealailepule Rimoni Aiafi: Mr Speaker, I did not intend to interrupt the speech of the Tuiatua....

MR SPEAKER: I beg tolerance of the Tuiatua, I will allow the interjection.

Tofa Lealailepule Rimoni Aiafi: Remember that the Tuiatua lives with a European and that is how they kiss. But the Samoan kiss was the first description and that is accurate.

MR SPEAKER: Do not take heed of the comments by Lealailepule. Your remarks are on point. Lealailepule is accustomed to those quick kisses. Continue.

Afioga TAFUA MALUELUE TAFUA: The gist as I was saying is the knowledge and skill of a journalist. An inch of a story can be drawn out to be a mile long. Also, when they put you on a pedestal they are good at coaxing you and you are drawn in as what happens to Palusalua often. But this service is very important for the future of our country.

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Journalists also have a tendency to listen to rumors and go to print. In my experience with the media while I was working in New Zealand, they cannot publish any information without informing you first so that the news items are balanced. I also took a course on Media and so I have a little understanding on the matter. The intention of the Bill is important with the establishment of a watchdog entity which will deal with the grievances. There should be some adjustment to the Media Council. For all initial Bills tabled in Parliament, there should be a grace period to monitor any errors in the Bill and amendments done accordingly by the Attorney General.

I strongly support this Bill and I envy the journalists that have the experience and knowledge to do this kind of work, it is a talent from God. There is Mataafa Keni, Savea Sano, Muliaga, Terry Tavita, Hesus Ieremia who is now with the Samoa Tourism Authority and others, these are those blessed with this knowledge which we should all be proud of. I only humbly beseech you all to remember that the work is not done alone but together. Many in this Parliament have been the target for your writings, many of which have no substantial evidence. The Government as well has been targeted for corruption and yet it is operating well with a budget of over a billion. There has also been much international aide. At a meeting I attended, a German woman stood and offered \$3million to Samoa for SIDS. I do not recall the exact amount but \$1billion+ was accumulated from the spin offs from that Conference.

Thank you for the Bill, I strongly support it and God bless this Meeting.

MR SPEAKER: I will give another opportunity to one of the Members from Salafai. I call on the Member for Faaselelaga No. 2 followed by the Leader of Opposition.

Tofa TUILEUTU ALAVAA VOI (Faasaleleaga No. 3): Thank you Mr Speaker and the dignity of the House. I would like to use this opportunity to comment on the Bill before the House. I support the Bill for the same occurrences in the past are repeating itself today. What we have witnessed today was also witnessed in the past. This is what happened between the Jews and the Israelites during the time of Prophet Hosea. The Lord saw that sinning was rife because of rumors. Hosea was the son of Beerli during the time of Ezekiel, Asa the king of Judah and Jeroboam the son of Boaz of Israel. This was a time of conflict because of the rumors and stories being carried around. By divine appointment, Hosea was told to marry the whore Gomer who bore Jezreel, Lo-Ruhamah and Lo-Ammi and they bore the Israelite nation.

Thank you for the Bill. Everything has its advantages and disadvantages. There are times when journalists are true. Information is understanding. Without this service, an epidemic may break out globally and we would be oblivious. The intention of the Bill is to guard and protect.

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All the comments on the Bill were relevant in consideration of the occurrences nowadays. As I illustrated, if the children of Hosea had not bore children, Israel would not have returned to a good state. That is my contribution with all due respect. God bless our Meeting and the country listening in.

Thank you Mr Speaker for my opportunity.

MR SPEAKER: Thank you for the lecture on the Word. I give the final opportunity to the Leader of Opposition.

Afioga Hon PALUSALUE FAAPO II: Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity. I rise with all due respect because Journalism is a very important not only for the Government but also the Opposition. It is the media that we take our grievances to if our views are left unrecognized. I have heard opinions judging the Media as if they were cruel but they are not, their duty is to inform the country. I thank the Media for this service especially for their democratic principles. Yesterday the Hon Prime Minister spoke about our media which is in higher regard than those in America and other Pacific nations which indicates that our media is doing a good job. Our positions are those of status and high esteem and the country wants to know what we are doing, but when the media reports, then we are angered. Why? The media is very important.

MR SPEAKER: I beseech the Member while the opportunity is given to the interjection by the Hon Prime Minister.

Susuga Hon Tuilaepa Fatialofa Lupesoliai Aiono Neioti Sailele Malielegaoi: Mr Speaker, we are all well versed in the ways to charm. Tofa Lealailepule made an exceptional speech but you will not get any points from such remarks. You are suggesting that everyone that commented on measures to regulate and control the Media so they will follow guidelines are bad people. You are trying to look good but you will not get anything out of it. Your side made exceptional speeches but you, as the Leader of that side, you should know how to lead. There are times when we make enticing remarks but there are also times when the truth should be said.

Afioga Lafaitale Patrick Leaiataualesa: Mr Speaker a point of order.

MR SPEAKER: I beg tolerance of the Leader of Opposition....

Afioga Hon PALUSALUE FAAPO II: What reason is there that you should correct me? Only the Hon Prime Minister can do that.

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Afioga Lafaitale Patrick Leaiataualesa: Sit down. I have an opportunity in accordance with Standing Orders.

Mr Speaker, I did not intent to interrupt the Leader of Opposition. He mentioned that when the media reports, it invokes anger. As I mentioned in the past, there is no criticism if the reports are accurate and just. This service is important and relevant but the reports should be true.

MR SPEAKER: Thank you.

Afioga Hon PALUSALUE FAAPO II: I will not respond.

MR SPEAKER: There is no need to respond as it is appropriate.

Afioga Hon PALUSALUE FAAPO II: Although the Hon Prime Minister has stated that I am trying to look good, there is no such intention. I am only after independence.

MR SPEAKER: I call on the Hon Prime Minister for his interruption.

Susuga Hon Tuilaepa Fatialofa Lupesoliai Aiono Neioti Sailele Malielegaoi: Mr Speaker, my remarks were clear. All those from this side and that side spoke on media reports being dishonest. But what he is saying is incorrect which is why I tell him to stop trying to look good.

After the Bill was drafted, it was presented to media representatives to consult on. After which it was then tabled. The media have agreed on the Bill. It was a lengthy process especially during its consultation stages which resulted in some of the amendments.

Mr Speaker, all the members of that side made good speeches to support the Bill. Not all media providers report in this way such as was the case on the reports about the Member for Aleipata Itupa i Lalo. Clause 4 states that the Act must be applied, implemented and enforced in a manner which fully respects and acknowledges Samoan tradition, culture and community values. What does this mean? It means that any news report should incorporate Samoan cultural values, those of respect.

Mr Speaker, the Bill was consulted on and approved by the media themselves. The remarks also made by the members are not being ignored. They are recommendations which would further raise the standard of Journalism but all the Leader of Opposition is doing is criticizing. That is what should be corrected.

Afioga Hon Palusalue Faapo II: Point of Order Mr Speaker. First, I did not utter a word of opposition....

MR SPEAKER: I beg leniency of the Leader of Opposition, I will give the opportunity for the interruption....

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Tofa Hon Tolofuaivalelei Falemoe Leiataua: I note the members discontent at the Hon Prime Minister and the comments that he is trying to look good. I was quick to remember a former Speaker, Nonumalo. When a member was speaking, Nonumalo thanked the member for his double meaning remarks. I think that is a good description of the speech with respect.

Afioga Hon PALUSALUE FAAPO II: Mr Speaker, I am addressing the Hon Prime Minister who is the responsible Minister for the Bill. I did not say there was anything wrong with the Bill. Also, I did not say whether I supported or opposed the Bill. That I will leave to the end. For now I am only mentioning the independence. The Government is paying for this Council, the allowances, salaries, so where is the independence. Independence in matters pertaining to the Parliament or the Executive or the Court. This is what I am worried about. Can the Media not find their own funding; there are agencies and individuals that can assist financially. But if the Government finances it, there may be restrictions or limitations dictated and the media controlled by fear. This is what I am talking about; the financing of this Council by the Government. The Media is very important not only for international Governmental relations especially the Parliament and the three arms of the State. The Media should not operate in fear.

This is exactly what I am saying Mr Speaker. It is not to oppose the Bill. If I were to call a media conference, they may be told not to attend or they will not be paid. That is what I am worried about.

MR SPEAKER: Let me assist. You are talking about independence. The Parliament approves the appropriations to the Judiciary. It seems that when an entity is known to be financed by the Executive then its trustworthiness is questioned. Your opinion suggests that the Government will withdraw its funding if their will is not done. Who is carried and who is dragged? You are dwelling on independence but you must remember that the appropriation for the Judiciary is approved here. I am assisting in case this matter bears heavy on your head as well as the media for no reason if the Executive were to withdraw, the Council would suffer. Move on, I believe this matter is clarified.

Afioga Hon PALUSALUE FAAPO II: I will not take much longer.

MR SPEAKER: I will give the floor to the member for Faleata West.

Tofa Lealailepule Rimoni Aiafi: It seems as this Council is being compared to other Councils. You cannot compare the Judiciary to this Council with respect.

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Afioga Hon PALUSALUE FAAPO II: See Mr Speaker....

Tofa Hon Tolofuaivalelei Falemoe Leiataua: Mr Speaker....

MR SPEAKER: I will give the opportunity to the Hon Minister of Women, Community and Social Development.

Tofa Hon Tolofuaivalelei Falemoe Leiataua: Thank you. The issue of independence is relevant but refer to the membership of the Executive Committee, it consists of 5 members of the media, 5 members of the public and the Chairperson is a lawyer not employed by the Executive. The constitution of the Committee is open and they work with the Association. The Journalist Association of Samoa also has their own rules and procedures similar to the Plumbers and Engineering Associations. As the Hon Prime Minister mentioned in the beginning, this Council should have been established long ago and if the Executive Government had not initiated this, it would not come about. You should not be concerned about the Bill. The intention is to seek fairness in the execution of their duties consistent with the Constitution.

That is my assistance to the member with respect.

MR SPEAKER: Thank you.

Afioga Hon PALUSALUE FAAPO II: Mr Speaker, I will not address those remarks because the only person I respond to is the Leader of the Government.

Mr Speaker, the Freedom of the Media was mentioned. They have their own code of ethics. To say that they roam around I am saddened by this.

Afioga Peseta Vaifou Tevaga: Mr Speaker....

MR SPEAKER: I give the opportunity to the member for Faasaleleaga No. 4.

Afioga Peseta Vaifou Tevaga: Freedom was mentioned by the Leader of Opposition which is exactly what I stated in my speech. Freedom of the Press, instead of seeking freedom of the truth – nothing but the truth.

The truth should also be protected. The Media already has freedom, the problem is that they are no protective measures to protect this freedom therefore legislation must provide for measures to control the eccentric reporting. There is nothing wrong with the reporting if it is the truth but if the reporting is inaccurate, it will end in court.

With respect.

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Tofa Lealailepule Rimoni Aiafi: Mr Speaker....

MR SPEAKER: I beg tolerance to the member for Faleata West, the Leader of Opposition disregarded the remarks by other members so he will finish. This is a serious matter as you all know, there have been drastic effects of these reporting.

I call on the member.

Afioga Lafaitale Patrick Leiataualesa: Mr Speaker, as I previously mentioned, this is an important service. We recommended that standards should be in place. Any person off the street cannot work in this profession.

We advised that the truth should be reported and not make erratically erroneous reports. We were not belittling the Journalism profession. You can tell the difference between a senior journalist who you want to read or listen to and a journalist that twists and misinterprets information.

With respect.

Tofa Levaopolo Talatonu: Mr Speaker, the member always touches on the truth but the reports were true.

MR SPEAKER: Member for Faleata West.

Tofa Lealailepule Rimoni Aiafi: I support the remarks of the Member for Alataua West. Member for Faasaleleaga No. 4, being before the Court many times has had a positive outcome – truth, nothing but the truth.

Afioga Hon Tuitama Talalelei Tuitama: Mr Speaker....

MR SPEAKER: I give the opportunity to the Hon Minister of Health.

Afioga Hon Tuitama Talalelei Tuitama: A point of order. The freedom of the Leader of Opposition is not being removed because his salary is paid by the Government.

MR SPEAKER: Leader of Opposition, do you believe me now. You are questioning the Executives assistance but honesty will still be done. Leave a persons honesty to God. There is no one that is independent. We need to connect so we can live harmoniously.

Reign in your comments. We are nearing our recess hour.

Afioga Hon Palusalue Faapo II: I will end now. I will also not respond to the Hon Minister of Health because he is incorrect. I hope the Media continues their exceptional service despite being paid by the Government which would make the Council a public entity.

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They will be public servants and there will be nothing we can do about it when the Bill is passed.

Susuga Hon Tuilaepa Fatialofa Lupesoliai Aiono Neioti Sailele Malielegaoi: Mr Speaker....

Afioga Hon Palusalue Faapo II: My speech has ended.

Susuga Hon Tuilaepa Fatialofa Lupesoliai Aiono Neioti Sailele Malielegaoi: I must correct these remarks because it seems that the Government is being accused. Clause 12 clearly explains the Funding of the Association; from the Government, revenues from fees, charges and penalties levied and imposed under this Act and any donations, other revenues generated by the Association. The Association may also incur membership fees such as the Accountants Association that has a annual membership fee of \$200. This Association should also consider this as well as fees for their services.

The reason for this Mr Speaker, is because of the comment regarding funds to finance the operations. This Society has no subscription fees and if this continues, it will fail. There is no need for a society if all they do is meet. Where will the members of the society come from? The Society must advise on the members for the council and their Board. This is why a quick decision was made to remove the Society and leave only the Council. It is like saying leave the table but remove the legs.

Mr Speaker, this cannot be done. There is a saying ‘we have to protect fools from their follies’ because if not done, it would be a waste of time to pass this and nothing materializes from it. However now, clear cut procedures are being given to establish the Association so that it can be an institution with teeth.

But since it is now 1.00pm, I will conclude my remarks.

MR SPEAKER: I thank the dignity of the House for this day. I believe we have reached our recess with many of our business done and complete. I congratulate everyone for their comments as well as the Cabinet and the Leader of the Government for their responses.

I acknowledge the Leader of Opposition for his remarks. We should be mindful of our statements so that it does not go off point but is kept on the right course so that our deliberations progress smoothly. No one is perfect and so I ask for forgiveness for any err on my part. We all have one intention and that is for Samoa to have a successful future.

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I thank all the CEOs present here in the House. I also acknowledge the presence of the media who was the focus point of our discussions today. We will rest for now and commence again tomorrow.

Before we end our proceedings, I ask the Hon Minister of Natural Resource and Environment to conclude our day with a word of prayer.

Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly were set aside at 1.04pm until 9.00am, Friday, 24 March, 2014.