

THURSDAY, 24TH JANUARY 2019

Mr Speaker took the Chair at 9.11am.

Prayers.

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

**SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION BILL (NO.1) 2018/2019
– continuation of debate for second reading**

MR SPEAKER: During adjournment last night, the Hon Minister of Education Sports and Culture was finishing his response.

This will be the opportunity for the Hon Minister of Finance to give a clarification in relation to matters raised by the Members on the Supplementary Appropriation (No.1) 2018/2019. With respect I call the Hon Minister of Finance.

Afioga Hon SILI EPA TUIOTI (Minister of Finance): Mr Speaker and respectable Members of Parliament, firstly I thank our Lord for His merciful love upon us to find this new day and renewed strength to carry out our orders for today.

Briefly honorable Speaker, as known and in regards to Government policies and other key priority programs and projects for this Supplementary Budget, these areas were met at the time these requests were submitted. As aware, the Supplementary Budget is accumulated from our additional revenue earnings and grants that was passed in our Main Budget.

Another important aspect your honor, is the readjustment of some of the key priority areas in the Main Budget in order to meet projects that needed first priority. As aware, the salary increase for public servants. For clarification, those in the Principal level to Officer Level, they now have an increase of 10% for their salary. The Deputy CEOs or the Assistance CEOs levels now have an increase of 7%. As for us Members of the House and Government CEOs or Chief Executive Officers, we have a salary increase of 5%.

The reason why this increase has been implemented for a three year period is based on the arranged funding we currently have so that other projects that are given first priority in the Main Estimates are not affected.

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Mr Speaker, the funding allocation given in the First Supplementary Estimates 2018/2019 adheres to the objectives of the Government. As given, not only has there been an increase in salaries for public servants, there is also an increase in pensions. A review is now being undertaken to evaluate pensions based on equity and also for Government Ministries and Corporations to take note of how these funds are used. As mentioned if this increase can be implemented per month, other benefits such as travelling for free from Mulifanua to Salelologa and getting free medical checkups and medicine will be ceased. At the moment we are still reviewing this matter perhaps Cabinet will be able to give recommendations later. If this matter is approved it will then be incorporated into the Main Estimates 2019/2020.

Mr Speaker this is the same for other changes, we have to observe areas that need assistance and review objectives to be in line with the standard of life moving forward. This is the same with our expenditures. This also regards education grants as voiced by some of the Members. There have been major changes seen in the previous year, there have been three grants that were distributed three or four times to schools per annum including church schools. The current procedure for these grants is that they are being put together into one account and the distribution of these funds have already commenced for School Committees in order for them to start allocating these stationeries and so forth. This was one challenge faced by the Ministry of Education in terms of procurements whereby the Ministry had to start carrying out the distribution, take inventories and so forth, and so, the process is more efficient now for schools and church schools to grab and utilize these appropriated funds.

Mr Speaker another issue raised was the several positions that remained vacant up to the end of the year for some Ministries due to various reasons. Firstly, not getting the suitable person to fill the vacancy due to the lack of knowledge and qualification which by record, a lot of money remains unused for this purpose at the end of the year.

For the purpose of moving forward, we are now in the process of preparing the Main Estimates 2019/2020, the Chief Executives of Ministries and Corporations should take this matter into deep consideration whilst the Ministry of Finance look into areas to rule out these posts from being vacant.

This is for the reason that at the end of every financial year, majority of the Ministries would put forth a request to have these unused funds be used as savings or purchase computers, cars so forth. It is the duty of the Chief Executive to oversee these matters, we are already drafting the Main Estimates for the New Year and it will be hard to adhere to such requests later.

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The Ministry of Finance will be working together with the Public Service Commission to ensure that only necessary posts requiring special knowledge/skills are advertised...

MR SPEAKER: Pardon the Hon Minister I call on the Member for Palauli le Falefa.

Afioga Hon Faumuina Tiatia Faaolatane Liuga (Palauli le Falefa): Thank you Mr Speaker. The matter clarified by the Hon Minister is very important. In the last recent Main Budget, the Ministry of Finance together with the Public Service Commission gave notice that all vacancies will be terminated by the 31st of December. During the consideration of the Supplementary Budget, other changes were made making it more flexible. If procedures were implemented, then we ought to follow them but the Hon Minister is right, majority of unused funds comes from vacant positions. The Ministries were given requests that if these posts could not be used, then reshuffle the jobs using the vacancies given in the Budget. Only the Ministry of the Prime Minister had the restructuring of vacancies which reduced the amount of their vacancies from six to five, in order to fill up the needs of the Ministry. With respect Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER: Thank you. I call on the Hon Minister to continue.

Afioga Hon SILI EPA TUIOTI: As I stated earlier, this area will be overlooked to ensure that such issue will not happen again, this does not remove nor affect the need for other vacant posts that are needed for carrying out key priorities of the State. As such, the Ministries should be more vigilant of such matters. If the deadline is the 31st of December, then this must be carried out. Perhaps this is one issue we have now, we make decisions without foreseeing the future. I will take heed of matters like this so that we will abide with Government policies in terms of implementing flexibility there is a time when it is needed, however, it is becoming a norm.

MR SPEAKER: I call on the Hon Prime Minister.

Susuga Hon Tuilaepa Auelua Fatialofa Lupesoliai Lolofietele Neioti Aiono Galumalemana Dr. Sailele Malielegaoi: Mr Speaker the truth is the Hon Minister has clarified the procedures implemented by the Government. This is also being questioned by the previous Minister of Finance.

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It is noted within the progress of our work that there are times when direction is needed. The requirement is to set out policies to provide a sense of direction as most of the times, decisions cannot be cancelled due to the fact that people are required within a Ministry. Ministries have different needs. I recall a strong decision by the Cabinet to allow only one vacancy under the request of a Ministry and withhold two. Three months later, I received a letter from the Chief Executive verifying the importance of these two posts together with its resignation. That event showed me the criticality of this matter considering that the Chief Executive is the only one who is aware of the need required for matters of this sort whereby in final, it had put his position on the line through a resignation, yet, this was one of the many intelligent and qualified CEOs we had. I wrote to him to have the matter be resubmitted into Cabinet for its decision. There is farsighted wisdom in Cabinet to make the necessary decision.

As the saying goes, *'o le uta a le poto e fetalai.'* This is the same with the decision of Cabinet, there are times when principles are set out but when it comes time to make change; that change must be done and should not be avoided. All these policies and principles must be made by the Government, and should be temporary. The opposite of wisdom – is dumb - which is holding on to it permanently.

There are only two cities in the world noted in the Bible, the city of Persia and Medes. Once the law is implemented no one can change it. A person will die if they change it. Where is Persia and Medes now? They no longer exist. That is what happens to a country that set out its policies and stands alone stupidly, and when time comes for change to be made, then you use far sighted wisdom. It will go down the drain.

This is why the Government sets out Proclamations whenever it gets into serious problems, it goes into a Proclamation. All principles and Laws are set aside and apply common sense by the State whenever a country is faced with unexpected emergency disasters like cyclones and wars. No country in the world would tie up themselves using iron wires and say that they have tied up their mouths and feet to make them immovable so change will not press through by the State or a Church made up of intelligent Leaders.

Mr Speaker, you must bear farseeing wisdom as this is happening far too often, saying that there is set principles even our Constitution was amended. There are some Ecclesia that could not proceed due to their existing Constitution. No Government neither Leaders with strategic vision would sit and tie up themselves on Laws that could make them halt.

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The only countries that could not change their law were Persia and Medes. Where are they now? They have fallen due to the foolishness of the people and their Laws. That is what happens when they do not implement change, no country operates forever using one law.

Mr Speaker, when it is time to make the necessary change according to policies, go ahead and implement it. The world that we live in is a world that is advancing and people are still growing henceforth, demands must change accordingly.

Mr Speaker this is the clarification on this matter in case another Member takes the floor again and mention principles. These guidelines are set out to guide us on the overall level, guidelines only. Therefore, once Government foresees that change is necessary, go ahead and do so.

MR SPEAKER: Thank you, the matter is now understood. A wise man is known for his manner of speaking. I call on the Hon Minister of Finance to continue.

Afioga Hon SILI EPA TUIOTI: Mr Speaker, the Hon Prime Minister has responded on the importance of principles. However it is important that such matters be reviewed and improved in order to counter the timely demands we have today.

Mr Speaker, we are also looking at Public Sector Reforms as discussed before, we are looking at increasing work efficiency for the Government Ministries and Organizations. Majority of the time it is observed that work is process driven although common sense must also be used.

Our expectations must enable us to do the work and adhere to the needs of the public. I believe that there are a lot of people in the Public Service that are qualified, skillful and capable to do the work. Although it looks as if most of the time they attempt to specialize rather opportunity should still be made to apply trainings for workers within Ministries so that service is efficiently and effectively improved in response to the public.

The Ministry of Finance is already looking at whether some of the works should be transferred like maintaining government buildings and make insurance. This is not a core function of this Ministry similar to other Ministries. We are currently working with the Commission to evaluate these areas to ensure there is no overlap in the mandates/policies. This is one of the issues, a lot of employees are needed but funding is insufficient for remunerations.

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One of the Members mentioned the contribution of the private sector to the Budget through dividends. The Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Public Enterprises have overlooked this fitting. The funds used for major developments within Government and organizations are funds received from overseas banks, the World Bank and Asian Development Bank. This has assisted us with some of our key utility developments like electricity, roads, schools and so forth. If an organization earns profits it is important that they also contribute to the budget in assistance to our revenues, particularly when the State is paying debts to banks overseas.

I am grateful to our State Owned Enterprises or SOEs and their performance. By observation, they have greatly assisted us by way of revenue earnings although however, there is still room for improvement.

The Chairperson of the Finance Committee spoke yesterday in regards to policies set by the Government and the Ministry of Finance and recommendations for necessary changes to be made for future development to have an affluent economy that adheres to the needs of the country.

Mr Speaker, I conclude with a report on the status of our development today. Figures seen for the 12 month period ending September 2018. At the end of September our GDP was noted at 1.9 million which has increased to 1.8% compared to the 1.88 million in September 2017. If noted per capita figures at the end of September 2018, was 11,307 per capita which is 2.5% higher than 10,900 recorded in September 2017.

There have also been changes to inflation which points to our locally made products sold in the country that is rather doing well. We have enough savings for trade which is currently increasing. We have our exports, thus it is challenging to have enough products for our export as our remittances have assisted us in maintaining our income per monthly basis to protect the purchasing of goods imported from overseas.

The matter concerning our debt as discussed in the Cabinet Development Committee or CDC. The Government through the Ministry of Finance and Central Bank has proven that we can still manage. There is no need for us to worry about our debts repayments. It is clear that we borrow money because of the swift need for major developments to assist our economy and to combat the negative impact of climate change.

The Supplementary Budget has discussed some of the major developments like road reconstruction to the airport. This includes further proposed works that must be prioritized.

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Mr Speaker, respectable Members of Cabinet and Parliament perhaps you have understood the clarification made by the Chairperson of the Finance and Expenditure Committee. I want to thank the Chairperson and Members of Committee for the findings and recommendations received, this will guide the progress plans of the State in order to improve our economy.

I thank the Chair for the opportunity granted to clarify queries particularly guidelines that could assist our work. I take this opportunity to thank Afioga Iulai Lavea who is the former Chief Executive of the Ministry for almost 10 years. This does exclude the many years he has served the Ministry as an Assistant Executive and Senior officer, he has greatly contributed to our economy with sound advice given to Ministers over the years. I pray that God will guide you safely to another new path whatever it may be. I also take the opportunity to congratulate the new Chief Executive for Finance, Afioga Leasiosio; it is not an easy task. I believe he will be able to continuously improve the work for our economy considering the ability he holds. He has the qualifications and work experience from working for the Government the last three years as an advisor to the Director of the Asian Development Bank. Therefore he has experience to oversee the development of our economy. I take this opportunity to thank the management of the Ministry for preparing the Appropriation Budget and the Supplementary Budget. The Minister only comes to present and clarify the Bill but thank you.

I wish to extend great thanks to the Chief Executive Officer of Ministries and Corporations for their cooperation in the work we do. I am grateful for the collaborating efforts in light of making our work easier with the coordination shown. Furthermore to be able to reach our set objectives laid out by the Government for future development. Thank you for the opportunity, Soifua.

MR SPEAKER: Thank you. I now give the opportunity to the Minister of Revenue, I call on the Hon Minister for a response on the queries raised by Members.

Afioga Hon TIALAVEA FEA LENIU TIONISIO HUNT (Minister of Revenue): Thank you Mr Speaker for the opportunity. I humbly greet the Hon Prime Minister, Cabinet, Associate Ministers especially that side of the House. I also greet the Chief Executives of Government Ministries and Corporations present here today. I acknowledge our country listening in to our Sitting this morning.

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There were minimal queries made to the two Ministries under my supervision comprising of the Prisons and Ministry of Revenue. The matter concerning our prison project, phase one was completed on the first of December last year. The first buildings constructed have already been enclosed and completed. The remaining work carried out at the moment is the construction of the fence around the compound. In the meantime, tender is in progress for the administration building. This also includes the roads, stand by generator and a building for the staff to use during night shifts. Since Tanunamalala is far away these buildings are needed because there are three shifts altogether, and workers need to sleep there before going home the next day. Mr Speaker the project has a lot of challenges which has been continuously questioned. The set target for the project to be completed is June this year. Hopefully with good weather conditions we will be able to complete this project. Nevertheless, we will leave it to the Lord for his guidance.

The funds allocated for this project is 20 to 25 million. Perhaps all the work will be completed with additional appropriations stated in this Supplementary Budget. I am certain that this project will not need any further funds for completion except for a prison in Savaii. Plans have been underway for the project in Savaii, \$600,000 has already been allocated for this development. As the saying goes, ‘what is good for Upolu is also good for Savaii.’ If the prison in Upolu has been upgraded then the one in Savaii should also be enhanced as well.

The concerns voiced on escaped prisoners, we do not refute such comments. The issue with prisoners escaping is a fault of this Minister and the Ministry. The public should know that these prisoners escaped on Sunday, we all attended church service at 7.00am with both escapees. I am not sure when exactly they were able to escape. Maybe it was when they were transferred back to their cells, this was an error on my part and the Commissioners and the staff on monitoring prisoners. In 2018, five prisoners escaped, three were found and were returned on the same day but the other two returned four days later. We cannot say our services have been outstanding. We are trying to reshuffle some of our works and several new programs are being implemented. Not only from the Ministry but other organizations who have been visiting every week to carry out rehabilitation services. At Tafaigata...

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

MR SPEAKER: I call on the Hon Prime Minister.

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Susuga Hon Tuilaepa Auelua Fatialofa Lupesoliai Lolofietele Neioti Aiono Galumalemana Dr. Sailele Malielegaoi: The important aspect to note, a church service was carried out but after the service, the prisoners have escaped. Nevertheless we will overlook the matter once again during the service to find out when exactly the prisoners escaped or whether it was during the time their eyes were closed. If it was during the time their eyes were closed, then their eyes should not have been shut to avoid the prisoners from escaping. This is the humble concern because some might think these people are good but the reason why they are there is because they have done wrong. This should be evaluated with the pastor whether it is Catholic, noting the time they escaped whether it was when everyone was shutting their eyes or either they were staring at the sky. Do not look at the sky anymore but look at where the prisoners are sitting.

MR SPEAKER: I call on the Member for Palauli le Falefa....

Afioga Hon Faumuina Tiatia Faaolatane Liuga: Thank you Mr Speaker the interruption by the Hon Prime Minister has increased us thoughts. Maybe the pastor was saying, “is Satan in church.” I already made a request to the Board; our prisoners should be set an example by the Administration. The Hon Minister has been reformed but not the administration. With respect.

MR SPEAKER: I call on the Minister of Works, Transport and Infrastructure.

Susuga Hon Papaliitele Niko Lee Hang: A humble request to the Hon Minister of Prisons. If the Minister is not aware church services undertaken by the holy sisters at Vailima are done from in their quarters. Therefore if services are carried out again I suggest that prisoners still be locked in their cells but have the service in front. This is a humble request made to the Minister.

MR SPEAKER: I call on the Member for Salega.

Tofa Olo Fiti Afoa Vaai: Mr Speaker I also have a recommendation. I thank the Hon Minister for admitting mistakes. This portrays a brave Minister for speaking the truth. I notice that the prisoners escaped during the church service. The only recommendation on the matter during prayers, the officers should not close their eyes because this is when the prisoners escaped.

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MR SPEAKER: Very well. The Member seems to support the opinion of the Hon Prime Minister. I call on the Hon Minister of Commerce Industry and Labor.

Afioga Hon Lautafi Fio Selafi Purcell: I just want to assist the matter. The Hon Minister of Health has whispered to me, while we were busy finding these prisoners they could be hiding under the pedestal. Just a recommendation to search the premises first they might be hiding under the pedestal but we are busy trying to find them outside. With respect.

MR SPEAKER: Very well, thank you thus these things happen. The recommendations made are helpful for the Ministry because the more we share the more we develop. I call on the Hon Minister.

Afioga Hon TIALAVEA FEA LENIU TIONISIO HUNT: Thank you for the recommendations. The Commissioner is listening to the recommendations being voiced by Member of the House.

The Ministry of Revenue, some of the Members mentioned some of the debts within the Ministry. This is accurate although it does mean that there are debts but we are trying to collect it. Majority of the account debts at the moment are being assessed with companies working together with the Ministry. At the end of last year these debts have gradually decreased because our audit team has been collecting accounts from each company. These debts were written off in the year 2006. Today, it has again increased which is a lot of work for the Ministry. Our Ministry is carrying out consultation works on the matter for decisions to be reached. If a decision is not met then it can be taken to court and the Ministry will do its duty to acquire the outcome needed. There have been problems due to the carelessness with debts and consultations on audit according to submitted reports and accounts. The delay in completing this task means more load on the Ministry. If companies are late in paying their accounts, they will be taken to the Court.

I thank the Chief Executive and staff for their work over the last six months. The work completed in the last six months of the previous financial year from July to December saw additional revenues of \$9 million apart from revenue collected.

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

MR SPEAKER: Pardon the Minister I call on the Hon Prime Minister.

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Susuga Hon Tuilaepa Auelua Fatialofa Lupesoliai Lolofietele Neioti Aiono Galumalemana Dr. Sailele Malielegaoi: Before the Minister moves on, debt is a serious issue made strongly by the Chairperson of the Finance Committee. This could lead to Government especially the Ministry being blamed for adverse actions. If we look into the Bill the section about repealing debts is very simple. Once a decision is made to repeal it then it is immediately repealed, it is a very simple action. This includes all Government services like the Development Bank. If we were to implement this method a lot of our businesses like hotels would be out of business. There would have been a lot of commotion in the country from employees being let go. The Government does not look at one area alone. Once the matter is submitted to Cabinet, we evaluate these companies in detail. How many employees have families and children that are dependent on them? Because once a company is closed down the employees will have no work nor money to support their families which will be quite depressing for this country.

This is why I am saying the revoking of debts is something simple and easy. It will be easier for the auditors because they will only be looking at the figures. Although behind those figures lies a major issue which greatly affects this country. Such effects range from people being fired from their jobs and businesses who will not be able to pay due to unforeseen circumstances especially if there are more than a hundred employees. Thousands and thousands of tala are being spent by companies in paying their employees. We are cautious because there are some Ministries and corporations that are quite happy once it is repealed but suspicions always follow. Was it repealed in a just manner? Or was it repealed with extra costs being paid? Various questions can arise. It is why Cabinet is very cautious of such matters considering repeals. Never know lest other businesses are safekeeping money elsewhere and however lie saying they cannot pay it. Once the matter is submitted to Cabinet, we always advice them to go back and reassess the issue if not they will be brought before the law. I reiterate repeals are very easy but this does not mean that the decisions made by this Government portray a corrupt system of governance. In saying that, there are several factors to consider before such decisions are made. The speeches given today, by next week the Government will make a decision to repeal all debts. They will then rejoice and say, “this Cabinet is so inconsiderate.”

We are very strict in making such decisions. I take the floor to emphasize this matter nevertheless it is one of the duties of the Minister because he is in charge of repealing debts. Members have heard that the Minister is quite considerate in giving chances to review such matters and be justified under the law than debts being repealed and forgotten completely.

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This is done especially for businesses that are able to pay their debts but are hoping for it to be repealed. This is the clarification honorable Speaker on the matter under deliberation in this House.

We should all be aware that behind the figures, this country is greatly affected by such occurrences.

MR SPEAKER: Very well thank you. I believe the clarification given by the Hon Prime Minister has been understood. I call on the Hon Minister of Finance.

Afioga Hon Sili Epa Tuioti: Thank you Mr Speaker for the opportunity. Since we are now considering the improvement of our revenues, there is an issue seen with the questioning of the integrity of auditing accounts given by businesses to the Inland Revenue. A question for the Hon Minister, will it be possible to get external auditors to carry out this work and ensure that the auditing of accounts from these businesses be done accurately, also, overlook where they get their investments. If we check and it is good then we give a clearance. There are some companies that have expanded after three months. The question though, have they paid their taxes? Perhaps this will be a proper measure to take also we are not discriminating their auditors. We are only worried as it could be a conflict of interest. All those who are auditors of these companies should be changed from time to time. I humbly suggest external auditors be considered to evaluate these businesses, not all. Maybe start with a random sample to evaluate and make sure that they are complying with policies.

MR SPEAKER: We should also look at the cars being paid half the duty debt. I call on the Chair person of the Finance Committee.

Afioga Aliimalemanu Alofa Tuuau: Mr Speaker, since the comments made mentioned the Auditor. The idea given is great but just a suggestion; our people already have the experience to overlook such matters. We do not really have to bring in auditors from overseas to do this work. The opinion of changing them from time to time is excellent. Nevertheless I suggest that we use the skills of our own people, our auditors and examiners here are very reliable in doing the work. They are able to carry and do auditing accounts based on integrity submitted from each corporations. Thank you.

MR SPEAKER: Very well. I call on the Hon Minister to continue.

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Afioga Hon TIALAVEA FEA LENIU TIONISIO HUNT: Mr Speaker the auditors at the Ministry are quite capable of carrying out this task for the time being. We are preparing external audits from overseas organizations in New Zealand for assistance. Not only will they be working with the Ministry over a minimal period of time, they will also be carrying out trainings for the audit division. Our staff is well qualified for the work considering that majority of debts is decreasing from one year to the next as clearly provided in their reports. Nevertheless this does not mean the Ministry is ignorant of ways to find more funds. We do not have any minerals neither any other products, it is the VAGST tax that is aiding the development of the country.

As the Hon Prime Minister stated, we cannot close any companies. We are trying to earn a good working relation with our businesses so they will be able to pay in a form of tax. There are a lot of businesses that comply with the timeframe to pay taxes however some are being difficult. The tax collected in 2006 was \$2000 million, it is the policy of the Ministry that tax collection be kept confidential and the names of the debit companies should not be submitted to the Minister. A lump sum is given but not the names of companies, this is restricted under the legislation of the revenue office. Nevertheless the Ministry is trying its best to acquire taxes, as stated in the last six months we collected an extra \$9million from the intended sum. This is 53.4% of our entitlements for this financial year.

The six months starting January until June...

MR SPEAKER: I apologize to the Hon Minister of Revenue, I give the opportunity to the Member for Palauli le Falefa.

Afioga Hon Faumuina Tiatia Faaolatane Liuga: Thank you Mr Speaker for the opportunity. The matter mentioned by the Hon Minister is quite important for our Controller of Custom to overlook the list of people that has arrears, but the Minister cannot look into it.

Hon Minister the legislation should be changed. If you cannot look at it how will you be able to fulfill your duties to the Cabinet and Parliament? *If it is not given to the Finance Committee as then at least you should be able to oversee it.* The legislation should be changed so that the Minister will be able to see this to base his decisions. With respect.

MR SPEAKER: Apologies I call on the Hon Prime Minister.

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Susuga Hon Tuilaepa Auelua Fatialofa Lupesoliai Lolofietele Neioti Aiono Galumalemana Dr. Sailele Malielegaoi: The previous Member is right. I do not know who implemented this ridiculous legislation. It should be reviewed and amended. The State lawyers are present here today, this legislation is impractical and should be evaluated. It must be reviewed because if not, we will never know which companies are corrupt.

MR SPEAKER: I call on the Hon Minister to continue.

Afioga Hon TIALAVEA FEA LENIU TIONISIO HUNT: Thank you, we will try and amend the legislation. As earlier stated we can look at it but there are certain restrictions. We will look into redrafting this legislation as recommended by Parliament. Mr Speaker this concludes clarification on these matters raised by the Members to this Ministry.

I take this opportunity to thank the Chief Executive and Associate especially the Ministry of Revenue for their work. Not only in the previous month but the time we spent working together. I pray that we work together for the next six months because this \$9 million can easily be removed if we fail for one month. I am confident that tax can still be collected to aid the work of the Ministry of Revenue. Failing to do this will affect the developments of the country.

I thank my constituency in all honorary salutations, I also thank the church leaders for their prayers and support to this Member. Pray that we will do well this year, thank you Mr Speaker for the opportunity.

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

Tofa Hon FAIMALOTOA KIKA IEMAIMA STOWERS (Minister of Women Community and Social Development): Thank you for the opportunity. I take this opportunity to thank the Chair for the administration of our work, I commend you for your patience and perseverance. I humbly greet the Hon Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and respectable Members of Parliament.

I acknowledge the support of all Samoa in all honorary respects, Le Ao o le Malo and his Good Lady, the Member of Council of Deputies, *Tumua ma Pule Ituau ma Alataua, Aiga I le tai ma le Vaa o Fonoti*. I also greet the clergymen in all parts of our country for their prayers of blessings upon our country. I greet the Heads of Government Ministries and Corporations here today, who are the force providing several services for this Government. I commend you all for the hard work done for the betterment of this country.

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I also want to acknowledge the Office of the Clerk for the services provided to the Legislative Assembly, thank you all for the hard work.

Lastly I want to thank my constituency for their support Gagaifomauga No.1 in all honorary salutations, also to my village of Manase, *Afio Taito ma ona Alo, alaalatai foi le Fetalaiga ia Tauasa*. I wish you all a prosperous New Year, thank you for the prayers and support.

Mr Speaker I append to praises voiced to our Father above for the blessings upon this Parliament also to all of Samoa listening in to proceedings today. Mr Speaker not many issues was mentioned towards this Ministry. Nevertheless a few recommendations were made to assist with the improvement of the services provided by the Member of Alataua West who is also the Chairperson of Parliament Committee. He stated last night the need to allocate funds for programs in the communities to improve services provided for our people. I am grateful to the Hon Prime Minister for clarifying this matter and I believe the public have understood the explanation given. The main objective of such development is dependent on the village council within villages which is currently designated under this Ministry.

I take this opportunity to further thank the Hon Prime Minister for his words of wisdom especially signifying the importance of carrying out the services by being honest and providing the best for our communities. This is very true if we are not honest with the work we will not be able to develop our villages and our people.

I take this time to clarify further the response by the Hon Prime Minister on the significance of the role of Sui o nuu, Sui tamaitai o nuu. Their role is important for the pulenuu who depend on it in order to maintain the authority of the village council because if this cooperation is maintained through village meetings conducted on a monthly basis the decisions and advice of the village representatives, village council through the alii and faipule in, good governance will be the result.

Furthermore, the delivering of State programs and informing/advising of of the village councils about the matters discussed in Parliament by Members particularly programs implemented by the Government Ministries. It is the main objective of this Ministry to ensure a safe, happy and blessed Samoa. This is dependent on the integrity of our services and us being informative. Speaking further about these programs, there are programs carried out by the Ministry every month within the communities. Our Heads of Government Ministries who are at the core of services there are times when people in the villages bring forward complaints. Some villages make requests for Ministries to come over, say Tuesday or Thursday and note a time although they keep on waiting and waiting but no one turns up.

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Nevertheless, there are unforeseen matters encountered every day. I humbly ask that Chief Executives inform this Ministry that the program will not be met before we will inform the villages. It is only through this Ministry that such programs will be carried out with certainty. Whatever the service I ask that we work together as I earlier stated the Ministry initiative is working together for better outcomes. Although if Ministries are pretentious the people will only make complaints, for example ‘the last time that Ministry came to the constituency was three years ago and since then they have not come back.’ It is important that we communicate and inform our communities of our services so they will understand the work of Government for the betterment of Samoa.

I want to inform the House that there was a program completed by the Ministry for 26 constituencies in Upolu and Savaii titled the District Development Program (DDP). This program will start again next month and Members have already been informed of the days it will take place within their constituencies. This is important since some of the constituencies have already launched their strategic plans some have also noted within their plans the financial assistance needed for the development of their villages. First some of the village councils only thought of awaiting the requests made by their Member in Parliament before a development can take place. Unfortunately they are not aware that there are other means of acquiring assistance which can be allocated by Ministries through grants pertaining to community developments. Therefore for this program that will be carried out in 20+ plus constituencies, please I beg that we assist each other in clarifying this matter. I am not ashamed to say this but there are times when we go out to the villages and they come to me and ask, ‘Hon Minister did you not see our Member? It is difficult to answer. This is similar with meetings held in this room last year.

In the saying, *E le aoaia e Laupua Tamafaiga*, however, the plea for us as Leaders since the Chairperson is the member of the constituency, including the Pulenuu, high chiefs, representatives of Government and women, we are all part of making decisions for the improvement of our people. I humbly ask with the utmost respect for your support, everyone has been informed of the dates the program will be carried out in Savaii and by March, it will be carried out in Upolu.

This is our humble request, thank you for the support while the Ministry endeavors to achieve their objective of collaborating, the more hands the lighter the work, work cannot be done alone without your support. I trust that every constituency is listening in to this announcement, we are trying our best to deliver Cabinet objectives for the benefit of Samoa as a whole.

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This is all Mr Speaker, as I stated earlier there were no queries made to this Ministry, I just pray that the Lord will guide us with our work this year and continue to assist us in developing our country and for us to all work together. I pray for blessings upon the Chair and this Parliament, while I the Member for Gagaifomauga No.1 live, thank you.

MR SPEAKER: Thank you. The clarification by the Minister of Women, Community and Social Development was quite refreshing. Furthermore it is important to work together.

I now give the opportunity to the Hon Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries for his response.

Tofa Hon LOPAOO NATANIELU MUA (Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries): Thank you Mr Speaker. Firstly I humbly greet the Speaker of the House, the Leader and the opposite side of Chamber. I also acknowledge the Heads of Government Departments and Corporations also the Office of the Clerk for their services, I commend you for the hard work. I humbly greet Le Ao o le Malo and his Good lady, Member of Council of Deputies, the Chief Justice and Judiciary and all of Samoa to the respects of *Tama ma Aiga, Aiga ma Tama, Le Usoga Pule ma Tumua, Aiga I le Tai ma le Vaa o Fonoti*.

I humbly greet my constituency in all honorary salutations I greet as well the Secretary of the Methodist Senate and all the Church Leaders within the constituency of Vaisigano No.1.

There were no matters mentioned in the Supplementary Budget for the Ministry but if we were mentioned it was made towards our work in progress. Most of the work carried out by the Ministry is done in collaboration with Members where we met last year, moreover your requests are always answered. We only ask that we be patient moreover we will follow whatever the Minister of Finance allocates to the Ministry through the assistance from overseas grants. Once we get these grants we will be able to carry out the needs as requested. We have a new venture which is the seaweed, at the moment officers of the Ministry have set out to evaluate this prospect and will report the outcome into the House in the future.

I will conclude here since there was nothing much mentioned towards this Ministry, I only pray that we find good results in our Main Estimates in June. Then we will speak further in regards to certain programs and also voice requests to the Ministry of Finance for future developments needed in the next year. With respect Mr Speaker I humbly conclude thank you.

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MR SPEAKER: Thank you Hon Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries. We now come to the Minister of Works, Transport and Infrastructure. I call on Afioga Papaliitele Lee Hang.

Susuga Hon PAPALIITELE NIKO LEE HANG (Minister of Works, Transport and Infrastructure): Thank you Mr Speaker for the opportunity to respond to the queries made towards this Ministry by the Members. Firstly I greet the respectable Members of the House. Mr Speaker, the Hon Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister, Cabinet, Associate Ministers respectable Members of the House, the Clerk and the Office of the Legislative Assembly. I also welcome this morning the Heads of Government Departments and Corporations. I acknowledge the support of all Samoa from the highest mountain to the coastal lands. I greet my constituency in all honorary salutations of Urban East.

Mr Speaker the queries raised are the usual requests from Members, it is made in relation to the Supplementary Estimates and the Main Estimates that is currently under discussion. This includes public road works, street lights, water supply and the improvement of services by the Samoa Shipping Corporation. I have noted down all the requests and recommendations for the improvement of services of the Ministry and Corporations under my designation.

I have already responded to some of the queries raised by the Members with the assistance from the Hon Prime Minister. I just want to voice sincere gratitude to the Finance and Expenditure Committee, the Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and Members for the report tabled regarding the Land Transport Authority. There are two recommendations made, firstly, the Ministry to look into the issue of road humps. We accept the recommendation and the Ministry will review it to see the appropriate size measurements of what the road humps will be.

Secondly, the contribution of cars to increasing gas emissions, CO2 emission especially the Electric Power Corporation using diesel for their generators. The Vice Chairperson of the Finance Committee and Member for Palauli le Falefa emphasized the importance of the affects of poisonous gas to our environment.

Mr Speaker I thought the Member was going to give his permission for the use of the waterfall in Sili for a Government development, through a Hydropower Plant that will assist with drinking for Salafai. The truth is Mr Speaker from the research undertaken by specialized engineers on hydro power, it was noted that this waterfall in Sili is the most suitable resource for this development. This will greatly benefit the public living in Salafai also those residing here in Tumua.

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There was a sermon given by a Pastor, which emphasized the Book of Proverbs Chapter 3. The Member and Vice Chairperson should know this verse since he is one of the speakers of the Church of Nazarene. The sermon of a pastor on one of the verses in Proverbs, God says; "Do not say to your neighbor, 'Come back tomorrow and I will give it to you', when you already have it with you." It is the will of God for such blessing to be shared unto your neighbor,' now that the upstanding...

Afioga Hon Faumuina Tiatia Faaolatane Liuga: Mr Speaker...

MR SPEAKER: I call on the Member for Palauli le Falefa.

Afioga Hon Faumuina Tiatia Faaolatane Liuga: Mr Speaker I thank the Hon Papaliitele Lee Hang for trying his best to lure me to take the floor to speak on this matter.

The waterfall in Sili, I went with the Hon Prime Minister there and got the consensus from the village. I think it was 2003, 2004 when a change occurred which resulted to a disagreement between the village and the Minister then. This does not mean that the water was granted rather it is the expectation of the village to serve this Government honorable Speaker. Although there is a present problem with the village council, even though they gave the Hon Prime Minister and me the go, it is best if the matter be consulted again with the elders of the village.

There was a road that was constructed during that time but when changes were implemented the water could not be reached anymore. It was decided that a road be constructed towards the mountains where the waterfall is located. There is a reservoir at the top of the mountains between the villages of Sili and Gataivai.

As for the Proverbs stated, I do not know which verse is it. The Member is a good singer at the church. The Hon Minister produces the songs and he has a gentle soothing voice. Every time he sings you can see tears streaming down his face because he can feel the Holy Spirit. I recommend that the access road for Sili be constructed.

MR SPEAKER: I call on the Hon Minister of Works, Transport and Infrastructure.

Susuga Hon PAPALIITELE NIKO LEE HANG: The Vice Chairperson I thank you for the clarification made in relation to the matter you and the Hon Prime Minister attempted to gain.

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In the bible verse, *‘Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find, knock, and it shall be opened unto you’*. Let me finish the sermon of the pastor that I heard, although, I do not recall the verse. There is a verse that goes, *‘Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God’*. Because that blessing is not yours, it is a blessing from God.

Afioga Hon Faumuina Tiatia Faaolatane Liuga: Mr Speaker the Minister is talking about the Book of Proverbs by Solomon. It is written in the book that ‘you anointed my head with oil,’ meaning, filled with the presence of the Holy Spirit and thy cup is overflowing. This means blessings will flow towards you, this is why Hon Papaliitele, you have to be anointed before blessings is flown towards others, with respect.

Susuga Hon PAPALIITELE NIKO LEE HANG: The anointment was given to Solomon, he was the son of the Lord which is no different from what we are trying to convey...

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

MR SPEAKER: Pardon the two church Ministers, I call on the Hon Prime Minister.

Susuga Hon Tuilaepa Auelua Fatialofa Lupesoliai Lolofietele Neioti Aiono Galumalemana Dr. Sailele Malielegaoi: The electricity cannot be powered from the arguments of the Members. The important aspect here is to generate water for electricity as the Government has wasted money in building that road.

MR SPEAKER: Let us listen to the recommendations; I call on the Hon Minister.

Susuga Hon PAPALIITELE NIKO LEE HANG: I will speak no further about the Bible, Mr Speaker, as the Minister for Electricity, I wish to express the importance of clarifying this matter. The Hon Prime Minister has stated investment already made for this waterfall in Sili for the development of the State. I will try my best to revisit this matter.

Mr Speaker I am confident that Salafai will greatly benefit not only with electricity but with water supply which will minimize the effects of gas emissions to our environment.

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Furthermore, we ought to achieve the goals of Government to stop the use of electricity and change it to renewable energy which is electricity found from water, solar energy, biomass and others.

Mr Speaker the truth is we will all benefit if the village of Sili allows us the use of their natural source or waterfall, which a blessing to Sili from God.

We will be able to save a lot if we will not use the diesel generators anymore in support of building and improving our roads, especially speed bumps mentioned by the Committee that has contributed to poisonous gas emissions caused by cars.

Mr Speaker these are the matters mentioned in the report of the...

Afioga Hon Faumuina Tiatia Faaolatane Liuga: Mr Speaker since the speech is nearing the end...

MR SPEAKER: I call on the Member for Palauli le Falefa.

Afioga Hon Faumuina Tiatia Faaolatane Liuga: Mr Speaker, thank you Hon Papaliitele Lee Hang for the clarification. There are parts of the road without bumps, but the objective for implementing it is for the safety of the public. Although there are more people that are not safe from gas emissions created by these humps.

The hospital does not have one there, it is only a line drawn there but no hump. In front of our school at Puleia there is no hump, and the cars do not go slow. This is the same for Salelologa where lines are drawn and even no gas emissions is being released and cars are not damaged. People die from poisonous gas but less people die from drunk driving. The lines drawn on the crossings are alright, people only get hurt if they are drunk driving. Also another hassle for the people is paying for car parts when their cars are damaged. This is less money the Hon Minister wants to spend on foreign exchange. With respect thank you.

MR SPEAKER: I ask the Hon Minister to conclude we are nearing our recess time.

Susuga Hon PAPALIITELE NIKO LEE HANG: I thank the member, I have thought that he was not going to mention bumps anymore since the Hon Prime Minister mentioned that he was the one who instated it. Now why are you criticizing the humps, I will see to it that all humps be removed...

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Afioga Hon Faumuina Tiatia Faaolatane Liuga: There are only two road bumps that we installed with the Hon Prime Minister, it was done after the road was sealed and asphalt was constructed for the road to Alafua. Furthermore both humps have been removed with respect.

MR SPEAKER: Well...

Susuga Hon PAPALIITELE NIKO LEE HANG: I will set aside this matter of road humps since it is taking up time. Mr Speaker the recommendations made by the Committee will be used on the matter concerning bumps and gas emissions affecting our environment. I conclude with a clarification on the matters questioned and pray blessings be upon the Chair of the House, pray for your good health to administer the proceedings of Parliament, blessings be upon all Members of the House, Soifua.

MR SPEAKER: Thank you for the clarification. We have arrived at our usual recess hour when we return we will continue with the next Minister.

I announce that Proceedings of the House be set aside for our usual recess hour.

Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly were set aside for normal recess at 10.47am until 11.32pm.

Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly recommenced with the continuation of the second reading debate of the Supplementary Appropriation (No.1) 2018/2019.

MR SPEAKER: I announce that Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly resumed. I thank the Members for their patience, I am certain that we have found new strength to resume our work.

We have come to the Minister of Tourism, I call on the Minister for his response on matters raised.

Afioga Hon SALA FATA PINATI (Minister of Tourism): I humbly greet the honorable Speaker and respectable Cabinet, the Hon Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, Associate Ministers and all Members of the House.

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I also greet the Heads of Government Ministries and Corporations in our gathering this morning. I believe we have been refreshed with the tea served, I move to speak on the role of this Ministry in relation to the Budget under deliberation. Mr Speaker there are not many Members that gave queries to this Ministry, I believe there was only one that spoke about the hotels. I will direct my speech on that matter straight away. I believe that every business faces challenges every day.

I convey sincere thanks to those who are faced with serving our overseas visitors especially the hotels. In all honesty only those who are brave enough, are able to do this work. For the clarification of the House and I am sure everyone else agrees with me, that money is everything. First you make a business plan then foresee where you will be able to earn fast profit. A lot of people are keen to do business, and it does not mean that when you get a degree, then you are good at earning money. A business acumen is dependent on time change and the gimmicks you use to attract people to visit our country. There is belief that this one thing that is lacking for most of our hotel business operators and our own local people. If we look at it there is a lot of money being used to operate businesses in Samoa. As a witness, most of the established stores seen today are by the Chinese people.

However, what is happening now is that majority of our people like to shop at the Chinese stores instead of the ones operated by our own people. Although, not all businesses are the same, if we look at the business owned by the Minister of Works, it is running well and does it belong to a Samoan, well, half Samoan Chinese. What strategies are these business operators using to attract customers? Firstly, there are businesses that started off by selling bread for \$1, moving on, it becomes \$2. When the Chinese came, they sold it for \$1.50 whilst the Samoans were selling it for \$2. So., when you ask someone to go get bread for tea in the morning, what is their choice, the \$2 or the \$1.50? This is similar feeling towards our hotels, everyone has their own idea of making business, nobody wants to set up a hotel and aim to go broke, no.

We all want to do something that will earn us money in return in order to look support our families and children. However, that aim could not be achieved. The hoteliers should also plan and base their strength on what they can do. There are some hotels that consist of 12 to 18 rooms and it cost \$2 million to build. If tourists from overseas come and stay in all 20 rooms that cost \$500 tala, that is the only money they will give compared to the \$2 million. This is a big percentage compared to the 2million which is the problem faced by our local businesses.

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Another aspect to look at is hygiene. There are some hotels that are not clean and provide poor services but costs too much. If we look at Taumeasina, it costs \$400 - \$500 per night and what about the service? How is the maintenance? All these areas are being considered by the tourists. As for us we look at what is affordable and where we want to spend our money on. The method used to market hotels overseas is different with the locally-owned operations and those owned by foreign business operators. Overseas owners have more freedom, they own two hotels. I have witnessed on weekends or during the week hotels like Sea breeze and Return to Paradise which always have a high occupancy rate. Even though it is pricey, people would still go there since it is worth their money. People have different reasons for visiting, some come here to know more of Samoa. What do we have available for them? It is our hospitality and integrity. This is where everything is determined, if you go and clean the rooms, do not touch anything but just clean.

Secondly, attention, you have to be attentive. It does not matter whether it is a tourist from overseas or local we have to show them our hospitality and friendly smile. This is the issue with us, whenever we come across the rich people, you all of a sudden become attentive, however all visitors should be treated the same. In business there is a saying that goes, 'the client is always right.' Even if you think you are not wrong, the client is still right and we have to be humble to maintain peace. We should consider in business first impressions are important. If the tourist is satisfied with the first impression you give and they will keep coming back. But if they treat you badly, they will not come to your hotel as there are other places they can go to.

This is the problem with us Samoans, we want to be millionaire for one day only. What about the Chinese? They start from 1 sene and gradually grow until they earn more money. What is this called?

The bank does not come to you, it is us alone that have to find a way for cash flow. This is the survivability that every business depends on.

Mr Speaker, I conclude my clarification, by giving great thanks to the Members of the House who are the big fish amongst us this morning. Our Team A, this is what I call the employees of the Public Trust, Audit Office, Statistics and Tourism Authority. They are good although they still need further improvement, I hope we will achieve more this year with experience and service, serve with integrity. Soifua and God Bless.

MR SPEAKER: Thank you Hon Minister of Tourism for that outstanding speech. I now call on the Minister of Health for his clarification.

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Afioga Hon TUITAMA TALALELEI TUITAMA (Minister of Health): I humbly greet the respects of Maota, Hon Mr Speaker, the Hon Prime Minister and Cabinet, respectable Members of Parliament, Heads of Government Ministries present and the Office of the Clerk serving this Parliament. Lest I acknowledge the support of our country, the presence of O Le Ao o le Malo, Members of the Council of Deputies and respectable members of the public.

Mr Speaker not many comments were made towards this Ministry, I will now respond to the matters raised by some Members in light of bringing insight in accordance to discussions on the Budget this Sitting day.

Some of the Members mentioned the matter concerning health centers within the constituencies. This is not a new request raised by the Members in almost every Sitting. Moreover, it is the duty of the Member to voice the requests of their constituencies on the services available for the benefit of their constituencies. Unfortunately, in regards to health centers, it is the same with schools, the decision is administered and approved by the Cabinet before they are a go. This is the same when a health center is removed, the decision is passed by Cabinet based on general perception. There are a lot of other areas the Ministry has to consider and give their recommendations on before it is passed on to Cabinet for their decision. There are certain factors to consider like the locations and the distribution of health service delivery from one health center to the next, as well as the number of staff that will be operating these centers whether there will be enough people to provide the services, all of this is reported to Cabinet for their decision. The Ministry is following guidelines and Laws by which our services are governed by including the building of health clinics. For the clarification of the House, the drafting of legislation for the two Ministries merge is on the way that will incorporate the upgrading of the rural healthcare services, ensure better accessibility to the clinics and guarantee the equal distribution and availability of doctors so that the services in Apia will be the same as Tuasivi. Let us be patient the Government is currently commencing their plans to counter these problems as raised in the concerns of the member in regards to the services provided in the rural areas.

Another matter Mr Speaker is our National Kidney Foundation, I have already stated earlier the relocation of our dialysis unit so it can cater for everyone since there is now an increasing number of people with diabetes. We are not only looking at the needs because we are now at the end results, kidneys are damaged and now machines need to make it function.

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The Ministry is now looking at the causes why kidneys are being damaged so measures can be taken, as one of the Members mentioned preventative measures and early intervention. This is undertaken in programs implemented for villages, doctors carry out consultations on nutrition and food that causes kidney failure. The dialysis unit also has a program for those who are nearly affected. There are quite a lot of them 300 to be exact who are taking medicine for prevention so they will not be put under dialysis. If they do reach that stage they will not need dialysis since they...

MR SPEAKER: Pardon the Hon Minister of Health I call on the Hon Prime Minister.

Susuga Hon Tuilaepa Auelua Fatialofa Lupesoliai Lolofietele Neioti Aiono Galumalemana Dr. Sailele Malielegaoi: Mr Speaker I rise with respect to the Hon Minister, I pity some of the Members of the House seeing that this group is nearing time for them to be taken to dialysis. This means there was investigation undertaken but I do not recall any study for this Parliament. Perhaps, the majority of Members on the opposite side are already affected therefore prevention is better than cure. I believe this is the reason why some Members continuously interrupt Cabinet because they have high blood pressure and go to dialysis after that. Do we have a program like this for Members, if not organize doctors to come and carry out checkups before the Sitting is concluded.

MR SPEAKER: Very well. I call on the Hon Minister.

Afioga Hon TUITAMA TALALELEI TUITAMA: Thank you Leader of the House for the interruption.

MR SPEAKER: Apologies Hon Minister of Health, I call on the Member for Palauli le Falefa.

Afioga Hon Faumuina Tiatia Faaolatane Liuga: Mr Speaker, the matter mentioned by the Hon Prime Minister is important. I already undertook tests for blood and kidney last Monday. The result was, my kidneys will be alright for the next 70 years. I am trying to find someone to give one of my kidneys to as they are both healthy. The rest of this side all have very healthy kidneys. With respect.

MR SPEAKER: I call on the Member for Anoamaa West.

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Tofa Hon Laufo Fonotoe Nuafesili Pierre Laufo (Anoamaa West): Mr Speaker because I was the one that raised this issue on dialysis. The day before yesterday, I visited my doctor for a checkup and everything is okay. I take the floor to convey that there was a time when we had the camp at Peseta Hall whereby, all Members of HRPP had their checkup. I was talking to the Member on this side, perhaps, he refuses to stand up. I asked him, how are you? He responded I am worried, I asked why? They said, I need pre-dialysis. He then went overseas to get another checkup with his doctor, and it turned out he was not sick at all. I reiterate that this side has already been checked.

MR SPEAKER: Thank you for clarifying this matter.

Afioga Hon TUITAMA TALALELEI TUITAMA: Thank you for the interruption. Even though we joke around these matters, it is evident with the figures given that diabetes is a major problem in the country. The Hon Prime Minister is right this is one reason why kidneys are damaged, it is due to high blood pressure, diabetes and obesity. Diabetes is a risky disease once you have it you will have to be very careful with what you eat. There are certain risks faced by diabetics, it affects vision that leads to blindness and it also affects kidneys which results to dialysis. It affects the hands and feet which could result to both being removed and then they end up in a wheelchair. If kidneys are damaged the person will have high blood pressure. Even though it is only diabetes, the diseases that come with it are many. This is the why Government is implementing an awareness program within rural communities, as stated by the Chairperson of the Finance Committee, the PEN (Package for Essential Non Communicable Diseases) is carried out. The initiative undertaken by PEN is to ensure that communities and those with high blood pressure and diabetes understand the risks. Also for Welfare Committees to monitor and check diabetic and high blood pressure patients and report back to doctors, and remind them to take their medication. This is another problem, those who are affected finish their medication and do not go back for a refill, and others would the medicine by not taking them at all. Some of these people are putting a waste to our pension.

Mr Speaker another raising matter is the service in Savaii. At the moment there are three patients in Savaii and they spend six months in dialysis. This includes three sessions of dialysis a week.

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The capacity of the dialysis unit in Savaii may reach nine months. Nine months means 18 patients doing treatment three times a week, if more patients are admitted then it will be 36 for six days a week, this is double the number per week. The hospital facility in Tuasivi has a huge capacity perhaps for the next five years. This is the response to the raising matter.

Mr Speaker there was a question on redundancy for the merge. In regards to redundancy, the Government follows set procedures and Laws for things like this as matters of this sort had occurred before. Legislations have already been set by the Ministry to guide those who are eligible in these posts. We cannot ignore the guidelines already set and implemented under law for such procedure.

Mr Speaker this is a clarification on the queries made to the Ministry, the Ministry is awaiting the drafting of a new legislation which will be tabled soon. Once it is tabled we will be able to discuss further the merge and restructure of the Ministry.

May the Lord guide the administration of this Sitting in the sharing of wisdom and knowledge of the dignity of the House. God bless the support of Samoa. I thank my constituency of Faleasiu for their support, especially my spiritual parents and servants of God who are praying for this Parliament. Soifua and God bless.

MR SPEAKER: I thank the Hon Minister of Health for the clarification, with respects to Faletolu and Fuaifale.

It is now time for the Hon Minister of Commerce, Industry and Labour.

Afioga Hon LAUTAFI FIO SELAFI PURCELL (Minister of Commerce, Industry and Labour): Thank you Mr Speaker. First of all I humbly greet the respects of the House, the Hon Mr Speaker, the Leader of Government, Cabinet, Associate Ministers the dignity of that side of the Chamber the Chairpersons of Parliamentary Committee and respectable Members. I also greet all of Samoa in all honorary salutations, thank you for your support to this Parliament especially to its first Sitting this year.

I greet the Heads of Government Ministries and Corporations here this morning. Greetings to the newly appointed Chief Executives and to the returning Executives who have been reappointed for another three year term. I ask for your cooperation because you are all the hands and feet of this Parliament especially for Ministries and the Cabinet.

I humbly greet my constituency of Satupaitea in all honorary salutations. I thank the faletua and tausi, saoa and all the servants of God for the prayers voiced for the welfare of this constituency. Thank you the support given to this Member to represent our constituency.

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Mr Speaker I will try and answer the overall queries made by Members towards the Ministry. Perhaps I will not be able answer each individual Member but I will try and clarify the work carried out by this Ministry. A lot of the issues raised have already been clarified yesterday. Other matters dealt with by the Ministry are minimum wage. The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Labor are reviewing the Bill before matters are submitted to Cabinet for recommendations into the House. As the Hon Prime Minister stated it is not easy because we are considering Government wages, this is the same with minimum wage it is a complex process. Our Government hopes that our people receive up to date knowledge the same as overseas, this is allocated under the apprenticeship program. The Ministry is currently working in partnership with the University and Samoa Qualifications Authority to ensure trainings for our people in several trades. These trades being taught are based on the level being used by overseas countries Australia and New Zealand. It is easier to liaise with these countries since they are closer to us. Also they are assisting us in other areas of expertise such as learning in vocational studies.

The matter mentioned by one of the Members which is a concern today are security officers working in hotel bars. I am saddened with the research done that these are the people who are creating most problems. Perhaps they are not taught well by their employers. The Ministry will review this matter, we already have a National Tri Partied Committee which includes representatives of Government, employees and employers perhaps we will find a solution to this issue here. It is the responsibility of the employer to train the employees. Unfortunately it has resulted to circumstances where the lives of people are threatened therefore Government will have to exercise proper measures on such issue.

One of the Members mentioned the issue of illegal drugs being brought into the country perhaps this has contributed to unruly behavior of those employed as security officers. This leads to disorderly manners such as throwing a drunken person outside or a rude person being told off. This is not acceptable nevertheless leave this matter for our consideration. Another option would be to ban employers from taking in people seeking work off the streets. It is best to hire people who are well educated in a related field which will be better for future development.

There was a mention of the Accident Compensation Cooperation, at the moment ACC are carrying out a review together with the coverage of what they can do. There are different benefits earned nevertheless review is undertaken on the legislation and work of the Corporation.

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We will be looking at ways that will assist our people perhaps some are not eligible yet to be covered by ACC. A representative of the Cooperation went to New Zealand to evaluate ways to assist with the improvement of services. At the moment they are currently reviewing different aspects before a report is given to Cabinet for their recommendations.

A Member voiced a few opinions on the matter together with the need to change the Act. I thank the Member for Salega for the recommendations perhaps we will review the changes stated. Every recommendation made within the House is taken into consideration by this Ministry. For clarification of the House I always hold meetings with the Chief Executives of my Ministries every month. We meet to discuss the work and share ideas in relation to what needs to be improved and developed. There are 18 Ministries under this designation and the objective I always emphasize during meetings is to serve our people and develop Samoa. Such issues mentioned in the House are considered within our meetings and for future improvement.

I am grateful to our public trading bodies, you have heard the Government is quite thankful for your contribution through our dividends. I hope this continues as we go forward. I believe there is still room for improvement not only on our services but with the earnings we acquire. At the moment there is limited funds however we are dependent upon, I commend the Ministry who are always paying their dividends. There are some who are too lazy. I commend the Chief Executive of the Ministry of Public Enterprises even though there have been criticisms made towards you, you still carry on courageously

MR SPEAKER: I call upon the Member for Palauli le Falefa.

Afioga Hon Faumuina Tiatia Faaolatane Liuga: Thank you Hon Minister. I commend you for the hard work. I wanted to ask about the issue related to ACC, remember the accident at Tafua where a member of my family was affected. This member of my family has not been employed there for a month. Once the accident took place the Accident Compensation assisted with funeral arrangements also money was given to his mother. Furthermore he received benefits for the next five years yet he was not even employed for a month.

Secondly, Mr Speaker especially the Hon Minister, I spoke to you earlier about the Unit Trust of Samoa. The UTOS in my understanding and the reason why it was set up is not a trading body. It is similar to the nature of NPF, ACC and SLAC but now dividends have been given to set up this organization, they earn 200, 300 a year.

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I thought these dividends could be returned to support the unit earnings for these people. This is the same with the entitlements given to NPF, they have to develop interests so they can have shares in buying companies like SamoaTel. With respect.

MR SPEAKER: I call on the Minister to conclude.

Afioga Hon LAUTAFI FIO SELAFI PURCELL: I thank the Member for the interruption. These are the benefits the ACC is currently working on as stated earlier, there are different coverage and I cannot discuss all of it right now. If there are Members who want to understand, further I recommend you come to the Ministry so they can explain it to you. The Member has stated an example which is an accident we are all aware of. The families of those affected voiced their gratitude perhaps there was an error with the handling of the work which resulted to such tragedy. I will be consulting the Minister of Finance about this matter. This is not the only cooperation that has changed from trading body to beneficiary body. It happened before nevertheless this matter will be discussed with the Minister of Finance before a response is given on the matter.

I thank our trading bodies moreover for those who are lethargic you have heard that our economy is dependent on your dividends. Do not attempt to find ways to avoid paying dividends on a monthly or yearly basis. Take heed of that.

Our seasonal workers this scheme is going well. One of the Members voiced the benefits of this scheme for his constituency. This is the objective of the Government as stated in the Strategic Development of Samoa, improve the quality of life for all. These are some of the programs that will achieve such goals, the Member also mentioned these people having four cars and a new house and that is the quality of life.

It is not an easy task because everyone has different expectations. There is not a single Member who has not asked to give his people the first opportunities. However it is also not easy to meet the requirements set by overseas employers both in New Zealand and Australia for such labor. Even though we try our best, the conditions set by overseas employers needing people with special skills is hard. They do not want to change the workers every seven months because they will have to be trained again. The Ministry is trying their best to adhere to conditions and ensure that benefits are equally distributed throughout Samoa.

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If there are people who want this opportunity I pray for your patience because there is a long list of people waiting but there are less opportunities. New Zealand alone has set conditions on the limitation of workers needed from the Pacific. As for Australia it is alright hopefully this year a lot of our people will be able to get opportunities to go and work there.

Our airline I am very happy Mr Speaker with the mention and support given to our airline. Perhaps this is the incentive even though others did not mention the matter but Samoa Airways is doing very well these days. This time last year it was really hard trying to convince Members to support this dream, it is a dream for all of us. This is a dream to take us forward. It is now been a year and a few months since we started and we have taken over Air New Zealand. The reason why we implemented this airline was to make it easier and cheaper for our people to go overseas and come into the country. It has now been achieved. I am grateful for this achievement as I mentioned last year, it takes a nation to run an airline. This development has become a success, with the support of our people and Members. There are times when we are faced with difficulties but this is how business works. We will be getting another airline next month. It is a new plane at the moment it is being painted but they have installed the chairs in it yesterday. There is an extra 20 seats and it has a bigger freight capacity than the one we have now. Samoa Airways hopes to compete with New Zealand with a plane that has a bigger capacity to take more freight. The lease we have now is much affordable than the one we used to have before because it is our own people that have been trained to take over this plane. The new plane will replace the one we are using now, this plane will be returned and we will use the 737 max. This is the latest model for the 737A fleet. It is a milestone for us in the development of our country. Maybe June, July we will get the two new planes, then we will have two planes running. Our dream is to have two or three planes as recommended by plane experts that wrote the report, a country should have two, three planes to start a fleet. Although we were brave enough to have only one maybe by next year we will have another nevertheless we are dependent on the support of our Government on this endeavor.

I greet the Board of Directors for Samoa Airways we did not go through an easy path to implement this endeavor especially the General Manager. It was not easy being criticized by those who want to destroy this dream nevertheless they never see to the good it has done to this country. I thank the Parliament and all of Samoa for the support given to develop our airline, it is the airline of Government and all of Samoa.

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Mr Speaker these are the queries made with respect thank you for the opportunity. I can see the Chair is ridden with illness but it has not stopped him from administering our orders especially the Members of that side who are being difficult. Thank you.

MR SPEAKER: Thank you. I thank the Minister for the clarification. I pray blessings upon you for the development of our country. We now come to the Deputy Prime Minister. I call on the Deputy Prime Minister with respect.

Afioga Hon FIAME NAOMI MATAAFA (Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Natural Resources and Environment): Mr Speaker and respectable Members of the House I move with respect to respond on behalf of the Government to queries on the Supplementary Appropriation No.1 2018/2019 debated. I thank the Heavenly Father for his love in guiding the Chair and Members here in good health. I take this opportunity to wish everyone a prosperous New Year, praying that the Lord will guide us with our work this year.

Mr Speaker first I want to thank the Finance Committee for their report on the Supplementary Appropriation No.1. We accept the recommendations made towards this Ministry. We have seen the initiative by the Government to increase wages for Government Ministries which will be in proportion. I believe this is not a small feat for Government to distribute funds from time to time. Nevertheless it is appropriate to do it now considering the high cost of living. Not only will this benefit the public servants but also everyone in general with other benefits. I am grateful for the additional funds given to pay some of our debts. Also to assist with emergency measures undertaken during natural disasters. We have now used the Digicel pole for our siren during times when disasters struck.

Mr Speaker, some of the matters raised by Members included the use of solar power. I am certain that Members are aware of the objective set by Government that by 2025, the country should hundred percent be covered with the usage of renewable energy. It is not an easy task, although it is noted in the work progress that we can achieve the current objective with five hundred percent. Renewable energy implemented within our country includes solar, hydro, wind energy being implemented in Aleipata and bio gas set up in other areas.

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These are small projects but we are dependent on STEC for the major project to generate electricity by burning discarded grass. The solar energy projects implemented have now been set up throughout the country. We are still using lights powered by electricity but there are also some now powered by solar energy. Priority of solar lights has been set up in rural communities that have schools and church compounds.

This is the same for the Apia township area including Salafai in the hope to lighten up the public areas. Not only is it for beautification but it will also bring safety for the traveling public. I strongly believe more people will be using the solar energy in the future. This will contribute to achieving the objective of using renewable energy by the people to hundred percent in the country. Another project implemented by the Ministry is the 2 million tree program. Trees contribute to the consuming of carbon dioxide or poisonous gases that safeguards the health of people. Moreover trees are important not only to eliminate poisonous gases but also to protect our coastal areas, watershed areas and our forests.

This is one of the objectives of the Ministry, to encourage people to plant more trees like coconut trees, an initiative by the Ministry of Agriculture. The Ministry of Agriculture also have programs like the planting of more breadfruit trees which has a lot of benefits, like making flour and generate the growth of the forest. This does mean that only the trees mentioned are growth in forests, forest is a natural resource of the country. I humbly ask our Members and representatives of our constituencies to let us work together in this area. If plants are needed then we will supply it to the people since we have a lot up at Nuu. There are also programs being carried out in several areas for cultivating small trees. It is not a hard task to do, you can just break off a branch from a tree and grow it. We also have coconuts that can be planted to get coconut trees. Do not be dependent on the Government for everything. Planting trees is what we do casually, I ask everyone for their assistance on the matter. Let us work together to protect our environment, coastal shorelines and water catchment areas for the safety of our surroundings to support the wellbeing of our country.

Mr Speaker our seawall. The conditions for building our seawalls is based on conditions or principles to protect Government assets like our roads. There are some rivers like the major development that is currently under construction for the Vaisigano Bridge that are being prioritized. There is a connection between the requests for seawalls and the replanting of trees.

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The planting of trees will help reduce soil being washed away from the roads and the growing of mangroves can assist with maintaining the erosion of the shoreline. We already have small programs in place for such matters nevertheless requests are still being voiced for seawalls. We have to consider our Budget, the funds should be used wisely based on what it will benefit. An example some of the requests stated seawalls are needed to protect Committee Houses, I am not saying it is not important. The allocation of \$2 million is based on what can bring benefit which is the protection of the Committee house and Government roads when we have the construction of the seawall areas. The Ministry is undertaking consultations with the villages on certain developments needed. This is being carried out with the assistance of the Ministry of Women with the objective of finding the entire needs of the communities that are required. Not only are the requests being voiced in this House but also meetings carried out between the village and the Ministry to consult the necessary developments and projects that that are needed in all areas of the country. This is also where the work of the Government is based upon.

Mr Speaker some Members mentioned the initiative to importance of banning plastics. We are all aware that by the end of this month, plastics ban will officially become effective. I thank the businesses for adhering to the policies implemented by the State towards this initiative. It is expected that by the end of this month, we will ban all plastic such as plastic bags, straws and others. This is just a start but we will continue with this initiative and work together with the business developments. It is the duty of the Government to emphasize its policies and ensure proper measures are taken in finding solutions to replace ban products for the safety of our environment.

An example Mr Speaker and Parliament, during faalavelave we are used to seeing those white foam plates and plastic water bottles. We do not care how it can affect the environment and how expensive it is to cater such event. On the other hand, perhaps we could spend this money elsewhere than wasting it on such things. There was a Member who mentioned the use of plastic flowers which should also be banned. There are a lot of negative factors that contributes to this initiative and it is quite broad. We already have a lot of plastic wastes mounting up on our lands and have spread across our coastal shores thus destroying our environment. The implementation of this task is not going to be easy, the important aspect here is people assisting us on this matter. The truth is we have to change our mindset and habits. Do not become attached with using plastics because we have now seen the major impacts it has on the environment and the wellbeing of our people.

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Another matter Mr Speaker is the mention of using public areas to sell goods. It is not something new, there are a lot of Ministries working together to resolve this matter. Our Ministry is giving the opportunity for those carrying out such businesses. This is a matter under the Ministry of Commerce, we look after the roads together with the police force who overlook the safety of the public. We try to be considerate by ensuring the cleanliness and beautification of our capital and by trying to give small businesses a chance to develop. The opinion made is important perhaps this matter should be put before the Cabinet for a decision. Especially with the ongoing project headed by the Prime Minister on beautifying our urban area especially Apia the capital.

The matter of cleaning our waterfall and drainages, this is a work in collaboration with the Land Transport Authority. We monitor these areas to ensure the cleanliness but the problem is that our people keep on littering. It seems we will need to draft legislation on the issue of littering. For some of you who have traveled overseas like Singapore, although it is clean, it is one of the strictest countries. It is difficult to say that everything we do must be in compliance with the law. It is my expectation that Samoans are people who are well educated. We are also people who live in a clean environment as majority of those visiting Samoa always say, Samoa is beautiful and the villages are clean. However, we are aware that some people are still seen disposing rubbish in public areas. This is one major challenge that we are faced with today, we are a small island but the waste disposal is getting high. If we are not cautious with this habit, we will risk a serious problem. This is something we can all do, use our common sense and we do not need a law to enforce it. Although if a law is necessary, I will gladly do it like the one carried out in Singapore. This will ensure that our people will stop being foolish by littering in the country.

Mr Speaker I now conclude my speech with the clarification made towards the queries raised by Members. God bless our Proceedings, Soifua.

MR SPEAKER: I thank the Deputy Prime Minister for the clarification. It is now time for the Hon Prime Minister.

Susuga Hon TUILAEP AUELUA FATIALOFA LUPESOLIAI LOLOFIETELE NEIOTI AIONO GALUMALEMANA Dr. SAILELE MALIELEGAOI: Mr Speaker a vote of thanks to the Committees and Members of the House as already being voiced by the Deputy Prime Minister and Ministers of Cabinet.

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**Supplementary Appropriation Bill (No.1) 2018/2019
– consideration in detail**

This is why being last is beneficial as most of the queries have been answered. Nevertheless I have already responded to other matters raised. This is why Hon Mr Speaker, with the few minutes left, let us consider the Budget in detail.

MR SPEAKER: Debate on the second reading of the Supplementary Appropriation Bill (No.1) 2018/2019 has now concluded. Question will now be put pursuant to the motion moved on the 24th December 2018.

Motion moved on the 24th December was approved and the Supplementary Appropriation Bill (No.1) 2018/2019 was read a second time.

**SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION BILL (NO.1) 2018/2019
– consideration in detail**

MR SPEAKER: Our next order is the consideration in detail of the Supplementary Appropriation Bill (No.1) 2018/2019. The Legislative Assembly will now consider the Supplementary Appropriation Bill (No.1) in detail.

During consideration in detail of the Bill Members can refer to the report of the Finance and Expenditure Committee on P.P.2018/2019 No.94 First Supplementary Estimates 2018/2019.

Pursuant to Standing Orders 135, consideration in detail starts with Schedules:

FIRST SCHEDULE

ADDITION IN APPROPRIATIONS

MINISTRY	DESCRIPTION	TOTAL
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES:		\$387,693.

Approved.

MINISTRY OF COMMERCE INDUSTRY AND LABOR:		\$68,995.
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Approved.

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**Supplementary Appropriation Bill (No.1) 2018/2019
– consideration in detail**

**MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS &
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY: \$31,002.**

Approved.

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION,
SPORTS & CULTURE: \$2,012,531.**

Approved.

MINISTRY OF FINANCE: \$2,582,181.

Approved.

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE: \$66,062.

Approved.

MINISTRY OF HEALTH: \$108,835.

Approved.

**MINISTRY OF JUSTICE &
COURTS ADMINISTRATION: \$319,839.**

Approved.

**MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES &
ENVIRONMENT: \$416,578.**

Approved.

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Supplementary Appropriation Bill (No.1) 2018/2019
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MINISTRY OF POLICE: \$363,879.

Approved.

**MINISTRY OF THE PRIME MINISTER &
CABINET:** \$66,186.

Approved.

MINISTRY OF REVENUE \$151,547.

Approved.

**MINISTRY OF WOMEN, COMMUNITY &
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT:** \$108,536.

Approved.

**MINISTRY OF WORKS, TRANSPORT &
INFRASTRUCTURE:** \$54,773.

Approved.

OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: \$79,222.

Approved.

AUDIT OFFICE \$54,058.

Approved.

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Supplementary Appropriation Bill (No.1) 2018/2019
– consideration in detail

ELECTORAL COMMISSION: \$261,197.

Approved.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY: \$352,716.

Approved.

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION: \$69,115.

Approved.

MR SPEAKER: I call on the Hon Prime Minister.

Susuga Hon TUILAEP AUELUA FATIALOFA LUPESOLIAI LOLOFIETELE NEIOTI AIONO GALUMALEMANA Dr. SAILELE MALIELEGAOI: Mr Speaker since I see that it is one more minute to 1pm, I move the motion, *It is possibly delightful to rest today and resume tomorrow.*

MR SPEAKER: Motion has been moved to conclude our business for today, it is our intention to fast track our orders for the sake of executing the works of the State in assistance to the Cabinet and developments for the country. We will now adjourn the consideration in detail of the Supplementary Estimates (No.1) 2018/2019 for today. Thank you.

As moved in the motion made earlier in the week, our work will now be suspended at 1.00pm and continue the next sitting day, tomorrow. There is no further need for another question or motion since we have already approved the motion to start again tomorrow at 9.00am. Before we conclude.

I call on the Member for Siumu to end our Sitting with a prayer.

Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly adjourned at 1.00pm until Friday, 25 January 2019 at 9.00am.