

29 JUNE 2020

MONDAY, 29th JUNE 2020

The Speaker took the Chair at 9:14am.

Prayer.

MR SPEAKER: I announce the resumption of Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly.

I salute the beginning of our Business this week, as we engage with the duties of Parliament.

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

MR SPEAKER: During the adjournment of Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly on Friday last week, the Hon Minister for Works, Transport and Infrastructure was speaking. With respect I ask the Hon Minister for Works to stand and continue the speech on the issues raised by the honourable members of Parliament.

Susuga Hon PAPALIITELE NIKO LEE HANG (Minister for Works, Transport and Infrastructure): Thank you Mr Speaker for the opportunity, I also offer greeting to you as well as the holiness and dignity of Parliament this morning.

Mr Speaker, before I conclude my speech, I would also like to join in the praises to our Heavenly Father and thank Him for His constant love and His kindness as we have successfully reached this new morning in good health and well-being.

Mr Speaker, when our sitting adjourned on Friday, I was responding to the issue raised by the member for Safotulafai or Faasaleleaga No.2, who requested assistance from the Shipping Company (SSC) for public transportation whether they can travel for free on the day of the election in April 2021.

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Honourable Member, your appeal will be set aside until next year and then the company will look into it to see if we can get a 50% discount, as this case depends on the decision by the Cabinet for free travels on Election Day. Wait until next year for the Authorities to examine whether this request is necessary. With all due respect.

Mr Speaker, for you information as well as the honourable members, this is an update of the major works of the Government that are currently underway, as well as for the public that are listening. The project at Moamoa at the crossing pavement, the implementation of the work is underway, expected to be completed by October 2020. Our road that is at the west coast road, the road that leads to the airport, the asphalt from Afega to Malua is still in progress which is 60% complete, and it is being implemented by the OTT Contractors. As for Puipaa in Faleula, the work is being implemented by the Joint Venture with the intention of being completed by August 2020. The continuation of our work on the west coast package tool at the airport, from Malua to Faleolo is expected to begin in January 2021. Our work that is being conducted at Vaisigano at the crossing pavement which is being implemented by JICA, the crosswalk has been constructed which is 75 meters long and 1.5 meters high. The construction is now 92% complete and the road repair are underway and is expected to be completed by August 2020.

The ship for Puleono in Salafai, the SSC is currently awaiting a report from the Lloyds Company for a recommendation on a suitable vessel for us, especially the state of safety at sea and then a recommendation is submitted for a unanimous vote by the Cabinet. The preparations are delayed due to the effects of the Covid-19 virus. The ship that will replace the Lady Naomi has been announced by the Government of Japan as their gift to us, so the SSC is now preparing the design of the Lady Naomi II before the ship is built, with the expectation that it will arrive on the island in December 2022 after all of the ships conditions have been inspected and passed.

The fords for Lano and Sapapalii at Puleono in Salafai, as well as the fords at Faatoia and Tiavea, they have now being prepared for construction when the Main Estimates for 2020/2021 is approved.

The road work from Vaiaata to Patamea has started, and it is expected to be completed this year 2020.

The clean drinking water project for Lotofaga, Aleisa East, Lepale, and Faleasiu-uta, is expected to open next week on 2nd July 2020.

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Mr Speaker, I have already responded to all of these issues that were raised by the honourable members. But Mr Speaker and the honourable Members of Parliament, I believe that I should announce an update on the situation of our children who are working on crew ships and cargo ships abroad to enlighten the parents and families who are eagerly waiting especially the support of the nation.

Mr Speaker, at this time, there is a total of 322 Samoan sailors working on contract with the MSC or the Mediterranean Shipping Company in Italy. A total of 250 Samoan sailors are working on ferries, however, 57 of them have already completed their contracts and are still on broad while still being taken cared for by the MSC until the International airports are reopened and then they will be returned. There are 201 sailors that are continuing their work until their contracts end and before they prepare to return. As a representative of our Government, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to MSC for their hard work and sympathy in caring for our children who have completed their contracts. A total of 64 Samoan sailors are employed on cargo ships, they are all getting paid, as well as the other 265 sailors, including seafarers who are working on mail boats and cargo ships.

According to a recent report from MSC, all our children are doing well and no one is affected by the disease. The communications between our Company (SSS) and the MSC are ongoing for updates on the well-being of our children. One Samoan sailor was involved in a dispute on board a passenger ship, and was charged with assault and injury. This sailor is being held under the Miami Florida Act pending the reopening of flights so that he can be deported back. The good news is that they are all healthy and have the opportunity to have their medical check-ups on broad free of charge. There has been a lot of false information, especially allegations on the internet and newspapers stating, that the Government is not doing their work to bring back our children who have completed their contracts.

The objective of our Government is that, as soon as the flights are reopened, repatriation flights will be arranged immediately.

Mr Speaker, I would like to use this golden opportunity to address my beloved constituency of Urban Seat East.

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

MR SPEAKER: I beseech the member for Urban Seat East as I ask the member for Aleipata Itupa I Lalo to stand, the Senior member may speak.

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Afioga Tafua Maluelue Tafua: Thank you Mr Speaker. I am grateful for the praises and thanksgiving that was offered to God this morning as well as the nation in support. Thank you very much to the Hon Minister Papaliitele Niko Lee Hang. There is only one reason why I am upstanding. I want to express the utmost appreciation as the road in Tiavea will be implemented, where there is a ford that is in a poor state. But the purpose of me standing with reverence, there is an English proverb, “what’s good for the goose is good for the gander”. I do not know the correct Samoan translation of this. What’s good for the duck is also good for the drake, excuse me. As I have heard, the ferry trip to Savaii for the election is free of charge. We also have a wharf at Satitooa. And so I respectfully ask, whether it is possible for our people to use the wharf in Apia so they can travel from Apia to Satitooa, as it will cover Lotofaga, Lepa and our constituency of Aleipata with all due respect.

MR SPEAKER: Well, I call on the member for Faasaleleaga No.2 to stand.

Tofa Namulauulu Sami Leota (Faasaleleaga No.2): Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity as we have already given praises and thanksgiving to God this morning. I also acknowledge the presence of the Hon Leader of the House and the Members of Parliament.

I stand to voice my appreciation to the Hon Minister of Shipping, it is noted that your explanation is proceeding forward especially in regards to the acceptance of a petition submitted by this member. It was perceived from your speech that 50% will be set aside. And it was also noticed that the Minister of Finance stated that he will look into this, perhaps this is where we will receive the other 50%.

Mr Speaker, I am addressing this issue, because this is the first constituency that was used to try out this Act so that all voters travel to Savaii for the election. At the end of our election 1,000 people did not vote. Some of these people are....

MR SPEAKER: I beseech the member to shorten your statement, not a full statement, but a point of clarification or point of order please.

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Tofa Namulauulu Sami Leota: Some of the people are deceased, some have migrated overseas, but many did not travel to Savaii due to these situations. Remember that when you go to Savaii, you have to buy a ticket, buy food, and you have to set money aside to buy some chicken for the family that you will be visiting. So if you do not vote next time, you will be fined with \$100. But thankfully we are receiving assistance from the Hon Minister, so I want to express my gratitude, as it seems that you will be responding to the request of this constituency, thank you.

MR SPEAKER: Thank you. Well, all of the issues that were cited in the speeches of the members have been clarified, because if we are to reiterate these matters, more members will stand to showcase and offer reminders, because our constituencies are listening. However, the Hon Minister of Works has already talked about the situation on the issues that you have been raised.

Well, I call on the member for Aiga I le Tai, apologies to the Hon Minister, but in case the country and Aiga le Tai ponder that they are not given the opportunity, that is the situation. So the speech does not need to be long, you just stand up and make corrections. Get to the.... main point of the...

Susuga Mulipola Leiataua Laki (Aiga i le Tai): It is true Mr Speaker, but point of clarification. Well, we always talk about equal opportunities. Well an opportunity for Savaii as well as an opportunity for my island of Manono.

It has been observed that Savaii will receive some relief in the near future, and that is also the desire of this member for this constituency, as my island of Manono is in need of ways for travelling during the election. With all due respect, thank you.

MR SPEAKER: Thank you. Well, I ask the Hon Minister to stand. But since we have moved away from the issues concerning the water and roads, as my constituency is listening, thank you on behalf of Fasitoo-uta for the water and the roads. Good work, your shares are not small, you face difficulties, yet you still try to distribute it accordingly, well done. I call on the Hon Minister. Thank you very much, God bless you.

But since the Hon Prime Minister is upstanding.

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Susuga Hon Tuilaepa Auelua Fatialofa Lupesoliai Lolofietele Neioti Aiono Galumalemana Dr. Sailele Malielegaoi (Prime Minister): Mr Speaker, long-term preparation is important for our election. The Minister has now responded on the plans for Savaii. Now is the time to submit all applications so that we can better prepare for it in advance, perhaps there are any other villages that need bus fares, this is the only time to make proposals do not hold back, or if they want taxi fares, do not hesitate and bring in recommendations. Because the situation that started in Salafai is not new. In fact, this is exactly the reason why the implementation of this plan was delayed, and I think 3 of our Committees of Inquiry investigated this matter to finding the true natives of the constituency especially for Savaii, it would be better if we do not have these special elections anymore due to this situation where our members are more focused on becoming a candidate for Savaii, when the broadcast on the first night of the election ended, while they waited, it shows that they win by 200+ votes, and then they have a party, but the special votes have yet to be counted, and in the end, they win with a total of 400 or 500 votes. And most of the times there have been a lot of complaints, these faulty ways should be stopped whereas the situation of people who have no relation to the constituency, but they are being brought into the constituency by the candidate.

It is for this reason that the implementation of those circumstances were delayed for the pursuit of justice due to these issues concerning people traveling to Savaii, and now a suggestion was given that our people should be treated equally, so I was not surprised when I heard that Manono needed assistance as well. This is the time, if buses are needed, we will pay for buses to take people from here to Moataa, so this is the time to make appeals.

MR SPEAKER: Well done. I call on the Hon Minister of Works to stand.

Afioga Aliimalemanu Alofa Tuuau (Alatau West): Mr Speaker...

Susuga Hon PAPALIITELE NIKO LEE HANG: Thank you to the Hon Leader for the further clarification of the response...

MR SPEAKER: Well, please, I implore the Hon Minister of Works as I call on the member for Alatau West to stand.

The member may speak.

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Afioga Aliimalemanu Alofa Tuuau: Mr Speaker since the opportunity is given for appeals; Alataua West will take the initiative and request for a bus to transport my constituency of Salelologa to Itu Asau area. Thank you.

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

Susuga Hon PAPALIITELE NIKO LEE HANG: Mr Speaker, I believe that the interventions have subsided, as I am starting to forget my speech due to the many interruptions.

MR SPEAKER: I beseech the member. Just like the other... You do not get the meaning of the Prime Minister's statement to stop presenting unnecessary things into Parliament. That is exactly what it means. We are giving buses for Savaii but what about Upolu?

Tofa Hon Faasootauloa Pati Taulapapa: Thank you very much Mr Speaker, thank you to the Hon Prime Minister for the opportunity. As this is the constituency that seldom stands up, but this is also the only constituency, where the plans are made by God's authority.

For your information Mr Speaker, it was not by the authority of the Government that brought our village to Salamumu, it was the authority of God. And so I request, the Government should create a flag for our village, only Salamumu that can travel to Savaii because it is the authority of God and not the authority of the Government. With all due respect, that is my appeal with respect.

MR SPEAKER: Well, Saleaula made a wonderful suggestion. I call upon the Hon Minister to stand to address the issues raised by the members.

Susuga Hon PAPALIITELE NIKO LEE HANG: Mr Speaker, I would first like to respond to the Hon Tafua, regarding the English translation that he asked about, what's good for the goose is also good for the gander. The Samoan interpretation is, "*o le mea e lelei mo le matuamoa, e lelei foi mo le toa.*" It is the usual phrase, "things that are good for Apia, is also good for the countryside and Salafai". That is definition of the English phrase that you have stated. Is it clear?

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Afioga Tafua Maluelue Tafua: Mr Speaker, point of order. Firstly, it is not a chicken; I said that it is a gander. It is about the goose and the gander. It has a long neck but I do not know the Samoan word for it, a goose with a long neck, and the gander is a male goose. With all due respect. Thank you to the Hon Minister for the assistance.

Susuga Hon PAPALIITELE NIKO LEE HANG: Well, you already know and yet you still ask. Well if you do not understand, it is the goose and the gander, or the... the goose is male and the gander is female. That is the case.

As I have noticed that my statement about ferry fares has been misinterpreted, a decision has yet to be made, but from what I can hear, the statements by the members make it seem like a decision had already been made. No decision has been made. It was only a proposal, it is left to the shipping company if they approve the 50% discount, but for the 100%, that is the responsibility of Cabinet. It is not yet April, which is when these conditions will be discussed, but it seems they are already upstanding and request that these blessings be given to Salafai. No, a decision has not been made.

It has also been noted from the speech of the Hon Prime Minister that, buses and taxis will also be made available. Well, this is a good chance, but the problem is that none of you mentioned these things in your speeches, the member for Safotulafai was the only one that cited this in his speech, but now it seems that there are some new opinions being raised since this matter has been discussed, but it was clear in my speech, that a decision has not been made. But it is set aside until the Cabinet meets.

To the sanctity of Urban Taulaga East, my speech will now come to my beloved constituency, and all its honorary salutations. The sanctity of the voters from my beloved constituency of Urban East, to those who volunteered and offered their assistance in support of your representative for this Parliamentary Term, which is about to end. You have done your best and you have won.

I pray for your protection from the darkness, as I acknowledge your support, and may your wisdom and insight stay unyielding for the challenges ahead. Depend on the good fortune provided by God to complete final work for this year. Thank you very much for your support as well as your devotion which has made it easier for your dignitaries to carry out their duties and responsibilities.

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Thank you very much for your respect as well as your trust and your confidence in me, to represent our constituency as a member of the Parliament of Samoa for many years. When the Parliamentary term ends in 2021, it will be 20 years since I was chosen as a member for our constituency.

The history of our constituency is interesting, as the Office of the Electoral Commission has undergone two major changes that have affected us. For your information, the 2001-2006 Parliamentary Term which was the first time I took office, this constituency was an Independent Electoral Constituency. In the next Parliamentary Term in 2006-2011 it remained as an Individual Electoral District. The first change occurred in the 2011-2016 Parliamentary Term, and any person with a matai can become a candidate. And then it was changed from the Individual Electoral Constituency to the Constituency of Urban East which we have now. For 2016-2021 I continued to uphold the Chair for our Constituency of Urban East.

The second change will be effective in the new election 2021-2026 which will make our Constituency become part of Vaimauga No.3.

I would also like to take this opportunity to apologise for any offensive language used, which was rude and unsightly to your observation. The truth is Mr Speaker, no human being is perfect, however, I believe that this humble servant will be forgiven by your virtue, wisdom and especially the Christian wisdom based on compassions and forgiveness. In the Samoan proverbial fishing expression, “*e leai lava se tautai e atoa ni i’a i sona vaa*”, a fisherman cannot completely fill his boat with fish”. When a mistake has been made inland, it should be rectified at the seaside. Forget and forgive any shortcomings of your servant, but trust in the Spirit of God to complete the proclamations in our morning assemble. We will meet in October 2020 when registration of candidates opens for the April 2021 election, to explain some of the changes of our new constituency of Vaimauga West No.3. Remember to visit the Electoral Registry Office and check your registrations for the 2021 election. Do not forget that you will be prosecuted under the Act, you will be penalized if you do not register and vote, value your vote.

Mr Speaker, and so we raise our voice, God bless your life, may God strengthen your spirit, body and mind, for your duties in managing our assembly. I also offer praises to the Hon Speaker for your patience and perseverance. God bless the Hon Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister and all the members of Parliament as well as the Chief Executive Officers of Government Ministries and Corporations.

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Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity. Soifua and God bless.

MR SPEAKER: Well done and thank you. I acknowledge the speech of the Hon Minister of Works, as Samoa is listening in support.

And now this is an opportunity to ask the Hon Minister for Tourism, Hon Sala, to stand and respond to the issues raised by the House. Good luck with your speech.

Afioga Hon SALA FATA PINATI (Minister for Tourism): Mr Speaker, it is with great honour and respect that I stand to express my opinion in accordance to the position I was appointed.

Mr Speaker, I believe Samoa is united in the House this morning; Samoa is also a designated Samoa. I believe that the accomplished sanctity of the House of Samoa, which have all gathered this morning in gratitude to God.

I believe that the efforts of this feeble member will commence, I am also worried that we will not have enough time, but the time has come for the Budget to be approved, but unfortunately there is still a lot of work. That is why I pay tribute to the sanctity of this House, the support of Samoa listening in all its honorific salutations. Thank you for hosting the Assembly of Samoa on this day.

Mr Speaker, I want to thank you as the House is at peace under your leadership. I would also like to extend my heartfelt greetings to the Hon Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister, the Cabinet, the Associate Minister, and the House of Representatives of Samoa who are with us this morning.

To the public servants of the Government, I commend your services; needless to say, it is your privilege to work together with us. This Country is dependent on this House, Samoa depends on it. These are all good things, and should be implemented during our time, why? Because we made an oath, it is an oath before the Almighty God, to manage all good things, to manage major things, as well as the minor things. Samoa is greatly valued. And so I say, give me an opportunity as I attempt to respond.

I would first like to talk about our Tourism Sector, Mr Speaker, the plight situation faced by our country is not unnoticed, especially the whole world with this disease or even a trial, or is it a curse? I am not sure if it is a curse. Because the wisdom and mightiness of the great nations in warfare, and the trials and having no faith in God, this is why. This is the answer.

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I believe that this is God's response, so that each person can worship. Like the prayer of my congregation, those who are superior will fall down and exalt those who are inferior to their throne. These words are with reference to measles and covid-19. The economy of Samoa has been affected, and we do not need to comment any further on what has happened to us. As for the business owners, are there beliefs that their business is safe and effective? The answer is, no. There are a lot of appeals submitted by the hotel owners. What is the solution for us? Our situation with financial debt has worsened, and many people have been laid off. The recorded number we have now, thousands of people are out of work.

I am stating the situation as provided in the documents that have been submitted. The first are the financial benefits through tourism. For the year 2014-2015, the total number of tourists was 133,000, while the total revenue was \$347 million. For 2015-2016, the total number of tourists, 146,104, and the total revenue was \$385 million. For 2016-2017, the total number of tourists was 146,437, and the total revenue was \$387 million. For 2017-2018, 163,323 people came. The total revenue was \$454 million. For 2018-2019 there was a total of 178,564, and the revenue received was \$514 million. From 2019 to March 2020, this is when Samoa was infected with the measles. This was followed by the corona virus. And the total number of people that have been noted to arrive from that time until March was 124,399 in total, and the decrease in the revenue received was, from \$514 to \$375 million. There is a significant number that has dropped and damages recorded. Not only for the country's income, but also the affected families, those who are dependent on the work they receive from hotels, buses, taxis, beach fale, and because there are small stalls that sell clothes and other small items to tourists, they have also suffered a lot.

What has happened? And what is the solution? And whose wisdom and strength will we ask for? How can Samoa reach out for assistance when it has nothing to manage its economy with? Thank you to God, thank you to the Spirit of God for giving us a caring leader, the work is not easy, as those who are trying to distribute funds are suffering. As you can see, there are many demands and many problems. Who will carry this burden? Is it something that only Tuilaepa and Cabinet is accountable for? Is it a Government of Tuilaepa and the Deputy Prime Minister and Cabinet alone? No Samoa, it is not, these are the tasks assigned to us.

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To you and I, to those who are sitting overhead, to those who are listening from outside, let us work together. Let us no point fingers, in case a person questions where do you come from? I am a half-breed, I am a half-blooded Chinese, and I also have the African blood. That is not important when you go overseas. The question that will be asked by the New Zealand Immigration is, where do you come from? I come from Samoa, and they will not ask whether you are a half-caste. You are a true Samoa, and you must stand and tell yourselves, if I do something good for my country and my people, that will be our contribution.

Mr Speaker, I am saddened, I have an opinion, let us go and find out what the Government has for us. I remember the words of an elder, which goes, do not think that the Government will find anything for you. But ask yourself what you can do. What can you do? What can we do to improve the economy of the country? Staying at home, and wait for things to be given, to be used for the country.

Soon we will be having the election, things that should be provided. If money is not given they will not come, if they are not given money to make an ID they will not come. If they are not given \$30, \$50, \$100, they will not vote for you. Where is the honesty? Where is the wisdom and prudence? Where is the fidelity of love? This is not love. You cannot buy someone with money. The integrity of a person, for God lives, money is given to satisfy them, pardon the Samoan listeners because this is a disease that needs to be removed. For all of us who are in this House. No one is excused from these habits, as although they yearn for the yam, but they are afraid of the rocks. This is the way of the economy, and we can walk the difficult path, if our spirits are united to implement all these things. What has been done? We already have roads, but I will recount the things that have been implemented, as attempts to fix the weakness of our people, I beg tolerance.

I also express my gratitude, thanks to those who are dealing with tourism, which is not an easy task. They are brave, to spend the wealth, why? It takes spending money to earn money, what is the situation now? The money that is spent is flowing like a river. But we are not earning money from it, because they are broke. And these are the things that are questioned by the hotel owners. What about our electricity? What about our water bills? That is what we are worried about, because we are not the owners, nor is it owned by the Government.

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There are already policies in place and set to be followed. And no one is above the Law, as all of us are under the Law. Let us follow the Law and then we will get to the point where the Government requires your service, yours and mine.

The things that have been conducted by the Samoa Tourism Authority, the marketing, as our main markets in New Zealand, Australia and American Samoa continues to work in advertising, through social media programs such as facebook and others. It has completely overhauled our technological websites, advertisement boards places beside the main street roads in Australia and New Zealand. Our Authorities are also moving to hype and promote the local market of the people in our own country. The program is underway like a box of eggs being educated, a total of one hundred students are being educated at the APTC or the Australian Pacific Training Coalition. Through Talanoa Lakapi which is aired, special trip to Savaii and Upolu for journalists and others to promote and to assist these people for their understanding and awareness, of things that are happening in Samoa itself.

All of this, will be paid by the Tourism Authority for the journalists and those who will be travelling overseas. They are also staying in hotels paid for by the Authority, to advertise. Our country is a beautiful one, there are many good sights, sights that many tourists should visit, but unfortunately, we do not have this with what I conveyed. Our duty is for the community and Government to work together, to promote places in the villages that beautiful attractions and are not known. What should be done? They have to come to the office, to talk it through, and see what can be done to help. There are so many people coming to visit, the whole world have seen our beautiful attractions and clean beaches.

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

MR SPEAKER: I call upon the member of Salega.

Tofa Olo Fiti Afoa Vaai: Thank you for the opportunity. It is also appropriate that I stand so the Minister can take a break. But we have heard the wonderful speech on the state of our tourism industry. I am also happy to hear your statement, that spending money to earn more money is interesting. But I just want to ask you, what is the plan of our Ministry now?

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To look at the beach fale and hotels. The industry is now appealing for your assistance and the Ministry. What is our plan right now, because we do not know, how long the Covid-19 will last. As for the employees, you are right, they are going to retire, because of the lack of income at the moment, but what is your plan?

MR SPEAKER: I call upon the Hon Minister.

Afioga Hon SALA FATA PINATI: I want to thank the member. The duty mentioned by the member, is not for us living in Samoa. What is happening in Samoa is not happening overseas. These villages in every constituency when it comes to the matai system, you must be present where the decisions and deeds are made. Also you can help with things, if you are asked for contribution, on such matters. This also determines a person who can be a leader. Also we find out those who are selfish and do not want to share.

When it is time for elections, they will come and ask, open these things, I will give them all, why? Because now it is elections time. It portrays the want of some people to spend now, but how about the next 5 years of regular service. Continuing service, is this not a leader that is worth watching? Is this not the reason why the member asked, what will the Ministry do for you who owns the beach fale which is in despair? For business, you cannot put your eggs together in one basket. Everyone must know that. You cannot put things together in one basket. Because when it breaks, is there anything else that you are doing to support you and your family? Or is it only the beach fale. As I said, you have to ask yourself what you are doing. The service to your community, family and Government, and the Government does not have to give you anything for it to survive. When you were born your father and mother had to find a way to support us. You grew up with nothing. The fathers voted with respect, and the children would be running around naked, there was no money to buy clothes.

Tofa Olo Fiti Afoa Vaai: Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER: The clarification is not finished.

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Tofa Olo Fiti Afoa Vaai: The clarification of the Hon Minister is very clear, as the country is also listening. Even the hotel owners and beach fale owners are listening. The Government will not give you anything for development. But where are the various funds stated in the budget? Tens of million are allocated to the Government to develop hotels and beach fale. I am a bit surprised by it. The person should do what they can, if there is nothing you can do then so be it. But this is the duty of the Minister and the Ministry, the development of these things.

MR SPEAKER: Pardon the member but the Hon Minister have yet to address it.

Tofa Olo Fiti Afoa Vaai: This is the baby of the Government that it is trying to nurture. So we have to feed this baby of Government which is tourism. However, it seems the Hon Minister has abandoned it.

MR SPEAKER: Pardon the member, the Hon Minister has yet to speak on it.

Afioga Hon SALA FATA PINATI: It is such a waste, to give good words that can be easily understood by someone who does not use his brain. This is the truth. It also provokes anger when you speak but he keeps standing up. The Government does not do that, it gives money to the people.

Tofa Olo Fiti Afoa Vaai: I can see that, we are using our brains but you have very little thought here in what you are saying.

MR SPEAKER: Pardon the member of Salega.

Tofa Olo Fiti Afoa Vaai: Everyone is listening, this development is under your designation, which is your responsibility.

Afioga Hon SALA FATA PINATI: Mr Speaker the member is in violation of the Assembly.

MR SPEAKER: I appease the member.

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Tofa Olo Fiti Afoa Vaai: You have no plan in place and that is a waste of time.

MR SPEAKER: I ask that you be seated you have violated this Assembly, as stated by the Hon Minister. The response of the Minister is very clear, do not put it together in one basket or it will break together. The advice is, the response has been given. I call upon the Minister.

Afioga Hon SALA FATA PINATI: The speech made by my brother Olo Vaai is well said. This is the reason why you are praised, because you bring about such matters. We all know for any business, without criticism the business will not grow, this is the truth. If you were to sit and think that you have done well, there will come a time when you sink down where you are sitting, but you do not notice what is happening. Thank you Tofa Olo Vaai that is a good thing that you are doing, even though it hurts me, but thank you. This is why I like Tofa Olo Vaai, in here we do not have hide what we want to say, we do not have to filter our...

Tofa Olo Fiti Afoa Vaai: Mr Speaker, I apologise to the Hon Minister, but do continue with your clarification, the story that you are telling is quite interesting...

MR SPEAKER: Very well, I call upon the Hon Minister.

Afioga Hon SALA FATA PINATI: Therefore the life of a Samoan, no matter how much is said, everything is settled here in the House the assembly of Samoa. I thank my brother. But it is wrong for him to say I abandoned it, I did not abandon anything with respect to the dignity of Samoa listening. Tofa Olo Vaai, donations and assistance is still given out, to do such things. But as I mentioned, our contribution to development is for us to all work together. We already have overseas markets, which have already been consulted with our overseas representatives.

I want to thank the Chief Executive Officer Afioga Salaga Faamatuainu Tuifua and the staff. The contribution that you make is outstanding. The only thing is, to not spend too much time having fun, if you are going to the villages to do the work, do it well, and note down those who are wasting time. If there are any problems, let them go and hire others. Now the matter related to the Westec as I have mentioned.

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

Tofa Lealailepule Rimoni Aiafi (Faleata West): I emphasized a statement, and advice on the matters related to Tourism. I have now finished reading it, and this is the only Ministry that has successfully prepared its report on the impact of their sector on the disease. I thank the Hon Minister. It was well prepared, also this is the only sector that we all know was mostly affected. The Minister has clarified, from \$514 million last year, for now the deficit is close to \$380 million. This means that all opinions and ideas should take precedence in this area at this time. The statement by the Minister seemed to be thought provoking as Olo's statement, saying that people will be let go. However, the report clearly states that out of \$375 million deficit, \$105 million is needed to assist the sector, as there are now more than 2,000 unemployed people.

The Hon Minister spoke on overseas promotions, and I am grateful in that regard. But this time, we do not need it because we do not know how long our borders will be closed. But a recommendation was made to the Minister, for our Emergency Committee which includes Cabinet, for opening hours. To assist with your work at this time especially the work of a few people, on what should be done. If \$105 million is needed. It should be the priority of Government, with respect.

MR SPEAKER: Pardon me Minister, I will give the opportunity to the member of Palauli le Falefa.

Afioga Hon Faumuina Tiatia Faaolatane Liuga (Palauli le Falefa): Thank you, but since we are moving away from the matter. I want to thank Afioga Sala Pinati for the clarification. But since you are moving away from an important matter.

I raised the matter of tourist attractions, is now not the time to start developing these attraction sites. So by the time the borders are opened, there will be sites for tourists to visit, like *Papaolefaatolotologatama*, the *Maasogi*, and the site of *Taemanutavae* and *Faugagana*. These are just some attraction sites that tourists want to see and stay in Samoa for a long time. With all due respect.

MR SPEAKER: Apologies to the member of Palauli West, I call upon the Leader of Government.

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Susuga Hon Tuilaepa Auelua Fatialofa Lupesoliai Lolofietele Neioti Aiono Galumalemana Dr. Sailele Malielegaoi: Mr Speaker, I would like to assist with the statements that are being made, the Ministers statement is very clear, businesses also have a role to play, it does not mean that they all have to depend on Government. It affects all businesses. The majority of stimulus packages given out have already been announced, it seems members are talking as if it is not part of the Budget. Mr Speaker, the roads that are being constructed, electricity that is being provided with special assistance, there is a lot of assistance been given. The Hon Minister of Finance should be thanked for the many stimulus packages made for us.

But do not forget, this Government is dependent on aid from other countries. Leave it to us to help, this is important in terms of our own efforts to help ourselves. What does this mean? Not only do you have to work for yourself, but you also get Government assistance. This is why our Government is dependent on our people, our businesses and tourists. This should never be forgotten, the Minister also mentioned, to remind us of the famous speech by the President of the United States on the day of his swearing in, he said, “Ask not what your country can do for you, but ask what you can do for your country.”

Mr Speaker, in that case, there is a limit to what the Government can contribute in terms of its revenue. Everyone is listening, even some people refuse to pay their taxes. Mr Speaker, we need to reflect on this area, to make requests to the Government but aslo read the speech given by the Minister. It seems the speech made has been set aside, that states a lot of assistance that is through the reduction of electricity, assistance in paying off some of the interest on loans, including all those who have small tourist attractions, which are all included in this Budget. Mr Speaker is seems as if nothing is being done, all the business community is involved in this Budget. This is why we should be cautious of what we say, questioning this sector, the tourism authority have assisted us a lot, our Government have also helped a lot with the tax credit that was carried out. Whatever profits you may earn, it can be used to expand the business. There are millions spent on some business that do not even pay taxes, Mr Speaker, there is a lot of work carried out by Government which should be done by them. And now that we are faced with this crisis, this is the time as mentioned by the Minister in his speech, not to put your eggs in the same basket.

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This means, the business owners in the tourism industry that thought about that, are not suffering, because now some businesses that are still active are taking over. But the Government is trying, there is one thing Mr Speaker, I want voice my assistance.

When this matter was brought forward when this development was affected, I have long spoken on it, to put down the prices so we can attract people, like Fiji, they put down the costs, made a deal with the airline, packages should be implemented to include airfares and reasonable hotel costs. Some did it, while others were doubtful, they wanted the hotel room price to go up, then people just went to Fiji and Cook Islands instead of coming here. How many times did Government give this advice? As usual I talked about, lowering the hotel rate but sort it out when it comes to food and drinks. There are many ways to do it, which have only just been done, because of this issue of people barely coming into the country, now it has only been decreased for our people. What is happening? There are hotels that are full on weekends with our people. But because of the inconsistency of the mindset so many are criticizing the Chinese coming in, but do not look at how the Chinese do their business and set it as an example.

This is the simplest thing that I mentioned, the Chinese businesses cement in front of their shops, making a good place for parking, and people constantly go in there and shop, however in front of other stores are dirty. This is a small action which later resulted with Chinese businesses flourishing, but we should have this long ago. I have seen that two or more businesses have mirrored this, but this portrays weakness of the mindset to think of ways to improve business. I asked some of the hotels the day before yesterday, have you done this? They said yes. How much is it for a room? The price has dropped to \$250 from the \$280. Put it down to \$100 or \$50, then there will be more guests. It is better to make money and our people going there, there are a lot of people here that will go and stay there for two nights once the price is dropped.

Mr Speaker, this is the matter, and this speech is no different from the clarification given by the Minister of Finance, outlining the grants for all businesses including tourism, and beach fales.

MR SPEAKER: Very well, thank you. Well, everything has been clarified with the response from Government given by the Hon Prime Minister, but lest it be a mistake to criticize the Chair, everyone can see that we all have this booklet. Do you have any booklets?

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The member for Palauli West, do you have a booklet? You do, well that is your answer on the issues that you are trying to stand up to convey. This is the truth. Keep reading it so you will understand...

I will give the member of Palauli West the opportunity.

Afioga Afoa Amituanai Faleulu Maui (Palauli West): Thank you Mr Speaker. I move to thank the Hon Minister of Tourism, thank you Hon Sala Fata for moving a motion to add another 20 minutes on my speech over the past week, which was not accepted.

Second, I want to thank you again, because I recall that you are the one that wept to Cabinet to give our hoteliers an opportunity, to re-schedule loan payments and take time to repay it, since it was affected by the financial crisis that occurred at the time. Not long after that crisis we were affected by the tsunami, a lot of hotels were affected, then there was the cyclone that was a result of flooding, much later we had the measles, then the Covid-19, everything was uncertain, then the borders were closed and there was no hope.

MR SPEAKER: Pardon the member, I ask that you listen to the Chair. Do not listen to Olo Fiti but to the Chair. No, that is enough talk. No, pardon the member, such matters is not an interruption. It does not pertain questions or words of gratitude. A question comes under a point of clarification...

Afioga Afoa Amituanai Faleulu Maui: I am giving a resolution to the issue that is needed in the Budget, please Mr Speaker...

MR SPEAKER: Well, the Minister has taken note.

Afioga Afoa Amituanai Faleulu Maui: No the meaning of what I am trying to say has not been explained thoroughly.

MR SPEAKER: I appease the member, but I have now ended your speech. It is very clear because you do not understand our Standing Orders, in giving opportunities. Do not listen to Olo but please listen to the Chair.

Tofa Olo Fiti Afoa Vaai: Mr Speaker, I did whisper to him, to be careful, since the Chair is speaking, but you can continue.

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MR SPEAKER: Thank you. I am grateful Olo if the advice is honest. But this is the reason for saying this, the booklet is the address of the Minister of Finance, this is the answer for everything even tourism, even those who are disable are included in it. I appease the member this is enough let the Minister continue.

Afioga Afoa Amituanai Faleulu Maui: Mr Speaker, the booklet does not contain everything that needs to improve this matter.

MR SPEAKER: Well, wait until the time you are Minister of Finance.

Afioga Afoa Amituanai Faleulu Maui: It should be fixed now since it is an issue, but wait until I am Minister then I will fix everything that is lacking.

MR SPEAKER: Alright.

Afioga Afoa Amituanai Faleulu Maui: The stimulus package that we now, should have the assistance of Government to offer funds to help our hotels. With respect.

MR SPEAKER: Very well. It was included in the statement by the Hon Prime Minister, yes, everything that was done by the hotels had the assistance of the Government without paying tax. It started like that, being nursed, and now being spoon fed. Please read it again for you to understand, because our time is wasted, but these are things already covered by Government.

I call upon the Hon Minister to continue his speech.

Afioga Hon SALA FATA PINATI: Thank you Afioga Afoa Maui, these are the qualities of life, if not for him the House would not have a laugh.

You have mentioned the application that you took up to the Prime Minister and Cabinet regarding your hotels. Well you would not know how I cried. I will now show you how I cried. (*The Hon Minister acted out how he cried within the House*) this is how I wept in front of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, and the members present were laughing, it was humiliating, to cry in front of the Prime Minister.

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I thank God, because it was answered, and what was it? Everyone was given a chance, even though it was a fail. Thank you to the Hon Prime Minister and Minister of Finance.

I will now move on to another matter, incase Olo Fiti will stand up again with more questions. The developments of Samoa Trust Estates Corporation. There is a word associated with STEC, we give them advice but they go broke, a lot of funds are spent but there is only bankruptcy. Now what? The Lord has answered. The truth is, there are times when millions of the Estate is looked for as stated in its records. It was not me, it was not something I did. I thank God Samoa is not forsaken in the various developments that have taken place as a result of the Estate. It failed but the Lord provides. It was our creativity and our trust in Him when he responded. And now it is already taking place.

The vanilla agreement has now been signed. Japan International Cooperation Agency and the Hokkaido Company from Japan will be leading it, and the vanilla as well as orchard will be produced at the Estate land in Mulifanua. I will not read in detail the parts already clarified by the Prime Minister on revenue. The member Afioga Toomata Aki Tuipea also stated the money that could come from vanilla. The STEC lands, mentioned by the member from Manono, I thank Aiga i le Tai, it was stated that there is no offence by the village on the lands where there are squatters. I convey a spirit of gratitude. These lands are a sensitive matter because they do not belong to any individual, these lands belong to the whole country. The unborn also have an attachment to it. These are resources that we are preserving, because it is our duty to look after the country, we are the custodians. To distribute well, do what is right and not do it out of selfish interest. Like I said, there is always someone who wants to serve as a matai but there is also those who are chosen, this is the better service, those appointed, than those who want to do whatever they want it but do not fit.

STEC now has plans to lease the land. There is a township that will be located at Mulifanua, the total number of acres allocated for this Division at Mulifanua is 150 acres directly opposite the golf course which is also owned by Aggie Grey at the end towards the wharf. A total of 516 blocks have already been divided, and many members of the public have applied for a quarter of an acre plot of land to do business. This dream will come true, but the plans will probably take 20 years before a town will be established for Savaii and the western part of our country. So the cost of a quarter acre for a business is \$718 per quarter per year subject to 30 years to renew.

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All of these aspects have been put in place, but a plan has not been approved by Cabinet, we only have a plan. And the 200 acres will be divided into acres for agriculture. Those are a few areas, all in all lands are not sold with all due respect to the House. There is no intent to buy STEC land. The Samoa Land Corporation and other Divisions of Government that also overlook Government lands, can also lease those lands. Then I come to the STEC developments, the developments that we have, we have close to 1000 yam shoots already planted so far, this is one prediction. If there are any calamities that may arise while there is enough yam in the country I say we have nothing to worry about, there is nothing to worry about. Yams, taro, banana, cocoa cover about a thousand acres. We are trying to implement all of this.

In what spirit were these things done? Let us get rid of the excuse saying there is not enough crops, not enough economy and the country is poor. Well how is it poor when the old men stated, it is under the fig and the banyan tree, it is where the cars go, and I know this is true. In those days we had a farm and our family was paid \$13 a fortnight, \$13 in the bank. Then I would go and ask, get me some bottles of beer then I will go. After 2 boxes of beer they say there is no money left because it has been spent on the 2 boxes. Then, I went to the farm and got some taro and sent it to New Zealand. The first taro obtained \$500+, and the next taro I earned even more. There is the saying that the money from abroad has come but the one received from the first taro have yet to be spent. This is the characteristics of our life, we often depict a farmer as someone without money. If a man comes from Savaii wearing only a small cloth goes to the hotel, the staff will say "Please, you are not allowed here, because your clothes are dirty, then the old man would reply, 'it is all right...No, you are not allowed.' However, they forget that hundreds or maybe a \$1,000 is knotted in his lava lava.

Samoa my country, do not forget our pride, all of us, the question is as I said, you do not go overseas and they say, who are you? Are you a European or a half caste? No I am a Samoan.

Now the matter regarding biomass. The biomass that we have, a lot of money has been spent, an estimate of \$ 20,000 of the Estate's current budget is allocated for this electricity, and also this electricity is now going into EPC. Yes. A deal has already been made, and it costs 50 sene per kilowatt. Judging by the \$ 1 price a day to make solar, that is very expensive, and the savior therefore, is who? The work of the Estate is still being carried out, thus we are being generous to the country.

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Then we come to the market, the Estate has already purchased land in Otahuhu, it has been bought. Right now we want to open it but unfortunately we cannot because of Covid-19. It is also the intention of the Government, the Estate will not only work there but it will be open to the public, to the taro sellers. Whoever travels to New Zealand and has no place to store taro, then Samoa has this property to refer to, we have been trying for a long time, when a European comes and wants to take the container that contains the taro, they dump all of our taro out, and return the container of the European. But what are we trying to do? We will store it there and sell our products.

This does mean it is done for free, there is a lease to pay, this will be taken care of by the person who will be managing this in Auckland everything will be recorded. As I said it is done for Samoa, Samoa for Samoa.

I believe this has concluded a statement regarding the Trust Estates.

MR SPEAKER: I call upon the Hon Prime Minister. Pardon the member.

Susuga Hon Tuilaepa Auelua Fatialofa Lupesoliai Lolofietele Neioti Aiono Galumalemana Dr. Sailele Malielegaoi: Mr Speaker, let the Minister rest, it is important to note that this is the second time we have visited the situation of the Trust Estate. Previously, we had 2 plots of land, and it was used for the purchase of agricultural products of the Trust Estate. Then gradually and eventually the Trust Estate lost money from it, it went bankrupt. There are 2 locations, the other one is close to town, it is where the crops are stored, and are sold whole, and our other location where we sell it as produce, but what happened was only recurring debt.

There is a reason behind the resurgence in interest due to the quantity of taro now acquired and also the taro growers have raised that we should have our own retailer. The reality is all of the existing retailers are Fiji Indians so what is happening here is an element of favouritism towards their own suppliers in Fiji. So now and then when our taro comes through they reject our taro being sold to their retailers. A report has come to me from some of our exporters that sometimes the poor quality mushy taro is labelled as Samoan whilst our taro is labelled Fijian. The situation with containers placed at the vicinity of our Counsellor office is not very good with the community crowded there making it dirty and is not a very pleasant site for the public.

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So a decision has been made to establish a retail store in the future for the purpose of selling the products of the Trust Estates which is in abundance and includes taro. It will also be open to taro exporters whom do not have a market to sell their taro other than the Fijians retailer proven to be a waste of time for Samoans.

Mr Speaker this is the reason why we are taking the old approach we use to apply due to the difference of investment and the price of land does not decline but continues to gradually increase particularly areas within the centre of a town where people crowd to for their shopping. This is the governments encouragement especially towards the Trust Estate Corporation which is thriving with the surge in supply of agricultural products particularly taro. You did hear the announcement on yam and our other products and the demand by individual sellers of taro who have been searching for market to sell their taro. Mr Speaker that is the background and the reasons behind it and the importance of the input from Cabinet Ministers, not discounting the marvellous work done by the Trust Estates Corporation.

Mr Speaker that is my explanation for the information of Parliament. Some people understand that at one time we used to have land areas like these before the Government sold them off due to the struggle and debt incurring nature of operating such businesses.

At the current, the opportunity is being given back to the people to export their products to markets in New Zealand where there is a bustling full of energy atmosphere of Pacific people including our craving for our products for their consumption from the resurgence in our production capability.

MR SPEAKER: Thank you but since we have come to our normal recess hour. I am of the view that the explanation from the Prime Minister is understood. The Minister will continue his remarks when we resume again from our refreshments. I announce the suspension of proceedings for usual recess.

Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly were suspended for its normal recess at 10.45am and to resume at 11.25am.

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Motion to Amend Sitting Hours

MR SPEAKER: I announce that Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly resumed. Before recess the Minister of Tourism was giving his address.

Before calling on the Minister I respectfully call the Leader of the House for a motion relating to our orders.

MOTION TO AMEND SITTING HOURS

Susuga Hon TUILAEP AUELUA FATIALOFA LUPESOLIAI LOLOFIETELE NEIOTI AIONO GALUMALEMANA Dr. SAILELE MALILEGAOI: Mr Speaker I rise to convey my appreciations to you and members of this Assembly. We are resuming again after our refreshments for strength to continue with our Proceedings on the deliberations of the Budget. As you know the Ministers are still continuing their response. We have no intention to speed up the matters raised by members. This goes to show that we do value your ideas. That is myself, the Deputy Prime Minister and Cabinet. As we will respond in the entirety of an issue as raised. Perhaps my response will not be as long since Cabinet have covered most of the issues. I would think that if it will be long it would be about 3 hours.

This is the importance of our debate. The Speaker on the other hand is not overlooking the provisions of our rules as stipulated. This Budget should be passed tomorrow. You are all aware of America and how often it has been closed down because they have no budget for Congress to pass.

We have until tomorrow to pass the budget otherwise it will become closed. Mr Speaker when Cabinet completes its response we shall proceed to committee stage of the Whole Assembly to consider the budget in detail. There are 5 of us that have yet to speak so once we are done, that would be the next step. For many years now I have sat through this process of the consideration of the budget inside this parliament and sometimes the debate went right through to 4am. We have not done that. This is the time we must repeat that in a marathon like manner which should stand us in good stead with the exchange of wisdom and ideas going into the future.

Which prompts me to rise Mr Speaker to move, to change our sitting hours as such, *That proceedings of the Legislative Assembly be suspended at 1pm this afternoon and continue at 3pm until 11pm tonight. We set aside at 7.00pm for a few minutes before resuming again. Mr Speaker if we are not able to pass the Budget by 11.00pm, we will adjourn and resume tomorrow.*

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But if somehow we can pass this tonight, we can proceed with our other orders tomorrow.

This is the motion with respect.

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

Motion approved.