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**TUESDAY, 23 JUNE 2020**

*Mr Speaker took the Chair at 9:00am.*

Prayers.

**MR SPEAKER:** I announce the resumption of the Legislative Assembly Proceedings. It is wonderful to see you all in good health. I applaud you for the courage to attend to your calling.

### **OBITUARY SPEECH**

*Mr Speaker announced the passing of a former member of Parliament.*

*Tofa Hon GAFA Ioelu Elisaia was a member for the Territorial Constituency of SATUPAITEA.*

*Tofa Hon GAFA Ioelu Elisaia was elected on the 13<sup>th</sup> day of September 1996 after a by-election and was sworn in on the 29<sup>th</sup> November 1996.*

*He became a member during the 1996 – 2001 Parliamentary Term. Tofa Hon. GAFA Ioelu Elisaia was a member of the Parliament Select Committee from 1997 -1998. He was Parliamentary Under-Secretary for the Electric Power Corporation and the Department of Communications in 1999.*

*He was Minister for the Department of Post Office and Communications in 1999. He was the Minister of the Public Service Commission, the Department of Revenue and the Customs Department from 2000 – 2001. He was also a member of the Human Rights Protection Party or the HRPP.*

*Allow me on behalf of Parliament to convey our condolences to the beloved constituency, his wife and children and the family for the departed father called by God.*

*I respectfully call on the dignitaries of Parliament to be upstanding and to observe a minute of silence as a mark of respect for the member and brother whom has passed on.*

*The members observed a minute of silence to mark their respect for the members passing.*

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**MR SPEAKER:** Thank you to the dignitaries of Parliament.

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

**MR SPEAKER:** We will now continue the debate on the Bill. At the conclusion of our Proceedings yesterday, the Minister of Justice and the Electoral Office had completed his address.

I now call upon the Minister of Education, Sports and Culture for his address on matters raised by members.

I call upon the Hon Minister please.

**Afioga Hon LOAU SOLA KENETI SIO (Minister of Education, Sports and Culture):** Thank you Mr Speaker for this opportunity. I am raring to speak this morning before the presence of the venerable and paramount dignitaries. Alas my substandard fails me to properly orate your honorific salutations of Samoa for you are sacred. Your notability extends from the Yellow Sea to the region of Alataua where the sun sets. In saying so I am humbled as I feel that I am incapable to revere your honorific decrees. I am so afraid that If I may attempt to I will err awakening the house of spirits consequently altering the colour of the yellow sea to black. I will now get to the task and address you Samoa as this House is filled with your honorific decrees.

I respectfully acknowledge the honorific salutations pertaining to Samoa in general from Manu'a to Savai'i. I must also acclaim the Clergy throughout the various denominations and their commitment to invocation for the prosperity of Samoa, they are our guidance and connection to the heavens.

I must also recognise the dignitaries of Government with the Afioga Le Ao o le Malo, the member of the Council of Deputies, the Leader of the House whom is also the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and Cabinet as well as Associate Ministers. The distinguished notability of that side of the Chambers are present with Chairpersons of Parliamentary Committees and members, the elected representatives of constituencies for the political affairs of this nation.

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I respectfully salute you Mr Speaker and the Deputy Speaker. You have already offered praises to our Heavenly Father as it is our spiritual duty to do so. Let that role rest with the clergy. Thank you for the invocation. We are also graced with the attendance of the Chief Executive Officers of Ministries and Public Enterprises. Praise God for life. For we are here today because of the blessings from our Maker.

The course of this Parliamentary Term is drawing near the end of 5 years but we must reflect on our journey. I can say on behalf of this Ministry that we encountered a lot of difficulty. Members expressed their recommendations throughout the term. This time I think only a few spoke on this Ministry which indicates the satisfaction of this Parliament with the service from this Ministry. In due course I will address the matters raised by members.

It is best that I enlighten you on the strategic goals and policies of this Ministry so as to give you a clear picture of our services. The objectives we set from 2013 to 2018 was marred by problems during that 5year period. There were challenges and we did take your suggestions to improve the Ministry services in moving forward. That period has passed and more policies have been set out for 2019 to 2024. There are objectives and policies to be followed by the Ministry to ensure that it is effective and will reach students.

That is a brief overview of our objectives of the Ministry of Education which is ascertaining that every Samoan child may obtain a sound education and to gain a bright future. Pre-Schools still maintain and have been for a long time emphasising the importance of pre-schooling. The One Government Grant have started rolling out this funding for all pre-schools around Samoa. The Ministry are also currently pushing for salaries for pre-school teachers. Why? Well we hold fervently to the belief that as long as the foundation is solid, the house will be too. This is the base of pre-schools and we must monitor every form of education. Continuing education and the development of teacher's capacity building is another area which you regularly advise us on and technological trainings as we are seeing at this time.

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Let me say this about the times we are in with the pandemic and the state of education and the numerous problems surfacing. Great leaders will not retreat but always look ahead considering what must be done. We understand that the development process for technology has been an extensive struggle of readjusting and modifying to achieve the goals for the benefit of students. In a sense the pandemic was good in a way as it encouraged the implementing of modern speedy communications of technology. We have also been informed of relevant vital information on the subject. This programme has been in the pipeline for a while now, for instance the school net 2014 which we have been talking about. We have now realised its importance, *e i ai foi faiva e asa lava foi ma se maumau*. There will always be errors as problems are inevitable. But with the realities now engulfing our shores the strategic goals of the Ministry are now under way to emphasise modern communications and to take the schooling syllabus to the rural areas using this method.

As a matter of fact, some members shared the disappointment of this service not being fully functional. As I have said before there will always be problems such as machines becoming inoperable or disconnection lines which are inevitable issues but we try to maintain services. Now under the radar there are educational programmes now rolled out for us to utilise these methods of delivering the message. The future is uncertain and as of now the pandemic has not reached our shores.

The preparations currently in place will be the concept to adapt when the pandemic does get here. The Ministry also has plans to change the starting age for children and I think that is now out there. Colleges were formerly for a period of 5 years that will now be changed to just 4. Why? There is no reason to have student's study for that long when they are not up to it academically. Research done by the Ministry suggested that it be done and as one member alluded to. To place emphasis on vocational schools. Students that cannot cope with higher education can opt to study at TVET or the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Institute. This shall be done next year and Cabinet have also submitted its directive to ensure this happens after they have been fully understood of this direction for the future.

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Year 9 students will be taking the SSLC at Year 10 to decide which path to take but they will all meet up again at the top. Although their curriculum will be different. This will make things more convenient for children that drop out from school when they cannot cope with study but will now take this other pathway which will take him to our University. This group will head straight for the TVET program and the academic subjects group will be heading to tertiary. This is our encouragement which is monitoring the progress of students. Currently year 8 students sit exams year 9, 10 and 11 will be assessed and tested again at year 12. For 3 years we have no idea where the student's progress is at. So we are changing that by testing at year 8 followed by their assessment at year 9. They are tested again at year 10 followed by the assessment at year 11 and being tested again at year 12, their secondary education ends there and heads straight to University.

**Afioga Hon Faumuina Tiatia Faaolatane Liuga (Palauli le Falefa):** Lau Mr Speaker....

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

**Afioga Hon Faumuina Tiatia Faaolatane Liuga:** I appreciate the concise explanation from the Minister on the point of giving opportunities to continue their education. I really like this program Loau and your Ministry.

I therefore convey my commendations and I applaud you for we are seeing progress in your objectives which were substantiated by Cabinet. May God's blessings be upon you and your Associate Minister. Bless this Sitting.

**MR SPEAKER:** Well done. This looks like another salute. I call upon the member for Faleata West.

**Tofa Lealailepule Rimoni Aiafi (Faleata West):** Mr Speaker I did speak on the very topic the Minister is on right now. In the past our school system began with year 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13. We no longer follow this system. I must then express my commendation to the Minister for this is the old system we have long been adopting. It started from the times when we were under New Zealand colonial rule. Now that we have come of age in terms of our own school system, it has come to this.

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My question stems from the fact that the emphasis is on vocational and field trades and the likes. In some countries when student's complete Year 10 they are then divided up.

You will remember that I objected from the beginning when TIS and NUS were introduced. I wonder whether it would be possible for the Minister and Ministry to set aside these two concepts and instead, divert focus on trades. But I do thank you once again for this important aspect which I did mention in my address. With all due respect.

**MR SPEAKER:** Thank you, I call upon the Minister of Education Sports and Culture.

Alright I will allow the member for Safata.

**Afioga Leana Ronnie Posini (Safata West):** Thank you Mr Speaker. I also commend the Minister as I do often mention this subject of trades, since it is my stance on the subject and it causes me to appreciate the Minister for considering vocational education. It is the reason we support this topic now in place. As a fellow member said, our country is growing and we need people with specialist skills in trades. It is the reason behind our argument of separating the University and Vocational Studies. As far as I am concern, people with specialist skills have a different knowledge and so they should be allowed to pursue vocational trades. I guess it is advocating the development of our country. With due respect.

**MR SPEAKER:** I hope this is a point of order or clarification so as not to drag on our Meeting. I do appreciate the remarks from the member for Safata West which are all acceptable information. But we must get our orders moving along for it seems that members are repeating the issues they have already raised.

I call on the Hon Minister.

**Afioga Hon LOAU SOLA KENETI SIO:** I must also express my gratitude if you realise the motives behind the endeavours by the Ministry. Let us all be grateful for that and move forward. But I do appreciate my brother Leala giving advice which I am noting down. Who knows perhaps a future Minister will act on it. But as for me I do not use it, I only note it down for the improvement of Parliament.

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**MR SPEAKER:** Let me allow the member for Faleata West.

**Tofa Lealailepule Rimoni Aiafi:** Mr Speaker this is the only Minister I spend more time with, day and night where I give him advice. All he does is take notes. I believe that the stuff he has done are from my recommendations. Thank you Loau for accepting my advice. Thank you.

**MR SPEAKER:** I call upon the Minister of Education.

**Afioga Hon LOAU SOLA KENETI SIO:** Well that was good to change things at this particular time. But my brother is correct and I am applying his advice.

I think it was the member for Lefaga and Faleaseela that mention certificates from NUS and I am a bit ashamed to say it, but he stated that it is not recognised abroad. There were three teachers that were accepted under the quota system so they did not have to go through the process of getting employment permits. We provided letters to the schools where they were offered teaching positions. So they are now teaching. These women extended their gratitude via email to me and saying that they were now in employment without having to go out looking for work. These teachers are graduates of NUS.

But the fellow members are right that there were issues that surfaced and we have left it at that for now. We have also come to understand that there was a gentleman that used to be in charge of the University and is from the member's constituency so perhaps that is why he is bringing this up. I am not making accusations as to who is right or wrong. I can say that our University are now collaborating with the Samoa Qualification Authority whose role is monitoring the programmes at the University whether they are up to standards and are properly taught. Now we have this new gentleman Afioga Laau na Fausia whom has checked and has given the green light for these programmes to be handed to the SQA for accreditation instead of giving it to TVET disregarding higher education or academic at NUS. This is the trend followed by other countries like Fiji, Australia and New Zealand where they all have this authority and we are currently doing the same so thank you to the member for bringing this up.

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So all the programs now taught like Bachelor of Education, Certificate of Education, Diploma in Education, Foundation Certificate in Agriculture, Foundation Certificate in Agriculture, Foundation Certificate in Science, Bachelor of Science, Bachelor of Medicine will all be accredited by SQA. Cabinet have also confirmed and have given their directive to ensure this is done. Let me say to the member that the process is currently under way.

Funding for Mission schools was raised by I think the lady member, Now the Government has a policy in place for the One Government Grant and church schools get the most funding. From this fund 60% pays for the teachers. If this is not enough, I guess then he lady members point of concern is vital and the Government will look into it and consider what possible changes that can be made as the funds is specifically for the said purpose. The lady member also said.

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

**Afioga Faaulusau Rosa Duffy-Stowers (Gagaifomauga No 3):** Thank you Mr Speaker for the opportunity and I gladly accept the clarification from the Minister on this note. I understand that the funds have been allocated to the church themselves. What I am trying to suggest to you Minister and the Ministry is the possibility of the Government holding the funds and putting these teachers on the government payroll. With respect thank you.

**MR SPEAKER:** I call upon the member for Falealili West.

**Tofa Aumua Isaia Lameko (Falealii West):** Thank you for the opportunity. Since the Minister is now on the topic of the One Government Grant where I asked whether the criteria for allocating funds through this plan for maintenance purpose on Primary Schools can be slightly widen. So as to allow for the purchase of a TV for education I technology please. Thank you.

**Afioga Hon LOAU SOLA KENETI SIO:** I appreciate the view from the lady member but since our budget is now in process I will note it down as your opinion is rather important and perhaps we could look at it in future.



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I must remind you though that our denominations are different, with the Congregational Christian Church their budget is huge and is the same with the Methodist. The Catholic Church on the other hand have a very minimal amount of funds and they must find out where their money is going to.

**Afioga Faaulusau Rosa Duffy-Stowers:** Mr Speaker is it possible to get another opportunity.

**MR SPEAKER:** The member will have the floor.

**Afioga Faaulusau Rosa Duffy-Stowers:** Thank you Mr Speaker, the Minister mentioned the budgets of these churches and I think that is not the role of the Ministry to state how much the various churches budgets are. All I am saying is the possibility of reconsidering the situation as all these children are Samoans, and yet only the teachers under government schools are being paid not teachers in church schools. Keep the money in the government purse whilst reviewing whether this group of teachers can be paid, with respect thank you.

**MR SPEAKER:** I call upon the Leader of the Government.

**Susuga Hon Tuilaepa Auelua Fatialofa Lupesoliai Lolofietele Neioti Aiono Galumalemana Dr. Sailele Malielegaoi (Prime Minister):** Mr Speaker this issue has come up not once nor twice and it is an area which the Government takes seriously. It is being considered from time to time. The matter now raised is important concerning mission schools. This Government Policy was instigated in 1983 and towards the end of that year the Budget was prepared for the Budget of 1984. It is 36 years ago since the dialogue for Government assistance to mission schools started. This was just for mission schools and so \$50,000 was handed over in 1984. The state of government finances at the time was very poor. In 1985 it was \$100,000 and in 1986 \$150,000 was appropriated and so it has gone from strength to strength over the years with the new proposed budget of \$18 million. This assistance considered by the Government is for the purpose of education. This depends on the money we collect from the people's taxes.

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There was also assistance from New Zealand and Australia for schools. What happened was this continued and for some reason it just stopped. So the Government continued to cover funding of mission schools. There was also assistance at the time for mission schools. The suggestion that the government must review it and meanwhile cease it which is a very important opinion to stop giving these funds but focus on paying the schools.

There is a lot of complications coming out of this. Since this money also covers the administration costs and the management of churches are all relying on this funding to cover it. Now cutting this payment is not a problem at all. We can always say to let us handle the payments and it will come from here but we do not know at this stage. Because we cannot do this to mission schools alone as there are also private schools. These are schools which were eventually relinquished to be operated by Committee. For instance, Samoa College and Avele which are now operating independently. The fundamental value which we all experienced from the past was that parents pay for our school fees. Everyone in this house's schooling were payed for by our parents.

There was a time when I was not allowed in school for two weeks because the payment of my fees from my parents was late. But parents did strive to pay but this period in time parents seems to be relying on the Government. I guess we cannot really blame anyone for that as most children are now attending public schools. There are various forms of assistance available for students at public schools. For the other schools there seems to be more weight on parents to meet school expenses.

This is the reason our taxes are regularly increased so that the whole country can assist including people objecting to paying taxes. What we are doing is on compassionate grounds. Taxing is not a bad thing but is to assist in the appropriations of Government revenues for financially strong parents and the disadvantage ones with lots of children.

Mr Speaker the point raised is important but the Government will not act in short range so to speak but must also consider the administration side. How do we meet the payments for administrations when churches are also asking for assistance? Mr Speaker, leave it with us after all the query is now before us.

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The HRPP Government initiated this assistance 36 years ago wholeheartedly for the long haul and it continues today. This type of support was not done before by any other Government. I remember when that very budget was tabled in Parliament, the objection to the Government was, how can the Government beguile the public with a lousy \$50,000?

Mr Speaker, those were the rhetoric in this House. The University started with only \$5 to maintain the topic whilst negotiations continued. It became an issue of mockery and prompting statements like, “*why discuss such thing here which is a joke. You cannot establish a University with \$5*”. What happen? It was established with \$5 and our University is now up and running. It became a subject of ridicule inside this House. Mr Speaker submit the question as the Minister has given his response and the Government has not missed this issue, we are still looking into it and there have been countless visits to my office concerning this matter.

It is also why I often sit down with the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Revenue to continue our study into these situations ensuring there is capital and always requesting for financial assistance from overseas in a courteous manner for the children of Samoa. Mr Speaker that is the explanation.

**MR SPEAKER:** Thank you. There you have it. Our actions and programs all depend on capital as the Prime Minister has explained. I call upon the Minister of Education.

**Afioga Hon LOAU SOLA KENETI SIO:** I guess that is understood as the Prime Minister has enlightened us on the emergence of this subject. God will provide us with more days. Currently the Teachers Council continues and is one of the vital part of the Ministry. It has been a long difficult process making it happen so as to analyse and monitor the teacher’s objectives. The registration of teachers is currently going confirming qualified teachers and the quality they possess. This covers all teachers within mission schools, private and public schools. Why? So as to attain quality teaching and the best teachers to educate our children. Some members raised school buildings which is very simple. Prepare the application letter and submit it to the Japanese Office and the Ministry will also be assisting with our supporting letter.

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I have heard members stating that they have no school buildings for primary schools and colleges. They should have been done by now if they are in a bad state. But if this is the avenue for you to get back in as I gather well that is alright. I can assist. But do the letter now and your school will start construction next week.

**Afioga Tafua Maluelue Tafua (Aleipata Itupa i Lalo):** Mr Speaker, it is only a minor matter which I raised and the Minister is now on it.

**MR SPEAKER:** I call upon the member for Aleipata Itupa I Lalo.

**Afioga Tafua Maluelue Tafua:** I appreciate the Minister's remarks. There is statement known as a passing comment. You are nearing the end of your remarks and I say greetings and farewell before saying please help us as we are building our school. I am observing the theme of your speech which is, every child in Samoa must be educated for a bright future for us. The reason behind my recommendations is because I like how you have divided up Year 8, Year 9, Year 10 and Year 11 before being tested.

My question is and it would be good if you address this point. What about the slow learners, the group that are only keen to start at 16 and 17 years old? Is there a provision for this group? But thank you for the school buildings I shall wait for a letter as that was the purpose of my application. Have a good speech.

**Afioga Hon LOAU SOLA KENETI SIO:** I appreciate the reminder from the Tuiatua faanofonofu. You are correct and that is the objective. Your school building is done. But for those who have not, they are the ones I am talking about. Since I hear that some members have yet to have their schools done. That is negligence on your part. But my support for you is to quickly submit the letter and by next week your school building will be done.

**MR SPEAKER:** I call upon the member for Falealili.

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**Afioga Fuimaono Teo Samuelu Teo (Falealili East):** Mr Speaker, thank you to the Minister for clarifying this area. At this stage we are not certain of the date when constructions begin for the new school building. But we are currently occupied with the preparations for the funeral of a distinguish member of the constituency, orator Ofoia. So we have allowed the daughter of Fuimaono Tautalaaso to follow up our application. At this stage the necessary actions we have done but we do urge you Minister to deliver on this project. With due respect.

**Tofa Namulauulu Sami Leota (Faasaleleaga No.2):** Mr Speaker, since we have the opportunity.

**MR SPEAKER:** The member may take the floor.

**Tofa Namulauulu Sami Leota:** I express my gratitude to the Minister for the financial opportunities to assist with the construction of our school buildings. The point I want to make today regards the Ministry enforcing the policy of children attending their respective village schools. Since it is becoming a trend to enrol children at a newly constructed school. Our village administration encourages everyone to comply with the rule to have all the children of our community attend our newly built school.

At the beginning of this year the school roll has almost reached a 100% increase yet the financial grant from the Ministry remains unchanged. Have a look into this as I am the president of our primary school. I wonder if there may be a way to sort this out as there are too many students and the grant remains the same. With due respect.

**MR SPEAKER:** I call upon the Prime Minister.

**Susuga Hon Tuilaepa Auelua Fatialofa Lupesoliai Lolofietele Neioti Aiono Galumalemana Dr. Sailele Malielegaoi:** Mr Speaker I am taking the floor to discuss new school buildings. The assistance for this purpose is currently going well. This is the financial support from the Government of Japan and it is an on-going subject of dialogue between the Government of Japan and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to discuss the grants from overseas.

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From countries like Australia, New Zealand, Japan, China and other countries. This process also involves the Ministry of Finance. Mr Speaker the standout program in this area is the rate of consent from the Government of Japan. This is the result of the effective reporting from our end but we cannot deny the fact that Japan was a pioneer in developing its very own people and instilling them with talents to thrive its country. This country does not have much natural resources with only 14% of its arable land area for farming. Most of the country's land mass is mountainous. Yet they have become renowned for advancing its people to become highly educated. Particularly vocational trades which is the reason behind our trade's schools here. They would procure iron ore to produce all sorts of steel by burning these ores to make steel. Which they produce numerous types of remarkable products like watches and so on.

What was so striking in the eyes of the world at the time was the amount of iron ore imported from Australia which they smelt to make steel. They would then manufacture these small products which Australia imports. That is the mentality which build Japan and the Japanese Government do welcome our request. Since this is the policy that build Japan, education to make Samoan students smart. It is also the reason behind the flexibility of the assistance which they continue to give. I am thinking of the numerous funding that have been granted. Some villages have a school already with another under construction for reasons like being burned down. For instance, Vailoa, which objected to the legislation currently being publicised. I know Vailoa have had three schools done. The first school done was destroyed by fire and so another school was built this was damaged and so another school was built by Japan. Fasitoo-tai is also another village that went through the same thing, after their school was built they decided to take it down and relocated it inland.

Mr Speaker a substantial amount of money is coming through this avenue. The other avenue of assistance is China but there is a problem though they do have lots of money which they are willing to give for school buildings. The difficulty is their approval processes is complicated and requires a lot of criteria which needs to be met and the requirements of applications are quite demanding.

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Up until now we are still awaiting consent for some of the request and applications that have been submitted including the Police Academy. You have all seen Tafaigata has already been cleared but the effects of COVID has halt things. So that is the reason which does affect all our applications at this stage and so Japan is the only source at the moment. There were school buildings funded by the EU but they have also altered the provisions of their policies. It seems that only Japan remains encouraging due to the positivity of their decisions upon our submissions. Moreover, it is the fervent belief of this Government that it is the vital avenue necessary for Samoa moving into the future.

I have taken the opportunity to say this due to members' demands for new school buildings but the delay is due to the processing procedures taken by our overseas counterparts. It is a pity to be poor, but we have been doing this in the past with our own resources. Even with schools that were built, my observation was perhaps \$300,000 plus would be given by Japan and the village would come up with the remaining balance.

In general, this relief can be carried out for \$300,000 if the community uses their own builders, and monitor the work, ensuring the outline and design of the house is followed. Because with builders there are thousands of different tricks they come up with, to make the work cheaper, but endanger the children of the village due to short cuts been made. Moreover, they do not use drawings already drafted by the engineers and architects. To keep the building strong and safe for the children of the community. Mr Speaker, this is assistance on the matter, as it is noted majority of the speeches stated that they are awaiting school buildings, now you have heard, there are a lot of needs, but the problem is the resources from the Europeans are delayed. Mr Speaker that is the explanation.

**MR SPEAKER:** Thank you, I call upon the Hon Minister. Members making requests for their schools should be patient.

**Afioga Hon LOAU SOLA KENETI SIO:** I want to thank the Hon Prime Minister for his assistance in clarifying some aspects, especially the matter on school buildings. Some members mentioned scholarship, as of now it is being monitored. It has been noted nowadays, the recipients of scholarships in New Zealand and Australia have taken a different approach.

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This is not to say that it is exclusively academic. They can also join TVET programs, which is training in different trades. Nowadays you apply online, if you are given an opportunity from them, then it is decided by the Scholarship office, it is no longer based on most marks, yes New Zealand looks over it and accepts you, this is the sooner it is done. This is why respectable member, it is not only academic but they also consider TVET. So you have to apply as soon as you have good grades, to be accepted overseas, for our University and scholarship opportunities.

The member of Falealili stated if he can buy a television? The answer is, yes you can. Perhaps your school is the only one that has yet to purchase a TV in all of Samoa. Yes, all Primary Schools have televisions. But if you go there and there is no funding, then you buy it. Your contribution, is to buy a TV.

The matter regarding the SchoolNet as mentioned by one of the members, SchoolNet and SNBH, this is the only issue Tofa Olo Fiti talks about since 2016 up until now. It is always raised by my brother, Tofa Olo Vaai. Why? Because he has the knowledge. Yes, he is persistent on this matter, he always mentions SNBH, together with SchoolNet every year, why? He has technical skills.

Everyone knows that he used to work at the airport. But I was surprised after I had a talk with Tofa Lealailepule Aiafi, saying the only thing he did was to turn on the lights of the airport runway. This skill is being used. And Tofa Olo Vaai is the one turning on the lights of the runway. This is why he is always talking about it all the time.

Tofa Olo Vaai for your information the SchoolNet is now 8 to 9 years out of date. We are now using another method. At the moment we are now using a modem. Or Google and all other programs that are up to date now. What you are talking about is out of date, it has long been obsolete.

**Tofa Olo Fiti Afoa Vaai (Salega East):** Mr Speaker...the speech by the Hon Minister is interesting, but a point of order first, I am not a person who turns on lights.

As for our SchoolNet mentioned by the Hon Minister as it being obsolete, why is it then stated in the Budget and in the reports. This means the Hon Minister does not seem to understand the work of the Ministry.



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As for SNBH, the reason why I am persistent on this matter is because it is important, to assist our teachers, you have been a Minister for 5 years but there is still a shortage of teachers. But I also remember that I mentioned earlier, the assistance of our radios in those days. We also remember such measures under coconut trees, this is what I was trying to implement, now all Primary schools have televisions. There are televisions but teachers and students are using it to watch SNBH.

Lastly, Hon Loau Keneti Sio, the cost for this was nearly \$80 million, but it is not being used. However all the best with your speech.

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

**Afioga Hon LOAU SOLA KENETI SIO:** Thank you, my brother. It is important to be reminded of such things, I am not saying that it is out-dated and it cannot be used. The only thing is it has slowed down, it is rarely being used since there is now the internet.

Do you recall the clarification made by the Hon Minister of Communication yesterday mentioning those cables, yes, there are so many cables. At the moment the Ministry is also trying to secure a cable. This reminds me...

**Tofa Olo Fiti Afoa Vaai:** Mr Speaker, now I recall, that both the Minister of Education and the Minister of Communication are liars with respect...talking about the various cables yesterday. How many GBs and how much is the capacity, yet the internet on our computers is still slow. I ask that both of you do your work well.

**MR SPEAKER:** I call upon the Hon Minister of Communication, Information and Technology.

**Afioga Hon Afamasaga Lepuiai Rico Tupai (Minister of Communication, Information and Technology):** Mr Speaker my clarification on the matter yesterday was very clear. There are lots of cables, and the internet is fast. With the exception of Vodafone's current equipment, they have now completely replaced their equipment. And their devices to improve their services. At the moment testing is being carried out. Let me tell you all, soon you will see how fast it will be.

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But in regards to speed, it is very fast. If we look back at the time before we got the cable, not only was it expensive, but it was very slow. Now, I would like to say be a little more patient if you have a Vodafone phone. Maybe very soon you will be able to see how fast it will be. At the moment they are working on it, they are not resting, thank you.

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

**Afioga Hon LOAU SOLA KENETI SIO:** The Hon Minister has responded, it will be very soon. But I mentioned this cable, because it is important to our Ministry, for communication. If the internet is free for students. Then the position of Samoa has been uplifted. Technology is fast, students will learn faster and they will quickly understand the subjects.

I heard the members Tofa Lealailepule Rimoni and Tofa Soalo Mene whispering about the contractor carrying out the work for the airport at Tiavea. They said, ‘big money but small airport.’ This is the same with Sagas cable, big cable and small usage.

**Afioga Peseta Vaifou Tevagaena (Faasaleleaga No.4):** Mr Speaker...

**MR SPEAKER:** Alright...

**Afioga Hon LOAU SOLA KENETI SIO:** Is there something... it was these members who said it not me.

**Afioga Peseta Vaifou Tevagaena:** The Hon Minister should take a break, it is hard since...

**MR SPEAKER:** I call upon Afioga Peseta Vaifou Tevagaena.

**Afioga Peseta Vaifou Tevagaena:** Perhaps the Hon Minister has forgotten that I emphasized in my speeches the life of faith. I know you are one Minister well versed in a life of faith. However you have spoken on the matter of the airport, this is good because I wanted to speak on this matter. But it was difficult to approach since some might think it is based on business.

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I cannot, for your information Hon Minister, I will respond for when the project at Tiavi was advertised. It is true that it is constructed on my land, there is no secret about it. Because the son always asks his father, how do you do this? How? Because we as parents teach our children what to do, on this and that.

This is also why the Leader of Government mentioned, that the work has already been advertised. There is not much work in the beginning, however, when the company came over to begin the work there were some families that wanted to pull out. If you look at the incentive of Government, Government is not taking over our lands.

This is a result of further consultation with the Alii and Faipule council, to rearrange where to put the airstrip. What has happened to it?

I would say it was somewhere 6 meters deep, the area of the airport that was buried. If we were to estimate the cost if not for this company, it was \$3.5 million followed by \$11 million, look at this if not for this relief.

This is how big the work is as mentioned by the member of Faleata, small airport big money, let him talk since he does not understand it. Yes, we are looking at large scale developments. With all due respect Mr Speaker.

**MR SPEAKER:** Do not mind them, it is good, the work is not yet complete.

**Afioga Hon Afamasaga Lepuiai Rico Tupai:** Mr Speaker...

**MR SPEAKER:** I call upon the Hon Minister of Communication, Information and Technology.

**Afioga Hon Afamasaga Lepuiai Rico Tupai:** Mr Speaker I rise with respect. Eventhough it is made as a joke, notice have been publicized, that there are many cables but there less usage. Well it is limited because our country is very small. I stated yesterday the long term plans for the use of our cables, and ways by which Government will be able to set up this infrastructure to carry out this task.

Since the companies are also listening in, there was alot of free internet being used during the time students were staying at home. There are things such as Zero Rated SIM, which is for free to do homework. It was frequently used and schools in rural areas are listening, these schools used Digicel and Vodafone for free, for education.

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Unless you want to go on for something else like facebook, you will have to pay. But it was used for free by our schools, even telephones up to now it is still being used for free by schools.

As stated by the Hon Minister for SchoolNet, there are only 60,000 textbooks and lessons that are in SchoolNet that are available. But the students who are using the internet, now they are able to access millions of lessons. This is a clarification on this matter, but it is good enough to use.

**MR SPEAKER:** Very well, I advise members, we are the ones that are at fault on such matters, because everything we do, is planned based on now then it is done. It has to be planned for the future, the country is growing, even children, also businesses are growing as well as those who will be using it in future.

If we are to plan something for only the present, what about tomorrow? How about next week if we need it? This is how it is, statements voiced carelessly in the House are being heard by the country. And it makes it seem that we are not taking our duties and work seriously.

This is the advice of the Chair. It seems... I call upon the Leader of Government.

**Afioga Hon Tuilaepa Auelua Fatialofa Lupesoliai Lolofietele Neioti Aiono Galumalemana Dr. Sailele Malielegaoi:** Mr Speaker this is the reason for taking the floor, all Government developments are implemented for now and the future. When we plan projects for now, it means after planning it would be built because most of these developments take 2 to 3 years. For projects it is called long term for the future. If we plan a large project for now, after it is completed it is useless, it is too small. This is why when plans are carried out for the big developments, we look at how far it can go. It is not limited to 10, 20, 50, 100 years for it to be used.

So that is how the planning is done, but we look at the future as it has been mentioned. It is for us, for ourselves, from the time we took our oath to the end of this Parliamentary term, Mr Speaker there are many children in our country who are now 5, 6 years at the time we did our oath. Some were only 5 years old now they are 10, what do we need? We need schools, for them to go to. We need hospitals, so that we can train them to be nurses as well as teachers.

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It seems we are jokingly saying whatever, but let us remember, there is no country or expert that can devise a plan far ahead into the future, but implement the measure to be used now. They all look ahead to the future.

Mr Speaker this is a very important area, I am grateful that you have clarified our long term plans. This is also why we see most of the complaints made against Government plans, are complaints about the present. This is what we call foresight. A shallow vision. But the vision of Government, is long term and into the future.

Mr Speaker this is the reason for taking the floor, since the matter is being deliberated in the House, and broadcasted outside. This is further assistance on the matter clarified by the Hon Minister.

**MR SPEAKER:** Very well, I call upon the Minister of Education, Sports and Culture to continue. The majority of issues raised by members have been clarified.

**Afioga Hon LOAU SOLA KENETI SIO:** Thank you Mr Speaker. I am certain the water is now very clear as explained. We are also working together with the Hon Minister, but this is a request of the Ministry and hopefully it is considered, if we look at the picture on the front page of the Observer, is it the Sunday Observer? There is a picture of cables lying on the ground. The Hon Minister has already mentioned that they will be looking at future benefits for the Ministry of Education on free internet. Once this is implemented I am certain that education will be advanced. Not only for the University, but several sectors of the Ministry of Education.

The school building mentioned by a member at Tafaigata, the member is right. Work has already begun and in the view of Government and the Ministry, it is appropriate to build a school at Tafaigata, why? Majority of our people have come to reside there. It does not mean it was set up there since it is the constituency of the Minister, no. This is not the case. These are long term developments of Government which have been considered and approved by Cabinet.

In the view of the Ministry and records, there are alot of people of our country living in this area, especially our brothers who have relocated inland, those who were living in Sogi, this is one important aspect, students live far away from Primary schools and Colleges.

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Now that they have relocated, we are now overlooking such measures. For instance we will build a College, Primary school and maybe a vocational studies school up there and an Early Childhood Education school. This means all forms of education will be set up. Work has now commenced, by the end or beginning of July the Primary will open. This is how fast it is going, so children up at Tafaigata will be able to attend as soon as possible. Therefore if Tafaigata is listening in, your request has been granted for a new school building. This includes children from Nuu, Falelauniu, Vaitele Uta, Tafaigata, Aleisa and inland where a lot of people reside. The data we received was from our Statistics office, this is one important factor considered.

The matter raised by one of the members, from Safotulafai, you are right, that is also what I noticed. Yes, it seems plans and funds are made accordingly, because there are different calendars. Schools start in January, as for the Budget it is in June to July, then funds are adjusted based on the number of students in a school. But the Ministry will look into this matter, and arrange the issue.

The Chief Executive Officer is a Professor of Mathematics. It does not take long for the Chief Executive to adjust and find this, you are right. It does not mean that they will be able to base it on this number, but when school starts there will be 400 students but the fund is small, this is why our Ministry should look into this matter.

Mr Speaker I believe the plans of the Ministry are in line with what was set out. One of the members of Falelatai and Samatau also stated the importance of the use of technology nowadays. Other countries have only 3 school days, and they believe it is best. They have 3 days of school and students in rural areas use online access for education.

The slow learning that was mentioned by Tuiatua Faanofonofu, for a 16 year old who has never been to school, learning is at the high chiefs house. This is where knowledge that is seldom found by many is learned, the house of the chief. Yes, that is wisdom that many rarely develop.

I believe I have concluded...

**Tofa Lealailepule Rimoni Aiafi:** Mr Speaker...

**Afioga Hon LOAU SOLA KENETI SIO:** Well, well...

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**Tofa Lealailepule Rimoni Aiafi:** This is an important matter, hence the Hon Minister is nearly finished with his speech...

**MR SPEAKER:** I call upon the member of Faleata.

**Tofa Lealailepule Rimoni Aiafi:** It is nearly time for the Minister of Finance. What I am trying to convey for the Ministry of Education, is for all schools to have internet access, it is here with the Ministry, we have been trying for 3 years from the schools we are involved in.

Hon Minister it is not an easy task. This is why we are making a request to you, it has been 2 years, 3 years since we submitted our application to the Ministry, you should fund someone who is not a teacher but an IT specialist. These big schools need an IT person to take care of the equipment, as well as trainings. It is not easy Hon Minister, since you are moving away from the matter, we are the ones that supply the cable, remember Tafaigata is part of Vaitele, where the king of Faleata resided under the title Tafaigata. This is the only village and family with the title Tafaigata, and the name Paloamatai, people of Paloalao.

Falelauniu was where the king had his feast. But it was at Siusega where the Sega was freed that saved Samoa. I just wanted to clarify to the Hon Minister incase he forgot these big villages, in Vaitele, where these things started, thank you.

**MR SPEAKER:** Very well, I thought the matter would have been considered outside, but...

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

**MR SPEAKER:** I will give the opportunity to the member of Palauli le Falefa, then the Minister can conclude his response.

**Afioga Hon Faumuina Tiatia Faaolatane Liuga:** I believe I should thank you. I mentioned the issue of the sports field, it has to... there is not enough funding for sports field. If it is only \$50 or \$100,000 to construct a sports field, it is not enough. I mention this aspect of sports field because it is linked to students who drop out of schools.

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This is one important area, I am surprised that there are a lot of players from your constituency in the Manu Samoa but you do not have a sports field. They use under the coconut trees. This is the reason why I have mentioned this matter, to have a program, \$6 million has been allocated to develop dropouts, but sports fields should also be developed, so they can use it, with respect.

**MR SPEAKER:** Very well, thank you. I call upon the Hon Minister this is the only matter you have to address.

**Afioga Hon LOAU SOLA KENETI SIO:** Thank you Mr Speaker, the member of Faleata also said his opinion. Samoa is a country already divided, but I will not explain it in detail.

As for the matter raised by the member of Palauli le Falefa, you are right. It is true, but rugby is not the only sport. Why not change to another sport? How about canoeing, that is one sport that is included in the Olympic games. It does not need a field. Please look into it. In case you might be passionate about rugby, but there is no one from your constituency. However, I will consider your opinion.

**Afioga Hon Faumuina Tiatia Faaolatane Liuga:** Mr Speaker I did not only mention rugby in my speech. There is soccer, cricket, you all know that with cricket, we have played several times with the Hon Ministers team and *Tanifa o le Vao* has never been defeated. They said to bring the game to Faleula, but they lost in Faleula, at the Hon Ministers sports field.

It is true, the sports fields, can also be used by our people for exercising, in rural areas, with respect, thank you.

**MR SPEAKER:** Well, let us...

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

**MR SPEAKER:** I call upon the Hon Prime Minister.



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**Afioga Hon Tuilaepa Auelua Fatialofa Lupesoliai Lolofietele Neioti Aiono Galumalemana Dr. Sailele Malielegaoi:** Mr Speaker sports field are important. Because sports and education go together. What should be certain is, a child that loves to play should also be well educated.

This program is not a new program. It is an old program, but it is important to generate ideas for the future. However like everything else it depends on our budget. It is best to take note, the recommendation from the member is important. We are also taking notes.

The only thing that bothers me, is the example stated by the member, there are good players but they play under the coconut tree. It seems to me, those playing rugby should only play under coconut trees. I feel like it was a minor error from the old man, but the matter is important hence it is nothing new, but this issue has been one of the strong programs of this Government. It is best to revisit it. The reason why such matters are usually delayed, on such good developments is because of the financial situation.

**MR SPEAKER:** I call upon the Hon Minister of Communication.

**Afioga Hon Afamasaga Lepuia Rico Tupai:** Mr Speaker I would like to respond to the query raised by Tofa Lealauilepule Rimoni, on the position of those who are experts to assist with IT in schools. The Ministry of Communication and the Ministry of Education have a partnership with our Samoa IT Association, SITA. Everyone saw that the program was launched for schools like Avele, for schools in Savaii, but the first school this partnership program was implemented, in training teachers and conducting online education, was Samoa College. But when we went there it was rejected by the Principal.

It is why Mr Speaker and respectable members of the House, we are working together, and it is difficult as we wait for others from abroad, but we already have the expertise here in Samoa. The assistance is given for free through the association, in schools for students, and also to train teachers.

**Afioga Sulamanaia Fetaiai Tauiili Tuivasa (Vaimauga East):** Mr Speaker can I get an opportunity? Mr Speaker, I noted this morning...

**MR SPEAKER:** Perhaps the matter clarified by the Hon Minister of Communication is now clear, apologies...

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**Tofa Lealailepule Rimoni Aiafi:** Mr Speaker...

**MR SPEAKER:** The matter is now understood, you both work together, it was your Minister that spoke, you two should be able to adjust..

**Tofa Lealailepule Rimoni Aiafi:** Yes Mr Speaker, but since the Principal of the school was mentioned. Remember, unlike in Parliament he is the Minister, but when it comes to Samoa College, the Minister listens to the President of Samoa College. Even the Principal is under the authority of the President, with respect to Madam Principal, incase the information given is wrong, we did not reject. When the Ministry of Education came by, we had long left.

This is a way of adaptation, to consider appropriate procedures because it is not easy. This is the case at SITA, people work there part time, but now the schools need someone to work full time. Therefore Hon Minister and Minister of Education, there are times when you both should pay attention to what I say. With respect.

**MR SPEAKER:** Very well, there is a word said, the right person is given respect. Yes, in the case of political and similar matters of Principals. Respect is given to the person who deserves the respect, the Minister. I want to remind the Society and... I call upon the member of Vaimauga.

**Afioga Sulamanaia Fetaiai Tauiiili Tuivasa:** Mr Speaker, with utmost respect, I have noted the matter between the Minister and his Associate and as you stated earlier I thought the matter would be considered outside. I feel sorry for the Hon Minister because he does not know, that his Associate is going around saying he is the Minister. As for the matter of this constituency, it is unfortunate the Hon Minister is nearing the end of his term, but this is the only Minister of Education that speaks and satisfies this constituency, he is someone who accepts recommendations. Furthermore he speaks directly to the allegations in his Ministry, which is unavoidable. And this pleases this member. Since we are talking about sports field, I am one member who mentioned it. This village of Fagalii already has a school building but there is no sports field. It seems you are being biased to others but please look at our village, since you are my brother.

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I want to remind you, the airport is available. This is the situation, this is where you use your position for our village, we do not have to remind you since you are my brother in law. Therefore you should do what is best for this constituency while you have the chance.

It is no secret that the site was given to Samoa Land for lands on which our village of Fagalii is going to build their school, but it was at the bottom of the valley. This is the reason why the school was constructed on a small piece of land, without a sports field. The school building is now complete but it has no sports field. I humbly ask the Hon Minister, to support our request, there is the airport that can be divided into two to construct our sports field. With respect, Mr Speaker.

**MR SPEAKER:** Very well, thank you. I ask the Hon Minister to note down the request for the member of Vaimauga East.

**Afioga Hon LOAU SOLA KENETI SIO:** Thank you Mr Speaker, the House has received these recommendations. Yes, they are all noted down. The member of Vaimauga East, you are right, I forgot that it is your sister that I am married to. I am grateful that your lineage is now part of *niusina*. However, you are right, this is one constituency that does not have a sports field it is small, also the youth there usually go to the golf course, this is one sport that our country is famous for and has earned us gold medals.

This is why the member should go and try playing golf, yes, you will find all the voters of Fagalii there, and most of the youth of Fagalii go there because they love golf. But you should also look at setting up a field, on the far side of the airport, I give you permission to use it for your sports. But just make sure of the police car that will follow, since the area is now under the authority of the Minister of Police. This means, you should play smart and be ready to flee when the police car arrives.

**MR SPEAKER:** I ask that the member conclude with his response.

**Afioga Hon LOAU SOLA KENETI SIO:** Mr Speaker this concludes a response on the matter. Before I conclude, I pray that you forgive any rude statement conveyed, together with any disappointment in services provided, the Lord is forever present. Our current strategy is from 2019-2024, unfortunately our reign finishes in 2021, yes, I hope we will all come back and continue with this strategy.

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Therefore, Mr Speaker before I take my seat, I would like to convey a word to the support of my constituency. My beloved Sagaga le Falefa we are going to part ways, unfortunately we are separated, and I will be separated from Fogaa together with Aiga e Tolu. This is why, from Niuvai to Fogaa I am very grateful for your support and prayers. I know that no catch is not worth it. As for your support on the duties and responsibilities bestowed upon me, I am grateful. This is why, *Aiga e Tolu, Luatua ma lou Gautaala, le mamalu foi i le Faletolu*, what you have witnessed in the services provided, well, the fisherman is smart but there are times when he cannot lead the fish to his net. I beg for forgiveness in our fellowship, the days of the Lord is never ending, it does not mean that constituencies are divided and then our relationship with *usoga* is broken, thus you are my brother. Therefore, *Luatua ma Aiga e Tolu*, thank you for the support on the duties of your member. We performed at the Independence, we went to New Zealand and America, and we have accomplished this down on earth, now we only have the moon left. Also my village of *Fogaa, Toetaufanua ma Alo o le Malietoa* and the village of Faleula, thank you for the prayers, your servant is strong because of your support.

May God be gracious and give you the Holy writ. There will be other days, come a time we will meet again, I heard that some elders have started to resign, please show compassion for your member is still alive. Be patient, do not make haste, in case it might be worthless.

May the Lord be kind upon the Chair and the dignity of the House, the Leader of the House, may the Lord bless you with the wisdom to fulfill duties. Also blessings upon the Chief Executive and Assistant Executives, the hands and feet of Government, may God be gracious and give you strength, and life. Soifua and God bless.

**MR SPEAKER:** Very well, thank you. I believe the country and this gathering have heard the response of the Hon Minister of Education, Sports and Culture, on matters raised by respectable members, which now has been clarified. I hope we will find foresight to move forward with the work of Cabinet.

However, since we have arrived at our usual recess time, our orders will be set aside for usual recess of Parliament.

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

*Debate resumed on the second reading of the Supplementary Appropriation Bill (No.3) 2019/2020 and the Appropriation Bill 2020/2021.*

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

Well done to the support of Parliament particularly the Ministry Heads of Government. During our break the Hon Minister of Education, Sports and Culture was finishing his speech.

So with respect I call the Hon Minister of Finance to speak in accordance to the raising concerns of the respectable members of Parliament.

**Afioga Hon SILI EPA TUIOTI (Minister of Finance):** Thank you honorable Speaker for the spiritual devoutness to the Most High for his abundant love and goodness which has enable us to reconvene so we can implement our duties and callings.

I greet the dignity of Parliament this morning, the honorable Speaker, Hon Prime Minister, Cabinet, Associate Ministers, members of the Parliament of Samoa, Heads of Government Ministries and Corporations in particular. I futher greet Samoa in all its honorific salutations, *Aiga ma latou Tama, faapea le usoga a Tumua ma Puleono* in Salafai.

Mr Speaker, I rise with great respect to clarify the matters raised by the respectable members in accordance to the Budget 2020/2021, together with other raising concerns in relation to the private finance section of the Ministry of Finance.

First and foremost, I wish to speak of the political situation that Samoa is in right now. Mr Speaker, I have mentioned in my address the Main Budget Statement, that Samoa has set a high standard with regards to its economic status most particularly in the circle of small island states in the Pacific.

It has been 58 years since Samoa became an Independent State and the first ever Pacific island to have governed her own people particularly for the wellbeing of her people in the future.

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So many achievements have been attained by Samoa for these many years in governing her State and I wish to read out some of these huge milestones as follows.

1. Samoa has become a member of several regional organisations including the United Nations and a Founding Member of the Asian Development Bank in 1966, the International Monetary Fund, African, Caribbean and Pacific and many other organisations which has had our contribution and participation for the prosperity of Samoa in the future.
2. Samoa has raised its economic status from Least Developed Country to Developing Country.
3. Raise the set currency for individuals in relation to gross domestic product or GDP per capita, from \$2,150SAT in 1980 to the current \$11,950.
4. International conferences and sports were hosted in Samoa. It not only benefitted the tourism sector, it also produced more employment opportunities and created a chance for Samoa to be on top of political arena in the entire Pacific. It is a country that can do anything and can implement all things given the high experience and qualification of its people.
5. Samoa has her own National University that assists with the education of her children together with the establishment of other higher university branches and vocational studies which includes medical subjects learning.
6. The standard of our international airport and ports have been raised for ease of travelling and international trade with our partners. We also have our own airlines company and shipping services that manages and supports our developments for the sake of traveling and exports in particular.
7. We have the establishments of nations Embassies whom we are working closely with, as well as the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, which have been administrated by our own people. These processes have created more access for us and our partners the creation of more opportunities from these international finance institutions to assist us with our major developments in support of developing our local economy.

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8. Build international sports facilities not only to improve our local sports facilities, and also a chance to develop our local athletes for international sports arena in terms of acquiring employment and to create us high standard in the International ground. It is unforgettable for Samoa to be hosts of some of the largest sports, namely the rugby match between Samoa and the All Blacks in 2015, the Commonwealth Youth Games in 2015 as well as the Pacific Games in 2019.  
Mr Speaker the assurance is, the reason for bringing these games to Samoa is due to the high belief of these big nations that Samoa is more qualified and fully prepared to host any international sports given its upgraded sports facilities and its well skilled people in administering these games in Samoa.
9. The enhancement of the Government building for the works of the public servants who are working for the sake of the State. This building has created a chance for several business entrepreneurs to set up their businesses within Apia proximity including Salelologa town in Savaii.
10. Development of concrete bridges, Vaisigano cemented drainage, seawall areas and protection measures for the coastal areas, including the State's several other major projects to counter disaster resilient infrastructure. In truth honorable Speaker, nowadays is different, we must ensure well planned preparations for our major project developments and the traveling public to be able to stand against the severe effects of climate change. The recent launching of the concrete Maliolio Bridge by the State is one of the major projects that had the assistance of our partners for the protection of the country at any time including the times of severe weather conditions which will no longer affect anybody in this part of the country.

Mr Speaker, the main aspect and objective of the explanation I attempt to bring at this point in time, there has been so much seen today, given the works and good developments implemented by the HRPP government that the country is bearing faith in as it is a Party that promotes its manifestos, and is also a Party that walks the talk in implementing the developments for the benefit of her people.

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Samoa is a very small country, and there are numerous challenges we are facing every day although we not only have a very small economy it is also difficult to attract major businesses into the country, as Samoa is remote from our business partners and business communications are very expensive. I further wish to emphasise the huge effects of climate change or the ex-essential threats for small island states.

Therefore, Samoa must prepare its strategic plans in order to counter these immense challenges. We must also strengthen and be hopeful of our guidelines for our economic distribution particularly some slight revenue earnings within the country and a few grants from our overseas partners.

Samoa through the Ministry of Finance is now preparing a long term plan called the Samoa 2040. This strategic focus is the State's aim for the following 7 which includes:

1. Raise and enhance agricultural development;
2. Raise and improve tourism developments;
3. Raise Information and Communication Technology development;
4. Search opportunities for Labour Mobility in Samoa;
5. Enhance and strengthen major resilient development;
6. Heed the importance of Human Capital Development;
7. Security for Samoa.

I heed the preparation and proper layout of the State's strategic plans for the sake of ongoing development plans. There is also continuous increase budget support stipulated in the Budget given the trust and full knowledge of our partners of our policies, priorities of Samoa and preparations for "Samoa 2040". These strategic plans has the assistance of the strategic development plan of Samoa, the Strategy for the Development of Samoa SDS where all works and developments rely on as set down for 14 private sectors for 5 years for the implementation of its work.

Therefore, a country with prudent long term planing is a country that can prosper and push for its development and economic growth. For Samoa, her partnership with other countries and organisations through the collaboration occurs by abiding the policies and procedures, particularly long term visions and focus view the State prepares and prioritizes.

Mr Speaker, the country need not have to worry about our economy. Some have queried the certainty and power of the testament which is the target revenue of \$588million aside from the \$249million grants from our partners.



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For your information, revenue earnings has reduced by 10% in Samoa due to the Covid-19 that has affected our economy. The Ministry of Finance trusts, we can achieve expected revenues collected from \$588million or more due to the following reasons:

1. The VAGST tax collection of businesses will commence in the new financial year using the Tax Information Management System (TIMS).
2. Establish a scanner machine to investigate imported goods at the Matautu port soon.
3. Resume programs and projects for major developments set out for future financial years. These developments will not only create job opportunities and raise standard for business companies and earn tax for Government, there is a huge contribution to earning international finance assistance utilized for international trade or foreign reserves.
4. Samoa is free from the Covid-19. Meaning, our economy should recover swiftly should a remedy be found or vaccine on the virus that is affecting the world.

Mr Speaker, I then come to other matters raised by some of the members, budget deficits or the expected deficit of 2.3% for the next fiscal year 2020/2021.

For the sake of clarity, this excess is simply a proposal or budget however we are unsure of future events each year. We are currently facing the Covid-19 after the recent measles outbreak that had affected our country at the end of last year. These challenges, no one knew that Samoa would be facing calamity at the start of this financial year.

Mr Speaker, the 4 consecutive financial years commencing from 2015/2016 to 2018/2019, the situation with our economic distribution was still good as observed, even though budget deficits for the 4 successive financial years were proposed. The explanation aims to focus on the actuals versus budget deficits as follows:

For the financial year 2015/2016, a budget deficit of 4.7% was expected to be collected. At the end of that year, there was an actual deficit of only 4%. For the financial year 2016/2017, the expected target collected for expenditures over revenues was 3.5%. At the end of that year, the actual deficit recorded was only 1.1%.

The financial year 2017/2018, the overall budget deficit was 3.5% and a 2% deficit was recorded at the end of the year.

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Following the next financial year 2018/2019, and the 3.5% budget deficit, a surplus of 2.7% was recorded for the first time since the past 5 years. Meaning, revenues was more than expenditures. That being said your honour, all these preparations are only proposed agendas by an individual, only God knows the result.

Mr Speaker, every year, expenditures are always greater than revenues in the State's appropriation budget. The reason is because our work is funded from grants and soft loans in assistance to revenue collected in the country. It is therefore not bad to grow more developments in the country, particularly with this sort of projects that can contribute and assist us through the support of our partners.

For your information, the work of the State cannot finish in a year nor a day, there are projects that requires a time period of 2 – 4 months like the Faleolo airport and road upgrading towards the airport in the western end of Upolu, and therefore, the balance from the previous year is carried forward to the current year. That means, the statement about bankrupt is false. Majority of implemented works requires many years to build, and this is a huge contribution for Samoa in terms of earning us more job opportunities, ensure assistance and support towards other developments of the country such as the tourism industry, tax on goods and wages of workers to implement developments and to continue the work of the State.

Mr Speaker, Parliament must also be aware of the required currency and public assets appropriated each year with regards to public accounts reports.

For the fiscal year 2018/2019, it details the total net worth of Government assets at \$987million in relation to the total assets of \$2.1billion compared to liabilities of \$1.15billion. Henceforth, the total assets of the State plus short term savings can still handle debt repayment at any time for the Government Ministries.

Mr Speaker some have commented that the State is bankrupt. With all due respect, this statement is unfounded for. There is no country nor organisation that will want to assist us if they see that our Government is corrupt. In truth, the State is not careless in implementing its developments, as they are in compliance with international finance and their policies and procedures which we use to execute many of our projects including roads, concrete roads, airport and ports, school buildings, hospital and many other works given our firm partnerships with these foreign partners who are assisting us.

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Then we come to our debt. For the fiscal year 2020/2021, there will be no new debt except for continuing debt of \$11.4million for 2 projects that was signed in the past years which have already been submitted. I do not accept the comments made by some of the members saying that new debts are no longer acceptable in Samoa. The truth is, the State has already given its intention to carefully monitor the spread and existence of this deadly virus. If the effect of this virus on the world and its economies will take a while, then our financial situation will be reassessed and thereby fiscal space will be opened as the last resort to allow the State to consider more debt if necessary. For the time being, no new debt is required and the State is endeavoring to collect tax from all people on the purpose to monitor well its revenue earnings in order to support the country.

When it comes to capacity and being able to repay these debts, it is only 10% or 11sene of the State’s overall revenues that can be used to meet these arrears. The other 89% or 89sene from one tala is our allocated revenue to implement other works of the State which includes salaries of public servants, works of Government Ministries and Corporations plus several other developments that are funded by the Government, partners and borrowings to support the necessary.

Then I come to the goal which is the focus of preparations for the Main Estimates for 6 years to date.

Firstly, the Main Estimates for the year 2015/2016, the objective became a theme, live within our means. It was a goal that the Government had complied by as explicitly heard in discussions at that time, and despite the many planned preparation by the State, there were set policies to gradually decrease the budget deficit at that time which targeted 55% strength for the economy in attempts to readjust the strength back to where it used to be before we became affected by the natural disaster that followed. It started with the tsunami in 2009 and cyclone Evans in 2012.

The first Budget for this Parliamentary term 2016/2017 had focussed on “Strengthening the Foundations, Building for Tomorrow”. It is a theme whereby it provided the apparent aim of the State and Samoa to plan ahead for the future using policies, long term vision, and plans to support its developments particularly government priorities.

In 2017/2018, it focussed on “Equity and Fairness”. The main goal according to the will of the State, is that all developments are essential for everyone and that each person should contribute to the development of its economy.

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The aim of the State for this particular year was, to ensure that priorities are set for everyone's benefit. We must also ensure that we work together by contributing to tax revenues for the development and prosperity of Samoa at large.

The theme for the Budget year 2018/2019 was "The Right Path" and the focus of the State was to settle and strengthen set guidelines to further stabilize the development of Samoa in the future. The State had achieved a 2.7% surplus as stated in the first place, to reflect the integrity of the State, not only was announced and planned, it was action and implement these works for the country.

This year 2019/2020, the theme is "Weaving a prosperous and secure future for Samoa together". The State is maintaining and prioritizing working together for the benefit of our people. This is also the message for the fiscal year 2020/2021, so that we can weave together for a better Samoa in the future. Mr Speaker, these are the good works of the Government, prioritize our citizens to achieve a better future.

The aim of Samoa 2040 and the set guidelines for its development is to ensure that all Samoans pursue a high living standard".

Mr Speaker, God does not forsake its people. We plan whilst God implements, fulfils and gives us strength through his blessings upon Samoa everyday. God's love for Samoa is explicitly showcased through opening up more grant offerings from our partners. With the goodness of God, Samoa is not infected from this virus that is causing turmoil across the globe. Such is our thanksgiving to the Most High for his presence in us always.

Mr Speaker, I will move on to other raising matters from the respectable members of Parliament.

1. NPF Benefit, I wish to state the following: \$35million stimulus package benefit was declared for phase 2, there is plan that an official notice will be out at the end of the week on this stimulus package to provide clarity upon all other raising concerns including the dividend payout that will be distributed to the country. This includes the date for implementing this process including other areas prepared by the Executive and the Board of Directors.
2. Free ferry rides for pensioners traveling to Manono and Apolima. The Ministry of Finance will implement an assessment with the NPF in relation to this request, depending on the cost to implement it plus the necessary processes for benefits like this;

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3. One of the statements is baseless saying that only foreign investors are eligible to NPF lending. This statement is false. The normal process, as soon as a request is received from the members of the public, the Ministry will move to carry out an assessment on the submitted request based on the borrower's capacity whether it can meet repayments. Company's revenues to meet the debt, and the credit history to determine whether the borrower is a good debtor or a bad one.
4. May I remind again to the Senior Men and Women members – the pensioners, your pensions will be raised from \$145 to \$160 next month. Note that there is an increased pension of \$100 for the month of July. Therefore, the increased total will be \$260 for the month of July and then continue with \$160 on a monthly basis.

**MR SPEAKER:** Pardon the Hon Minister of Finance, I allow the interjection from Palauli West.

**Afioga Afoa Amituanai Faleulu Mauli (Palauli West):** Because this was covered in my speech in the past. I am speaking the truth about lending to foreign investors and no benefit for our people. This involves \$5.7million apportioned by NPF to Asian foreign investors for developing their business ventures. Invest here and invest on things like that. Whereas for our locals, there is no chance for them to earn such benefit. I do not know how this huge amount is allocated to these people who are foreign investors, they should be bringing in large capital investments to the country. Because if this NPF lending continues then after 10 years time, we would only be seeing foreign-owned companies in the country. Because lending is made available for these people and none for our people. Our people should be prioritised and should be getting this money. It is \$5.7million, therefore Mr Speaker, based on observation.

**MR SPEAKER:** The clarification is well received, be brief then. Your will is the difference in treating the Asian people...let us have the explanation of the Minister.

**Afioga Hon SILI EPA TUIOTI:** Mr Speaker, let me speak for the sake of clarity. The statement by the member is wrong and baseless, saying that only foreign businesses are eligible to NPF loan right now.

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The normal process, whether NPF, ANZ, BSP or whatever bank institution, there is a process that must be implemented. The normal process whenever an application is received from the members of the public, is that the Bank will have to carry out an assessment of the submitted application on the borrower's capacity, whether it can meet the loan repayment. Things like credit history in specific, whether the borrower has a good loan record. The member had also mentioned Asian or Chinese people who have earned local citizenships, they too are eligible to loan here.

**MR SPEAKER:** Pardon me, I permit the Prime Minister.

**Susuga Hon Tuilaepa Auelua Fatialofa Lupesoliai Lolofietele Neioti Aiono Galumalemana Dr. Sailele Malielegaoui:** Mr Speaker, the recent member that stood up, is part of the Parliamentary Committee that oversees reports, the NPF report. How many times have we received the NPF reports, stipulating and outlining borrowed money by business entrepreneurs and farmers? How many times have we received these reports and this member was also in this Committee yet he has spoken carelessly in here, it is not given to a Samoan. Mr Speaker, you have already known, the quarrelsomeness of this member. I have thought that he was one of the auditors and a Committee member to have looked into these reports. However, standing up and giving groundless talks like this, it is better that you read the report again thoroughly and speak of facts. Instead of making untrue accusations when you are a part of this. How many times have the NPF reports come in here with clear statements on revenue earnings and borrowings for business operators.

Mr Speaker that is why I stood up. I have thought the member had understood. It does not mean that you submitted a request to NPF and was not approved then you look at the reasons why. These are the reasons which I read out. There is no bank, no organisation that can give out more money without assessing a person's request, history, how. But do be reminded, NPF investment is the money of contributors. There is the duty of the Committee to wholly believe. If their money is taken for investment, there should be excess returns so that it can be distributed to the contributors as this is their money. Mr Speaker that is the comment. The member with the greatest knowledge is someone that reads and understands. If you are an auditor, read and understand it.

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**MR SPEAKER:** Well done. I call on... pardon the member for Palauli West, because you are debating this issue. Our Standing Order states, you are not allowed to debate a matter on a point of order or point of clarification. It was also clarified by the State and the Leader of the Nation in the first place. Therefore, it should not be debatable, that is the elaboration. The member should know it.

So the member is also an auditor, so this should be easy. I am not an auditor but I do understand this concern. So I beg tolerance to the member, there will not be any debates, leave aside your will, and let the Hon Minister resume with his statement.

**Afioga Afoa Amituanai Faleulu Maui:** I do not want to respond to the Hon Prime Minister.

**MR SPEAKER:** I beg tolerance... then there is no... Malie lou finagalo... e leai la...

**Afioga Afoa Amituanai Faleulu Maui:** I do not want to respond to the Hon Prime Minister because the Minister has accused me of the information I gave saying they were not true, however these are the facts I submitted. It is in the books, it is also being broadcasted in newspapers and everything else please.

**MR SPEAKER:** I will clarify them.

**Afioga Afoa Amituanai Faleulu Maui:** This is what I stand to correct...

**MR SPEAKER:** I do not mean trouble, but whenever I give my orders then you take your seat. Yes, that is it, we must bear respect. Or we may have to use our Standing Orders. I do not want to withdraw anyone from the House during this Parliamentary Term please. Go ahead with your statement Hon Minister.

**Afioga Hon SILI EPA TUIOTI:** Thank you honourable Speaker. I have recommended the member to go and see whether the debtors are doing anything like this. The entire NPF portfolio and lending of almost a billion for borrowers specifically individuals, companies and all that.

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The reason for disapproving this is because there is a credit cheque which is inappropriate.

Your honor I shall proceed, for Part (4) under this section on NPF, a reminder for our senior members. Next month, pension will be raised from \$145 to \$160 per monthly basis. Therefore, there will be \$15 increase for pension. There will also be an additonal bonus for the month of July, it is \$100.

That means that the senior members, the pension they will be receiving in July will amount to \$260 meaning, that the pensioners will be getting \$160, a raise by \$15. Another thing that was raised is the \$50 for registration. The task force is still working on it with the Statistics Bureau, Ministry of Communication and Information Technology, the Electoral Office, Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Finance, by providing the necessary requirements for this job before it becomes effective in July and August.

This work is not only to ensure the total household population and involvement of the entire members of the household, it must also provide information for people's National Identifiatio. Majority of the information from our surveys is the problem with families coming together thus resulting in incomplete information provided. This is the plan for this...giving \$50 to anyone who has been licensed within the homes and have been registered. This is also assistance to ensure that everyone else is involved and present by the time the counting comes to your villages and homes, it will also help with traveling and things like that.

**MR SPEAKER:** Pardon the Minister I allow the member for Faleata.

**Tofa Lealailepule Rimoni Aiafi:** Mr Speaker...the Minister let him have a break for the good things received. The \$35million from NPF in the Legislation was emphasised in my statement which is the normal payout contribution we get. The thing to be thankful for, NPF has only 4% obligation, and that is it. By observation, in other years it can reach up to 10%. The intent for this request Hon Minister and the Ministry, the proposal for this dividend distribution this year, this benefit.



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It must be looked into, so that the normal process is not undertaken, but to achieve the term stimulus, something to recover the economy and to assist the contributors and public service at this stage in life. Distribute directly, give people the chance, if they want their whole dividends then it would be really good for us during these days. That is the request.

**MR SPEAKER:** Pardon the Minister may I call upon the member of Anoamaa East.

**Afioga Alaiasa Muagututia Moefaauouo Malagaitutogiai Sepulona Moananu (Anoamaa East):** Thank you for the wonderful statement by the Hon Minister we just heard. The mind is happy, because these are the things that were in mind, revenue collection of \$588million. The Minister still has high hope that collection can be done. It has also cleared the issue that has been a problem during the current economic crisis in the world. Even with the current budget, it is understandable the reasons behind it...so that accountability and transparency are accurate on record such as the work provided by the Statistics Bureau. The only existing figure I am hearing is the GDP per capita of \$11,000. This number is the economic indicator for any country. Although for the sake of the listening public in the back, there are times as not all people have the same earnings. Because if for instance the focus is on per capita, the total number of household in the rural is 6, father, mother and their kids totalling to 6, therefore the income per annum is \$66,000.

That is the reality of things, as this is the economic measure, there are also people living in the town area with high per capita income. This is the reality lest people are misled, not all have the same per capita income. Because there are times where there is unfair distribution of wealth whereby some get larger amounts, which is dissimilar with, this is the economic indicator, but thank you for the chance. We now understand all these things we had raised in our comments in accordance to the pension and our \$50. Thank you for the opportunity.

**MR SPEAKER:** Go ahead Minister.

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**Afioga Hon SILI EPA TUIOTI:** Your honor as I mentioned this \$50 registration, not only is it assisting the general public living in turmoil due to this financial crisis and earnings from the Covid-19, it is also attempt to ensure the accuracy of our population numbers. It is also a year for the Government to prepare for the National ID and the population census of the country. This is the right time to implement this undertaking. The statement by the member on per capita and dividing the GDP on the total population is very true. This is what the United Nations is implementing for all countries as true is the statement on the \$11,000 for everyone else.

It is an indicator which aims to provide consistency to determine which is higher. Because what we have so far, majority of the small island nations, there is a per capita income of \$1000 divided by the population in order to obtain our GDP. However, at the current, our GDP is now above 10,000 given personal belief on our economic growth and development. The focus is to grow our economy and to create employment opportunities, business growth and so forth, it will further raise our GDP standard and the average GDP per capita.

I will progress with other matters. Why offer financial assistance to bank institutions and what about the small finance services. I have stated the drive of the State I think it was last year, to regulate all small finance services in a near time. I have also recommended the Central Bank to draft a bill on borrowers who will be loaning from these small finance services. The Central Bank has informed us about a copy of this drafting bill which will possibly be submitted before Parliament by December of this year and the Parliamentary Committee for consideration and to regulate these services. As known, there was discussion in Parliament on people's complaints about borrowers and small loans that could not be met ending them up in prison. And 2 or 3 months later they are brought up again with debt forgiveness, yet another addition.

This is the response in relation to the most vulnerable within our village communities. There should be assistance to protect individual rights with regards to money needed, as clarified by other bank institutions.

Section 4. Assistance for persons with disabilities. Like the blind...

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

**MR SPEAKER:** Be brief.

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**Afioga Fuimaono Teo Samuelu Teo:** Perhaps the response of the Hon Minister was not explicit as I was the one who raised stimulus. I see that 2% is allocated for commercial banks. Whereas the bulk of employees have less salary earnings, they would use small finance loan services other than the main bank institutions for borrowing, I have queried whether possible to allow some funding assistance for these private loan services that offers small loans starting from \$500, \$800 and \$1,000. With all due respect.

**MR SPEAKER:** This matter was also raised by the member. I call the Minister.

**Afioga Hon SILI EPA TUIOTI:** Mr Speaker, as I said, interest cannot be offered to commercial banks, due to no regulation whereas for all borrowers of finance companies, all eligible on these other things given, lower electricity cost, lesser water bill and other benefits for families through the stimulus package. But this is also the case with the decrease in the interest rate and things like this, which the Government cannot achieve due to the lack of legal protection, which can assure a guarantee. If this interest was imposed to lessen the burden, it is not clear whether it is affordable to report back. That is why we made a request to the Central Bank of Samoa to enact an Act, and then our people will be able to gain access to the existing benefits.

The other question your honor, an assistance to business owners like the hotellers and manufacturers. I am pleased to point out that the Government has given a lot of relief for these developments, as there is 2% to ease the interest rates on the loans at commercial banks for 3 months. It helps to ease the burden on the electricity and the water as advertised. To aid the unemployed workers, unemployment subsidy and the hospitality training which should be conducted immediately using APTC and other facilities. In order to continuously improve the quality of work. When our tourism recovers, they will be reemployed. And the relief by the NPF and the ACC through a moratorium as well as a portion of assistance to the Development Bank of Samoa, which may provide support for the farmers as well as the hotels.

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Under the SAFPROM program, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Agriculture and the World Bank are now working together to maintain some remaining areas and it is hoped that a promotion to the country should commence, especially the implementation of the work on this project, for the benefit of the agriculture and fisheries developments in the near future.

There is also the question that some have been found asking about the CSSP program, there are programs currently underway for the developments that have been approved, and it is hoped to conduct more promotions for new developments in the near future. A review of these programs is also pending and this is an opportunity to identify some of the challenges of this program as well as the areas that need to be improved. There is also an ongoing flood program, especially in Vaisigano for flooding, with the assistance of the GCF. But so far about 100 applications by small businesses to small families and households that own small businesses, now these contracts have been signed and funds have been released to implement their small developments. That is a major assistance for the Government funded by the GCF. The CSSP also advises those in charge of this project to speed up the process, especially for households. There are also those who own large businesses, as it is being clarified, if those who already have businesses should be requested if it is not possible for them to conduct their businesses under such circumstances. Mr Speaker, it is set aside for discussions, but there are many opportunities for small businesses to help those affected by the floods.

You also asked about the insurance for Police Officers, Ministry of Police...

**Afioga Sulamanaia Fetaiai Tauiiili Tuivasa:** Mr Speaker, this member raised an issue in regards to where the assistance provided is being stored like CSSP and other sectors, because of a request that was submitted due to the complexity of the situation. Probably this constituency has submitted more than 3 to 4 applications which were all rejected. But it was rejected due to a few simple things. So a request was submitted to the people that oversee this, if they can make it easier, as there are also applications under the Women's Organization, or the youth or community being submitted, but they are also rejected. And so the application that was provided requires an easier process to make...

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There is more assistance available, but the complexity is the process. It cannot be achievable for these village communities and constituencies, thankfully you have made your statement on this situation, which is the intention here. So that plans are easier to fulfill for everyone else. Because there is a lot of financial assistance submitted, however it is the process and the implementation that is complicated.

So the Hon Minister of Finance, that is the assistance.

**MR SPEAKER:** I call upon the Minister of Finance.

**Afioga Hon SILI EPA TUIOTI:** Well, a brief reply to the member who is currently speaking, perhaps for CSSP, not only the process but the situation as I talked about the assistance that is handed over to the GCF which is then given to the households of small businesses and other similar situations, they have a criteria as to whether you are qualified? Maybe this is the first process, but usually the first step is to check whether the family is eligible...but we will wait until work starts next week and then we will question the CSSP Department, to provide information and then you will be informed.

But in this case, there are probably as many as 300 or 400 businesses for this assistance. But only 100 have been signed by my Office, as we are still trying...we are waiting on CSSP so that we can get signatures and give out the money, so that it can be used by the people right now. This is the response to the honourable member. As for the question regarding the insurance for the Ministry of Police, Mr Speaker, there is a special benefit called the Special Insurance for the Government which include the Ministry of Police and Prisons and the Fire Services Department.

This assistance is different from the special benefit that was advertised in the stimulus package relief such as the \$500,000 set aside for those employees, who may get injured while performing their duties for the safety of the country. This is a brief response, as we also have insurance coverage for the protection of our police officers as well as the firefighters.

There were some who questioned the delays in the implementation of projects and the need to close programs and activities that have been carried out for years, but are no longer used. As you can see, the Government's emphasis have been on monitoring its developments that are being implemented, including the Cabinet inspections as this is now a new feature in the development programs of the Government, and will be continued.

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Work will be supervised and inspected, to ensure the implementation is speedy and done well by those responsible for these works. The Ministry of Finance has also worked together with its partners, who are funding these projects, to terminate the projects that are no longer in use, but are still carried out on an annual basis.

As for the old Office of the Regulator which was damaged by the disaster. The Ministry of Finance together with the Auditor General's Office are conducting regular inspections to ascertain the damage to Government assets. We are also awaiting contact from the Insurance Company, to complete their investigation, for the purpose of recovering a portion of Governmental funds, in accordance with the terms of insurance.

For travels to Savaii, for the country to conduct the election for a Leader of the country in April of the new year. Mr Speaker, the Ministry of Finance and the Office of the Electoral Commissioner are currently discussing a suitable way for the Government to provide and pay for this service, so that the country can travel to exercise their right through voting. The Government takes this initiative seriously to remove the suspicion, by some that candidates should conduct this work and involve them in the Act.

The Government should assist to encourage the development of agriculture, fisheries and tourism. Mr Speaker, it has now been included in the Government's assistance to promote the development of the Agriculture and Fisheries sector. The Government has also begun negotiating with its partners, which include the Commercial Banks and the Business Sector, a partnership to support the Government's efforts for agriculture and fisheries development, which is now included in the Investment Concessions of the Government.

For the tourists and hotels, the Government has met its plans for hotel developments, and it is hoped, that this assistance will end in the near future. For your information, the assistance provided by the Government amounts to millions given to the private sector for many years, till this day and it is necessary for them to be independent and take responsibility for their own developments.

Some have questioned the expectation of the Government to generate revenue through the trading of assets, Capital Gains Receipt. That is the intention and plan of the Government, for increasing its revenue. We have now completed the necessary preparations, and it is now up to the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Revenue to finalize and complete the required preparations, before the Bill is presented to Parliament.

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Developments that are good for Upolu are also good for the main island of Salafai. The Government continues to uphold this mandate, and now some of the Government's major developments have been set out for the Salelologa township area. These include the construction of the new NPF Office, the construction of the new Judiciary Centre, the opening of the new paved road in Maliolio, and the construction of the road from Patamea to Vaiaata has also been planned.

The Samoa Water Authority, the Land Transport Authority and the Electric Power Corporation are also working to reorganize services for the Salelologa township area to be in line with Government plans, to make the town a stepping stone for all Governmental services and businesses for the main island of Savaii.

Mr Speaker, the next part is an issue that has already been discussed by the Hon Minister of Communications...

**Tofa Olo Fiti Afoa Vaai:** Mr Speaker...

**MR SPEAKER:** Apologies to the Minister as I call upon the member for Salega...

**Tofa Olo Fiti Afoa Vaai:** Well, the only reason why I am standing as the Hon Minister can rest, but only because the Hon Minister is moving away from the matter regarding the funds that were donated for the promotion of the agriculture and such things, as I noted the \$13 million that was funded by the World Bank under the assistance of IFAD.

But there is US\$20 million or perhaps \$70 million which came from this program, funded by the World Bank under the assistance of ID Aid. But I do not see it in our Budget as we do not know what has happened to such a big amount. Assuming it has been used to fill our deficit which we are conflicting about, then it is not a problem. The only thing I know that this money should be used for, which is US\$20 million, to be directly used for farmers and fishermen.

Even for the older women that also fish the coastlines, it is clearly stated under these funds, for money to be given to them. As the old women are listening, have you received money from this US\$20 million?

**Afioga Hon SILI EPA TUIOTI:** Mr Speaker...

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**MR SPEAKER:** Well, to save time for the Hon Minister of Finance, there is another interruption. It is Faleata...

**Tofa Lealailepule Rimoni Aiafi:** Thank you Mr Speaker, my matter is different from the issue of the member, the Hon Minister is moving towards the issue concerning tourism.

The important thing I have heard this morning Hon Minister, remember that it was emphasized in my speech the issue regarding new money. As money is needed for support during this time. The Minister has clearly stated that we do not need loans. Thank you, and there are no new loans.

Hon Minister, you have just finished mentioning in your speech, 10% to reduce our revenue. This means that \$71 million is expected to be reduced from our revenue. That is why I beseech the Hon Minister, to take a good look at these areas. It is true it is for hotels, but a reminder to the Hon Minister, it is emphasized by our Government that it is important. After the measles we had the current situation that is happening now, take a closer look at this. We met with the Hon Minister of EPC yesterday, together some other...when we met the Minister was stressed, as there were a lot of petitions given to him. This is especially true during this time, as these are not easy times.

But they should work together with the Ministry of Finance in these areas, so that one Ministry can assist the other Minister and the Government during this period, because as I can see, our debt situation is very good because it is stated that we do not need loans as we only have 44%, so there is 6% remaining before we can reach 50%, with all due respect, thank you.

**MR SPEAKER:** I call upon the Minister of Finance.

**Afioga Hon SILI EPA TUIOTI:** Thank you to the Member. In regards to the money provided by the World Bank, and the IFAD, this is the money we are talking about in this SAFPROM project. We would also like to thank the World Bank and IFAD for expanding these standards, which are now separate from SACEP. But opportunities for fisheries have been added. It is the same for agriculture, as they are not small farms, but perhaps in due time this matter will be re-introduced, because even now assistance from others is needed, but those whom we can work together with are unable to come due to the closure of our country.



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But be patient for a bit longer as the Hon Minister has made preparations, and perhaps he will be able to answer this question.

Well, in the case of the loans mentioned, for now, if you notice we are trying to prioritise efforts to counter the impact of Covid-19 on our economy, as well as....

**Tofa Olo Fiti Afoa Vaai:** Mr Speaker, apologies to the fellow Minister. The issue that I raised, as I can see in the Main Estimate regarding this grant, I would like to understand why it is not in the Budget? The \$70 million which was provided by the ID Aid. This is because the US\$20 million and the US\$3.6 million that are stated in here were approved together. This is in the Budget which funds the Ministry of Agriculture. Please Hon Minister.

**MR SPEAKER:** It has been noted... well I call on the Chairperson of the Finance Committee to stand. Is the statement made by the member for Salega true?

**Afioga Aliimalemanu Alofa Tuuau (Alataua West):** Mr Speaker, I would like to ask the member for Salega where the \$70 million from ID Aid as mentioned comes from? But the thing I want to offer assistance on is, when it comes to aids like this, it is not as much as \$100 million that I heard was mentioned. It does not mean that when received it will be used for one year. It depends on the work that can be done, in 12 months. That is my assistance.

**MR SPEAKER:** Well, it has now been....

**Tofa Olo Fiti Afoa Vaai:** Mr Speaker...

**MR SPEAKER:** That is the response honourable member.

**Tofa Olo Fiti Afoa Vaai:** It is correct that this has been answered, but a motion should be moved to...

**MR SPEAKER:** Well, you already know the answer yet you still want to ask?

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**Tofa Olo Fiti Afoa Vaai:** A motion should be moved, because these funds were approved on the 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2019, these two grants from the World Bank. But move a motion so that you can take this into consideration.

**MR SPEAKER:** Well, the Hon Minister of Finance can continue his speech.

**Afioga Hon SILI EPA TUIOTI:** Mr Speaker, no, these funds are not paid in full. The money that was received first is \$11 million which is inside the Budget and the records, to kick start the work, but it does not mean that the money is given in full, it has already been recorded and it has also been approved. This development takes many years. And as also mentioned, the records on our Budget and such things like our debts are transcribed legitimately.

**MR SPEAKER:** Continue with your speech.

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

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

**Susuga Hon Tuilaepa Auelua Fatialofa Lupesoliai Lolofietele Neioti Aiono Galumalemana Dr. Sailele Malielegaoi:** I would like to just remind the member for Salega, it has been more than or nearly 3 weeks since the speech and the Budget were presented and yet you are still asking questions. But it is the member's responsibility to look into this and need not to ask about it. And the member is also not a new member, he is an old member. It is better to examine and read the Budget properly rather than always standing up and ask questions.

**MR SPEAKER:** Well...

**Tofa Olo Fiti Afoa Vaai:** Mr Speaker, we will not debate. No, all I asked was, why this money was was not recorded in the Budget, if it was recorded, I would have never asked.

**MR SPEAKER:** Well, you have just answered your own question.

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**Susuga Hon Tuilaepa Auelua Fatialofa Lupesoliai Lolofietele Neioti Aiono Galumalemana Dr. Sailele Malielegaoi:** The Chairperson of the Finance Committee has already responded, but the problem is that the member does not want to listen to the Chairperson of the Finance Committee.

**MR SPEAKER:** Well, I call on the Minister to continue the speech.

**Tofa Hon Lopao Natanielu Mua (Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries):** Mr Speaker, I would like to point out that the \$11 million for this year is inside the Budget, if you look at the first page which is a breakdown of the budget for Agriculture, it states the \$11 million of SAFPRO, with all due respect.

**MR SPEAKER:** It is found on page 11.

**Tofa Olo Fiti Afoa Vaai:** Thank you, that is another fund from IFAD, but I was talking about the IDA. You are talking about IFAD but the \$20 million from IDA, this is what I asked about that you signed, Hon Minister, you requested for this, as you had signed it. But move a motion for it to be given.

**Tofa Hon Lopao Natanielu Mua:** No, I am just stating where the \$11 million that was mentioned by the Hon Chairperson.... And the Hon Chairperson is also right... it does not mean that we will use up all those funds in one year.

You have also been in Parliament for a long time, you should already know these things, with all due respect.

**MR SPEAKER:** Well done. I call on the member, Minister of Finance have you finished your speech? As it is in line with the finished time on our agenda, because....

**Afioga Hon SILI EPA TUIOTI:** Mr Speaker I will conclude it.

**MR SPEAKER:** For your information, no matter how much you try to explain to the member he does not want to understand.

**Afioga Sulamanaia Fetaiai Tauiliili Tuivasa:** Mr Speaker....

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**MR SPEAKER:** Olo is already aware but he just wants to draw out the Assembly.

**Afioga Sulamanaia Fetaiai Tauilili Tuivasa:** Mr Speaker, to save the time for the Hon Minister, as it seems that he will be concluding his speech. But this constituency had an appeal concerning people, who are physically and mentally disabled, as it was just briefly touched upon before concluding.

But what is the situation as they are listening, as many of the residents of this constituency have special needs, they are unable to achieve the level of 55, or the level of 65, but are there benefits from the Hon Minister of Finance in regards to this?

**Afioga Hon SILI EPA TUIOTI:** Mr Speaker, these benefits already exist. As you know there was a portion that was divided into Mapuifagalele, ADRA and all those who are here, there needs to be organizations, in terms of this like ADRA and so on, to enable these funds to be sent to those in need. It cannot be sent directly to the families unless there is an Authority, it can be received and distributed, and records can be rewritten to prove that the...

Remember that there was \$200 set aside for them. To date, we are unable to give it to them, as they are not under any specific organization that can perform the services. But the desire is for it to be distributed, as money is available. But we are still waiting on the process as the distribution of funds should always be accountable, with all due respect.

**MR SPEAKER:** I call upon the Leader of the House.

**Susuga Hon Tuilaepa Auelua Fatialofa Lupesoliai Lolofietele Neioti Aiono Galumalemana Dr. Sailele Malielegaoi:** Mr Speaker, before the Minister of Finance concludes his speech, I want to make an announcement, I am in possession of the report of the NPF for 2019, last year. It is given to me and then it is received by Parliament. And then it is presented to the Committee to consider if they have any issues to state.

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In this annual report it has been audited and I congratulate the National Provident Fund as we have heard the honorable Chairperson of the Finance Committee stating the high level of services provided by Government Organizations and Government Companies, with the speedy preparations of their annual reports which are then tabled within Parliament, and then it is given to the Committee for their investigations.

Therefore, it is clearly shown in the report by NPF the usage of the NPF funds, which are allocated for loans. It is stated, in the first paragraph, the amount of money that is being loaned, it is loaned using the guidelines that have already been laid, in order to be able to receive the money, for any development, and to ensure that enough funds can be reimbursed, in order to maintain the funds from the contributors and to be distributed every year.

It is shown in this pie graph, it states, the total amount of this portfolio or these loans, is \$736 million, and the division of these as shown here, there are sections that are divided, in large loans. This means that these loans are for businesses, which are loans with short term repayments. Loans that are exonerated to members and for the various grants they carry out, and this information is all written inside the report, funds that were loaned, small loans, short terms loans, and loans that are repaid quickly. Investment loans, which are large loans, they are all listed here \$241 million for small loans, these are short term loans, these are loans with quick repayment of \$36 million, Investment loans, which have raised questions, are \$189 million for the year which ended in June 2019. But last year it was \$163 million.

Mr Speaker, I did not just stand up as a bluff. I stood up in regards to the usual terms, at the end of each year the NPF submit their reports and they allocate the loans one by one, and then it is given to the Committee to examine.

Well those are the details for the member that stood up, and in all honesty, if your loan is not approved; do not bring it in here as that is your personal information. That is why there are reasons, it should be noted, that the Corporation always follows its Rules, as precautions to giving out loans and losing the money of the contributors, for them to rely on especially in times like this Mr Speaker.

That is why I had risen because I noticed that you were raising your voice, because the member seems to be deaf, so that he would know, I did not just stand up without a reason, which was the reason why I stood up.

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Mr Speaker, I congratulate the Hon Minister on the many difficulties he had faced. That is why, the Cabinet is now fully prepared, to completed answer any question that is given, so that it is clear and understood by this House.

**MR SPEAKER:** Well done, thank you.

**Susuga Hon Laauli Polataivao Leuatea (Gagaifomauga No.3):** Mr Speaker...

**MR SPEAKER:** In case it is another question, regarding the issue that has already been clarified by the Hon Prime Minister...

**Susuga Hon Laauli Polataivao Leuatea:** There is a small matter...which is not directed to the Hon Prime Minister, but to the Minister of Finance whose wonderful speech is about to conclude as some of these given issues will be set aside. The deficit will be set aside, the bankruptcy, and other things that I had asked about, but we will talk about the decrease in funds.

I would like to make it clear that we will be depending on the Hon Minister with the belief that you have made it clear that we can collect this money. This is also a recommendation for our expenses. That was a small matter that I wanted to state, and that was the intention in which the...

**MR SPEAKER:** The member for Gagaifomauga No.3, our time is up...

**Susuga Hon Tuilaepa Auelua Fatialofa Lupesoliai Lolofietele Neioti Aiono Galumalemana Dr. Sailele Malielegaoi:** That is why I stood up because you had instructed, and I stood up to ask the Minister to conclude his speech. Now that the Government has ended its statements, and as I briefly stood up to explain this small matter, but now they are upstanding again, as the member has been exited from the bench.

**MR SPEAKER:** I beseech the member for Gagaifomauga No.3.

**Susuga Hon Laauli Polataivao Leuatea:** Yes, Mr Speaker...

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**MR SPEAKER:** I beseech the member, finding a fault is the same as having a friendship with the devil. Now you are attempting to delay our work, but it is now time for us to go home.

**Susuga Hon Laauli Polataivao Leuatea:** I implore the Hon Speaker, as I had asked a question, but the Hon Minister did not respond.

**MR SPEAKER:** I beg tolerance to the member, it has already been explained.

**Susuga Hon Laauli Polataivao Leuatea:** The new Policies that I presented to the Hon Minister of Finance....

**MR SPEAKER:** That matter has already been clarified.

**Susuga Hon Laauli Polataivao Leuatea:** This will do Mr Speaker. Thank you for the opportunity.

**MR SPEAKER:** We are going back, which means that we will go back and it will be explained more and more...

**Susuga Hon Laauli Polataivao Leuatea:** Mr Speaker, I am not trying to find mistakes, which is why I wanted to stand. The intention was to give a recommendation to the Minister of Finance, but thank you.

**MR SPEAKER:** I implore... please... Now I am begging, yes, the essence of our work is different, as it is also dependent on Mr Speaker and his assistance given. Because others will question your statement, however, I believe that it will not be allowed. But our work is like that, after it has been explained, because that is the intention of the Government, to explain a new issue that has just been raised, the word to voice, the mouth and fire, to straighten a bent and burning steel. The Government will always stand to respond after any member makes a statement, so that the country understands. But now we are taking a step back, as this issue may take up a whole day to explain, just like the issue mentioned by Vaimauga concerning people with disabilities. Yes, they are also included in the census and will receive \$50. But I implore the Hon Minister of Finance to please stand up and conclude your speech so we can conclude our work.

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**Afioga Hon SILI EPA TUIOTI:** Thank you Mr Speaker. I will now conclude my speech.

Before I conclude my statement, I would like to thank the support of my constituency of Faasaleleaga No.1 Eastin all its honorific salutations.

As well as the presence of the Hon Tafua with his honorific salutations. I would also like to thank the servants of God for pouring the water of life into our constituency. I believe that your prayers and your solemn devotion have blessed the work of your servant in the service of our Government as well as your holiness and the dignity of my beloved constituency. May God continue to bless your support; a day will come when we will meet with the goodness of God.

Thank you Mr Speaker for my opportunity and God bless you. God bless the Hon prime Minister and Cabinet, as well as the Assembly of Samoa and the whole of Samoa. Soifua.

**MR SPEAKER:** Well done and thank you. It is not flattery, but thank you for the clear and concise speech. That is how it is. The works itself has many duties and responsibilities, but have hope that God will help us to keep Samoa safe and to ensure our country prospers from our work.

Well, now that we have reached our time to end our work for today, I call on the member for Safata, the Hon Leana for a prayer to end our work.

*Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly was adjourned at 1:11pm until 9:00am on Wednesday, 24<sup>th</sup> June 2020.*