

24 JUNE 2020

*WEDNESDAY, 24 JUNE 2020*

*Mr Speaker took the Chair at 9:10am.*

Prayers.

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

I respectfully greet the dignitaries of Parliament with his Honourable Prime Minister and Cabinet and the elected representatives of the country. I extend the same to the public service in their function to develop Samoa through the roles of the Chief Executive Officers.

**SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION BILL (NO.3) 2019/2020 &  
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second reading**

**MR SPEAKER:** At the conclusion of our Sitting yesterday the Minister of Finance had concluded his address therefore, the next speaker in line for the Government's response is the Minister of Revenue. I respectfully call upon the Minister for his address of matters raised by members.

**Afioga Hon TIALAVEA FEA LENIU TIONISIO HUNT (Minister of Revenue, Police and Fire Services):** Thank you Mr Speaker for this opportunity. I will firstly greet you Mr Speaker, the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister, Cabinet and Associate Ministers, Chairpersons and Parliamentary Committee members of this Assembly, Chief Executive Officers, the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly and his staff.

I acknowledge the encouragement of Samoa from His Highness Le Ao o le Malo and his consort, the member of the Council of Deputies and his good wife. I also recognise His Honour the Chief Justice and the Judiciary, the extended members of the Clergy who are servants of God throughout Samoa and the public at large tuning in.

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Mr Speaker in light of the matters concerning the two Ministries under my portfolio, the Ministry of Customs and Revenue and the Ministry of Police and Rehabilitation Services raised by members in their speeches on the Supplementary Estimates 2019/2020 particularly the Financial Estimates for 2020/2021. I shall begin with the Ministry of Police and Fire Services.

Mr Speaker, everyone understands about the merging of the Ministry of Police and Rehabilitation Services at the beginning of the year. This change is a repeat of a former arrangement when the Ministry of Police was in charge of Prisons. So although new it is an old arrangement. Certain members raised the breakout at the prison. I believe an explanation was made at the previous sitting and I do apologise to the public particularly the community around the vicinity of the Prison at Tanumalala. I will firstly voice my appreciations through your representative for your support on the night. The Ministry of Police and the Prison Services would not have been able to handle the situation without your assistance. So I do acknowledge your acceptance of our call for support.

On the night, I arrived at the scene shortly after it occurred I saw the appalling state of the prison with offices being totally vandalised and doors smashed and also cars in total wreckage. You all know the number of people that broke out that night. 36 of them with 7 being caught within the parameters of the prison, with 29 able to return that night. 3 were caught on the following morning. What I noticed with the group that returned that night was that none of them was walking properly. They were either limping or had scratches. Why? If you look at the area, it is all covered with lush green grass for livestock. But beneath it is sharp as nails rocks which makes it is difficult to run on. The only possible path you can take is the road that has been done. The merging of the two entities I guess is the result of this incident that night. Having the Prisons brought under the Police once again since there are 700 plus police officers with only 145 staff at the prison which is a very small number.

Now with the two being brought together the staff now reaches 800 or more after merging the Police and Prison. The staff in Apia are now starting their shifts working with the staff at Tanumalala and I guess this is appropriate despite the distance. However, they cannot be separable in terms of duty as when inmates do break out the police will assist. So I think it is a great move on the government's part to merge the two.

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With the Commissioner and Assistant Commissioner and management of the Police and Prisons, I think handing me this portfolio is not easy but I believe the helping hand of God will ensure the job is done for the safety and security of the public.

Mr Speaker a question was put forth concerning the salaries of police officer. The Ministry of Police has 23 divisions with 12 divisions under the supervision of Superintendents and 11 under Inspectors. When you compare it with other Government Ministries they are all under the scale of Principal level. Yet the work they do is vital for the security of the people. I am not sure whether the reason they refuse to contest the ACEO salaries is because it is renewed every 3 years but with Principal level they can remain there until retirement. At this stage and looking ahead, proposals have been submitted to the tribunal for an increase and to set the salaries of police officers. With the incentive to upgrade the service and no one will object to progress. Perhaps their positions will all be promoted to ACEO level as well as the salary level to match with interviews to be done every 3 years. There are now opportunities for everyone to move up and it should improve their performance.

As far as I am concerned, the Superintendent that is employed at Savaii is paid at Principal level salary. I think there should be a Deputy Commissioner and a manager at Savaii because there is a lot of work. I am not at all familiar with Superintendents and Corporals and on which is difficult to differentiate. When I do come across them the Superintendents and Inspectors are the only ones I would know of because of their belts.

But with all the rest they are all simply officers to me. The salaries of the staff at the Prison are quite high that is for sure. The starting rate for police officers we are trying to increase. That is my observation of the Ministries preparations into the future and also to reflect the value of the service being done and paid accordingly.

The other point raised was sirens for the Prison and we have ordered one for the top of the Prison so that in cases of emergency the siren would warn nearby communities of an incident going on. This product is not in store here so we need a really good siren that can give off warning to neighbouring villages.

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Cars with spot lights is shockingly prevailing and it was asked what the Ministry can do about these vehicles. On the 1<sup>st</sup> of July which is next week is when the Ministry of Police and Prisons will take over traffic from LTA. Once this switch does eventuate the Commissioner and Ministry will remove all of these perilous lights as really, some lights when flashing does make one think that it is the police and when passing it is not. Blasting music from vehicles is happening again and though it may be an enjoyment to those doing it but I would feel sorry for them when they do get to the rural communities and the repercussion of their behaviour. Safety on the road is something we must all be responsible for. As I have said before on the first week of July there will be a lot of changes to these vehicles. The thing is when they do bring in their cars for registration all this annoying items are removed and are hooked back when they get home and there on again. So the role of the police is to enforce the law so if you are caught, your vehicle will be confiscated and the items will be removed. That is the only necessary action to stopping this behaviour concerning music, remove them from cars and auction them. This is the problem with making money and looking at things in general. So with these light flashing the Ministry will be considering whether to continue importing them.

If I look at the matters from the Minister of Revenue, we will be losing money if we are to stop importing these machines. We will be considering this issue when the two Ministries discuss whether to continue bringing in these products. I guess the important factor is not installing these items on cars. So that way the retailer would somehow give up with importing these irritating lights on the road when people no longer have interest in them.

With speeding cars well, the only solution is to install cameras along the road which is not cheap. The Ministry is looking at ways to contain the problem as there is not enough man power to be assigned along the various road junctions to capture on camera for those people that are racing their cars. The road in front of the sports complex is fortunate to have humps there but cars still speed in between the humps. But we will try to do away with our culture of giving chances out of mutual respect we have for each other. It has come to the point where we are unable to control the realities of life. The only solution is the law, install cameras which would capture the license plates and automatically issue tickets and inform them to pay the fine. A lot of changes will have to be in place meaning a lot of money from the Ministry of Finance for these changes like the installation of street cameras particularly along strip of roads where speeding is common.

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I was driving along towards Faleolo yesterday and what a beautiful site it was with the asphalt seal all the way to Saleimoa. It is ideal for speeding and I welcome the humps along the way which does keep down the speed of cars. So the only thing to do is to install speed cameras and this road must have them. But as I said it is not easy and will require quite an amount of time to amend the law here in Parliament and I think I am talking about the next term but it is something that should be done.

The Minister of Finance has stated that police officers and fire fighters must have life insurance policies particularly at this point in time with COVID-19 and whatever may happen at least they are insured. The point that was raised was making the necessary changes as the job is not easy.

**MR SPEAKER:** The member for Aleipata Itupa i Lalo will take the floor.

**Afioga Tafua Maluelue Tafua (Aleipata Itupa i Lalo):** Mr Speaker Thank you. I see that you are surprised by saying oh when you were not looking at me but greetings to you.

**MR SPEAKER:** No, it is the strong dazzling light...It is not that I would look at you at all times.

**Afioga Tafua Maluelue Tafua:** Well I do look at you all the time.

**MR SPEAKER:** You may have the floor instead of...

**Afioga Tafua Maluelue Tafua:** I do not want to interrupt the Minister's address but you mentioned humps which I touched upon. The purpose of them is a mechanism to slow down cars. You also mentioned that speed cameras are expensive. That is not your domain and Papalii is listening. Why do we not look at another alternative instead of humps as it damages vehicles when you cross them from speeding. So instead have patrols along the roadside of say every 4 kilometres zone place police vehicles to await speeding cars and calls to attend incidents nearby but it would be good for catching the odd thief walking along with another family's piano. With respect.

**MR SPEAKER:** Thank you. The member for Faleata West will take the floor.

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**Tofa Lealailepule Rimoni Aiafi (Faleata West):** Mr Speaker thank you perhaps it would be good for the Minister to pause as he has a big portfolio. I appreciate the Minister mentioning a Deputy Commissioner of Police for Savaii.

We raised this issue when we were in the Finance and Expenditure Committee with Tafua after realising that all Ministries in Savaii had Assistant Executives except this Ministry which has the highest number of staff but has no deputy.

The reason I ask is there was lot of investigations by the Finance and Expenditure Committee on entry points for police officers in the force and prison. What surprises me here is, I thought the entry points threshold was the same for everyone based on job description and qualifications but is not so. I want to ask the Minister and perhaps the Chairperson of the Finance and Expenditure Committee can assist as to why this had happened. With respect.

**MR SPEAKER:** Thank you. I call upon the member for Salega East.

**Tofa Olo Fiti Afoa Vaai (Salega East):** Thank you for the opportunity. I will be brief. I appreciate the Ministers clarification on this area. May I remind the Minister that the issue with the Police Force which we are all aware of is the shortage of officers. It has been 60 years since this very factor surfaced. I hear that speed cameras will be in installed but are too expensive. You have stated that they cost a lot of money but consider the high number of students finishing secondary school and hire them into the Ministry to secure a high number of staff in the Ministry as there are a lot of them being unemployed.

My second query to the Minister is how he feels about outsourcing the registrations of vehicles which is now under the Ministry of Police to mechanics who are qualified and comply with standards that you require from vehicles to pass registration. The reason is sympathy for the public from having to travel afar towards Fagalii where vehicle registration is done.

**MR SPEAKER:** Thank you. I call upon the Minister and I advise you that whatever was raised...

**Afioga Hon Gatoloaifaana Amataga Alesana Gidlow (Faasaleleaga No.1 West):** Mr Speaker...

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**MR SPEAKER:** My apologies to the Minister but I will allow the member for Faasaleleaga No.1 West.

**Afioga Hon Gatoloaifaana Amataga Alesana Gidlow:** Thank you for the opportunity Mr Speaker. I am taking the floor in my capacity as the chairperson of the Parliamentary Committee handling matter's pertaining to the Ministry of Police, and entry points is something which we regard as of importance. It has been questioned why the entry points of police officers are being compared to other profession when they do not have qualifications. The feeling of the Committee is the lives of the men and women which should not be compromised with a qualification. Once you are accepted into the Force your life is on the line. It will be your call of duty. We thought then there should be a justifiable compensation for the life that is offered for the security of Samoa. Mr Speaker that is my assistance.

**MR SPEAKER:** Let me ask you; did you raise in your speech the point you are seeking an understanding on? Our Standing Orders stipulates that you may only interrupt on a point of order or clarification on matters which you spoke about. So you will merely be wasting your time. My advice to the Minister is not to waste your time on a member that is speaking on something which they did not originally raise. I call upon the Chairperson of the Finance and Expenditure Committee. What I said applies to everyone and that is our Standing Orders. The member for Alataua West will take the floor.

**Afioga Aliimalemanu Alofa Tuuau (Alataua West):** Greetings Mr Speaker on this new day. I am taking the floor since our Committee was asked on the matter relating to our findings and it is in our report the findings on salaries including the Police, Prisons, and FESA. The response given to us was that the difference of entry points depends on the risks involve or challenges and difficulties concerning each salary. The risks involving police officers at the prison is different as they deal with prisoners. The risks involving the FESA employees is different since they risk their lives during fires as we witnessed in the recent incident. The risks for police officers working in traffic is also different.

That is my response to questions concerning our report.

**MR SPEAKER:** Well done. That is now understood...

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**Tofa Aumua Isaia Lameko (Falealili West):** Thank you. I had raised this point on the reason behind the difference with entry points for the police officers yet they do the same role. In 2008 Samoa signed their consent to become a member of the International Labour Organisation. Which puts everyone doing the same job on equal salaries. In other words people at the entry point doing the same job receives similar wages. I raised this as Samoa has already signed this international law. It is something the Tribunal should look at whether it is inappropriate to pay the same salary to the Police Service with respect.

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

**Susuga Hon Tuilaepa Auelua Fatialofa Lupesoliai Lolofietele Neioti Aiono Galumalemana Dr. Sailele Malielegaoi (Prime Minister):** Our Government has a policy that started back in 2001 where a committee was established to deal with salaries adjustment.

This came about since the adjustments and variation of salaries right from the start. Up until that time salary difference was a mess. It eventually led to the PSA strike in 1981. The nurses tried the same in 1981 but the solution and adjustment of salaries had been in place. So what was the outcome of that strike? It collapsed and ended poorly. This is the nature of people where groups demand their salaries to be increases with another group asking for the same claiming that what they do carries more risks and so on. Even Parliamentarians salaries were way below than others.

I recall Hon Tofilau raising this matter twice here, that the salaries of members must be adjusted since the public service salaries were much higher than the members of this Assembly. Yet it is this Assembly where the decision making are made in which the Government adheres to. The problem was when the Government makes such proposal the Opposition objects, articulating sympathy towards the public being poor and here we are increasing our salaries. At the time Parliament was receiving meagre salaries. The Government gave up on the idea and decided to let Parliament continue operating at very low salaries due to the fact that none of the Government's sector visualised the adjusting of salaries. So the law was amended and legislated one body alone to adjust it.



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We are still trying to maintain that standard and disallow the situation of one group receiving a higher increase whilst another drops significantly due to the argument about risks claiming that their role is much riskier than the other deserving an increase. Where does the money come from? Well it comes from the general public. The Government determines our salaries and that of the public service and bear in mind that the public are witnessing our actions.

Mr Speaker that is how it is done and it must strike a balance when adjusting our salaries and that of the public service considering the country we live in. When salaries are low a comparison is made to Australia and New Zealand. We cannot compare our country to Australia and New Zealand. That is the basis of where this is coming, lawyers have very high salaries and there is really no reason for those salaries to be so high.

Mr Speaker it is not an easy task to adjust salaries. After the public service salaries increase eventuated. The private sector objected on the basis that companies are responsible for providing employment for the public. If you look at scholarships offered for further education overseas to return and serve the government. What is happening is too many are returning and the government is unable to employ them all. The government then sorted to give them the option to work elsewhere other than within government, be it their family business.

The only provision is if you spent six years of schooling abroad you must ensure that you work here for at least six years serving the country through enhancing the family business or any other company ensuring the country's growth. We now have a tribunal responsible for the structure of salaries throughout every profession. Right from the bottom starting point to the top order. We must keep in mind the country we are serving is a country which invest its capital be it from Australia or New Zealand it is capital which belongs to this country. When you get your degree, experience and specialised skills you must return to serve on salaries provided by the country. Instead of demanding a much higher salary but one must consider whose country you are serving and where does it get its capital from. Mr Speaker that is the reality now returning nationals forgetting the government sent them overseas with its own money and now upon return they are crying out for higher salaries. Whatever salary you get you should accept and consider it as your service to the country. Even with us when we came back. I started at \$28 a fortnight but we continued working. But that is what happen as years roll on people were fed up and so came the strike of 1981.

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Mr Speaker we adjust to the capital we are getting and available to be allocated for our projects and the operations of government. There must be capital for our development which provides jobs and wages to go into people's pockets. It is the reason Government is seeking overseas employment for our people. We must accommodate Australia and New Zealand and in return they allow our people to come over for employment. One can now remain working in Australia for 3 years and return home to visit before going back. I would be surprised if you cannot get a number of two storey houses and cars during that period.

Mr Speaker, that is the role the government is playing but there are also concerns which was highlighted yesterday and the government must review this. Having 2 teachers mentioned yesterday is a concern right now. Police officers and teachers leaving to go overseas. There is currently a total of 1100 scheduled for overseas. The government should really look into this and take only those who are unemployed and keep those that the government rely on particularly public servants within essential services like education and health. That is my encouragement on that note and the role of the Ministry of Police is not an easy one and I cannot recall the numerous times I have attended graduations of new police recruits. There have been a high number of new recruits hired and they must have their salaries adjusted accordingly with the particular profession and specialised training one has achieved instead of allowing others to earn very high salaries.

It is the reason why there is stability with teachers, doctors and nurses. Since the majority of them were really at a very low point because the government was being cautious in relation to the past. Why? Well 1% takes up a millions due to the high number of employees. It is the reason the government places its focus on these two Ministries of Education and Health so there is a gap with other profession. Mr Speaker, let us deal with this and we have not lost focus on it. This is why we established the Special Tribunal with the role to adjust salaries compared to inflation and the available capital to allocate.

**MR SPEAKER:** Thank you. I call upon the Minister for Women, then the Deputy Speaker.

**Afioga Hon Tuitama Talalelei Tuitama (Minister of Women, Community and Social Development):** I am taking the floor since the salaries for doctors is mentioned.

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I just like to inform you that in 1970 I began working at the hospital and my salary was \$1,300 per annum which is \$35 plus a week. That is all thank you.

**MR SPEAKER:** The Deputy Speaker.

**Tofa Nafotoa Talaimanu Ketu (Gagaemauga No.3):** Thank you Mr Speaker for the opportunity given to this constituency. The remarks from the leader of the country was pleasing to hear and is understood, concerning the adjustment of salaries and the provisions that made it happen. But I cannot be silent when the Ministry of Police is discussed for I must say something. Because I have experienced this life of service as it was my occupation for 35 years. Well God has blessed me for being the representative of my constituency in this Assembly and the Government.

I appreciate all the members that spoke on this Ministry and I know that everyone employed at the force whom are called the protector of the country are sacrificing their lives to serve the country through the Ministry of Police. I appreciate the fact that the Chairperson of the Committee that dealt with the issue of improving this service must be done. However, the importance of the discussion and the risks is such that officers begin from 7 in the morning standing at the side of the road breathing the toxic fumes of cars until evening after all public servant has gone home. I am glad for the fact that the Leader of the Government has spoken to leave it to them to sort it out and there should be an increase.

I urge the Minister to do this as the member for Faleata has highlighted entry points. When it comes to qualifications well you must then apply the merits system but in conclusion, please show compassion to the Ministry of Police and Prisons.

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

**Susuga Hon Tuilaepa Auelua Fatialofa Lupesoliai Lolofietele Neioti Aiono Galumalemana Dr. Sailele Malielegaoi:** I promptly rise to correct that the member has made a serious mistake. The Ministry of Police has made other promotions since the appointment of the current Commissioner. He often submitted this paper to Cabinet. Then other increases were made, but a recommendation of our Tribunal or Special Committee was sought to set the pay range.

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Similarly, if decisions are delayed, that is why Cabinet seeks recommendation from the Wages Committee, so that there should not be too much controversy, furthermore, it also looks at the general extent to which the company's pay structure is consistent. Because once there is a difference, a crisis will start whereby people who work in the companies will leave their jobs and come to Government. This is why there should not be much difference, to keep the people working in Government work in Government as well as those working in Private sector. Do not try and agitate the progress of Samoa that might affect its development which is supported by that side in the spirit of finding work. For children of the country who leave school every year. Mr Speaker, it does not mean that nothing is done, it is being done. The only case is, the small issue mentioned, the differences in the pay grade between Prisons and Police of our country, is a result of your queries. But leave it to us, there is Moses and the prophets to overlook this matter. It is nothing new, it is not new. It is regularly reviewed by the Minister and Commissioner and brought before Cabinet.

**Afioga Sulamanaia Fetaiai Tauiilili Tuivasa (Vaimauga East):** Mr Speaker, to save the time of the Hon Minister, since it was mentioned in my speech.

**MR SPEAKER:** Pardon the member but make it brief, it seems majority of members are speaking, but an interruption is only for a point of order or clarification, if called upon members should mention a point of order or a point of clarification. However, it seems speeches are voiced, this is inconsistent with our Standing Orders. I call upon the member of Vaimauga.

**Afioga Sulamanaia Fetaiai Tauiilili Tuivasa:** Mr Speaker I am grateful, I mentioned in my speech insurance for police, it is not a secret that the Hon Minister of Finance stated that they will look into insurance. I have noted with gratitude the constant raids undertaken by police related to drugs. This is the reason for such request, I am thankful, as I mentioned in my speech the pay, because it seemed like it was different with up there, the Ministry of Police do not have overtime, which differs from up at the Prison. This should be reviewed, our Leader has spoken, but I rise to show my appreciation with these insurances.

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As for the Deputy Speaker who just spoke, it seems it was during his time when other members of Parliament were locked up. These were the people who were there at that time, they had no respect for the leaders of the country then. But they are the ones that should have shown respect to the Leaders of the country.

**Tofa Nafaitoa Talaimanu Ketu:** Mr Speaker, it seems it is not a point of order or clarification, but the need to show intellect. What would be your advice Mr Speaker, to set aside this matter since insurance has already been made clear, with respect.

**MR SPEAKER:** Thank you, the matters that were not raised by members in their speeches, do not respond to it, however the member of Vaimauga is right, he did mention insurance. The Hon Prime Minister has given his clarification, leave the matter to us. This means that the speeches of all members have been responded to by the Hon Prime Minister, in summary. This is a brief response and assistance to the Hon Minister of Revenue and Prisons, majority of the work has been done, you may speak.

**Susuga Hon Tuilaepa Auelua Fatialofa Lupesoliai Neioti Aiono Galumalemana Dr. Sailele Maleilegaoui:** I just came across the Ministry of Polices expenditure report from last year. It states here \$22 million, \$200,000 of capital as mentioned above, the use of which is detailed below. A total of \$16.9 million was earmarked for the salaries of police personnel. Including allowances and benefits eligible. However, not all of these funds could be used due to the large number of staff resignations and vacancies.

Mr Speaker that is the case, \$16.9 million close to \$17 million was spent last year. As I mentioned, other increases have already been made but it seems that this is only a small part of what we are upset over, even the Minister has given a clarification.

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

**Afioga Hon TIALAVEA FEA LENIU TIONISIO HUNT:** Thank you Mr Speaker. I also want to thank the members who made public speeches, but did not speak during the time you gave your speech, thank you.

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At the moment for police, trainings take up to 17 weeks then they take exams. Three weeks ago was the last recruitment, it started with 50 but after 17 weeks only 44 were left. They had their graduation, after these 17 weeks. This means all police officers are equally skilled who will be recruited from time to time. Once the Police Academy is completed, it will be attended by police officers, securities and prison guards. Whatever training that will be possible, to gain skills in police work and prison guards, the level of expertise will be the same. As for the decision of the Tribunal made on remuneration, it is now being set aside, until the Budget of the Ministry of Finance is passed, then it will be discussed and implemented. This is a response on the many comments conveyed.

Arming the police is probably not possible, as the Minister, it cannot be done. The only time police are armed is when there is a raid on marijuana or homes suspected to produce ice as mentioned by members. This raid has to be signed by the Attorney General and myself, two of us has to sign this warrant then the police force are armed. The warrant is signed with fondness of the heart, because we do not know how this raid will end. Let us thank God that nothing has happened. These raids carried out by police are beneficial, it has removed from some of the villages, the means of conspiracy of these people. If not for the power of Police, the risk is very high.

As I stated a warrant is signed together with the person in charge of the Attorney General's office, then I sign it after. We talk, should we sign this with our hearts full of love to the Commissioner and this particular team of the Police department. I commend you all for the hard work, one day people will talk about your work. Our work ends next year, but the duties recorded in the Ministry of Police and Prisons are incidents that will remain. Mr Speaker there are many other issues but I will try and make it brief.

The Oloamanu Prison, they are responsible for cleaning the town area as well as in front of the Parliament House, all of Parliament grounds and the Judiciary office. Their services has also been requested from the home of the aged at Vailele. The services from Oloamanu have reached there. The work they do is to provide food for the prison. In Savaii at Vaiaata, the work they do there is mainly for the plantation, so that food supply is enough for the prison. Our budget every year cannot satisfy food supply for the prison.

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There is an increase of convicts this year to more than 400, together with those on remand. There are 400, even remands are more than a 100, say 120, and both 2 rooms have been occupied by them. They all eat, those who are taken to Savaii are low risk, they are the ones we are dependent on for food supply for our prison. Last year on revenue, I want to congratulate the Commissioner, they got \$950,000. This is the first that the Ministry has earned such revenue. This is a result of traffic fines, and other road projects, as for this year we are going to license cars. Therefore, revenue is expected to rise to \$15 million for licensing.

The matter mentioned by some on taking cars to be passed at Fagalii. No, the licensing of cars is done at Vaitele, a plot of land will be used by the Ministry of Police where Land Transport Authority is located for passing cars. Some mentioned that the certifying of buses is not done properly. I assure you, that the authorisation of buses is done thoroughly, given the lack of buses being charged on the road at the police station. This means that the Land Transport Authority is doing a good job of certifying vehicles especially taxis, buses, vans and others, since there are rarely any charges. This means there are no problems. This is a response on the matters raised...

**Afioga Fuimaono Teo Samuelu Teo (Falealili East):** Mr Speaker, can I get an opportunity. I have noted that the speech by the Hon Minister is ending, perhaps this is the Ministry in charge of the Cyber Bullying or Cyber Security legislation, and it seems as discussed it is tilted towards the internet. Will it be possible to review it and see which part is being carried out by the Ministry? So that we can be protected from advertisements made on TV.

We are all aware that such actions have been seen on television, in our country, there is a lot of slander. Not towards individuals but also defaming churches. Now it is being made directly to the churches, he preaches in vain and slanders other churches, but he does not focus on the church he is attending. It does not seem to reflect the Christian norms of this religion, based on the teachings and sermons, with respect.

**MR SPEAKER:** I am older, but the member of Falealili is right, however you have been too hasty since the Minister was going to clarify the matter. Yes, but be patient, see if you had not stood up the matter would have already been explained. But the member of Falealili is right, look at the behavior of the pastors.

I call upon the Hon Minister.

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**Afioga Hon TIALAVEA FEA LENIU TIONISIO HUNT:** Thank you Mr Speaker perhaps these are matters that will be given a general recommendation since I do not have the records. But in this case it is no secret...all of us have seen...the advertisements broadcasted on television using the law of freedom of speech.

In my perspective it is too much. The Ministry of Police will look into it, on the status based on the law. The Ministry of Police cannot go outside the law. If the law says until a complaint is lodged, only then will Police take action. Come over to file your complaint, so that the Commissioner and Police department can act upon it, they cannot just go and do it. A complaint is required, to be submitted to the office for the work to be carried out.

But we have all heard it, and it is too much. It is beyond the preaching of the Gospel, the gospel should be preached with the heart of their church. Do not interfere with other religions. But the Ministry will look into it.

**MR SPEAKER:** Let us take note, because I do not have to reiterate, everyone has heard it. It is starting to be irrational.

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

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

**Afioga Hon Tuilaepa Auelua Fatialofa Lupesoliai Lolofietele Neioti Aiono Galumalemana Dr Sailele Malielegaoi:** Perhaps this matter is not trivial. Especially since words have been conveyed on the decision of the country, who chose the members of this Parliament. And it is beyond the scope that a decision need be implemented.

Mr Speaker, I have already received some complaints on this matter. The accusation made on the appointment of the Leader of Government by a foreign authority, it is an accusation of subversion, it also mocks and insults this country of Samoa, and its Independent State.

In the case of using broadcasts from television, and the release of Government TV to be privatized, it was done based on a positive mindset. It was a positive attitude resulted from the Privatization Policy of Government. This was releasing of Government businesses, to be operated professionally, by those who have the skills, because there were some ideas made towards the Government not only for Samoa but also abroad.



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The aspects of running a business, it is very unlikely that the Government is qualified to do business. Businesses should be left to business owners. Why? Because they are good at doing business. When it is bankrupt everyone is fired. Once an individual is fraudulent, they will be thrown with a spear, pardon me. As for Government businesses, there are roads that can be fixed in 4 months, after 2 years it is still being dragged, it is dragged but there is a law that protects the right of the person.

As for businesses that are privately owned. Once you make a mistake you are fired. There are no words, they only hire good people if there are people who are inconsistent they are fired on the spot while better ones are hired. No one interferes, leave it to the Government.

This is one of the problems that has made the Government businesses bankrupt, there are too many laws that protect the rights of the corrupt. It delays the process of decisions that need be made quickly. It is taken to court because of this law and that, but for business of business owners, there is none. They have the authority, once you fail you are fired, there is no conversation to discuss.

That is how the idea was born, it was followed by all countries of the world to let go of these things, to give up, and leave it behind. So there are times when other businesses stop others, because, the reason is that the service is too much for the people, and the Private Sector is not able to carry it like our aircraft. Like the hospital, like the schools. Other countries have no schools and no government to run hospitals, they are all commercial. That is why so many people die in America, because when you are sick, if you do not have insurance, you do not have money you will not be treated. Because everything is business.

Countries like ours are still overlooked by the Government. No matter the loss, it is in operation for our people. That is why businesses are being handed over under the privatization policy, in the spirit of it being operated by those looking over TV Samoa. They can operate the business, and we accept the price they offered to run it. In my opinion, those who are familiar with Government policy and have the vision, to oversee and continue to operate it with caution. They should watch out for those who foster jealousy and strife.

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That is also why a Special Council was appointed, a council was set up for journalists so they could look at matters they have control over. But what is happening? Some of those who are in this council have been accused of corruption. The Government cannot sit idle, in the event of these things happening and the Government is sitting still, these are things that surround Government and the Constitution of the Government of Samoa.

It was let go in good faith, and Government strived in trying to develop our telecommunications. Government is well aware of what happened with our telecommunications, it is being used by many. It spreads jealousy around the world which enabled the establishment of this ISIS regime, in the Middle East. Their motto is to murder people they do not like. Then this is spread to the internet, and throughout the world fostering people with the same mindset.

New Zealand and Australia have paid little attention to this issue of the right to freedom of expression, to express your views. But then the incident in Christchurch happened, a law was then drafted, made against the nature of media to spread slanderous propaganda, creating unrest in a peaceful country.

Mr Speaker this should not be taken lightly and I will seek the advice of the Attorney General. Why? Judicial decisions have already been implemented to ban such behavior. The court case where former Prime Minister of Samoa, Afioga Tofilau Eti Alesana was charged, there was a lot of insult and defamation of his name by the Observer. It was in this court, that laid out and clarified the right to freedom of expression.

The decision was laid out in court together with a set motion. There is no absolute right to freedom of expression. You do not have freedom under the Constitution to freely announce that there are restrictions. What restrictions? Because this is the case in Samoa, once you ruin a person, you have killed them. And it is more serious to kill someone for their beliefs and conduct, than to kill a person to end a life. Character assassination is worse than murder, why? For they shall live and spread to their children and to their children's children the ugliness, shame and reproach.

Mr Speaker, that is the end, but it is even more dangerous in the Samoan culture, the malice on the person's name. It is why this conclusion was drawn, the decision made is very thick but it will be useful if the lawyers would encourage people to read about it. This decision was made based on the Constitution. The Constitution of the Government of Samoa.

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If you think you are going to exercise your right, to express your views to harm a fellow human being, then you should be ready to collide with the law. So that is why within this area, I will seek the advice of the office of the Attorney General on their work. To protect this country, from a situation where Samoa could be in turmoil, there is always hope and ambition, incase the police come late.

When it comes to matters of the church, Christian beliefs, people react very quickly. So far the unrest has been contained. For more than 700 years the people of Ireland have been fighting each other in wars between the Catholics and Protestants. It is a dangerous thing, the instigation of violence that stems from beliefs.

Church leaders on the Protestant and Catholic sides have given up trying to suppress and preach the Gospel to all members of the Gospel. The people were in great darkness.

But the people who are doing these things, are known as people of the church but no longer go to church. They have dark thoughts overtaken by the devil. The devil also is smart in the Old and New Testaments. The devil is very clever, and then he turns to preaching which persuades people to preach. And uses the Divine name of God. But Gods commandments are very clear. What? The first 3 commandments are, to love God. Commandments 4 to 10, love your neighbour because when you love your neighbours, you will not bear false witness. You should not say criticize others because all those people are your neighbours.

Mr Speaker, this pastor, is very ignorant. He has chosen something very small, and forget, that the purpose of preaching the Old and New Testament, Mr Speaker is love. It is love, it is expressed in sending the only begotten Son of God to die for us all. But is based on love.

Mr Speaker, it is a tragedy for a Church Minister, to overlook the commandments of God, to love. But the spiritual message here, who is the Catholic church? Who is the Mormon? I have already told them, maybe tomorrow or the next day we will see someone from the Congregational Christian church and the Methodist. Small knowledge is extremely dangerous knowledge. And anywhere that uses the name of God, it says false preaching with the devil behind it.

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How do you stand up front? But not ask, when was your church established? It was just yesterday, when he left the main Seventh Day Adventist Church. My belief is that the Main Seventh Day Adventist Church is part of the church Ministries fellowship. Yet this Minister does not understand that this is the whole heart of the preaching of Jesus, to love and not harm your neighbour.

Mr Speaker, that is the situation, all of us Mr Speaker, we are all entwined. My family and I all have churches. The Main Seventh Day Adventist and the new independent one just established yesterday. Perhaps it has not been 10 years. They oppose the Main Seventh Day Adventist. There are the Catholics, the Mormons and the Assembly of God and its branches. There are all churches of Samoa in my family. But they all love each other, and no one tries to harm the other.

What is this church Minister doing? He has forgotten such things. All of the country is part of it. Because we all have children, grandchildren, brothers and sisters who are members of other churches. The defamation from this pastor, has no moral. He has in turn ruined the whole country. This is what you call someone with a mind ruled by the devil. The devil has overtaken his mind standing upfront. And is assisted by TV1.

This is the law, the person who owns the matter is implicated, together with the method used to convey an accusation. The court decision has been made, and this matter will be assessed.

Mr Speaker, we do not want that to happen again. We have passed it, we are now in the world of Christianity. The Christians around the world already went to war over it, causing the war of the Crusaders. All Christians show support, that all churches go to Jerusalem. To chase away the Muslims, who were founded in the year 600, but their beliefs were established in the Old Testament.

If we look at the Muslim Bible, it is the Old Testament and its punishments, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. This practice is still seen nowadays by some countries where the Muslim Church is in control of their Government.

Samoa is a Christian country, and it is this term that has inserted into the heart of the Constitution of the Government of Samoa, the words Samoa is founded in God. That is the high standards it should be at, and it is remembered from one Christian to the other. The essence of the Christian preaching, to live in harmony. Those were the last words of the Lord Savior before He went to Heaven, *'Love one another'*.

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But anyone who preaches to stir up strife among the churches is not a Christian. It portrays they are antichrist. And we have been warned by our Lord, let us beware, that there will be a multitude of antichrist, preaching the name of our Lord, but have a different purpose.

Mr Speaker, I apologise to those involved in this matter. And I hope, the eyes of those who control this TV will watch. Do not be greedy for money, it is money that is the problem with just decisions. Look at the services that should be provided by the TV. These are matter that should be overseen by the Manager, the Manager should look at it. Everytime an ad comes on that might be offensive, then they do the job that they should be doing.

Mr Speaker, leave the matter the us. The matter mentioned is very important, and once it is raised in this Parliament, it should not be overlooked. We have the Constitution. A Constitution that supports religion. And within this Constitution, it has warnings, on the grounds of those creating conflict in the country.

The Government of New Zealand is now vigilant on such matters, passing their laws, also New Zealand is another country that has a very open Government. But now they are starting to look more closely, to the current rights, rights to cause violence, killing alot of people, because of rioters. People who have been brainwashed, because of these preachings.

Mr Speaker, there is no use to have an Assembly for Samoa, if we look at the causes of unrest imposed upon peace in this country. The matter has now been brought before the Legislative Assembly, and it should not be overlooked.

Mr Speaker, I apologize to the member for the matter will be left to us, but I commend you for the courage in voicing it in the Legislative

**MR SPEAKER:** Very well, thank you. This is the reason Hon Minister of Police and Prisons especially Revenue, we are trying to get Government to pay attention. The Hon Prime Minister has spoken, and Government should lead with restraint, on matters likely to cause unrest within the country.

Therefore I want to say thank you. We will leave the matter to Government, for them to review, because who should lead? The Government should in keeping the peace. I call upon the Hon Minister of Revenue to continue.

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**Afioga Hon TIALAVEA FEA LENIU TIONISIO HUNT:** Thank you Mr Speaker. I also thank the Hon Prime Minister for the clarification made on the matter regarding this announcement.

Mr Speaker, I believe that it has come to the other Ministry that I am in charge of, the Ministry of Customs and Revenue. And according to the notes I wrote down, these are a few issues raised and questioned by the members.

First is the matter regarding the liquor olioli, second, the electronic method for tax monitoring, TIMS. Especially the business of supermarkets and small shops. Law on Investment Tax Credit, to encourage the construction of quality hotels, and attractive five star for tourists ended on 30th June 2018, especially the Capital Gains Tax in accordance with the amendments to the Act of 2017.

Before addressing each of the following issues, it is considered that the focus, the main objectives of the Ministry as well as its long term plans, should be given in three parts. The Corporate Plan 2017-2022. Long term plans for service guidelines. Under these strategic plans, the Ministry's vision is clear, to work together for a secure and prosperous Samoa as well as its mission, to sustain progressive development through excellence in revenue collection, enhanced compliance and stronger border security.

It is the desire of the Ministry for the future, to be able to fulfill its stakeholders, their obligations, the Law of voluntary compliance, facilitated with the assistance of the Ministry. To increase awareness of the people, the payment of taxes and duties is their major contribution for the whole country. The Government believes in the efficiency, effectiveness of internal trade, as well as the effective management and security of tax records and information. Communities should be aware of the importance of securing their international borders in their daily lives. Village and communities should know, there are appropriate and legal provisions to prosecute those who do not uphold the law. The community should believe that the staff of the Ministry is knowledgeable, honest and helpful in performing their duties. To have international recognition of appropriate legal mechanisms for trade and the enforcement of international border security.

To achieve all of these visions and objectives, the Ministry has developed 5 individual guidelines for its functions. To provide better customer service and legal compliance. Reform revenue collections to modern systems. Effective management of international trade and border security, effective conduct of ongoing research and law enforcement.

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To improve human resources and level of capabilities, to improve professional knowledge and leadership skills.

Due to the long term plans of the Government and this Ministry, it is necessary to prepare and plan its programs for each year to ensure that it provides a good service, honest, impartial, complete, clear, respectful, and reliable in collecting Government revenue, promptly clearing goods for migrants into Samoa and protecting our international borders from importation of prohibited goods into Samoa. These are some of the programs that include a container x-ray scanner, which is funded under the assistance of the Asian Development Bank provided to the Government for the improvement of its Matautu international port.

This machine will assist the Customs office in checking the packages sent into Samoa, whether the goods that are documented and received from the data provided to the Ministry is correct, to carry out their checks, evaluation and research. If the records match the appearance on the xray, the goods will be cleared faster. If goods are cleared quickly, the goods will be available for sale to the public, businesses receive money quickly, Government will quickly receive funds through duties and taxes, and Government plans and activities will be executed quickly for public services. At the moment, the Ministry inspects the containers by inspecting the goods and packages for a day or two before it can be cleared. There are allegations and major issues which has acquired much criticism in the system of checking container goods, but because of the desire of the office goods should be properly inspected to ensure there are no other goods hidden together with the ones listed or declared, that is the reason why there is a delay. Once this container x-ray scanner arrives, the service will no doubt be quick.

Other programs were still implemented on the vision, to provide clarity and improvement of some of the Laws and Regulations in managing the works of the Ministry. The Tax Act 1974 is now changed to Tax Act 2012. Customs Act 1977 is being changed to Customs Act 2014. VAGST Act 1993/1994 is now changed to VAGST Act 2015. Customs Tariff Act 2012 is now amended to a new Customs Tariff Act 2017. Computer programs have been enhanced and is being used by the Ministry to implement their work so that effective and efficient collection of tax is accurate. There is also the ASYCUDA or the Samoa Electronic Tax Service or the Samoa E-Tax which is section of the Inland Office system that can register taxpayer businesses to earn themselves tax returns...

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**MR SPEAKER:** I interject the current speaker as we arrived at our recess time. I beg tolerance, Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly will set aside for normal recess.

*Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly set aside at 10:45am and resumed at 11:30am.*

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

**MR SPEAKER:** I announce that Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly resumed. Before break the Hon Minister of Finance was speaking as well as the Minister of Police and Prison.

I call the Hon Minister to resume your statement.

**Afioga Hon TIALAVEA FEA LENIU TIONISIO HUNT:** Thank you honorable Speaker. I trust lunch has rejuvenated the Hon Prime Minister and the respectable Parliament.

Observation of this service has been very crucial during this time of the Covid-19 to save people from traveling and to save up time and money for the business, car park, as well as queueing up at the cashier to pay tax. This tax invoice monitoring system is implemented by the Ministry using technological methods and advance communications to help monitor the collection of tax on the trade in goods and paid services. This program will help gain business revenue numbers for the Ministry during trades operation, through the use of internet or other electronic devices to record and send information through the Ministry of Revenue server. When it comes time to submit these tax documents for this period and that period, then the TIMS can make comparison of the numbers with the filling numbers on the tax papers. If similar, then excellent, the Ministry has imposed penalties to avoid any difference in occurrence. The important thing, is to obtain accurate and similar tax numbers that must be paid to the State.



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Given these strategic planning and policies, it is observed that there is an increased in revenue earnings collected by the Ministry. The year 2015/2016, the projected revenue accumulated was \$479.1million and the actual amount collected was \$485.1million. A profit of \$6million. In 2016/2017, the revenue collected was \$491.8million, and the total amount earned was \$498.1million, with a profit of \$6.4million. The total revenue earning from one year to the next when compared with the total amount collected was \$19.5million.

In the year 2017/2018, the projected revenue collected was \$522.4million, the revenue earned was \$507.6million, a drop of \$14.8million from the previous year was not met. Despite this drop, it did not meet the expected target that was supposed to be collected, and the profit earned from one year to the next was \$9.4million.

For 2018/2019, the expected revenue collected was \$530.2million. The actual revenue collected was \$551.6million, with an excess of \$21.4million. So putting it to the next financial year, it will come to \$29.2million excess revenue collected by the Ministry.

The financial year 2019/2020 from the 1<sup>st</sup> of July to the 31<sup>st</sup> of May, the revenue collected is \$505.8million. The projected accumulating revenue should be \$527.7, and therefore, the remaining amount of \$21.9million must be met by the month of June. Based on records up to yesterday, money collected is more than \$21.9million. Which means, the Ministry of Inland had collected a greater revenue for the financial year 2019/2020.

The reason is because there were some members who queried revenue drop for the Ministry of Inland. That is reason why I am going through this again due to a few comments made on revenue fall by the Ministry of Revenue.

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

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

**Tofa Lealailepule Rimoni Aiafi:** Thank you Mr Speaker, thank you Hon Minister since I was the one who raised this matter on new tax collection by the Hon Minister. These are the numbers read out by the Hon Minister which I recorded at the start of 2016 to date, with very good revenue earning from one year to another. It began when it did not even reach \$500,000 and revenue collected is now climbing up to \$600,000.

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The meaning of my explanation, work was well implemented, whereas what is happening with this new system is the purpose for it is to earn higher revenue. As I said in my speech, this constituency highly supports this new system which is something that must be done.

But thank you now that the Hon Minister has responded, we will look at sorting the requests submitted by the applicants. Because the job is easy to do, there are also records of companies that are honest with paying their tax. These companies are the ones that have been very honest from 10 years ago, and assistance should be given to them for their support.

Right now your honor, deficit has been mentioned far too many, I trust only a weak Parliament talks of deficit. A week ago, Tonga had managed to pass their biggest deficit ever since the establishment of their Government. What was shocking is that they had 21 members of Parliament who wholly supported their budget.

Australia this year, their Prime Minister said, this is the largest deficit they ever had since the founding of their country. And again as we see it in the Sunday's paper, Australia is again offering us another grant for our education. Such is reason for my words Hon Minister, given the division which is different from this....

**Susuga Hon Laauli Polataivao Leuatea (Gagaifomauga No.3):** Mr Speaker, I wish for a chance please regarding the member's statement.

**Tofa Lealailepule Rimoni Aiafi:** Assistance are meant for these few companies given this drastic period we are in. With due respect.

**MR SPEAKER:** Very well, I get the statement of the member. Gagaifomauga No.3 did you stand up, whom do you wish to interject?

**Susuga Hon Laauli Polataivao Leuatea:** Thank you with the spirit of respect, it seems that we are rewinding our talks which we...the Budget and the address by the Hon Minister of Finance is finished. But saying that our thoughts are weak, that is what I am after, the member's statements are being made carelessly, do not suppress them that is your own opinion. Do not make statements like that to weaken our views. The recommendations made were to build the thoughts for the Minister of Finance. This is the advice to you honorable Speaker, our thoughts and voice of our constituencies are vital and not weak. With due respect.

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**MR SPEAKER:** Thank you. Faafetai.

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

**MR SPEAKER:** Did you mention this situation? Sa e taua le tulaga lea?

**Tofa Lealailepule Rimoni Aiafi:** You hearing it your honour, my thought is being generalized, because I did mention deficit, I did too clarified it in the beginning. But I did not mention any names on these matters. Because we are speaking generally, I would never talk about neither control anyone's opinion. If that is what you think, then that is your own view, whereas my thought, that is my own opinion.

**MR SPEAKER:** Very well thanks. You may speak.

**Afioga Hon TIALAVEA FEA LENIU TIONISIO HUNT:** Well that is the given explanation. Thank you Liuga for the challenge you made. The truth is, the Ministry had implemented its job to the best of their ability and service in accordance to the provisions of the law that is regulating the Ministry in collecting revenues. This is also a good picture in building the compliance of the Law's provisions and objects for the tax payers for all people to contribute including private businesses.

With regards to queries on the olioli, in addition to the previous statement, there are 3 main spirits produced in Samoa, beer, spirit and wine which excludes spirits that are imported into the country. In regards to records and report of the Ministry, there are different methods and ingredients that produce these spirits which I will make short in these significant parts.

The beer is produced from malt, yeast, sugar and water and is left stale for some time in order to gain beer flavour. Rice wine is produced from rice, yeast and water, it is boiled and distilled to get concentrated rice alcohol and atedon is put into it to get spirit. The Ministry has also investigated from SROS on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> June 2020 the strength of this alcohol as well as contained sugar for this spirit. Taula Larger is 660ml 7% alcohol, 5% sugar. Taula 4% alcohol, 5.2% sugar. Sili alcohol soda, 7% strength, it contains 8.5% sugar.

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Vailima pure 4.9% strength and 4.3% sugar. Olioli wine strawberry, pineapple, grape, lemon, 13% strength, 11.5%-11.9% strength sugar. Olioli Wine, is produced from rice which is mixed with water and yeasts for 20 days to get strong wine when rice is filtered and dilute it with different flavors using coke, pineapple, grape, lemon and strawberry to reduce the strength of the wine.

With regards to the Ministry of Health, the company is complying with the conditions and demands of the hospital under the Food Act 2015 and the Health Ordinance 1915 as submitted from the Health Certificate on the 6<sup>th</sup> of August 2019. The company has already paid the excise tax from the total of goods supply the olioli wine bottles which was produced together the olioli wine bottles which was bought because of this false information.

In relation to the wrong receipt which has been verified by the Ministry from its investigation, some of these receipts were proven false, and the Ministry of Cutoms and Duties Office are still looking into this excise tax and its penalties which has already been implemented.

Meantime the rice wine is being withheld whilst improvement work on the CCTV camera is being carried out on this site. The Liquor Board has already conducted its meeting and has given its instruction to the company to change the plastic bottle for wine to glass bottle from 1 liter instead of the 550 liter one. In truth, the olioli bottle was cheaper because of the plastic bottle and the smaller size bottle. Once this improvement is done, the Ministry will move on not to resume this wine production. The staff is made of about 40 local employees working for this company. The Ministry has throught of monitoring the entire production line and process within this company and if another penalty is found in it, then they will face prosecution by Law here in Mulinuu.

**Susuga Hon Laauli Polataivao Leuatea:** Mr Speaker, just this small bit I wish to further clarify on the statement of the Hon Minister.

**MR SPEAKER:** I call the member for Gagaifomauga No.3. You may proceed.

**Susuga Hon Laauli Polataivao Leuatea:** Thank you since this is not the first time for me to raise this matter as I have raised it several times. Firstly, our safety, that is the plea.

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You see honorable Speaker, this bottle is not safe as produced by this company, they have made numerous tricks, I have received many other new receipts this morning, and I am just assisting. The most important aspect is that tax collection is not made fully. For excise tax according to my calculations should not be below \$2million per annum for this company in the future. I am just saying as you are engaged with collecting revenue in order to run and operate the country. You have already known that we are stepping up to tax church ministers due to insufficient revenue earned, when these men are playing tricks here. Such is the endeavor with respect, we will submit more of these receipt for the sake of accountable investigations carried out by the Ministry. With due respect.

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

**Afioga Hon TIALAVEA FEA LENIU TIONISIO HUNT:** Thank you honorable Speaker. We must correct part of the member's statement. With regards to the taxing of church ministers, it was not implemented because we were bankrupt.

The intention for doing this is for everyone to pay tax, it not only involves the church ministers, the Le Ao ole Malo was also involved and was also paying tax. The main intention for me and the Mnistry is to involve everyone to pay tax. Everyones uses roads, water, electricity, hospital. And where does the money come from? This Ministry attempts that whatever money and cents we earn, we give it to the Minister of Finance. But thank you for the...

With the Olioli spirit, I have said it already, if investigations carried out finds it correct that they should be closed down, but it should be based on special investigations. If these bottles are sent abroad to make, they are sent abroad and when it comes time for it to be closed down...

**Susuga Hon Laauli Polataivao Leuatea:** Mr Speaker, I rise with great respect, there is no intention...

**MR SPEAKER:** I allow Laauli another chance.

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**Susuga Hon Laauli Polataivao Leuatea:** Hon Minister, I wish not to rediscuss the matter we had already argued about in relation to taxing of church ministers, rather I plead that you reconsider as not all tax are collected which is a deceit to some of these people that is otherwise putting the burden on the church ministers. That is the plea, I will leave it to you as you have the discretion to do so.

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

**Susuga Hon Tuilaepa Auelua Fatialofa Lupesoliai Lolofietele Neioti Aiono Galumalemana Dr. Sailele Malielegaoi:** Mr Speaker leave us your will on business entrepreneurs, as that is the job that must be done so that everyone pays tax, but let us not mention church ministers again. The Minister has spoken of the main aspect of tax. There are also conditions laid out such that if the targetted amount of \$15,000 is not achieved by tax payers involving everyone. And if the amount comes to \$16,000 with only \$1000 excess to implement small tax. Mr Speaker, all laws are complied by all the countries of the world on this regard but let us not be corruptible, use the names of church ministers as the recent speaker had long conducted talks with the church ministers to reject the Law. This is the most terrible thing, the ministers themselves had informed me of this proclamation by this member, when the House had already given its approval of this matter.

**MR SPEAKER:** Very well. Perhaps Laauli we will not accept ...

**Susuga Hon Laauli Polataivao Leuatea:** Mr Speaker, he is still laying allegations against me saying that I am being corrupt...

**MR SPEAKER:** Pardon the member for Gagaifomauga, I will not grant you another chance...

**Susuga Hon Laauli Polataivao Leuatea:** Sure that will be fine. Your honour, nothing will be done against anyone. Take back the words of the Leader of the Nation.

**MR SPEAKER:** There is thought, this tax is everyone's contribution, yes. That is the correct wording, it is everyone's contribution, everyone's share to water, electricity, education and all those things.

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Regardless, the feeling is like that, pardon me do not mention pastors but let us direct our intention to contribution or tax, because if we mention pastors, then we are rewinding our talks from the start and clarification which we already have on the spirit of developing the country and things like that. We have spent so many days discussing this matter before, and then other nations will also bear us assistance if they see that we are helping ourselves first. Such is the will of God, when God sees that you are toiling, it is not just about praying and sitting around, you must pray and work. If God sees that you are working, then he will bless the works of your hands. Yes, why bother to bless when you are not doing any work?

You may continue your speech.

**Susuga Hon Laauli Polataivao Leuatea:** Very well, I will swallow the bitterness of bad and accused words thrown at me, I will accept it.

**MR SPEAKER:** Thank you. I call the Hon Minister.

**Afioga Hon TIALAVEA FEA LENIU TIONISIO HUNT:** Then we come to TIMS which the business people are conflicting about. Particularly those that raised TIMS. There are only 4 letters for this program by our Ministry. I have undertaken this role as Minister of Finance and Customs, and the proclamation from business entrepreneurs says, the level of the plain field is not balanced in relation to GST tax payers. There are those that do not pay their tax, there are also those that hide GST in the banks. That was the word we received during the time we implemented this role. That drove us to initiate something, to undertake something to provide consistency for all businesses, to avoid them from hiding money in their homes, instead of saving it in the banks.

TIMS was therefore the response, so that the Ministry is able to monitor tax money. Anytime you make a purchase the server of the Ministry automatically picks up this purchase. It can monitor the total GST tax that has been collected. You can get your total GST return within 2 months time to which the Ministry is aware about as you are about to fill up. Like the statement made earlier, the numbers we had should be similar with the number that you filled on the GST for this 2 months period. So that we can easily implement refunds and other things. The intention for TIMS is to resolve problems on the non-tax payers.

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With regards to other comments, whether it is permissible to postpone the electronic tax system for tax monitoring. Pardon me, the day for this program will not be postponed due to the following reasons. For your information, it is not just the VAGST that is monitored under this program. It can also monitor annual sales. And then it goes to check whether the annual income tax is fitting with those records/data provided at the Ministry. This program is significant for the Government, particularly at this time whereby technology is getting advanced, to implement with e-commerce, as shared by the Minister of Communications and Information Technology. This is also the vision of the Ministry for Government to oversee duty, through e-commerce utilized by the business world which is on the rise. These are all the preparations of the State, together with tax laws.

The total cost of this project is \$3.4million, which started its awareness from the previous financial year and had its launching on the 4<sup>th</sup> March 2020. In addition 4 months were given to the first group to prepare and start this program, on the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020. There were 5 groups of tax business operators that was planned by the Ministry, which were allocated to come and register under this program, TIMS. The first group started on the 1<sup>st</sup> July with a total of 210 large sized businesses. Group 2, started on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2020, it had a total of 1,500 businesses. Group 3 was on 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2021 with a total of 1500. Group 4, was on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2021 with a total of 3,000. In total, the amount came to 8210 businesses which we will have and by the 1<sup>st</sup> of July 2021 it will be complete. Group 1, will take 4 months to prepare, then it will take 3 months each, resize the 4 groups following. The aim is to involve all business trades and any good or service into this program. Whether big or small as there are several important and useful things for them as well as the State.

These are some of the advantages for the business owners who are paying tax. To protect the business operators who are honest with paying the right tax from inappropriate competition. For accountable information and to be able to respond to tax related topics. To reduce the cost for compliant with the law. It can enable a business owner to monitor their purchases particular the process of their businesses by their employees. It can register the expenses and revenues through business trade and other businesses, and will make it easier to check tax returns or refunds. The good advantage for shoppers whom are the Ministry's partners, their assistance is very much required.



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For the buyer, you must obtain a receipt from the machine, so that the \$100 you paid is verified with the shop which includes the \$15 GST so that it goes directly to the State and not the pocket of the shop owner. The support of the country is therefore required, so that the receipt is obtainable, and so that all VAGST are collected. That is the advantage for the buyer, to ensure that a record of keeping a receipt is guaranteed from the TIMS system. Receipts are a verification which is your vital contribution to the country which will help a lot with funding the developments of the Government. Ensure that the total revenue collection is accountable to the State which is in their advantage, and that everyone is equal to paying tax. To reduce operations and economic related information that are nontaxable from the people's registration proof.

Then nature and location of the business. The use of advance technology today will detect penalties and reduce the avoidance of tax payment. It is true that all businesses have expenses starting with this program, and there is only one time a business entrepreneur faces problem, it prepares electronic fiscal device, to implement this program, although, time and years are long for this program to be useful. There are also many advantages for this program to gain from, it will allow her to gain more revenue than expenses. It will allow more registrations and purchases from customers, it will disallow the cashier to steal and put money into its own pocket. There will be no need for receipts. All businesses including larger ones will purchase from here, and their money will be invested into these electronic fiscal device which connects to this program for the future wealth of businesses.

If records are well kept and there is a smooth running of TIMS within the Ministry to ensure that the level of compliance is increasing and improving based on tax and duties Law, then this will assure us that negotiations of tax rates of the State, is good for the future. Who knows if benefit is good and GST will drop again in the future. Besides, your corporate taxes may also drop. If there is any addition with your revenue from these machines, business benefit returns will go back to the business owners. This is hope to happen in the future, if we work together to implement this program instead of trying to avoid it. Since the Ministry has already informed its plans for these 5 areas. The Ministry will therefore press forward with its plans on the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020 commencing next week.

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The recommendation, register all 210 companies that have been registered, penalty is unavoidable. They must all register with the Ministry before the 1<sup>st</sup> of July 2020. As for other companies for Group 1, it has requested for an extended time, on this response for them to prepare. The Ministry is undergoing a thorough review to ensure that accuracy and trustworthy reasons given are made for a decision to reach before the start of the program on the 1<sup>st</sup> of July 2020. There are different reasons from each company thus the deep review of all these reasons for a response to be given for each business, case by case review, and not a response for the entire Group of 210. Therefore, do attend the consultation, register and get a chance to talk with the Customs Office. If you refuse to come and register, the penalty starts on the 1<sup>st</sup> of July 2020 which becomes automatic directly. This is followed by a statement on the legal powers under the TIMS Regulation 2020.

There are huge penalties in place and anyone who breaches them starting from you not coming to the Ministry to register. Trickery on this program, falsifying this program and any other way that destroys the accuracy and effectiveness of this program, has a penalty. I wish not to read out these legal penalties. Because I wholly trust that we will work collectively, work closely to implementing this program for the benefit of the country. The purpose of the State is to provide equal chance for everyone to pay tax. And to provide service to satisfy all taxpayers, through various services for all people.

This includes education, hospital, roads, water, electricity, internet and so forth. These are all funded from Government revenues collected by the Ministry. A good future, is happy, free and safe, it is in our hands if we all work together. The clarification of TIMS Tax Invoice Monitoring System and its usefulness to the Ministry and the Government has already been made, particularly business owners.

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

**Susuga Hon Tuilaepa Auelua Fatialofa Lupesoliai Lolofietele Neioti Aiono Galumalemana Dr. Sailele Malielegaoi:** I wish to make a slight addition to this Bill, particularly this ending bit in the speech of the Minister on the Government part, like a body to redistribute finance on this part of the country from those who have more money.

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This thought provoking idea is critical to the State, for the sake of teachers' salary in private and mission schools. Whenever we talk about children, we are talking about the future. But it all depends on sufficient funding. Such is the criticality of this proposed legislation. There have been many demands submitted on access roads so that farms are easier to develop. For all those things, it covers assistance towards other businesses. Help is required, which is something that should be done by the Government. Bring money from people with enough funds, and redistribute it to those who need it.

In December 1996, we went with the Governor of the Central Bank to Great Britain to attend a major conference on how countries can earn revenue from tax. That is also why I went so I could listen. We transitted through Moscow Russia and had consulted a few investors to come and invest in Samoa. The extraordinary thing about this meeting is that there were other lawyers from Samoa who were there including so many business owners. But I did gain a few things out of it. The important thing I had gained from this trip is the statement by one of the wisest people on tax and business owners.

He stated, "You are the Heads of the Government and you are responsible for the business community and their taxes, keep this in mind, keep an eye on all the business owners, especially businesses that are committed with paying their taxes, keep a close eye on those who are honest. Because once there is a mistake, in just a blink of an eye, they will stop being honest and become deceitful."

This is the only thing which makes them quick-witted, no matter how righteous they are, their devotion is based on the efficiency of the Inland Revenue, and monitoring their audited returns that have already been audited by certified auditors. It does not include corrupt auditors, because there are also these kinds of auditors, who are corrupt. There is a saying, they cook the books, only registered accountants and auditors should be used. But as soon as the Ministry's vision fails, things will start to deviate. So that is why it is very important, and to monitor all these things, it is also important to use machines. But if the Ministry is not active in examining how these machines are properly used, these machines may malfunction. That is why it is important to have punishments. Then my family said their goodbyes to each other, and left at 10 o'clock.

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As soon as we left all the lights in London went out. And then I said, London is the capital of the business world, and the knowledge of the people is astonishing, they are implementing various policies, but now the lights are not working. They were off for almost 5 hours, when we came outside London was completely dark. London is the capital of Great Britain, but now it was completely dark.

That is another useful thing that I had acquired. Even in the country with the most intellectuals, and various technologies but now they are having a power outage. What happened is, when we came outside, there were a lot of people probably over 100. They were queuing on the train tracks for almost an hour, as the trains were immobile. And it was in December, which is the winter season in the north. I was so cold that I got sick there while standing outside trying to find a taxi, but there was also a shortage of taxis. That is another useful thing I have obtained, London had a power outage, and there were not enough taxis to transport people, and for almost an hour, I was freezing while waiting for a taxi. Freezing, power outage, these are lessons. To all the business owners that are paying taxes, be vigilant every year.

Mr Speaker, that is not to say that we are pursuing only these groups, no, but the Act states that taxes must be paid, all the people of the country are paying their taxes for their Government. The Leaders that have been buried in the Sacred Grounds have struggled for decades for their Government, so that we can have a Government that lives on taxes. It is similar to the Kingdom of Israel with the abundance of warriors, but there were 12 tribes of Israel. During the era of David, there were 12 tribes each with tens of thousands of soldiers recruited to form the army. Meaning, it was no less than a quarter of a million. How were they accommodated? They were accommodated with tax. Mr Speaker, taxes were paid not only with money, but also using food, since the olden days until the present, countries survived on taxes.

In conclusion, it has not been long since I arrived here, and an elder that had given the speech in Samoa visited. He came to apply for a license, because he is also investing in Samoa, he is looking for a license to operate the stock exchange market. Then I called the Ministry which is responsible for this, for their advice. And they advised that it is unnecessary, and then I informed the man who gave the speech in London, who is investing in Samoa. That his appeal for a license was not accepted, as the advisors stated that it was unnecessary.

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About 2 weeks passed and I asked the Ministry again, if there are still investments.... have they all been withdrawn from Samoa. Mr Speaker, that is the case, advice if given by our employees, people who have studied abroad and received degrees, and people who have worked abroad. This is an international organization, who is accustomed to these things. They have worked overseas just like the Chairman of the Finance Committee. This is a warrior who has worked in International Organizations, as well as the Minister of Finance, who was the first person to commence this program, to work in foreign financial Institutions, to earn a broader understanding so that when they come back from these foreign Organizations, we will have a better understanding of the situation.... either about taxes or developments of the Government we are able to comprehend it completely.

Mr Speaker this is my statement. There are a few others, but I will not mention them, they have also worked in International Organizations, to which they are proud of. But these two are enough, because they are ones that deal with these financial issues of the Government. This is regarding the matter of obtaining enough capital from the Ministry of Revenue, in order to fund the needs of the Members, to respond to the demands of their constituencies.

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

**Afioga Sulamanaia Fetaiai Tauilili Tuivasa:** Mr Speaker, to spare the Minister's time.

**MR SPEAKER:** Well, was it not included in the speech by the Hon Prime Minister?

**Afioga Sulamanaia Fetaiai Tauilili Tuivasa:** There were things that were not mentioned, most of the issues have already been clarified, but there were some parts that were missed in the statement by the Prime Minister. In regards to this system, I would like to thank the Hon Minister as it was stated in you speech. That is why I did not interrupt you when you giving your speech. This is the only Minister who has received a lot of petitions from this member.

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As your Ministry is the pillar of our Government in acquiring funds, I want to thank the Hon Minister. The circumstances I mentioned regarding the Budget for this financial year which is ending. That was not the whole meaning of my statement, I did not say that there was a deficit, or \$527 million. Now that this financial year is underway, and it seems that it has been decreased, that was what I meant when I asked whether...but it is noted that you are still determined, as the financial year is not yet over, but you have now announced it. The situation concerning the system mentioned which was raised by the Hon Prime Minister. Thank you for your emergence and for introducing the system to manage our Ministry. It was probably last year when I visited Singapore with the fellow member, Sooalo, as the system they are using is for bringing containers to the port, as vehicles are taken into the machine. And when the red lights turns on, this means that there are contents within the vehicle, and then it is removed from the machine and taken to the customs for examinations, and then the duty is conducted.

So the concern with bringing in these machines is, because even though workers at customs notice the red light turning on, but they ignore it and continue with the work. Because in Singapore once the light turns red, the package is then moved to the other side to be examined by customs. But in regards to our machine, which is being used at the airport, people would come and place their luggage in the machine, and when they see that it is the honorable Associate Ministers, they will just let you pass, but there are items within the bags that should be put on duty. Because it is being controlled by people... but if it was controlled by the machine that is what I meant. But I want to express my gratitude for the way it is being used... the system that you have mentioned is quite interesting.

But there is a concern by the member, because it seems that you are now considering stores and supermarkets. But you should look at major constructions that produce a lot of profit. If possible, a similar control system should be installed within the major Contracts that generate money. As some of the stores that will be receiving our system are minor shops. But the major Constructions are where our Government receives a lot of revenue from, so please examine this situation, and that is what I wanted to remind the Hon Minister.

**MR SPEAKER:** Well done, I call on the Hon Minister.

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

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**MR SPEAKER:** I call upon the member for Faasaleleaga to stand.

**Tofa Namulauulu Sami Leota:** Thank you for the opportunity. I had also extended my Congratulations to the Hon Minister for this system, as this is one of the arguments raised which be clarified by the Minister to be consistent and to even the playing field. The only things is that there are a few men within our constituency who are requesting assistance with installing this system, as it is too technical for them. I ask if the Ministry can provide some assistance to install this system in our constituency, even if it charges money, because they have noted that, the installation of this system in their stores is quite complicated.

They do not object as they are happy about it, but an appeal to the Hon Minister and the Ministry, can we receive some assistance with this? Even if the shops are charged with money, as it is their request as well, but as stated by the Hon Minister, it will commence in July and we will comply. But that is the only request for assistance on this matter, with all due respect, thank you.

**MR SPEAKER:** Well done, the member is right, I call on the Minister to stand.

**Afioga Hon TIALAVEA FEA LENIU TIONISIO HUNT:** Well, thank you for the opportunity. The response to the question by the Hon Sulamanaia...

**Afioga Fuimaono Teo Samuelu Teo:** Mr Speaker, could I just make my statement first....to save the Minister's time.

**Afioga Hon TIALAVEA FEA LENIU TIONISIO HUNT:** When I stand.... wait until I finish responding to these two issues...

**MR SPEAKER:** There is nothing in our Standing Orders that warrants the dismissal of a member, only to be ejected from the House, oh are you standing to correct something...

**Afioga Fuimaono Teo Samuelu Teo:** Yes, I ask for an opportunity as this matter was stated in my speech.

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**MR SPEAKER:** I call on the member to stand to make corrections.

**Afioga Fuimaono Teo Samuelu Teo:** There is not much to say about it because there are already a lot of discussions on the system. The only thing is.... if it is possible to...because this is the same system that was going to be used in Fiji. Is there a reason why Fiji postponed the implementation of this system? If there is a fault, in case we use it, but later on a problem would occur. That is the only question because it has been noted, as we are in an agreement with this group, but now Fiji has delayed the use of this system. With the utmost respect.

**MR SPEAKER:** Thank you. The reminder by the member is good but I call upon the Minister.

**Afioga Hon TIALAVEA FEA LENIU TIONISIO HUNT:** Thank you to the member....to the Hon Sulamanaia, it is true that.... he is one of the employees of the Ministry who has been with the Ministry for many years and has also provided major services. And most of the advice and suggestions he gave me, I have only used 10%, because the Ministry cannot go backwards as we can only move forward...

Well, the situation with ignoring the red light when it turns on does not occur anymore. As you can see with the collection of taxes, if the red light was ignored, the Ministry would not be able to collect this much money. Just like the time when you worked and collected a lot of money. They are on my desk... I wish you could come back. If you are not elected in the new Parliamentary Term next year, you should reapply to the Ministry, perhaps you will be accepted by the Hon Matafeo, because you have worked hard for the Ministry, but for the TIMS as I had stated, it is 210...

**Afioga Sulamanaia Fetaiai Tauiliili Tuivasa:** Mr Speaker the speech by the Hon Minister is very interesting, as it seems that he is making decisions for me. If I was to reapply and you are no longer there, what will I do?

**Afioga Hon TIALAVEA FEA LENIU TIONISIO HUNT:** As you have heard, you will be reapplying to Matafeo, not me. I stated that you should apply to Matafeo perhaps.... because I know that you will not be returning and I will not be returning as well.



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But all of the 210 companies, they all have major contracts, road workers and carpenters, and they are all given these machines. It is true that they do not make daily payments, as they only receive their cheques after a month and it amounts to a million, and then is it used. But it affects every business, not just the shops.... in regards to the Ministry's assistance with the installation.... they have already been notified to... converse with the Ministry on what they can assist with. I cannot answer if it is possible or not. The advice has already been given, so have discussions. Most of the people are afraid to converse with the Inland Revenue Department. That is how it was when I was appointed. I do not know why? But that is the only way to resolve fines. The Ministry's fines are also automatic on a monthly basis, 20% for taxes that are not paid. But I do not understand why they are unable to come and discuss the reasoning.

For every business, they will do well today, but perform awful tomorrow, they will do well again the next week, but they are afraid to come and converse. But when they converse, it is the children of the country who are in charge of the Ministry. It is important, as we cannot distance ourselves from our partners. The Inland Revenue's partners are the business owners, because without them we would not be able to obtain the money that is being collected by the Ministry.

They are the pillar that the Ministry depends on, with the taxes that they are able to pay. So they cannot say that we refuse to consult, it is a must to consult, for a better understanding, and to pay the taxes. That is the desire.

The statement that was also made to the current Chief Executive Officer and Deputy CEO, and the entire staff, there is only one thing that we have to look at, and compare our work that is being implemented by the public. No matter what wonderful things we do, but if we do not receive the annual contributions, and that is the only thing our Ministry will charge, not only from an external point of view but also the receiving of tax.

The statement is true.... this year will begin in July, and it has been reduced to \$475 million as 10% had been deducted which has reduced the amount set aside to be collected in this financial year in the new year due to Covid. Well, with the many reliefs that have been given, the duties of most products will no longer be available.

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In addition to the fact that this Ministry does not have taxes, all these things, these are all the funds that the Ministry is unable to collect. Now it has been reduced to 10%, but the challenge for the Chief Executive Officer, because she is uncertain of the new year if she will return, to find out these things.... so that the money collected this year of \$527 is more than.... to be collected in the new year. It should be more than \$475.

That is also the purpose of the TIMS starting in July, because there are companies that are already prepared. But if it is postponed again, as I have said, it will take 4 months. That is the time limited for Companies to request for changes... they are able to change within 120 days. That is the time allotment for Companies to alternate... this means 3 months. But if they had consulted in March, when it started, by this time their changes would have already been completed. But they waited until June, which is one month before, to reach out. Since we have a lot of Regulations and work to conduct, we rely heavily on business owners for their advice for postponement, we will postpone. It is then rescheduled for later, which is the beginning of every system.

But this is the only system that can be stopped right away. As the Ministry will do what it sees fit, because they have to look at the public welfare of the country. To look at how taxes are accumulated. Therefore, if it is postponed again, July will be the same as postponing to October. For the first part, even if it can be postponed, as we have said, it depends, either the election or any other circumstance, we have to do what needs to be done. Do not be afraid and do what needs to be done. Even if it prevents the Minister from returning, well I am the Minister. But we still do what needs to be done.

The license for businesses, small shops, and supermarkets, under the Business Licenses Act 1998, sets the amount of the license that must be paid, in order to conduct a business. With the type of business structure that you registered with. Whether, it is an Independent Business, Sole Traders, a Business Company, or a Partnership Business. And the provisions of the Act are clearly implemented to collect the Revenue, of our Government from business licenses depending on the type of business structure in which it is registered.

In regards with the work implemented by NEOC or the National Emergency Operation Committee, with the involvement of the Commissioner of Police, and the Ministry of Customs and Excise.

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To monitor the adherence with the provisions of the SOE we have now. The orders clearly state the difference between small shops, which sell their goods through a window, and the supermarkets, where you can enter and acquire your own goods and make the payments to the cashier. Even if you are a Sole Trader, but you have become a supermarket and opened your doors for self-services for customers, then you fall under the Supermarket Regulations. But also for small shops, which sell goods through the window, they are the ones that are under the SOE Regulations, and are enforced by the Ministry of Police.

The Investment Tax Credit Act, which had expired in 2018. This was the assistance by the Ministry and the Government for hotels. The implementation of this Tax Credit started in 2003. It is like if another Company wants to build a hotel, but it receives funds from another company as investment. Suppose the other company invests a million to build the hotel for this company, that million is also let go from taxes, it is deducted from income taxes per year.

Hundreds of millions of dollars have been reserved by the Ministry for the Tax Credit. It is a lot of money, and if we were to obtain all that money, the Ministry would be able to collect it all. We have over 70 million dollars, with more than 60 million dollars left. And it was removed in 2018, because of the time it took, there was no time limit. There were questions, on how long this would continue. But not it has ended in 2018, the Hon Minister of Finance and I have given them 5 years to use their Tax Credit, if by 2023 on the first week of July it has not been fully depleted, then it will be returned. Therefore, it should be used before the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2023. And investments have been halted, as it has been stopped because of the amount of money that has used. So where does it go? They are distributed to hotels.

Most of the assistance by the Government is given to these services because it was important for hotels that needed more rooms, but unfortunately the impact of the measles followed by covid has hampered the industry, but I have hope that the situation with tourism will be improved.

**MR SPEAKER:** Apologies to the Minister as I call on the member for Vaimauga East to stand.

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**Afioga Sulamanaia Fetaiai Tauiliili Tuivasa:** Mr Speaker, because the Hon Minister stated an issue that was mentioned in my speech, to save time. I would like to express gratitude to the Hon Minister, and as I have said, you are very caring towards your Ministry with your feedbacks. Now an Act has been enacted to limit this tax credit, and that is why I am thankful. Because you have stated that it will end here, so my question is, if it ends and there is still \$1 million tax credit left in your Ministry, how will this situation be conducted? Because in this case, your statement is correct, it is a lot...

As some have stated...the developments that have been implemented are good as it has revitalized the hotels but as we can still see... this member is curious, are the taxes being paid properly? Because they were brought in for a different job regarding telephones, but now they are working at hotels. Where does the money being used come from? If the taxes are being paid properly, that is good, as it can be used for the implementation of our developments. But that is the reason for my feedback.

The situation with the business license, my constituency is suffering. There is shop owned by an elder, he has used his own home as an entrance for his shop, it is a very small shop, perhaps the value of all the stocks inside is about \$1,500. And then it is.... the old lady would sit in her house while the customers would enter her home and grab their purchased items. Now that this new Act has been introduced, they would consult the member for concrete sacks to cover the entrance of their home. That is the spirit I want to convey, the supermarkets are full aware of this situation, but for our few small shops in the rural area, the old lady would just sit while the customer goes and retrieve their products. That is the desire I want to relay, I ask that your Ministry looks into this matter while implementing these things, to show the license, and do not let our Act become another burden for the people, to rebuild more houses in order to uphold the regulations.

That is what I wanted to convey, but your speech this morning at this hour, it has made this member understand. That was what I was worried about, thankfully the tax credits have been set aside, because it is a lot of money, but they are not taking it seriously. With all due respect.

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

**Afioga Hon TIALAVEA FEA LENIU TIONISIO HUNT:** The question of where the rest of the money goes? It is cancelled, removed and will no longer be used.

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As stated before, if it is a million and you pay your taxes, your financial statement at the end of the year will be profitable, you pay \$500,000 which is less than \$500,000 from the tax credit you have. So this is how it is used. So by July 2023, it will be cancelled, you can no longer claim a tax credit if it has been removed.

Well as in... but the situation with the small shops, which as explained, you should ask NEOC because they own this Act which is enforced by the Police. But talk to the Police.

There were some who mentioned this Act, in the case of the Le Lava Hotel. As the Hon Prime Minister stated yesterday, the Act has expired and was terminated in 2018. The Ministry continues to monitor the business and the revenue of these two companies, to ensure clear and accurate compliance with the Customs Act as well as the payment of taxes and duties of these two Companies.

For your information, the Investment Tax Credit qualifies Digicel Samoa Ltd as a tax credit from its income tax, but they still pay their VAGST. This Company is still paying VAGST. Well, for the LE Lava Hotel which will begin to open this year and the money that will be received by the Ministry is the staff tax and the hotel profit tax, and that is the money the Ministry is able to collect, which is received in accordance with the tax credit used.

The Capital Gains tax, as clearly stated by the Hon Minister of MCIT, Bluesky Samoa Ltd did not receive any capital gain because there was no transaction of shares between Bluesky and Vodafone, because both of these companies are owned by a single company, but they are only changing the management structure, to use the name programs of Vodafone. So we do not receive tax or capital gains from it.

But the Ministry of Revenue will continue to monitor the expenses of this company, to ensure that their tax information is always provided. And that the provisions of the Act are heeded, and make sure the taxes are clearly and accurately paid to the Government.

Well that concludes the...

**Afioga Sulamanaia Fetaiai Tauilili Tuivasa:** Mr Speaker, I ask for an opportunity because the member mentioned the... as I have said with many of my requests, because I feel sympathetic towards the Minister.

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In looking for the funds that I requested so that all this money can be obtained. And the situation that was mentioned that we do not earn money from purchasing Bluesky, and that should be made clear to this House, because there were some members that said that it was \$11 million and sold to others for US\$86 million.

**Afioga Hon Tuilaepa Auelua Fatialofa Lupesoliai Lolofietele Neioti Aiono Galumalemana Dr Sailele Malielegaoi:** Mr Speaker I will address this issue when it is my turn, but your time is up.

**MR SPEAKER:** Well, it has been heard by the member, as I call upon the Hon Prime Minister to speak.

**Afioga Sulamanaia Fetaiai Tauilili Tuivasa:** But my statement is not yet finished...

**MR SPEAKER:** It is now fully comprehended, as your desire was first comprehended by the Hon Prime Minister. I call on the Minister of Finance.

**Afioga Hon Sili Epa Tuioti (Minister of Finance):** Mr Speaker, I would like to take a moment to offer assistance and to clarify some of the issues that were raised by the Minister of Revenue. The situation concerning the companies that are uncooperative, like the company that is brewing the olioli and such beverages, we have given them many opportunities, but our Acts should be strictly enforced. An opportunity like this will not be given again, if happens again, then the company should be closed down.

As the Hon Members of Parliament can see, with alcohol, and things like that, not only does it make our people sick, it also causes accidents, quarrels, and some have also been imprisoned. There have been a lot of social problems that occur due to these alcohols. We must protect the young people of our country.

Of course the money is good, but we should also have limits, so that it is safe...

**Afioga Hon Tuilaepa Auelua Fatialofa Lupesoliai Lolofietele Neioti Aiono Galumalemana Dr Sailele Malielegaoi:** Mr Speaker, perhaps this matter should be referred to the Cabinet.

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**MR SPEAKER:** Well done, I refer this matter to the Cabinet to consider and to work on... the result is that once they get their hands on alcohol they will get drunk immediately, and it will continue on for the next day as well, and when the next morning comes, hundreds have lost their lives due to this. The Cabinet will consider it.

I call the Hon Minister to conclude your speech.

**Afioga Hon TIALAVEA FEA LENIU TIONISIO HUNT:** Thank you Mr Speaker, this concludes the issue that was raised, but a brief comment on our...there is still enough time. Our meeting with the 2 Ministries, the Ministry of Police and the Ministry of... We continue to ask cooperation for the benefit of the country, because the Ministry of Customs and Revenue, try to acquire funds to ensure stable living, for the economy of the country so that it can be distributed to the Minister of Finance. And everything that the Ministry does... the different ways to earn funds will be conducted by the Ministry.

The Ministry of Police is responsible for the safety of the public, as well as taking care of our prisoners at Tanumalala Prison, so we need to work together, for the prosperity of our whole country in peace.

Mr Speaker, I would like to make a statement to my constituency, because this is the only Budget except for the Supplementary in December. To my constituency of Vaa o Fonoti, the two houses of Fagaloa and Faleapuna, it has now been 10 years since I was appointed to this position.

I want to express my gratitude for the honor you have bestowed on me for these 10 years as the new year approaches. Whatever work that I was able to accomplish, it was done to the best of my abilities. Let us depend on God for any other work to be accomplished. But I would like to thank for your support, especially to the Reverends and Fathers and all those are in our constituency, especially the Elder Reverend at Uafato. Thank you for the support, thank you also for the advice on the many things that have been done, whatever I left in this Parliamentary Term, I will try to implement it all.

But due to the terms of the Act, and the division of constituencies, I believe that it is no longer possible to compete for the constituency of Vaa o Fonoti, as Faleapuna has now been separated and allotted to the constituency of Anoamaa East. Unfortunately, the spirit is weak, especially when I am at the helm, a fellow brother. That is how difficult the situation is... because of the Act.

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I believe that God will provide opportunities, to the fellow member, because I cannot escape the wishes of my family to uphold the Title of Tialavea at Faleapuna. So that means in the next election I will be competing for Anoamaa East, because of the Act we have now, as Faleapuna is now part of Anoamaa East. But it will only be conducted in the next Election. Thus why, I want to let the constituency know, as I will be leaving, but whatever work there is to be done at this time, it will be implemented.

But also pray, that the next candidate that will replace me in the constituency in the next election, leave it to God to decide. Whatever it is that we are quarrelling over for the election, only God can decide, if the person themselves believes in the appointment by God, what does it mean? That is God's decision. But for today, thank you for support me over the last 10 years.

For the constituency that I will be competing for, the men that compete are brothers, there are many families. The family of Alaiasa, Lufilufi, Faleapuna, Falefa, blood, body, flesh. Unfortunately, the Act created by the Minister of Elections is the cause of this, this man. If this man was good it would not....

Well, that is a statement to the constituency. God bless you Mr Speaker, may you have strength to be elected again in the next election.

Hon Prime Minister, I hope that you will always have the strength and patience to manage our Government. During these times while heading into the election, we will be faced will many problems. Well, we must work with patience and perseverance. Hon Deputy Prime Minister praises to you for advising the Hon Prime Minister as you work together in managing our Government as well as our Political Party. The Members of Cabinet, I hope that you have strength to conduct the rest of your duties this year. To the Associate Ministers, you have been great advisors to us, as well as the Chairmen of the Committees and also each of the Committees on that side of the House, may God bless election so that we are all able to return. But have a blessed day Mr Speaker, as the time is up.

**MR SPEAKER:** Thank you. Well, everything is clear as heard by the Parliament as well as the support of Samoa listening with the efforts by the Hon Minister for Revenue, Police and Prison to clarify and elaborate the issues raised by the hon member.



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Thank you very much, like the remarks made to God. Well, the ears are eager to listen to the plans for the constituency, so depend on God, as the men that compete are brothers. Whoever is chosen by God, he will be the one to represent the constituency.

But since we have arrived at the hour to finish our work, which will be concluded, it is believed that it has been a long day. Before we adjourn and conclude our Assembly, I will close our Assembly with a brief prayer.

*Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly was adjourned at 12:58pm until 9:00am on Thursday, 25<sup>th</sup> June 2020.*