

DISCLAIMER

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**Day 4
9:33am**

- **GOVERNMENT ORDERS OF THE DAY – Reading of Bills**
 1. **Supplementary Appropriation Bill (No.1) 2023/2024 – second reading debate continues (Day 4)**
 1. **Tofa SEUAMULI Fasi Toma, Member for Gagaemauga 2.**

The Member greeted Mr Speaker and all Members of Parliament who were present as well as his constituency. He then moved to speak on the following issues:

- **Samoa Shipping Corporation:**

The Member commended the Hon Minister and his staff for their continuous effort in serving the country, especially during the festive season as all ferries travelling between the two islands of Upolu and Savaii were always full.

- **Ministry of Works, Transport, and Infrastructure:**

The Member emphasized on the poor road conditions within his Constituency and urged the Government to select the best contractors for road developments as the Government is usually blamed when repair works are poorly carried out, instead of the contractors. He then requested a speed hump in-front of the Vaiola Church at Saleia to prevent cars speeding and potential accidents.

The Member further mentioned the construction work conducted a year ago on a road at Vaipouli where they only dug up the ground and left it unfinished. He urged the Minister to consider this matter as it leads to schools (Itu o Tane College and Laumoli Secondary School) and the hospital in his Constituency. Another incomplete road construction from Satoalepai towards Le Lagoto which was approved under a Cabinet Directive on 12th February 2020 was

raised by the Member for the Minister to consider and accentuated that only 1 kilometer needs to be fixed.

- Ministry of Customs and Revenue:

The Member raised the issue of timeliness involved in the process of releasing cargo items at the wharf for ferries travelling between Tutuila and Upolu especially during the festive season where most ferries from Tutuila arrived in the evening, but the passengers can only receive their packages during normal working hours. In this regard, he suggested whether this can be flexible along with a fee to pay so passengers can receive their items on the same day despite the time the ferry arrives from Tutuila.

- Ministry of Health:

The Member requested the Ministry to ensure their doctors are physically present at the hospitals when people come in for treatment or seek medical help. The Member asserted that he raised this issue and his disappointment before regarding the service provided by one specific doctor stationed at the Safotu Hospital; thus requested the Ministry for another doctor or to advise the current doctor accordingly.

- Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources:

The Member reiterated his request for seawalls towards Fagamalo, Lelepa and Avao as one of the Church Minister's residences was almost affected by the high tides and strong waves.

- Gambling Control Authority:

Tofa SEUAMULI suggested whether it is possible to cease the renewal of license for conducting gambling games like Bingo as the process is such a hassle.

- **Tofa Hon. LEATINUU Wayne Soialo, Minister of Gambling Control Authority.**

In response to the Members suggestion put forth, he emphasized that it cannot be done given that all gambling activities are administered in accordance with the law and therefore urged the Member to adhere to processes in place such as renewing license for Bingo.

Tofa SEUAMULI Fasi Toma, Member for Gagaemauga 2 (cont.)

The Member asserted that there is no legislation regulating the prizes of these gambling activities such as raffles and bingo, then requested the Minister to establish relevant policies to regulate these activities, (setting prizes for gambling activities). He further sought clarification whether the prizes for bingo can also be similar with the prizes used for most raffles such as 1/4 acre or \$10,000, etc...

2. Tofa MAUU Siaosi Puepuemai, Member for Vaa o Fonoti.

The Member greeted the House and Samoa then put forward the following issues to respective ministries and agencies:

- Land Transport Authority:

The Member reminded the Minister of their request for access roads in his constituency as it is located in the mountainous areas of Samoa, therefore the delays in construction are usually caused from heavy rainfall in the periods December to January. In this regard, he requested whether it is possible for the construction work to commence next month.

- **Tofa Hon OLO Fiti Afoa Vaai - Minister of Works, Transport, and Infrastructure.**

The Hon Minister responded that the Authority has commenced their construction work at the mafa area as well as the Fagaloa area as mentioned by the Member for Vaa o Fonoti.

Afioga SULAMANAIA Fetaiai Tauiliili Tuivasa, Member for Vaimauga 1 – interruption.

The Member sought clarification from the Member for Vaa o Fonoti whether the road works he's requesting are the roads that were fixed before the by-election.

Tofa MAUU Siaosi Puepuemai, Member for Vaa o Fonoti (cont.)

The Member responded that the roads that were fixed before the by-elections are different from these roads. He then reminded the Minister on their request to fix the seawalls given that his Constituency is very prone to impacts of climate change.

- **Afioga Hon TOEOLESULUSULU Cedric Pose Salesa Schuster - Minister of Environment and Natural Resources.**

The Minister emphasized that the Ministry are prioritizing projects that affects the Governments assets such as roads and further urged the public to replant trees along the coastal areas to avoid landslides as there are some people cutting down the trees for their ava farms.

Afioga FUAAVA Suluimalo Amataga, Member for Aleipata Itupa i Luga – interruption.

The Member for Aleipata Itupa i Luga sought clarification whether the landslide he mentioned occurred within his Constituency or does it include the landslide incident at the Mafa. He then commended the Hon Minister for the road developments when the Slipway at Aleipata was officially opened.

Tofa MAUU Siaosi Puepuemai, Member for Vaa o Fonoti (cont.)

- Ministry of Police:

Requested to take proactive measures and think of other ways smugglers may bring drugs into the country aside from ferries and airplanes. In this regard, he suggested to look into pharmaceuticals that are brought into our country; for instance, the different types of paracetamols we use now are different from the ones we used to have in reference to their sizes and colors.

- Ministry of Finance:

The Member acknowledged the Ministry and their newly appointed Minister for the preparation of the Supplementary Budget, therefore concluded with acknowledging his constituency for their constant support and unwavering prayers.

3. Susuga Hon TUILAEPA Fatialofa Lupesoliai Dr Sailele Malielegaoi, Leader of Opposition and Member for Lepa.

The Hon Member first commended the Speaker for his patience in mediating the procedures of the Legislative. He then addressed the Hon Prime Minister, her cabinet ministers and the President of the FAST Party as well as all Members of Parliament and CEO's present in the House. He emphasized that it has been 40 years since the requirement to have CEO's present in all Parliament sitting was enacted. He accentuated that such initiative was proposed and implemented to assist respective Ministers by having their CEO's present to provide prompt advice when needed. The Hon Member then jested that all CEO's should give priority to Parliamentary Committee meetings when they are summoned.

The Opposition Leader also acknowledged everyone listening in and encouraged all CEOs to serve one master instead of two, to avoid any biased opinions and to ensure the best advice is given. He also acknowledged the Deputy Opposition Leader for urging Members to read the Finance Committee Report then clarified that the long hours queried by the Deputy Leader of Opposition was justified to ensure the Finance Committee conducted its deliberations thoroughly. He further made emphasis that the Finance Committee is the only Committee elected by the Parliament to deliberate on the budget for not less than 14 days. In this regard, whilst

everyone is on their holiday break the Finance Committee is still working tirelessly to meet its timeframe.

**Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly were set aside at 10:32am
and resumed at 11:05am**

**Susuga Hon TUILAEPFA Fatialofa Lupesoliai Dr Sailele Malielegaoi, Leader of
Opposition and Member for Lepa (cont.).**

The Leader of the Opposition continued to put emphasis on the working hours/days of the Committee for its report and its importance.

- **Hon FIAME Naomi Mataafa, Prime Minister and Leader of the House.**

The Leader of the House stood on a point of order to emphasize that the 14 days mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition is the minimum of days for the Finance to deliberate on the budget and further highlighted that the Committee had 19 days to prepare and deliberate on the Supplementary.

**Susuga Hon TUILAEPFA Fatialofa Lupesoliai Dr Sailele Malielegaoi, Leader of
Opposition and Member for Lepa (cont.).**

The Hon Member commended the CEOs for adhering to the Committee's requests and stressed the importance of their roles as they could all be MPs in the future if they wish to take such a career path. Hon TUILAEPFA then expressed his support for the supplementary and commended the Government for their reconsideration to bring back a national aircraft noting that this is an important initiative for the development of Samoa which he fully supports.

- **Ministry of Police:**

He also commended the works and efforts put in by the Police in addressing the issue on the rise of drugs, and urged the Village Council to take action and assist the Police in monitoring and looking out for people using drugs as this is a serious issue and requires collective action to address it. He then advised the Ministry to place more police officers on the roads to control traffic congestion especially in the morning and the evening after work.

- Ministry of Works, Transport, and Infrastructure:

Suggested that the Ministry for Works, Transport and Infrastructure laid out clear plans for new roads to avoid traffic congestion.

- **Hon OLO Fiti Afoa Vaai - Minister of Works, Transport, and Infrastructure.**

The Hon Minister clarified that plans are in the pipeline for the construction of new roads. He further emphasized that it is provided in the sector plan and noted that a feasibility study is near completion for this. He then acknowledged the Leader of the Opposition for supporting this plan.

He also clarified that consultations with families involved in these road developments are in progress. In relation to roads along the West Coast, plans have already been incorporated in the sector plan and emphasized that the plans for the road projects around Vaitoloa Faleata are near completion; however, there is a halt in operations due to limited land space around the area and asserted that the engineers are creating new plans and designs.

Susuga Hon TUILAEPa Fatialofa Lupesoliai Dr Sailele Malielegaoi, Leader of Opposition and Member for Lepa (cont.).

Electric Power Corporation:

The Opposition Leader perceived that the reduction in the price of electricity is due to the solar power generating electricity, he then suggested that the price can be further reduced if the Corporation tapped into other renewable energy sources, such as wind and water.

- **Hon OLO Fiti Afoa Vaai, Minister of Works, Transport, and Infrastructure.**

The Hon Minister clarified that the Government has plans in place on the matter raised by the Leader of the Opposition. He further noted that there is a project which will commence in July regarding solar power to generate electricity with the hope it will be completed in August 2025.

Susuga Hon TUILAEPa Fatialofa Lupesoliai Dr Sailele Malielegaoi, Leader of Opposition and Member for Lepa (cont.).

- Ministry of Health:

The Leader of the Opposition touched on the shortage of pharmaceuticals in the country and urged the Minister of Health to consider this matter as we have enough storage to store the supplies. He further emphasized to consider the conflict of interest within Ministries.

- Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries:

He urged the Minister to take note on the shortage of chemicals used by the quarantine unit at the wharf who inspects and disinfects all items/packages before taken overseas. He further

emphasized that the chemical we use is less effective and does not meet the standards of the New Zealand quarantine.

- Ministry of Communication and Information Technology:

In reference to the internet, the Leader of the Opposition recalled a Conference for Pacific Ministers in 1995 on transportation. Through this conference, a member named Seth brought to their attention an effective method to assist with trading services and other services to improve information technology (IT). This same member also highlighted that only 30,000 of the population used the internet at the time. Through this, Samoa decided to adopt this to improve its IT. He further emphasized that this was also a controversial matter when it was decided to separate telecommunication from postal services which was passed in 1999. Through this, Samoa established a domain name WS.

The Leader of the house highlighted that Samoa only had 30 phones but ever since it adopted the 'domain name WS', Samoans were able to contact anyone in the world. However, due to the high risk of this system, a former Cabinet minister was assassinated which led the Government at the time to bring in three telecommunication companies such as TeleCom, Digicel and SamoaTel as our service providers.

4. Afioga FALEOMAVAEGA Titimaea Tafua, Chairperson for Finance and Expenditure Committee.

The Chairperson commended the Deputy Leader of the Opposition for acknowledging and making queries on their report. He further highlighted that he was the only Member that put forth a query on the Finance Committee report; therefore, he will only respond to that query. In this regard, he asserted that the Leader of the Opposition has provided a clear response accordingly. In reference to the usage of 90% of funds, he emphasized that we still have 6 months left for the fiscal period. He also announced that virements have been opened and as such, Ministries have been advised to wisely budget their remaining funds.

Afioga SULAMANAIA Fetaiai Tauiiili Tuivasa, Member for Vaimauga 1.

The Member stood to emphasize that he also put forth questions relating to the supplementary budget on the appropriation for salaries of Associate Ministers to two new Ministers.

- **Hon FIAME Naomi Mataafa, Prime Minister, and Leader of the House.**

The Leader of the House emphasized that the issue raised by the Member for Vaimauga 1 is an Executive matter and the Government will respond in due time.

5. Afioga FALEOMAVAEGA Titimaea Tafua, Chairperson for Finance and Expenditure Committee.

The Member acknowledged his constituency in all its honorific salutations and emphasized that the Minister of MNRE has clarified the projects for seawalls and its schedules, and requested Members for their patience. He then put forward his request for ‘road sign reflectors’ for the road at Vaipu especially during night-time where reflectors are needed for the safety of the travelling public. He concluded by acknowledging the Office of the Clerk and the Committee clerk for their efforts and commitments.

- **Hon FIAME Naomi Mataafa, Prime Minister, and Leader of the House.**

The Hon Prime Minister commended the Chairperson of the Finance Committee for his response and given that proceedings are near adjournment she asserted that the Government responses will commence next week starting from her and for the Minister of Finance to conclude.

**Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly adjourned at 12:00pm
and will reconvene on Tuesday 30, January 2024 at 9:30am.**