

DISCLAIMER

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**Day 3
9:32am**

I. ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE CHAIR

Mr Speaker welcomed Parliament to another Sitting day and reminded Members to make use of the opportunity to speak on the Supplementary Bill as it does not look well on Parliament to have the Speaker urge Members to speak; asserting that if no other Member wishes to speak, then he will give the chance to the Opposition Leader for his address then the Finance Committee Chairperson speaks to wrap up second reading debates before Government responds.

II. GOVERNMENT ORDERS OF THE DAY – Reading of Bills

1. Supplementary Appropriation Bill (No.1) 2023/2024 – second reading debate (cont.) Day 3

1. Afioga Hon. LAUTAFI Fio Selafi Purcell, Member for Satupaitea (cont.)

The Member greeted Samoa in all her honorific salutations, his fellow Parliamentarians and all who were present in Chamber. He also extended greetings to Samoa listening in and to his constituency then addressed specific Ministries in his address:

- **Minister of Natural, Resources and Environment**
The Member reminded the Minister about his request for a seawall around the costal part of his constituency considering the serious effects of climate change. Furthermore, stressed the importance of promoting cleanliness in the country, and raised concern regarding the delay in the collection of garbage around his constituency and noted that there are times when the truck goes up to 3 weeks. He further stressed that Samoa is preparing for CHOGM thus, we should focus on keeping our environment clean. He further acknowledged the launching of the signage posts for each village by the Samoa

Tourism Authority which is a good initiative in preparation for the CHOGM. In terms of funding for the Samoa Tourism Authority, the Member stressed the need for sufficient funding for the authority as he noted from the budget in the previous financial year that there was only \$1.5 million appropriated for STA which is not enough as the Tourism Sector is the main source of revenue and income for the development of Samoa, especially with the upcoming Conference where Samoa will be hosting 56 countries, this would be a good avenue to market Samoa as a tourist destination.

- **Hon TOEOLESULUSULU Cedric Schuster, Minister of Natural Resources and Environment & Samoa Tourism Authority - Clarification**

The Minister acknowledged the Member for highlighting important matters in his address, then clarified that the reason the STA budget was low in the previous year, was due to receiving foreign aid which greatly assisted with the Authority's operations. The Hon Minister asserted that the Authority continues to prioritize keeping Samoa clean and has set a schedule for rubbish dump trucks to follow, to ensure rubbish is effectively collected around the country.

Afioga Hon. LAUTAFI Fio Selafi Purcell, Member for Satupaitea (cont.)

The Member reminded the Minister about his request for doctors' residence at their district hospital and further requested for more oxygen machines as a new oxygen concentrator was damaged but is a need for the hospital; further requested for a van to service the district hospital. He raised that it is important for the hospital staff to be trained on how to utilize these equipment to avoid further damage.

- **Afioga VALASI Luapitofanua Tafito Selesele, Minister of Health – Clarified**

The Hon Minister responded to the Member that Cabinet and the Revenue Board have approved the project on construction of District Hospitals, it is only a matter of time. He then touched on the Ministry's plans such as vehicles and proper resources for district hospitals. He stated that Parliament has passed 9 vans to assist with the immunization outreach program. The Hon Minister mentioned the lengthy process and unforeseen delays when purchasing resources from New Zealand, such as oxygen concentrators, therefore Samoa has sought to acquire these from American Samoa.

Afioga Hon. LAUTAFI Fio Selafi Purcell, Member for Satupaitea (cont.)

The Member addressed the Minister of Police and raised concerns with the rise in raids and crimes. He then echoed sentiments made by other Members on the importance of an x-ray scanner and K9 dogs for assistance to identify these illegal drugs.

- **Tofa Hon OLO Fiti Afoa Vaai, Minister for MWTI – Interjected**

The Hon Minister clarified that the xray scanner is expected to arrive on the 21st February as the Ministry is very much aware of the increase in drugs. He then stated that the Airport Authority has provided 2 xray scanners to assist the wharf at Matautu.

Afioga Hon. LAUTAFI Fio Selafi Purcell, Member for Satupaitea (cont.)

The Member acknowledged the Minister for his clarification and concluded his address.

2. Tofa ALE Vena Ale, Member for Faleata 4

Acknowledged his constituency and commended the Hon Speaker for the opening prayer this morning and for our Almighty for His constant blessings and guidance upon us. He then addressed the House and CEO's of respective Government Ministries and Offices. He also acknowledged the Head of State and the Council of Deputies as well as Samoa in all her honorific salutations. He further greeted all denominations of Samoa for their support and prayers and then voiced his requests as follows:

- **Minister of Finance**

The Member acknowledged the Minister of Finance and his Ministry for the Supplementary Bill and expressed support.

- **Minister of Women, Community and Social Development**

The Member raised the delay in the appointment of their constituency's woman representative and queried the Minister what is causing the delay.

- **Minister of Natural, Resources and Environment (Samoa Land Corporation)**

The Member was disappointed with how the Ministry handled a pressing matter in his constituency involving freehold land. He asserted that the delay is costing his constituency as they have plans on cultivating the lands to earn an income, thus urged the Minister to rectify the process.

- **Afioga Hon TOEOLESULUSULU Cedric Schuster, Minister of MNRE**

The Hon Minister clarified that the issue was mentioned during the budget in June 2023, and emphasized that this matter has been discussed with the responsible authority, stating that they are currently waiting for legal advice from the Office of the Attorney General, as the law is being stated that it is not eligible to transfer lands and converted as customary lands. He further stated that all Government Lands are under his supervision and the issue that has come about is the lack of proper policies and regulations thus the relevant authority is working towards reconciling and providing a proper and consistent process. Hon Minister also confirmed and agreed with the Member regarding necessary revisions provisions of the Act.

- **Tofa Hon LEATINUU Wayne Soialo, Minister of MPE - Interjected:**

The Hon Minister noted that during his time as the Minister of Samoa Lands Corporation, the issue was brought to his attention, then urged the Member for his patience while the Authority finds a solution.

- **Susuga Hon LAAULI Leuatea Polataivao Fosi, Minister of MAF – Interjected**

The Minister mentioned 200 acres of freehold land at Mulifanua which was converted to customary land without any legal authority. He advised the Member for his patience and understanding as the Government tries to address this issue.

Tofa ALE Vena Ale, Member for Faleata 4 (cont.)

The Member corrected the Minister of MAF and stated that the law was passed in 2010 that provided transfers to be made, thus his frustrations as the Member believes this law contradicts with the Constitution.

- **Afioga SULAMANAIA Fetaiai Tauilili Tuivasa, Member for Vaimauga 1**

The member cautioned the Member that he should not consider Parliament's work lightly as all acts are officially deliberated and passed by Parliament with a collective decision and understanding.

- **Hon LAUOFO Fonotoe Nuafesili Pierre Laufofo, Member for Anoamaa No.2**

The Hon Member agreed with the Member for Faleata 4 that the Act was indeed passed in 2010 when both the Minister of Works and Minister of Agriculture were present and voted yes in Parliament.

- **Susuga Hon TUILAEPa Dr. Sailele Malielegaoi, Member for Lepa and Leader of Opposition**

The Opposition leader commended Mr. Speaker for his decision and ruling that any Act which Parliament has passed is valid and legitimate. Thus, if any Member speaks against it, it is contempt of Parliament. He further advised the Government that if they want to make amendments to any Act then they should bring these amendments before Parliament to consider and pass.

Tofa ALE Vena Ale, Member for Faleata 4 (cont.)

The Member then addressed the Minister of Works, Transport and Infrastructure and reminded the Minister of a request from last year for road maintenance in parts of his constituency.

- **Afioga Hon TOEOLESULUSULU Cedric Schuster, Minister of MNRE**

The Hon Minister clarified on the process involved with road repairs and numerous other matters when purchasing land without road access or land which affect streams, rivers, and other important species of the land.

Tofa ALE Vena Ale, Member for Faleata 4 (cont.)

The Member touched on the Office of the Electoral Commission and suggested that there be a set funding for candidates running for elections to assist with their campaign, noting that every general election follows numerous bribery and treating charges; suggesting a cap of 50k for each candidate, and any Member who goes above the amount will be charged.

- **Hon FAUALO Harry Schuster, Minister of Police - clarification**

The Hon Minister noted that statements by the Member and asserted that the Office is working on a report which will be brought into Parliament for consideration and relevant action.

Tofa ALE Vena Ale, Member for Faleata 4 (cont.)

The member advised the Government to thoroughly consider ways to prevent the rise of drugs in Samoa and advised to mandate drug-testing for all employees including Parliamentarians. The Member also raised a matter in which he believes that the Police and Courts are not doing their job, referring to a matter where a member of parliament was suspected in this matter and further implying that once a Member of Parliament is suspected, his/her seat should be vacated.

- **Hon FAUALO Harry Schuster, Minister of Police - clarification**

The Hon Minister clarified that the Ministry have concluded their investigation and resolved that the witnesses and statements are not strong enough to hold in Court. Further asserted that any person involved can charge the Police Office if they are not satisfied with their decision on a certain case. He then asked for public support to come forward as currently the Ministry has resolved that this matter cannot be taken to court as there is not enough evidence liable to support the matter.

- **Afioga LEAANA Ronnie Posini, Member for Safata 1**

The Member commended the Minister of Police for his clear response which hopefully has put the public at ease with all assumptions and false information circulating online regarding this issue and commended the Member for raising it as well as the Minister for the clarification.

Tofa ALE Vena Ale, Member for Faleata 4 (cont.)

The Member acknowledged the Minister for his response on this issue as Ministers and Members were implicated in this matter.

- **Susuga Hon. LAAULI Leuatea Fosi, Minister of MAF - Interjected**

The Minister noted that this issue is heavy on him as he was one wrongly accused as being a suspect of this case and therefore the lack of evidence or witnesses reported by the Minister is hard to accept as it does not clear his name.

- **Afioga Hon FAUALO Harry Jeffrey Schuster, Minister of Police - Interjected**

The Hon Minister emphasized that the decision made by the Police was in accordance with the law, however there are other avenues if any member would like to appeal.

Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly were set aside at 10:48am;
and resumed at 11:20am

Tofa ALE Vena Ale, Member for Faleata 4 (cont.)

The Member commended the Minister for the 1 million development project and reminded her that his constituency is waiting for the next appropriation before the financial year ends.

- **Afioga Hon TOELUPE Poumulinuku Onesemo, Minister for MCIT**

The Minister also queried on the matter raised by the Member for Faleata 4 in regards to the police investigation as he was also investigated on this matter and he also wants to prove his innocence.

- **Afioga Hon TUALA Ponifasio, Deputy Prime Minister**

The Hon Deputy PM asserted that the Hon Speaker has made a ruling for the House to refrain from speaking on the case discussed earlier and his concern is that such matter is not a parliamentary matter therefore, we should focus on the Supplementary Bill at hand.

Mr. Speaker – Point of Order

Announced to leave this matter in the hands of the Police, to investigate the truth, and to pray for answers to be revealed.

- **Susuga Hon. LAAULI Leuatea Fosi, Minister of MAF - Interjected**

The Hon Minister asserted that Members should adhere to the ruling of the Speaker and the response given by the Deputy Prime Minister to refrain from further discussion in Parliament rather leave it with Cabinet to deliberate on the matter.

3. Susuga MAULOLO Tavita Amosa, Member for Sagaga 2

The member greeted the House and Samoa in all its honorific salutations. He also acknowledged his constituency and offered condolences to certain members of his constituency who were

grieving the loss of loved ones. The member pursued to outline his constituency's demands under the supplementary:

The Member commended the Minister of Finance and the Ministry for preparing the Supplementary as well as the Ministry for Customs and Revenue for the tax collected which increased the revenue for our country. He then noted three important aspects noted in the supplementary that he wanted to speak on:

1. noted an 8% increase of the economy which is equivalent to 2.55 billion.
2. noted the decrease of the loans for the country.
3. 234% increase in the number of tourists visiting our country.

Maulolo was pleased to note the 2% reduction in the cost of living and encouraged the Government to reduce the percentage even further. He then requested to subsidize the cost of goods especially daily essentials to assist families with feeding their children. He then explained that there was a shortage of chicken during the holidays, hence the increase in price (\$97) when they were back in stock.

- Minister of Health:

He then raised the need for affordable medical care and to lessen the costs on our families overseas who are seeking dialysis treatments in Samoa.

- Minister of Education, Sports and Culture:

The Member mentioned the importance of teachers and the proper usage of technology in schools for convenience, such as during the pandemic time.

- Minister of Justice and Courts Administration:

He expressed gratitude to the Minister for the professional handling of his constituency's numerous requests. He further raised concern with the slow customer service at the Ministry, specifically at the Land and Titles Court because of poor computers used by the staff. Thus, requested the Minister to consider purchasing new machines for the staff to use as this ministry provides crucial service for the country.

- Samoa Tourism Authority

The member was pleased to note an influx of tourists coming into Samoa. Furthermore, there were no additional flights for travellers to Samoa, therefore most had to resort to purchasing business class seats which is quite expensive to secure a seat to see their families. He then posed the question of whether it is befitting to bring our own aircraft given the high number of travelers and the high cost of living.

- **Tofa Hon OLO Fiti Afoa Vaai, Minister for MWTI – Interjected**

The Hon Minister clarified that the seating arrangement system for planes has existed for some time, the only thing, is that people need to book and pay in advance to avoid the added costs. Furthermore, Hon OLO asserted that despite bringing in Samoa's own plane, in keeping with market trends, we will have similar pricing with other airlines.

- **Hon LEATINUU Wayne, Minister for Samoa Airways**

The Hon Minister asserted that members have presented the need for an airplane incessantly, however, the Government of the day are prioritizing reducing the airlines debts and emphasized that everyone is aware that Samoa Airways is operating on a negative balance. He then accentuated that the Government will consider purchasing an airplane when Samoa is in a better financial position to do so.

- **Susuga MAULOLO Tavita Aмоса, Member for Sagaga 2 (cont.)**

The member acknowledged the Minister response and stated that it would be advisable to bring in the aircraft as it would address the soaring costs of airfares.

- **Minister of Women, Community and Social Development**

The Member requested to translate in Samoa the guideline booklet regarding the 1million Project so that Members fully understand the requirements for acquiring the full fund. Further suggested to monitor the progress of each Constituency's projects so that all funds are utilized properly. Susuga MAULOLO suggested to have a report on the current progress of the 1million project whether there are any issues that need to be addressed, given that it has been 3 years since it was rolled-out. Additionally, the member also requested for the inclusion of a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) process to check whether stated KPIs are achieved.

- **Minister of Works Transport and Infrastructure**

The Member acknowledged the completion of road repairs in his constituency and stated that they need to be tar sealed especially those immensely affected with heavy rainfall.

- **Minister of Natural Resources and Environment**

The member reminded the Minister about his request for seawalls along Afega, Tuanai and Malie.

- **Tofa Hon OLO Fiti Afoa Vaai, Minister for MWTI – Interjected**

The Hon Minister was surprised to hear that the roads were just repaired 2-3 months ago, however they have been damaged implying that the construction did not do it well; then stated that he will drive out for an inspection after sitting to inspect and determine the accuracy of the member's statements.

- **Afioga Hon TOELUPE Poumulinuku Onesemo, Minister for MCIT - Interjected**

The Minister responded to the member's request on the usage of technology in schools as a way to address the shortage of teachers, and assured the member that this will be one of the areas of the Government's long-term plans and vision going forward.

- **Afioga Hon TOELESULUSULU Cedric Schuster, Minister for MNRE – Interjected**

The Minister responded to all Members who requested for seawalls within their constituency that the Ministry has received their requests and site visits have been conducted to identify priority areas once funds have been received.

Susuga MAULOLO Tavita Aмосa, Member for Sagaga 2 (cont.)

The member concluded his address and acknowledged all Minister for promptly responding and clarifying his issues and requests.

4. Afioga ALAIASA Moefaaouo Malagaitutogiai Sepulona Moananu, Member for Anoamaa 1

The Member greeted the House and acknowledged God’s guidance and blessings upon Samoa. He recalled during the festive season, Samoa was peaceful, and he expressed his gratitude with this, as it makes our country different from overseas countries. He acknowledged the leaders of Samoa and their duty to ensure Samoa remains peaceful. He then continued to voice the requests of his constituency.

- Minister for Customs and Revenue

The Member acknowledged the Minister and his Ministry on efforts to collect revenues for the development of our country, as positively reflected in the national revenues collected in the current Financial Year.

- Minister of Works Transport and Infrastructure:

The Member requested for road reparation to continue for the road in Falefa and to continue access roads in Lufilufi given its importance to his constituents. He also mentioned the importance of proper water supply for families residing in inland areas of his constituency thus requesting for a borehole to be dug to accommodate for these families.

- Minister of Police (Electoral Office)

Afioga ALAIASA expressed his support for the Government if they decided to change Territorial Constituencies/Traditional districts for election purposes.

- Minister of Women, Community and Social Development

The Member suggested whether Fono Faavae employees can have access to vehicles to ensure more convenient commute to conduct their duties and responsibilities.

- Minister of Health

The Member reminded the Minister of his request for a more convenient and appropriate land to construct a district hospital to cater for medical needs of his constituents.

- **Afioga VALASI Luapitofanua Tafito Selesele, Minister of Health – Clarified**

The Hon Minister informed the Member that he holds the approval letter to construct a hospital for his Constituency and emphasized that they have inspected the land of where the Hospital will be located.

Afioga ALAIASA Moefaaouou Malagaitutogiai Sepulona Moananu, Member for Anoamaa 1 (cont.)

The Member acknowledged his Constituency and thanked them for their constant support and best wishes throughout his journey and wished Parliament well and to maintain their faith in our faithful GOD.

Mr. Speaker – Point of Order

Mr. Speaker took this opportunity to address individuals making posts on social media directing towards him and how Parliament sessions are conducted, the Speaker reminded everyone viewing proceedings that proceedings are conducted with peace and tranquility.

5. Tofa Hon LAUOFO Fonotoe Nuafesili Pierre Laufo, Member for Anoamaa 1

The Hon Member greeted Mr Speaker, Parliament and all of Samoa. He then mentioned high tides and strong waves which has affected the roads thus urged the Ministry to look into this matter. Hon FONOTOE expressed his concerns with the high cost of living which has shocked not only our country but also our visiting families. He then asserted that although the inflation has decreased, if compared to the Pacific statistics it is considered high, therefore the cost of living in Samoa remains high.

- **Minister of Sports and Recreation**

The Member requested to conduct outreach programs in communities to selected individuals who are qualified for any kind of sport to help build a sports academy for the country. He then advised to make effective use of various sports facilities and resources available to build the capacity of our local players.

- **Samoa Tourism Authority**

The Hon member encouraged the Hon Prime Minister to maintain the standard of tourist attraction sites to ensure that we can continue to generate high revenue from tourism. Furthermore, reminded the PM about the importance of tourists as they contribute heavily with the growth of local vendors and businesses.

- **Samoa Airways**

Hon FONOTOE commended the Minister of Finance for acknowledging that it is within the pipeline that the government will have a plane, then suggested to bring it in before the CHOGM so the country can garner more revenue from it.

- Minister of Police

The Member echoed sentiments from previous members on the alarming increase of drugs in our country, then advised the Government to facilitate a nationwide campaign to address this issue. He further suggested to consider rehabilitation programs to help people with drug addictions.

- Minister of Health

The member requested whether it is possible to extend the hospital morgue given the high number of deaths experienced in the country.

- Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries

The Hon Member expressed support for the Ministry's plans as explained by the Minister, on plans to bring in traps including cameras brought into Samoa for the protection of agricultural developments and advised to distribute these to all constituencies.

- **Tofa Hon OLO Fiti Afoa Vaai, Minister for MWTI – Interjected**

The Hon Minister asserted that the issue raised by the Member for Anoamaa 2 has been addressed then advised the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to refrain from talking about false information namely claiming he is a shareholder of the Greenpower company

- **Susuga Hon LAAULI Leuatea Polataivao Fosi, Minister for MAF – Interjected**

The Hon Minister clarified that the cameras for the traps are solar cameras and that they are environmentally friendly as it runs on solar energy not electricity, furthermore, that he has made a list based on the urgency of these traps, and the Deputy Leader's constituency is included

Tofa Hon LAUOFO Fonotoe Nuafesili Pierre Laufo, Member for Anoamaa 1 (cont.)

The Deputy Leader spoke on the importance of the Finance and Expenditure's Committee on the Supplementary Budget, noting the amount of hours and sitting days the Committee embarked on to ensure the thorough and complete consideration of the Supplementary Bill with Government Ministries and Offices. He then made reference to page 6 of the report [to which Mr Speaker intervened and informed the Member that this will be delved into during the 'Consideration in Detail' stage of the Bill. He then mentioned the 90% utilization of operating budget for Government Ministries yet there is still 5 months remaining in the current Financial Year. Deputy Leader acknowledged Mr Speaker and the House, his constituency and concluded his address.

Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly adjourned at 1:02pm
until Friday 26, 2024 at 9:30am