



The Senate

STATE CAPITOL
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

Senator J. Kalani English Statement Honotua Communications Cable Dedication 01 March 2010

Vice President Edouard Fritch and all other guests from French Polynesia, on behalf of the government and people of Hawaii:

Welina Mai -- Welina and welcome to our islands.

Mayor Billy Kinoi, greetings and thank you for your warm welcome for all of us today on this, the largest island in our archipelago.

The links between Hawaii and the five archipelagos of French Polynesia are older than recorded history. Legend tells us that Pele, the fire goddess, was born at Papenoo on Tahiti, traveled to Moorea, Raiatea, and Bora Bora, and then crossed this vast ocean to Hawaii. This ancient connection is a bond of blood, culture and history that has endured for centuries. The historical path is the one that brought the first settlers to Hawaii, and for generations bore goods, travelers, and enduring ties between two sets of islands thousands of miles apart.

I cannot resist the temptation to see the footsteps of Pele guiding the path of Honotua. The cable, this symbol of modern connection and communication, follows precisely the same path: Papenoo, Moorea, Raiatea, Bora Bora, Hawaii. Pele, born as Te Ura Vahine, drawing upon the strength and spirit instilled in her at her birthplace, Papenoo, blazing a trail across the ocean to become a central figure in the creation and culture of Polynesia's sister civilization in Hawaii.

And the path from where Te Ura Vahine stepped from the South Pacific to the shores of Hawaii, where she was transformed from her physical self to the Fire Goddess that built these islands: that path is stronger than any cable and more constant than any ocean current.

The era of prosperity and good will that grew from that ancient connection finds new life today in the establishment of Honotua—the link towards the open seas. Now it is a link measured not in weeks as it was on ocean-going canoes, or hours of air travel, but at the speed of light, the pace of our modern world.

Modern communication over an ancient path, refining and building upon a connection that has defined and supported a link that has stood the test of time. For all the years that the link lay silent as Hawaii and French Polynesia refined our separate histories, it was never broken.

It is a link that has personal meaning for me. I carry both Tahitian and Hawaiian blood, and so I feel that link now symbolized by Honotua.

The gourds of La'amaomao has been opened today as the winds welcomes our family from Tahiti. It is interesting to note that Honotua was born between a cyclone and a tsunami. Perhaps the mana of our kupuna gave life to this project through these ancient signs for a modern project.

In the world of today, the existence of a high-speed fiber-optic backbone means as much as ocean-going canoes meant to our ancestors. They are a means of travel and exploration, and a means of expansion. We can hope that the creation of this additional communications capacity

will result in lower costs for users. We in Hawaii had that experience when our capacity grew to allow for more competition and improved service. At the same time, we can hope that with this cable available, all the archipelagos of French Polynesia will enjoy its benefits. Finally, we can all hope that Honotua will become the backbone of commerce and economic growth, bringing to Tahiti and its neighbors the opportunity to expand its reach to the world, while inviting the world to benefit from its culture and creativity.

The links between Hawaii and French Polynesia are older than recorded history, and yet a vital part of our place in the world today. In the footsteps of Pele, in the wakes of countless voyaging canoes, revitalizing a bond of blood and culture. Honotua is our shared past and our best future combined. I join all of you in the hope that it will stand as the next vital force in preserving the bonds that join us together across the Pacific.