

DISCLAIMER

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DAY 5: FRIDAY 26th JUNE 2015**TIME: 9:20am****[PART A]****I. GOVERNMENT ORDERS OF THE DAY****1. SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION BILL (No.2) 2014/2015 and
APPROPRIATION BILL 2015/2016 (debate on second reading resumed)****i. *Hon TUITAMA Talalelei Tuitama, Aana Alofi No.1, Minister for Health***

The Hon Minister addressed the issue of maintenance of the new hospital. He noted that maintenance is costly and estimated that the total cost for maintenance over a 5 year period would most likely equal the total value of the new facility. Hon TUITAMA emphasised that it is not the sole responsibility of hospital staff to maintain the facility but rather, it should be a joint effort with the public.

In regards to a request for a hospital branch in Falelatai, the Hon Minister stated that the recommendation is to renovate the existing building. However, the

implementation of this proposal will depend on funding and resources. The Hon Minister noted that hospitals are strategically located across the island; it is unrealistic to establish branches in every village due to a lack of funding and human resource to staff additional hospitals.

He then addressed the request for a medical doctor to be situated in Sataua; he stated that the Ministry is considering this proposal. The difficulty with such a request however, is that medical doctors currently located in rural areas are underutilized; despite this, like everywhere else, the Hon Minister acknowledged the fact that doctors are needed in the rural areas.

ii. *LEALAILEPULE Rimoni Aiafi*

The Member clarified that the initial question was whether private practitioners would still, in collaboration with the National hospital, provide mobile clinics to the rural areas.

iii. *Hon TUITAMA Talalelei Tuitama, Aana Alofi No.1, Minister for Health*

The Hon Minister emphasised that the underlying issue is the distribution of the limited resources available to the Ministry. In regards to various requests for kidney dialysis treatment to be made available in the rural areas, the Hon Minister stated that this would be expensive. It would require the installation of air conditioning, back-up generators and dialysis machines.

*** The Member for Aana Alofi No.3 (TOEOLESULUSULU Cedric Pose Salesa Schuster) queried whether or not the media were permitted to sit in during parliamentary proceedings. Mr Speaker stated that this has been addressed, and that the media's presence is a matter for the Chair ***

iv. Hon TUITAMA Talalelei Tuitama, Aana Alofi No.1, Minister for Health

The Hon Minister reiterated that the establishment of additional kidney dialysis services would be expensive with operational costs alone averaging at \$125,000 per annum. However, he noted for this service to be provided, it should first be identified whether there are any residents in need of treatment.

v. FAGAAIVALU Kenrick Samu, Aleipata Itupa I Lalo

The Member clarified his initial request for a dialysis unit to be established in Aleipata. He stated that there are in fact residents in that area in need of dialysis treatment. He stated that these rural patients would prefer to be treated closer to home as opposed to receiving treatment in Apia.

vi. Hon TUITAMA Talalelei Tuitama, Aana Alofi No.1, Minister for Health

The Hon Minister stated that since 2005, approximately 253 people have utilised the NKF's services. This included 86 permanent residents, including 80 from Upolu and 6 from Tuasivi. The cost of providing this service (since 2005) has totalled approximately 5.6 million. 5 million was utilised in 2005 for the establishment of the Foundation with the remainder being utilised for other services.

The Hon Minister addressed the request to install hospital beds which were more appropriate for the "Samoan physique". To this, the Hon Minister stated that hospital beds are approximately 7ft in length; he noted that there are beds which can accommodate shorter patients at 6ft in length. The Hon Minister stated that when the new hospital was constructed, furniture including beds were also procured. However, there was a shortage in mattresses. He noted that there was also a shortage of bedding which led to Dr Papalii donating 250 blankets and pillow cases. He also noted that some of the hospital beds have since been destroyed and

various overseas donors have also donated additional beds. 6 beds were donated to Fualalo and recently, Dr Papalii donated 20 beds.

vii. PESETA Vaifou Tevaga, Faasaleleaga No.4

PESETA clarified that the issue was in regards to the size of beds, not the number of beds. He noted that these beds were imported from China and are not suitable for the average Samoan person.

viii. Hon TUITAMA Talalelei Tuitama, Aana Alofi No.1, Minister for Health

In regards to the various requests for ambulance vehicles, Hon TUITAMA noted that 2 ambulances were procured for the SIDS conference which were fully equipped and included for example, oxygen and heart monitors. These vehicles are used to transport patients from the Motootua National hospital to the Mulifanua wharf. Other ambulances in Samoa are semi-equipped; with for example, oxygen and blood pressure equipment.

The Hon Minister then explained to the House that 16 slice CT scans were ordered by the Ministry, however, adjustments had to be made to the machines to accommodate larger sized patients. He stated that the company from which the scans were procured offered a more advanced CT Scan (32 slices) at the same price as a 16 slice CT Scan. The Ministry is now awaiting the arrival of the 32 slice Scan; it will be installed in July with the hopes that it will be available for use in August.

The Hon Minister thanked the public for their contribution to the work of the National hospital blood laboratory. He noted that due to the public's cooperation with efforts to recall faulty/dangerous products, the laboratory has been able to send blood work and slice tissue to New Zealand pathologists for testing. In

regards to a Diabetic Clinic, the Diabetes association is no longer operational. Diabetes support is now administered through the Ministry of Health until the contract of about 3-4 contract officers which were formerly under the Diabetes Clinic end. A new location for the clinic in the town area is currently being sought out. In closing, the Hon Minister noted that consultants are expensive with fees averaging \$5,500 per day. He noted that the Ministry fosters a strong partnership with private doctors in order to accommodate the large number of Apia patients. He stated that general practitioners are utilised for visitations to the rural areas.

ix. Hon LE MAMEA Ropati, Lefaga & Faleseela

The Hon Minister stated that the FAO World Agriculture conference held in Rome provided positive ideas for the improvement of Samoa's agriculture sector. He expressed his gratitude to the Hon PRIME MINISTER for the opportunity to attend the conference. The Hon Minister noted that the conference addressed budgetary issues as outlined in international policies and strategies. The conference was attended by approximately 1,700 delegates, including the Pope, 2 Queens, 16 Heads of States, and 29 Prime Ministers.

The Hon Minister noted that Samoa's current taro supply is insufficient to meet the growing overseas demand. He did however note that there has been an improvement in the supply of taro from Savaii plantations; since the beginning of July 2014 taro shipments have increased from 4 containers to 10. It is expected that this month will see at least 137 taro shipments to overseas countries such as New Zealand and America from the Savaii plantations. He also noted that current taro exports to American Samoa are estimated at about 1,422,330. This emphasises the fact that Samoa's supply is insufficient to meet the growing demands for taro. The Hon Minister noted that the Ministry is researching in to 3 variants of taro to be launched at this year's Agriculture Show. He stated that as a solution to

the apparent supply deficiency, it would be beneficial for all Samoan families to grow their own taro to contribute to export numbers.

Proceedings were adjourned at 10:45am for morning tea.