

DISCLAIMER

This Report provides a brief of the Proceedings of Parliament on Wednesday 22nd January 2020. While all efforts have been made to provide an informative brief, this information must not be relied upon as an alternative to the official Hansard record of proceedings of Parliament. If you have any specific questions about the Proceedings of Parliament on Wednesday 22nd January 2020, you should consult the official Hansard or seek assistance from the Office of the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly.

PART A

Wednesday 22nd January 2020

9:07am

i. PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE REPORTS TABLED:

A total of 3 Committee reports were tabled in Parliament: All 3 reports by the Standing Orders, Electoral, Petition & Constitutional Offices Committee.

I. GOVERNMENT ORDERS OF THE DAY

1. SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION BILL (NO.1) 2019/2020- *debate on second reading continues*

i. SALAUSA John Ah Ching- Member for Faleata East- *cont'd*

The Member greeted the House and continued with his speech. He expressed that he was asked to further elaborate on the measles illness last-night by some Members. Therefore, he reiterated his statement that such illness can only be transferred through air and people and that the virus lives in people. However, he emphasised that this can be prevented by vaccination and anyone that has yet to get his/her immunization injection will easily get affected.

In regards to queries by members of the public on the safety of the measles vaccine, the Member asserted that more than 190,000 people who were immunized during the mass-vaccination approach by Government, not a single individual has lost his/her life from being vaccinated.

PM- interjection

Noted that a total of 500 newborn babies are born every year and asked the Associate Minister of Women, Community and Social Development on his views on children who fear 'the needle' - how would he as a medical practitioner deal with such children.

The Hon PM then queried the Minister if there were any awareness or plans on how they can resolve the issue where children fear the injection because of the mentality that once injected they will immediately die.

SALAUUSA John Ah Ching- Member for Faleata East- cont'd

The Associate Minister responded by mentioning a number of vaccinations a child should receive so as to be protected from the numerous diseases such as Tetanus, Mumps, etc. Most of these infections are not viral or have not been seen for a long period of time and it is perhaps the reason why parents do not see the importance of having their children vaccinated however we as parents should be diligent in ensuring that when such illnesses arise they are already protected.

The Associate Minister went on to reveal an upcoming programme initiated by the Ministry called the Mop Up service/programme which aims to find families who have not been vaccinated and find the reasons as to why they have not received vaccination, collect data for government records thus initiate a relevant response.

OLO Fiti Vaai- interruption

Questioned the validity of records. Current statistics suggest 400 newborns per month and approximately 8 months in which vaccinations were withheld as a result of ongoing investigations in an incident that occurred at the Safotu hospital, according to calculations approx. 3600 children were not vaccinated at the time, yet only a few were infected. Where then are the others?

SALAUUSA John Ah Ching- Member for Faleata East- cont'd

The figures are accurate as they were provided by one of the doctors at the hospital's maternity ward - the rest of the newborn babies were spared from the measles. Elaborated on the mop up program which has identified that there continues to be individuals who have not been immunised. Which then begs the question as to why such choice was made.

PM interjected to move a motion for the Member to be given another 5 minutes to finish his speech because of the importance of the matter the Member has raised. Motion approved.

**5 minutes added to the Member's speech*

The importance of the mop up program is to be more prepared for future occurrences of any outbreak in Samoa - the Ministry is taking a proactive approach to ensure strategies can be formed to ensure the whole nation is included and no one is left behind.

FUIMAONO Teo Samuelu Teo- interjection

Queried whether it was possible to take vaccines orally (convert injection to tablets or liquid form) to counter the issue of children fearing the needles.

Minister for MWSCD, TUITAMA Talalelei Tuitama - point of clarification

The Minister noted that 30 teams were distributed in Samoa; 10 in Savaii and 20 in Upolu. This was conducted for two days (one week after the two days of vaccination) and it recorded that more than 1,500 of the population were not vaccinated.

He further stated that another door to door service was conducted for three days (8th - 10th Jan, 2020) and noted that it reported 275 have yet gotten their immunization injection.

The Minister went on to pinpoint that the mindset of people is also a challenge when trying to explain to them the importance of being vaccinated; an elderly from one of the rural villages did not support vaccination because of the misunderstanding that the virus has further effects which cannot be irreversible (Minister noted that one's decision is one's human right). However, the Ministry will continue to inform and make the public more aware of the impacts and importance of being immunized.

Spoke on the psychological impacts of the tsunami tragedy in 2009. It was something which was taken lightly by the local authorities, however this dark area was picked up by World Health Organisation who provided funding to encourage the healing and counselling of families and victims of the tragedy --- hence the importance of dealing with the psychological impacts of the measles outbreak tragedy. Government has not waited but have initiated programmes to address this aspect.

Minister for Ministry of Health, FAIMALOTOA Kika Iemaima Stowers

The Minister urged Members to not bring back what had happened in the past but focus on implementing what needs to be done and take what happened in the past as a lesson and formulate effective strategies to control similar issues in the future.

The Prime Minister added that the permanent solution to the outbreak is the law which was passed by this House in December 2019 which provides for mandatory vaccination for all children.

SALAUUSA John Ah Ching- Member for Faleata East- cont'd

Member spoke on the changes made to the electoral boundaries which was passed by Parliament in January 2019 - these changes were made to accommodate the increasing population within different areas/constituencies in Samoa, therefore is it fitting to also change the process funding development projects in different areas (whereby developments in constituencies should be based on the number of people occupying/residing in that constituency).

He went on to enlist a number of constituency needs- in terms of road developments the Moamoa roads greatly need reconstruction. He mentioned that he has recognized a number of road developments in Savaii in the previous year and therefore suggested whether it is time to equally have the same development for his constituency.

The member requested for an additional seat for Faleata as the amount of residents continues to increase in the constituency.

PM- interjection

The PM clarified that there will be only 1 seat for each constituency, there will be no additional seats as requested by the Member as we will now abide by the ("one man, one vote") mentality. He further confirmed that all the roads for Faleata constituency will be reconstructed better than the access roads that were opened in Savaii.

SALAUUSA John Ah Ching- Member for Faleata East- cont'd

The Member concluded his speech acknowledging villages in his constituency for their support.

ii. AFOA Amituanai Faleulu Mauli- Member for Palauli West

The Member for Palauli West greeted the House and his constituency in its honorific salutation. He commended the PM, the Cabinet and the responsible Ministry for their collective work during the measles crisis. He also conveyed his condolences to families who lost their lives to the measles.

He further expressed his disagreement with the allowance of gambling like activities such as bingo being aired on television because of its effects on the children. He mentioned that he had written a letter on behalf of his constituency to the relevant Minister but still received no response.

Minister for Ministry of Public Enterprises, LAUTAFI Fio Selafi Purcell- Point of Order

The Minister explained that there is a legislation that was recently passed in accordance to gambling control (i.e. bingo).

Member continues to read the letter

PM- interjection

The PM stated to the Speaker and the House that the Member for Palauli West cannot continue with the letter that he provided for this day, his reason being is that it is inappropriate and that if this should be allowed then come the next sitting there will be 200 letters read out by Members.

SULAMANAIA Fetaiai Tuiliili Tuivasa- interruption

Requested to the Speaker to withdraw comments made by the Member for Palauli West by comparing “bingo as a way to hell”.

**Speaker adjourned the meeting for normal Parliament recess and asked the Member for Palauli West to converse with him during the break*

**Proceedings were adjourned for
normal Parliament recess at 10:47am and resumed at ...am**

AFOA Amituanai Faleulu Mauli- Member for Palauli West- cont'd

In regards to a request of withdrawal of his statement made upon Bingo, he clarified that he is not against Bingo conducted within villages but gambling games on social media such as TV Bingo, monetary competitions on radios and televisions which may affect our children's future.

Minister of Works, Transport and Infrastructure, PAPALIITLELE Niko Lee Hang

The Minister commented against the Member's statement that TV Bingo affects our children, he stated that there is a current legislation to monitor such issue and suggested that a

census should be conducted to determine the number of children affected by such programs because the Members comments is generally made without proof.

AFOA Amituanai Faleulu Maui- Member for Palauli West

The Member concluded his speech by addressing the PM and his cabinet as well as the collective work of all the Ministries and wished them well for their future endeavors.

iii. AMITUANAI Fagaivalu Kenrick Samu- Member for Aleipata Itupa i Lalo

The Member firstly addressed the House and acknowledged the tabled Budget. He then commented on the airport at Tiavea which is in progress and conveyed his appreciation for such development in his constituency. However, he requests to further extend the airport area as he perceives that the current Airport at Faleolo will not be safe in the future and believes that the airport in progress will be an alternative in regards to climate change or any natural disasters.

He thanked the government for the developments that will benefit the country as a whole. Thanked the PM for having such development in his constituency. He then went on to addresses road construction work needed in areas of his constituency and stated that this is the 5th year in the Parliamentary term and still his requests have not been fulfilled.

The member also commended the Minister of Justice, with a suggestion that capacity building programmes for staff should be held so as to ensure that they be more responsible, transparent and accountable and have the integrity operating their work. He stated his support for the new electoral boundaries arrangement.

SPEAKER- POINT OF ORDER

Advised the member to avoid talking about subjects that touch on other branches of government nor pinpoint to a specific person.

The Member continued his speech and addressed the Ministry of Health. He acknowledged the work of staff at the Lalomanu district hospital who had no case of measles affected patients admitted. He concluded by commending the work put forth by his constituency and thanked them for their support.

iv. LEALAILEPULE Rimoni Aiafi- Associate Minister of Communication, Information and Technology

Commended Samoa for her development during the current Parliamentary Term, looking back at the previous years' events: the successful hosting the Pacific Games and various major developments being implemented.

The Member touched on the measles outbreak which was an unexpected occurrence to him as he believed this should not have happened. The response of Government in passing the legislation mandating the immunization of all children was very much needed and strongly supports the law. He recalled a time when he had to enroll his child overseas (and it was a

requirement to present his son's immunization records) which he felt grateful that our local immunization records were recognized overseas.

He further advised the Minister of Health to go back to the using of their outreach programs as they are vital to better inform and educate our people on the importance of being vaccinated, as well as the detrimental impacts is one opts not to be immunised.

Furthermore, he stated that his constituency does not have many requests however as mentioned earlier by his fellow parliamentarians, there is dire need for repair and reconstruction of roads at Falelauniu. He suggested that since most of the areas in his constituency are not guided by village chiefs it is better to have a Council in his Constituency to be responsible in countering social issues for the public.

He thanked the Minister for Education for the hard work and laid out the following requests:

- To construct a Hall at the Faleata College; and
- The need for a new primary school.

The Member suggested for a shredder machine to crush unused cars to protect the environment and to reconstruct the airport in Savaii.

He reverted to the Prime Minister and pinpointed that the removal of the Luafatasaga Hall which was located at the back of the Parliament building was a waste. This should have been maintained still for Members lounge.

In regards to the Bureau of Statistics, the member stated that the primary reason why it was removed from Treasury and made independent to ensure the services provided were done so independently and accurately - however, the process of keeping citizens records are made complicated (noting that the baptism certificate is no longer valid to create the birth certificate) and questioned why is this the case when it is an important document? He further recommended to the Bureau that they should be able to keep records in their system instead of giving the original copy to the family and the Ministry is left with no record at all.

v. SOOALO Umi Feo Mene- Associate Minister of Justice, Courts and Administration

Acknowledged each respective Ministries for their hard work and emphasised that Samoa is founded on GOD and further relayed his constituency's condolences to the measles victims and their families.

The Member stated that the children's education is a priority and commended the responsible Ministry for ensuring that all children are being schooled. Furthermore, he acknowledged MNRE for ensuring that our country's environment is well looked after and appreciate all the current developments and projects implemented within the country.

The member thanked his constituency for the endless support and silent prayers.

vi. ALAIASA Moefaaouuo Malagaitutogiai Sepulona Moananu- Member for Anoamaa East

The Member addressed the house in their honorific salutations and stated that they were appointed to work together in order to achieve a goal which is the betterment of our country. Although this is a One party state, he perceived that the Parliament are one as a team.

He reaffirmed that our economy is healthy; however, it only becomes a threat when there is corruption and collusion. The member commenced to address the different Ministers and their Ministries:

- MESC - commended the Ministry for prioritising the children staying in school and stated that the Ministry should continue prioritising this aspect.
- MWTI - road works and repairs are needed; the member stated that the problem is not the lack of funds to implement the development projects as it was seen that the Tanumalala Prison was funded solely by the revenues earned within the nation. The problem is that Government through the Minister of Works, Transport and Infrastructure prioritises developments differently. He further added that Samoa has sufficient money to fund needed developments for the country.

Minister of Works, Transport and Infrastructure, PAPALIITLELE Niko Lee Hang

The Minister clarified that there is still work in progress and reassured the Member that all constituencies are considered for road developments.

The Prime Minister added that all access roads are taken into consideration in the budget.

Minister of Customs and Revenue and Prisons, TIALAVEA FEA LENIU TIONISO HUNT

The Minister responded to what was raised by the Member in regards to the Prisons that although \$10 million from the government's budget was spent in building the new Tanumalala prison (which some Members have argued was too costly), it so be rightly so expensive given the high importance of the Prisons and its functions- which is to protect its communities from crime offenders.

**Proceedings were adjourned at 1:06pm and will
resume at 6:00pm**