

DISCLAIMER

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Thursday 23rd June 2022

**PART A
9:30am**

I. PRESENTATION OF PAPERS

The Accident Compensation Corporation Annual Report for the FY 2020/2021 was tabled.

II. GOVERNMENT ORDERS OF THE DAY

- 1. SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION BILL (NO.2) 2021/2022 – debate on second reading continues**
- 2. APPROPRIATION BILL 2022/2023 – debate on second reading continues**

i. Afioga Hon LOAU Solamalemalo Keneti Sio – Member for Sagaga 1

The Hon Member greeted Samoa and the House in its honorific salutations. He also addressed respective CEOs present in the House and clergies of different denominations as well as our neighbouring nations Tutuila and Manu’a. He then acknowledged his constituency Sagaga 1 for their unwavering support. The Member then proceeded to commend the Hon Minister of Finance and her Ministry for compiling the tabled budget and emphasised it’s a collective responsibility of Parliament to deliberate on the budget for a better future of our country. He further stressed out to the Government of the Day to be receptive with their continuous questions as the rationale behind is to develop and improve the economy of Samoa. The Member then highlighted on the notable loss in the budget and proposed to consider looking at methods to resolve it. However, he commended the Hon Minister of Finance for the 51 million appropriation for the district development projects and addressed the respective Committees who will monitor and develop such development. The Hon Member made requests to certain Ministries:

- Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF)

The Hon Member commended the Hon Minister for MAF with the Talomua Program which has immense benefit for most villages and requested to include his constituency for this program.

- Ministry of Works, Transport and Infrastructure (MWTI)

The Minister for MWTI and his ministry was also commended for their work by the Member and emphasised that access road constructions have now been shifted under the 1 million Project; however, he suggested to construct road intersections in villages and main roads as he believes how vital it is to have smooth solid roads in order to prevent car accidents.

- Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture (MESC)

The appropriation for the Ministry was complimented by the Hon Member despite the decrease from the previous financial year. He then accentuated on the importance of the Ministry's service and responsibility to our people. He further highlighted on the high expenditure estimated for the Ministry but perceived there's a small portion for the teacher's salaries for both government and mission schools. In this regard, the Member complimented on one of the FAST promises to include all teachers for government, private and mission schools to be paid under the Ministry's budget as he fully supports this to ensure balance across the education sector, regardless of Government schools, Mission schools or Private schools.

He then requested to consider the inclusion of Early Childhood Education providers in the payroll of the Ministry, as Parliament has legalized the age of compulsory education to commence at 4 years, hence teachers providing this mandated service should be paid accordingly.

- Ministry of Customs and Revenue (MCR)

The Member queried on the status of the scanner as the number of drug-related crime has increased at an alarming rate which is very concerning, thus heightening the need to bring in the scanner for our borders.

He then provided clarification on the matter emerged by a member in the previous sitting regarding the Afega Bridge that it was one of Government's priorities at the time as the road was mostly crossed by the general public.

Tofa Hon. OLO Fiti Afoa – Minister of MWTI

The Hon Minister clarified that they perceived that the road at Ti'vea should be a priority given that it has led to numerous accidents whereas the bridge at Afega was perfectly safe for people to drive on.

i. Afioga Hon LOAU Solamalemalo Keneti Sio – Member for Sagaga 1 cont’s

The Member spoke on the complaint letter by the Deputy Prime Minister against two Opposition members which led to their suspension and caused all these unnecessary issues; he then stated that the matter is now with the court which will linger on and bear no fruits for the development of Parliament and Samoa as a nation.

Afioga Hon. TUALA Tevaga Iosefo Ponifasio – Minister of MCR

The Hon Minister clarified that he made a written complaint based on facts and provisions in the Standing Order and advised the member that it is their duty to look at these issues and make good judgment.

i. Afioga Hon LOAU Solamalemalo Keneti Sio – Member for Sagaga 1 cont’s

The Member expressed, that his only concern was that there are court cases against the Prime Minister and other Ministers which could have been settled without involving the judiciary. The Member then concluded by acknowledging his constituency for their steadfast support.

ii. Afioga LEAANA Ronnie Posini – Member for Safata 1

The Member for Safata 1 greeted the House, the Hon Deputy Prime Minister, Cabinet and all Member of Parliament. He then commended the Minister of Finance and the Ministry for their collective work in putting together the budget. However, he queried the notable deficit emphasizing on the term ‘Tupe Gau’ of 175 million provided in the budget.

Tofa Hon. OLO Fiti Afoa – Minister of MWTI

The Hon Minister stood on a point of order to advice the Member for Safata 1 to use the term deficit ‘tupe pau’ instead of loss ‘tupe gau’.

Afioga Hon TAPUNUU Niko Lee Hang – Member for Vaimauga 3

The Hon Member for Vaimauga 3 interjected on a point of clarification that the figures in the budget are estimates thus, if the estimates are reflecting a deficit it should be called Deficit but not Loss.

SPEAKER

Mr Speaker advised the Member for Safata 1 to avoid using the words 'tupe-gau' as the country is listening in and they might take the meaning of these words in a negative way.

ii. Afioga LEAANA Ronnie Posini – Member for Safata 1 conts'

The member queried on the notable reduction in the allocation appropriated for respective Ministries whilst a huge deficit is reflected in the budget which implies that expenditure is greater than revenue. He further stated that there's no transparency on where the money is going given that the appropriations for each ministries have reduced and prices for goods and services have increased especially the price of fuel.

Hon LAAULI Leuatea Polataivao Fosi – Minister of MAF

The Hon Minister stood on a point of clarification to elucidate that the increase in price of fuel is out of the government's control.

Tofa Hon. OLO Fiti Afoa – Minister of MWTI

Hon OLO Fiti Afoa warned the Member for Safata 1 that if he's against the allocation provided in the budget then he should not propose for any project or development for his constituency because he will not consider it.

Afioga Hon VALASI Luapitofanua Toogamaga Tafito Selesele – Minister of MOH

The Hon Minister advised the Member for Safata 1 to consider the words he uses and suggest to give advice on how to resolve it instead of expressing his opinions with offensive words that will make the government look inferior.

Afioga Hon TOELUPE Poululinuku Onesemo – Minister of MCIT

The Minister for MCIT provided a comparison of fuel prices in Australia which is almost \$3 dollars and more than \$2 dollars in NZ which is equivalent to \$4 tala and \$3 tala if converted to our currency. This is an indication that fuel is expensive worldwide.

ii. Afioga LEAANA Ronnie Posini – Member for Safata 1 conts'

The Member for Safata 1 accentuated to the Minister that Samoa's development is incomparable to Australia and New Zealand.

MR. SPEAKER

The Speaker of the House cautioned the Member for Safata 1 with his choice of words as the country is listening in. He emphasized on the words 'tupe faamaimau' should not be used when referring to the Budget that the government prepared to develop our economy and our people.

ii. Afioga LEAANA Ronnie Posini – Member for Safata 1 conts'

The Member then continued by raising issues and making requests to the following Ministries:

- Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture (MESC)

The Member raised that the registration fee for NUS is too high and believes it is inappropriate given that school fees are also expensive. He further noted that the appropriation for the Ministry should not be decreased given the increased number of students especially those in the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programs which requires extortionate equipments.

- Ministry of Health (MOH)

The Member queried on the status for the district hospital in his constituency and the whereabouts of the ambulance vehicle that was donate to the Saanapu district hospital as it is not there anymore.

Afioga Hon VALASI Luapitofanua Toogamaga Tafito Selesele – Minister of MOH

The Hon Minister responded that the district hospital is still in progress and emphasized that the whereabouts of the ambulance for his constituency is not the Ministers responsibility.

Proceedings were set aside at 10:47am and resumed at 11:30am.

• MOTION: Hon Deputy Prime Minister

The Hon Deputy PM moved a motion to set aside Standing Order 32 so that proceedings will continue with the following times:

9:30am – 1:00pm and 6:00pm – 10:00pm

Motion seconded and approved.

Afioga Hon SEUULA Ioane – Minister of MESC

In response to the issue raised by the Member for Safata 1, the Hon Minister clarified the rationale behind the notable decrease in the MESC appropriation was due to the lockdown which delayed and postponed projects hence its being rolled over to the next financial year to implement other projects. In reference to NUS registration fees, he accentuated that this has been the same fee since 4-5 years ago.

ii. Afioga LEAANA Ronnie Posini – Member for Safata 1 conts'

- Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development (MWCSD)

The Member complimented on the 1 million Project under the Minister and noted that many are waiting in anticipation for the budget to be passed so developments for respective constituency will begin.

- Ministry of Police, Prisons and Corrections Services (MPPCS)

The Member mentioned a recent accident that caused death to three (3) Police Officers and queried whether the officers followed the Ministry's protocols.

He also stressed on the fact that there are many people found with illegal drugs during the police raid which indicates that people are producing and distributing such illegal substance.

- Ministry of Communication and Information Technology

The Member queried whether the large appropriation allocated to the Ministry is for the direct appointment of a contractor without being advertised. He then suggested to consider the process and its implementation.

- Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries

The Member expressed his support for the Talomua program; however, he suggested whether sustainable planning may be in place, especially during these unprecedented times, to ensure that there will be no shortage in our agricultural produce.

iii. Afioga SULAMANAIA Fetaiai Tauiliili Tuivasa – Member for Vaimauga 1

The Member greeted all Members of Parliament, the Head of State, Council of Deputy, Judiciary and all denominations of Samoa in their respective honorific salutations. He then proceeded to make requests to certain Ministries:

- Ministry of Works, Transport and Infrastructure (MWTI)

Request to repair access roads to villages in his constituency such as Fagalii, Vailele and Letogo as they were dismantled by flood when the river bursts.

- Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE)

The Member requested for a seawall at Laulii which was also in his request through the responsible Minister in the previous year. He asserted that he is concern as this Village does not have a reef so the full force of waves may affect families residing by the sea.

- Samoa Land Corporation (SLC)

He also requested for the lands in his constituency to be returned so that they can nurture it and utilize it for development.

- Ministry of Finance (MOF)

The Member commended the Minister and the Ministry for their collective work on the tabled budget. He then mentioned that there is a notable decrease in overseas grants and an increase in tax proposed for certain goods which indicate that people will find it harder to afford it.

- Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Labour (MCIL)

The Member complimented on the opening of borders in August but stated that the airfares are too expensive now where a way ticket cost about \$2000. He then posed a question how people can travel with such absurd prices; therefore, he suggested bringing in our own airplane so that fares can be affordable for everyone to travel back and forth.

- Ministry of Health (MOH)

The Member for Vaimauga 1 commended the Minister for his work, especially with the reduction in prices of medicines which is beneficial for the public. He then requested on an update of those affected, died and recovered from the COVID.

- Ministry of Works, Transport and Infrastructure (MWTI)

The Member then commended the Minister of MWTI for shifting the traffic services back to LTA as he believes it will help garner the Authority's revenue.

- Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF)

The Member complimented the Hon Minister for initiating the Talomua Program.

- Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development (MWCSD)

The 51million appropriation for the 1 million project was complimented by the Member but requested the Minister to place lenient conditions in conducting the scheme such as rolling out the fund to respective constituencies and have them make their own decisions and conditions on how to utilize the money.

In relation to the increase price of fuel, the Member suggested whether it's appropriate to bring in another supplier of fuel so that there is a competition within the country which will relatively lead to price reduction/control.

- Ministry of Education and Social Development (MESD)

The Member suggested to bring in the retired teachers as school inspectors as there are some teachers who have retired but are still well and active.

The Member then posed a question on how certain CEO positions are still vacant and whether it's best to have them processed in order for the respective Ministries to progress with their respective services.

He also queried the high cost of living and requested the responsible Minister to have the price control board to monitor the pricing of goods and services by respective supermarkets.

- Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Labour

In regards to price control, the Member noted that some other business people have increased their price on products that are in short supply. The Member then requested the Ministry to enforce and re-use price control to maintain the price of goods that we buy.

- Ministry of Communication and Information Technology

The Member advised the Hon Minister to review what is being exposed on internet or have a technical advisor that can filter what is being put on social media. He further stressed on how imperative it is to look at these matters as it can ruin other people which doesn't reflect good on them.

The Member then concluded his speech by wishing everyone all the best.

iv. Hon. LAUTAFI Fio Selafi Purcell – Member for Satupaitea

The Member for Satupaitea addressed the House and Samoa in its respective honorific salutations. He then acknowledged his constituency and commended the Minister of Finance and the Ministry for their effort in trying to allocate money equally to meet all priority areas of development. He also noted that the preparation of this budget is vital as we are in challenging times especially facing the Covid-19 pandemic and global challenges.

He further commented on the 700 million of receipts and grants which is a decrease if compared to five years back. He asserted that this appropriation is usually more than 800 million but this is the first time it has come down to 700 million.

Afioga Hon TOELUPE Poomulinuku Onesemo – Minister of MCIT

The Hon Minister clarified that the reason that it has come down to 700 million for this FY because 84 million is set aside for General Budget Support Financing.

iv. Hon LAUTAFI Fio Selafi Purcell – Member for Satupaitea conts'

The Member continued to note that the amount of ordinary receipts has increased in which he will be talking about in awhile. He then emphasized that we need the support of our families through remittances and also funding and aids from overseas to provide for us and to increase the growth in our economy; however, he posed a question on when we are going to fund our projects and stop relying on overseas aids and funds to fund projects and other things for us. He further stressed on the fact that we need to start formulating a plan where we can work on our own and not rely on overseas funding. The rationale behind this is that there will come a time when they will stop donating funds, aids and all sorts of assistance because the cost of living is incessantly going up.

The Member then advised the government to avoid relying heavily on tourism industry and the opening of international borders to gain revenue as the pandemic is still spreading and other viruses are emerging. In this regard, the government should look at other strategies to stimulate the economy instead of fully dependent on the tourism industry.

Tofa Hon. OLO Fiti Afoa – Minister of MWTI

The Hon Minister clarified that with regards to becoming independent and not relying on overseas funding and aid, we would have to go back to the backbone on the development of this country. He clarified that the Government of the Day are working on revitalizing agriculture and fishing industry for exportation. He then accentuated that the current government has started out smoothly without loaning as the old men back then knew that this is the only way to developing the country is through agriculture and fisheries. The Minister then reiterated that we can always improve the tourism industry and be self sufficient through agriculture and fisheries hence the encouragement of Talomua in respective districts.

Afioga Hon VALASI Luapitofanua Toogamaga Tafito Selesele – Minister of MOH

The Minister commended the Member for Satupaitea on the issues raised but suggest not to school them but to advice them.

iv. Hon LAUTAFI Fio Selafi Purcell – Member for Satupaitea conts'

The Member then urged the Government to look at overseas companies who are interested to invest in our local economy so that they can provide employment opportunities for our local people and enhance the circulation of money in the country.

Afioga Hon TOELUPE Poumulinuku Onesemo – Minister of MCIT

In response to the suggestion put forth by the Member for Satupaitea, he clarified that the policies of the Government of the Day is to go back to the village to develop and get the people in the rural areas to cultivate their lands and develop the agriculture sector instead of considering forms of income from foreign investment.

iv. Hon LAUTAFI Fio Selafi Purcell – Member for Satupaitea conts'

The Member for Satupaitea stated that he is only expressing his views and bringing forth suggestions but it's up to the Government to consider it or not. He further emphasized that a country with a strong economy is the one with well established industries. This means if investors do operate in the country, they can employ our people and get paid and have the money to help with their own developments.

Tofa Hon. OLO Fiti Afoa – Minister of MWTI

The Minister reiterated that the Government of the Day's priority is revitalizing agriculture and fisheries for the development of Samoa.

iv. Hon LAUTAFI Fio Selafi Purcell – Member for Satupaitea conts'

The Member clarified that if there are any provisions in any Act or Acts that may limit a person to invest in Samoa or to live here, it is up to the Government to change that as the decision is theirs to make. He then requested the Minister of MWTI to kindly accept his requests through his letters submitted.

Furthermore, the Member emphasized on the importance of the RSE scheme and recommended for those who return back from these schemes should use their prowess gained from overseas to boost our economy.

He then requested to provide a vehicle to transport the assigned Doctors who are going out in the rural. He further suggested to have a place for Doctors to live especially those in district hospitals. The Member then stated that although the funding has decreased from 3 million to 1 million to construct residences for medical doctors; it is imperative to have a good house for Doctors who are providing the service to respective districts.

The Member for Satupaitea then complimented to the Minister of MWCSD on the \$200k that is already passed and the proposed 1 million for each constituency for the 1 million Project.

He then concluded by reminding the Minister of MWTI about his requests via letters regarding the construction of seawalls for his Constituency.

Proceedings were adjourned at 1:02pm; and will reconvene at 6:00pm