



September
2021

PARLIAMENTARY SITTING SUMMARY

DISCLAIMER

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PART A

DAY 6
9:26am

Tuesday 21st September 2021

ANNOUNCEMENT FROM MR SPEAKER

Hon Mr Speaker took his chair and said the prayers, then greeted all present in the House, from the Hon Prime Minister, Hon Deputy PM and Cabinet as well as Members of the FAST Party, extended greetings to the Opposition Leader and the Opposition. Hon Speaker then advised the House that Members are to speak directly on the Appropriation Bill and refrain from speaking on matters such as those mentioned in the proceedings of yesterday. The Hon Speaker asserted that the statements made by the Member for Faleata 3 in the House, implying that the Speaker was responsible for the termination of the previous Clerk was not taken lightly by himself as Speaker of the House. Therefore pursuant to Standing Order 91, Hon Speaker ruled to remove the statements made by the Member for Faleata 3 from parliamentary records and urged Members to refrain from speaking of these matters in the House.

I. **GOVERNMENT ORDERS OF THE DAY** **APPROPRIATION BILL 2021/2022 – debate on second reading (Cont.) Day 5**

1. **Afioga Hon TUUU Anasii Leota, Member for Siumu**

The Hon Member greeted the Legislative Assembly, acknowledged His Highness le Ao o le Malo and his good lady, our neighbouring islands of Tutuila and Manua and all of Samoa. The Member then spoke on the budget and acknowledged the Minister and Ministry in preparing the budget.

The Member noted that he will not raise the 1 million tala and \$300 pension as questioned by his constituency and specifically addressed the following Ministers:

- Minister for Works, Transport and Infrastructure:
 - The Member expressed gratitude for fixing the access roads in Maninoa and Matafala, and requested to fix the access roads in certain parts of his constituency. He then reminded the Minister about the access road for his village Saaga next to Falealili which has been requested for some time now, but still no response.
 - The Member mentioned the road leading to the village (Siumu) road, requests that it could be tar sealed for easy travelling and to save time and also vehicles.

- Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture:

The Hon Member then addressed the Minister of Education and highlighted the issue raised by other Members for a fund or scholarships for students who have the potential to further their studies but cannot due to financial restrictions. Hon TUUU suggested the Government to initiate the Student Loan Scheme like countries overseas that can assist families and students to continue and further their tertiary education

The Hon Member concluded by acknowledging the support of his constituency and their prayers that has secured his seat in Parliament to voice their concerns and opinions and developments for their constituency.

2. Afioga Hon TAPUNUU Niko Lee Hang, Member for Vaimauga 3

The Hon Member addressed His Highness O Le Ao o le Malo and his good lady, Council of Deputies and Members of Parliament. He greeted his constituency in its honorific salutations and acknowledged their continuous support. He then commended the different denomination for their support and prayers, and acknowledged the Judiciary.

The Hon Member commended the Hon Minister for Finance and her Ministry for the tabled budget. The Hon Member was pleased to note the mission of the tabled budget, prioritising "Our family, our people, our nation, our culture and Christian values" The Hon Member questioned Mr Speaker whether the events on the 15th September coincides with the mission of the budget.

Hon Mr Speaker – Point of Order:

Hon Mr Speaker urged the Hon. Member to refrain from looking in the past as he has already ruled on the matter.

Leader of the Opposition – Interjection:

The Hon Leader called Mr Speaker to be more bearing as the Members voice their opinions as this is their fundamental right as Members.

Hon Speaker of the House – Point of Order:

Hon Mr Speaker clarified that the Chair is independent, and that decisions from the Chair is considerate of both sides, and prays that we keep moving forward.

- advised members that his ruling is final and reiterated to move forward.

Afioga Hon TAPUNUU Niko Lee Hang - Member for Vaimauga 3 (cont.)

The Hon Member sought pardon from the Chair if his statements were offensive, and further noted that it was important that he reminds the government on their mission. He also reiterated that the Government should keep to their mission and not act otherwise. The Hon Member also raised the issue on the elimination of domestic violence provided in the budget and queried whether this was reflected in their intention to eliminating domestic violence when LAAULI made harmful comments towards women.

Hon Prime Minister – Interjection:

Hon PM expressed concerns that HRPP is politicizing the issue of domestic violence; recalling the statements made by the leader of the House towards her in the previous Parliamentary Term.

Afioga Hon TAPUNUU Niko Lee Hang - Member for Vaimauga 3 (cont.)

The Hon Member reiterated his intention when making the statement was to make the responsible Minister aware of such instances and think of possible solutions to move forward and address the issue of eliminating domestic violence. The Hon Member then noted 2 separate appropriations of \$250,000 for consultants, and offered his services in conducting the ‘Full Forensic Accounting Assessment’. Queried on the \$250,000 allocation mentioned in the Hon Minister for Finance budget address. The Hon Member queried whether there are any conditions for the promised \$1million to all the constituencies and stated that Laauli did not say that a distribution of 1million will be given out per constituency, rather, 5million will be given to constituencies, 1 million per year amounting to a total of 5million for the parliamentary term.

Susuga Hon LAAULI Leuatea Polataivao Fosi, Minister for Agriculture - Interjection:

The Hon Minister stood to clarify the 1million issue which has been brought up numerous times, stating that the 1million distributed to each constituency will happen; he asserted, that this will be the last time I will stand up to clarify this issue; “It will happen”.

Leader of Opposition – Motion:

The Hon Leader moved a motion to add more time to the speech of the Member; motion seconded and declined.

Afioga Hon TAPUNUU Niko Lee Hang, Member for Vaimauga 3 (cont.)

The Hon Member acknowledged Mr Speaker for permission to conclude his speech and emphasised on the million tala promised by FAST and that principles of transparency and accountability should be adhered. He then advised that the Minister for Finance should be administering this distribution to all 51 Constituencies. He then highlighted a phrase by the Minister of Finance that we are in deep debt, however the Member clarified from his own understanding that we are at 4% decrease in debt. He also clarified that the reason a nation loans and borrows from foreign institutions is to allow for progress and development of the country, noting that it is the similar case for countries such as America & Canada; hence why the previous government had debts carried forward to this FY to the existing government.

Hon Prime Minister – Interjection

The Hon PM reminded Mr Speaker that a motion was moved and passed for the Member to conclude his speech, yet the member is not abiding with the time limit and procedures of the House.

Afioga Hon TAPUNUU Niko Lee Hang, Member for Vaimauga 3 (cont.)

The Hon Member acknowledged his loyal supporters and thanked his constituency for electing him to be their voice in Parliament and concluded his speech.

3. Afioga Hon. SALA Fata Pinati, Member for Sagaga No.3

The Hon Member acknowledged the Prime Minister, Deputy and Cabinet, all CEO's present in the House, the Leader of Opposition and their Opposition; greeted Mr Speaker and the Office of the Legislative Assembly.

Hon Sala, Noted that he will not voice any concerns on the Appropriation Bill asserting that the Government of the day holds the authority to do as they please, however he stands this morning to give advice to the Government not for their betterment but that of Samoa and the people we represent. The Hon Member stated that regardless of how well we do something, it is never fully complete and correct as we are only human beings.

The Hon Member noted that any policy decision and direction made by the Executive is carried out and implemented by the CEO's and Ministries. When things go wrong, when a project is delayed, the Minister is not blamed but the CEO, therefore we should value our CEO's and the implementation body of our policies.

The Hon Member commended efforts of the Ministry for Agriculture and Fisheries to use the Market in Auckland to sell local produce; he then mentioned that fishing vessels are quite expensive when compared to the past, and asked whether a company or individual can be assigned to revive this development.

Proceedings were set aside at 11am; and resumed at 11:31pm

Leader of the House – Hon PM Motion:

The Hon PM moved a motion to change the sitting hours from;

9:30 – 1pm;

2pm – 6pm; and

7pm – 10pm

These times will remain until the Appropriation Bill 2021/2022

Change of Sitting Hours

Continue with sitting hours in the previous motion (9:30 - 1pm & 2pm - 6pm) then reconvene from 7pm - 10pm until the budget is passed by the Assembly given that there's an Electoral Amendment Bill that needs to be considered too as provided in the orders of the day; motion seconded and approved.

Afioga Hon. SALA Fata Pinati, Member for Sagaga No.3 (cont.)

The Hon Member then addressed the Samoa Tourism Authority and requested for fund to develop the road towards the Pulemelei (star mount) in Palauli which is one of the tourist sites mainly visited by tourists.

He addressed the Minister for Works, Transport and Infrastructure and posed a statement “ask not what your country can do for you, rather what you can do for your country” noting that the same applies to our families, our religion, our village and especially our Government. The Hon Member advised Members to remember that this prestigious calling is from the Almighty, and that it is important to carry out our duties with love and honesty. We must not focus too much on external developments, but focus on our internal surroundings 'your home-your family'. The Hon Member also acknowledged the Minister for Justice and Courts Administration and wished her well.

He then addressed the Hon Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries, and pleaded that he considers the developments made by the previous Government in reviving WESTEC, if the agricultural sector of Samoa succeeds, our nation will succeed. He concluded by acknowledging his constituency, and expressed sincere gratitude for their support and prayers throughout the past parliamentary term and this new Parliamentary term.

4. Afioga ALAIASA Moefaaouuo Malagitutogiai Sepulona Moananu, Member for Anoamaa I.

The Member greeted the whole of Samoa, church ministers, and our neighbouring country American Samoa. He then greeted the Members in the House, the Hon Prime Minister and the FAST government. The Member commended the Minister for Finance and the Ministry for preparing the Budget. Afioga ALAIASA stressed that the minister for Finance noted 1 billion debt inherited from the previous government, confirming that yes this is true because it is an indication of a developing nation.

The member noted that the budget speech by Minister for Finance should also reflect the assets inherited as can be proven with the numerous developments in the country. It shows that debts are due to the developments and it shows with the improvement of housing and living standards of families. The Member asserted that loans mean gain more developments. The Member jested that the government of the day has been constantly saying that Samoa is bankrupt referring to deficit but sees that there's a notable deficit in the tabled budget; this is indicative that we all intend for a better Samoa.

The Member stated that we deliberate on what is in the budget, if it is not included in the budget, then we do not talk about these things as it can create misunderstanding and misleading to the people; the Member then wished the Minister of Education well on his duties and reign. Afioga ALAIASA addressed the Minister for Health and noted the importance of their duties in keeping Samoa safe from the pandemic, and acknowledged the efforts for frontline workers.

Minister for Police & Prisons:

The Member recalled the events that happened last week and comparing this to the well-known Black Lives Matter movement in America. As a consequence of the police force being harsh towards the public it has been defunded. Advising the Ministry to refrain from repeating what happened last week otherwise they will face the same consequence as overseas.

The Member concluded by acknowledging his constituency, the clergies, the women committee and their efforts to eliminating domestic violence and expressed sincere gratitude for their prayers and support.

5. Afioga LEALAILEPULE Rimoni Aiafi, Member for Faleata 3

The Member acknowledged the senior Members of Parliament who are present in the House. He then greeted the Parliament, church Ministers, and Samoa listening from afar. The Member spoke on the differences of democracy in foreign nations when compared to Samoa. He noted that democracy in Samoa go hand-in-hand with our traditions and customs and Christianity, as we are a nation founded on GOD. He went on to state that Parliamentary proceedings always begin with prayers which is a sign of the value we place on our Christian beliefs. We treasure culture and tradition, we have so much respect for those who have been here before us. Other countries do not do these things like us and this is what makes our Parliament unique. He also stated that whatever happened in the past, let it be a lesson to us all; as today shapes tomorrow; we may be able to forgive but we can never forget.

In regards to the tabled budget, the Member stated that he was an opposition member for 15 years, a Government member for 5 years, and not once has he rejected the budget. The Member noted that as the new government took on the reigns, there was not much difficulty with the transition, and this is owed to the solid foundations and policies laid by previous Government. He then mentioned the 2040 long term plans and the SDS 5 year plans which all aim to develop Samoa. He urged the Government that if they follow through with these plans then the economy of Samoa will continue to grow. The Member touched upon the budget for 2020/2021 which noted at the end of the FY a 1% surplus. Further stressed to the Minister for Finance that debt is a positive sign of development

The Member raised the issue of daylight saving and clarified that it would be difficult to implement the proposed changes by the Minister for Commerce, Industry and Labour as there are numerous factors which must also be taken into account, such as the impact on the Ministry for Communication and Information technology noting the impact on the time zones. He then called to consult with other bodies and ministries related to the issue, before ceasing Daylight saving altogether.

The Member then addressed the Minister for Police and noted his disappointment with the instructions to 'arrest of the leader of the HRPP Party'

Afioga Hon FAULALO Harry Schuster, Minister for Police – Clarified

The Hon Minister clarified that the Minister does not have the authority to give orders to the Police officers to make an arrest on any member.

**Proceedings were suspended at 1:04pm;
and will resume at 2pm.**