



September
2021

PARLIAMENTARY SITTING SUMMARY

DISCLAIMER

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PART B **2:01pm**

MOTION – Hon Prime Minister:

Hon PM moved a motion to continue deliberations on the Appropriation Bill until it has been considered in detail and third read; motion seconded and approved.

ANNOUNCEMENT – Hon Mr Speaker:

Mr Speaker advised Members to let Ministers speak and complete their responses before raising questions and further clarification as we have a limited time to complete our Business of the Day.

3. Tofa Hon LEATINUU Wayne Socialo, Minister for Commerce, Industry and Labour & Minister for Public Enterprise, and Member for Faleata 2:

The Hon Minister acknowledged the Members who have raised matters on which he will address in a short while, then mentioned the use of sports facilities, and clarified that the Government has put less costs of using these facilities so that those who have the talents can further their careers. He also noted that there are times these facilities are offered free of charge. He then spoke on the different issues raised by Members:

In regards to the Ministry for Commerce, Industry and Labour, the Hon Minister mentioned the important services under this ministry such as providing work for our people through the RSE scheme; He then touched on the Gambling Authority which is also under his portfolio and emphasized the revenues earned by this entity; further acknowledging the previous Government’s initiatives which has assisted this entity to generate revenues and give back to the community.

In regards to the Samoa Airport Authority, the Hon Minister highlighted the importance of the Authority in contributing to the economy and conducting international travel, he further raised concerns regarding the plane which some members have requested to be brought home, he acknowledges the previous government for their plan to bring the plane, however, as the new

government they must thoroughly analyse the costs of executing this plan considering the uncertain times we are in with impacts of covid. The Hon Minister again acknowledged the previous government and their initiatives and encouragement and numerous advices provided to the Minister and Cabinet. Hon Minister reminded that they still look at this and will consider the advise by the committee tasked with reviewing the pros and cons and will honestly take the best advice for the benefit of Samoa as well as gaining revenues. The Hon Minister noted that all advises will be submitted to the Committee for proper review before finalising their decision. He further added that numerous reasons were provided to justify the plane being brought into Samoa, such as one recommendation that the plane can be used to take cargo out of the country, however the Minister feels that this is not possible as this is a very expensive aircraft.

In regards to the Apprenticeship scheme, the Hon Minister noted the requests by Member for Faasaleleaga No. 5, Peseta regarding Apprenticeship and clarified that there are 8 trades taught at APTC. Then spoke on issues relating to RSE Scheme, clarified that the Ministry does not earn revenue from these RSE Scheme, rather they prepare the paper work, travel documents and travel details for these schemes. Then noted that more than 1000 people have left to work overseas in Australia, and there are more opportunities available for Samoans to go overseas even during the pandemic.

The Minister noted that the RSE scheme have certain criterias in place to ensuring the best-fit is selected, those with enough man-power, strength and ability to carry out the job. Hon Minister also noted that there have also been opportunities from Tutuila for our people to find employment and earn an income to support their families. Hon Minister further stated that the Ministry continues to look for more areas and countries that can utilize labour from Samoa. The Minister noted that the RSE scheme initiated in 2007 between Samoa and NZ.

Hon Minister noted 210million was the total amount of income earned by seasonal workers all together in the FY2019/2020; The Minister acknowledged all concerns raised by Members and the private sector and assured the House that the Ministry continues to look into matters to ensure the best approach is taken to move forward.

In regards to certain committees raised by one of the Members, Hon Minister emphasised that there are no committee responsible for price control. The Minister emphasized the continuation of CODEX programs and clarified on questions directed to the Ministry regarding any other trades or training that our people can qualify for, the Minister clarified that there was a company that approached the Ministry to provide training for our local people, the Ministry will conduct its assessment and full evaluation to determine the benefits of this training; mentioned that this company specialises in training on how to operate heavy-duty vehicles and machinery.

The Hon Minister noted the issue raised by SULAMANAIA regarding land evaluation in his area where he claims that it is impossible to satisfy his request of reducing the price for their land as the valuation provides this area is valued at \$140k.

In regards to the Market place at Sogi, the Minister recalled the relocation of the Savalalo market to Sogi will not happen as they have completed a survey in which most of the vendors did not support the relocation. Savalalo can be easily reached and accessed by the public and also tourists.

i. Leader of Opposition, Susuga Hon TUILAIPA Auelua Fatialofa Neioti Dr Sailele Malielegaoi, Member for Lepa.

The Hon Member commended the Hon Minister for his response; however, in regards to seasonal workers - mostly 60% of the successful applicants will be returned but only 40% will remain to continue to work. He then queried whether it was possible to push for a higher percentage than 40% in order for our people to have access to better opportunities overseas. Hon TUILAIPA raised an important matter regarding seasonal workers overseas who end up becoming permanent workers, and suggested the Minister considered offering them the Quota scheme to allow them to permanently live abroad and bring in their families for a better standard of living.

ii. Tofa Hon LAUOFO Fonotoe Pierre Nuafesili Laufo, Member for Anoamaa 2

The Hon Member noted that other pacific countries like Vanuatu and Fiji have higher tourism status than us hence the importance of continuing relationships with the APTC as it assists with educating our people on how to better serve our hospitality industry which will also prove beneficial to Samoa once the impacts of covid dwindle and our nation opens her borders again.

Hon LAUOFO commended the Minister for expanding opportunities for our people, as mentioned by Hon Minister that a Company that focuses on training employees on how to drive heavy-duty machinery such as forklifts, etc... noting that this is also an important skill to attain and encouraged the government of the day to have more training for basic mechanical engineers on machine maintenance. Hon Member queried the Minister whether they have a contingency plan for the proposed 5-storey building planned to be built in Savalalo.

Leader of the House

The Hon PM noted that the House are not abiding with the Standing Orders of the House, specifically when Members wish to speak they should seek approval from the Speaker whether it be on a point of clarification, point of order etc.

iii. Afioga PESETA Vaifou Tevagaena, Member for Faasaleleaga No 5:

The Member commended the minister for their continual service in providing apprenticeship programs however, requested that we must seek assistance from overseas regarding safety (hire

a qualified person/teacher that can teach safety skills for our local people) stating that the ACC has spent a lot of money in compensating those affected.

iv. Tofa LEALAILEPULE Rimoni Aiafi, Member for Faleata 3

The Member touched on the issue with daylight saving and again urged the Minister to reconsider as it cannot be activate in a short span of time.

v. Afioga SULAMANAIA Fetaiai Tauiliili Tuivasa, Member for Vaimauga 1

The Member thanked the Minister for highlighting the matter that he raised with the Lands for Vailele, and urged the Minister to please consider this issue, as it is very important to his constituency.

vi. Afioga Hon LAUTAFI Fio Selafi Purcell, Member for Satupaitea

The Hon Member requested to the Minister to consider having another liaison officers in Australia that can help seasonal workers as the officer on site cannot cover all the territories in Australia especially since the several lockdowns in certain territories due to covid.

Tofa Hon LAUOFO Fonotoe Pierre Nuafesili Laufo, Member for Anoamaa 2

Hon Member commended the Minister for mentioning the CODEX program and stated that he will write to him on other issues he feels would be of assistance to the Minister.

Tofa Hon LEATINUU Wayne Socialo, Minister for Commerce, Industry and Labour & Minister for Public Enterprise, and Member for Faleata 2:

The Hon Minister responded that he has noted down all the comments and advise by members regarding areas under his portfolio and asserted that all will be taken to account before a decision is final; he then addressed his constituency and his family and acknowledged their support and prayers for him.

4. Afioga Hon VALASI Luapitofanua Toogamaga Tafito Selesele - Minister for Health and Member for Vaisigano No. 2

Hon Minister praised the leader of the opposition on his political stance, his services and the years that he spent in office as the Leader of this country. The Minister added that, this is one of the Ministries that had the most criticism in the past years and he stated that whatever goodness that we do, people will always find faults, and noting that we cannot please everyone. The Hon Minister praised the previous Prime Minister for giving him the chance when he came into Parliament as a SNDP member and noted that this was the only Prime Minister who gave him credit for trying.

**Proceedings were set aside at 3:45pm; and
resumed at 4:17pm**

**Afioga Hon VALASI Luapitofanua Toogamaga Tafito Selesele - Minister for
Health and Member for Vaisigano No. 2 (cont.)**

The Hon Minister highlighted the issues raised by Members regarding the district hospital at Tuasivi which needs renovation. In terms of chairs and equipment, beds and all, these were the things that were distributed to district hospitals. In regards to the hospital at Avao, this is still in good and solid condition, to the extent that the district hospital at Avao can be perfect to be a quarantine centre due to its isolated location. The Hon Minister noted that there are 7 new ambulance on standby for all the constituencies that requested ambulance. He also noted the short supply of medicines in district hospitals and clarified that there is enough medicine supply at the main hospital, the districts can order in advance so that they can avoid running short of supply and causing an inconvenience to the patients.

In regards to supply of oxygen tanks; the Minister stated that at as of now, a new building funded by New Zealand for oxygen storage is in progress and nearly completed. The Hon Minister directed each district hospital to order their medications straight from the pharmaceutical unit in Motootua rather than relying on Tuasivi and further advised to conduct bulk orders and have proper management.

In regards to the CT Scan as raised by other Members, the Hon Minister clarified that he had approved the tender for the CT Scan after receiving approval from Cabinet, he further clarified that the CT scan has yet to arrive but confirmed that there is a CT scan. Hon Minister noted that the Ministry is looking to renovate the doctor's housing in certain constituencies, noting its importance in convenience for patients to receive medical care and treatment when required. The Hon Minister noted that it is important to show kindness to nurses and doctors stationed at all district and main hospitals as these are our own children.

The Hon Minister noted their visitation to district hospitals of Falelatai and Saanapu and asserted that consideration will be made into renovations for these hospitals; he then acknowledged the request from the Member for Gagaemauga No.2 for an ambulance and stated that he has taken note of this. The Minister also acknowledged the request by Member for Aana No. 3 for an ambulance for Leulumoega, he emphasized that they will negotiate and plan accordingly which district clinic will receive one of the 7 ambulances. The Hon Minister also noted that there will be a new health centre at Salelologa for the people of Savaii, and emphasized that they will consider rightful measures for a hospital in Salelologa for convenience and ease of access for patients.

The Minister recalled having met with the Doctors and Nurses Association and has informed them to utilise everyone in the Ministry with medical capacities to assist at all times. The Hon Minister also noted that the Ministry is looking at building a special house to accommodate the Specialist from overseas who can operate and check-up patients at the hospitals but this is on hold due to

COVID 19; the Hon Minister stated that he has noted all the requests from MPs and that they will look at each request in due time.

i. Afioga MASINALUPE Makesi Masinalupe

The Member showed concern on the issue that he raised on a Hospital and ambulance for Lefaga and Faleseela, which the Minister has not mentioned.

Afioga Hon VALASI Luapitofanua Toogamaga Tafito Selesele - Minister for Health and Member for Vaisigano No. 2 (cont.)

The Minister reiterated that an ambulance cannot be given if there is no hospital at the constituency and informed the Member that there should be a formal letter written to the Minister and the Ministry noting the needs and requests for his constituency to ensure permission is granted following they went through the right processes.

The Hon Minister acknowledged the work of NEOC, Ministry of Health front-liners, for the hard work and effort put into keeping Samoa covid free. He then urged MP's to get involved in the mass-vaccination campaign on Thursday and Friday to ensure Samoa reaches its required percentage of citizens fully vaccinated. Although none of the MPs spoke on this, the Minister reported and acknowledged the NKF and the OUM for their services, Hon Minister acknowledged the efforts of the OUM and the association of Doctors. He saluted the work that these individuals are doing to nurture young doctors of Samoa. Acknowledged the NKF and mentioned the new location that will house and relocate the NKF and acknowledged the former Ministers of MOH and extended gratitude for their work done in the past parliamentary term.

ii. Afioga Hon TUUU Anasiii Leota, Member for Siumu

The Hon Member thanked the Minister for addressing the issue regarding a new hospital at Siumu.

iii. Tofa MAUU Siasoi Puepuemai, Member for Vaa o Fonoti

The Member reminded the Minister about their request for his constituency for a hospital.

Leader of Opposition, Susuga Hon TUILAEP Auelua Fatialofa Neioti Dr Sailele Malielegaoi, Member for Lepa.

The Member raised the Pharmaceutical Warehouse and posed the importance of this warehouse to ensure district hospitals do not run out of medications for patients. In regards to the NKF, the Hon Member noted the importance of establishing this office in Salelologa for convenience to patients.

The Hon Member mentioned the importance of special after-care services post-surgeries, noting that it is imperative for the patient to be cared in hospitals rather than sending home after an operation, to minimise the impacts thereafter a surgery. Hon TUILAEP A acknowledged the special

surgery unit as a good initiative and suggested to implement this project, headed by our local surgeons with assistance by overseas doctors or one of our own who has the skills, knowledge and experience in this area. He further noted the district hospital in Avao and its purpose and further clarified on the issues that could assist the Minister with his duties.

Afioga Hon VALASI Luapitofanua Toogamaga Tafito Selesele - Minister for Health and Member for Vaisigano No. 2 (cont.)

The Minister acknowledged his constituency for their unwavering support; and concluded by calling for God's Blessings upon Samoa and her Parliament.

5. Afioga Hon FAUALO Harry Jeffrey Schuster, Minister for Police and Prisons and Member for Vaimauga No.4

Greeted the Legislative Assembly, Hon PM and the Leader of the Opposition Party. He acknowledged the Acting Commissioner of Police and the Prisons Warden; the FESA Commissioner, and the Electoral Commissioner for their hard work. Hon Minister then spoke on issues raised by Members:

- Car Accessories (Spotlights, Amp Speakers, Etc)

The Minister addressed the issue of car accessories such as 'neon lights' or overtly bright lights used by private vehicles which can be hazardous to other drivers. The Hon Minister stated that these lights cannot be banned completely as some companies are using these lights in their line of work like Security services, as well as farmers and fishing boats when they go out to sea at night.

On the issue of amplify speakers used in private vehicles, the Minister noted that it is provided in the law that these accessories are prohibited for government vehicles only but does not extend to the private cars; further noted that the Ministry continues to look at possible ways to avoid the private sale of such accessories (neon lights and amplify speakers, etc...)

The Minister mentioned a program sponsored and implemented by the AUS-Aid, that helps train, build capacity and educate the police force to better carry out their services, noting that there has also been opportunities for work attachments to Australia. He acknowledged the suggestion for the Commissioner to be on a permanent basis and not contractual and clarified that they will consider and accept the advice given. He acknowledged suggestions to remind police officers that tradition and culture go hand-in-hand in the implementation of their duties. The Minister also spoke on the duties of police officers and asserted that in the past 6 weeks since he took on the Ministerial position for the Ministry of Police he noticed that the police service conduct their operations with the traditions and customs of our people in mind.

In regards to the issue of police salaries the Minister noted the differentiation in salary-scale between the Police and Prisons Services and FESA regardless of the high-risk nature of the job. The Minister noted a request for a Fire Outpost in Aana as the law stipulates that the fire truck at Faleolo cannot be used.

In regards to the Office of Electoral Commission, the Minister clarified that the Office will look at the feasibility of establishing an Office in Salelologa. He then commented on a proposal to allow

an estimate of 30,000 per candidate to spend on electoral processes, and to inform the Electoral Commission of such dealings to avoid any possible claims of corruption and bribery which is one of the aims of the Office, 'to eliminate corrupt practices'. The Minister also reminded Members that there will be a Commission of Inquiry after all General Elections to note the challenges and possible solutions for the improvement of the General Election process moving forward.

i. Afioga ALAIASA Moefaaouo Malagaitutogai Sepulona Moananu, Member for Anoamaa 1

The Member stressed on the idea that the Minister mentioned, they will use force at the last resort. The Member thanked the Minister for resorting to customs and traditions of 'respect and courtesy' before the law and before using force if it does not work.

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

The Hon Member recalled past events when the police barricaded Parliament House and locked the HRPP out from entering, asserting that the police received instructions from their Minister, then queried whether there are any powers provided to the people to take a Police officer for his aggressive nature to the court.

Afioga Hon FAUALO Harry Jeffrey Schuster, Minister for Police and Prisons and Member for Vaimauga No.4

The Minister clarified that he did not instruct the Police to barricade Parliament as he does not have the authority to do so; further stating that the Police are instructed by the law, and should they choose not to abide, that is between them and the Judiciary.

iii. Tofa LEALALEPULE Rimoni Aiafi, Member for Faleata 3

The Member noted the important task conducted by the police service, and advised the Minister that for future events, refrain from over expending its resources, as parliamentarians do not need more than 100 police officers to manage them, it all comes down to common respect which is deeply rooted in our culture.

iv. Leader of Opposition, Susuga Hon TUILAEPA Auelua Fatialofa Neioti Dr Sailele Malielegaoi, Member for Lepa.

The leader of the opposition reiterated statements made by the Minister for Police regarding the Minister has no power to instruct the police service to arrest any civilian or act a certain way, as this power is vested with the Commissioner. Then recalled the time when the Minister of MAF asked him to use his powers as the Minister for Police to withdraw a claim against him from the courts; which he did not as it was beyond his powers. Also commented on the importance of making the Police Commissioner an independent and separate authority.

v. Susuga Hon LAAULI Leuatea Polataivao Fosi, Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries – interjection:

The Hon Member jested that the statement made by the Opposition leader has no truth.

**Proceedings were set aside at 6:02pm;
and resume at 6:47pm**