

June
2019

PARLIAMENTARY SITTING SUMMARY

DISCLAIMER

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Wednesday 19th June 2019

9:10am

PART A (9:00am – 1:00pm)

PRESENTATION OF COMMITTEE REPORTS:

A total of 5 Committee Reports were presented in Parliament; 2 reports from the Finance and Expenditure Committee, 2 reports from the Infrastructure Committee, an 1 from the Economic Sector

I. GOVERNMENT ORDERS OF THE DAY

1. SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION BILL (NO. 2) 2018/2019 and Appropriation Bill 2019/2020- Debate on second reading (cont.)

(i) Afioga SULAMANAIA Fetaiai Tauiliili Tuivasa, Member for Vaimauga East

The Member greeted his fellow members and Samoa in all her honorific salutations. He greeted Members present in the House, O le Ao o le Malo and the general public listening in on the proceedings of Parliament; he also addressed his constituency and families and expressed gratitude for their prayers and support.

The Member then commended the works of the Ministry of Finance on compiling the budget report with the aim to generate revenues for the overall development of the economy of Samoa.

Hon Prime Minister – Point of Clarification

The Hon PM interjected to clarify the issue raised by the Member in regard to the transfer of the monitoring and administration of traffic role from the Land Transport Authority (LTA) to the Ministry of Police. The Hon PM elaborated that the underlying issue raised by LTA was having a decrease in revenues collected from registration

of vehicles, licensing and collecting traffic offences, and so forth; however, the PM emphasised in the House that it is important to note that all monies whether generated within a Ministry or Authority, or accumulated from other means is authorized to be transferred to the Ministry of Finance (Treasury) to ensure accountability and transparency of all monies collected.

Hon Minister of Works, Transport and Infrastructure – further clarified

The Hon Minister elaborated on the Hon PM's clarification and stated that all revenues in regard to the registering of vehicles, licensing and traffic fines will be collected by the Ministry of Police, and then transferred to Treasury – the Ministry of Finance.

Hon Prime Minister - Interjected

The Hon PM further clarified that the Minister of Works continues to progress with the development projects in regard to the reconstruction and maintenance of roads (depending on which cases are prioritised). Furthermore, the Minister and the Ministry continue to carry out inspections and assessments on the standards and quality of the roads around Samoa to determine which roads needed to be prioritised with maintenance. He asserted to the Member that he need not worry about where the funds will be sourced from, as the Ministry of Finance will allocate the relevant funding to each respective Ministry (Health, Education, Works, etc...) to implement these numerous projects.

The Hon PM then touched on the importance of the Committee's scrutiny role during the screening of budget---noting the importance of consultation stage between Committee and the respective Ministries to explain and clarify the funds allocated by Government to each Ministry (ensure accountability and transparency). He asserted that it was crucial for Committee members to uphold the confidence of scrutiny stage in Committees when dealing with sensitive and confidential information; as the information provided by the Ministries/Public Bodies/SOE's are submitted to the Committee in confidence to ensure their role as Parliament's 'watchdog' is carried out effectively; however when CEO's are aware that there are Members seated in certain Committees who cannot keep the information relayed in confidence – this then results CEO's refusal to provide the documents or being reluctant to state the truth and therefore leading to poor or false reporting from Ministries.

Tofa OLO Fiti Afoa - Member for Salega West

The Member stated that it was important to make the public aware.

POINT OF CLARIFICATION - Hon Speaker:

Mr Speaker on a point of clarification spoke to inform the House that it is Government's duty to clarify and explain its policies to ensure the public at large are aware and are not misled.

Afioga SULAMANAIA Fetaiai Tauiliili Tuivasa, Member for Vaimauga East (cont.)

The Member continued his speech and noted the high number of vacant positions reported from Ministries, yet there is an increase in unemployment, while fresh graduates are struggling to secure employment.

Hon Prime Minister - Interjected

The Hon Prime Minister stated that the issue raised by the Member was important and that it should be understood that each position entails certain qualifications and credentials, which is the reasoning why certain applicants are not successful for the position. The PM stated that the recruitment and selection process is continuously reviewed by the Public Service Commission and usually about 90% of applications referred to Cabinet are approved whilst those who are not endorsed are due to applicants' lack of ability to meet the requirements and qualifications of the job.

Afioga SULAMANAIA Fetaiai Tauiliili Tuivasa, Member for Vaimauga East (cont.)

The Member continued by proposing to the Minister of Works, the reconstruction and maintenance of roads in his constituency; He also pleaded to Cabinet for the recruitment and selection process for Chief Executives of Ministries and Offices. He stated that there were certain applicants who were reluctant to apply due to having personal conflicts with the certain Ministers – and implored Cabinet to consider removing all personal affiliations or conflicts when dealing with decision making.

Hon Prime Minister - Interjected

The Hon PM clarified that the accusation made by the Member must be corrected, as the recruitment of CEO's is professionally conducted, based on merit and not on any personal ties. The Hon PM stated that the submission to Cabinet with the recommendation always has substantial reasoning and justification – the Hon PM asserted that Samoa is a small nation, 'everyone knows everyone' "at the end of the day, one's integrity and work ethics are public knowledge" – therefore emphasizing the importance of honesty "*o le faamaoni lava*".

SULAMANAIA Fetaiai Tauiliili Tuivasa, Member for Vaimauga East (cont.)

Furthermore, the Member commended the efforts of the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture and concluded his remarks by wishing Samoa well in hosting the Pacific Games 2019 and jested that the Hon Prime Minister should also participate in the archery sport for the Olympics.

(ii) NAFOITOA Talaimanu Ketu, Member for Gagaemauga No.3

The Member greeted the Assembly and was pleased to note the well allocations of the budget for respective Ministries and agencies with the aim to enhance the economy growth of Samoa. The Member then conveyed his constituency's support on the Budget and commended the efforts of the Ministry of Finance in preparing the budget and asserted the urgency to pass the Budget in order to proceed with the development of projects. The Member commented on the need to consider an effective avenue to transfer voters from Upolu to Savaii during general elections, to ensure there is a designated vessel to cater for voters.

Another issue raised by the Member was in regard to the Vaipouli Clinic, the member was aware that there were plans for the clinic to be demolished; and therefore pleaded to the responsible Minister to delay this plan, and whether there was a possibility to relocate the clinic to the central area of the constituency (for ease of access).

The Member also raised concern for the condition of the road heading towards the Tafaigata Shooting range and queried the responsible Minister whether there were plans to maintain/reconstruct this road, especially before the Pacific Games in July.

Proceedings were set aside for its usual break at 10:45am; and reconvened at 11:35am.

MOTION – Hon Prime Minister

The Hon Prime Minister moved the motion to change sitting hours:

9am – 1pm; and

7pm – 11pm

Motion seconded and approved.

(iii) NAFOITOA Talaimanu Ketu, Member for Gagaemauga No.3 (cont.)

The Member continued by addressing the following Ministries:

- Ministry of Works Transport and Infrastructure
The Member highlighted the need for an inspection on the roads in his constituency, as it is in dire need of maintenance (especially Satoalepai), he further stated that that it is near a tourist attraction site which is popularly visited by tourists and therefore stated that the construction of roads is important to ensure this site can be easily accessed and can be sustained.
- Samoa Airport Authority
The Member commended the development of the Authority at the Faleolo International Airport, specifically in the installation of the aerobridges.
- Ministry of Police
The Member urged the Ministry to continue its role in collecting stray dogs around the town areas and generally around Samoa for the safety of the public at large and those who will be travelling to Samoa during the Pacific Games 2019.

The Member concluded his speech by wishing all participants the best of luck for the Pacific Games and applauded all officials involved in the running and operations of the Pacific Games 2019.

(iv) Afioga Hon. GATOLOAIFAANA Amataga Alesana-Gidlow, Member for Faasaleleaga No.1

The Hon Member greeted all who were present in the House; the CEO's responsible to implement the decisions and policies of Government. She commended the work put forth by the Minister for Finance for the tabled budget, and all respective Ministries for their collective efforts to generate revenues for the overall development of the nation.

- The Minister for Natural Resources and Environment
 - With the worrisome condition of climate change, the Member queried the Ministry whether there was any mitigation fund' to assist with families and villages to counter and combat the impacts of climate change.
 - The Member then requested for the construction of seawalls for her constituency, especially to counter the impacts of sea level rise (king-tide)
- The Minister of Works, Transport and Infrastructure
 - The Member noted the importance and the need to have proper signal posts at every intersection, especially in the rural areas, to ensure the public and tourists travelling to the rural areas can easily locate the correct route to beaches, resorts and destinations the person is travelling to.
 - The Member then requested the need for maintenance of roads in her constituency

- The Minister of Education, Sports and Culture
 - The Member addressed the need for more English and Mathematics teachers from a young age, and the importance of developing libraries in schools.
- The Minister of Health
 - The Member acknowledged efforts of the previous Minister and wished the new Minister of Health the best of luck; she then noted the importance of continuing the services whereby doctors travel to rural areas once a week to tend to the sick patients. Furthermore, the Member noted the poor conditions of hospitals (poor sanitation) which should be addressed to avoid the spread of more illness.

The Hon Member spoke on the need to increase the retirement age from 55years as there are other employees who are capable to perform the work required of them but have been laid off due to reaching retirement age.

Hon Prime Minister - Interjected

The Hon Prime Minister interjected to note his support for the proposal made by the Member, and requested the legislative drafters to increase the retirement age to 70years.

On the issue of indicators and road signals – the Hon Prime Minister explained that Government continues to construct such signal posts and indicators for the benefit of the general public however; it is also the responsibility of the Village Councils to oversee government property (to ensure it is sustained and maintained).

Afioga Hon. GATOLOAIFAANA Amataga Alesana-Gidlow, Member for Faasaleleaga No.1 (cont.)

The member then concluded her remarks by noting the need for Savaii voters to cast their votes. She commended the efforts of the Ministry of Finance on the budget especially the Chairperson for Finance and Expenditure Committee and her team for providing the report on the budget. In addition, she then expressed appreciation for the support of her constituency.

(v) Afioga ALAIASA Moefaauouo Malagaitutogiai Sepulona Moananu, Member for Anoamaa East (Associate Minister of Education, Sports and Culture)

The Member greeted all of Samoa; wished the new Member for Faasaleleaga No.2 well on his journey; noted his support for the tabled budget and noted two issues in his speech.

- The need for road reconstruction in the constituency, especially the route from the Lufilufi clinic as the drive inflicts more pain to the patient due to the poor state of the road
- The Member commended the new infrastructural developments at the Faleolo International Airport, as it was an indication of Samoa's economy moving forward.

The Member then expressed well wishes to the competitors of team Samoa participating in the Pacific Games 2019.

(vi) Tofa LEALAILEPULE Rimoni Aiafi, Member for Faleata West (Associate Minister of Communications and Information Technology)

The Member addressed his fellow Parliamentarians, O le Ao o le Malo and Samoa in all her honorific salutations. The Member then spoke on the Budget at stated in all his years as a Parliamentarian, he not once refuted or rejected the Budget or disagreed with loans; reason being is that when revenues are compared from the last 20 years to the present, there is an increase, which is indicative of Samoa's development and progress.

**Proceedings were set aside at 1:00pm; and
will reconvene at 7:00pm**