



September
2021

PARLIAMENTARY SITTING SUMMARY

DISCLAIMER

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PART B

DAY 6
1:57pm

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

Afioga TOEOLESULUSULU Cedric Schuster, Member for Aana Alofi 4 - Interjection

Expressed apologies to the Hon Speaker for the delayed interjection, and clarified on the matter mentioned by the Member for Faleata 3 regarding the projects that the old government implemented in his constituency; and asserted that their roads are still damaged, there is no water, water pump does not work and the roads are poorly maintained. He then asked that the Minister for Works look into these issues.

Afioga LEALAILEPULE Rimoni Aiafi, Member for Faleata 3 (cont.)

The Member mentioned his disappointment when his Church Minister was blocked and turned away from entering the HRPP headquarters during the road blockage and asserted that there is nothing in the Constitution which hinders Church Ministers from upholding peace in the nation. He then acknowledged the work of the Speaker and wished them well. He again iterated that what you see is what you get, there are no hidden agendas. He concluded with acknowledging the unwavering support and prayers of his family, his father, his siblings, especially his wife and children. Noted that his wife and children are the silent victims of the current political debacle. He acknowledged his constituency for the support and acknowledged the services of the former Attorney General, CEO for Ministry of Finance and the Clerk of the Assembly ‘thank you for all your services and loyalty to the Government’.

6. Afioga Hon LOAU SOLAMALEMALO Keneti Sio, Member for Sagaga 1

The Member recalled the many challenges that he went through after General elections and he is thankful to the Lord for he has kept him under his wing all this time hence why he has made it this far. The Hon Member touched upon the million tala promise made for each constituency.

Susuga Hon LAAULI Leuatea Polataivao Fosi, Minister for Agriculture and Fsiheries – Interjection:

The Hon Minister clarified that the 1 million will be given to the constituencies for the development of respective constituencies and mentioned that this was never done in the past.

Afioga Hon VALASI Tafito Selelese, Minister for Health – Interjection:

The Hon Minister reminded the Member that the Court showed mercy on them (HRPP) with their decision regarding their case with the Hon Speaker, after all the events and disagreements that occurred between HRPP and Court.

Afioga Hon LOAU Solamalemalo Keneti Sio, Member for Sagaga 1 (cont.)

The Hon Member acknowledged the support and silent prayers of his church Ministers throughout tough times. Also acknowledged the Deacons and all the prayer warriors that prayed for him during his ministerial term and General Elections. He then acknowledged his constituency for their continuous support.

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

The Hon Member acknowledged Hon Prime Minister, Cabinet, Associate Ministers, acknowledged Leader of Opposition and MPs; he also acknowledged the CEOs. He then addressed His Highness, Le Ao o le Malo, Council of Deputies, Chief Justice and the President and the Judiciary. He then greeted Samoa as a whole and American Samoa. He addressed his constituency in all its honorific salutations, the clergy members and all who voted for him for their unwavering support, especially for allowing him to represent their opinions and voices in the Legislative Assembly of Samoa.

The Hon Member acknowledged his mother and noted his disappointment with the police blockage which prohibited his mother from attending his swearing in as a Parliamentarian; The Hon Member acknowledged both of his mother's for their never ending prayers over him as a Parliamentarian.

Hon Prime Minister - Interjection

The Hon PM reminded the Member that the Speaker has already urged the Members several times, to move forward and not recall events of the past; she made reference to the events of May 24th when HRPP locked the Maota from FAST Members to enter and be sworn in and asserted that this was a similar situation.

Hon Mr Speaker – Point of Order:

Mr Speaker reminded the Member from Satupaitea to refrain from speaking about the events which happened in the past, instead it is important to move forward together.

Hon Afioga LAUTAFI Fio Selafi Purcell, Member for Satupaitea (cont.)

The Hon member commended the Minister for Finance on her work in preparing the budget also acknowledging that this is her first time as minister thus mistakes are a normal part; he expressed disagreement regarding the statement in the budget which states that 'it is unfortunate that they have inherited the debt from the previous government'. The Hon Member stressed that the Minister and the new Government could have turned this into a positive and rephrased this statement 'the new Government is ready to take on the challenges inherited from the previous Government'. As it somewhat devalues the reputation of Samoa in overseas countries as if Samoa is going bankrupt.

The Hon Member raised the issue that the current budget only provides a short-term plan to satisfy the public with promises made, however does not mention a long-term plan for the on-going development of the country, thus advised that Government must thoroughly assess the feasibility of carrying out with their promises, rather than merely making statements to please and satisfy the people.

Hon Prime Minister - interruption

The Hon PM voiced her disagreement with statements made by the Minister as if to imply that the Government's promises are not genuine and made for the purpose to lure voters; she then called to remove such statements by the Member for Satupaitea as it does not reflect a solid government of the day.

SPEAKERS RULING:

Hon Mr Speaker supported the PM and advised members to refrain from saying things which may seem to doubt the current government and their effort in fulfilling their promises.

Leader of Opposition:

The Hon Member jested that as an Opposition, the task is to scrutinise all Government actions and policy directions, and should not be taken offense easily by Members of the Government.

Hon Afioga LAUTAFI Fio Selafi Purcell, Member for Satupaitea (cont.)

The Hon Member stated asserted that he was merely advising and apologised if it was offensive to the Government as it was not his intention to harm any feelings; the Hon Member stated that if the advice given is useful then take note, if not then please disregard.

Hon Prime Minister - interruption

The Hon PM clarified that there is nothing wrong with what the minister said, rather she is mindful of the use of doubtful words intentionally, which implies that the government is only making promises to satisfy people but not fully committed in achieving them.

Hon Afioga LAUTAFI Fio Selafi Purcell, Member for Satupaitea (cont.)

The Hon Member urged the relevant Minister to bring in the plane as it will help with the development of Samoa.

Hon Minister for Works, Transport and Infrastructure – interjection:

The Hon Minister stated that the delay was his own doing, the reason being was that it was not safe, there were parts of the plane that needed to be changed and for the safety of our people, he proposed the delay. He then assured the Member that when all criterias for safety of the plane is met and achieved, the aircraft will be brought in.

Hon Minister for Commerce, Industry and Labour – Interjection

The Hon Minister clarified that the reason being for the delay of the plane is the cost of spare parts, when they have the money to buy the spare parts, they will bring in the plane.

Hon Afioga LAUTAFI Fio Selafi Purcell, Member for Satupaitea (cont.)

The Hon Member acknowledged the clarification made by the Ministers and spoke on the issue of daylight saving, again advising the Minister to reconsider the decision to cease daylight saving,

further noting that all nations are connected through globalisation and therefore Samoa should not be left behind with the changes in time.

Proceedings were set aside at 3:36pm; and resumed at 4:06pm

Afioga AUUAPAAU Mulipola Aloitafua, Deputy Speaker

The Deputy Speaker moved a motion to remove the words spoken by Member for Satupaitea as it has a dual meaning and should not be included in parliamentary records; motion seconded and approved

Hon Mr Speaker – RULING:

The Hon Mr Speaker Ruled to remove the words made by the Member for Satupaitea from parliamentary records.

8. Tofa Hon FAIMALOTOA Kika Stowers – Ah Kau, Member for Gagaifomauga No.1

The Hon Member acknowledged and greeted her constituency in its honorific salutations, expressed sincere gratitude to her prayer warriors, deacons and church Ministers whom have silently prayed for her during this time. She then apologised to her constituency who have been continuously calling her phone, to urge her to voice their opinions on matters which the Hon Speaker has already advised the House to refrain from making, hence why she has turned off her phone. She then delved into the budget and voiced her opinions on the following Ministers.

- Minister of Health:

The Hon Member acknowledged the Hon Minister and the Ministry for their work by keeping Samoa safe from covid and ensuring our borders are closed. She then queried the fund from World Bank for renovations and repairs of District Hospitals and sought clarification as to the status of this project.

- Minister for Works Transport and Infrastructure:

- The Hon Member mentioned the need for proper and sufficient water supply for Safotu, as there is never enough water supply for the village of Safotu; she then mentioned the road in Manase and a funding of 10million from the World Bank to implement this project. She further noted that this is one of the most dangerous areas in her constituency as it is prone to landslides, therefore heightens the need to implement this project. Hon Member noted that the road to Matavanu was in progress during her time as Minister and noted that last year the roads were being dug for construction, urged the Minister if this project can be completed.

- **Minister for Natural Resources and Environment:**

The Hon Member commended the Hon Prime Minister on her calling and reminded the Minister about the seriousness of environmental problems affecting her constituency especially with no seawalls around the area making them vulnerable to sea level rise.

- **Minister for Finance:**

Hon Member acknowledged the Hon Minister and her Ministry for the tabled budget.

In regards to the Ministry of Health, Samoa continues to be covid free, noted that when covid was a pandemic, in March 2020 the Government introduced a stimulus package with a total of 66.3million to assist with the impacts of covid to the economy. Then noted her disappointment that there was no allocation for the continuous funding to assist with covid safety. However, commended the Ministry for efforts to lockdown the nation for 2 days to conduct the nationwide mass vaccination. The member stressed the importance of keeping our borders closed and not to be easily swayed by overseas claims that covid is fading; urged the Ministry and responsible authority not to be complacent and to always be prepared.

The Member noted an allocation to fund hospital foods for patients in hospitals (main and districts); emphasised that these were also in the previous Government's strategy but was only delayed due to people taking advantage of the hospitals food. The Member also suggested to have a main hospital in Salelologa which can be easily accessed by the public.

The Member was hopeful that the Ministry would include new measures to further strengthen preparedness measures of the Ministry in regards to covid. Hon FAIMALOTOA mentioned the 3 million for renovation of district hospitals and salaries for nurses and doctors, then reminded the Minister of the project to improve housing for doctors stationed in districts. The Member suggested that the government should get the right man to do the job as it can save a lot of resources if we use our own local contractors. She also emphasised that the previous government also ordered the CT scan for our main hospital at Motootua but was delayed due to Tender's Board process.

Hon Member noted the 11million allocation under the Ministry for Women and sought clarification on the allocation of this amount as it is not specified in the Appropriation. The Hon Member queried the 1 million allocated for hygiene committees. She then emphasised that most of the projects in the budget were from the previous government of the day plans.

Hon Speaker:

Mr Speaker reminded the Member that reading speeches are not allowed in the House.

Tofa Hon FAIMALOTOA Kika Stowers – Ah Kau, Member for Gagaifomauga No.1

The Hon Member clarified that she is not reading her full speech, rather referencing to the main points which she highlighted as a guide for her when she speaks. The Member recalled the events of the past with sadness and tears and noted that she will never forget the events of the day. She concluded her speech wishing the Government of the day well on their duties and calling.

9. Tofa Hon LAUOFO Fonotoe Nuafesili Pierre Laufo, Member for Anoamaa No.2

The Hon Member greeted the PM and the Cabinet and all the Members in the House. He noted that the high standard of living requires a stable economy. He then spoke on the budget; acknowledged the inclusion of an appropriation for disabled people and sought further clarification as to the term 'disable person' so as to be clear who is eligible to receive this fund.

The Member highlighted the allocation to assist with building houses for low income earners and asserted that there was also assistance provided by the previous government through ADRA who was the implementing body. Hon LAUOFO further noted that the allocation for this initiative has increased although it only provides for building houses for low income earners.

The Hon Member mentioned that there is something in the budget that says "Full Forensic accounting assistance" which personally implies that the new Government is looking for lost funds, noting that all financials are audited and other Government offices have internal auditors, also mentioned the updated annual reports submitted by Government Ministries and Offices. The Hon Member then addressed specific Ministers:

- **Ministry of Health:**

The Hon Member noted an allocation to renovate district hospitals, noting that there was an intention for a relocation of the district hospital from Lufilufi to Saoluafata because as there is enough land at Saoluafata compared to Lufilufi, but these plans were postponed due to covid. He further noted that the budget calls for a Pathologist, and queried whether this will be recruited locally or from overseas and whether there are any bodies at the morgue. The Member was pleased to note the move to have 2 public holidays to push for mass vaccination.

- **Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries:**

Hon LAUOFO noted that he recognised there is no money in the budget allocated for the eradication of rhinoceros beetle program which was a very important project in the past. He also noted that it was his understanding that part of the SAFPROM project included the marketing and exporting of local agricultural products, then sought clarification from the Minister.

SROS:

The Member stated that SROS has been working on new products and their service includes noting the marketability of these local products to overseas markets to contribute to the growth of Samoa. Furthermore, SROS is also the responsible authority to conduct research on illegal drugs. The Hon Member then queried the status for the heavy-duty x-ray scanner which was scheduled to arrive in Samoa soon.

- **Ministry for Commerce, Industry and Labour:**

The Hon Member noted previous Committees administered by the MCIL, and mentioned that the Competition Commission plays a vital role in the Ministry, as well as the CODEX coding system and asserted that this committee looks into the standards of imported goods as well as local products. He touched upon the RSE Scheme and suggested that the Ministry seek other avenues to expand the employment opportunities of our people to not only include fruit picking and tradesman but also expand to tourism and hospitality.

- **Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture:**

The Hon Member noted the reduction of the appropriation for the Ministry from 18million to 17million yet there are plans to increase teachers' salaries; he then queried whether the increase includes all teachers (government and religious schools) as well as primary schools. He noted funding for sports which includes sports on a professional level. The Member noted that there is a fund from SIFA and other organizations. The Member noted that there should always be a fund set aside as there have been sports which have put Samoa on the top and recognition is very important.

The Member made mention of upcoming meetings for ACP-EU and JICA which were scheduled to occur in the current FY, and queried whether these meetings would still take place and whether an appropriation was included in the Budget. The Member noticed that the government's scholarship scheme has been shifted from PSC to MESC, the minister commended this move but questioned the minister of MESC whether there are other options for students especially those educated at NUS who are financially vulnerable but cannot get scholarships.

The Member stated that there is not enough fund for Legal aid (Ministry of Justice) he further clarified that there is an increase in crimes these days, people would need proper assistance in this area as to why this fund must be sufficient to cater for the people who need it most.

In regards to the move to separate the Judiciary, the Member sought clarification and justification on this as it is not clear. He queried whether the separation of judiciary refers to the separation of criminal court from the land and titles court. In regards to the Ministry from Customs and Revenue, the Member queried the progress of the TIMS system.

- **Minister for Works, Transport and Infrastructure:**

Hon LAUOFO queried the decrease of the electricity and water charge, and queried where the revenues would come from, then stated that at this rate, the EPC may turn to the Government for additional funds to keep the Corporation operational. He then noted the importance of daylight saving as it also saves electricity and fuel consumption.

- **Office of the Legislative Assembly:**

The Member noted an appropriation under the Office of the Legislative Assembly and queried the 250,000 appropriation for a 'Constitutional Review'. Noted that this project is a complex and lengthy process especially in the consultation stage, noting that there are debates from the Constitutional Convention of 1960 which must also be considered during the review, to keep the true intentions of our forefathers in mind when conducting such a task. Hon Member highlighted this is a supreme law of the country and it's a huge project which will require for a referendum.

- **Office of the Electoral Commission:**

The Hon Member noted that in the past few months they have noticed the state of the constitution where there are loopholes leaving it opened for interpretation on some accounts.

- **Ministry of Police and Prisons:**

There was intention to establish a police outpost at Saoluafata but was delayed due to covid and requested a police outpost near his constituency to tend for many incidents as there have been growing number of road/traffic accidents.

- Minister for Women, Community and Social Development:

The Hon Member called to clarify the 1 million as promised by Fast Party during their roadshow for each constituency.

Susuga Hon LAAULI Leuatea Polataivao, Minister for MAF - Interjection

Hon Minister clarified that the 11 million is included in the budget and it is there for the development of respective constituencies.

Tofa Hon LAUOFO Fonotoe Nuafesili Pierre Lauofo, Member for Anoamaa No.2 (cont.)

The Hon Member queried what conditions were required for the 51 million as he wants to know for his people. The Hon Member then noted several projects ceasing since the new Government took over the reins and queried why, as these developments were introduced for the benefit of our people and the growth of our nation. Hon Member concluded his speech by acknowledging his constituency and again thanking them for the honour to represent their voices in Parliament.

**Proceedings were suspended at 5:54pm;
and will resume at 6pm.**