

June
2020

PARLIAMENTARY SITTING SUMMARY

DISCLAIMER

This Report provides a brief of Part B of the Proceedings of Parliament on **Monday 29 June 2020**. While all efforts have been made to provide an informative brief, this information must not be relied upon as an alternative to the official Hansard record of proceedings of Parliament. If you have any specific questions about Part B of Proceedings of Parliament on **Monday 29 June 2020**, you should consult the official Hansard or seek assistance from the Office of the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly.

Monday 29 June 2020

PART B (1)

DAY 10

3:10pm

- I. **GOVERNMENT ORDERS OF THE DAY – Reading of Bills**
1. **SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION BILL No.3 2019/2020; and APPROPRIATION BILL 2020/2021**

GOVERNMENT RESPONSES cont.

Hon TUITAMA Talaelei Leao Tuitama, Minister for Women, Community & Social Development and Member for Aana Alofi No.1 East (Cont.)

In regards to appointing Sui o Tamaitai under MWCSO, the Hon Minister clarified that appointment is provided in the Ministry of Women Affairs Amendment Act 2009 s16A (1) 'Establishment of Sui Tamaitai o le Nuu'- Hon Minister elaborated that there needs to be a Women's Committee (as this is the Committee responsible to elect a Women Representative). The Hon Minister noted that the Office of the Attorney General is looking at the stipulations of the Act specifically at legitimizing the Women Representative within the Act. Furthermore, the Hon Minister asserted that villages who do not have a Women's Committee are not included in selecting a Women Rep. The Hon Minister emphasized that the change is to have only one committee assigned with overseeing health and hygiene issues of the village.

The Hon Minister noted that there are 84 villages with Women Committees for Savaii, and 119 women committees in Upolu. Hon Minister explained that the number of Committees exceed the number of villages which is a positive sign. However, Hon Minister stated that there is an imbalance in Falelalaga. Hon TUITAMA perceived that if each women committee has its own Falelalaga then this would also be another contributing factor for the development of our 'ie Samoa'.

The Hon Minister noted that the Ministry seeks to encourage Women Committees to have sub-committees tasked with the weaving of fine mats (Fale Lalaga) and noted that there is immense economic benefits from this development. The Hon Minister noted that the Ministry seeks to ensure all villages without a traditional ascribed authority especially in the Urban Area have a women committee. The Hon Minister noted that there are stipulations in the Ministry of Women Affairs Act which limit the jurisdiction of the Ministry thus plans to review this Act.

The Hon Minister refuted claims made by the Member and clarified that the Proposed Bill seeks to legitimize and Incorporate 'all' Women; it has no political agenda, rather to meet its personal motto that "No Woman is Left Behind". The Hon Minister stated that stipulations of the Act recognize the validity of a Candidate for the Woman Representative endorsed by the Church & Village; and urged the villages to select candidates based on their fitness and ability to work.

Hon FIAME Naomi Mataafa, Minister for Natural Resources and Environment, and Member for Lotofaga

The Hon Minister stated that she sought to add on to the proposed amendments by the Hon Minister. The Minister further noted that the Word "Komiti" is an English word and stated that this was borrowed during the era of the decentralization of health services (in reference to "Komiti Soifua Maloloina"/ Health Committees). The Hon Minister acknowledged the Minister for the statistics stated and requested that he closely examine the size of each Committee to village ratio. The Hon Minister requested that the Ministry look closely and note that there are 3 different committees including the (Saofaiga o Faletua & Tausi, Sa'o-ao, Tamaitai, Aualuma) which is considered as one of the significant committees within the faa-samoa. Hon FIAME stated that the term Komiti was ambiguous and not inclusive of all the aforementioned Committees for Women. The Hon Deputy PM stated that there are factors overlooked by the Ministry of Women when dealing with including all women.

LEALAILEPULE RIMONI AIAFI, Faleata West

The member queried when the Ministry will make good on his word, that no one is left behind; specifically in regards to women committees as he noted an appropriation of 1million in the budget for women committee's yet if women committees for unregistered villages (nuu-le-mavae) are not included then they will also miss out on this funding. Also commented on grants from foreign donors which are afforded directly to Non-Government Organizations, the Member suggested that funds need to go through Government to ensure fair distribution of funds.

MULIPOLA Leiatua Laki, Member for Aiga i le Tai

The Member noted that Manono is not classified as a registered village and requested the Minister to look into this issue. Moreover, the Member stated that the two isles of Manono & Apolima are not clearly set out as Savaii & Upolu especially when the Ministry reports its policies.

NAMULAULU Sami Leota, Member for Faasaleleaga No.2

The Member stated that there is a flaw in the ratio of Pulenuu to Women Representatives. He noted that Sapapalili and Fusi both have 2 Pulenuu and 1 Sui Tamaitai each.

Hon TUITAMA Talalelei Tuitama, Minister of Women, Community and Social Development (Cont.)

The Hon Minister noted the matter raised by the Deputy PM and used the word "Inclusivity" to accentuate the mandate with which the Ministry operates by. The Hon Minister expressed concerns on certain practices whereby the public are utilising drainage pipes as additional areas to grow crops and plants. Hon Minister called relevant authorities in the villages Village Council to look into the matter, because drainage were constructed for a purpose to reduce flooding, and it is certainly not for planting. Additionally the Minister clarified that hedges are not under his jurisdiction & clarified that this is under MWTI. The Hon Minister conveyed support with MP Leanaa's sentiments.

The Minister concluded by acknowledging his constituency. The Hon Minister recalled developments for his constituency; such as the opening of a new water source at Sapulu & stated that the Borehole drilling had elapsed two Parliamentary Terms. The Hon Minister stated that the total cost of the Water project is \$3.6 million.

Sapulu to Aleisa Road: The Hon Minister stated that this is in the pipeline for implementation at the end of the Parliamentary Term. The Hon Minister noted that all villages in his constituency have access roads.

3. Hon LAUTAFI Fio Selafi Purcell, Minister for Commerce, Industry and Labour; Public Enterprise; and Member for Satupaitea

The Hon Minister acknowledged the Executive, Chairpersons for respective Parliamentary Committees, 3 arms of Government, Samoa in her honorific salutations, and the Clergy. The Hon Minister noted that there are 9 Government Ministries & SOES under his jurisdiction: MCIL, Samoa Business Hub (SBEC), MPE, SHC,SLC, GCA, SSFA, Samoa Airways & ACC.

The Minister began with the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Labour and noted that MCIL's mission statement is to "Ensure favourable market conditions to stimulate business growth and employment" The Ministry is driven by 3 principles:

- 1) Development of Private Sector & Encourage foreign investment;
- 2) Encourage Industry Productivity & Fair Trade to ensure healthy and Competitive Market; and
- 3) Foster Employment for the Public to ensure safe & healthy working conditions for both employees and employers.

The Hon Minister reiterated that MCIL aims to foster and encourage an optimal market which is favourable for the Private Sector. He noted that there are also direct assistance from the Government for development of the private sector such as the \$200,000 appropriation for the Private Sector to encourage and stimulate growth and administration. Small private businesses also receive funding of \$4,000 to \$5,000 per year. The Hon Minister asserted that funds are appropriated on the spot and

followed by inspections and follow-up visits by the Ministry to ensure funds were utilized accordingly.

Hon Minister touched upon the Code 121 scheme by the Ministry to assist businesses with low earnings by offering duty concessions on machinery and equipments utilized by the business. (Duty Concession-aimed at fostering hospitality sector growth.) In regards to the Samoa Business Hub (formerly known as SBEC) the Hon Minister stated that the name change is due to the involvement of medium businesses incorporating as beneficiaries.

In regards to matters raised by certain Members of the House:

The Hon Minister stated that claims to use Development Bank's Covid assistance should be reconsidered as the stimulus provided through the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Labour is better. The Hon Minister commended and elaborated on the MSME - Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise which has assisted the Government through SBH for ease of access to financial assistance and other services to ensure growth; for instance, Guaranteeing amounts up to \$10,000 – this is convenient (transactions can be done on the phone) 80% guaranteed by Samoa Business Hub 20% guaranteed by the applicant.

In terms of investment, the Hon Minister noted that the Ministry is trying their upmost best to portray Samoa's market as a safe haven to attract foreign investments. Hon LAUTAFI stated that benefits from foreign investment has a trickling down effect to the community if foreign investors choose Samoa as a destination of investment. The Minister noted that the Minister aims to have a level playing field for both consumer & producer. (Consumer & Competition Act 2016) noted that this favours consumers as it ensures convenient prices. The Hon Minister recalled the Covid19 induced Panic Buying in Australia which correlates directly to the surge in prices & noted that Government then suspended the act momentarily & activated Price Control measures to enforce healthy competition and fairness and avoid abuse of suppliers/producers power to raise costs.

The Hon Minister noted that the Ministry is proactive and not reactive & then proceeded to call on the Public to notify the Ministry if there are any Shops operating with exceeding price ceiling. Hon Minister also informed the House that there will be improvements to the service with proposed plans to establish a toll-free line which the customer can ring to report any business charging too high for certain good (this will assist the Ministry to achieve effective monitoring and compliance). Reemphasized the importance of a healthy market economy.

In December 2019 – March 2020, Reports have provided that 438 shops were inspected spot-checked in accordance to prices & scales. Hon Minister noted that 307 inspections in Savaii & 131 inspections for Upolu had healthy levels of compliance in accordance with the 3 gauges: ensuring that prices are clearly provided on each product; having a receipt book; and a measuring scale.

The Hon Minister urged the public and customers to call the free line, as the inspection officer of the Ministry cannot work 24hours monitoring businesses to ensure suppliers adhere with policies. (emphasizing that collective effort is needed).

The Hon Minister also noted that a total of 3,000 individuals are employed under overseas schemes implemented by the Ministry (RSE Schemes). Hon Minister also commented on another scheme which Samoa has tapped into, that is carpentry. Hon LAUTAFI asserted that this is another positive as our people are recruited for this trade; providing employment

opportunities for our youths (this is a good prospect for Samoa). Seasonal works and Pacific labour schemes for Australia are other schemes that have contributed to providing employment opportunities for Samoa.

Hon LAUTAFI noted that Samoans are hired due to good manners, hard work, and being family oriented (these are the qualities with which they are gauged on for potential employment). Hon Minister also included the importance of the Village Council in encouraging the youths and teaching them lessons before leaving for New Zealand or Australia. The Hon Minister asserted that all employed under the Schemes are safe & sound. Moreover, the Ministry is currently in the process of talks for repatriating these individuals. Hon Minister assured that those employed under the scheme are encouraged to specialize in other areas such as tractor driving, growing crops while away on these employment schemes to enhance good skills that can be useful when they do come back, to develop their families and villages.

In regards to calls for Scholarships for TVET- Technical Skills; the Hon Minister noted that everyone is blessed with different talents (academically gifted) & (technically gifted). Noted the codependent nature of each specialization and noted that the Government seeks to develop Technical Skills (Apprenticeship).

The Minister accentuated the interdependent nature of all jobs in the betterment of the nation and stated that this was indeed Governments aspiration; to have local consultants to operate all development needs of Samoa such as being a plumber, electrician, mechanic etc. Hon Minister stated that development of technical skills assists with the development of infrastructure that contributes to the economy of Samoa.

The Hon Minister commented on the levels of apprenticeship: There are 2 levels; pre-apprentice scheme or have passed the level of school that offers such specialty such as; Don Bosco Technical School. The Hon Minister noted that there are special provisions for individuals whom persevere. The Hon Minister also commented on the establishment of the Manufacturing Awards- SAME- cited this as Governments assistance to the Private Sector to encourage the production/manufacturing of goods.

In regards to Intellectual Property, Hon Minister stated that Samoa is signatory to the International Intellectual Property Organisation which seeks to safeguard intellectual property of our nation. The Hon Minister noted certain local designs that were taken by Fiji, Tonga and other nations.

The Minister emphasized the importance of higher education which provides our children with more prospects in the future and in turn give back to the nation. The Hon Minister explained how fast children are learning daily such as development of Biomass and other new developed and renewable energy using organic resourced to produce.

**Proceedings were set aside at 4:46pm;
and resumed at 5:37pm.**

**Hon LAUTAFI Fio Selafi Purcell, Minister for Commerce, Industry and Labour;
Public Enterprise; and Member for Satupaitea (Cont.)**

The Hon Minister conveyed acknowledgement on the reform operated by the Ministry of Education and noted the main aim is to ensure that future generations benefit from the operations of today. The other issue raised by Members was towards the Samoa Land Corporation; Queries were towards what efforts were made by Government to assist low-income earners/families in the leasing of lands for development. Hon Minister stated that the Government has yet to inspect lands in Savaii, however, there are lands reserved for development of villages – noting that this is another means to earn revenue for Government through leasing lands. In regards to urban areas such as Vaitele, Saina, Fagalii, Vailele and Letogo - these villages are near town and are affected by the urban drift process (growth of town/urban areas due to the increase in number of people moving from the rural areas). Noted that there are 1/4 acre for \$35,000 to lease land within the above mentioned town villages.

In response to the Member who stated that there are unutilized lands (one member stated that there is 50 acres unused) and noted that the Ministry appropriates accordingly to the need. Hence the re-division of certain lands. In response to Namulauulu calling for Fiaga land to be appropriated, the Hon Minister clarified that the lands are currently under lease. Moreover, the Minister clarified that there is a loophole in the agreement stating if the land elapses 3 months and the Authority notices that there is no development, then the contract can be terminated. The Hon Minister further iterated that other leases in the area have a timeframe of 20 years. the Hon Minister reiterated the importance of working the lands leased.

The Minister noted Namulauulu's request to upgrade the road at Fiaga and stated that this has been conveyed to the Minister of Works. The road to Fiaga was repaired however due to heavy rain, the state has deteriorated thus it becoming an issue again.

In regards to Stimulus Package: the Hon Minister cited the wavering of leases for businesses as a measure implemented by Government for six months as well as SHC assisting with an interim of 3 months in loan repayment.

The Hon Minister noted that those whom are leasing at Fugalei Market had also been afforded a waiver. Furthermore, the Minister noted that the approval of leases is based on urgency (those whom are from Savaii & have no lands have a higher rate of acceptance). In regards to Dividends payable under the PFMA Act 2001: the Hon Minister noted that upon the inception of MPE the enforcement of Dividends Payable has been at an optimal state. Called the Public trading Bodies to pay dividend. The Hon Minister cited the rationale in dividends payable is to act as an incentive to acquire a profit. Furthermore, the Hon Minister noted the interdependence of Dividends payable & the lowering of Electricity & Water fees/charges.

FAUMUINA Faaolatane Tiatia Liuga, Member for Palauli le Falefa

The Member clarified his viewpoint and stated that dividends should be reinvested at UTOS to maximize returns and to ensure that even Cocoa Planters are afforded maximum profits.

LEALAILEPULE Rimoni Aiafi, Member for Faleata West

The Member noted that there are various public trading bodies who have been affected by the Covid 19, the Member then queried whether there was a plan by the MPE to help the public trading bodies in the payment of their dividends.

Hon LAUTAFI Fio Selafi Purcell, Minister for Commerce, Industry and Labour; Public Enterprise; and Member for Satupaitea (Cont.)

The Hon. Minister noted the clarification by Member for Palauli and reaffirmed he will look into this. Also stated that the UTOS is run as a company as it was form under the Companies Act. In regards to the matter raised by Faleata West, the Hon Minister noted his concerns and stated that a 'stress test' is conducted to determine whether Dividends should be paid or not.

Hon PRIME MINISTER - Clarification

The Hon PM noted that Dividends can be viewed as a challenge to the operations of SOE's. The Hon PM reiterated that this was the Genesis of the MPE to regulate the operations of SOEs and to ensure effective management of SOEs. Furthermore, the proactive approach of the Ministry to push SOEs to optimize operations in formulating principles are beneficial in the long term. Moreover, the Hon PM reiterated that dividends payable are an integral part of funding the operations and requests which Members are repeatedly raising in the House. Hon PM also emphasized that any surplus will be reserved to implement and complete other priority areas.

OLO Fiti Afoa Vaai, Member for Salega East

The Member queried an appropriation for SOEs which have been hindered during the Covid Financial Crunch (Samoa Airways & Shipping Services)

Hon LAUTAFI Fio Selafi Purcell, Minister for Commerce, Industry and Labour; Public Enterprise; and Member for Satupaitea (Cont.)

The Hon Minister accentuated the point made by the PM and stated that due diligence is implemented on those employed on the Board of SOE's to ensure an optimal state of operations for the SOE's. In regards to the query raised by the Member for Salega; the Hon Minister noted that there have been appropriations to ameliorate these effects as per stimulus package & reiterated that Government is looking at formulating the next course of action.

On the privatization policy, the Hon Minister cited the Agriculture Store as a success story of the policy.

In regards to the Samoa Airways, the Hon Minister noted that this is one of the affected sectors due to covid19. Furthermore, Hon Minister explained that since establishment of the Airline a net profit has never been attained. However, Hon LAUTAFI cited that if the gauge for progress is the acquisition of a profit then Samoa Airways has done excellent. Stated that this development is expensive and has been noted that it is very hard to earn profit. The

Hon Minister further noted that Samoa Airways now has 3 airplanes in its fleet & noted that the estimated time of arrival of the new plane is penned in for August. The Hon Minister noted that the usual trend for airlines is that it takes 5 years to acquire a profit & the unprecedented profit acquired in 2 years is testament that this is indeed a masterstroke investment. The Hon Minister noted that the Airlines compliment our emphasis on hospitality sector.

The Hon Minister noted that they have considered a suitable aircraft considering dry lease in order to provide employment opportunities for locals and highlighted majority of the airline staff have been dismissed while others are still working but claiming half of their normal pay. For instance, current flights between Samoa and American Samoa are in support to providing an input to retaining some staffs. The Hon Minister noted that the Airplane acquired had met all airline safety standards and is in a presumed optimal state. The Minister further accentuated that the Airplane acquired is affordable and guaranteed to make a profit for the Airways.

The Hon Minister cited 3 major events which resulted in the hindrance of operations of Samoa Airways

- The Hon Minister accentuated that Government had made the excellent choice in light of ongoing Market Factors (Covid19).
- The Hon Minister cited the Australian Bush Fires: lower flights from Australia
- The Measles last year and Covid19 the world is currently facing, which cause difficulties with the development of our Samoa Airways company.

The Hon Minister noted that irrespective of the aforementioned 3 events Governments stance is long term benefits post Covid19 - cheaper airfares in the long run.

Hon LAUTAFI noted that Samoa is proposing to collaborate with Fiji Airways but clarified that the process is costly. In light of sentiments by shareholders and noted that this is the proposal and will be implemented in due time. Noted that gauges of the Airlines success is limited if you factor in the age of the airlines. Noted that each visitor spent an average of \$2800 for 5 days.

The Minister quoted a report to the House providing the number of people to utilize the Samoa Airways approximately 37% of the traveling public while 81,000 is recorded for the Air New Zealand. 2800 Samoan Tala on average by travelling public. 187 million in revenue generated from Samoa Airways services in 2019. Hon Minister noted that the statistic Government looks at is the Revenue Generated.

Hon Minister requoted the PM's statements noting the spinoff beneficiaries of these developments fishermen, hotels, kava sellers to accentuate his point of the benefits incurred in the running of our own airline. The Member called on the Public to remain hopeful & place their faith in those responsible. Advised the Airport/Airline to consider setting flights during the period that are profitable; The Hon Minister stated that in regards to the operations of the SSFA and noted that maintenance is an ongoing issue to ensure the standard of the facilities are maintained.

The Hon Minister noted that there is continuous assistance from China & noted that the CEO is proactive & fluent in Cantonese, Mandarin & all dialects pertaining to China. The Hon Minister concluded by acknowledging his CEO's of his respective SOE's and Ministries & his constituency through its honorific salutations. Acknowledged the continuous support of his constituency as well as the elders listening in especially his mother for the silent prayers. Thank you and God bless.

5. Hon. FIAME Naomi Mataafa, Minister for Natural Resources and Environment, Member for Lotofaga.

The Hon Deputy PM greeted the House and those listening in through different media channels. In regards to matters raised by Members pertaining to her portfolio, the Hon Deputy PM stated that the majority of concerns raised were requests for developments to counter the impacts of climate change. The Hon Minister clarified that matters pertaining to Climate Change is decentralized to all Government Ministries, as it is a collective responsibility and therefore not specifically vested with one specific Ministry.

Hon Minister elaborated that there are two factors which contribute to climate change impacts:

1) Lowering of Green House Gas Emissions, which result directly to sea level rise. The natural disasters i.e Cyclones. The Hon Minister elaborated that weather patterns are unpredictable & calamities and their magnitude have increased drastically. The Hon Minister noted that Government is targeting renewable sources of energy and are aiming to move away from utilizing fossil fuels; also stated that STEC is looking at fuel acquired from burning plants.

In terms of mitigation the islands of the Pacific is focusing on energy to reduce gas emissions. Hon Minister elaborated on the importance of having different energy sources to ensure the supply is not affected when one source fails. Hon FIAME stated that Members mainly raised matters pertaining to seawalls and escape routes.

The Hon Minister proceeded to comment on the importance of collaboration between villages (DDP) as stated by Hon Tuitama to implement and ensure optimal state of affairs of the Ministry.

She then informed the House of a plan in place for all Ministries to support the following projects that in turn contribute to the overall mitigation of climate change.

- Adaptation fund- 8.5 million appropriated from 2012-2019
- PPCR (Pilot Program for Climate Resilience)- 16.6 million for 2013 to date.

The Hon Minister noted that the operations of the Ministry are sourced from funds appropriated from Government & Donor Grants. Hon FIAME noted that as evident with the two aforementioned projects Adaptation Fund & PPCA- the common theme is that projects are long term.

The Hon Minister noted that the role of mangroves in our ecosystem are to stem sea level rise and assist with the formation of new land. Hon FIAME noted that the monitoring & protection of Mangroves depend heavily on the monitoring of the Village Council (look after mangroves). In light of calls for solar street lights & place priority on areas with a high residential area and churches. In regards to old broken cars and old motor oils, there are places that the public can dispose these scrap.

In response to queries on the process for scrap metals raised by the Member for Faleata West the Hon Minister clarified that there is an Organisation tasked with the disposal of these scrap metals. The Hon Minister stated that this is a potential business opportunity & stated that there are 5 companies whom are tasked with the disposal of scrap metals.

LEALAILEPULE Rimoni Aiafi, Member for Faleata West

The Member stated that he lives next to a garage which has a substantial amount of scrap metal & stated that he has queried why they had not disposed accordingly. The response given was that the Scrap Areas are dysfunctional, then he called for a Hydraulic Press/ compactors to dispose of these metals.

LEAANA Ronnie Posini, Member for Safata West.

LEAANA noted that his request was for a seawall within his constituencies and it has been 20 years since this has been granted; the Member queried whether there was a certain process which the Ministry undertakes to determine which village/constituency is considered.

AUMUA Isaia Lameko, Member for Falealili West

The Member requested for a water catchment project for his constituency.

TAFUA Maluelue Tafua, Member for Aleipata Itupa i Lalo

In regards to Mangroves, the Member noted that there is a mangrove which breeds malauli-red snapper & requested to look into the protection of this area. Member cited the other mangroves have various functions which assist the marine ecosystem.

SULAMANAIA Fetaiai Tauiilili Tuivasa, Member for Vaimauga East

The Member noted that he mentioned in his speech requesting for a seawall in his village of Laulii, and therefore asked whether it is convenient to transfer the funds to them so they can start on such project. He then asked the Minister to prioritize the villages that are more vulnerable to sea level rising and climate change. Therefore requested that priority of appropriation be placed on the effects of the Climate Change.

Hon. FIAME Naomi Mataafa, Minister for Natural Resources and Environment, Member for Lotofaga (Cont.)

The Member clarified to the Members that the process is during consideration in detail where they can raise matters when each clause/allocation is considered not during the Ministerial address. In regards to calls for Seawalls, the Hon Minister noted that the approval process behind Seawalls is the protection of Government Assets i.e Roads. In regards to the request made by the Member for a seawall at Laulii, this has already been factored into the plan. Hon FIAME responded to the Members calling for seawalls to place emphasis on relocating inland. Stated that Sea Level Rise is imminent & proactive approach is needed. She then urged the Village Councils to plant more trees within the Falealili constituency that will contribute to the 1 million tree-planting advocate

**Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly set aside at 7:12pm;
and resumed at 7:47pm**