

DISCLAIMER

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Day 19
9:36am

Monday 15th February 2021

I. GOVERNMENT ORDERS OF THE DAY

1. SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION BILL (NO.1) 2020/2021- second reading & Debate on the Bill (cont.)

a) Hon TUILAIPA Dr Sailele Malielegaoi, PRIME MINISTER- Ministerial Statement

The Hon PM welcomed everyone and a new day of Parliamentary proceedings, acknowledged Samoa and its honorific salutations. He touched upon issues that affects Samoa due to Developed countries doings i.e. Climate change, Covid-19 & other diseases. He referenced the absence of other MPs to do their personal matters instead of attending Parliamentary proceedings and reflected upon his days as a public servant when his Ministry was called to Parliamentary committee he would make his way to report to committee but then had to wait for other MPs that are either at pubs or elsewhere to make their way to committee.

The Hon PM commented on the importance of attendance in the House, noted that this is the highest Maota in Samoa, which houses leaders elected by respective constituencies. He also noted the importance of the Village Council in maintaining law and order in the Villages. Noted the importance of planning for the future so as to have long term goals for the benefit of the people of Samoa and the generation to come.

Reminiscenced on the past 50 years and noted the numerous developments made since, such as raising the capacity of Members in the House and iterated that we are here to serve Samoa, to ensure we the leaders provide a 'better tomorrow' for generations to come. Hon PM noted when he was a public servant, and was summoned by the

Committee to come in and explain different development projects, whenever we were summoned the public servants would leave everything, and turn up before the Committee – upon arriving at the Committee room, he and his team would wait for hours so that the Committee would meet its quorum.

He noted since HRPP has taken the majority of seats in Parliament this Parliamentary term, HRPP MPs (who do not have government portfolios) are now doing the checks and balances of Government works making sure that the government of the day are held accountable by stating “Party checking the work of the Party”. He noted that Parliament only reflects and projects truth and whenever wrong statements are made then they should be corrected. Also, cases are referred to the Privileges committees to consider a case whenever wrong statements are being stated in Parliament.

Noted on those who publishes false statements towards Parliament may be referred to Privilege Committee to consider whether they need to be terminated or resigned from their duties. Mentioned the misleading statements made by certain Members who have gone out of their way to speak out to the vulnerable groups. He then asserted to disprove such comments by laying out improvements made in parliamentary proceedings, such as the scheduling of sitting dates 'sitting calendar' in the beginning of the year. Another improvement, was the Members Pre-Sitting briefing which affords the opportunity to MPs to raise queries (on the merits of the bills that are to be tabled in Parliament the following day) to respective CEO's. Hon PM mentioned past practices whereby, Bills would only be received and viewed on the day it is tabled in Parliament. Regardless of Pre Sitting briefings offered, there are certain MP's who do not want to accept the clarification of respective CEO's. Another development was the community wide consultation conducted by the Parliamentary Special Inquiry Committee to better inform the public of the true intentions of the three (3) controversial Bills to avoid ambiguity.

The PM spoke on the principles of 'good governance' as an important guideline for any organisation. Clarified on the two attributes of good governance: transparency and accountability ensures good governance - these all intertwine. Further stated that this is applicable to guide any organisation. Hon PM asserted that the reinstatement of any individual to their designation/post, is reflective of how well they performed while in office. (whether a contract has been renewed for any contractual officer, or the re-elected Member who has completed his/her term).

The PM stated that any Member, a Member of Parliament that instil in him/her the responsibilities that they carry especially to their constituencies, should perform the duties that they promised their constituencies that they would do. Hon PM asserted that it is envisaged the Government will thoroughly respond to all issues raised by Members this week, such as Government duties to ensure the development of Samoa,

the assurance that Samoa continues its efforts to combat covid19. He concluded his speech by stating, "fear not parliamentarians, God never abandons his people and those who do his will. As leaders "we have to play the role of peace maker" to ensure peace among our people in these trying political times.

MOTION TO TABLE MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Hon Faumuina Tiatia Faolatane Liuga, Member for Palauli le Falefa moved a motion to table the PM's Ministerial Speech;

Motion seconded and approved

i. LEALAILEPULE Rimoni Aiafi, ASSOCIATE MINISTER FOR MCIT & MEMBER FOR FALEATA WEST

Acknowledged the PM for his Ministerial statement and asserted that there have been numerous challenges encountered by the Hon PM yet he has never backed down. Mentioned the disappointment with the absence of the FAST Members in the House.

Member touched upon the statue of liberty and its representation 'light and peace'. The Member stated that his mother (who had recently passed away) showed him what a true reflection of a woman in leadership and he will always be grateful for the wonderful love she had showed him. Recalled his speech during Samoa College prize giving, whereby he tried to interpret the phrase 'an intelligent son, makes a father proud, while a weak daughter saddens a mother'. The member urged the youth of Samoa, to care for their parents lovingly and honestly for it is the only guaranteed life insurance.

The Member addressed Mr Speaker, the Leader of the House, Members, Samoa and its dignitaries and Heads of Government Ministries and Public Bodies present in the House. Noted that the paramount aim of the Maota is for a "peaceful and blessed Samoa". Mentioned the passing of fellow Parliamentarian, Vaafusuaga Toleafoa Ken Poutoa and conveyed sympathies to the grieving wife, daughter and family.

The member noted the importance of our upbringing as we were taught that the nicest words starts with 'F'. If you want something you say 'Faamolemole' and 'Faafetai' once you get it. The member stated the word 'Fealofani', Unity and the importance of unity of which it brings blessings. With unity a peaceful and harmonious people are born; posed the question, how then can we achieve a peaceful and united nation. He responded, through sound and stable leadership,

leaders in families, villages, churches, businesses, organisations, and the nation through our Prime Minister.

Stated that a stable and peaceful country is a product of strong and good leadership. The member stated that the first reason leading to a healthy and good leadership is when leaders believe in God of Samoa as per the saying (Samoa's Coat of Arms) 'Faavae i le Atua Samoa' 'Samoa is Founded on God'. The member noted the importance of the incorporation of Samoa's Christian beliefs in the Constitution in 2017. The Member elaborated that the inclusion of God the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit specified the GOD Samoa serves. Stated that countries like Fiji, New Zealand, Australia and other nations nearby are classified as secular states because they have numerous beliefs.

Proceedings were suspended at 10:53 am

Proceedings resumed at 11:43am

LEALAILEPULE Rimoni Aiafi, ASSOCIATE MINISTER FOR MCIT & MEMBER FOR FALEATA WEST cont.

The member continued his speech by acknowledging the recognition of communal rights in the Constitution Amendment Act 2020. The member commended how Samoa started as a Least Developed Country (LDC) and has now graduated and attained a developing status. Further stated that factors which must be determined to find the status of a nation are its indicators such as life expectancy rate, infant mortality rate, employer-employee relation, GNP and GDP, which are used by the donor countries for which aid assistance would be based on.

The member noted an increase foreign reserves evident from the increasing amount of revenue collected for churches in 2020. Infant mortality rates are static. Noted the services afforded to pensioners: free medical check-up, prescription fees waved, transportation to and from Savaii are also free of which he then noted that these services are not free and should not be taken lightly. In regards to Life expectancy rate in 2005 an increase in the number of 70 year olds living and shows the improvement in our life style and the way of living. Noted an increase of pensioners from 5,000 in 2011 to 11,000 to date. The Member acknowledged the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture (MESC) and noted an increase in literacy over the years. Made reference to Samoa College one of the best Colleges in Samoa yet students there are only required to pay \$40 fee annually. He then posed the rhetoric how can you pay only a minute of money for quality education. This is only afforded under this government.

Hon FAUMUINA Tiatia Liuga, MEMBER FOR PALAULI LE FALEFA

The member noted that the road in Samoa College is in bad condition and full of potholes. Work needs to be done.

Hon PAPALIITELE Niko Lee Hang, MINISTER FOR MWTI – Point of clarification

The Minister wishes to clarify a statement made by the member that free travel is only to Savaii and not Pago as the member stated. Clarified that he came into Parliament and that was the normal practice.

Hon TUILAEPa Dr Sailele Malielegaoi, PRIME MINISTER- Point of clarification

In regards to ease of increasing pensions the Hon PM explained that there are other complexities and variances that need to be done before an increase in pension can be done. He posed the comparable by stating, either to raise pension and reduce funds to other avenues such as education. Increments cannot be done until enough research is done. Reiterated the word "sustainable development" - continual development which guides the work of government. The Hon PM provided an example of a project that was temporary, Aid from Australia which enabled other students in government schools to attend school free of charge. This assistance suddenly stopped thus government moved in to cover this so that the initiative would continue. To date, a lot more students are afforded free education to which the privilege is afforded to some mission schools. Accentuated that the government firstly set out its budget for its major projects and see which sector to prioritise and whether it is possible to achieve it; instead of announcing that they can do this and that but do not have the budget for it as proclaimed by others, indirectly pointing to the campaign of other Parties pre-election.

LEALAILEPULE Rimoni Aiafi, ASSOCIATE MINISTER FOR MCIT & MEMBER FOR FALEATA WEST cont.

The Member noted that the appropriation given to the Ministry of Education for free education is close to \$50million. The Member spoke on the figures of employment rate in Samoa which shows an increase when comparing 2011, 50,000 employees and 2016 recorded 55,000 employees. The total number of contributors in NPF 2019 is more than 35,000 Samoa - this is important in terms of increasing contributors as well as more monies generated within the Fund, mentioned the 27million profit collected in 2019, and 66 million recorded profit in 2020 which shows progress.

The Member noted the impacts of the flooding on our people and the great response by the Government services to restore the electricity and water for those

families affected in a short period of time, this in itself reflects improvement of the services provided by our local workers.

The Member stated under the circumstances of Covid-19 and its effects, he stated that Samoa is in survival mode, food security, rehabilitating our grown crops and what we can get from the environment. Commended on the fact that Taro price has decreased to \$10 due to the increasing number of taro in the markets. The member stated the increasing number of taro in markets is a result of people's preparation for Covid-19 to ensuring food security in times of foreseeable struggle. The member noted that economies of the world are talking about 'survival strategies' especially in these unprecedented times.

Addressed the Minister of Agriculture & Fisheries and noted the decrease of costs for agricultural crops at the market, to which a consumer would be pleased, while the producer carries the cost, then queried the Minister of Agriculture whether there was any possibility that such products can be used at the SROS. He then stated the common challenge faced by the government and some of the Members in Parliament the spread of misleading information that causes hatred amongst our people as well as claims that they will give back the lands to the people if they were to be in power.

Hon TUILAIPA Dr Sailele Malielegaoi, PRIME MINISTER- Point of clarification

The Hon PM commented on the issue of taking of land and returning lands to its rightful owners; he stated that there have been recent court cases whereby the courts could not deliver a ruling to alter the ownership of lands which were made during German administration such as the lands in Siumu and Satapuala.

Recalled the time when HRPP came in Office, there was almost trouble at Faleolo, this is when people from a village that was not mentioned came and lived illegally on lands that does not belong to them. Police were armed and ready to defend these lands and residents there were asked to leave the lands. The response then was they will turn to ash on these lands. The Hon PM reiterated the importance of words, say things that you know you can do. At the end of the day, these people took down their houses and left the lands. The Government will not turn a blind eye on matters like these.

LEALAIPEPULÉ Rimoni Aiafi, ASSOCIATE MINISTER FOR MCIT & MEMBER FOR FALEATA WEST cont.

The member continued by stating that in regards to other parties in their campaigns proclaiming most things will be reduced when they come into power, clarified that such matter depends on our estimated revenue. Reiterated that 'little knowledge is very dangerous'.

Mentioned that there were talks about banning Facebook during elections to avoid and stop the spread of unrooted arguments on social media, and then noted that the party decided to continue as usual, as completed works speak louder than empty statements made by certain members, spreading misleading statements to the public.

Noted that any project implemented by government they firstly conduct their research to identify whether it is profitable; also consider the benefits from it and most especially how it will develop the economy of Samoa. He then commented on the plans to develop a wharf in Vaiusu and acknowledged the Government for this vision as it will benefit Samoa, more specifically the village of Vaiusu. Noted that there are 2 questions which need to be answered: (1) is it needed? (2) Who will benefit? The Member noted that from 2015-2019, a 70% increase of ferries and cruise arrived in our wharf; 30% increase of container vessels docked at the port and more than 300 fishing boats have been docked also at the port. These facts will assist members of the public to understand why the government has come forth with a project such as the Vaiusu wharf.

Hon TUILAEPA Dr Sailele Malielegaoi, PRIME MINISTER- Point of clarification

The Hon PM stated in regards to the matter of the wharf for Vaiusu, he stated that the Member publicly opposing the establishment of a wharf at Vaiusu does not understand these things and that he is not a Matai of Vaiusu and does not have any business regarding this matter. The matter has been in the government's plans for quite a while and has sought opinions of the high chiefs of Vaiusu.

LEALAILEPULE Rimoni Aiafi, ASSOCIATE MINISTER FOR MCIT & MEMBER FOR FALEATA WEST cont.

Noted that Vaitele was supposed to be the industrial zone and for all the markets, ports and other businesses. Supported Government's decision to stop its sale of government lands, as these should be kept for future development projects. The member advised the Clergy to not involve themselves with politics.

He then concluded by addressing his Constituency and expressed gratitude for the honour bestowed upon him to be uncontested in the upcoming elections. Acknowledged Mr Speaker for all his service to Parliament and Samoa. Acknowledged the Hon PM for all he has done for Samoa and stated the words 'when God calls on someone, only He can remove him ', you (referring to the PM) are God's blessing to Samoa. Acknowledged his Minister and Ministry, paid special acknowledgement to the Police, health workers for putting their life on the line for Samoa. Acknowledged his family and friends, especially his wife and

children for their never-ending support despite the ramifications that come with the title of being an MP.

**Proceedings were adjourned at 1:20pm
Parliament will again reconvene on Tuesday 16th February 2021 at 9am.**