

DISCLAIMER

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PART A

Day 26
9:21 am

Wednesday 24th February 2021

I. PRESENTATION OF PAPERS

- 1 Regulation was presented to Parliament:
 1. SR 2021/5, Immigration Act 2020- Notice of Commencement.

II. GOVERNMENT ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

- i. **Hon LAUTAFI Fio Selafi Purcell, MINISTER FOR COMMERCE, INDUSTRY AND LABOUR & PUBLIC ENTERPRISES cont.**

The Minister acknowledged the Speaker for presiding over the sitting throughout this Parliamentary Term. Commended the Speaker's patience whilst chairing every parliamentary session and wished him all the best for future endeavours. Acknowledged Hon Tuitama for his long service in Parliament and prayed for Gods blessings upon him.

Concluded by addressing his Constituency in its honorific salutations. Commended them for their constant support and for believing in him as it has strengthened his confidence to serve as their representative, posed the rhetoric 'a journey well shared is a journey

well enjoyed'. Acknowledged the Church Ministers and their wives from his constituency for their prayers and blessings and wished that God continues to strengthen their faith.

Praised his constituency for their ongoing support as it was reflected from his 10 years of being a Member of Parliament for Satupaitea. He added that throughout his term, the main focus was on projects that would benefit his Constituency, it includes the roads, the district hospital and the sport field and access road for some other villages of his constituency. Commended the fact that there are now doctors for his district hospital. Addressed the road works completed in his constituency, as well as sports field made in his constituency. Advised his constituency to utilise these developments wisely and develop the student's/constituency talents in sports. Stated also that well maintained public bathrooms for his constituency and by-passers have been established, a secondary school building with a hall has been done for his constituency. The access road for Vaega will be implemented soon. Rome was not made in one day and so he ensured other developments will be done eventually.

The Minister apologized for any shortcomings during this Parliamentary term as he did his best in doing what he promised them to do. Finally acknowledged the Lord for guiding him throughout his journey as a Member for Satupaitea and for continuously giving him the strength to carry out his duties effectively for the betterment of his constituency and Samoa.

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

The Hon PM noted that there are two issues he wishes to respond to. Issues that were raised by the Member for Salega East in yesterday's sitting:

- 1. In regards to the shortage of chicken meat in Samoa;*
- 2. Packaged goods in sacks particularly rice have been recently found contaminated with small debris.*

Suggests that there should be a motion moved to refrain the four members of FAST in Parliament from making misleading statements in public. He believes that these members took an oath in Parliament to speak noting but the truth but as depicted from their false accusations, it does not reflect that they take pride in the oath they took. PM commended that he would not let these kinds of false information air for our people because it creates misunderstandings all throughout the country and it can also create chaos as this information are simply un-true.

In response to the chicken shortage allegation by the member, the Hon PM stated that the government have enough funds to import different kinds of good for the people. Clarified that the government is not responsible for supplying or ordering imported chicken meat for the country as this is the responsibility of business owners. The only problem that would stop the import of chickens and stop any other transactions is when the government has no money left but we still have the money to import overseas chicken. Indicated that the shortage of chicken supply was also from misjudgement of orders (the business owners did not think it would run out that quick). Hon PM recalled only an instance when a shipment of goods for Samoa was stuck in Fiji because of the pandemic,

the government and the NEOC committee took an alternative to make sure that we have enough supply of chicken meat. We allowed the ship to still make its way, and policies were put in place to ensure that we have the products that we needed as well as protect those who were on duty from Covid-19.

In regards to rice contamination with debris, the Hon PM reassured that there are no complaints about it. There is no rice contaminated with rice. Hon PM then asserted the main reason why Government permits businesses to enter into Samoa is to create more job opportunities for our people. The Hon PM's response against the oppositions party accusation of Chinese businesses taking over local businesses as false. They are rather here to assist with our economy. Perceives that these issues are brought forth in Parliament by certain Members with the intention to ruin the government's reputation. However, he also urged Ministers to immediately correct these accusations so that others would not mislead our people.

MULIPOLA LEIATAUA Laki, MEMBER FOR AIGA I LE TAI

The Member made reference to statements stated in the House yesterday without supporting facts. Also made reference to the roadshow by FAST that took place in his constituency yesterday. Stated that false statements were made, accusations against him were also made. He was distraught the whole night last night because of the accusations made against government and him.

Hon LAAULI POLATAIVAO Leuatea, MEMBER FOR GAGAIFOMAUGA No.3

The Member for Gagaifomauga No.3 (propose leader for FAST Party) clarified that they only mentioned the name for the Member for Aiga i le Tai during their road show conducted in Manono Tai yesterday when they were queried by some members of the constituency on current Members in Parliament who had committed a crime. Emphasised that they did not intend to ruin the Member's reputation.

Hon TUILAIPA Dr Sailele Malielegaoi, PRIME MINISTER

The Hon PM noted that the Member for Gagaifomauga No.3 has been deceiving the whole of Samoa and has been doing this for years. Queried the leader of the FAST Party, why not take your roadshows to your own constituencies. Also argued that the three (3) Bills were passed by this very Parliament yet these members have made it their aim to spread wrong information regarding them, further emphasized that these should not be discussed in public as it has already been passed.

ii. Hon SALA Fata Pinati, MINISTER FOR SAMOA TOURISM AUTHORITY

The Hon Minister noted that his new constituency will be called Sagaga No.3 as a result of the change of the Constitutional boundaries; he then addressed Samoa and his constituency in all its honorific salutations.

He commenced on speaking on the Authorities under his portfolio:

- Samoa Tourism Authority

The Hon Minister noted that the Tourism industry has always been a robust contributor to Samoa's economic development, however due to the impacts of covid19 pandemic, 140 businesses including Resort owners, Restaurants, Rental operators, and others have been hard hit. The Minister asserted with the establishment of Samoa Airways, it has helped due to a decrease in the cost of air fares thus enabling competition.

The Minister stated that due to the Pandemic, a 30% decrease in the number of tourists coming in the country was noted. Despite the challenges, the Government remains a strong support to the tourism and hospitality sector. Accentuated that collective efforts will ensure Samoa continues to progress. Noted revenue earned in the previous financial years as well as the number of tourists as follows:

- FY 2014-2015

Tourist Visit: 133,070
Revenue Earned: \$347.5 million

- FY2015-2016

Tourist Visit: 146,105
Revenue Earned: \$385.1 million

- FY2016-2017

Tourist visit: 148,437
Revenue earned: \$387.6 million

- FY2017-2018

Tourist visit: 153,313
Revenue Earned: \$454.2million

- FY 2018- 2019

Tourist Visit: 178,564
Revenue Earned: \$514.1 million.

Noted the drastic earnings in 2019/2020 due to Covid-19 and the Measles outbreak with tourist numbers totalling at 124,359 and revenue earned was \$375.13 million. The pandemic affected a number of factors such as: 68.1% of employees were affected by Covid and measles whereby 276 employees were made redundant and a total of 1,071 employees were only afforded to work for 20 hours a week. About 1,774 remaining workers in the tourism industry by the end of the year 2020.

Stated that some signboards for some of the tourist attractions were made. Such as the Vae o Moso, Falealupo Canopy Walk, Afu Fuipisia, Fafa o Saualii, Vaisuatoto and Ana o le laauoleola at Falealupo, Mataolealelo at Safune, Ana o Tagata pupu'u and the Pe'ape'a cave at Paia.

Proceedings were suspended at 10:53am

Proceedings resumed at 11:48am

TAFUA Maluelue Tafua, MEMBER FOR ALEIPTATA ITUPA I LALO

The Member for Aleipata Itupa i Lalo suggested to move a motion for an additional day for the Hon Minister for Tourism to finish his response on issues raised against his Ministry. The member mentioned that despite the decrease in revenue earned by the sector as highlighted by the Hon Minister at a total of \$375.1 million in 19/20 from \$514.1 million in 18/19, the Member believes that this is still a vast amount of money especially in times of the Pandemic.

The member then advised the Ministry to look after and protect signposts for village addresses. Queried whether only \$100,000 is allocated to beautify and renovate beaches and suggested to increase the appropriation for such initiative.

Hon SALA Fata Pinati, MINISTER FOR SAMOA TOURISM AUTHORITY cont.

The Minister responded that the \$100,000 queried by Member for Aleipata Itupa lalo that there has been an addition to the \$100,000 for the said initiative. Touched on utilising Google Maps by tourist in Samoa for directions to certain accommodations. The Minister added that a total of \$913,000 tala was spent in developing the following tourist:

- Water fall at Palauli;
- Lava field at Saleaula;
- Ianuolaola cave Aopo;
- Waterfall at Sopoaga;
- Waterfall at Tiavi;
- Conserve area for clams at Savaia; and
- Palolo Deep.

Also stated that a total of \$1.3 million equivalent to \$760, 000 NZ dollars has been set aside for this financial year to continue the refurbishment of the following tourist attractions:

- Waterfall at Se'ese'e;
- Papaitai waterfall at Tiavi;
- Swimming with turtles at Satoalapai;

- Asaga Mangroves;
- Palolo Deep

Minister commented on the blessings that we have in terms of income that we get from Nature, tourist attractions.

Hon FAUMUINA TIATIA FAAOLATANE Liuga, MEMBER FOR PALAULI LE FALEFA

Queried that the Minister has not mentioned the Tourists attractions in his constituency such as papa ole faatolotologatama, maa sogi which he clarified that if one kisses it, good will come their way. The Member noted that he has raised the need for this tourist attraction to be further refurbished in several of his speeches. Queried the Minister whether this is included in his list of sites to refurbish this year.

Hon AUMUA Isaia Lameko, MEMBER FOR FALEALILI WEST

The member requested to the Minister to fix the Togitogiga Waterfalls and Puna o tala waterfall.

Hon SALA Fata Pinati, MINISTER FOR SAMOA TOURISM AUTHORITY cont.

The Minister stated that the request from Palauli le Falefa has been put forth a few years back however, there will come a time. Stated that the government is aiming to complete all the renovation works to tourist sites by July this year. Noted that STA continues to implement the Government's Stimulus Package at a cost of \$1million for tourism and hospitality.

The Minister stated that training has been carried out for employees in the tourism industry in communication and technology skills, cooking and hospitality; other trainings are scheduled for this month and next month for housekeeping skills and leadership and management. Promotions of Samoa as a tourist attractions are conducted by way of Newspaper, TV and social media. Awareness programmes such as Cooking programmes are also being rolled out. Noted that greater projects are in the pipeline to develop the industry, such as promotional programmes overseas.

The Minister noted that the Industry's target revenue for the last two (2) years was 1 billion tala unfortunately this was not achieved.

Hon TUILAEPA Dr Sailele Malielegaoi, PRIME MINISTER

The Hon PM stood to clarify on what the Minister had stated and noted that half a billion was achieved by the industry. The reason why the target was not achieved was a result of the Measles and the Pandemic. Noted that the industry is one that earns a large amount of revenue for Samoa as well as employment opportunities for our people. Tourist attractions are integral, the more sites we have, the longer tourists will stay in Samoa.

Made reference to developments to tourist attractions, these should be unique and only found in Samoa. No tourists would want to come to Samoa and see something that they already have in their homelands. Mentioned the Pulemelei pyramid at Vailoa Palauli which is the only highest pyramid made of rocks in the Polynesia as one of a unique tourist attraction in Samoa that should be promoted. He also stated that some sites are have cultural taboos such as the To Sua Trench. There are cultural boundaries in place but if they are not complied with, incidents occur. Took into account a number of death cases at the To Sua Trench and urged the Ministry to make known these cultural taboos to ensure tourists are safe.

The main reason why Teuila Festival was extended to a week was to ensure tourists stay longer in Samoa and spend all their money here. Urged for the continual practice of siva samoa and Samoan food to be served to tourists as these are unique, it is not found in their home countries. The Beautification program for villages was also done to attract tourists to go around the islands and see the beautiful villages of our country.

Noted that Government has requested Hotels to cut down their prices for our locals yet their response was slow. However once that request was done by the hotels, locals started flocking in and taking advantage of the service. Sports also is another tourist attraction. International meetings are another avenue that can pull more tourists in Samoa. Hon PM stressed that government is implementing a variety of projects so as to support this industry, such as road developments, kidney Foundation establishment, refurbishment of tourist sites and many more.

SALAUZA John Ah Ching, MEMBER FOR FALEATA EAST

The Member commended the cooking programmes aired on television, Kuka Samoa and Kuka Pacific. The main point here is that our local produce was used for all the recipes. Suggested that a Samoan cooking/recipe booklet in Samoan language should be collated.

AFOA Amituanai Faleulu Maui, MEMBER FOR PALAULI WEST

The member made known to the Minister that there are at least 8 hotel owners that request for extension in their loan repayments at the Development Bank of Samoa (DBS). Please consider these.

Hon SALA Fata Pinati, MINISTER FOR SAMOA TOURISM AUTHORITY cont.

Minister responded that they are not planning to close down hotels that have outstanding loan payments, as it is our culture to have love for one another and that is difficult to ignore. Added that if they could not pay their own outstanding's then it is their own problem and they will be given a chance to make sure that they can revive themselves. Stated that there are agreements and conditions that the hotels should

follow in regards to government assistance for the development of hotels. He acknowledged the letter from the Audit Office, expressing sincere thanks and acknowledging the thorough work of the Parliament and the Parliamentary Committees.

**Proceedings were adjourned at 1:05pm
Parliament will again reconvene at 6pm.**