

DISCLAIMER

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DAY 6 – PART A

9:28am

I. PRESENTATION OF PAPERS

A total of three (3) Reports were tabled in the House:

- i. P.P.2022/2023 No.144, Review of the Family Laws of Samoa, Final Report 25/22, Samoa Law Reform Commission;
- ii. P.P.2022/2023 No.145, Delegation Report on the 51st Presiding Officers and Clerks Conference in Melbourne, Australia, 4th-8th July 2022;
- iii. P.P.2022/2023 No,146, Delegation Report on the 65th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, Halifax, Nova Scotia Canada, 20th-26th August 2022.

II. GOVERNMENT ORDERS OF THE DAY - Reading of Bills

1. Supplementary Appropriation Bill (No.1) 2022/2023 – debate on second reading (cont.)

GOVERNMENT RESPONSES CONTINUES

- i. **Afioga Hon VALASI Luapitofanua Toogamaga Tafito Selesele, Minister of Health and Member for Vaisigano 2.**

The Hon Minister firstly acknowledged the Speaker of the House for the Morning Prayer to start the day. He then greeted all Members of the House and respective leaders for each Government Ministries and Agencies present in the House. The Hon Minister also acknowledged his Ministry, the National University of Samoa, the Oceanic University of Medicine and respective district hospitals. Further to his greetings, he acknowledged his Constituency; the incessant support of the Office of the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly (OCLA) to ensuring all procedures in the Chamber goes smoothly. He further expressed his gratitude towards all denominations for their support and to businesses that recognised his role through gifts given during the festive season.

The Hon Minister then emphasized that his Ministry is not included in the First Supplementary but all matters and concerns raised by Members will be considered. In this regard, he acknowledged the Members for their constructive feedback towards the Ministry’s operations. He then gave a synopsis on the following industry under his ministerial portfolio:

1) Oceania University of Medicine (OUM)

The Hon Minister stated that this University was established under an Act passed by the Assembly in 2001. He asserted that there are currently 19 students and consist three (3) female students who will be graduating in May at Brisbane, Australia where one of the females students to be graduated is the daughter of our Speaker. He then accentuated that this University is sponsored by a millionaire in United States of America (USA) to assist with the students fees. He further emphasized that all tax, NPF contribution, Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) together with the employee's salaries are fully paid from America. However, he asserted he received a request from the Dean of the University for an allocation to fund allowances for student's transportation as most classes are conducted in the evening.

) **Afioga PESETA Vaifou Tevagaena, Member for Faasaleleaga 5**

The Member for Faasaleleaga 5 emphasized that the issue with the qualifications of our nurses and doctors, is that they are not recognised in America and American Samoa. In this regard, he suggested whether it's time to use Americans curriculum system for our medical university in order to be eligible for these foreign opportunities. He further accentuated that this will pave a way for opportunity to the youth to be interested and be educated in the University as this will also enhance the standards of nurses and doctors.

Afioga Hon VALASI Luapitofanua Toogamaga Tafito Selesele, Minister of Health and Member for Vaisigano 2 (conts).

The Hon Minister clarified that the students who graduate from OUM can be employed in Australia, USA and New Zealand. He then emphasized that getting into this University is not easy as it requires commitment and hard work. However, he ensured the Member for Faasaleleaga 5 that his suggestion is noted and further responded on the following:

2) National Kidney Foundation (NKF)

The Minister for Health then acknowledged the Member for Aleipata Itupa i Lalo who requested for a dialysis machine to be placed in respective district hospitals. In this regard, he stated that there are ways to consider addressing this matter on the advice of the Ministry. For instance, to have a Mobile Dialysis Machine but emphasized that this is still under consideration as health requirements and patients conditions needs to be met and considered. He further asserted that it is intended to train nurse specifically for this service and have qualified technicians to fix and maintain the machines when needed. The Hon Minister also put emphasis on the request already submitted to the Hon Minister of Finance for an allocation to purchase 30 new machines.

The Hon Minister then stated that there are 25 dialysis patients at the Tuasivi Hospital with only 8-9 dialysis machines but assured the Assembly that this matter is referred to the Ministry for consideration. He also responded to a Member who raised a concern on the location and the price for dialysis treatment by emphasizing that Samoa only charges \$10 Tala for dialysis treatments which is cheaper when compared to NZ price which is \$1,200 NZD. He further stressed on the matter regarding overseas people wanting to go for a

check-up at the hospital that there's a form to be filled instead of walk-ins. He then reiterated that it is within the Ministry's pipeline of plans to have mobile clinics in the rural areas to ensure the service is accessible and convenient to the people but clarified that it requires numerous installments such as 10,000 litre water tanks and back-up generators. He further asserted that the Ministry also plans to provide a generator for respective hospitals.

) Afioga FUAAVA Suluimalo Amataga, Member for Aleipata Itupa i Luga

The Member for Aleipata Itupa i Luga acknowledged the Hon Minister clarification as he was the Member that raised a concern on the traveling cost of people in the rural areas who are diagnosed with dialysis coming to NKF for treatments but commended the Ministry for planning to offer a mobile dialysis treatment out in the rural. However, he is concerned with the challenges on this initiative as it requires 10K litre of water and must be dechlorinated and generators that are to be distributed to respective district hospitals will only last 10-20 years. He further stated that he was part of the Taskforce team who travelled to Singapore in 2005 to conduct studies on this matter and therefore suggested to have a stand-by machine incase an issue occurs to the main machine.

Afioga Hon VALASI Luapitofanua Toogamaga Tafito Selesele, Minister of Health and Member for Vaisigano 2 (conts).

The Hon Minister commended the Member for Aleipata Itupa i Luga for his clarification on the matter and then moved on to responding to District Hospitals requests:

) District Hospitals

The Minister for Health clarified that the Hospital at Saanapa has served for 35 years and was not leased. In this regard, he asserted that negotiations have been made for a land-lease to build a hospital on and this project is currently with the tender's board for recruitment process. He then accentuated that residence for nurses and doctors in respective district hospitals is in progress and are waiting for the successful contractors to commence their work.

In reference to the request for a hospital at Vaimauga, he responded that it is in progress and a request has been given to SLC for a land to implement this project. He further responded that the hospital planned for Matautu Lefaga has been moved inland as it was too close to the coast. He then urged Members requesting for district hospital to have it on paper so the Ministry can act accordingly.

) Susuga MAULOLO Tavita Aмоса, Member for Sagaga 2

The Member for Sagaga 2 acknowledged the Hon Minister for his response regarding his request for maintenance work for his Constituency district hospital. He further commended the Hon Minister for their long-term plans in place to improve existing hospitals and building new ones and emphasized that the governments plan is a collective responsibility to ensure we are well prepared especially when a new variant of the virus enters our country.

) **Afioga SULAMANAIA Fetaiai Tauiliili Tuivasa, Member for Vaimauga 1**

The Member acknowledged the Minister's response and the Minister for MNRE for providing them with land as requested. He then clarified that there were no request for dialysis machines made in the past parliamentary term as there were only a few patients if compared to high number of dialysis patients now. He then reminded the Minister his request for a hospital in his Constituency.

) **Afioga LEANA Ronnie Posini, Member for Safata 1**

The Member for Safata 1 acknowledged the Hon Minister's response regarding his request for a district hospital and will wait patiently for it to be implemented.

) **Afioga MASINALUPE Makesi Masinalupe, Member for Lefaga and Faleaseela**

The Member for Lefaga and Faleaseela also conveyed his appreciation to the Minister for approving a hospital at Lefaga as there was no hospital built in the previous parliamentary term.

Afioga Hon VALASI Luapitofanua Toogamaga Tafito Selesele, Minister of Health and Member for Vaisigano 2 (conts).

The Hon Minister continued with his response by stating that he saw the condition of the district hospital at Fagaloa during his site visit and the place is decayed due to poor maintenance and further asserted that there was no tender for this building. He then expressed his disappointment on the waste of money used for this building and therefore urged the Member for Vaa of Fonoti to provide a written proposal outlining the land and plans for their new district hospital in Fagaloa so the Minister and Ministry can consider and respond accordingly. The Hon Minister reiterated on the case to utilize this building as the Committee house but he rejected it as it was constructed especially for the hospital.

In regards to the Member for Anoamaa 1's request, the Hon Minister urged the Member to find an inland within his Constituency for their district hospital to be built on. He also gave assurance to the Member of Safata 1 that his request has been considered and was discussed with the Ministry of Natural, Resources and Environment (MNRE) for land to be used for a hospital at his Constituency. The Hon Minister then responded on a request for a generator at their hospital stating that there's already a generator but awaiting for main parts in order for it to work. He then reiterated on new generators planned to be given for each district hospitals and clarified to Members complaining about the performance of doctors to refer their matter to the Medical Council.

) **Tofa SEUAMULI Fasi Toma, Member for Gagaemauga 2**

The Member for Gagaemauga 2 clarified that the issue regarding the poor performance of the Doctor at his district hospital is ongoing hence bringing it forth to the Minister in order to be addressed forthwith. He then stated that the Vaipouli district hospital needs more staff as everything else is secured such as the building, electricity and water and

further urged the CEO of the Ministry to pay a visit at their hospital in order to observe on the issues he raised.

**Proceedings were set aside at 10:46am; and
Resumed at 11:28am**

Motion to Change Sitting Hours:

Afioga Hon TUALA Tevaga Iosefo Ponifasio, Acting Leader of the House, Minister for Customs and Revenue and Member for Gagaemauga 1.

The Hon Minister moved a motion to set aside Standing Order 32 as the House still has more papers to consider; therefore, proceedings will continue until 1pm and will reconvene at 2pm until 6pm.

Motion was seconded and approved.

Afioga Hon VALASI Luapitofanua Toogamaga Tafito Selesele, Minister of Health and Member for Vaisigano 2 (conts).

The Hon Minister continued with his response by informing the House that there is a container that imported 200-300 wheelchairs which arrived last week. This supply was mostly funded by the Pacific Cast Company in Australia and the Ministry intends to distribute 10 wheelchairs per district hospitals. He further urged the Members that they have the authority to solve minor issues instead of waiting for the Ministry and Minister. In the case of limited number of nurses, he emphasized that this is a global issue and the Ministry is collaborating with the University to provide scholarships for students under the nursing program. He then accentuated that a total of 80 nurses graduated last year which is an indication that there are people who are interested in this profession.

) Tofa Hon FAIMALOTOA Kiksa Stowers-Ah Kau, Member for Gagaifomauga 1

The Member for Gagaifomauga 1 commended the Hon Minister for his response but reminded him about the district hospital at her Constituency which they funded for. She then urged the Minister to prioritize renovating the residence of the nurses and doctor or whether it's possible to have the doctor's residence near the hospital for convenience. In reference to issues regarding the performance of doctors and nurses, she urged the Members that there's always way to resolve this and believes that it is within our customs to resolve issues through communications and respect.

) Afioga Hon LAUTAFI Fio Selafi Purcell, Member for Satupaitea

The Hon Member expressed his appreciation to the Minister and the Ministry for addressing issues raised and then requested to the Hon Minister for 10 wheelchairs for their district hospital.

Afioga Hon VALASI Luapitofanua Toogamaga Tafito Selesele, Minister of Health and Member for Vaisigano 2 (conts).

The Hon Minister asserted that residence for medical officers are in progress and clarified to Members requesting for this project such as the hospitals for Sataua, Safotu and Satupaitea for Savaii and Lalomanu and Lufilufi for Upolu that the status for their project is within the tender stage and are currently waiting for the successful bidders so these projects can be implemented hopefully by July. He then informed Members that there are Engineering Specialists who would focus on maintaining our district hospitals.

) **Tofa Hon FAIMALOTOA Kiksa Stowers-Ah Kau, Member for Gagaifomauga 1**

The Hon Member sought clarification from the Minister whether the district hospital in her Constituency is included in the list of 'in progress projects' as it was not called out in the list he called out. She further accentuated that it was mentioned in her main speech and whether it is considered by the Ministry so that her Constituency can be informed that the hospital will be renovated.

Afioga Hon VALASI Luapitofanua Toogamaga Tafito Selesele, Minister of Health and Member for Vaisigano 2 (conts).

The Hon Minister for Health assured the Member for Gagaifomauga 1 that their district hospital is within the Ministry's plans for renovations and then moved to respond on the status of Covid-19 in Samoa.

) COVID-19

The Minister emphasized on the importance of taking precautionary health measures to protect ourselves. He then asserted that he received reports on the new variant of Corona that is currently spreading in the foreign countries and informed the general public that we can be protected if we get fully vaccinated. He further affirmed that our vaccination can counter the new variants of Corona virus. In regards to the population status of vaccination, he stated 94% have received both vaccination and 65% already received their booster shots. He also asserted that the Ministry has 40,000 vaccinations in storage and are currently waiting for 30,000 boosters. In this regard, he urged the people to get their vaccination and booster shots done as the Ministry has enough supplies and encouraged Members to promote health precautionary measures within their respective Constituencies.

The Hon Minister then commended the Member for Sagaga 2 for being vigilant and proactive in offering school buildings and halls available to isolate people of his Constituency who were infected with the virus. He then asserted that he once advised the Director for the Ministry to re-enforce on all precautionary measures such as wearing mask in public places especially in large gatherings such as funerals. He then accentuated that ensuring all health measures are in place was a challenge as majority of our people were in compliant.

) **Afioga PESETA Vaifou Tevagaena, Member for Faasaleleaga 5**

The Member for Faasaleleaga 5 interjected to commend the Hon Minister for his encouragement to re-enforce wearing mask.

Afioga Hon VALASI Luapitofanua Toogamaga Tafito Selesele, Minister of Health and Member for Vaisigano 2 (conts).

The Hon Minister then emphasized that being a leader; we are to be proactive, be at the forefront of activities and setting good examples to ensure things will fall in place.

) Tofa Hon LAUOFO Fonotoe Nuafesili Pierre Laufo, Member for Anoamaa 2

The Hon Member commended the Minister for Health and his Ministry for their incessant efforts in ensuring our people are well informed on the importance of taking precautionary measures to prevent Covid19. He then mentioned the upcoming International Conference we are hosting and queried whether we are prepared to host and whether it's possible to enforce requirements similar to overseas countries such as ensuring to getting all their booster shots taken. In this regard, he noted that there are countries with 5 vaccinations already and whether our Ministry intends to offer a third booster shot as we have only rolled out 2 booster shots.

Afioga Hon VALASI Luapitofanua Toogamaga Tafito Selesele, Minister of Health and Member for Vaisigano 2 (conts).

The Hon Minister assured the House that the Ministry are prepared to offer its service when Samoa host this Conference. He then emphasized to the Member for Anoamaa 2 that only 35% of the population has yet received their boosters shots and there will be no 3rd booster shot rollout for the people.

) Tofa Hon LAUOFO Fonotoe Nuafesili Pierre Laufo, Member for Anoamaa 2

The Hon Member emphasized on the importance of getting your booster shots as there is a timeframe on its effectiveness hence his query whether the Government has plans to rollout a 3rd booster shot for the people to assist with our immune system when another virus spreads.

Afioga Hon VALASI Luapitofanua Toogamaga Tafito Selesele, Minister of Health and Member for Vaisigano 2 (conts).

The Minister for Health clarified that the vaccines we have are supplied from foreign countries and are the same vaccine they use. He then reiterated that 65% of the population has had their booster shots and the Ministry aims to get the remaining 35% of the population to take their booster shots. He then called on requests put forth by Members that was not addressed in his response to submit their request on paper and submit it at his Office and will provide a response accordingly once received.

The Hon Minister then acknowledged the work and the commitment of his Ministry for ensuring our country is safe especially the doctors and nurses. He then urged the Ministry to support their new appointed CEO.

The Minister then informed the House and the public that the Ministry now conducts its site visit in two days for all district hospitals; one day for Savaii and one day for Upolu. This inspection initiative is to ensure all supplies are in stock and everything needed for the hospitals are

provided accordingly. He then concluded his response by acknowledging his Constituency and his family for their support.

ii. **Tofa Hon OLO Fiti Afoa Vaai, Minister for Works, Transport and Infrastructure and Member for Salega 2.**

The Hon Minister addressed all Members of the House, the Hon Speaker and Samoa in all her honorific salutations. He then acknowledged the OCLA and their service and addressed all CEO's in Government Ministries and Agencies as well as the Private Sectors.

The Minister then asserted that all issues and concerns raised by Member towards his Ministry are noted and accentuated that although the Supplementary has no allocation for his Ministry, he did not neglect the Members requests put forth. In this regard, he emphasized that any issue or concern raised by Members, it is their routine to inspect the areas mentioned by Members so that the Ministry can take appropriate actions and to consider on what projects that needs to be prioritized.

The Hon Minister then provided synopsis and response to the following Agencies under his ministerial portfolio:

❖ Samoa Shipping Corporation (SSC)

The Minister expressed his appreciation towards Cabinet Ministers and Members for their support to the Corporation during the festive season.

The Hon Minister then clarified that high cost of living emanated from the changes in prices of transportation. For instance, freight prices have increased from \$3,800 to \$7,580 for a 20 ft container and \$9,000 to \$13,280 for the 40 ft container. In this regard, it led the Ministry to consider looking at purchasing a cargo ship for our country. He further stated that the Ministry have conducted its research and will provide a proposal for this cargo ship and once its approved, he emphasized that it will be operated by our own people as we now have eligible sailors that we can recruit. He further accentuated that a total of 435 of our people have been employed in foreign companies as seafarers. The Minister clarified that this has contributed in the high remittances reported in our country and further stated that this was one of the essential industries that continued its operations during the lockdown. He further emphasized that having our own cargo ship will be beneficial to our country. The Hon Minister then asserted that the Ministry intends to replace the Fotu Samoa vessel that transport between our country and American Samoa and Tokelau.

❖ Samoa Airways

In reference to a suggestion put forth by a certain Member for direct flights from Samoa to NZ, he clarified that this can be implemented once we have a joint venture with the Fiji Airways and urged the responsible Minister to look into this matter.

❖ Samoa Airport Authority (SAA)

The Hon Minister then asserted that a total of 121,547 visitors/tourists have visited our country ever since borders re-opened in August 2022. The increase numbers of visitors also emanated

from the increase number of flights as there were 4-5 flights on a daily basis which never happened before.

The Minister then stated that the Authority garners its revenue from landing fees and airspace above 244ft which is more than a million every year and \$200K from lower airspace (under 244 ft). He then accentuated that the delay in flights as raised by a Member during the festive season, it was due to rearrangements made by the Airline on their flight schedules as there are only two (2) Belt Loader machines used for loading and unloading of luggage.

The Hon Minister then accentuated that the primary goal of the Government is to gain more partnership with multiple Airlines in order to present a competition between the airlines so prices can be decreased and affordable.

❖ Samoa Ports Authority (SPA)

The Hon Minister responded to a request by a certain Member regarding the wharf at Satitooa, he accentuated that Port was not included under the Ports Amendment Act that was recently passed but assured the Member that the Ministry will look at ways to develop this wharf. In regards to the request for the wharf at Manono Island, he clarified that the Ministry only intends to improve current wharfs and not operate them. He further accentuated to the Member that the Constituency is responsible in maintaining and renovating the lounge or waiting area for their ports.

In regards to Cruise Ships, the Hon Minister asserted that there have been a number of cruise ships that arrived in our shores which was also within the plans of the Government of the Day. He then asserted that there are six (6) cruise ships scheduled to arrive next month which paves a way for opportunity to earn revenue. In this regard, he urged the small businesses such as the retail shops, handicrafts and street vendors selling coconuts to be vigilant as they can benefit from tourists on the cruise. He further emphasized that this contributed in the 4.7 increase of our economy and urged our wholesalers to stock up their meat supplies as some cruise ships orders meat for the people on the ship which can be a source of revenue for our country especially wholesalers.

) **Afioga FUAAVA Suluimalo Amataga, Member for Aleipata Itupa I Luga**

The Member for Aleipata Itupa I Luga asserted that the Aleipata Port was not included under the amendment passed by the Assembly and accentuated that there are two Constituencies that manages the wharf at Satitooa. Furthermore, he asserted that the workers for this wharf were affected ever since the amendment Act was passed and enacted but the workers are in need of income to provide for their families. In this regard, urged them to apply for the RSE Scheme but unfortunately, it is now on hold. He further noted that the Port in his Constituency was not included in the Ministers list of projects to be considered and queried whether there is a company that is interested in utilizing the slipway at Aleipata.

) **Afioga NIUAVA Eti L Malolo, Member for Vaisigano I**

The Member commended the Hon Minister for acknowledging his request for the wharf at Asau as he believes that it will be beneficial for the Savaii.

Tofa Hon OLO Fiti Afoa Vaai, Minister for Works, Transport and Infrastructure and Member for Salega 2 (conts).

❖ Samoa Water Authority (SWA)

The Hon Minister asserted that 89% of the country has access to water and clarified that the remaining percentage is under private areas and these areas are easily damaged by heavy rainfall or drought. He then urged the general public to register their water at SWA and install meters to ensure the water they consume is safe and hygienic. He further called upon the independent water scheme owners that it is not too late to change their water supply to SWA. He also called upon the Member for Gagaifomauga 1 that the people residing at Manase are convinced to change from Independent Water scheme to government water supply through the Authority.

) **Tofa MAUU Siaosi Puepuemai, Member for Vaa o Fonoti**

The Member for Vaa o Fonoti that the independent water within his Constituency is under their supervision but recommended the people in his Constituency to opt for the Government water supply by installing the meters as it is guaranteed that it is filtered water.

) **Afioga LUPEMATASILA Galumalemana Tologata Togia Tile Leia, Member for Falelatai and Samatau**

The Member for Falelatai and Samatau clarified that the Independent water located at Pata cannot cater for all the people residing in Pata and Matautu.

) **Susuga Hon MULIPOLA Anarosa Ale Molioo, Minister of Finance and Member for Palauli 1**

The Hon Minister asserted that the two villages in her Constituency namely, Salailua and Siutu have completed installing meters for water supplies. She further noted that part of her Constituency is under the Independent Water Scheme and asserted that the water is unfiltered at times. She then requested the Authority to filter their water and urged the Authority to conduct filtration service for their water.

Tofa Hon OLO Fiti Afoa Vaai, Minister for Works, Transport and Infrastructure and Member for Salega 2 (conts).

The Hon Minister accentuated that the Ministry will conduct its inspection visit this Friday and will act according to the law for the water at Siutu as they prioritize the health of our people. He then clarified that the shortage of water supply emanated from drought and the Ministry is looking at ways to address this issues in order to continue providing sufficient water for the people. He also urged the public to refrain from cutting down too much trees as it is also a contributing factor to water scarcity.

Proceedings were suspended at 1:10pm and will reconvene 2:00pm.