

**DISCLAIMER**

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**PART B**

**Day 28**  
**6:18pm**

**Friday 26<sup>th</sup> February 2021**

**I. GOVERNMENT ORDERS OF THE DAY**

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

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE**

**1. Afioga Hon TIALAVEA Fea Leniu Seigafolava Tionisio Hunt, Minister for Customs and Revenue (cont.)**

The Hon Minister continued and stated that by the end of 2016, there were 628 prisoners recorded for the Tafaigata prisons. Furthermore, the Hon Minister noted that it was also in 2016 that he and the Associate Minister sought the advice from the Chief Justice regarding the growing number of prisoners. The Hon Minister also noted that at the end of 2017 towards the beginning of 2018, there were 324 prisoners recorded; from that amount 304 prisoners were released as they were currently being held at the prison facility to await remanding. Further to this, the Minister stated that the Prisons Services used full authority of parole for prisoners who have recovered while serving their time. The Minister noted that in 2018 a training needs analysis report was conducted to identify the capacities which needed improving for prisoners.

In 2019, the new prison facility was officially opened in June; relocation of prisoners from Tafaigata to Tanumalala; construction work for the Vaiaata Prison commenced; commenced community cleaning project by the juveniles at Oloamanu Centre. Increase of employees to 138, total count of prisoners were 78, programs implemented 48.

In 2020, the Administration block completed; recording a total of 145 staff and 278 prisoners. The Hon Minister noted the offices which were constructed at the Tanumalala Prison, including Warden Office, Tower, fence, isolation cells to house prisoners who are high risk, Corporate Service Office, Generator, Water tank, separate rooms for the ladies and males. Hon Minister mentioned the appropriation of 20.7 million for the Tanumalala prison which was solely funded by government. The Hon Minister noted programs that were conducted for the prisoners' rehabilitation to avoid these individuals from reoffending when they are released and integrated back into the community. The Hon Minister also mentioned the Matimati program specifically for inmates over 60 years old.

The Hon Minister highlighted that in March 2020 prisons was administered by the Ministry of Police – then highlighted occasions whereby security assistance was executed by the Ministry of Police, such as: The Ao o le Malo sworn in service in 2017, Rt Hon. Jacinda Ardern's diplomatic visit, President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints visit, road blockage at Luatuanuu, diplomatic visits by officials and the overall security of the public.

- **Afioga OLO Fiti Vaai, Member for Salega East**

The Member noted that he spoke on the issue of national security, and made mention of the morgue in Motootua holding corpse awaiting the pathologist to confirm the cause of death. The Member asserted that the usual process provides for corpse to be held for only 72hours; and then queried the status of the Nafanua vessel, whether it was fixed

***Hon Prime Minister – Clarification***

*The Hon PM clarified that the matter raised by the Member for Salega East is not a matter pertaining to the Ministry of Police and Prisons, rather the Ministry of Justice and Courts Administration as they hold the authority of what can be done.*

**Afioga Hon TIALAVEA Fea Leniu Seigafolava Tionisio Hunt, Minister for Customs and Revenue and Member for Vaa o Fonoti (cont.)**

The Hon Minister clarified that the Nafanua has a minor problem and the part needed has been ordered; he then asserted that traffic matters, registration and licensing of vehicles has been transferred to the Services of the Ministry of Police. In 2015, 665 employees were recorded for the Ministry and in 2020 it has been increased to 703 with an increase of 38.

In regards to revenue collection:

In 2016-2017 projected revenue- \$353,160,000 (collected revenue- 524,145,000)  
profit- 170,985,000

2017/2018: projected revenue - 353,160,000; collected revenue - 427,1528 (profit-  
74,368)

2018/2019: Projected- 353,160,000; CR - 472,053,000 profit- 118,1893

2019/2020: Projected- 622,705,000; CR - 1.8 million profit -385, 605, 00.

2020/2021 (first 6 months- July to Dec 2020) 15,590,086; Collected revenue  
after 6months = 7,795,293.77

The Hon Minister noted the increase in crime each year and that records also assist the officers to look at ways to decrease the numbers in the country. Hon Minister further noted that they have conducted capacity building for police officers to better inform and educate the officers on their mandated legislation and the overall protection of Samoa. Furthermore, the Minister noted the use of drones in search and raids conducted by the Ministry in efforts to protect the officers especially in dangerous circumstances. Hon Minister mentioned the Partnership with NZ to review its organisational structure to ensure easier flow of operations and communication.

Hon Minister called out the Police Out Posts for Upolu and Savaii:

- Stations in Upolu, at Tuanaimato; Afega; Faleolo; Lotofaga; Poutasi; Lalomanu; and Vaitele.
- Stations in Savaii, at Tuasivi; Fagamalo; Asau; Vaitoomuli; and Salelologa.

The Hon Minister also noted that 4 acres of land has been developed at Salelologa to shift the Tuasivi Station which is anticipated to commence this year. Further noted collaborative efforts between the Government of Samoa, the Australia Police and the Australia Defence Force to assist the Samoa Police in training and equipment useful to effectively carry out the duties of a police officer. The donation of instruments for the Police Band from the Government of China, donation of vehicles, bikes, that were used at the time of the Pacific Games. The Hon Minister noted that the Vaiaata prison is currently in the pipeline of the Ministry; new police station at Salelologa; installation of parking meter machines in Apia.

The Hon Minister mentioned the Police Academy project which is funded by China and will be located at Tafaigata. It is envisaged that the Academy will provide police recruits the opportunity to be educated and trained in how to effectively carry out their policing role and keep themselves physically fit.

The Hon Minister acknowledged the Commissioner of Police, Prison and Correctional Services and the Ministry, he also acknowledged the previous Prison Commissioner who served from 2014 until early 2020 and others who have served in the Ministry, for all their hard work and efforts during the parliamentary term. He then acknowledged the current Commissioner Fuiavaillili Egon Keil and his leadership, and the management and staff of the Ministry.

***Hon Prime Minister - Clarification:***

*Hon PM clarified on the Police Academy and the process and negotiations for its location, Hon. PM noted that this project is funded by China as a grant. After negotiations they agreed to build this Academy at Tafaigata where the old prison was located and is expected that this project will commence in March 2021. Spoke on the new Prison facility and asserted that another purpose of relocating the prison to Tanumalala was owed to plans to establish a township from Vaitele to Tafaigata in the future, and therefore the relocation was necessary. Hon PM affirmed that the new prison is safe and any inmate who wishes to escape will be lost in the forest surrounding this new prison.*

*The Hon PM also noted that there are plans to relocate the Police station at Tuasivi to Salelologa and further clarified that this will provide convenience and ease of access for the people travelling from rural areas.*

• **Hon FAUMUINA Faaolatane Tiatia Liuga - Member for Palaui le Falefa**

The Hon Member noted that he also supported the importance of an academy to hone the skills of our constables and for those who are sent overseas for peace keeping missions as this generally contributes to improve Samoa's revenue.

***Hon Prime Minister - Clarification:***

*The Hon PM mentioned Government's intention to increase Samoa's contribution by 50% from \$8,000 to \$12,000 for its peace keeping efforts to East Timor. He also noted that the Police sought training assistance for foreign partners. A total of 20 constables were able to apply for this training (noted the low number was due to statement made by a certain Member which questioned the plausibility of the program, therefore made some officers hesitant to attend the training). However, when the 20 officers returned home, they were able to afford new cars and build new homes for their families. Following the first training, there were more than 100 constables that applied for this training as they realized it will help develop their families.*

- **Tafua Maluelue Tafua - Member for Aleipata Itupa Lalo**

The Member stated that the East Timor project was one which helped with the development of Samoa's economy, noted that he travelled often to NY the past years and came across a police officer from Aleipata who sat the exam and was fortunate to be employed in the UN. Afioga TAFUA stated that these opportunities have helped not only in peace keeping missions but also develop and build the skills which can be used in security jobs, police officers or FESA. The Member suggested that the Police Academy should be open to train both the Police, Firefighters and security officers within the country.

- **LEALAILEPULE Rimoni Aiafi - Member for Faleata i Sisifo**

The Member noted that the challenge faced by the Ministry of Police is in regards to controlling cybercrime on social media and the increase in drugs and illegal substance coming into Samoa. The Member then proposed training to ensure the police are well equipped and knowledgeable regarding these new crimes as well as to have a ICT and SWAT team assigned specifically to investigate matters as mentioned above.

**Afioga Hon TIALAVEA Fea Leniu Seigafolava Tionisio Hunt, Minister for Customs and Revenue and Member for Vaa o Fonoti (cont.)**

The Hon Minister spoke in regards to illegal drugs and asserted that it is not easy to locate these illegal substances, but the Ministry will continue to work in reducing these substances from entering and circulating in Samoa. In reference to cybercrime, the Hon Minister responded that the establishment of the academy will hopefully rectify the issue with the support of the MCIT who have people with the skill and knowledge to identify those who contribute to this crime on social media. The Hon. Minister posed a challenge to the Commissioner and staff to have the Vaiaata Prison opened in March 19, 2021 and noted that Vaiaata prison helps by providing food for those at the Tanumalala prison.

***Hon Prime Minister - Clarification:***

*The Hon PM noted that he advised to abolish capital punishment in 2004 and noted that the Roman and Arab punishment uses 'death by sword'. As for Samoan punishment- we use our words, and this is the most dangerous weapon as words are equivalent to the sword which some countries use emphasizing that words can burn, hence why village matai's and faipule are strict with village rules and regulations.*

**Afioga Hon TIALAVEA Fea Leniu Seigafolava Tionisio Hunt, Minister for Customs and Revenue and Member for Vaa o Fonoti (cont.)**

The Hon Minister spoke on the Ministry for Customs and Revenue and noted that the Ministry have three corporate objectives:

- i. collect government revenue from duty fee, tax and licensing alcohol
- ii. Custom duties and clearing of overseas loads and goods
- iii. Preventing illegal firearms and drugs from entering the country.

Future aspirations of the Ministry:

- Continued partnership through compliance
- Employees to be honest, have the integrity to enforce their service and be knowledgeable.

**Proceedings were suspended at 7:55pm**

**Proceedings resumed at 8:46pm**

**Afioga Hon TIALAVEA Fea Leniu Seigafolava Tionisio Hunt, Minister for Customs and Revenue and Member for Vaa o Fonoti (cont.)**

The Hon Minister continued by noting the 2016/2017 achievements:

491.7 million (Projected Revenue) – Collected Revenue was 511.3million; noting an increase of 9.1 million. The Hon Minister expressed gratitude to the Lord for His Divine guidance and commended tax payers and other businesses for complying with the policies of the Ministry. Hon Minister mentioned the mandated legislation of the Ministry in 2016/2017:

In June 2017 – Tax Amendment Act which provides for the HOS and church ministers to pay tax. Then commended the different denominations for paying their taxes. The Minister elaborated that the rationale of the amendment is to ensure collective efforts of all those earning an income to contribute to the overall development of Samoa. Hon Minister noted that it was also during the FY that the legislation for businesses to pay tax on export goods and the Excise Tax on alcohol above 3%-6% volume and food affecting our health were passed by the Parliament. Furthermore, the increase of business license from \$500 to \$800 and passed amendments on capital gain expense. In December 2016 – December 2018: review on compliance of tax payers. The Hon Minister mentioned efforts to provide and keep clear and accurate records to ensure the overall improvement on monitoring illegal items in customs; the Minister noted that the IMF and NZ assisted with the Ministry's efforts to achieve this. There was also mention of the

assistance by the NZ government in providing tools to improve the overall services of the MCR.

In the FY 2017/2018:

The Hon Minister noted a 14 million decrease in collected revenue. He then commended the Ministry for their services and spoke on the Tax Credit incentive afforded to the Hotel Industry to assist with the development of the tourism sector as Government understands that Tourism has been a major contributor in Samoa's income. Hon Minister stated that this incentive commenced in 2003 and completed in 2018. The total of 132 million worth of tax incentive; 80million has been used while 33 million remains and should be utilized by 2030. The Hon Minister commented on the importance of the renewable energy drive by Government which the Ministry continues to uphold by reducing the duty imposed on renewable energy from 20% to 5%.

The Hon Minister mentioned that in September 2017 a Pacific Island Tax and Administration Association Forum was held in Samoa. This meeting consists of 15 Pacific nations which come together to discuss issues of non-compliance, there were 16 staff representatives present and 50 members from the Pacific region attended. There were 30 matters of illegal substances which were sniffed out by K9 dogs and requested to the Minister for Finance the need for 2 more K9 dogs for the unit to assist with the role in detecting illegal substance and ensure it does not enter Samoa. The Hon Minister noted that there were 2 joint audits conducted which discovered more than 2 million worth of taxes which have not been collected, and affirmed that these amounts have since been collected by the Ministry. There was also mention of a regulation to regulate the manufacture year applicable to be imported into Samoa and also to allow the importation of vehicles from other overseas companies

In the FY 2018/2019:

530million Projected Revenue, 551.6million Collected Revenue; with a notable 100.4% increase of 21.4million. He then noted the legislation passed in 2019 to reduce excise tax on alcohol sprits. In 2018 the amendment to provide for the film incentive to allow the Survivor series to be filmed in Samoa. Hon Minister noted that in 2016/2017 Cabinet restricted the manufacturing year for vehicles to be imported into the country. In 2019 Cabinet approved the change of the Ministry's name from Ministry for Revenue to Ministry for Customs and Revenue to reflect the services offered. There was mention of the Pacific Leadership Program which included 15 staff representatives from various ministries, such as the Ministry of Police, Ministry for Finance and Ministry for Customs and Revenue.

In the FY 2019/2020

527.7million Projected Revenue, 551.3 Collected Revenue; however the projected revenue reduced to 517.7 due to the impacts of covid. The Hon Minister noted developments made to the legislations pertaining to the Ministry. The Asia Development Bank procured a heavy duty scanner for the Ministry to easily detect any illegal substance brought into the country. Additionally, the Minister noted a signed contract between the Ministry and the Data Tech International (Serbian Company), for TIMS programme (Tax Invoice Monitoring System) to increase tax compliance and reduce hidden earnings and avoid tax evasion.

***Prime Minister – Point of Clarification***

*The Hon PM noted that the revenue generated for Samoa relies on Tax and Tariffs, and clarified that the country and the Government relies solely on tax, therefore any person raising the matter of changing taxes is playing with fire and has indirectly started a war. Also stated that all countries' value taxes because this is their source of revenue. The VAGST was only for Hotels at the time, however they incurred this tax on all goods and services to generate enough income for the development of Samoa. When they decided to impose VAGST on products, there was a protest, firstly by the Catholics who wore white to indicate that it was a 'peaceful protest', then another protest occurred by the Savaii- Puleono Salafai and asserted that 'it is called treason' as tents were put in front of the Government building and there was also dancing, the Government then invited them for a meeting and noted that while they were consoling in this meeting, there was a war outside- ugly words were thrown to the government and emphasised that tax pays the developments for our country.*

• **SALAUZA John Ah Ching - Member for Faleata East**

The Member noted that his constituency only requested for road works and asserted that the main roads are funded by world bank but sought acceptance of access road improvements for his village, noting that numerous Members, CEO's and employees take residence within his constituency and need the roads repaired, and rely mainly on the revenues collected by the MCR through collecting taxes therefore he expressed appreciation towards the revenue collected by the Ministry every financial year.

- **FAUMUINA Tiatia Faaolatane Liuga - Member for Palauli le Falefa.**

The Member clarified on the importance of assistance from donors for because he recalls during his time there are conditions that comes with these financial assistance.

**Afioga Hon TIALAVEA Fea Leniu Seigafolava Tionisio Hunt, Minister for Customs and Revenue and Member for Vaa o Fonoti (cont.)**

The Hon Minister noted the amount received from VAGS, then spoke on the newly introduced (TIMS) Tax Invoice Monitoring System, noted that Chamber of Commerce have been complaining that there were businesses which did not comply with paying tax and requested for a system to monitor businesses to pay tax honestly. In February 2020, the Tax Administration (Tax invoice Monitoring System) Regulation 2020 and officially launch TIMS in July 2020. The Minister noted that the duty free on electric cars for 2 years with the intention to reduce gas emissions.

**HON PRIME MINISTER – MOTION:**

*The Hon PM moved a motion to change sitting hours to allow parliamentary sitting to be held on Saturday 27 February 2021, from 2pm to 7pm; secondly, after tomorrow, to carry the motion which was made earlier this week which provides for proceedings from 9am – 1pm and 6pm-10pm; and thirdly, to allow the Minister for Customs and Revenue to continue his response to its conclusion. The motions were seconded and approved.*

**Afioga Hon TIALAVEA Fea Leniu Seigafolava Tionisio Hunt, Minister for Customs and Revenue and Member for Vaa o Fonoti (cont.)**

The Hon Minister acknowledged the support of his constituency and addressed them in their honorific salutations. He addressed the constituency for Anoamaa which he will be contesting in the upcoming elections and asserted that he is able and willing to serve and represent their needs if given the opportunity to do so. He then acknowledged his associate minister, Afioga LENATAI Victor Tamapua for his support during the parliamentary term, commended the CEO for Revenue and the entire Ministry for all their efforts in collecting revenues for Samoa. He then acknowledged the clergy and expressed gratitude to his family for their prayers and support.

**Proceedings were suspended at 10:31pm;  
and will resume at 2pm on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> February 2021.**