

DISCLAIMER

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DAY 4: Friday 21st June 2019

9:15am

I. PRESENTATION OF PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE REPORTS

A total of three reports were tabled; 1 report from the Economic Sector Committee, and 2 reports from the Infrastructure Sector Committee

II. GOVERNMENT ORDERS OF THE DAY

1. SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION BILL (NO. 2) 2018/2019 and APPROPRIATION BILL 2019/2020 - Debate on second reading (cont.)

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE:

(i) Afioga Hon AFAMASAGA Lepuiai Rico Tupai – Minister of Communication and Information Technology

The Hon Minister addressed Parliament, CEO's present in Chambers, and Samoa in all her honorific salutations. The Hon Minister began his address by noting 2 general issues: firstly the importance of physical activity in the lives of all. The Minister mentioned One Touch Ministry which promotes healthy living in Samoa, and encouraged his fellow Parliamentarians to move their bodies often as they remain seated in Chamber, as proceedings of Parliament tend to take multiple hours.

The Minister then touched upon the advancement in technology, particularly with the facebook-live which the Office of the Legislative Assembly has provided to ensure proceedings are easily viewed and accessed by Samoans all over the world.

Afioga SULAMANAIA Fetaiai Tuivilili Tuivasa, Member for Vaimauga East

The Member disagreed on the point raised by the Minister in regard to the live streaming of proceedings of Parliament.

Hon Prime Minister – Interjection

The Hon Prime Minister explained that the issues raised by the Minister was relevant as it was his ministerial portfolio to speak on the advancement of technology, as well as to advice Members who are present in Chamber to mind their posture and mannerism in Chamber to reflect their status as Parliamentarians.

Susuga Hon LAAULI Leuatea Polataivao Fosi, Member for Gagaifomauga No.3

The Member jested that he and other Parliamentarians were members of the boot-camp initiative for healthy living. The Member further noted that in order to maintain a healthy lifestyle, 80% is nutrition while 20% is physical activity-and therefore iterated that 'your wellbeing is in your hands'

Afioga Hon AFAMASAGA Lepuiai Rico Tupai – Minister of Communications and Information Technology

The Hon Minister continued his address, and informed Parliament of the developments in the Ministry, specifically the improvements to enhance the coverage of the 2AP and FM radio stations. Furthermore, he touched upon the progress of Digital TV, and stated that the project will be officially launched in October 2019. The digital TV box will arrive in July and it is required for the proper installation; the Minister affirmed that Government has provided assistance in reducing the cost for the box to ensure affordability for families.

Tofa OLO Fiti Afoa Vaai, Member for Salega East

The Member queried the involvement of the Office of the Regulator, whether there were two companies operating the Digital TV; if so, the management and regulation of the digital TV should be vested with the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology, rather than the Office of the Regulator to avoid any conflicting interest.

Afioga TAFUA Maluelue Tafua, Member for Aleipata Itupa i Lalo

The Member noted that the Hon Minister stated 95% of Samoa will be covered with digital TV, and therefore queried whether his constituency of Aleipata was included in this 95% coverage.

Afioga Hon AFAMASAGA Lepuiai Rico Tupai – Minister of Communications and Information Technology

The Hon Minister clarified that currently there is only one company who will operate the affairs of the digital TV, while the Office of the Regulator continues to play the regulatory role to ensure the prices and rates of the digital TV project are within national policies and can be afforded by the people.

Hon Minister of Communication assured the Member for Aleipata Itupa i Lalo that the majority of his constituency was also included in the coverage for the digital TV (except for some areas down-hill which has yet to be occupied by families).

On the issue of call centre companies in Samoa, the Hon Minister explained that there are 2 call centres which have helped increase employment for our people; noting that a total of 70 individuals are employed in these call centres. The Hon Minister further noted the progress of launching National Identification (ID) in support of the upcoming General Elections 2021 – these ID's are not paper quality but will be similar to the automated transaction cards (ATM cards).

The Hon Minister then spoke to voice his passion for the sport of rugby, noting the benefits of the sport on the development of individuals and their families. He also commended the Super 9 Tournament as another means for the talented individuals to make a living.

Afioga SULAMANAIA Fetaiai Tuivilili Tuivasa, Member for Vaimauga East

The Member queried whether the Minister of Communication and Information Technology was also the spokesperson for the sports sector, as it seems the Minister has already addressed the issues and developments within his ministerial portfolio, and is now raising issues regarding sports development when there is a responsible Minister for this portfolio.

Hon Prime Minister – Interjection

The Hon Prime Minister clarified that the Minister of Communication is speaking in his role as a member of the Samoa Rugby Union Board and noted his support in the issues raised by the Minister.

Afioga ALAIASA Moefaaouou Sepulona Moananu, Member for Anoamaa East, Associate Minister of Education, Sports and Culture.

The Member stood to clarify that although the Minister of Communication is advocating for sports and the benefits it has on the individual; the Ministry of Sports takes a more vested approach on the development of sports at the grassroots level, emphasising the importance of the role of the Ministry in the overall development of sports in the nation.

Afioga Hon AFAMASAGA Lepuiai Rico Tupai – Minister of Communications and Information Technology

The Hon Minister concluded his response by wishing the new Member for Faasaleleaga No.2 the best in carrying out his role for his constituency. He then addressed his constituency and expressed gratitude for their support and prayers.

**(ii) Afioga Hon FAAOLESA Katopau T Ainuu – Minister of Justice and Courts
Administration**

The Hon Minister addressed the House, the public listening in and all of Samoa; he then spoke on the issues raised by Members in regard to his ministerial duties.

On the proposal to relocate the Ministry of Justice office in Savaii from Tuasivi to Salelologa, for convenience and ease of access, the Minister asserted that plans are in the pipeline, waiting for relevant funding. The Minister further stated that funds may be sought after Government's commitments towards the Pacific Games in July.

Afioga Hon FAUMUINA Tiatia Faaolatane Liuga, Member for Palauli le Falefa

The Hon Member stated that in his role as the Deputy Chairperson for the Finance and Expenditure Committee, he was made aware that there was an allocation of \$370,000 for the funding of the project, but the funds were reallocated to clear outstanding debts of the Ministry.

Hon Prime Minister – Interjection

The Hon Prime Minister interjected to advise the Minister of Justice on the importance of seeing through endorsed projects with the necessary funding from the Ministry of Finance, as this avoids any fraudulent practices or misappropriation of funds. The Hon PM emphasised the need for honesty and accountability when managing and administering finances. He urged the Minister and Ministry to prepare the relevant documentation to progress with the discussed project.

Afioga Hon LAUTAFI Fio Selafi Purcell, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Labour – Clarification

Hon Lautafi, being the responsible Minister for Samoa Land Corporation affirmed that there is currently land in Salelologa already reserved for this project; the delay was owed to securing the necessary funds to implement the project.

**Afioga Hon FAAOLESA Katopau T Ainuu – Minister of Justice and Courts
Administration**

The Hon Minister addressed the issue raised by the Member for Gagaemauga No.3, regarding the need for another way to ensure voters for the constituencies in Savaii who are residing in Upolu have another means to cast their vote, rather than travelling to Savaii as stipulated in the Electoral Act. The Hon Minister advised Members that this practice has not been enforced as the Act has only been recently passed by the Assembly.

Hon Prime Minister – Interjection

The Hon Prime Minister interjected to advise the Minister and the members who raised the issue, that Cabinet will look into the matter, to ensure the best solution.

Afioga Hon PAPALIITELE Niko Lee Hang, Minister of Works, Transport and Infrastructure – Clarification

The Hon Minister asserted that during the Faasaleleaga No.2 bi-elections, the Samoa Shipping Services (SSS) were prepared with 3 vessels to cater for the voters travelling to Savaii, however only 2 trips were made as there were no other passengers left for the third trip. The Minister again emphasised that there were enough vessels to cater for the travelling public and that the SSS are already aware of the duties it should perform for voters during elections.

**Proceedings were suspended at 10:30am; and
reconvened at 11:30am**

(iii) Afioga Hon LOAU Solamalemalo Keneti Sio - Minister of Education Sports and Culture

The Hon Minister commended the efforts of the Minister of Finance and the Ministry in preparing the budget, and expressed gratitude for the \$3million increase in the appropriations for the Ministry. He also acknowledged all the Members who spoke in regard the Ministry's developments and began to address the issues raised by Members.

On the issue of the Teacher's Council, the Hon Minister clarified that the initiative to establish a Council was not from the Government or the Ministry, rather the teachers profession themselves, as they hoped to boost the status of the profession to be similar to the council of other professions in Samoa. Shows.

Tofa OLO Fiti Afoa Vaai, Member for Salega East

The Member clarified to the Minister that the concern was in regard to the payment of \$100 tala for a license in the teaching profession, while there is already a Teacher's Society in existence whereby teachers' pay subs for the development of the society.

Afioga Hon LOAU Solamalemalo Keneti Sio - Minister of Education Sports and Culture

The Hon Minister attempted to explain to the concerned Member the differences between the Teachers Council and the Teachers Society; the Teachers Council was an organisation of all who are included in the teaching profession, and the overall aim of this Council is to enhance and develop the teaching profession, it also involves monitoring of teachers performance and responsibilities, and to mentor and guide teachers to ensure the quality of teaching is acceptable.

The Teachers Society on the other hand, is a group of teachers who come together to pursue their own personal interests as teachers.

Afioga Hon FAUMUINA Tiatia Faaolatane Liuga, Member for Palauli le Falefa

The Member reminded the Hon Minister for an explanation as to the increase in the number of school dropouts and requested for possible strategies to counter this occurrence.

Tofa OLO Fiti Afoa Vaai, Member for Salega East

The Member queried the 400 school dropouts and proposed for possible strategies.

Afioga FAUMUINA Wayne Fong, Member for Urban West:

The Member queried the policies of the Universities in Samoa and sought clarification from the Minister as to why the University of the South Pacific did not recognise the qualifications awarded by the National University of Samoa.

Afioga Ili Taateo Setefano, Member for Aana Alofi II:

The Member reminded the Hon Minister on his request to include the Early Childhood Education providers/teachers on the Ministry's payroll to also provide an income for these individuals performing this service for the future generation of Samoa.

Afioga Hon LOAU Solamalemalo Keneti Sio - Minister of Education Sports and Culture

The Hon Minister addressed the issues raised by Members by noting that there are foreign universities who recognise the awards from the National University of Samoa, such as the Nursing Diploma/Degree. The University of the South Pacific also allows for cross-credit of awards or units from the National University of Samoa – however there are conditions and circumstances which prohibit such practices, such as taking into consideration the percentage or average of the student and other relevant factors that the University considers before making a decision.

Furthermore in regard to the number of school dropouts, the Hon Minister explained that there are various factors and reasons that come to play, such as students migrating overseas (when successful with the NZ Quota Scheme), there are also students who take up religious callings (Piula or Malua). He addressed the need to pay early childhood education providers and asserted that Government will look into this, as it needs to secure sustainable source to fund this request. He thanked all Members for their recommendations and concerns and acknowledged his constituency for their support.

**Proceedings adjourned at 12:00pm; and
reconvene at 9:00am on Monday 24th June 2019**