

DISCLAIMER

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Day 3: Friday 24th June 2016

9:00am

I. GOVERNMENT ORDERS OF THE DAY CONTINUED

1. SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION BILL (No.2) 2015/2016 – second reading debates continued *(inclusive of the Appropriation Bill, Supplementary Appropriation Bill and the Report of the Finance and Expenditure Committee on the Second Supplementary Estimates of Receipts and Payments of the Government of Samoa for the Year ending 30 June 2016)*

GOVERNMENT RESPONSES CONTINUED

44. Hon LAAULI Polataivao Leuatea, Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and Member for Gagaifomauga No.3

The Member began his speech by acknowledging God's grace for enabling all to be present in the House today.

- The Hon PRIME MINISTER noted that the Assembly should consider the Supplementary Bill by 10am as Standing Orders provide that Friday proceedings must end by 12:00pm.
- Mr. Speaker reminded the House that Friday proceedings finish at 12:00pm.

The Hon Minister continued by expressing his gratitude to the Hon Prime Minister for his Ministerial portfolio. He then addressed the various issues raised by Members:

(1) Local Crops

The Hon Minister commented that Samoa had been plagued by blight for a period of 20-30 years; however, during this time taro research has resulted in 5 blight-free variants of taro produced for export. LAAULI noted that the ongoing issue is the lack of crops; he noted that in May of the 22 containers set aside for taro, only 2 were filled. He stated that the Ministry is continuing its efforts to source all variants of taro shoot (tiapula) for planting; however, it is necessary to encourage more people to cultivate taro for harvesting. The Hon Minister noted that at present, the approximate price of taro per kilo is \$50-60 tala. He then stated that the Ministry is attempting to focus on cultivating vegetables usually imported, on island.

LAAULI informed the House that a stimulus package (\$2.5 million) had been appropriated for a cocoa and coconut project; particularly due to the fact that chocolate is now locally produced. He stated that the project is in progress and looks to be ongoing owing to its usefulness and development impact for local farmers, and the economy in general.

(2) Service Delivery

The Hon Minister stated that the Ministry is seeking effective ways to improve their service delivery.

(2) Projects

i. Samoa Agriculture Competitiveness Enhancement Project (SACEP)

The Hon Minister commented on the SACEP, noting the many obstacles that have been encountered. However, he stated that the Ministry is working on raising public awareness.

ii. Women in Business Development Inc. (WIBDI)

The Hon Minister commended the work WIBDI, particularly for their efforts in promoting organic farming. He noted that \$350,000 ST has been appropriated to assist WIBDI in the development of this sector. He emphasised the Ministry's willingness to continue its support for this project.

iii. Samoa Research Organization of Samoa (SROS)

The Hon Minister stated that research is continuing regarding possible produce for export. In regards to fisheries, he stated that there are currently various obstacles; for example Samoa's fishing zone does not extend past 200,000 miles in addition to other issues. In particular, there is a reoccurring issue with the destruction of buoys; however, they are necessary to guide canoe fishers in the lagoon as well as for big game fishers. The Hon Minister stated that he would like to bring this issue to the attention of the

public as it affects both the economy and the Ministry's resources. It is necessary for the public to play their part in ensuring resources are not wasted as they contribute in a significant way to overall development efforts.

The Hon Minister noted that the Ministry is currently negotiating with 2 fishing companies for various fishing agreements; it is the Ministry's hope that the agreements will be implemented in the near future.

The Hon Minister stated that the Ministry is researching the viability of commercializing the production of the Tilapia fish for export, as currently it is only being sold domestically. In regards to the Nonu plant (also known as 'Noni'), it is in the pipelines for future export. The Hon Minister noted that he is a strong advocate for the Nonu plant, stating that he has 500 acres in his constituency specifically for the cultivation of the Nonu plant.

There was a brief exchange between the Members for Salega East, Anoamaa West and the Hon Minister.

The Member for Faleata East, SALAUSA John Ah Ching, queried an issue he had raised in his speech regarding the establishment of an Export Authority and research into the cattle market in American Samoa. He requested the Hon Minister to respond to these 2 queries.

The Hon Minister stated that the Ministry is currently attempting to organize a stand-alone Export Authority. In regards to the American Samoa meat market, the Hon Minister stated that negotiations are in progress for possible export. The Hon Minister then concluded his speech by thanking his constituency for their support for the last 3 Parliamentary Terms.

45. Hon TIALAVEA Fea Leniu Tionisio Hunt, Minister for Revenue and Member for Vaa o Fonoti

The Hon Minister for Revenue noted that only 2 Members referred to his Ministry, namely the Members for Falealili West and Vaimauga East. He stated that they requested the construction of a warehouse at the wharf to clear containers. He continued by stating that as of the 23rd of June, 99.4% of estimated revenue for this Fiscal Year had been collected. He then noted that the Ministry is attempting to find new methods for tax collection from businesses and that overall, their revenue goal for the upcoming Fiscal Year is \$ST500 million.

46. Hon FAIMALOTOA, Kika Iemaima Stowers, Minister of Women, Community and Social Development and Member for Gagaifomauga No.1

The Hon Minister acknowledged Samoa and the three branches of the State. FAIMALOTOA then addressed specific issues raised by various Ministers:

(1) Projects

In regards to the "ie Samoa-*iniini*" project, the Hon Minister stated that the project is in progress and the results thus far have been positive. She then attempted to alleviate worries raised by some Members regarding the possibility of the pandanus plant being taken overseas and fine mats being mass produced by foreigners, stating that the Ministry is investigating the issue but believes that it will not be a problem. She stated that if the pandanus plant is grown overseas and fine mats are made overseas, the mats would not be Samoan. She asserted that Samoa's fine mats will always be unique.

(2) Women Representatives

The Member for Urban West, FAUMUINA Asi Pauli Wayne Fong, queried the appointment of village representatives, noting that there are male Village Mayors but no village women representatives.

(3) Public Awareness

In response to a Member's suggestion that the Ministry should be responsible for raising public awareness of viral threats such as the Zika disease, the Hon Minister stated that the Ministry will willingly and enthusiastically take on such a responsibility as the Ministry interacts with all age groups and classes of people.

In concluding her speech, the Hon Minister stated that it has only been 3 months since the Parliamentary Term has begun, therefore she encouraged Members and constituents to be patient with their requests. She then acknowledged her constituency and those candidates who contested the Gagaifomauga No.1 seat at General Elections.

47. SILI Epa Tuiofi, Minister of Finance and Member for Faasaleleaga No.1 East

The Hon Minister stated that the tabled budget is not just for the Government, but the country as a whole. He also acknowledged the Finance and Expenditure Committee's support for the budget and the Hon Prime Minister's comments throughout this sitting. He then addressed various issues in regards to the budget:

(1) Surplus

The Hon Minister touched the ST\$23 million surplus; noting its importance, he stated the following:

- Savings are a necessity to account for times of emergency, particularly due to the ever changing global economy and the possibility of natural disasters;
- having sufficient surplus reserves enables the Government to support and implement necessary projects which have not been included in the budget estimates. He then clarified that this is different from what is referred to as 'unauthorized expenditure';
- ample savings decreases debts. He stated that despite a reluctance to loan 'out of habit', there are times when loans are necessary. He also noted that the increased loan amounts over the years are a result of funding requested development projects and general infrastructure repair, particularly post-Cyclone Evan.

The Hon Minister stated that it is necessary to effectively use and implement projects, which have been funded via loans. He noted that revenue generated from these projects could be used to repay loans. He further noted that project staff should have the capacity to analyse their ability to repay loans, as debts should never exceed 50% of the GDP; however, the Government remains flexible in cases where this percentage is exceeded and may provide alternative options as necessary.

(2) Debts

The Hon Minister noted debts owed to the Government by businesses, particularly small businesses, stating that businesses should not make it a practice to wait until the 14 day processing limit has been reached before processing their payments. The Hon Minister stated that it should take, at most, 7 days for this process to be implemented. He stated that what is needed is cooperation between relevant parties to ensure that established goals and objectives are effectively implemented.

(3) Service Delivery

The Hon Minister noted his gratitude to the Ministry of Finance for their effective service delivery. He noted his appreciation of the Chief Executive and his staff for preparing the budget; preparations for which began in August 2015. He also noted that there have yet to be any complaints from the other Entities under his portfolio, such as the Development Bank of Samoa (DBS), the National Provident Fund (NPG); Samoa Life Assurance Corporation (SLAC) and the Unit Trust of Samoa (UTOS).

(4) Access Roads

The Hon Minister noted the many concerns raised regarding access roads for individual constituencies. He stated that approval for the construction of access roads should be prioritised for those constituencies who require access to their plantations. He the expressed his gratitude to his constituency for their support and the opportunity afforded

him to represent them in Parliament. He then thanked the Lord and the Hon Prime Minister for his current Ministerial Post and asked for support to ensure that the work entrusted to him is completed effectively and efficiently.

**48.LOAU Sola Keneti Sio, Minister for Education, Sports and Culture and
Member for Sagaga Le Falefa**

The Hon Minister stated that 27 Member raised issues relevant to his Ministry. He summarized the various issues as follows:

- shortage of teaching staff;
- issues specific to the National University of Samoa;
- education grant schemes;
- sports generally;
- sports fields for schools;
- the construction of new school buildings;
- inter-school conflicts;
- the reintroduction of corporal punishment;
- the construction of an APTC branch in Savaii; and
- the construction of a National University branch in Savaii.

The Hon Minister then stated that in the era we are now in the "technological age", wherein the Internet and relevant devices such as smart phones, laptops and iPads are at our disposal. The Hon Minister suggested that Members utilize these devices and suggested that they encourage communication through email; begin an email thread or a chat group - to address issues with each other directly.

The Member for Urban West, FAUMUINA Asi Pauli Wayne Fong, noted that the school in Vaigaga does not have email access and queried whether constituency electricity bills could be covered under MCIT grants

The Hon Minister stated that 30% of grants are allocated for the maintenance; he suggested that the Member discuss such issues with the relevant Parliamentary Committee.

The Member for Urban West informed the Hon Minister that he is on the Education Committee. He noted that the 30% allocation is not an issue, however, he was in fact referring to current arrears; stating the bills he refers to were accumulated during the

school holidays and they cannot afford to pay it.

- The Member for Palauli East, TUIFAASISINA Misa Lisati Leleisiuao Palemene, stated that the broadband is expensive and perhaps a more affordable alternative would be to utilize television to conduct lessons on subjects such as mathematics and science.
- The Hon PRIME MINISTER stated that he is the Chair of the School Committee in his constituency and they face similar problems. He advised Members to ensure their schools' bills are paid before the beginning of school holidays.
- The Member for Falealili East, FUIMAONO Teo Samuelu Teo, stated that there are no computers in schools in his constituency.

The Hon Minister stated that the grant scheme is intended for schools to purchase items such as Computers, tablets and so forth. He stated that it is the Member's responsibility to decide and monitor where the grant money is allocated and how it is ultimately utilized.

- Member for Faasaleleaga No.3, TOFA Foleni Lio Tama Galu, stated that procuring computers is senseless if they are given to untrained users. He stated that students and teachers alike first require basic training before they can effectively utilize such devices.

The Hon Minister stated that there are many opportunities for Members to take up such issues with him, and that he is willing to hear further queries and issues.

In concluding his speech, the Hon Minister acknowledged and thanked this constituency for their support.

Proceedings were suspended at 10:41 am and reconvened at 11:20am

49. Hon FAAOLESA Katopau T Ainuu, Minister of Justice and Member for Vaimauga West No.2

The Hon Minister addressed Members; the *O Le Ao o le Malo*; the Council of Deputies; respective Ministry Chief Executives; various denominational leaders and Samoa. He addressed his constituency and expressed his gratitude for his Ministerial portfolio; noting that this is the first time a matai from Apia has been appointed to the Cabinet. The Hon Minister thanked the Minister of Finance for the budget and requested that the Minister for Works prioritize the roads in the Vaimauga district; particularly since they are from the same constituency.

50. Hon AFAMASAGA Lepuai Rico Tupai, Minister for Communication and Information Technology and Member for Aana Alofi No.3

The Hon Minister addressed his constituency and expressed, on their behalf, gratitude for his Ministerial Portfolio. He noted that it has been 30 years since a Member from the Aana Alofi No.3 constituency has been appointed to Cabinet.

The Hon Minister concluded his speech by thanking former Member Toeolesulusulu Cedric Pose Schuster for works achieved during the previous Parliamentary Term; and for being a gracious opponent at General Elections. He then thanked his family and friends and called upon his constituency for their continued support and blessings as he endeavours to serve them to the best of his ability.

- Member for Aleipata Itupa i Lalo, TAFUA Maluelue Tafua thanked the Hon Minister for responses and noted that a commonly used phrase employed by the Hon Minister has been "Be patient..." The Member stated that despite his appreciation of the answers provided, he fears that the same issues will resurface during the 2017/2018 budget.
- The Hon Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries queried whether the Member was referring his comments to the right Ministry.

51. The Hon PRIME MINISTER

The Hon PRIME MINISTER summarized the various issues raised throughout the second reading debates, and stated the following:

In terms of developments, the Hon Prime Minister stated that constituencies tend to forget

requests made at the beginning of each Term. He stated that a former member, who is now deceased, continually interrupted Minister speeches during the budget, however, he cautioned Members not to rush with their requests given each Term is for 5 years. The Hon Prime Minister stated that there are approximately 90 individual projects both in the pipeline and in progress, all of which total approximately ST\$1 billion. He noted that the main obstacle to the implementation of most of these projects is poor preparations by Ministers and Ministries, which is the necessary first step before execution is possible.

In terms of the many requests for water, the Hon Prime Minister emphasised that this continues to be a Government priority. He stated that since Samoa's partnership with the European Union, approximately ST\$60 million has been received from the EU for various projects such as upgrades to water supplies and the provision of water tanks for the areas from Ululoloa to Samatau. Another project was the installation of water tanks for the areas from Vailoa to Puapua; he stated that last Thursday, he signed a ST\$70 million contract to fund these projects.

In regards to sourcing alternative water supplies, he stated that it is not good practice to continually dig boreholes. He stated that some have been dug down to sea level, which has made water unfit for consumption. He stated that it is for this reason that water meters are used, noting that once fresh water from the aquifer has been depleted, what remains is salt water.

In regards to carbon emissions, the Hon Prime Minister stated that carbon gases can only be neutralized by oxygen produced by trees, as they absorb CO₂. However, given the ongoing increase in global population, the trees can no longer effectively absorb the mass amounts of carbon emissions. He stated that research has proven that countries have been slow to react to the effects of climate change and that counter efforts should have begun as earlier as 50 years ago. The Hon Prime Minister illustrated the effects of climate change in our local context noting the various cyclones, which have hit Samoa such as Ofa, Valilia and Winston. He stated that climate change has affected everyone, however, Samoa has been vigilant in its prayers for national safety, which was recently evidenced by near misses from 2 cyclones.

In relation to the issue of water, the Hon Prime Minister emphasised the need for conservation, hence the use of a metering system that ensures that water use is managed effectively. He then commented on a Member's request for 'dirty water' and stated that such comments are both irresponsible and intolerable, given its scarcity and basic necessity for human survival. He stated that the Member for Vailoa should consult with his constituency so that he may be informed as to its water requirements. He then emphasised

that water is a basic commodity, which many villages have to go without due to a lack of supply, therefore Members should be, take the issue seriously.

In closing, the Hon Prime Minister stated that despite being criticized in the past about his 'lack of visionary ideas', he is a man of faith. This means that when important issues and challenges arise, he prays on them and is blessed with not one, but twenty resolutions.

- Mr. Speaker put question that the Appropriation Bills be second read; the motion was seconded and the Bill was second read.

2. SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION BILL (NO.2) 2015/2016 - consideration in detail

(a) First schedule - Addition in Appropriation

- Ministry of Finance: \$3,840,500 - approved.
- Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment: \$1,059,394 - approved.
- Ministry of Health: \$457,082 - approved.
- Bureau of Statistics: \$33,000 - approved.
- National Health Services: \$3,500,000 - approved.
- Office of the Regulator: \$84,000 - approved.

Total Additional Overall Expenditure: \$8973976 - approved.

(b) Second Schedule - Reduction in Appropriation

- Ministry of Finance: \$3,434,500 - approved.
- Ministry for Revenue: \$2000,000 - approved.
- Bureau of Statistics: \$51,600 - approved.

Total reduction to overall expenditure: \$3,686,100 - approved.

Clauses 2 and 3 - approved.

Clause 1 and Short Title - approved.

The Supplementary Appropriation Bill (No.2) 2015/2015 progressed without amendment.

3. SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION BILL (NO.2) 2015/2016 - third reading

The Hon Minister of Finance moved a motion for the bill to be third read; the motion was approved and the Bill was third read and subsequently passed the Assembly.

4. APPROPRIATION BILL 2016/2017 - consideration in detail

(a) Corrections to the Samoan Print

Pages V,X, 33-35, 51, 69, 71, 89-91, 142-143, 145, 149-151, 159, 162, 195-196, 223, 234, 249, 278, 293, 310-311, 318, 336, 342-343, 354, 380.

(b) Corrections to the English Print

Pages V, X, 69, 89-90, 142 - 143, 149-150, 159, 163-167, 189, 225, 229, 239-240, 279, 296, 320, 326-327.

(c) First Schedule

- Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries: 16,660,228 - approved.
- Ministry of Commerce Industry and Labour: 15, 836,099 - approved.
- Ministry for Communication and Information Technology: 8,111,096 - approved.
- Ministry for Education, Sports and Culture: 91,186,761 - approved.
- Ministry of Finance: 75,687,360 - approved.
- Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Trade: 21,104,049 - approved.
- Ministry of Health: 86,833,049 - approved.
- Ministry of Justice: 11,213,942 - approved.
- Ministry for Natural Resources and Environment: 24,796,776 - approved.
- Ministry of Police and Fire Emergency Services: 27,640,063 - approved.
- Ministry of the Prime Minister and Cabinet: 7,697,418 - approved.
- Ministry of Revenue: 10,880,967 - approved.
- Ministry for Women, Community and Social Development: 11,317,444 - approved.
- Ministry of Works, Transport and Infrastructure: 46,495,810 - approved.
- Office of the Attorney General: 3,025,296 - approved.
- Office of the Controller and Auditor General: 3,380,412 - approved.

- Office of Electoral Commission: 2,050,379 - approved.
- Office of the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly: 6,737,388 - approved.
- Office of the Ombudsman: 1,119,895 - approved.
- Public Service Commission: 4,634,310 - approved.
- National Prosecution Office: 2,578,529 - approved.
- Bureau of Statistics: 4,426,679 - approved.
- Law Reform Commission: 1,319,280 - approved.
- Prisons and Corrections Services: 5,973,323 - approved.

Total Expenditure: 492,306,167 - approved.

Clauses 2 - 4 - approved.

Clause 1 and Short Title - approved.

The Bill progressed as corrected.

5. Appropriation Bill 2016/2017 - third reading

The Hon PRIME MINISTER moved a motion for the Appropriation Bill 2016/2017 to be third read; the motion was approved and the bill was third read and passed the Assembly.

- The Hon PRIME MINISTER moved a motion of adjournment; the motion was approved.

The Hon PRIME MINISTER expressed his gratitude to all the relevant parties who worked together to prepare the budget, and thanked the Members for participating in debates.

***Proceedings were adjourned at 12:48pm.
The Assembly will reconvene at 9:00am, Monday 27th June 2016.***