

DISCLAIMER

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Tuesday 20th December 2016
9:11am

I. GOVERNMENT ORDERS OF THE DAY – CONTINUED

1. Supplementary Appropriation Bill (No.1) 2016/2017– first reading

The Hon Minister for Finance, SILLI Epa Tuioti moved a motion for the Supplementary Appropriation Bill (No.1) 2016/2017 to be first read; the motion was approved.

2. First Supplementary Estimates 2016/2017 - tabling

The Hon Minister for Finance moved a motion for the tabling of the bill; the motion was approved.

3. Supplementary Appropriation Bill (No.1) 2016/2017 - Budget Speech

The Hon Minister for Finance presented the Budget Speech to the Assembly. Hon SILLI stated that the Government continues to encourage its overarching theme of "living within our means". He stated that the Government has attempted to identify various means of maintaining its fiscal target of a budget deficit within the range of 3.5% of the national GDP.

The Hon Minister noted that the Ministry for Finance has completed an assessment of previous financials for the FY 2015/2016 and have since concluded that there has been a 0.4% decrease in total national spending. A review of the first quarter of the 2016/2017 financial period has revealed a 0.7% budget deficit of the GDP. The Hon Minister stated that these are clear indications that all Ministries, under the guidance of the Ministry for Finance, have been committed to ensuring prudent control and the efficient use of all Government resources throughout the course of the financial year. The Hon Minister further noted that the expectation was that these 'controls' would not diverge from other Government priorities, which are currently being

implemented to ensure a continued improvement in the quality of life for all Samoan citizens.

Hon SILI stated that the overall expenditure for the First Supplementary Estimates totals \$12,288,936.00, and will be allocated as follows:

Summary of Revenue

- - \$148,140 - Ministry for Revenue
- - \$ 204,552 - Ministry of Finance

The Hon Minister noted that a large portion of additional requests received from various Ministries are funded through the reallocation of savings from existing appropriations, and include the following:

- \$2,254,340 from Statutory Vote
- \$1,352,866 reduction in Principal payments for external debt servicing
- \$901,474 reduction in interest payments on external debt servicing
- \$2,600,000 from the Ministry of Finance
- \$1,600,000 reduction in the Government of Samoa Capital injection to the World Bank and ADB which is currently up to date and will not be reviewed again until August 2017;
- 1,000,000 reduction in appropriations for Insurance on Government Assets following the conclusion of the tendering process for this expenditure item as approved by Cabinet
- \$7,081,235 from the MWTI;
- \$39,100 savings identified from lease and rents expenditures for the TATTE Building
- \$48,000 appropriated for the temporary hire of a structural engineer, which will now be reallocated into personnel to finance the post for a permanent engineer;
- \$7,000,000 originally allocated as a subsidy for VAGST to the EPC but is no longer required due to a change in legislation that now has electricity zero-rated

Summary of Additional Expenditure

Additional expenditure requested and granted under this supplementary budget have been reviewed against additional resources and formulated against a backdrop of the critical developments contributing to sustainable developments.

Priorities include:

- - \$7,000,000 to the Statutory Vote
- - \$5,000,000 additional funds for VAGST refunds
- - \$2,000,000 additional funds for Income Tax Refunds
- - \$274,134 for the Legislative Assembly
- - \$709,885 for the Ministry of Communication
- - \$1,934,828 for the Ministry of Education
- - \$225,000 for the Ministry of Finance
- - \$353,569.73 for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

- - \$825,080 for the Ministry of Health
- - \$233,962 for the Ministry of Justice
- - \$161,440 for the Ministry of Works, Transport and Infrastructure
- - \$680,000 for the National Health Services

The Hon Minister stated that the First Supplementary tabled in the House today is a result of careful review and has been given priority to ensure the continued effective provision of all Government services.

4. Constitution Amendment Bill (No.1) 2016 - First Reading

The Hon Prime Minister moved a motion for the bill to be first read; the motion was approved.

5. Constitution Amendment Bill (No.2) 2016 - First Reading

The Hon Prime Minister moved a motion for the bill to be first read; the motion was approved.

6. Police Service Amendment Bill 2016 - First Reading

The Hon Prime Minister moved a motion for the first reading of the Bill; the motion was approved.

7. Police Service Amendment Bill 2016 - Second Reading

Hon Prime Minister (Minister for Police and Prisons) moved a motion to suspend Standing Order 101(2) to permit the second reading of the Police Service Amendment Bill 2016; the motion was approved and the Hon Prime Minister clarified the bill. The Hon Prime Minister stated that the overall purpose of the bill is to eliminate the need to call a commission of inquiry when the actions of the Commissioner or an Acting Commissioner come into disrepute. He further stated that Cabinet will instead be able to advise *the O Le Ao o le Malo* as to appropriate actions to take, as opposed to referring matters to a Commission. This will uphold the integrity of the Police Force.

i. OLO Fiti Afoa Vaai - Member for Salega East

OLO noted that the Commissioner was still entitled to benefits (salary and allowances) during his suspension period. He then queried why this practice was not standardised for all Ministries.

ii. Hon AEAU Peniamina Leavaiseeta - Member for Falealupo

Hon AEAU queried who would be responsible for enforcing the termination of the Commissioner or an Acting Commissioner.

iii. Hon PRIME MINISTER

The Hon Prime Minister stated that Cabinet is, still reviewing the issue of benefits for suspended heads of Ministries. He stated policies would be put in place to permit the monitoring of appointments, which are to be suspended for an extended period of time. The Hon Prime Minister further noted that the Ministry of Police and Prisons is the only Ministry, which has such issues at present.

Hon TUILAEPa stated that the powers afforded to the police to aide their role in enforcing peace and public safety; however, due to the apparent abuse of power, policies are now to be put in place to ensure closer monitoring. The bill put before the House is not only intended to benefit the Government but to promote good governance and accountability. These changes are necessary to ensure stability. He claimed that there is no shortage in opinions regarding these matters; however, failure tends to occur when it comes to the enforcement of policies. The Hon Prime Minister then provided a similar example in regards to past election issues wherein it was found that deceased persons had been casting votes. This lead to the use of IDs, which eventuated in numerous other issues.

iv. FAUMUINA Asi Pauli Wayne Fong - Member for Urban West

The Member queried the Minister's power to decide matters or whether this authority rests with Cabinet as a whole.

v. Hon PRIME MINISTER

The Hon Prime Minister stated that all matters are in fact to be referred to the *O Le Ao o le Malo* for a final decision, whereas Cabinet will provide a recommendation only. He then reiterated the purpose of Parliamentary Committees, noting that it is at the Committee stage where Members may provide their opinions on all bills before the House.

The Hon Speaker moved a motion for the bill to be second read; the motion was approved. The *Police Service Amendment Bill 2016* now stands referred to the Social Sector Committee.

8. Customs Tariff Amendment Bill 2016 - first reading

Hon TIALEVEA Fea Leniu Tionisio Hunt, Minister for Revenue and Member for Vaa o Fonoti moved a motion for the *Customs Tariff Amendment Bill 2016* to be first read; the motion was approved.

9. Customs Tariff Amendment Bill 2016 - second reading

The Hon Minister moved a motion for the second reading of the bill; the motion was approved. The Hon Minister spoke to clarify the bill, stating that the bill propose to include vehicles fueled by renewable energy to be included in the tariff schedule .

11. Coroners Bill 2016 - consideration in detail

The Deputy Chairperson for the Social Sector Committee, LEAANA Ronnie Posini, moved a motion for the Committee Report on the Coroners Bill 2016 to be approved; the motion was approved.

Clauses 2 - 10 approved;
Clauses 11 - 19 approved;
Clauses 20 - 60 approved;
Clause 61 - Committee correction; approved as amended:

Omit clause 12(5) and substitute clause 12(3) so that clause 61 reads:

"61. Police to help coroners' investigate, etc - Without limiting section 12(3), the Commissioner of Police must cause police officers to help coroners' investigations, inquiries and inquests under this Act."

Clauses 62 - 80 approved;
Clause 81 – 88 approved.

12. Village Fono Amendment Bill 2016 - consideration in detail

Clause 2 - Committee amendment

Insert in (b) new definitions as follows:

(a) banishment means an offender as prohibited from being involved in village affairs, and is expelled from the village, never to be seen in the village until the village fono decide to uplift the banishment.

(b) "ostracism" means an offender is prohibited from being involved in village affairs but still reserve the right to live in their respective homes within the village.

The amendment was approved

Clause 3 - Committee amendment.

To insert a section 2A in paragraph (d) after "banishment", the words "or ostracism".

Amendment approved.

Clause 4 - Committee amendment.

Delete section 4(3).

Amendment approved.

Clause 6 - Committee amendment.

In the proposed section 5A(3):

(a) to substitute number "4" with number "5" in paragraph (c) and

(b) to insert (v) the Ministry of Police after paragraph c(iv).

Amendment approved.

Clause 7 - Committee amendment.

In the proposed subsections for section 6

(a) in subparagraph (aa) of subsection (1), insert the words "or ostracism" after the word "banishment" and

(b) in subsection (7), insert the words "or ostracism" after the word "banishment".

The Hon Deputy Prime Minister expressed gratitude to the Hon Speaker and the Office of the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly for their efforts and support during the first year of the XVIth Parliamentary term. She also acknowledged the Hon Prime Minister, Cabinet and all Members of Parliament for their tireless efforts throughout 2016. The Hon Deputy Prime Minister also acknowledged the hard work of all Chief Executives and their Ministries, Corporations and Bodies.

Proceedings were adjourned at 11:02am, to reconvene on Tuesday, 24th January 2017.