

DISCLAIMER

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**Friday 23rd March 2018
9:22am**

Day 3

I. GOVERNMENT ORDERS OF THE DAY – Reading of Bills

1. CUSTOMS TARIFF AMENDMENT BILL 2018 – first reading

The Hon Minister for Revenue, TIALAVEA Fea Leniu Tionisio Hunt moved for the first reading of the Bill; motion seconded and approved. The Customs Tariff Amendment Bill 2018 was read a first time.

2. CUSTOMS TARIFF AMENDMENT BILL 2018 – second reading

The Hon Minister for Revenue, TIALAVEA Fea Leniu Tionisio Hunt moved for the second reading of the Bill and spoke to clarify the objects of the Bill. The Hon Minister explained that the Bill seeks to make amendments to the First Schedule of the Customs Tariff Act 1975 by replacing rates for tariffs for certain items with new tariff rates. The bill is proposed to encourage healthy eating habits by increasing custom tariffs on unhealthy products such as turkey tails (20%); lamb flaps (20%); and chicken (10%)

i. Hon TUILAEPa Lupesoliai Fatialofa Dr Sailele Malielegaoi, Prime Minister

The Hon Prime Minister elaborated on the clarification of the Minister for Revenue stating that the with the continued increase in Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) in Samoa, and the increase of patients treated at the National Kidney Foundation (NKF) reflects the unhealthy eating habits of

our people; thus raising the need to implement relevant strategies to alleviate this problem. The Hon Prime Minister explained that a total of USD40million (equivalent to SAT100million) was spent to fund the treatment of NKF patients. He recalled the previous Minister for Health (Mulitalo Siafausa Vui) who was the only Minister to persuade Singapore's Minister of Health to assist Samoa in the establishment of the National Kidney Foundation. The Hon PM affirmed that the amendment is for a better and healthier Samoa; and urged the people to take a more active approach to life and not to be lazy as there is wealth in their surrounding; farm the lands and fish the seas.

ii. OLO Fiti Afoa Vaai, Member for Salega East

The Member noted his disapproval of the Bill, specifically in regards to the increased tariff on chicken. He stated that the bill is inconsiderate of our average earning families who can only afford chicken. OLO suggested that in order to promote healthy living such products should be banned rather than raising the tariffs. The Member noted that the added costs on lamb flaps have made it more expensive to the average family who rarely consume this product.

Hon Minister for Revenue, TIALAVEA Fea Leniu Tionisio Hunt

The Hon Minister spoke to correct the claims made by the Member for Salega East in regards to the bill being inconsiderate of the average earner; the Hon Minister asserted that the bill encourages healthy eating choices.

iii. Hon FAUMUINA Tiatia Faolatane Liuga, Member for Palauli le Falefa

The Hon Member conveyed his support for the Bill, and noted that the current count of dialysis patients utilising the National Kidney Foundation is 110. The Member further stated to include noodles to the banned list of items as it has proven that the flavoured sachet contained in noodle packs has contributing effects to the deterioration of cognitive function (memory loss)

iv. FAAULUSAU Rosa Duffy Stowers, Member for Gagaifomauga No.3

The Member noted that healthy products are the most expensive (fruits and vegetables), and queried whether there was a monitoring body to oversee expiry dates on canned products (tinned fish). The Member suggested livestock and poultry farms to be bought from the Ministry to develop families in the rural areas to try and ease the effects of increased tariffs and duties imposed on certain products.

v. Hon LAAULI Leuatea Polataivao Fosi

The Hon Member acknowledged the intents of the bill to increase tariffs on certain products which indirectly contribute to healthy habits. However, the Hon Member noted that the objects of the bill cannot be satisfied if the implementation process is ineffective; raising the importance of proper implementation methods. The Member concluded by encouraging the Ministry for Revenue; Ministry for Women, Community and Social Development; and the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries to collaborate effectively to ensure the bill is implemented to its fullest.

vi. ALIIMALEMANU Alofa Tuuau, Member for Alataua West

The Member noted her support for the bill and seconded the request by the Member for Gagaifomauga to have livestock distributed to her constituency in order for communities to be self-sufficient, with the support from the Development Band of Samoa (DBS) and National Provident Fund (NPF) to fund the livestock for each rural community.

Hon Prime Minister, TUILAEPA Lupesoliai Fatialofa Dr Sailele Malielegaoi

The Hon Prime Minister acknowledged the Members who spoke on the bill, and responded to the suggestions made by the Member for Alataua West and Gagaifomauga No.3 for government to encourage livestock, noting that this falls under the assigned cultural roles of the Ministry of Women to set-up poultry farming. The Hon PM then commented on the suggestion by the Member for Gagaifomauga No.3 to monitor expiry dates of tinned fish and stated that there were no diseases caused from tinned fish, and asserted that Non Communicable Diseases (NCD's) came about after the introduction of lamb flaps to Samoa.

The Hon PM encouraged religious leaders and Village Fono members to take the leading role in, leading by participating in community zumba and other activities which contributes to healthy lives. The Prime Minister commented on the law of supply and demand which determine the prices and costs of products.

vii. Hon FAIMALOTOA Kika Iemaima Stowers, Minister for Women, Community and Social Development

The Hon Minister clarified to the Members who suggested livestock for their constituencies, stating that there are current plans in the Ministry's pipeline for the development of poultry farms and livestock for subsistent living.

Proceedings were set aside at 10:30am and resume at 11:20am

viii. SULAMANAIA Fetaiai Taviliili Tuivasa, Member for Vaimauga East

The Member supported the Bill, but disapproved the custom tariff on chicken; the Member noted that this is the most affordable meat for the average earner, and asked the Minister to reconsider this.

ix. FAUMUINA Asi Pauli Wayne Fong, Member for Urban West

The Member noted his support for the Bill; he also proposed to the Minister to introduce incentives for the tax payer, such as awarding tax returns. The Member noted that this could be made possible if the National Provident Fund and the Accident Compensation Corporation work together.

x. FUIMAONO Samuelu Teo, Member for Falealili East

The Member expressed his support for the Bill and suggested for proper control measures imposed on imported goods.

xi. AUMUA Isaia Lameko, Member for Falealili West

The member requested that the 10% custom tariff on chicken be lowered. The Member then advised that there should be a standard weight for imported chicken cartons. for instance; exported taro is set at the standard 20kg as stipulated in the foreign policy. The Member requested for the MCIL advertisement on the rights of the individual in buying goods to be aired on television again.

The Customs Tariff Amendment Bill 2018 was read a second time.

3. CUSTOMS TARIFF AMENDMENT BILL 2018 – Consideration in Detail

Clause 2 – Approved

Clause 1 – Approved

Schedules – Approved

The Customs Tariff Amendment Bill 2018 progressed without any amendments.

4. CUSTOMS TARIFF AMENDMENT BILL 2018 - third reading

The Hon Minister for Revenue, TIALAVEA Fea Leniu Tionisio Hunt moved for the Bill to be read a third time; motion was seconded and approved.

The Customs Tariff Amendment Bill 2018 was read a third time and passed the Legislative Assembly

5. EXCISE TAX RATES AMENDMENT BILL (No.2) 2018 – SECOND READING

The Hon Minister for Revenue, TIALAVEA Fea Leniu Tionisio Hunt moved for the first reading of the Bill; motion seconded and approved and the Excise Tax Rates Amendment Bill (No.2) 2018 was first read.

6. EXCISE TAX RATES AMENDMENT BILL (No.2) 2018 – SECOND READING

The Hon Minister for Revenue, TIALAVEA Fea Leniu Tionisio Hunt moved for the second reading of the Bill and spoke to clarify the objects of the Bill. The Hon Minister clarified that the Bill seeks to make amendments to the Schedule of the Excise Tax Rates Act 1984 by replacing rates for tariffs for certain items with new tariff rates. The merits of the bill include; to increase the excise tax rates for local produced spirits to 100% from the current excise tax rate charged following the government's revenue review completed in 2016; and to limit the content for all alcohol to 40%.

i. LEALAILEPULE Rimoni Aiafi, Associate Minister for Communication and Information Technology

The Member noted the proposed amendment will possibly hinder distillation breweries in Samoa. Furthermore, the Member stated that the Samoa Whiskey percentage of 65% does not meet the proposed criteria for alcohol percentage content. LEALAILEPULE concluded by noting his support for the Bill and recommended to have a member of the Samoa Law Society in the Commission.

ii. Hon LAAULI Leuatea Polataivao, Member for Gagaifomauga No.3

The Hon Member expressed his support for the Bill, noting that the amendment will further enforce prevention specifically in regards to driving when under the influence of alcohol, which has claimed multiple lives this year.

iii. SULAMANAIA Fetaiai Tuiliili Tuivasa, Member for Vaimauga East

The Member queried whether the proposed amendments on food and drinks violate the conditions of the Pacer Plus agreement, noting that one of the conditions of the agreement is highly tax imported goods.

Proceedings were set aside at 10:46am and resume at 11:36am

Hon TIALAVEA Fea Leniu Tionisio Hunt, Minister for Revenue

The Hon Minister acknowledged the Members who spoke on the bill, and asserted that the amendment is to regulate the alcohol content in spirits as it was noted from a police survey, that 60% of road accidents have been attributed to irresponsible consumption of spirits (not beer).

The Excise Tax Rates Amendment Bill (No.2) was read a second time.

7. EXCISE TAX RATES AMENDMENT BILL (No.2) 2018 – Consideration in Detail

Clause 2 – Approved

Clause 1 – Approved

Schedule – approved

The Excise Tax Rates Amendment Bill (No.2) 2018 progressed without any amendments.

8. EXCISE TAX RATED AMENDMENT BILL (No.2) 2018 – third reading

The Hon Minister for Revenue, TIALAVEA Fea Leniu Tionisio Hunt moved for the Bill to be third read; motion seconded and approved and the Bill was read a third time.

The Excise Tax Rates Amendment Bill (No.2) 2018 passed the Legislative Assembly.

Proceedings were adjourned at 12:00pm.

The Assembly will reconvene at 9:00am on Monday 26th March 2018.