

DISCLAIMER

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Day 5

PART C

7:20pm

I. GOVERNMENT ORDERS OF THE DAY – Reading of Bills

1. Supplementary Appropriation Bill (No.1) 2023/2024 – Government Responses continued – Day 5

(1) Afioga Hon FIAME Naomi Mataafa - Prime Minister & Leader of the House.

The Hon Prime Minister emphasized that this Ministry covers the collection of taxes and duty fees posed on goods. She then accentuated on the following issues raised by Members:

i. Subsidies on stable goods/baby foods, pharmaceuticals, and other products on the taxes. The Hon Prime Minister clarified that there is subsidy on the tax impose on these products.

ii. VAGST. She clarified that this tax is impose on anyone (who purchase goods/services) by emphasizing that the bigger your shopping cost is the higher the VAGST and same applies when the total cost of your shopping is less.

iii. Boundaries. In reference to the Xray scanner and the mobile scanners, she asserted that it will be arriving soon to help with tracking and monitoring of imported goods entering our shores and to detect any illegal drugs coming in.

iv. K9 dogs. The Hon PM clarified that this service is still active and is used most of the times.

Afioga LEAANA Ronnie Posini, Member for Safata 1.

The Member asserted that he sought clarification regarding the case where overseas police came to assist our police with the investigation.

Afioga Hon FIAME Naomi Mataafa - Prime Minister & Leader of the House (cont.)

The Hon PM clarified that there are police from overseas working together with our local police for the security of our country and the preparations for CHOGM.

She then moved to assuage the matter raised by the Minister of MAF and accentuated that she understands how everyone involved in the case are feeling right now especially the Hon Speaker for accepting the Courts decision. She then put emphasis on the changes of laws and policies but encouraged them to have patience and leave the matters to the Court and to also maintain the peace between these two arms of Govt (Legislative and Judiciary) whilst awaiting the Courts decision on the matter.

(2) Afioga Hon LAUTIMUIA Uelese Vaai - Minister of Finance.

The Hon Minister greeted the House and Samoa in all her honorific salutations, He also acknowledged all members for expressing their support with the supplementary and all the members of the Finance and Expenditure Committee for their effort and scrutiny role in ensuring all merits of the supplementary are well considered. He then accentuated that the primary focus of the supplementary is based on the reshuffle and additional Ministers in the Cabinet and to cater for the remaining half of the FY. The Hon Minister then moved to respond to queries and concerns raised by members:

RSE Scheme:

He clarified that there will be an additional Liaison Officer placed for our Offices in NZ and Australia leading to having 3 liaisons for NZ and Australia. This is to assist our Consul and Trade Commissioner in these countries to ensure our people working in the RSE are safeguarded and protected. Further to this, he asserted that the Cabinet approved a Lead Task Force that is chaired by the Minister of Finance consisting of CEOs of Government Ministries such as the CEO for MOF, CEO for MFAT, CEO for MCIL, CEO for SBS, and PSC Commissioner. He emphasized that no supplementary or appropriation of funds is needed for this Committee.

In relations to the Governments intention to refer the selection of people from each Constituencies through their respective Fono Faavae, he affirmed that this will be implemented once the following reasons are achieved:

- conduct awareness programs to notify on the implementation plans for the scheme.
- conduct more training programs for Fono Faavae to be able to manage registration forms and administer the smooth flow of RSE.

The Hon Minister outlined the importance of increasing awareness programs for Fono Faavae so they are well capable to carry out the RSE program. He then accentuated that all Fono Faavae's

will use the face-to-face approach and should be fully aware of all documents and requirements needed from people applying for the scheme.

Susuga Hon MULIPOLA Anarosa Ale Molioo - Minister of Women, Community and Social Development (MWCSO).

The Hon Minister asserted that their Ministry's CEO is not included in the taskforce and requested for her CEO to be included given that the Ministry will play a vital role for the RSE Scheme (through the district 1 million project).

Afioga Hon LAUTIMUIA Ueese Vaai - Minister of Finance (cont.).

The Hon Minister acknowledged the request put forth by the Minister of MWCSO. He then moved to emphasize that there's a maximum number of people required for seasonal workers where both NZ and Australia's maximum are 6000 people.

Fuel Price:

The Minister of Finance then emphasized that the cost of petrol decreased in December which further decreased in January. He then asserted that they are hoping for the price to decrease unless another unforeseen circumstance occurs to affect our fuel prices.

Afioga LUPEMATASILA Galumalemana Tologata Tofia Tile, Member for Falelatai & Samatau.

The Member acknowledged the decrease in the fuel prices but urged the Government to consider reducing the fuel price used by the EPC and proposed whether its best to remove levies charged on the fuel to decrease the price for electricity.

Afioga LEAANA Ronnie Posini, Member for Safata 1.

The Member commended the Hon Minister for confirming that the selection process for the RSE workers will be transferred under respective Fono Faavae. He further asserted that he believes that this will address the rising issues with our seasonal workers going overseas.

Afioga Hon LAUTIMUIA Ueese Vaai - Minister of Finance (cont.).

The Hon Minister clarified to the Member for Falelatai & Samatau that they charge EPC with the wholesale price instead of the retail price which is cheaper.

NPF dividend payout of 2.4%:

The Minister of Finance announced that this dividend was released in January to assist families in preparing their kids for school. He further emphasized that 70% of the special dividend has already been claimed.

In relation to new fees issued by the National Provident Fund for their services, he clarified that these are not new fees and have been issued from years back. He further emphasized that any changes made on fees and charges goes through the National Revenue Board first before it is referred to the Cabinet for approval.

Unspent Funds to be rollover:

He clarified that the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) 2001 PART 8 Section 56 clearly states that any unspent funds will be transferred to a special purpose account. Further to this, he highlighted that any unspent funds from one FY is intended to fund other priority projects for the next FY.

- **Afioga LUPEMATASILA Galumalemana Tologata Tile, Member for Falelatai & Samatau.**

The Member asserted that since there's a special account for the unspent funds of Ministries, he queried on how many special accounts established to date and the total amount of funds in such accounts; accentuated to present these in Parliament.

Afioga Hon LAUTIMUIA Uelese Vaai - Minister of Finance (cont.).

The Hon Minister reiterated that the PFMA 2001 gives authority to the Treasury Secretary to transfer any unspent funds to a special purpose account for the purpose to fund any other developments in the next FY. He further clarified that these special accounts are audited and therefore will be tabled in Parliament. In this regard, he urged the Government Ministries and Offices to utilize their allocated funds within their budget to prevent the transferal of unspent funds to the special account.

- **Afioga SULAMANAIA Fetaiai Tauilili Tuivasa, Member for Vaimauga 1.**

The Member commended the Hon Minister for clarifying that there's no additional allocation to pay the taskforce established for the RSE and further jested to include two of their Committee Fono Faavae members in the taskforce.

Afioga Hon LAUTIMUIA Uelese Vaai - Minister of Finance (cont.).

The Hon Minister clarified that the Cabinet approved the Task Force for only CEOs and further jested that this taskforce is to train the Fono Faavae members so they (Fono Faavae members proposed by the Member for Vaimauga 1) are needed to attend and be trained by the taskforce. The Hon Minister concluded by acknowledging his Constituency for their endless support and continuous prayers for his journey as their representative in Parliament.

Mr Speaker put forth the question to second read the Supplementary Appropriation Bill (No.1) 2023/2024.

2. Supplementary Appropriation Bill (No.1) 2023/2024 – Consideration in Detail.

P.P. 2023/2024 No. 108, Finance and Expenditure Committee Report on P.P. 2023/2024 No. 66, First Supplementary Estimates of Receipts and Payments of the Government of Samoa for the Year Ending 30 June 2024.

Schedules

Schedule 1: Addition in Appropriations

- **Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Labour: \$263,810
APPROVED**
- **Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture: \$262,540
APPROVED**
- **Ministry of Finance: \$465,588
APPROVED**
- **Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade: \$902,802
APPROVED**
- **Ministry of the Prime Minister and Cabinet: \$746,700
APPROVED**
- **Ministry of Public Enterprise: \$115,121
APPROVED**

**TOTAL ADDITIONAL OVERALL EXPENDITURES 2023-2024:
\$2,756,561 - APPROVED.**

Schedule 2: Reduction in Appropriations

- **Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Labour: (\$520,621)- APPROVED**
- **Ministry of Finance: (\$400,000)- APPROVED**

**TOTAL REDUCTIONS OVERALL EXPENDITURES 2023-2024: (\$920,621)-
APPROVED.**

Clause 2: APPROVED

Clause 3: APPROVED

Clause 1 and Long title: APPROVED

The Supplementary Appropriation Bill (No.1) 2023/2024 progressed without amendments.

3. Supplementary Appropriation Bill (No.1) 2023/2024 – Third reading.

The Hon Minister of Finance, LAUTIMUIA Ueese Vaai moved a motion to have the Supplementary Appropriation Bill (No.1) 2023/2024 be read the third time; motion was seconded and approved.

The Supplementary Appropriation Bill (No.1) 2023/2024 was third read and subsequently passed by the Legislative Assembly.

SPEAKER:

Called for the Leader of the House if she wishes to move a motion for the Assembly to continue with other matters provided in the Order paper or for proceedings to adjourn, as the motion she moved was for proceedings to continue until 10pm with the intention to complete the third reading of the Supplementary Bill and have it officially passed by the Assembly.

Afioga Hon FIAME Naomi Mataafa - Prime Minister & Leader of the House

The Leader of the House called for proceedings to continue and consider all matters under the Government orders of the Day, as there was sufficient time remaining before the end of proceedings as the approved motion was changed to adjourn proceedings at 10pm.

4. National Provident Fund Amendment Bill 2023 – Consideration in Detail

Afioga FALEOMAVAEGA Titimaea Tafua – Chairperson of the Finance and Expenditure Committee.

The Chairperson moved a motion for the Assembly to approve its Report on the bill which consists of its findings and amendments.

P.P.2023/2024 No.109, Finance and Expenditure Committee Report on the National Provident Fund Amendment Bill 2023.

Clause 2: AMENDED and APPROVED

Clause 3: AMENDED and APPROVED

Clause 1 and Short Title: APPROVED together with correction.

The National Provident Fund Amendment Bill 2024 progressed with amendments and corrections.

5. National Digital Identification Bill 2023 – Consideration in Detail.

Afioga NIUAVA Eti L Malolo – Chairperson of the Economic Sector Committee.

The Chairperson moved a motion for the Assembly to approve its Report on the bill which consist of its findings and amendments.

P.P.2023/2024 No.110, Economic Sector Committee Report on the National Digital Identification Bill 2023.

- Clause 2: APPROVED
- Clause 3: APPROVED
- Clause 4: APPROVED
- Clause 5: APPROVED
- Clause 6: APPROVED
- Clause 7: APPROVED
- Clause 8: AMENDED and APPROVED
- Clause 9: APPROVED
- Clause 10: APPROVED
- Clause 11: APPROVED
- Clause 12: APPROVED
- Clause 13: APPROVED
- Clause 14: APPROVED
- Clause 15: APPROVED
- Clause 16: APPROVED
- Clause 17: APPROVED
- Clause 18: APPROVED
- Clause 19: APPROVED
- Clause 20: APPROVED
- Clause 21: APPROVED
- Clause 22: APPROVED
- Clause 23: APPROVED
- Clause 24: APPROVED
- Clause 25: APPROVED
- Clause 26: AMENDED and APPROVED
- Clause 27: APPROVED
- Clause 28: APPROVED
- Clause 29: APPROVED
- Clause 30: APPROVED
- Clause 31: AMENDED and APPROVED
- Clause 32: APPROVED
- Clause 33: AMENDED and APPROVED
- Clause 34: APPROVED
- Clause 35: APPROVED
- Clause 36: APPROVED
- Clause 37: APPROVED
- Clause 38: APPROVED
- Clause 39: APPROVED
- Clause 40: APPROVED
- Clause 41: APPROVED
- Clause 42: APPROVED
- Clause 43: APPROVED
- Clause 44: APPROVED
- Clause 45: APPROVED
- Clause 46: APPROVED
- Clause 47: APPROVED

Clause 48: APPROVED

Clause 49: AMENDED and APPROVED

Clause 50: APPROVED

Clause 51: APPROVED

Clause 52: APPROVED

Clause 53: APPROVED

Clause 54: APPROVED

Clause 55: APPROVED

Clause 56: APPROVED

Clause 57: APPROVED

Clause 58: APPROVED

Clause 59: APPROVED

Clause 60: APPROVED

Clause 1 and Short Title: Approved with corrections in the Title of the Bill

The National Digital Identification Bill 2024 progressed with amendments and corrections.

MOTION: Afioga Hon FIAME Naomi Mataafa - Prime Minister & Leader of the House.

The Leader of the House moved a motion to set aside Standing Order 108(4) to allow the third reading of the Bills that were Considered in Details.

6. National Provident Fund Amendment Bill 2024 – Third Reading.

The Hon Minister of Finance, Afioga Hon LAUTIMUIA Uelese Vaai moved a motion for the bill to be third read; motion was seconded and approved.

The National Provident Fund Amendment Bill 2024 was third read and subsequently passed by the Legislative Assembly.

7. National Digital Identification Bill 2024 – Third Reading.

The Minister of Women, Community and Social Development, Hon MULIPOLA Anarosa Ale-Molioo moved a motion for the bill to be third read; motion was seconded and approved.

The National Digital Identification Bill 2024 was third read and subsequently passed by the Legislative Assembly.

Afioga Hon FIAME Naomi Mataafa - Prime Minister & Leader of the House.

The Hon Prime Minister asserted that the next parliament sitting is in March and accentuated that some Ministers have mentioned that there are legislation under review which will be tabled in Parliament. She then urged the Committee members to use the month of February to scrutinize

papers and reports tabled in Parliament. She then concluded by acknowledging the work carried out by the Office of the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly to ensure parliament proceedings run smoothly as well as their assistance to Committee members.

**Proceedings were adjourned at 9:02pm and will reconvene on
Tuesday 5th March, 2024 at 9:30am.**