

Weekending 09 February 2017



INTRODUCTION

On Tuesday 7 February Parliament convened with Finance Minister Hon. Patrick Chinamasa responding to the third report of the Public Accounts committee on the findings by the Auditor General on the 2014 appropriation accounts for the ministry of Finance and Economic Development. Hon. Chinamasa made an undertaking to respond to all Committee reports with issues pertaining to his ministry by end of March this year.

Hon. David Chapfika (ZANU PF-Mutoko South) presented the report on the Portfolio on Finance and Economic Development on Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Bill where the

Committee made the following observations and recommendations;

1. To ensure regional representation on the Board, the Committee recommends that the number of Board Members be revised to eleven in order to cater for a representative from each province and the eleventh Member being the Chairperson of the Board.
2. Treasury to ensure that the Authority is adequately resourced to enable it to execute its mandate effectively.

Finance Minister Hon. Chinamasa gave a Ministerial Statement concerning the current status of VAT on basic goods. He suspended the implementation of Statutory Instrument 20 (SI20), which imposed 15% VAT on rice, meat, potatoes, margarine,

cereals and mahewu saying that he first had to consult before introducing the levy. Members of the legislature welcomed the move and applauded him for removing such taxes to ensure that the majority of Zimbabweans afford basic commodities.

QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

On Wednesday 8 February 2016, Parliament assembled for the question and answer session which commenced with Hon. James Maridadi (MDCT-Mabvuku Tafara) raising a concern over the lack of commitment that Ministers exhibit in Parliament in terms of their attendance pattern. The Speaker of Parliament Advocate Jacob Mudenda concurred with Hon. Maridadi and said he will engage President Mugabe over the issue stating that it is the violation of the Constitution by the Executive.

During the session, Hon. Muchenje asked Minister of Local Government, Public Works and National Housing Hon. Saviour Kasukuwere about the efforts being made by his Ministry through the Department of CPU to assist people affected by floods.

Hon. Kasukuwere indicated that they received support from the Air Force of Zimbabwe through rescuing and helping people that were trapped or marooned. He added that each affected family received \$100 and that his Ministry made a request to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development for US\$5 million to further assist the affected families.

Hon Dubeko Sibanda (MDC-T Binga North) directed a question to Primary and Secondary Education Minister Hon. Dr. Lazarus Dokora to clarify why the Ministry has decided to introduce teaching of Mathematics in Shona and Ndebele and if it's the current Government's policy?

In response Hon. Dr. Dokora explained that the new education policy, allows that a child should be taught in vernacular when they are in the infant class, which is the first class meaning, the ECD up to Grade 2. He added that the new curriculum did not restrict the teaching of Maths in Shona and Ndebele only but in any language that is provided for in the Constitution.

Hon. Lucia Chitura (ZANU PF Manicaland) asked the Minister of Women's Affairs, Gender and Community Development, to inform the House whether there are plans to assist women involved in mining who are facing challenges of exorbitant prices in securing those claims.

Deputy Minister Damasane highlighted that the following proposals have been made to relevant Ministries:

1. To extend the payment periods for the charges, that women miners be allowed to mine before full payments of the total charges required then the charges be deducted from the periodic sales of

minerals until full payments have been made

2. Government to subsidise charges made to women miners as a way of economic empowering through the mining sector.

Hon. Godfrey Sithole (MDC-T Chitungwiza North) requested the Minister of Transport and Infrastructural Development to inform the House on how much ZINARA collected during the year 2016 and to state how much was disbursed to local authorities.

In response, The Minister of Transport and Infrastructural Development Hon. Dr. Joram Gumbo indicated that ZINARA had collected total revenue amounting to \$173 552 491. Furthermore, he said, commitments related to the Plumtree to Mutare highway, grader maintenance, toll gate construction, outstanding obligations on the Airport Road and administration costs were deducted from the total revenue. He added that the amount disbursed to road authorities in 2016 was \$41 031 2020.

On Thursday, 2nd February, 2017, Parliament convened for their normal sitting and began with Hon. Priscilla Misihairabwi-Mushonga (MDC Matabeleland South) case of alleged contempt of Parliament by a Herald reporter which she argued the article published by the media house distorted her speech. Speaker of Parliament however

said the matter was resolved following the pledge by the reporter to always follow ethical and professional reporting standards.

The Minister of Transport and Infrastructural Development Hon. Dr. Gumbo then responded to a motion on the Report of the Portfolio Committee On Transport and Infrastructural Development On the Operations of Air Zimbabwe. He indicated that Air Zimbabwe was in need of recapitalisation to start sustainable operations with a debt of over US\$323 million as at 31st December, 2016.

Hon. Gumbo also responded to a report on inquiry by the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Transport and Infrastructure Development into the causes of road carnage. After the response by the Minister, the report was adopted by the House.

Parliament will convene today as they continue with the business of the House.