

FRIDAY, 26 JANUARY 2018

Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly resumed at 7.00pm.

Prayer.

OPENING REMARK BY THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

DEPUTY SPEAKER: I announce that Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly resumed.

It is indeed a great morning today where we have witnessed the greatness of our God with all the Members of the House present today because of His Grace.

I wish to take this opportunity to greet the dignity of the House; Leader of the House also the Hon Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and the Cabinet Ministers, Associate Ministers and that side of the House. Welcome! I also wish to greet the Chairpersons of the different Parliamentary Committees and all the Members elected from each electorate.

I also acknowledge the presence of the Heads of Government Departments. I commend your early attendance. I also recognize the support of Samoa this morning. Thank you for your patience. I ask for your continuous support as your Parliament proceeds with its orders of the day.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS

Clerk read out P.P. 2017/2018 No. 148 Annual Report of the National Health Services 2014-2015 and P.P. 2017/2018 No. 149 Annual Report of the National Health Services 2015-2016 pursuant to S.O. 49.

NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICES AMENDMENT BILL 2018
– second reading

DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have received a Certificate of Urgency signed by the Leader of the House, therefore the Legislative Assembly will proceed with the second reading of the Bill.

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I call on the Hon Minister of Health.

Afioga Hon TUITAMA TALALELEI TUITAMA (Minister of Health): Mr Speaker and Members of the House, we have heard the prayer this morning and I am grateful for this offering that is now before the Lord. The Lords loving grace forever be upon the Leader of the House and Members of this Parliament.

I stand Mr Speaker to move a motion, *That the National Health Service Amendment Bill 2018 be read a second time and I wish to clarify it.*

Seconded by the Minister of Works, Transport and Infrastructure, Minister of Tourism, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries and Minister of Commerce, Industry and Labor.

Afioga Hon TUITAMA TALALELEI TUITAMA: Mr Speaker, this is a brief explanation of the Bill. There are only two sections that are amended by this Bill and the objective is to progress with the restructuring. As the House is aware, the National Health Services and the Ministry will be merged again as it was 10 years ago.

1.0 Object and reasons

1.1 The Bill seeks to amend the National Health Service Act 2014 (“Principal Act”), to put into effect the first phase of the merger of the National Health Service and the Ministry of Health, and related purposes.

1.2 The objects of the Bill are:

- (a) to amend the provisions of the Principal Act that establishes the composition of the Board, to create a Board that reflects the merger of the National Health Service (“NHS”) and the Ministry of Health (“MOH”);
- (b) to give Cabinet general authority to appoint any other member to the Board;
- (c) to remove the “ineligibility” of a person employed by the NHS for appointment as a director of the Board;
- (d) to give authority to the Board of Directors to appoint a secretary or co-secretaries from its members.

Mr Speaker, the details of the amendments are as follows:

Clause 1: provides for the short title and commencement.

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Clause 2: This clause amends section 6(1) of the Principal Act by introducing a new sub-paragraph (h). Sub-paragraph (h) is a general provision that gives Cabinet general power of appointment to appoint any other board members for the purpose of the merger. - Further, this clause will repeal section 6(4) of the Principal Act. The removal of section 6(4) will allow a person employed by the NHS for appointment as a member of the Board.

And the final part is Clause 3: amends and replaces section 8(7) of the Principal Act. This clause will give authority to the Chairperson of the Board to appoint a secretary or co-secretaries who may participate in deliberations of a matter where authorized by the Board, but have no right to vote.

Mr Speaker, and Members of the House, these are the amendments to the 2014 Principal Act now before Parliament. With respect.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: I applaud the explanation by the Hon Minister. The Chair is of the opinion that this explanation was clear and brief and perhaps there is no need for a deliberation on the matter.

Pursuant to Standing Orders, the opportunity is available to the Members of the House who wish to comment on the amendments presented by the Hon Minister of Health.

I call on the Member for Salega East.

Tofa OLO FITI AFOA VAAI (Salega East): Thank you Mr Speaker for this opportunity. The explanation by the Hon Minister was brief and so will be our queries.

Our prayers of gratitude have been offered to heaven because of our Lords continuous grace allowing us to be present here this morning.

First Mr Speaker, in 2006, the two bodies were separated. Looking and the objects and reasons, these are the same that were made then and I am confused as to what exactly is the truth. Personally, it is not the separation or merging that is important, it is the operations. This amendment is just an indication that the operation is inefficient because we separated the two and now we are proposing another merge. This is just further proof that expertise is lacking. I know that there are experts and knowledgeable personnel in both institutions but when it comes to implementation, there is a lapse.

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Second, I note the tremendous undertaking given to the Board. The fact is that it is better that the appointing of the Board be left to the Cabinet. I believe that there are policies governing the appointing of Board Members so that those who are qualified are chosen to consult on matters pertaining to the respective Ministries. I only ask that the appointment of the Board Members be fair and that only those with health service qualifications and expertise be appointed to the Board. I mention this because many of the Boards comprise of those who supported your election and this is their reward...

DEPUTY SPEAKER: I beg tolerance of the Member, I call on the Hon Minister of Public Enterprise.

Afioga Hon Lautafi Fio Selafi Purcell (Minister of Public Enterprise): The Members speech is admirable and I note that he is directing his comments towards the appointment of the Boards and he has mentioned the policies in regards to this. There is an Independent Select Committee that advises the Minister on qualified candidates and the Minister presents this to Cabinet. The applicant has to apply and list your qualifications specific to the Ministry. There is no preference to the party supporters that is not how this Committee operates with respect.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. The explanation by the Hon Minister on the appointing of the Board Members is clear. I call on the Member for Salega East.

Tofa OLO FITI AFOA VAAI: Thank you. The reason I mentioned this issue because it is clearly stated that the Cabinet will appoint the Board members. This was the reason but no matter. I just wanted to stress that whoever does the appointing whether it is the Cabinet or the Committee, that they appoint qualified members.

Specific to health, doctors would be suitable, or those who are knowledgeable because decisions made will be dependent on this Board. If the Members are not qualified, the CEO and Ministry's efforts will be in vain. These are just some comments on behalf of the Constituency on the Bill, thank you for the opportunity.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: I give the floor to the Member for Falealili West.

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Tofa AUMUA ISAIA LAMEKO (Falealili West): I am grateful Mr Speaker for the opportunity. I believe we have given our praises to our Father in Heaven for the life he has given us to attend our Sitting this morning.

The National Health Service Amendment Bill 2018 is now before the House. The theme of my remarks this morning, cooperation is key for harmony in the service of others.

Reading this Bill, I recall when the two were divided to separate the healthcare services from the administration. The National Health Services was run with the business strategy for sustainability. This means that there would be fees for the services to ensure its continuity. It is not a service for profit.

For the Board that was mentioned, it was an effort to enable the hospital to operate without subsidy from the Government. This was the plan in those days. Now, the Government has decided that both services merge.

My view Mr Speaker on the two entities; the National Health Services deals with healthcare and treating patients but the Ministry of Health deals with the administration and policies aimed at preventing illness. Personally, the prevention side of things should be strengthened so that the costs of treatment can be reduced. What is the case now? We are all aware of the increase in diseases. Perhaps this Bill will revive the women's committees in the villages and the cooperation with representatives from the Ministry with regards to basic healthcare.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank the previous Board Members. This amendment will restructure the two entities and the merge is supported. It is an appropriate merge so that we can be rid of duplicated outputs such as finance, human resource and procurements.

Again, I reiterate my gratitude to the Board since 2006 to date also the Head of the Departments and the staff. I commend you all for your service. When a group is again appointed for a task but there is not enough to compensate them, we can only accept with gratitude their good works.

To those who will be made redundant because of this merge, we thank you for your service. Mr Speaker, this Constituency offers its support to this Amendment Bill, thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. I call on one of the Members for the Urban Constituencies.

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Afioga FAUMUINA ASI PAULI WAYNE FONG (Urban Constituency): Thank you Mr Speaker in conducting our orders. I recognize the Ministers and the Hon Prime Minister and their efforts throughout this week as we have now reached the end of the week.

In respect of the urgent state of the Bill, I have two or three points I wish to put forward. First is in relation to the National Kidney Foundation which I see is not included in this merge. This is an important service for the country and I do not know but maybe we will all need this service. The Foundation needs to be centralized and that it is not impacted by the merge.

I read from the Report that there are overseas partners that visit and volunteer for the Foundation. The concern is that this partnership continues and is not interrupted by the merge. It is an essential assistance to us because it does not cost much and the request is that the independence of the Foundation be maintained Hon Minister.

Second, it would be better that there is a CEO and a Deputy CEO to assist with the workload. Each body had its own respective CEO but now that the two will merge, perhaps a Deputy CEO would suffice and the ACEO positions still remains.

My view is that the service delivery will not be affected but hopefully the quality of the service will be improved for the hospital so that the nation in its entirety will see the justification of this marriage. But if the merge is realized and there is no noted improvement, this would be a big concern. I only pray that the Lord bless this new marriage and that there is progress in the future.

I wish to thank the Hon Minister for responding to some of the needs submitted.

That is all Mr Speaker. You are looking quite exceptional today and we pray for the blessings upon the Speaker. God bless, thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: I commend the Member for his speech and recommendations made. The Hon Minister of Health has heard your views on the National Kidney Foundation and the revival of the Deputy CEO positions for large Ministries such as is the case with the Ministry of Police. Thank you for your advice.

I call on the honorable Member for Palauli le Falefa.

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Afioga FAUMUINA TIATIA FAAOLATANE LIUGA (Palauli le Falefa): Thank you Mr Speaker. I thank you for your prayer offered to our Heavenly Father this morning.

I wish to comment on the Amendment Bill now before the House. I note that the emphasis is on health.

I was in the Cabinet when the division was made and the current Minister of Health was the Associate Minister. The decision by Cabinet was important at the time with the priority being health. The Cabinet also delved thoroughly into the legislation which provided for the division at the time and the highest intention of the Executive was to find the best way to access national healthcare.

Mr Speaker, I fully support this Bill because it is ad hoc type legislation. It provides for the transition period so that the two entities can prepare for the merge. I commend the Hon Minister and the Cabinet for their foresight.

My only concern is that this period is not drawn out. I recommend that the period be brief because we should be mindful of those that will be affected by the merge.

One advantage of this merger will be the quick response to urgent medical cases that need overseas medical attention. One layer in the process will be removed where the Minister and Cabinet had to wait for a recommendation on patients to be treated overseas and those to remain. Another advantage is that it is cost saving. The funds that will be saved can be redirected to upgrading district hospitals. If we upgrade the district hospitals, people will not have to travel far to come to the general hospital and they will save money and time especially if they are admitted for three days to a week. Hon Minister, you also worked in the rural areas and when there were no patients, you went fishing.

This is why I recommend that there are incentives for the doctors to want to work in the rural areas especially if they are leaving behind a family to work in the area for a month or so. The Ministry mentioned that housing and a vehicle would be provided. This is the normal benefit because they are necessities for service delivery, but what will they get when they return to their families? You are all aware that if a husband and wife are separated for a long time they may be tempted physically and in some cases the distance may cause mental distress. Nurses should also be employed to work with the doctor instead of the doctor being isolated.

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Another important group is the women's committees especially in regards to healthcare in Savaii. You should not neglect our island. You were bestowed the Lemaota title from Tafua but you do not concern yourself with Savaii. There are so many here that hail from Savaii, there is Sala, Lautafi, Unasa and Lopao. Incentives should be prioritized.

In regards to the Board that was mentioned by one of the Members, it is not permanent. I will explain further on that when the amendment to the Principal Act is tabled in the March Sitting for the implementation on July 1st.

I ask for your consideration of the hospice in Satupaitea and Tuasivi because they are the main centralized points of healthcare to stabilize patients that are waiting transfer through the wharf or airport at Maota.

May your burdens be light Afioga Hon Tuitama or Lemaota. I see that Afioga Hon Sala is standing to interrupt my speech; you are also a warrior of Savaii. With respect, thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: The opportunity will be given Hon Minister when the Member has concluded his speech.

I call on the Hon Minister.

Afioga Hon Sala Fata Pinati (Minister of Tourism): I did not intend to interrupt the Members speech but he has mentioned our titles from Savaii. It is true that works have not been realized but the requests have been made. It has been 12 years since I have been making requests ever since I entered Parliament three terms ago. The developments and access roads have been submitted but we are also cautious with our allocation. There is always that assumption that when we are appointed to a portfolio then we should be prioritized. But we first give priority to others. Mr Speaker and the dignity of Samoa listening in, our intention is that the best is offered to Savaii. Despite the electorate being divided, we are not being idle with our work. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. I call on the honorable Member for Anoamaa West.

Tofa Hon LAUOFO FONOTOE NUAFESILI PIERRE LAUOFO (Anoamaa West): Thank you Mr Speaker for the opportunity. I greet everyone this morning.

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My comments will be brief as other Members have commented on other matters. I recall in the 1990s, there were many reforms in the public service. I assume that there are Members present who were still Members of the House at that time when the reforms were being made. In 2006, the NHS and MOH were to be separated as the NHS had their own governing legislation. At that time, as Afioga Faumuina Liuga mentioned, there is only one objective of these reforms and that is to enhance the services of the public service. It was at that time when the then Associate Minister of Health, Afioga Tuitama had this dream. The Minister of Health at that time explained that the MOH would deal with policies for the health sector. The NHS would deal specifically with the hospital and the treatment of patients. I supported this dream. At the time there was only one Ministry and the House is aware that there was much criticism at that time in regards to health services. This reform was proposed. It was perhaps in 2013 when the Hon Minister then proposed a Bill to change the management board to Board of Directors. The objective was for the Board to be independent of the Public Service Commission. At that time, this was seen as relevant. One of the Members mentioned this morning that the objective was for the hospital to be self sufficient and have the patients pay fees.

There was another Amendment Bill in 2014 and to date, there is another Amendment Bill to merge the MOH and NHS. The reason I mentioned the historical background of these reforms is because it seems that the intention was to progress but then it is moving backward. If it is to be this way then the progress would be even better. Thank you Hon Minister. Throughout these years and the reforms, there are issues and complaints from the country as we have read printed in the newspapers. I recommend the Hon Minister review the quality of workers because I note that all the reforms target the systems but the criticism of the service remains.

I am aware of the changes by the Ministry and the Hon Minister in trying to improve the services. I understand that your work is not simple even with this merge, it will not be easy.

Regarding the Bill, as the Hon Minister mentioned, the amendment provides for the Cabinet to appoint the members of the Board. As the Member for Palauli le Falefa stated, the Board seems to be an interim Board comprising three Ministers and I assume that you Hon Minister will be the Chairperson. I only remind the Hon Minister that your work is done thoroughly because the Cabinet will review and approve the recommendations made by the Board.

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Finally, I believe that a Term of Reference should be prepared. The only matter I wish to understand is whether there is a proposal for the Board to be under the Public Service Commission? That is all Mr Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: I thank the Member and the Member for Palauli le Falefa. The recommendations are for the betterment of our work. Thank you.

I call on the Member for Faasaleleaga No. 1 West.

Afioga Hon GATOLOAIFAANA AMATAGA ALESANA-GIDLOW (Faasaleleaga No. 1 West): I am grateful for the opportunity Mr Speaker and I endorse your word of prayer made this morning to our Heavenly Father thanking him for His guidance and blessings upon the Members of this Parliament and Samoa.

I wish to make some remarks on the National Health Service Amendment Bill now before the House.

I first thank the Hon Minister and the Ministry for the proposed changes. I believe that there is no change that is done without justification and a vision with consultations with the objective of improving the quality of the service for Samoa. This Bill we are considering is specific to the healthcare. Without health, we cannot have strength to do carry out our normal duties and so this is a very important Bill.

First Mr Speaker, regarding the Board and the proposed change, there will be a quorum if there were only five Directors but I note that there will be about ten initially and then there will be additional members such as the Hon Minister. Although it is an interim board, there should not be less than the number of Directors to have a quorum, there should be more. That is an additional recommendation.

I was part of the changes during that time and so I will comment on it. I know the changes in those times were not taken lightly with the changes beginning in 2000 and it was only implemented in 2006. The changes were not made or proposed in one night.

The important thing I noted from the remarks made, when a Ministry is divided, it can be monitored and outputs allocated. Also those who will do the monitoring and those who will carry out the activities can be separated. This is appropriate so that those who will carry out the work will not monitor themselves in case there is a conflict of interest and it is not addressed.

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Also, it will enable the policy divisions to concentrate on policy. It was a good proposal at the time. Now there is this proposal to merge the two bodies and the concern is that the monitoring will not be thorough and the service will improve for the health of our people. This will also improve the quality of workers. I do not know where else we can employ doctors to increase the number of doctors. I know that the Hon Minister has a strategy planned but it is important that the number of staff is increased because the population of Samoa is also increasing and the current number of staff cannot cater to the increase.

One other matter I wish to comment on is public health. I applaud the initiative to revive the women's committees. This recommendation was also presented at the time to the Ministry. It was suggested that the nurses would visit the different committees and assist mothers and their children. Again, I reiterate my gratitude for this initiative because we used to have this service and I assume that it was in 2000 when they ceased this service. I am uncertain as to the reasons for ceasing this service but hopefully this will be a progress to the future and better national healthcare. There were comments on the redundancy package for the employees as was done before to ensure that not many are affected and this was confirmed by the General Manager. I again recommend that only a few are affected because this is their livelihood.

That concludes my remarks Mr Speaker. I wish the Hon Minister all the best as well as the Associate Minister and the Ministry. We support the service, thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: I thank the Member for the comments. You were also responsible for this portfolio during the development of the health sector. Thank you for your service.

I call on the honorable Member for Faasaleleaga No 2.

Afioga PAU SEFO TAUMATA PAU (Faasaleleaga No. 2): I am grateful Mr Speaker for the opportunity this morning. I greet the Deputy Prime Minister, Cabinet Ministers and the Associate Ministers as well as all the Members of Parliament.

I stand to contribute on behalf of my Constituency on the Bill. For changes such as this, it should be done for a higher cause. If it is a change to glorify a person, we should reconsider and make changes to glorify the Lord through serving the nation.

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In my view, this amendment provides for the chain of decision from the Board, the Cabinet and then Parliament. Also, the Board comprises of former employees, those who have experience in the health sector. Mr Speaker, I stand because I live close to the hospital and I often visit there. I also visit the Tuasivi hospital because it is in my electorate and I should comment on the issues faced by our island of Salafai.

At the Motootua hospital, I am grateful to the Hon Minister. I visit the hospital twice a day and I observe and advise the security to be vigilant. Whenever a Samoan is in a clean environment, they do not concern themselves with dirt. Some people visit the hospital and are unhygienic and I tell the securities to look out for these because we are responsible. Some visitors wear do not wear proper clothing as you are all aware, the air condition is on 24 hours and perhaps being hygienic will be healthy. I ask the Hon Minister whether additional beds can be acquired for the hospital, perhaps 50 more in the vacant buildings to withhold the patients that need assistance because there are cases where the patient is only given a tablet and told to go home and wait until a bed is available. This is the humble request Hon Minister just to cater to those patients.

As for Tuasivi hospital, the air condition is working but the only remark is that with the merge, there should be an active and knowledgeable leader to manage the Ministry because it will be a large Ministry and they need to be able to make visits. There are only 34 beds at the Tuasivi hospital. Even patients from Salega come to this hospital hoping there is a vacant bed. I request an additional 20 beds for Salafai. There are times when I walk around in the hospital and I take a minute out to rest on a bed.

As for the care of the patients, the service is adequate. In the morning, the breakfast at 10.00am is an apple or orange and at 12.00pm there is lunch and then another meal at 2.00pm and then dinner at 7.00pm. There are 6 meals a day and the cost is approximately \$30, this was the estimated cost. For the Tuasivi hospital, many of the patients' meals are prepared from their families which is inappropriate because it can cause more health problems. Hon Minister, perhaps 3 of the meals offered at the Motootua hospital can be removed and be offered instead at Tuasivi. Also, there is insufficient parking space. The Members in Savaii are aware that there is no parking space for families visiting their patients. I investigated this last week and there is a space where a patient can be dropped off in front of the hospital and the vehicle parked in the back. There is a proposal by the Government...

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DEPUTY SPEAKER: I beg tolerance of the Member that has the floor. It is fitting that I clarify our Standing Orders. The Bill is an Amendment under a state of urgency. The opportunity has been granted to comment on the general merits of the Bill and I advise the Member to direct your comments to the Bill and the merge of the two entities. There is also an opportunity during the consideration in detail of the Bill to make a comment. As I mentioned, the Bill is under a state of urgency and the Chair advises the Member to bring your speech to its conclusion.

Afioga PAU SEFO TAUMATA PAU: Thank you Mr Speaker. You are right Mr Speaker but my Constituency wants to listen to the remarks made on their behalf. I recall the ferry Pikilu. If you were travelling from Savaii and the sea was rough, the ferry would stop off at Apolima so no matter what, if there is an opening, the opportunity should be taken.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: I again beseech the honorable Member, there is a great opportunity for the Constituency to listen in to your requests to upgrade the beds and parking. But please address the Amendment Bill specifically as it is under a state of urgency.

Afioga PAU SEFO TAUMATA PAU: Thank you. The remarks were to changes but I will conclude as you have instructed.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you.

Afioga PAU SEFO TAUMATA PAU: Thank you Mr Speaker for the floor. I recall a past Minister who would say to leave it at his side. As for this amendment, whether it will be changed again in another five or ten years, it should be done to glorify the Lord and for the good of the country. If this amendment will increase the number of nurses and doctors' then it is relevant. There is a hotel that I usually visit, I will visit there again tomorrow and there are employees that went to nursing school. I hope this Bill will bring them back because their knowledge is wasted when they can use their knowledge to care for their families. As for the doctors at Tuasivi, there should be an additional doctor not only to provide a service to this hospital but also to be on standby. There should be board for the doctors and their families so that the doctors do not have to return here on the weekends.

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Also, there should be reconsideration of the state of the service in the hospital in the Salega side of the island. If a patient is taken to the hospital, the treatment is done by the doctor here at Tuasivi and if the doctor is out and is called upon for a decision, the doctor would make it from that place but perhaps this Bill will allow for a doctor for this hospital.

Mr Speaker, if my Constituency is listening in, you have heard by attempts to voice our concerns although not loud but in depth. I conclude by addressing the Deputy Prime Minister because there is a need for a seawall from Fatausi. It has been almost 12 years. To the Hon Minister of Education, Sports and Culture, I obeyed the instructions and went and sought out the Japanese Ambassador to build our school and all that is needed now is your signature. I plead with the Cabinet to be sympathetic and allow the Hon Minister to witness the boxing match. I remember what my Uncle King Pola used to say about such trips, whoever goes they should also take their wives because there is a lot of preparation from daily medication to clothing. If not, there is the Associate Minister...

DEPUTY SPEAKER: I beg tolerance of the Member. Please conclude as your time is finished.

Afioga PAU SEFO TAUMATA PAU: I will abide Mr Speaker.

Tofa Olo Fiti Afoa Vaai: Mr Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: I call on the Member for Salega East.

Tofa Olo Fiti Afoa Vaai: With all due respect, the Member from Safotulafai has an exceptional speech therefore I move a motion, *That the Members time be extended by 15 minutes.*

Seconded by the Member for Falealili East.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Conclude your speech.

Afioga PAU SEFO TAUMATA PAU: Mr Speaker the motion has been seconded.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: I beg tolerance of the Member, the motion is before the house as per Standing Orders.

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Leave was not granted.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Proceed to conclude your speech. The Constituency has heard your clear speech.

Afioga PAU SEFO TAUMATA PAU: Hon Minister of Works, Transport and Infrastructure, I ask that you be available for a whole day visit. Hon Minister of Women, Community and Social Development, there is a need for additional women representatives. There are village mayors but no women representatives in Sapapalii, Fusi and Fuifatu. Hon Minister of Finance, we should have a meeting and I will recommend two avenues where we can generate funds because the Members have many needs.

Mr Speaker. That is all and I wish to acknowledge my Constituency for their support. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: You may address your Constituency and we will go on recess.

Afioga PAU SEFO TAUMATA PAU: There is a need for funds to satisfy the needs of the people because there is a great need but we should live within our means.

I now address my Constituency in all their honorific salutations; *Afifio le Aiga sa Malietoa faapea foi sa Tooa, le Usoalii matua ia Mago ma le Usuifanua, o le vaa e taumua tasi e taunuu i Fuifatu, upu ia te oe Sapapalii Leilua ma le Toalima, Alalatoa ma le Alo o Malietoa ma le Lautinalaulelei ma Tuiletufuga ma le Aigamalae Tuilagi ma Namulauulu ma upu ia te oe Safotulafai.* Thank you all for your support and prayers. I am grateful that we get to meet every Saturday. There is nothing to be concerned of.

Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity. I fully support the Bill before the House. Soifua.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. I now see we have come to our normal hour of recess.

I announce that the Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly will be set aside for its recess.

Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly were set aside at 10.32am and resumed at 11.24am.

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Deliberation on the second reading of the National Health Services Bill 2018 resumed.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: I now announce that the Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly have resumed. I believe we are strengthened by our meal provided this morning.

Our Orders were set aside after the Member for Faasaleleaga No. 2 addressed the House. I now call on the Member for Alataua West.

Afioga ALIIMALEMANU ALOFA TUUAU (Alataua West): Thank you for the opportunity. I believe we are all satisfied with the meal provided this morning and now we are continuing with the deliberation of this urgent Bill. I support the Bill as there is an urgency in the merging of the Ministry and the National Health Services. My only concern is the delay in the tabling of the Bill because there was a proposal for the merge to be complete this year as there will be an impact on the employees. For future reference, this should have been addressed a long time ago so that the service is not suspended.

While I have the opportunity, I want to comment on this merge. The Bill merges these two services and I believe that a detailed description should be outlined. I assume that the purpose of the division was to separate the policy unit from the services. Referring to the separation of the Public Works and the Communications, the separation is still efficiently executed. This is the intention of these Government policies so that there are detailed and specific instructions for those that will oversee the separation of policies and services. If there are entities that were separated but are operating well, will they be merged and if precedence is anything to go by, after 10 years, it will be merged again. The gist of my remarks is that the Minister drives the policies but the staff executes. I do not need to explain that there are Sustainable Development Goals, Millenium Development Goals and National Development Goals and there are work plans in addition to the Appropriation. I stand to present the stance of the Finance and Expenditure Committee.

These work plans are presented annually with the Appropriation so that we can achieve our National Development Goals which are linked to the Millennium Development Goals and this is why individual Government entities are allocated funds to enable their services.

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The concern is that the services and the policy side will be clustered together nevertheless the Bill has been tabled and so there is no other comment on it. But this is just a comment while I have the opportunity. Whether there is a merge or separation, there should be detailed information on the execution of the policy unit and the services so that the funds are also detailed to ensure efficient execution of the services because there may be an improvement in the medical services but the administration services, pharmacy and maintenance services decline.

Again, I reiterate the need for detailed allocation so that the administration services, pharmacy and maintenance services are not impacted because the execution at the moment is efficient. That is all, bless this Meeting, thank you for the opportunity.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: I call on the Associate Minister of Education, Sports and Culture.

Afioga ALAISA MUAGUTUTIA MOEFAAUO MALAGAITUTOGIAI SEPULONA MOANANU: Thank you for the opportunity. I also want to contribute to the Bill on behalf of my Constituency.

Gratitude to our Heavenly Father is great for His grace on this House. I see that the Bill provides for the first phase of the merge. We are all aware of the separation and now they will again be married.

I believe that the reason for this merge is because there is a fault. There is no question in my mind that this is the reason. This is why I am grateful for this proposal. Now that the faults have been found, they are being addressed. If this initiative is to resolve the issues, then this Constituency fully supports this.

Five years ago, we witnessed the opening of the new hospital so the fault is not in the infrastructure. There were comments that the buildings needed to be upgraded and the service would improve but now we have witnessed the upgrade which is almost number one in the Pacific in the infrastructural design.

There is a saying amongst the elderly, it is not the building but inside the building. This is where I believe the fault is. I watch on television that new equipment is being received so I would assume carelessness from the top. I support the proposal to achieve the vision to provide quality services to our people seeking medical assistance.

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This is what is important to my Constituency. I support also if district hospices will be upgraded with this change as we also have a hospice and I have witnessed that there is crowding in the hospice with the new illnesses we are affected by.

I acknowledge the speech by the Member from Safotulafai. I heard that he visits the hospital regularly, twice a day. I advise the Hon Minister that funeral parlors be left to the private sector and hospital can focus on medical services. This would help the Member because I assume he visits the hospital in the morning and evening to see the names of those who are written. This is why I recommend that the morgues be left to the private sector.

The Member also mentioned my attendance of the boxing match. No thank you. There is more use for me here in Samoa. There is a saying from Faleula “*E patipati taoto Feepo*” Feepo applauds from his bed. There is no need for our attendance. Even if the match is lost, he will receive his \$12million and then take a break. Why then should we trouble ourselves? In response to the honorable Member, I do not want to go. Mr Speaker, I support the Bill if the intention is the benefit of the services. May God look kindly on us this day, may the...

DEPUTY SPEAKER: I call on the Member for Faasaleleaga No. 2.

Afioga Pau Sefo Taumata Pau: Thank you Mr Speaker. The Member for Anoamaa East mentioned me. The Member is knowledgeable in this area and supports it. We forget that this is one means of generating revenue; it is after the call from our Heavenly Father. We already have a morgue. No matter in the world there are relatives, if their parent passes on, they request that the body be left until they arrive. If you calculate the revenue for one funeral, it is about \$100,000 and if there are 10 funerals in the week, it amounts to \$1,000,000. This is one means of revenue. I thank the honorable Member. I was going to move for 5 more minutes but I assume that is all he has prepared.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: I beg tolerance of the Member; it was only a recommendation for the benefit of your work. Do not be concerned, there will be a time when the Speaker will also have a funeral parlor. I call on the Associate Minister to continue.

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Afioga ALAISA MUAGUTUTIA MOEFAAUO MALAGAITUTOGIAI SEPULONA MOANANU: I thank the Member for his interjection. The remarks being made are to assist in the improvement of the service.

I have just heard that there is a resident of our Constituency that has passed on and I wish to offer my condolences to the bereaved family of Susuga Selelimalelei.

Thank you Mr Speaker for the opportunity, God bless this House.

Susuga Hon Tuilaepa Auelua Fatialofa Lupesoliai Lolofietele Neioti Aiono Galumalemana Dr. Sailele Malielegaoi (Prime Minister): Mr Speaker, I have just arrived and the Member for Safotulafai has made an appealing argument. In 1992, I travelled with the Member to investigate the probability of a crematorium for Samoa. There would be two options, a funeral parlor for cremation and a funeral parlor for those to be buried. I wish to ask the Member if there is a way to preserve the deceased and their physical appearance instead of having them buried or cremated so that the family can still look at their loved one. I ask because this is one Member that is vigilant in seeking ways to preserve the deceased. It is just a question and if it is inappropriate, we can talk about it later.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: I call on the Member for Faasaleleaga No. 2. Is it a matter to be discussed in the back or in the House because...

Afioga Pau Sefo Taumata Pau: Thank you for the opportunity. This matter has been queried locally and overseas by many. I am grateful to the Hon Prime Minister for the trip we went on. We had a meeting with overseas operators and they asked if I was considering this method and I asked for an estimated cost and I was hesitant when the cost was mentioned. They asked if there was a mountain near the town area. I replied that there is Mount Vaea where a man from across the seas was buried. They said that when you get to Vaea, establish a crematorium. This eventuated and now we have both methods available. It took 20 years, but the project was realized. I wanted to go up Mount Vaea and sit there where this man is buried and the lighthouse is situated. I have been there and the project has been implemented. New methods are being researched.

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There are those that are still hesitant when we use the word ‘burn’ but when we say ‘ashes’ they are more open to the idea. Three deceased were cremated and in the weekend, there are Philippine nationals arriving from American Samoa.

There is a new method where you can visit with a deceased loved on. There is a special room set up where the deceased can lay for a month or a year until the family is ready to bury the deceased. There are relatives that do not want to return overseas because they want to spend time with the deceased and this room is available.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: I assume the question has been satisfied.

Afioga Pau Sefo Taumata Pau: There should be no concern about the time. Just as this merge is planned, with preparation, it will eventuate. There are also beds that can be used to make the deceased sit up. I took all the old beds from the hospital and revamped them so that the deceased can be placed in a seated position and you can talk to them. These are the services to satisfy the nation.

That is the response Hon Prime Minister. There are injections available for all that. That is the reply with respect.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Everything is now clear.
 I call on the honorable Member for Aleipata Itupa i Lalo.

Afioga TAFUA MALUELUE TAFUA (Aleipata Itupa i Lalo): Mr Speaker and the dignity of Parliament, thank you for the opportunity. I applaud the Member for his response to the query from the Hon Prime Minister.

You expressed that you receive \$1million a week from your business. With the time you spent marketing your funeral parlor in Parliament, it is about \$100,000 and perhaps that can be donated to our budget, with respect.

Moving on, Mr Speaker, I stand to make a brief comment on the matter. There were many Members who voiced their views so I will not mention the matters already addressed. I assume that this Bill will only be effective for 5 months. It was clearly mentioned by some Members that the separation was a result of policies and now the marriage is again being proposed.

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The Member for Faasaleleaga No. 1 West stated that decisions of yesterday, shape today, but my question is, the decisions of the day before yesterday, shapes when? We were rowing forward now we are rowing backward. This is the cause of my disappointment because we are going back to what was. As was mentioned by one Member, the systems and polices will change with regards to the execution of the work, by the outputs remain.

The Member for Anoamaa East mentioned that it is not the building but inside the building. So the changes we are proposing through this Bill is to improve services. I believe that the services are essential and there should not be any complaints to the Government or the Ministry.

The Member for Anoamaa West mentioned the historical background of the service and this Bill from being one entity to being separated and again this Bill to merge.

First, there is a concern with the Transition Board comprising of three Ministers. I raised this same issue during our briefing. The Chairperson will be the Hon Minister of Health, the Minister of Finance and the Minister responsible for SOEs will assist and your report is presented to the Cabinet where you also sit. There is an assumed conflict of interest because you make the decision and then you sit in the Cabinet. I do not doubt your capacity. I firmly believe that your presence is essential but that is the only concern.

Second, I reiterate my concern on redundancy. I only plead with the Hon Minister of Health and the Minister of Finance to ensure the relevant compensations through the redundancy package because those impacted are our own.

Those are the only matters Mr Speaker with all due respect. God bless this Meeting.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. I call on the Member for Falealili East.

Afioga FUIMAONO TEO SAMUEL TEO (Falealili East): I deem this the perfect time Mr Speaker to comment on the Bill before the House. I greet the dignity of the Parliament, the Leader and the Cabinet as well as the Members from each constituency.

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Mr Speaker, I assumed that during the explanation by the Hon Minister, all the aspects would be clarified so that the Members would not raise any queries. Anything that is and was executed well and the purpose for the merge should be transparent. All the different fragrances have been collected from the views of the Members this morning.

First, I commend the decision for this temporary Board comprising the Hon Minister for only this transition period. I do not know if the positions within the Board filled by the Ministers will be removed after. I recommend that after the transition period, the Ministers will be removed and the positions filled with the Management then they will be the advisors. I support the presence of the Ministers in the Board only during this transition period.

Second, the CEO mentioned that approximately 20 will be affected by this merge. Whether it is 20 or 15, the Hon Minister should consider this because these people have families to support and they will be shocked by the termination of their service. This is the same case with the police.

If they will be terminated from the Service, the advice is that they are given employment in other Ministries to continue their service. I know that those that will be terminated have commitments not only in their families but also with loans because they assumed they would have permanent employment. But now their service will be terminated and their commitments affected. That is the concern.

There was a saying mentioned by one of the Member, it is not the building but what is in the building. The fact is that the new hospital is at an exceptional level and I am proud of it especially when overseas relatives visit and they witness the work. I only have a recommendation Hon Minister regarding the emergency services. Two weeks ago, I went to take my child to the hospital and for three nights we were there and there were no beds. We had to sit in the corridor and wait for a vacant bed.

This is an increasing problem especially in the emergency. It is not only the beds but also the limited staff to carry out the work. I was very sympathetic of the nurse on duty that day. If I knew how to do the work, I would have revived one of the staff that was trying to administer oxygen to a patient because she was very petite and she eventually had to get on to the bed to pump oxygen to the patient. I approached her and asked if she needed help because I knew that I had the strength to pump but in the end the patient passed away. Everything leads back to service.

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The infrastructure is good and the operation is good but if there is no one to deliver the service, then therein lies a big problem. Perhaps the Hon Minister and the Government should consider the fact that practitioners opt to have their own private practices because of financial reasons. The issue is not with the service but that there are not enough staff to carry out the service.

In the emergency room Hon Minister, on the ceiling there is mould spreading on it and it is a serious matter that should be addressed. While the patient I mentioned was being revived, mould from the ceiling almost fell on to him. The mould is spread across the ceiling and I do not know if there is a water leak causing this. This may cause more illness. As for the shortage in beds, the Member for Safotulafai has offered a solution. He mentioned that he revamped the old beds from the hospital so he can sell it back to the hospital to increase the number of beds for now while we await further assistance.

I wish to express gratitude to the Ministry for the service because it deals with national health. This is the heart of our nation. I wish to also commend the Hon Minister and Hon Minister of Women, Community and Social Development for their collaboration in reviving the women's committees and enforcing the role of the village mayors so we can focus on prevention as the saying goes 'Prevention is better than cure'.

I conclude Mr Speaker by applauding your role in conducting our meeting. May you have the wisdom to continue your work. I also acknowledge the support of my Constituency of Falealili East. Soifua. Thank you for the opportunity.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: I commend the Member for his speech. Thank you for your preparations. I note that there is no...

I call on the Member for Vaimauga East.

Afioga SULAMANAIA FETAIAI TAUILILI TUIVASA (Vaimauga East): Thank you Mr Speaker for the floor. As the Member for Falealili East expressed, I too wish to commend you for conducting our Proceedings since yesterday.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: I interrupt the Member for Vaimauga East. The Chair is mindful that our Friday Sittings concludes at 12.00pm but there is an opportunity to continue on Monday.

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I wish to express my gratitude and appreciation for the work completed by the House throughout this week. I commend the House, the Hon Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and Cabinet and the Associate Ministers.

I also acknowledge the esteemed Members of Parliament. The Chair offers its gratitude for your patience as well as the harmony maintained throughout our Proceedings. Thank you for supporting the Chair and its role in conducting our Proceedings.

Hon Prime Minister and your crew, I applaud your patience. I am aware that you are no stranger to the calling. During this week, I believe the Lord was with us. To the other side of the House, I commend you for your preparations and contributions. Our role is to voice the needs of our nation. The Chair asks that you support the work of the Cabinet and Government.

Samoa listening in, thank you for your support and encouragement, thank you for your prayers which is the reason for the success of this Parliament. It is your never ending prayers that has seen the success of our work. To conclude, if there has been any offence, we ask for your forgiveness and it is only through the Lord that we will be blessed.

The dignity of Parliament, if the Chair has caused any offence in any way, I ask for your leniency. The intention is that we are observing our Standing Orders so that there is order in the House and we maintain the dignity of the Legislative Assembly. Let us rely on the Lord as we proceed with our work, not only the Government but also our Parliamentary Committees.

I now announce that the Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly will now adjourn and before we do, I call on the Associate Minister of Justice and Court Administration to close our Sitting with a word of prayer and we will continue with our work next week, God willing.

Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly adjourned at 12:07pm until 9.00am Monday, 29 January, 2018.