



OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

[HANSARD]

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

SECOND SESSION - FIRST MEETING

TUESDAY, 28TH MAY, 2019

SESSION – 2019/2020



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PARLIAMEN TARY DEBATES

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VOLUME: I

NUMBER: 4

First Meeting of the Second Session of the Fifth Parliament
Of the Second Republic of Sierra Leone.

Proceedings of the Sitting of the House
Held Tuesday, 28th May, 2019.

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PROPOSER: HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS

SECONDER: HON. FRANCIS A. KAISAMBA

BE IT RESOLVED:

"THAT WE THE MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT HERE ASSEMBLED WISH TO THANK HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT FOR THE ADDRESS HE SO GRACIOUSLY DELIVERED ON THE OCCASION OF STATE OPENING OF THE SECOND SESSION OF THE FIFTH PARLIAMENT OF THE SECOND REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE IN THE CHAMBER OF PARLIAMENT ON THURSDAY, 2ND MAY, 2019"

[SECOND ALLOTTED DAY]



THE CHAMBER OF PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE

Official Hansard Report of the Proceedings of the House

SECOND SESSION – FIRST MEETING OF THE FIFTH PARLIAMENT OF THE SECOND REPUBLIC

TUESDAY, 28th May, 2019.

I. PRAYERS

[The Table Clerk, Mrs Bintu Weston, Read the Prayers]

[The House met at 10:40 a.m. in Parliament Building, Tower Hill, Freetown]

[The Speaker, Hon. Chernor Abass Bundu, in the Chair]

The House was called to Order

Suspension of S. O. 5[2]

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, I want to promise the Whips that the day the House starts proceedings at exactly 10:00 a.m., I will provide a special gift for them.

HON. HASSAN A. SESAY: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we reported an incident that had to do with the attacks on two of our colleagues; one Member of Parliament from Lungi was attacked at Rokel and the other in Makeni. We requested to meet with the Leader of Government Business, but have not heard anything from him.

THE SPEAKER: I think the meeting did not take place.

HON. HASSAN A. SESAY: Again, Honourable Mohamed Bangura was attacked at Rokel and his security was stabbed. This is why we have not seen him this morning. He is currently in the hospital with his gateman. He climbed up the roof, but when the robbers came, they came to his room and took a hand bag that was lying on the chair and left. Mr Speaker, if such unfortunate incidents are constantly taking place, we have to do something very fast. I think the security of the people of this country is paramount. Our lives are being threatened and it will be prudent if the meeting that was requested yesterday between the two Leaders be held. As Members of Parliament, we have to be properly protected. When we go to our respective homes, we should be at liberty to enjoy the comfort of our homes without thinking about armed robbers. We should not politicise this issue at all. The undertones were unfortunate and I think before we commence proceedings, let us address this issue and say something that will help the situation *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, let me say one thing though. I hope for God`s sake we have not lost our humanity. I really hope so. When one of us is attacked, it can happen to any one of us. So, please let our humanity shine on occasion like this.

HON. DR KANDEH K. YUMEKELLA: Mr Speaker, I also share your sentiment. We have just finished three [3] days of a conference on social cohesion and reducing tension and instability. If a Member of Parliament is attacked, I am sure it is all

Members of Parliament that have been attacked [*Applause*]. Our responsibility is to represent our people and defend their human rights. Sometimes, by the nature of our responsibility, we will criticise institutions and heads of institutions if they violate the rules. However, we cannot do it in an atmosphere where people feel threatened. So, this is not a partisan issue, it is about Members of Parliament. It is our responsibility to represent the people, defend their rights and ensure justice. As I said earlier, we have just completed a three day conference on National Cohesion. The incident the Honourable Member has just reported keeps happening repeatedly. The attack on Honourable Mohamed Bangura is the third incident. So, this is not about party politics, but the security of Members of Parliament. So, I share your concern Sir [*Applause*].

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, I do not want us to open a debate on this. Again, I am going to request for a meeting in my Chambers immediately this sitting is adjourned between myself, the Leader of Government Business, Leader of the Opposition and Deputy Leader of Government Business. I do not want us to debate it at all. It is a very serious matter.

HON. REBBECA Y. KAMARA: Mr Speaker, you have just said you would like to meet with the two leaders. I do not know, but since this is a sensitive issue, I would like the Leader of the NGC to attend.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I will not leave out the leaders of the NGC and C4C.

HON. REBBECA Y. KAMARA: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: They are also invited and I will also invite the leader of the Paramount Chief Members of Parliament. There is no Independent Leader.

II. CORRECTION OF VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS FOR THE PARLIAMENTARY SITTING HELD ON MONDAY, 27TH MAY, 2019.

THE SPEAKER: As usual, we shall skip pages 1 to 4. Page 5? Page 6? Page 7? Page 8? If there is no comment or observation, could someone move for the adoption of the

record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting, held on Monday, 27th May, 2019 as presented?

HON. MOSES B. JORKIE: I so move, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON. MASSAY N. ARUNA: I so second, Mr Speaker.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[Record of Vote and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting held on Monday, 27th May, 2019 has been adopted as presented]

III. MOTION OF THANKS TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT, JULIUS MAADA BIO

THE SPEAKER: I have received the list from the main Opposition, the Government Bench and the NGC. I have not got any list from the C4C. Well, the Independent Candidates will be treated individually. I am waiting for C4C list of speakers. I do not want to be accused of unfairness. So, when I have all the lists in front of me, I will then proceed to ask people to speak in the order in which the names are presented to me. I will start with the Honourable Abdul Kargbo.

Honourable Members, I want to inform you that I will give twenty minutes to each speaker. Mr Clerk, what is the situation on the attendance of MDAs? Honourable Member, please proceed.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it was bit unfortunate yesterday during the debate that this House was consumed by rancorous argument. But I hope that today, my delivery will be accompanied with the prerequisite serenity and tranquillity it deserves.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I listened to the State of the Union Address by former President Barack Obama on the 12th June, 2016 in Washington DC. When he was speaking, he asked four questions, but because of S.O. [38] I will not repeat those four questions. However, it will be a disservice if I do not repeat the first question. He

asked, "How do we give everybody a fair opportunity and security in this new economy?" President Barak Obama was calling for a fair share for every citizen of America. What came to my mind, after I listened to him, are the words of one of my favourite reggae artists, Peter Tosh. Peter Tosh said, "**I do not need peace, I need equal right and justice.**" Peter Tosh was indicating that equal right and justice are the precursor to peace. When the Bintumani III Conference was summoned, I asked myself a rhetorical question, "**Are there equal rights and justice?**" Peter Tosh was saying even if we have 'five Bintumanis,' without equal right and justice, there will be no national cohesion. He was saying with equal right and justice, there is no place for Bintumani III because peace and national cohesion will take place.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we are building a foundation for a generation yet unborn, and if this trajectory continues, we will have ourselves to be blamed or posterity will not spare us at all. I have carefully gone through the Presidential Address and I want to handle it chronologically.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I start with Paragraph 3 and it says: "Economic growth rate of 2017/2018 remain steady at **3.7%**." He chose to use the word 'steady,' but the real meaning of 'steady' in this context is from 2007 to 2008, there was no growth in the Economy. Meaning the Economy was at stunted growth and there was no progress. Yesterday, I was amazed at the exposé of some of the Members of Parliament. Some said "the previous Government spent more than the revenue they had." However, with my background in Engineering and very strong in Mathematics, please allow me to do some calculations. When this Government came to office, there were Quarter 1 and Quarter 2; and for both quarters, they publicly announced that the revenue generated was **Le 2.01tln**. Correspondingly, the expenditure for those two quarters was **Le 3.25tln**. Is the expenditure not more than the revenue? Mr Speaker, please permit me to go to Quarter 3.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, for me to follow the brilliance of your debate, would you kindly refer me to the paragraph? Or is an announcement made outside of the Budget?

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Mr Speaker, it is in the Budget. Honourable Members, for Quarter 3, the total revenue spent was... - *[Interruption]*.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member!

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Mr Speaker, I hope you are taking note of my time.

THE SPEAKER: I am taking note of your time.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Your interjection is taking my time.

THE SPEAKER: And I also want you to take note of S O 32[5].

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Of course, Mr Speaker. If you go to Paragraph 5, it is saying that the previous Government spent more than their revenue. So, I am substantiating the fact that by virtue of this Budget, this Government is also spending more than its revenue *[Applause]*. In Quarter 3, the revenue collected was **Le 1.12tn**, but the expenditure was **Le 1.53tn**. From that analysis, the expenditure is more than the revenue. There is an excess of **Le 41bn**.

THE SPEAKER: What is the Point of Order?

HON. HINDOLO M. GEVAO: Mr Speaker, this is the House of Parliament and when a colleague is referring to an authority, he should be able to refer the nation to the document in question. My colleague on the Floor is making reference to a document that we have not seen. Let him refer us to the Budget.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Honourable Hindolo M. Gevao, let me allay your fears by referring you to Paragraph 27, Page 6 of the Budget. I have told you that I am always equipped and I have proven that to you severally. You just want to test my ability.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me draw your attention to Paragraph 6, where the President spoke about Executive Order 1. I want to remind this House that Executive Order 1 has caused more harm than good to this nation. Duty Waiver was instituted by the previous Government to ensure that our investors will invest in Sierra Leone other than other Africa countries. I worked for the Africa Minerals, but let me give you an example. The BCM had more than 100 tractors and to clear a tractor from

Water Quay, it costs more than **Le 30mln.** So, for BCM to have cleared more than 100 tractors would have cost a lot. I also want to state here that we are not the only country in the Sub-region that has iron ore. If it was expensive for them to have come here to establish, they would have chosen an alternative country to Sierra Leone. What the previous Government did was to waive the taxes, so as to ensure that companies operate in this country. The advantage is that when such company operate in Sierra Leone, they will employ our brothers and sisters and they pay them on monthly basis and Government will also get taxes from those payments. So, Government will indirectly collect revenue through taxes. This was how the previous Government chose to get revenue, rather than imposing more taxes on companies. This is preventing potential investors from coming to Sierra Leone. Mr Speaker, with the elimination of tax waiver, a company had started taking their trains back to South Africa.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to prove to this House that there are problems in this Address. I refer you to Page 36. But I want to first of all inform Honourable Hindolo M. Gevao that I have the aplomb and panache to control the Queen's language more than he does. Mr Speaker, I refer you to Page 36, Paragraph 190. It states: **"Sierra Leone is presently ranked at the bottom of the Environmental Performance Index, and the third most vulnerable to climate change in the world."** I have the Environmental Performance Index for 2008, when we came to office and 2018, when we left office. In 2008 Environmental Performance Index, Sierra Leone was the third most vulnerable to climate change. After ten years of diligent service to this nation, Sierra Leone was ranked as the twenty-fifth most vulnerable to climate change. In this Presidential Address, I underline the word 'presently.' This is a clear indication to show that what is in this document is not credible.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when I read Paragraph 191, I asked myself a question. It says: **"The overall objective in the New Direction is to protect the environment."** I made a comparative analysis between this Address and what is contained in last year's Presidential Speech. In last year Address, the President said

unequivocally that his Government was projecting to collect **Le 491bln** from timber export. How can you protect the environment when you have increased timber export? The Honourable Member from Falaba said his Constituency is manned on daily basis to get timber out of this country. I want you to note that Sierra Leone is a signatory to important international treaties like environmental protection. We are a signatory to the United Nations Action on Deforestation. We are a signatory to the Kyoto, Paris and Kigali Amendments. I want to state here that the consequences of massive timber logging will tell on our next generation.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I go to Education, which is the flagship programme of this Government. But before that, let me explain the essence of delivering a Presidential Address. The essence is for the President to tell the nation what he has accomplished within a period of one year and what he intends to achieve in the coming year. However, if you are presenting a subsequent Address after you would have previously presented one, you should always make a follow-up on the successes and challenges of the previous Address before you continue to make promises. I however want to tell you where the lacunas are in the previous Presidential Address. In last year's Presidential Address, the President said they would start granting loans to students. I want to know if students have started receiving loans in Sierra Leone. He also said that they would construct more schools. Are there more schools being constructed in Sierra Leone? He said they would construct Adult Education Centre in every district. Is there any Adult Education Centre being constructed in Sierra Leone? The President also said that they would build Polytechnic in every district. Is there any Polytechnic in every district?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, even when those promises have not been met, more promises are being made in this Address. For instance, the President promised to construct houses for all Members of Parliament. There is a saying that 'a chick that is going to be a cock could be sported the very day it is hatched.' If you have promised and you have not been able to fulfil that promise, tell me whether I should repose confidence on any other promise. One day, I told my son that I would buy him a bicycle

if he passed is exam. He passed the exam and he met me later to remind me about the bicycle. I did not buy the bicycle on time even when I told him that I was going to buy other thing. He said: **"No Daddy, buy the bicycle first."** I want to state here that before the President builds houses for Members of Parliament, education is more important and I would like the Government to construct those buildings in the provinces.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I want to remind you that you have one minute.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Mr Speaker, a Member of Parliament said that the IMF and World Bank left this country during the last Government. I want to make clarity on that issue. I do not mind sacrificing a month of my salary to any Member of Parliament who will produce a document where the IMF told the people of this country and the World that they would leave the country. That was a malicious fallacy, Mr Speaker. Let me tell you what happened, Mr Speaker. We have the African Confidential, which is a publication. They published in 2016 that IMF was leaving Sierra Leone, but there was a rebuttal. They wrote again that IMF was not leaving Sierra Leone. In fact, if I had enough time, I would have read to you IMF statement in December, 2017 when we were at the peak of the elections. It is this same African Confidential that wrote against the then Flag-bearer of SLPP and the SLPP formally wrote to African Confidential, refuting that statement. It shows that they have some credibility issues. Why did you fail to mention where they wrote about you? Why did you focus on the area they wrote about?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to make this clear that I have made my submission. I will be going to my house and hope that when I am in the midnight of my sleep bed, nobody will attack me. We have gotten a Parliament in which the lives of Members of Parliament are not safe. I do not have a security and I am with my son and my wife. I may have succeeded in taking Mr Speaker on an expedition to a land of strange ideas and experiences. I thank you very much.

HON. HINDOLO M. GEVAO: Mr Speaker, for the good of this House, we should keep away from making innuendos, or imputing things to suggest as if the security of one set

of people is in jeopardy as a result of the action of other Members of the House. We heard what the Honourable Dr Kandeh Yumkella said that an attack on one Member is an attack on everyone. For a colleague Honourable Member to insinuate that he could be attacked after this debate is very unfortunate. He said he wished he would not be attacked after this debate. That statement is an innuendo and an imputation that the attack that they are alleging is orchestrated by another group of people.

HON. CATHERINE Z. TARAWALLY: Mr Speaker, I will debunk Honourable Hindolo M, Gevao.

HON. HINDOLO M. GEVAO: You should not make unfortunate innuendos or insinuations as Honourable Members.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, please take your seat. With the greatest respect to the Leader of the Opposition, I want Honourable Members to take their seats. You have not come here to engage yourselves in a shouting contest. That is most dishonourable, Honourable Members. I have not given anybody the Floor to speak. You have come this morning and some of you seem to be prepared for a shouting contest. I am afraid you have no referee and certainly I am not prepared for that. Now, let me put a ban on all contributors that I do not want you to be attacking yourselves.

Honourable members, as if I foresaw this kind of development that is why I invited the leadership to meet with me in my Chambers. So, please let us restore the decorum of this House once again and proceed with the debate. Let me thank and congratulate the Honourable Abdul Kargbo for a very exciting statement. I was struck by his reference to Peter Tosh. I used to be a great follower of Peter Tosh until Luck Dube came on the scene and I decided to be a disciple of Lucky Dube, instead of Peter Tosh. Let me tell you the portion or the lyrics that you cited are very dangerous lyrics. Please, do not cite them again. If you talk about the absence of peace and the enjoyment of human rights, the logic does not work at all. You need peace before you enjoyed your human rights. I want you to always remember to give primacy to peace first before the enjoyment of your rights. You cannot enjoy your rights in the absence of peace. Let us continue this debate.

HON. REBECCA Y. KAMARA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I start by extending my greetings to all Honourable Members in this House. I have listened to all the debaters and I want to state here that I am a bit disappointed. What we have been hearing is not what Sierra Leoneans want to hear. We should stop pointing fingers at each other and focus on issues. Sierra Leoneans want to hear comments and observations about the Presidential Speech. If there are areas we need to improve, we have to make recommendations.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to start by commending the President for delivering a very long Speech. There are however very good things in this Speech. I would start with issues relating to women. In his Speech, he said his Government has allocated certain amount to create Women Development Fund for female entrepreneurship. He said the money would be given to traders' entrepreneurs to enable them start small businesses. The previous Government used to make similar policy statements, but the implementation has been the problem. If Government has allocated **Le 2bln** for small scale businesses to the women, distribution and implementation of that amount should be fair. It should not be S.O [2] dis dem nar den suffer for wi, so mek wi consider dem fos.' If we want to preach about national cohesion or fair distribution of the national cake, we have to start with this allocation. The number of women we have in this country are more than the men. The women can make and unmake a Government. Sometimes when these moneys are given to institutions to distribute on fair basis, they consider their party supporters or relatives. If we want the 'New Direction' to work, we have to ensure that whatever the President says is implemented. We do not want to put our feet in the old shoes of the APC as you normally say. You used to say the APC deceived this country or the APC misused public funds.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this is the 'New Direction' and we should ensure that we change the strategies that were previously employed by those we are criticising. I want to plead with those who will be handling these funds to ensure that the moneys are fairly distributed. The rightful people must benefit from these funds. I want to

commend the President for thinking about setting up the National Gender affairs Commission. This brings me to what I learnt when we visited Rwanda as one of the representatives of the Parliamentary Female Caucus. They have the National Gender Ministry, which we call the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs in Sierra Leone. It usually monitors all works done by organisations interested in gender issues. In Rwanda, the Gender Ministry monitors all NGOs and private sectors that are interested in issues relating to women. It is not like Sierra Leone, where everybody is doing what he/she wants to do. We have had situations where people came to this country in the name of promoting women, but they are busy promoting themselves. They will go without addressing issues relating to women. So, if the Government is setting up the National Gender Affairs Commission, let this Commission be inclusive. The Commission should start at district level; and if possible, at Chiefdom and national levels. This will ensure proper inclusion of women at all levels. In fact, men who are working alongside women will be included.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I go to the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs. I would like to look at the women, children and persons with disabilities. In our last budget discussion, I appealed to the Government to increase the budget for the Ministry of Social Welfare. If you look at Page 24, Paragraphs 1 to 3, it says: **"Government has recently launched the national strategy on the reduction of adolescent pregnancy and child marriage, and the child welfare and alternative policies."** This is not just about launching because if there is no money in the Ministry, how can the Ministry work. We have debated the national budget and I must state here that the allocation to this Ministry is inadequate. The workload of this Ministry is enormous, but the Ministry's budget is not adequate. The Ministry cannot wait and allow other ministries to do its work. For example, the Ministry does not have enough staff at all. If you go to Kono, you will find out that there is only one or two staff at the Ministry's Headquarters in Kono District. The staff do not even have a good motorbike to facilitate movement. The motorbike they are using is very old and no longer roadworthy. Sometimes they approach the NGOs for support. How can

the Government achieve these plans if the Ministry is not capacitated? The President had good intention when he mentioned these programmes in his Speech, but the implementation is a very great concern to me.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, over the years, presidents have come and gone. They kept saying things to this nation, but nothing happened. Therefore, I want to appeal to the Government to ensure that the 'New Direction' becomes the 'right direction' or the 'working direction,' and not just the 'talking direction.' In this same paragraph, the President mentioned human trafficking and smuggling in the country. First of all we have to ask ourselves if we have a law or policy on human trafficking. I am sure we do not have a law or policy on human trafficking. I can confirm that Honourable Members. Mr Speaker, before we went to the USA to attend the Conference on Security, we went to the Office of National Security [ONS] to find out about the country in terms of national security. We were told by the Head of ONS and other staff that this country does not have any law on human trafficking. So, if people are caught in human trafficking, what do we do to them? I want to appeal to the President to ensure that at least a policy is put in place or a Bill that is related to human trafficking. This is because human trafficking is on the increase.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am sure if the Government is serious to combat human trafficking in this country, they should put in place laws and policies that will govern that particular area. Again, if you look at Page 24, Paragraph 125, the President said: **"It is embarrassing to the State to see our disabled brothers and sisters running after us in the vehicles begging for handouts."** It is indeed embarrassing, but what are we doing to tackle that social menace? What is the Government doing? The Speech also states that they are trying to put modalities in place to ensure that they take those people out of the streets. The question is how long would that take? I am saying this because the number keeps increasing and people are leaving the provinces to come and beg in Freetown. They think that is the new way for them to get money. Some of these beggars are not disabled; they usually close one of their eyes to roam about the streets, with little boys/girls, begging. Some will even use

abusive language on those who fail to give them alms. I hope the New Direction will be sincere in terms of taking care of them so as to stop this embarrassment. A beggar nearly spat on me few days ago in my vehicle. I want to appeal to the Government to take care of these people, so that we can stop this embarrassment.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I go to Energy on Page 27, Paragraph 137. The President said: **"In 2018, my Government promised to conduct technical audit of the energy sector, undertake robust reform in the energy sector and restore electricity supply to all districts capitals invest in low cost renewable Energy potential of the country in the areas of solar, hydro, wind and biomass."** I always take Kono District as example because I come from that District. We usually get electricity from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. and from 6:00 p.m. to 12:00 midnight. If you visit that district, you will see what I have just mentioned here. If you go to Kono unannounced, the officials will tell you that there is no fuel. If you want to insist, they will tell you to ask the Government. Kono is almost in darkness and that has not been the situation. I will not blame the President, but those who are responsible to monitor these areas. Sometimes the President says one thing, but the implementation will be a different thing. There is no mechanism for proper monitoring; and at the end of the day, our people will say the 'New Direction' is the wrong direction.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want the Government to speed up the Commission for Gender Affairs, so that the **30%** quota will be captured. I would also like the Government to review the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone. This is because a lot of things are ongoing that are not good for this country. If these things are done, I believe people will start saying that the 'New Direction' is the right direction.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I go to 'corruption and accountability.' Sometimes people think corruption is all about misappropriating public funds. I want to however state here that corruption could also mean failure to follow due process. Somebody spoke about the youth election that has just been concluded and some people were shouting. The APC started it, but that does not mean the SLPP should continue doing the same thing. It is totally wrong and we must turn a new page. I was once a Vice

Chairperson of the Youth under the late Dr Ahmad Tejan Kabba [*May his faithful soul rest in perfect peace*] and I was elected democratically. I did not belong to any party at that time. We started the process from Sections, Chiefdoms to District levels. How did it go? The sectional level executives were elected through a democratic process. Those at the sectional level voted in the chiefdom elections and at the chiefdom level voted in the district elections. However, this has changed because they informed the youth without informing some of us. I learnt about that on Social Media and some of the youth who wanted to vie for this position were asked outside and the election was conducted.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I went to the radio to condemn that particular act because it is not in the interest of national cohesion. If the youth are not treated seriously and fairly, they will become disgruntle and things will go wrong. I was on the radio, condemning such act and we sent out press releases.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, all of us can attest to the fact that the President spoke about national cohesion. He told us that those who were unlawfully sacked, including Chief Alhaji Sidikie Samuel Samsuman. He promised to give their benefits and he even mentioned Chief Alhaji Sidikie Samuel Sam Sumana name here. We are expecting the 'New Direction' to perform. Regrettably, Chief Alhaji Samuel Samsumana's securities were withdrawn. No matter what had gone wrong between him and the APC, he is still a senior citizen of this country. The Government should think about that statement and stand by it. I want to appeal to the President and the SLPP Government to go by that particular statement. I thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member for her contribution.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank you very much for inviting the MDAs, especially the Permanent Secretaries and other Vote Controllers. What has been said in this Speech by the President will be implemented by these Vote Controllers and excuses will not be tolerated anymore. Vote Controllers are expected to attend these debates, so that they

can take note of the comments and observations of Members of Parliament. Once again, I thank the Speaker for ensuring that Vote Controllers are present.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank His Excellency the President, for delivering this Speech in this House. When we started this debate yesterday, I expected my brothers on the other side to apologise to this House and the nation because during the course the National Anthem was playing, my colleagues on the other side were moving outside. When we were young, the National Anthem used to be a sacred song. We were told in primary schools that whenever the National Anthem was sung, you should stand at ease. It is in this Parliament I saw Honourable Members who are representatives of the people walked out during the National Anthem. They should apologise not only to this Parliament, but to the people of this country.

HON. ABDUL O. SESAY: Point of Order, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: What is your point, Honourable Member?

HON. HASSAN A. SESAY: Mr Speaker, I stand on S.O. [34] to correct the statement made by the Honourable Member. Indeed, we have never denied the fact that we did not walk out. We walked out, but not when the National Anthem was playing. You can prove me wrong because there are video clips to show that we never walked out when the National Anthem was playing. I just want to make that correction, so that my colleague will not misinform the public.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker,

THE SPEAKER: You have referred us to the evidence and that will be looked at when the appropriate time comes.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Thank you very much. Mr Speaker, before you became the Speaker of this House, the former Speaker used to say, 'to thyself be true.' Mr Speaker, to some of us who were here, we have to be sincere. If we are not sincere to ourselves, we cannot be sincere to Sierra Leone. This is my seventh year in this Parliament and we used to advise them when we were in opposition, but they have still not learn. I want to assure them that if they continue like this, they will be in opposition permanently.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, somebody was asking for equal rights and justice, but when they were invited to attend the national cohesion meeting, they failed to attend. The President said he would create a Commission that would seek to foster peace and cohesion in the country, but they failed to attend that meeting. There is no reason because all of us are elected by our people. When the people speak, we should listen. We have our differences, but we should go and find solutions to those problems. I want to remind my colleagues that they will remain in opposition for a very long time. I hope you will boycott the 2023 elections [*Laughter and Undertones*].

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I go to Education. My colleagues are now condemning education, but in the last ten years of their rule, there was nothing to write home about. It is only in Sierra Leone pupils are crying for Government to allow them to spy in public exams. Today, graduates from the university cannot compete in the sub-region. In fact, our lawyers and engineers cannot compete in the sub-region. Honourable Dr Kandeh K. Yumkella can attest to this fact. This is the only country where pupils who failed the National Primary School Examination [NPSE] are corruptly promoted to Secondary School. Again, those who failed the Basic Education Certificate Examination [BECE] and the West African Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination [WASSCE] are corruptly promoted to senior schools and University respectively. Are we ready to change the narratives? Our Government is definitely going to change the narratives and it is not going to be business as usual. During our campaign, the message was very clear. We have promised the people that we would develop the human resource base of this country; and one way of doing that is by developing the human resource through quality education.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to remind my colleagues that we promised the people 'Free Quality Education' and we are going to deliver. Our colleagues should tap us on the back because we have started the programme. In less than three months when we took over, we challenged our doubting Thomases and we launched the 'Free Quality Education.' In fact, we were able to pay fees for pupils from class 1 to SSS 3. In less than a year, the enrolment of pupils into the school has almost quadrupled. Today,

it is difficult to go to PZ and see children begging on the streets. It is only adults who are very active in begging because we are encouraging people from Krubola and Kailahun to attend school.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we want to ensure that there is quality education and that is why we have approved more schools in less than a year than the ten years rule of the APC. The APC was unable to approve less than two hundred schools in ten years, while we have approved more than one thousand schools in less than a year. Again, in less than one year, we have replaced teachers who are not in existence. We have also reassessed teachers who have gone through tertiary education and have been paying what they are not supposed to be paid. We have also been able to recruit more teachers in less than a year.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we are working towards achieving quality education and we have five years mandate to do that. I want to inform my colleagues on the other side that after achieving the Free Quality Education, they will continue to be where they are for decades. We appreciate their criticisms and we are ready to keep them on that side.

[Suspension of S.O. 5[2] it's being 12:00 noon]

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this Government is very tolerant and we are ready to listen to divergent views. We will not frown at those who criticise us. We appreciate our critics, especially our colleagues in the APC. You have identified your rightful position as opposition members. I thank you very much and I want to encourage you to continue to be in opposition.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the issue of examination malpractice has been reduced to the barest minimum and I want to thank the Government for prosecuting those who were involved in examination malpractices. In our days, it was hardly believed that public exams were marked in Sierra Leone. We used to hear that public examination scripts were marked in foreign countries. It was only in the days of the previous Government that examination scripts were marked at Aberdeen, Calaba Town, Wellington and other areas. Teachers were selling grades to pupils. I told somebody

that maybe our Government would not be as popular as the APC because we are interested in the development of the human resource in this country. It is not just about constructing cosmetic roads, leaving out educational system that will develop our children forever.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if you look in this Well, you will find out that a lot of Members of Parliament in the last Parliament did not come. In other words, over **85%** did not return because we were not able to pay school fees for our constituents. Usually, September and October of every academic year have always been the toughest periods for Members of Parliament. I want to thank the President because nobody is disturbing us again for school fees. My Honourable Member from Krobola can attest to what I have just said [*Applause*].

THE SPEAKER: That was just a passing example you can simply ignore. As a matter of fact, I am please me with that statement, but the implication is that I expect to see all of you to come back next term [*Applause*].

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. We are sure and ready to come back because we are not under pressure for school fees. Again, when colleges reopened, for some of us who were here, we saw the pressure from students who wanted to buy admission forms. I thank the President for taking that burden away from us. This is the first time nobody runs to Members of Parliament for admission forms. The President has used his wisdom to pay for all students who wanted to enrol in the university. Thank you very much, Mr President.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, for the past eight years, nobody talked about the Sierra Leone Grant-in-Aid [SLG]. However, we have revived it and we have just granted over 500 scholarships to university students. Again, I want to thank the President for that. We are making the university campuses very attractive and convivial for learning.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is very difficult for me to speak if I failed to mention what was happening. I am the Chairman of the parliamentary Committee on Works and Public Assets. Mr Speaker, before I became Chairman of that Committee, I

was a member of the said Committee. Somebody said that the services of this country should be equitably distributed. We were in this Parliament when Members of Parliament were saying that 31 Kilometres was given to Makeni and 9 kilometres to Bo. For heaven sake, Bo is the second capital city. Again, Port Loko town was given 12 Kilometres, while Bonthe was given 3 Kilometres. Also, Lunsar, a town in Port Loko District, was given 10 Kilometres, while Kenema was given 5 Kilometres. Lungi was given 9 kilometres, while Kailahun was given 4.5 Kilometres. In Kambia District, Rokupr was given 7 kilometres, while Pujehun was given 5 kilometres. Kambia town was given 12 kilometres, while Mattru Jong was given 3.5 kilometres. Mr Speaker that was the Government we used to have in this country.

HON. SEGEPOH S. THOMAS: Sorry, Honourable Member, but I represent Constituency 089 and Bonthe is part of my constituency. This is for the attention of the general public that Bonthe District was given 3 kilometres, but nothing was done there *[Applause]*.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to inform the public that this was how our resources were being distributed in this country. We hope that Bo City, which is the second city in this country, is fairly treated this time. Again, Kenema is the third city, but Makeni got 40 Kilometres while Bo was given 9 kilometres. I want to inform the public that this Government is a listening Government and it is a Government of national unity. That was why when the President took over in 2018, he told the people of this country that he would not be a President for SLPP or a President for Bo or Bonthe, but a President for Sierra Leone *[Applause]*. If you look at our Cabinet, we have APC and NGC members. In fact, other political parties are also represented in our Cabinet. This President is a listening President and we must thank him.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would also like to thank the Leaders in this House. In the last Parliament, for instance, only one SLPP Member of Parliament was included in the delegation to the ECOWAS Parliament. As we speak, that anomaly has been corrected. In the Pan-African Parliament [PAP], we have two APC and two SLPP

Members of Parliament. We work side by side and we are taking them along. They had an opportunity to sit here and listen to the President when the President was here. This is the first time Members of Parliament at the back are given the opportunity to be heard. This is indeed a novelty, Mr Speaker. I want to thank the Speaker for his magnanimous leadership.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I thank the APC for their criticisms and for being in their rightful position. Mr Speaker, may you live long in that office.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member for his contribution and for thanking Mr Speaker and the Leadership of Parliament. I now recognise the Honourable Foday Mario Kamara of the NGC.

HON. FODAY M. KAMARA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, please permit me to thank His Excellency the President, for this wonderful Speech he delivered to us on the 2nd May, 2019 in this Well. Indeed, it is a brilliant Speech and in the NGC is not in this country to criticise unnecessarily. We thank the President for this Speech and we appreciate this Speech. We are also grateful because we now have the opportunity to put few things we think are not exactly the way we are thinking. When you look at the Speech of the President, his emphasis is on taxation and it is very good. To me, taxes are the backbone of a country's development. I am glad to see that on Page 2, Paragraph 7, where the President talks about putting in place a robust and holistic policy on tax waivers. I like that very much, but my fear is on 'equitability or fairness.' Now, he is saying that policy is to reduce the authority of the Government in terms of tax exemption; i.e., we should have a policy that spells out clearly how things should work. I want to state here that we need a blueprint to accomplish that. When we were talking about the Free Quality Education, the NGC asked for a blueprint because we wanted everything to be on paper before the programme starts. That will help us to evaluate what is going on. If we fail to write down these things, how can we monitor? I am sure tax transparency will help to develop this country. We should know which commodity to be exempted and which not to be exempted. We also know which

companies should be exempted and which ones should not. If this policy comes out, then we will be at ease with tax transparency.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the second point we have is on the timber. I am particularly concerned about timber trade because it affects my constituency. We have a Chiefdom which depends on timber trade. Mr Speaker, when I heard that we have one exporter of timber, I asked myself, who could that be? I am sure we have a decentralisation policy and there is a group responsible to export timber. Do we think of the indigenous farmers who depend on timber trade? One important thing the President has said is deforestation, but we have to think about the poor people who depend on timber. They come to Freetown to sell their timber. What do you think will happen when these exporters do not want to pay the correct price? Well, they will delay buying the timber from these farmers in the villages.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the issue of timber in this country is a problem and people are very interested in that business. I think we should have three to four exporters in Freetown, instead of one exporter. I think we should have three bodies, vis-à-vis exporter, somebody to do the reforestation and the other supervising. In fact, for reforestation, I had to go to the District level to ask because my people are logging timber. If there are issues about timber logging, I have to visit the District Agricultural Office. Mr Speaker, what I want to say here is that we are not against the policy on timber, but we want the poor to be considered, especially villages where timber is produced.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if you look at the roads, people are talking about the Tonko Road, the Konmaga Road and Blamaya Road. These roads are destroyed by the timber trade. Have we thought about that? I am making culverts and bridges in my constituency because timbers loggers destroy these bridges. I do not know the policies for those who are trading in timber. For deforestation, they have asked the NGOs to implement, but we also have District Agricultural Offices [DAO]. If NGOs are to implement, why do we have District Agricultural Offices? Why do we divorce Forestry from Agriculture? The Ministry of Agriculture should be involved. In fact, the politicians,

especially Members of Parliament should know what is happening. There is a Directorate in the Ministry which is responsible for timber. I know reforestation has been talked about, but we want proper monitoring and supervision. Members of Parliament are not supported to undertake robust oversight activities.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I thank the President for introducing the Free Quality Education. I want to however state here that Sierra Leone is not the only country that has introduced Free Education. For instance, Guinea has introduced Free Education from primary to the university levels. What we are seeing in our Free Quality Education is the contributions we have to make towards this project. We have said we should implement this project in phases, but others think otherwise. I am sure that has led to delays in many areas. For instance, we are yet to receive the school buses. I am sure the buses are taking too long to arrive. Of course, the President spoke about the rigid procedures to be followed, but it has taken more than a year to bring these buses. Again, we want to know the number of buses to be procured. If we have to order 1,000 buses, I am sure they will not arrive until you are out of power.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we also have the school feeding programme, which is also part of the Free Quality Education. I thank the President, but I would like you to tell the President about what is going on. We are saying we are feeding the children, but what type of rice are we giving to these children? Of course, I visited some of my schools because I am interested in education. In fact, I am an educationist and I would like to see quality education in this country. As we speak, the World Food Programme [WFP] is feeding the children, which is not bad at all. The food was originally meant for the farmers, but the farmers are now crying while the children are laughing. I want to tell you what I feel about this WFP. I was thinking of linking the school feeding programme to the Ministry of Agriculture. We should have encouraged our farmers to produce more rice and use it to feed our children, instead of importing rice for this particular programme. We should be buying rice from our local farmers, but we have to encourage them. So, it is nice for us to have the School Feeding Programme, but I want

the Speaker to tell the President that we want these children to be fed with our locally produced rice. This will encourage our local farmers to produce more.

THE SPEAKER: I will also invite you to please direct the issue to the President, so both of us can do it together.

HON. FODAY M. KAMARA: Mr President, I know you are watching and listening and I am doing this in your interest. I want to inform you that most of the things that are happening in Parliament are not communicated to you by those who are responsible to do so. Please Mr President, listen to us directly. They will tell you that they are feeding the children, but we know that WFP is doing it.

HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS: Mr Speaker, Point of Order. This is just for the edification of the Honourable Member that the Government of Sierra Leone is providing funds to WFP to undertake the school feeding programme.

HON. FODAY M. KAMARA: Thank you, Mr Leader of Government Business. I am glad to hear that.

HON. HASSAN A. SESAY: Mr Speaker, I stand on S.O. [34]. I want to state here that the submission made by the Leader of Government Business is not true because the Sierra Leone Government is not funding WFP. I thank you.

HON. FODAY M. KAMARA: Thank you, Opposition Whip. I have linked Education to Agriculture. I think when we discussed funding to Agricultural-Business in this Well, we said that everything should be done to make sure that the funds go directly to the farmers. I am not sure if this is happening. When you heard the President mentioning SCADeP, this is one of the groups that is not doing the right thing. I want the President to know this. We have approved loans for the farmers, but farmers have still not received anything. I am sure Agriculture is time bound and if we have to fund any agricultural activity, it has to be done on time, so that those receiving the funds will have enough time to prepare.

HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS: Mr Speaker, this is the Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of Sierra Leone and the World Food Programme. I will read

the preamble for Honourable Members. The Memorandum of Understanding regarding WFP's contribution to the implementation of the National School Feeding Programme is entered into and engaged by the Government of Sierra Leone, represented by the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education [the Government] and the World Food Programme, represented in Freetown, Sierra Leone thereafter refer to separately as party and together as parties. Thank you very much sir *[Applause]*.

HON. FODAY M. KAMARA: Mr Speaker, I want to thank the Leader of Government Business for that meaningful intervention.

THE SPEAKER: Let it be stated, for the records, that I Mr Speaker, rules Honourable Hassan A. Sesay out of Order unless he produces written evidence to the contrary.

HON. FODAY M. KAMARA: Mr Speaker, if you look at Page 21, Paragraph 112, the President enumerates a lot of issues relating to the youth. However, some Members of Parliament have already pointed out what has happened during the youth election, which does not augur well for national cohesion in this country. Some people just handpicked those they wanted to be on the Youth Commission. My people reported to me, but I told my people to allow them to select their own people. I said if that was how they wanted the country to be run, let them go ahead and do it. Some of us kept quiet until posterity decides otherwise.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want the President to crosscheck some of the information usually receives from this Parliament. If you look at Page 46, Paragraph 241, the President talked about the declaration of the state of emergency proclamation. I would not have believed that something like this document would come because that particular issue has to do with the Constitution. It should not have been included in this Speech at all. The President would not have mentioned it because it was not approved by this Parliament. That proclamation needed a two/third majority, but that did not happen. Though he has stated it, but he should not have done that because it was not approved by this House. That means it was ignored by this Parliament.

On that note, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I thank the President for this Speech. It is a very good Speech and I hope some of the issues mentioned are implemented. Indeed, Members of Parliament have an oversight responsibility to ensure that the implementations of the issues in this Speech are monitored.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member for his contribution. I call on the Honourable Daniel B. Koroma to take the Floor.

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: Thank you very much, Mr speaker, for allowing me to contribute to the Motion of thanks to His Excellency the President, for a Speech he graciously delivered in this House on Thursday, 2nd May, 2019. Mr Speaker, I am a bit confused about the nature and character of this Speech. I am tempted to say there may be some forms of insincerity or lack of commitment on those who prepared the various Speeches at MDAs levels before presenting them to the President. There was some amount of deception and the duty of Vote Controllers is to provide correct information to the President. I am saying this because once the President delivers his Speech through the people's representatives, I will spend the first ten minutes to give general observations of this Speech, while the remaining ten minutes will be spent on key issues mentioned in the Speech.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in Paragraph 2 of this Speech, I was tempted to make reference to his maiden Speech in 2018, Paragraphs 80 and 81. Please turn to Pages 20 and 21, Paragraphs 80 and 81 of the President's 2018 maiden Speech. He used two paragraphs regarding the Music Industry and condemned the activities of the previous Government. If you look at Page 23, Paragraph 117 of the 2019 Speech, the President failed to mention what he has done during the one year he has spent in terms of ameliorating the situation he earlier condemned in 2018. He did not say anything in terms of what he has done in that regard. If you look at Page 4, Paragraph 17 of this Speech, the last word in that paragraph is an affront to this Parliament because every policies, rules, regulations or agreements brought before this House are not just for our information, but for our approval. I want to state here that Agreements, rules, regulations and statutory instruments are brought here for our approval.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I do not know if there is representative from the Ministry of Finance, but Page 4, Paragraph 20 is saying that the Ministry of Finance has been paying salary arrears to government workers in the past one year. I want to state here that it not true at all. I wish the Minister of Finance could have come here to speak to us directly. He said he had paid salaries and arrears to all Government functionaries, but I want to make it clear to this House and to the nation that the gratuities, end of service benefits and other benefits due to past Ministers and Ambassadors of the former Government have never been paid. This is a deceptive statement to the highest degree. They have not been paid as we speak.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Point of Order, Mr Speaker. I stand on S.O. 34. The information my colleague on the other side is giving is not correct. With your leave, I will read paragraph 20 the Honourable Member referenced.

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: Mr Speaker, he does not have my permission. There is a provision in the Standing Orders and he should make reference to the relevant provisions.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: I want to know if the Honourable Member is now the Speaker of this House.

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: Mr Speaker, there is a provision the Honourable Member needs to reference.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, he rose on a Point of Order.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I stand on S.O. 34. The Honourable Member referenced Paragraph 20 of the Presidential Speech. I want to inform this House that the paragraph in question did not talk about Government functionaries. Government functionaries are those who have served the country. Today, we are paying salaries without bank overdraft. I thank you very much.

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: I want to inform this House that overdraft is not even worth responding to, Mr Speaker. You can read for yourselves and analyse the situation. Mr Speaker, I hope you will take note of the time I have been interrupted.

Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. That is not even worth responding to. I go to Page 9, Paragraph 44. Do we have a representative from Ministry of Agriculture? I think we have one representative here and I am very happy for that. It has been reported that the Ministry of Agriculture has constructed 125 new ABCs in one year. I want to debunk that statement that it is not true. If that is true, where did you construct them? It is also mentioned that you have constructed 600 kilometres of feeder roads. The question is, where?

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please read the paragraph correctly or direct me to the precise sentence in that paragraph.

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: Mr Speaker, Paragraph 44, Page 9. I hope you are taken note of my time.

THE SPEAKER: I do, Honourable Member.

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: With your leave, I read the entire paragraph, but please take note of my time.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you made a comment about the 125 ABCs.

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: It says: **"Additional, 125 Agricultural Business Centres have been constructed."**

THE SPEAKER: Your reading is wrong. Please read it correctly.

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, except we go to the audio, but what we have here is 125 ABCs.

THE SPEAKER: What I have in front of me is not 125 ABCs. I think, we should not deceive the general public. That sentence starts with additional 25 and not 125.

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: Mr Speaker, you will agree with me that it is because of the way it is written. We can prove it with the audio recording of the Presidential Speech.

THE SPEAKER: I have been truthful to myself. I did not give the Floor to anybody else. That is not figure '1,' but letter 'L.'

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: I take it that way, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you.

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: Once it is shifted the interpretation might change, but I take as is observed by the Speaker. I still insist that even the 25 ABCs are nowhere to be seen. We cannot see the new 25 ABCs at all.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I go to Page 17, Paragraph 86, which states that the Sierra Leone Teachers Union [SLTU] is now working on the salaries and wages of teachers and there are plans to establish Salaries and Wages Commission. So, I want this House to know that once that Commission passes its verdict and presents it to this House for approval, if the content varies with what the SLTU or the Teachers Commission will present, I think it will cause problem. This is because there is an ongoing plan for the Wages and Salaries Commission to be established and that will have the responsibility to harmonise all salaries. If the SLTU has already harmonised theirs on behalf of the teachers, but it conflicts with what the Commission will present, it will be a problem.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I go to Page 24, Paragraph 123. Mr Speaker, when I read that Paragraph, I asked myself if this Parliament is relevant. The Paragraph talks about the current State of Emergency on rape and other sexual offences. I challenge you, Mr Speaker that sometimes when you are in your closet, I am sure you also ask yourself thus, am I really Mr Speaker? With you leave, Mr Speaker, I would like to read from the record of Votes and Proceedings. According to the record of Votes and Proceedings, you made a ruling and I am sure this document is a product of this House. Mr Speaker, without prejudice to what has transpired during the last sitting and taking into account the Votes and Proceedings of Thursday, 7th and Thursday, 27th August, 2015 I want to state here that the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone and the Standing Orders requires two-third majority, for example, Section 29 [3] of the Constitution or any other provision enumerated under Section 108 of the Constitution that requires two-third majority cannot be determined by a collection of voices except where there is unanimity in the House. If there is unanimity, that immediately captures the two-thirds

majority, but if there is no unanimity, then S.O. 46[1] comes into play. What is in the record of Votes and Proceedings of Friday, 22nd February, 2019. It says: **“I was compelled to make an adjournment due to lack of decorum in the House In that regard, a letter has emanated from the Opposition to His Excellency the President in deference of that so as to restore decorum in this House. The Votes and Proceedings of Friday, 22nd February, 2019 will be set aside until the next adjourned date.”** This was your ruling, Mr Speaker. I want to inform this Honourable House that State of Emergency was never passed according to that ruling. However, I want to inform the public that implementation of the State of Emergency has started because people are being convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, life imprisonment is worse than death sentence. That is why if you sin against God, His worst penalty will be eternity in Hell. That means you will not die, but you will suffer for the rest of your eternity. It is worse than death sentence, Mr Speaker. It is a human rights violation. My colleague from Bo said that this Government has been politically tolerant, but I want to refer to the arbiters, i.e., the national and international observers’ statement about the previous Government. The title of the document is Sierra Cast TV, Full Election by Cokorioko team of legal representation. The caption says ‘President Koroma is the champion of political tolerance in Sierra Leone [*Applause*].

HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS: Mr Speaker, Point of Order. The document the Honourable Member is referring to, especially Cokorioko, is a well-known APC press. So, there is no way he can refer to that document.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Speaker, the document should not be referenced here.

THE SPEAKER: What document are you referencing, Honourable Member?

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: You can search for it on the internet. We also have the Sierra Cast TV. The Leader of Government Business has the right to come with whatever reference he has in his possession to show that this Government is politically

tolerant, it is also my right to make reference to a document that supports my argument.

HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS: Well, I will bring one from Unity Press. Since you decided to bring one from Cokorioko, I will bring one from Unity Press.

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: Thank you and you can do so at your will.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I did not quite hear the source.

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: The document is titled, Sierra Cast TV, Full Election Cover.

THE SPEAKER: What is your source?

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: Sierra Cast TV is my source, Mr Speaker. It is also on the internet. Mr Speaker, this is pictorial evidence. It says, 'President Koroma and Mr Maada Bio enjoy a warm embrace.' Please look at the pictures of former President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma, embracing Maada Bio as flag-bearer of the Opposition. He embraced him! Can we have that opportunity now?

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I think the credit is certainly due to President Bio for embracing the former President. When did that take place, Honourable Member?

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: Mr Speaker, I am just afraid of my time but if you can give additional time, I can read.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Daniel B. Koroma, you occupy a very special place in this House. In terms of the number of years you have served both the country and this Parliament, I am here to listen to you and also to be informed and to be educated. If you are quoting from a source, I will be glad to know the source. Secondly, when you are referring to the two gentlemen embracing that should be welcomed by everybody in this country. That was why I asked when that took place. I would have liked to see a similar event in 2018.

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: Exactly, Mr Speaker. That is what I am trying to say. If such event is repeated, I am sure the political tension we are experiencing could have

lessened. In fact, the former President also embraced the past regime as stated here. It says: 'President Koroma and Mr Solomon Berewa shared a joke at State House.' That is what we are expecting now.

HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS: Mr Speaker, honestly I admire the photographs shown to us by the Honourable Member on the other side. To be very honest, the whole country was very impressed at that time when the now President actually embraced the winner of that particular election at that time. The then flag-bearer also congratulated the Former President, but as we speak, the Former President has never congratulated President Bio and this President is one year in office [*Applause*]. Again, the former flag-bearer of the APC, Dr Samura M.W. Kamara has never congratulated His Excellency the President.

THE SPEAKER: Do you have any response to that, Honourable Member?

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. In context, when the winner gets his victory, the moral duty is on the winner. The one who has got the power should create the environment for such event to take place.

THE SPEAKER: That must be a practice recognised only in Koinadugu [*Laughter*].

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: Mr Speaker, the whole World will agree with me that President Koroma has been rated as the champion of political tolerance. The state of human rights, as stated in Pages 48 to 50, Paragraphs 247 to 245 could not be the case. I have a document titled United Nations Human Rights and the heading is 'Sierra Leone must respect Human Right Law.' With your permission, I read: "Sierra Leone's decision to remove the three Members of the Human Rights Commission was an attack on the rule of law and must be reversed.' In other words, the Government's decision to dissolve the Commission's current membership undermines the rule of law in Sierra Leone and distracts the effort to promote and protect human rights and human rights defenders in the country.' This was stated by Michael Fort, the Special rapporteur to the situation of human rights in Sierra Leone. Three human rights Commissioners were appointed to serve in this Commission for a five year term, but in June this year, the

President of Sierra Leone ordered the dissolution of the Commission without stating any reason. The Commissioners were not dismissed formally, but in August, 2018 the new Government asked the public to nominate three representatives. The special rapporteur said that Sierra Leone Government should immediately rectify their actions by allowing the Commissioners to conclude their five years term.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to state here that the human rights violations in this country is alarming as stated by a UN Special Representative. It was a magnanimous decision for the former President to embrace a political opponent, but the present President is doing the contrary as we speak. What he is doing is completely the opposite and it is not good for the wellbeing of this country. I thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member for his contribution. I will take the last speaker for today, who is no less a person but Honourable Vandy Keikura.

HON. CHRISTOPHER K. VANDY: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I start by saying that in 2007 when former flag-bearer, Mr Solomon Berewa lost the election, he conceded defeat and he attended the swearing ceremony of the former President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma at State House. In 2012, when Rtd Brigadier Julius Maada Bio was not satisfied with the outcome of the election result, he later accepted and he went to embrace the former President. Mr Speaker, during the peace conference at Bintumani, I saw a girl below the age of ten years. In her presentation, she advised Sierra Leoneans to judiciously use the internet.' I hate seeing educated people who are not using the internet for thorough research. They go to Wikipedia and download information, but when they give false information to the public. This is an Honourable House and we should be doing things honourably.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank His Excellency President, Rtd Brigadier Julius Maada Bio for the speech so graciously delivered in this Well. As a management practitioner, I want to segment his speech into six categories; i.e., administrative, infrastructure, diplomatic representation, maintenance of law and order, payment of national debts and productive services. Mr Speaker, for a responsible Government to run a country successfully, these are the areas you are supposed to look

at. In Management, we refer to this as the role of Government in an Economy. If these issues are adequately addressed, then you would lead the country effectively. If they are not adequately addressed, you will take the country to the dungeon and that is exactly where we were last year. I was flabbergasted when I heard Honourable Members on the other side criticising the Free Quality Education. I want to go through the... - *[Interruption]*.

THE SPEAKER: What is going on there? Honourable Member, instead of creating more noise, what you could have done was simply to draw my attention to that particular individual and I would have dealt with him accordingly. But how can I act when all of you were speaking at the same time? We need decorum in this House.

HON. CHRISTOPHER K. VANDY: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as I told you, I want to handle the administrative aspect of this Government for you to know that this Government is a serious Government. If your administrative skills and strategies are not proper, you will hear a phrase like, 'ways and means.'

THE SPEAKER: Hold on, Honourable member. Mr Clerk, I would not want to see chairs behind Members of Parliament. If you want to follow the debates, you have to go to the gallery.

HON. CHRISTOPHER K. VANDY: As I have just said, in a situation where you have good managers and administrators to run the affairs of a state, there are some vocabularies you do not consider at all, like 'ways and means.' I have never heard about such phrase since my primary school to university days. It was during the reign of the former regime I heard the phrase, 'ways and means.' That is the name of an overdraft. It was coined as 'ways and means' and that was how they sourced money from the Commercial Banks to pay salaries. The Commercial Banks were very powerful than the Central Bank.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I go to education, which is my domain. As I mentioned earlier, I was flabbergasted when I heard an Honourable Member on the other side condemning the Free Quality Education, instead of applauding the President and his Government for a job well done. Of course, **21%** of the national budget was

allocated to education. We have over 2.14 million beneficiaries, who are APC, SLPP, NGC and C4C children from the Free Quality Education. Mr Speaker, it will interest you to know that with the introduction of the Free Quality Education, over 90,000 children were opportune to go to the primary school and 10,000 to the Junior Secondary School [JSS] and 100,000 to the Senior Secondary School [SSS]. As I speak, over **Le 66bln** has been expended on this project.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am sure when the Free Quality Education was introduced, Members on the other side were confused whether we would get funds to sponsor this project, but in management, we have what is known as sources of revenue. For the benefit of listeners and this Honourable House, I talk about few of the sources of Government revenue. We generate revenue from taxation and we often see people grumbling about taxation. I will not expand further, but if you want to know more, please consult me later. We have public enterprises that are state owned enterprises and the profit they make belongs to the Government. We also get moneys retrieved from corrupt politicians. In fact, the ACC has recovered over **Le 12bln** for us. That is just a tip of an ice berg. I am sure after the Commission of Inquiry could have done its work, we will have billions of Leones or millions of Dollars retrieved from corrupt politicians.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Honourable Foday Mario Kamara said that Government is expected to provide food for all primary schools, but he saw WFP logo on the bags. I do not think if anything is wrong with that. In my opening statement, I told you that one of the functions of Government is diplomatic representation and what is this diplomatic representation? It is the responsibility of a responsible Government to lobby with international partners or international financial institutions to source funds to implement the budget. As I speak, four thousand and seven schools are benefiting from the Free Quality Education nationwide. Also, teaching and learning materials are being distributed nationwide. I am sure **Le 3bln** was allocated for the procurement of furniture for fifty schools. It is also stated in the statement that **Le 3bln** was allocated for rehabilitation of fifty schools. If you have not seen it, we have seen it. As I speak,

over two thousand teachers resigned or retired. I retired on the 4th August, 2014, but my name was still on the voucher on to the time I entered this Parliament.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am sure when somebody retires from the teaching profession, he/she is supposed to be replaced. As I speak, 1,102 teachers have been recruited to replace over 2000 teachers who have retired. We take qualification into consideration and over 12,000 applications have been received by the Teaching Service Commission and the necessary actions will be taken very soon.

Mr Speaker Honourable Members, people are condemning the Free Quality Education, but they were not able to pay West African Examination Council [WAEC] for conducting public exams like the BECE, NPSE and WASSCE. It is the Maada Bio led Government that made the backlog payment. The payment was done after the Government funded the international meeting for WAEC and the Chairman of the meeting presented to the President that the Sierra Leone Government owed WAEC huge sums of money for over eleven years. This is very surprising and nobody knows what the previous regime was doing.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the recruitment of hundred and fifty inspectors of schools is in progress and Government will provide mobility for them, so that they will monitor these schools. This Government was able to note that one of the problems hindering our educational system was lack of schools monitors. For the past eleven years, our schools have not been monitored. If you go to Bo, where I come from, you will not see up to four inspectors of schools.

HON. LAHAI MARAH: Mr Speaker, Section 76 [1b] of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone states "...you cannot be a Member of Parliament... - *[Interruption]*.

THE SPEAKER: I think I will have to stop you there. The Honourable Member is well aware of that provision.

HON. LAHAI MARAH: Mr Speaker, the Honourable Member is not aware. The Honourable Member said he had been collecting salaries even after he had retired. He said his name was still on the voucher up to the moment he entered this Parliament.

THE SPEAKER: Am sorry, I have to rule you out of Order.

HON. LAHAI MARAH: Mr Speaker, please allow me to present my case before you rule me out of Order.

THE SPEAKER: No, you are missing the point. He did not say his is still collecting his salaries. He did not say that, Honourable Member.

HON. CHRISTOPHA K. VANDY: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I have said in this Well times without number that I resigned on the 4th August, 2014 and the resignation came into effect on the 1st September, 2015 and that was the time I stopped receiving salary. One of your brothers at No. 9 Soko Street, Rokupr impersonated me and presented himself as Christopher K. Vandy. He teaches at the Ahmadiyya Primary School and he teaches Arabic in class 4. He opened an account at Sierra Leone Commercial Bank in Port Loko, where they used to pay that salary and the matter was with the Anti-Corruption Commission, the CID Headquarters and the Economic and Finance Unit. The man was arrested and the police report came out which exonerated me. Again, the former Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Education also exonerated me. I resigned, but my name continued to run and that does not mean I received salary.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, initially, we had the 6-3-3-4, but the former regime introduced the 6-3-4-4 system because they wanted to create an avenue to embezzle our money. I used to teach Business Management and Administration and there are ten topics to cover. Any sober minded teacher will not tell me he will not teach ten topics in three years. Why do you need additional one year? There are fourteen topics in Financial Accounting and if you cannot teach these topics in three years, you should not be in the classroom.

THE SPEAKER: I will not put the mikes on deliberately, because you are using them to create more problems. I have switched all the mikes not just yours.

HON. CHRISTOPHA K. VANDY: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in a situation where square pegs are not put in round holes, then the right thing will be done. If you

want to head the educational sector, you need to be familiar with the educational system. We want to put the records straight and that is why I am speaking with specific figures.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this Government was commended by Melinda Gate. For the past eleven years, the APC Government did not approve up to two hundred schools in this country. As I speak, we have approved six hundred schools in one year. We have approved 76 schools in Port Loko, 6 schools in Koinadugu, 43 schools in Kambia, 86 schools in Bombali/Karene, 44 schools in Tonkolili, 13 schools in Falaba, 67 schools in Western Urban, 42 schools in Western Rural, 57 schools in Kono, 10 schools in Kailahun, 50 schools in Kenema, 27 schools in Pujehun, 56 schools in Bo, 19 schools in Bonthe and 7 schools in Moyamba. The total number of approved schools is 600 Junior Secondary Schools. If we are really sincere to our conscience and we represent our people, there is no need condemning the President for such a good work. In my Maiden Speech in this Well, I made it clear that we represent our people and we have to give account of our stewardship one day. If you are here to condemn even when good things are being done, so be it, but to the best of my knowledge, the Free Quality Education is on course. Nevertheless, every cloud has a grey line. It is a gradual process. The moon moves very slowly, but by day break, it crosses the sky.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, before I sit down, I want to briefly talk about the Committee on Energy. I am currently the Chairman of that Committee. I want to inform every Member of this Parliament how the energy sector operates. The last time the Deputy Chairman, who is from C4C, led a delegation with the Minister and they went all over this country. I was not there, but I delegated responsibility to him. They were on a fact finding mission about the energy sector. I want to assure you that this Government is working assiduously to make sure we have sustainable energy, instead of emergency energy supply we used to have. We do not want to embark on emergency energy supply and we also want to negotiate with Independent Power Providers [IPP] who will be talking to us for single digit tariff. We do not want our people to pay more money. We do not want this Government to pay more money to [IPP] and that is why the two

years agreement the Ministry of Energy signed with Kapower had been renegotiated and we are saving \$ **18,000,000** in two years. The previous regime was paying about 19.67 kilowatt per hour, but we have reduced it to 16.4 kilowatt per hour. I am sure \$ **18, 000,000** was going to personal individuals but we have brought that into the public domain. I want to thank you very much, Mr Speaker for this opportunity.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member for his contribution to the debate. Honourable Members, tomorrow will be the 3rd and final allotted day of this debate and again I will entertain only six speakers, including the Leadership.

ADJOURNMENT

[The House rose at 1:30 p.m. and was adjourned to Wednesday, 29th May, 2019 at 10:00 a.m.]