



OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

[HANSARD]

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

FIRST SESSION - SECOND MEETING

FRIDAY, 21ST DECEMBER, 2018

SESSION – 2018/2019



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PARLIAMETARY DEBATES

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

Proceedings of the Sitting of the House
Held on Friday, 21st December, 2018.

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PROPOSER: HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS

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BE IT RESOLVED:

THAT THE TWENTY-THIRD REPORT OF THE FIRST SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON APPOINTMENTS AND THE PUBLIC SERVICE BE ADOPTED BY THE HOUSE AND THAT THE RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED THEREIN BE APPROVED.

III. LAYING OF PAPER

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE AND QCELL SIERRA LEONE LIMITED. DATED DECEMBER, 2017



THE CHAMBER OF PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE

Official Hansard Report of the Proceedings of the House

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

Friday, 21st December, 2018.

I. PRAYERS

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

[The House met at 10:25 a.m. in Parliament Building, Tower Hill, Freetown]

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

The House was called to Order

Suspension of S. O. 5[2]

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS [*Leader of Government Business*]: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to amend the Order Paper. I propose that item III becomes Item IV and item IV becomes Item III.

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON. MATHEW NYUMA: I second the Motion.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[The Motion was carried]

THE SPEAKER: I am reliably informed that we do not have the record of Votes and Proceedings for Wednesday, 12th December, 2018. Therefore, we shall skip that particular item until our next meeting.

III. MOTION OF THE COMMITTEE ON APPOINTMENTS AND THE PUBLIC SERVICE

PROPOSER: HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS

SECONDER: HON. HASSAN A. SESAY

HON SIDIE M. TUNIS: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I present to you the Twenty-Third Report of the First Session of the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service:

1. Introduction

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Committee on Appointments and the Public service that is charged with the responsibility of vetting Presidential nominees and selecting the most fitted and qualified persons to serve in public offices met on Thursday, 20th December, 2018 to interview three Presidential nominees for the following appointments:

[i] Chief Justice of the Republic of Sierra Leone;

[ii] Member, Board of Directors, Environmental Protection Agency Board; and

[iii] Member, National Telecommunication Commission.

2. Procedure

The Committee relied on specified documents provided by the nominees and other information obtained from the general public to conduct its hearings. Pertinent questions put to the nominees were related to their educational backgrounds, track records in pertinent work situations, declared assets, tax obligations and the nominees' visions for a successful and nationally productive tenure. Issues of unsuitability or otherwise were closely looked into by the Committee.

3. *Twenty-Sixth Sitting of the Committee on Thursday, 20th December, 2018.*

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the following nominees were interviewed on oath:

[i] Honourable Justice Desmond Baba Tunde Edwards, Proposed Chief Justice of the Republic of Sierra Leone.

Honourable Justice Desmond Baba Tunde Edwards is currently serving as Appeal Court Judge in the Judiciary of Sierra Leone. Having been in legal practice from 1990 to date, particularly on the Bench, Honourable Justice Desmond Baba Tunde Edwards has a wealth of experience in legal and judicial matters, including national and international Arbitration Laws, Rules of Arbitration, Rules for Settlement of Investment Disputes between state parties and investors etc. etc.

Responding to the Committee's enquiries on the current status of the judiciary, Justice Edwards said that one may be tempted to dismiss the current state of the judiciary as nothing to write home about. A lot of people, he said, have done their bit but compared to what is happening in other countries, Sierra Leone is way behind. **"Part of the problem, as I see it, is that the judiciary throughout the past years has been managed by lawyers. Lawyers are not managers. There is a difference between judicial functions and administrative functions. If the administrative function is weak, then obviously things are not going to work. Nowadays, we have Master and Registrars. The volume of work that Master and Registrars have on their plates is too much. The caseload is so heavy that you need**

more managers. We need a judiciary where judicial functions are separate from the court management. We want Human Resource Managers and Accountants. These are all officers that will come under what we call court managers as distinct from the judicial functions handled by the Master Registrar. So these are issues that should be addressed if the judiciary is going to make a head-way. Without that, we are not going to succeed. The judges are overloaded with case files,” he said.

[ii] Dr Morie Kalilu Kormoh, Proposed Member, Board of Directors, Environmental Protection Agency [EPA] Board.

Dr Morie Kalilu Kormoh is a retired senior Lecturer in Chemistry, Dr Morie Kalilu Kormoh Department of Chemistry, Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone 1975-2016. Dr Morie Kalilu Kormoh has a long list of publications to his name.

Responding to inquiring questions, Dr Morie Kalilu Kormoh said that the first experience he would bring to bear on the Agency would be his knowledge of local farming practices. **“We are already aware of the climate changes that are taking place in the Sierra Leone environment. Bush clearing and burning is creating a lot of problems to the extent that climatic conditions are changing. In the month of June for instance, Sierra Leone is supposed to be getting heavy rainfalls, but we are now experiencing the opposite, particularly in the northern parts of the country,”** he said. Mr Kormoh promised to sensitise local farmers to know that certain farming practices were responsible for the changes in climatic conditions, which in turn would adversely affect their environment.

[iii] Mrs Madiana Nyanda Samba [Nee Marra], Proposed member, National Telecommunication Commission.

Mrs Madiana Nyanda Samba [Nee Marra] is founder and Executive Director of ‘Community Action to Restore Lives,’ a local NGO that is operating in five Districts. Mrs Madiana Samba has competence and skills in Project Development, Implementation and

Management, Administration and Management, Gender and Human Rights, Education, Peace Building and Child Welfare and Protection.

Mrs Madiana Samba viewed her nomination as a call to national service, a pay-back time for what this country has done for her. **“I promise to work to the best of my ability for the success of the Commission and His Excellency’s vision for this nation,”** she said.

5. Recommendation[s]

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Committee adjudged the following Presidential nominees to be fit and qualified for their proposed appointments and they are recommended to the House for approval:

[i] Honourable Justice Desmond Baba Tunde Edwards, proposed Chief Justice of the Republic of Sierra Leone;

[ii] Dr Morie Kalilu Kormoh, proposed member, Board of Directors, Environmental Protection Agency [EPA] Board; and

[iii] Mrs Madiana Nyanda Samba [Nee Marra], proposed member, National Telecommunication Commission.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Twenty-Third Report reflects the unanimous view of the Committee. I therefore move that the Twenty-Third Report of the First Session of the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service be adopted by the House and that the recommendations contained therein be approved. Signed by Honourable Mohamed Sidie Tunis, Chairman.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, for the records, before asking for a seconder, I want confirmation whether we do have a quorum. If we have more than a quorum, it is okay. Let that be stated for the records. Any seconder?

HON. HASSAN A. SESAY: I so second, Mr Speaker.

[Question Proposed]

HON. HASSAN A. SESAY: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have nominees in front of us for approval. They have been nominated by His Excellency the President to

help him execute his policies and programmes. It is his mandate to nominate people and we have no question as to whether they are qualified or not. We however have the mandate to question the report of the Committee, whether it is a reflective of what actually transpired in the Committee Room.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me draw the attention of the Leader and Chairman of the Committee to certain issues. During the interview, I posed a question which is not captured in this report. I am saying this for the records. I have nothing against the proposed Chief Justice who has been nominated by the President. I am of the conviction that the issues discussed are not captured. Like I said, these are fine nominees [*Applause*]. I am not asking for applause, but raising a serious issue. This is for the Hansard and I still stand by what I have said. We have to report issues as they were in the Committee Room 1. The Leader knows what I am talking about.

THE SPEAKER: The Honourable Member is protected. He has made the point that not everything that transpired in the Committee room was captured in this report before the House. His point has been seriously noted. But for the future, I think it is only fair that every salient point made in the course of the interview should be captured in the report.

HON. HASSAN A. SESAY: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, like I said, I am not questioning the qualifications, but the procedures. I hope that our Constitution would be upheld. We have to ensure that constitutional provisions are adhered to. I am not going to respond to undertones at all.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, just ignore the undertones.

HON HASSAN A. SESAY: When they become overtones, they require response.

THE SPEAKER: An undertone is an undertone. It is not part of the proceedings at all.

HON. HASSAN A. SESAY: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I hope the nominee is going to uphold the relevant provisions in the Constitution. He has to ensure that the constitutional provisions are observed. That is what I am asking for and nothing more. However, I know Dr Kormoh at Fourah Bay College. I attended Fourah Bay College

when he was a Chemistry Lecturer. He did not lecture me because I was not a student of Chemistry. According to his CV, he has spent a long time and he has written so much in his subject area. I know he must know what he is up to and we expect him to add value to the institution he has been nominated to serve.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I go to the nominee for NATCOM. We are aware of what is going on at NATCOM. I think over 91 workers are being relieved from their duties. We have to clarify certain things. I want to state here that not all the workers at NATCOM are contract workers. If the term of office for those contract workers ends and you want to renew their contracts, that is fine, but I want to call the attention of Mr Speaker and this House that the issue has to be addressed. We are talking about 91 Sierra Leoneans and it does not matter where they came from or what they have been doing. If they are laid off, we have to do something about it. This is why I have to call on the Commissioner to look into this issue if this House approved her nomination. We have to put Sierra Leone first and not individual or partisan interest.

Having said that, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I hope and pray that this House approve these nominees, so that they can go and do their work. I expect the best from the Chief Justice, having listened to me. Thank you very much *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the seconder of the motion for his contribution. I recognise the Honourable Alpha Bah.

HON. ALPHA A. BAH: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I am gratified this morning for catching the Speaker's eye. I have been unable to catch the eye of the Speaker for quite a while now. This is the first golden opportunity given to me.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I go to Honourable Justice Babatunde Edwards. I have known him to be a dedicated person at the Bar. I have also known him to be a very frank and open minded Lawyer. He is an experienced person at the Bar and he is like a father to us at the Bar and the Honourable Gevao can attest to that. I wish to ask that if he is approved by this House, he continues the good work and he continues to

be dedicated to his work and to put national interest above all other interest and we will continue to work with him as a member of the Bar.

On that note, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to urge this House to approve the nomination of Honourable Justice Babatunde Edwards *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member for his contribution. I just want everyone to understand that the brevity that characterised the debate this morning owes no reflection whatsoever on the superb qualities of the nominees before the House. On that note, I will take just two more speakers. I would recognise the Honourable Kandeh Yumkella followed by the Leader.

HON. DR KANDEH K. YUMKELLA *[Leader of NGC]*: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to premise my intervention on this all important debate, focusing only on the proposed Chief Justice, given the importance of the judicial arm to our governance and democracy. I would like to premise my intervention from a short quotation from Act 5, Scene 5 of Macbeth. With your permission sir, it reads: **“Life is but a walking shadow, a poor player that struts and frets his hour upon the stage then is heard no more. It is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, but signifying nothing.”** Today, this debate is very important. I am a leader and by the rules of debates, I am supposed to be given time to intervene. We have given up our recess to be here and I think we have to be heard *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to join others to congratulate the proposed Chief Justice. In the interview yesterday, you said to us that there was not much to write about our Judiciary. I think you were quoted very correctly by the Leader of Government Business. In the interview yesterday, several of us, including Honourable Dickson Rogers, gave examples of the problems we have seen in the judiciary. You know that and you have an opportunity to reform that institution. I quoted that portion of Macbeth because it is your hour on the stage. You mentioned that others have not been able to do it. The question is can you reform the judiciary to protect the rights of the citizens, protect the rule of law and avoid arbitrary interpretations of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the proposed Chief Justice referred to Section 120 of the Constitution yesterday. Therefore, I would refer the House to the same Section 120, Sub-section 3 of the 1991 Constitution. It says: **"In the exercise of its judicial functions, the judiciary shall be subject to only this Constitution or any other law and shall not be subject to the control or direction of any other person or authority."** I repeat that last part **"...shall not be subjected to the control or direction of any other person or authority."** We said that the judiciary is one of our governance structures and it is very important. We have seen the abuse of our Constitution by other administrations, but we hope you would guarantee us that you would protect our rights and the independence of the judiciary. Many of us have suffered from injustices. We want to wish you well. We will be watching from the side line. It is your time on the stage and may the Almighty God help you to be just, so that you dispense justice. May the Almighty God help you to protect our sacred Constitution.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member for his contribution. This is not a day for independence Member of Parliament. I am afraid.

HON. CHERNOR R.M BAH [*Leader of the Opposition*]: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I knew what Honourable Gevao wanted to say so I would say it for him [*Laughter*]. I want to join the queue from Honourable Dr Kandeh K. Yumkella and others before me. I am sure I know all the three nominees very well. I would not say how, but I know them all. I wonder what is happening in the courts today because I can see that almost all the Judges are here, including my pupil master, Eku Roberts. I am sure the judiciary is working from Parliament today. Justice Samba was attempting to threaten me this morning, but I reminded her that this is Parliament and not a court.

On that note, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I was part of the interview and having read what was presented this morning and listened to other colleagues, I want to endorse the recommendations of the Chairman of the Committee.

THE SPEAKER: Before I call on the Leader of Government Business, may I take this opportunity to recognise the presence in our midst of very eminent Judges. I would refrain from calling them by name, but to simply ask them to stand, so that they can be

recognised by Parliament. All our eminent Judges please stand for recognition. Thank you. I think they deserve more than that *[Applause across the Floor]*.

HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS *[Leader of Government Business]*: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank my colleagues, the Opposition Chief Whip and the Leader of Opposition for their contributions. I just want to call on this Honourable House to approve all the nominees. We already know the proposed Chief Justice to be a very serious minded person and hardworking. The Honourable Lawyer from the other side has just explained to this Honourable House who Honourable Justice Desmond Babatunde Edwards is and I want to assure the Chief Whip that in future, we would ensure that we capture everything that is being said in the Committee Room 1. Thank you very much.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[Motion of the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service has been approved]

THE SPEAKER: For reason which everybody knows and recognises, let me now take this opportunity to commend His Excellency the President for the decision he made in nominating no less a person than the Honourable Desmond Babatunde Edwards to become our next Chief Justice. He could not have made a better choice. We all know his qualities and we wish him well. We have no doubt that he would live up to the expectation of His Excellency the President, this noble House and the general public at large. Thank you and good luck *[Applause]*.

III. LAYING OF PAPER

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

MR MOHAMED RADO SWARRAY *[Minister of Information and Communications]*: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members of Parliament, I beg to lay on the Table of this Honourable House the following document:

Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone and Qcell Sierra Leone Limited, Dated December, 2017.

HON. VERONICA K. SESAY: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I stand on S.O. 23. To my colleagues and children in this House, I know most of you missed me. I was thinking about you, but thanks to God there is no complaint. You were well behaved. I want to applaud you for that and to show that I was thinking about you. I took upon myself to make sure that people in and out of this country should recognise you and should know that you are coming from Sierra Leone. That was why I made name tags for everybody in this House. The name tags carry your name, district, constituency and the Green White and Blue. Instead of carrying rope on your necks like you are going for workshops or seminars, you would have it on your chest when you go there.

THE SPEAKER: I am sorry Honourable Member, I did not hear you saying anything about Mr Speaker.

HON. VERONICA K. SESAY: I know you are very special and you do not need to say it here. So, the Clerk is in possession of all those names for the tags and we would present it to the Clerk and the Clerk would hand it over to you. I believe that next year is New Year and we hope for new changes. You would have your badges and all other things would be kept in your bags. You have your name tag and you would be walking with your head up.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to say after Parliament, there is life and some people might want to say it is funny, but it is not funny. You have to prepare yourselves. We have all spheres of lives in this House; i.e., doctors, lawyers, business people, accountants, teachers and I am an entertainer. We have people drawn from all walks of life. As the saying goes, 'all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy. So, I am an entertainer; an actress. I have acted a movie and that movie has been acknowledged as best movie. I believe I am going to clinch it on behalf of Parliament. It is going to be on the 24th and it is a national award event. I want you to be there to show the people that we are not only here to talk, but we can do other things in life. There are actors and actresses in Nigeria, Ghana and elsewhere. We have actors and actresses here, so I want your support. They have voted already, but I want your support. Please go and cheer me up. I believe you would be there because we are

going to clinch it. I want to thank you all and I wish you a prosperous New Year and a very happy Christmas. Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member. Let me draw your attention to one thing the Honourable Hassan A. Sesay drew the attention of this House about certain happenings at NATCOM. I want his attention if he does not mind. Let me say that I expect the Chairmen of the various Select Committees to be very attentive to things that are happening in the MDAs under their responsibility and under their watch. If they fail to execute what is expected of them they must know that I, as the head of this institution, will not hesitate to go down to the level of doing their jobs. It is a warning I am giving to the various Chairpersons. If you overlook what is happening in the MDAs under your watch, especially when matters of importance are brought to your attention, Mr Speaker will go down to your level and do your jobs for you. Please do not put me in that situation, but if I feel compelled, I will do so. All of us took the oath of office when we were sworn in as Members of Parliament. Your duty is to Parliament and to the nation and to your constituents. I want that duty to be discharged without fear or favour. A word for the wise is sufficient.

Honourable Members, I draw the attention of the House once again to the issue the Honourable Hassan A. Sesay has brought to our attention that is ongoing at NATCOM. I want the responsible Committee to pay heed to what I have just said, but failing to act will leave me with no alternative but to play the role that the Chairmen would have failed to play. I will give an opportunity to the Chairman of that Committee to respond.

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker for bringing this issue here. I have been working even before this problem at NATCOM. This is because there was a problem at NATCOM and the Honourable I.B. Kargbo, the Minister, the Committee Chairman and even some Members have held several meetings all in the name of resolving the issue. One of the issues I brought to their attention was to speedily endorse the Commissioners. In the Act, it is very clear that the President will nominate the Director General of NATCOM and the Board will have to approve, but that has not been done.

Again, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there was also a problem which has been brought to our notice. They have gone as far as meeting the President and we have gone as far as meeting the Minister to intervene and call a stakeholder meeting where we can address all the issues. I have discussed the issue concerning NATCOM with the Minister and I told him that we need to review it urgently. He has given me the authority to work together to resolve that problem.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when I took over as a Chairman of the Committee on Information and Communications, I discovered that one needs to have experience in terms of the ICT. It is revolving every day. We have held meetings in the New Building trying to tell Members to understand the different Acts we have in that Committee. We have held a familiarisation meeting at the Committee Room 1; and we have also held a meeting at Lan Sangrila to interface with all the MDAs under our purview. We are going to have a pending meeting in January, where we are going to address this issue at NATCOM. We have given the Minister an ultimatum to give us an explanation in terms of those who are on contract and those who are permanent. We have also asked them to tell us those who have been relieved, so that we know the modus operandi. He has promised that after the holiday, he would give us all the details.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we are not running a Committee as if we want to beg. We are running a Committee as a responsible Government. As Chairman of the Committee, we have not held any meeting beyond three. You cannot interface with the GSP operators because you have to pass through NATCOM. However others Members want us to go into the operators to interface with them that is not the protocol. What we have decided to do is to interface with the Ministry and address this issue at NATCOM. I can assure you the Commissioners who have been approved by this Parliament are cooperating and we have started working in unison. Thank you very much.

HON. IBRAHIM B. KARGBO: Mr Speaker, the discussion relating to the workers at NATCOM should not be restricted to NATCOM alone. There is a question that should be answered. In other words, why do we have a large number of people being laid off at

Maritime Administration and then NATCOM? To me, it is very important that we look at it globally and wholesomely. Two days ago, we heard that the leadership of the Maritime Administration has been set aside and this was a lady we approved here less than three months ago. I discovered that the number had even increased. We had again the problem at NACSA.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to explain a little bit about NATCOM because I am knowledgeable about the operations of NATCOM. The problem is that NATCOM has a very strong position at its Board level. The administration itself cannot be strong if it does not have a Board. Nonetheless, the mistake that occurred this time was that we took too long to appoint a Board and because there was no Board, it became difficult for the Director General or even the Chairman to consult the Board. This is because consistent with the operations of NATCOM, the Board must always approve very important decisions. It was few weeks ago that NATCOM was given a Board and that Board is very new. I want to also state, without any effort to support Mr Chairman, that one thing that is very important is that the Board must always take decisions according to the Act that created it. This is why I agreed with you, Mr Speaker that all the Leaders who are in charge of the various MDAs should find out about the problems brewing in their various institutions.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I heard that meetings have been held in some insinuations and I would also plead with our colleagues to attend meetings. If you do not attend meetings, then you simply do not know what is happening and the important thing is that there is a secretariat. I do not want to deviate from the very important point, but the fact is that the workers at NATCOM have been laid off and we simply want to find out why they have been laid off. If they have been laid off, is it consistent with the Act? To us this is very important. Also, we would like to know about the workers at the Maritime Administration. We want to know why they have been laid off in such a large number and whether it is consistent with the Act. We also know that there is a problem at National Commission for Social Action [NaCSA]. I am not talking

about NATCOM alone, but we should develop ways to resolve these issues. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: First of all, I want to thank all Honourable Members who heeded to our call to return to this House today at very short notice. Some are from Krubola, some from Sumbuya and some from the extremities of this country. I want to sincerely thank all those who have made the journey to the capital to make this meeting possible. I think you all deserve applause [*Applause*]. I recognise the Honourable Dickson Rogers.

HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, before the recess, an Honourable Member of Parliament stood on SO [23] and spoke about how the drivers or vehicle owners wanted to increase transportation fares during this holiday. On that day, the House resolved to invite key players. Indeed, we called them and the Deputy Executive Director of Sierra Leone Road Transport Authority [SLRTA] was here. The traffic police in charge of traffic was also here. Abess was here, the president of the Drivers' Union was here and we agreed that nobody should increase transportation cost during the Christmas holiday. You should not take advantage of a situation simply because people are going to their villages to spend time with their families. There has been no increase on the price of fuel; therefore there is no need for them to increase transportation cost. I have made that report to the Speaker and the Leader of Government Business, but I want the House to know that the Transport Committee has done its assignment that was given to us. As of yesterday, I called the president of the Drivers Union because some drivers attempted to increase the price yesterday. The drivers were arrested and the moneys were returned to the passengers. I want to appeal to the nation that during this holiday, nobody or passenger should pay more than what they were paying. I want to state here that any driver caught doing that, that driver must be brought to justice that is the report. I thank you, Mr Speaker [*Applause*].

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member for his statement and for executing and discharging his duty to the satisfaction of the House.

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: Mr Speaker, what I am about to say has to do with the credibility of Members of Parliament. There is impersonation going on round social media. Somebody is using false numbers to extort money from people. This is happening and it is real. They go to Facebook, take your picture and post it to people that, stating that 'we are stranded in our constituencies and people are giving them money because they usually say they going to be Members of Parliament. Yesterday, Honourable Bashiru was in a problem with Mr Paul Sengeh, the father of the innovator, Dr Sengeh. I called Mr Sengeh and explained to him that all of us are involved. They even used my name in the scam. They said I was stranded in my constituency and I needed money. They pleaded with Mr Sengeh for help. He sent one million, five hundred thousand Leones on my behalf.

THE SPEAKER: I have been a victim as well, not once but several times.

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: Before this time, we have started working on the cybercrime, so what happened when we went to the European Union [EU] we engaged the Minister and they have started working on the cyber law.

THE SPEAKER: I saw the Minister here a little while ago.

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: Yes, but he has left. They have started working on the cyber laws. They are working on draft because there is no specific law to handle this particular cybercrime. It is happening persistently all over the country. They have used the name of the Leader of the House, the Chief Whip and other senior Members of the House. We have also informed the police, but we have not seen anything tangible being done. They have a cyber-unit at National Telecommunication [NATCOM] and I have also informed the Director General of NATCOM. He said they were working on it, but we have not seen results. So, we want the general public to know that the criminals are using different numbers purporting to be Members of Parliament. They usually purport as being stranded and they need money. People have been sending them money. This is all over the WhatSapp and Facebook. We are talking to the media outlets to also report it to the public. If, for example, you want to send money on behalf of a Member of Parliament, you can call him/her to confirm the validity of the request. I thank you.

THE SPEAKER: I will only entertain three or four more speakers and then we will close.

HON. AMADU KANU: Thank you very much. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise with a very heavy heart to report for the attention of this House and by extension to the Government and the people of this country that the Paramount Chief PC Foday Mahoi the fourth of Ribbi Chiefdom in Moyamba District is reported to be seriously sick. Arrangements that have to do with his ailment are on-going and for further information you can contact us on the following numbers 076725515/078938938. I thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, before you proceed on that particular note, I am at a loss as to what we should do. If I understand you correctly, the language that you have used in the traditional sense I think we understand what it means, but it does not state well with what we normally do when we receive such information here. Please take note.

HON. AMADU KANU: Please take note and for further information about the arrangement of this ailment and subsequent arrangements, you can contact us on the telephone numbers being provided.

THE SPEAKER: On that note, the House will duly take note of the ailment of the Paramount Chief and we pray for his early recovery.

HON. AMADU KANU: For the attention of Government, the 6th January will be the final arrangement of the ailment of the Paramount Chief of Ribbi Chiefdom and will be announced accordingly. Additionally, for the past two weeks, we have witnessed a number of calamities in that Chiefdom and by extension the District. We also suffered a loss at the Mabang Ferry. We have an accident where a vehicle sank with the ferry at the Mabang Bridge. We have about five people who were killed in the process. We are still searching. We have recovered three bodies and we have already buried them. This is just to inform well-wishers, sympathisers, Non-Governmental Organisations [NGOs], Ministries, Departments and Agencies [MDAs] concerned, but more particularly for the

attention of the Office of National Security [ONS]. Thank you very much for coming to my aid.

HON. HASSAN A. SESAY: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I listened to the Chairman of the Information's Committee trying to educate us a little bit on what should obtain at NATCOM. Being the Chairman, I wanted to call on the attention of Members that the Act is very clear. I want to refer Members to the Act. I do not want to question the Chairman in the Well of Parliament, but I will engage the Chairman in camera, so that we can talk about issues relating to the Act we created in this Well, it has to be properly looked into. However, I will engage the Chairman in camera. I noticed an error when he was making his statement, but I am not going to talk about that here. I will give him respect as Deputy Leader of Government Business. I will talk to him later. I will refer him to the relevant provision on the appointment of the Director General and Deputy Director General respectively. I beg to defer, Mr Chairman *[Undertone]*. We should not discuss it here. I will engage you and show you in camera. Mr Chairman, I just want to make a correction.

According to the Act, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the DG and Deputy DG must be nominated by the President. If that is what the Act says, that was why I said I would engage him in camera, so that we examine that part of the Act. I do not want to engage you in public about it *[Applause]*.

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: Mr Speaker, I do not want to go into the details of that, but I know that nomination of this nature come from the President and the Commissioners will settle that impasse. We have said it in several occasions that if there is a problem, you can engage me in camera, but there is nothing new. Everybody knows that there is no problem with the nominations of the Director General and the Deputy. We have the Commissioners in place now and we are going to settle that issue. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: If there is any Member here wishing to have his birthday announced, let that person be prepared for the consequences. I keep receiving notes of that kind and the consequences attached to such announcements. You should satisfy the whims

and caprices of every Member of Parliament who listens to that announcement, otherwise I will not make it.

HON. REBECCA Y. KAMARA: Mr Speaker, I stand to make reference to something the Honourable I.B. Kargbo raised about up at the Maritime Administration, with special reference to a certain woman that has been sacked. That has really touched me so much that I want to make this clear to the House that Dr Sarah Bendu, whom we approved few weeks ago has been sacked as Chief Executive Officer of Maritime. I want to make this submission that when I heard about it, I was really not happy. Majority of the people both men and women are not happy with that particular decision. Mr Speaker, whether the decision was taken by the Minister or Deputy Minister, I felt very disappointed because she was appointed by the President and approved by this House, but was sacked few weeks after her appointment. She is a woman of integrity in this country. As Executive Officer, we do not have enough women to serve in that capacity. The President has appointed a woman to serve in that capacity and just few weeks ago, she was sacked. I want to send this message to the President that we the women of Sierra Leone will not be happy with any institution that relieves women of their duties without proper investigation. I believe Dr Sarah Bendu was a very fine woman that was appointed by His Excellency and been approved by this House. Nobody here rejected her appointment, but she has been relieved of her duty. I want to send this message to Mr President and those concerns that we want a speedy reinstatement of Dr Sarah Bendu. Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, I invite all of you to read S.O 23 very carefully. I want all of you to pay heed to the precise wording of S.O 23. We should not abuse or misuse S.O 23. S.O 23 is not an omnibus provision for capturing everything in the sun, including what happened in your backyard before coming. Let us be specific when we stand on S.O 23. We should avoid controversial matters. I recognise the Honourable Timbo and I know he will pay heed to the wordings of S.O 23.

HON. OSMAN A. TIMBO: Definitely, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I wish you compliment off the season. I want to report here that at the early hours of

Sunday, a truck load of charcoal lost control and ran into a field carnival and killed four 4 people, 2 ladies and 2 young men, including the only daughter of one of my Councillors in my constituency. She was supposed to graduate from IPAM University next year. May the souls of the faithful departed rest in perfect peace.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the daughter of the Councillor will be buried on Monday. However, what is disheartening is the fact that these un-road worthy trucks if English may permit me, are allowed to be on the road and the question we ask is, who are the people who issue licenses to these vehicles? We call on the institution or the Agency responsible for the issuance of licences to look into this issue.

THE SPEAKER: At this juncture, I now ask the Clerk to please invite the Chairman of the Committee on Transport to return to the House. Honourable Members, this is a serious matter that is being raised by the Honourable Timbo. Vehicles that had no business being on our roads are on our roads, totally un-road worthy. Mr Chairman, we brought you back, so that you can listen to the Honourable Timbo. What he was reporting to the House affects all of us, especially at this festive season. It is the most dangerous time to be on the roads in Sierra Leone. Vehicles ply the road that ought not to be there. Therefore, let us go back to the sources; i.e., those who issue licenses to them in the first place.

HON. OSMAN A. TIMBO: Mr Speaker, I think you have informed the Chairman and the House exactly what I wanted all of us to pay attention to. As I sit down, the Honourable Member also mentioned how a truck ran into a stationary vehicle that had no reflector. Let us pay attention to the Agency that is responsible for the issuance of license and also for the Insurance Companies. You will have to pay **Le100, 000** to insure your vehicle and the third party insurance covers about a Million Leones. If someone kills somebody, can the driver replace the life? We need to look into the insurance policies as well. We have to look at those who issued the licenses and the drivers who drive these vehicles. Most of them are not qualified to drive, but those who are responsible usually fail to examine them. Sometimes you even get license without

even going to Road Transport. We need to pay attention to this. Once again, I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New year.

THE SPEAKER: I just want to add that your Speaker here was once a victim of an accident which I suffered because there was a truck moving with woods and there was absolutely no light and no reflector in the rear. I ran behind that truck somewhere near Songo Junction in the middle of the night. It was only by providence that I escaped and still alive.

HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS: Mr Speaker, I want to thank my colleague. Nobody has said anything bad. We are not only here to make laws, but to also make sure that our people are protected. Like I said in the meeting, every one's life we lose in this country could mean we have lost a doctor, nurse, President or a Member of Parliament. So, it is our duty to make sure that the lives of our people are protected.

Having said that, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I think most of the accidents nowadays are sometimes caused by drunkards. Those who watched AYV on Monday or Tuesday would attest to the fact that I was there on this matter. Fortunately, the Police have got testers and if they find out that you are drunk, you would be detained for hours before you continue the journey. According to the LUC or Traffic Superintendent, if alcohol content is too much, they would not allow you to drive. For the vehicles that are not road worthy, we have also agreed that we need to know the age of the vehicle and conduct all necessary tests before licenses are issued. The Speaker's experience is enough to for us to take action. May God forbid, if anything would have happened to him, he would not have become the Speaker of this House. We have got so many experiences in this country. There are lots of people on roads at night. We also see stationary vehicles without reflectors. Sometimes the vehicles broke down in the middle of the roads and they do not even attempt to move the vehicle somewhere.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am not defending the SLRSA, but I think they are constrained. They should have special patrol vehicles that monitor such situations on a daily basis. When they see a stationary vehicle on the road to do something. For some of us who have lived elsewhere apart from Freetown know that there are police officers

on High ways with patrol vehicles. If you drive from Freetown to Makeni or any other part of the country, you hardly see a single patrol vehicle.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I think we can do better than that as Members of Parliament. Let us take upon ourselves this extra duty that when we piled the main routes of this country and you see any vehicle on the High way that ought not to be there, especially when you know clearly it is violating some traffic regulations, we have to take the number of that vehicle and make that number available to the SLRSA through our Committee. You have to report to the SLRSA what you observed about that vehicle. Maybe it will help a bit. We have to take upon ourselves that extra duty. Let us all become policemen and even take photographs of the vehicles as concrete evidences to be submitted to the Committee.

HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS: I agreed with you, Mr Speaker, but I think we have to encourage the police to permanently locate patrol vehicles from Freetown to Kenema, Kailahun, Makeni, Kabala and so forth. Let us have two police patrol vehicles on every highway. I am saying this because sometimes there is no coverage along the highways and if you meet a vehicle along the way that is not supposed to be there at that particular moment, it will be difficult to make a call because of coverage problem. Or if Honourable Lahai Musa is going to Kailahun and his vehicle broke down, he can easily call on a police patrol vehicle plying the routes every day, every moment, and every hour. I think some of those accidents will be reduced. I know the police will talk about resources, but Government is allocating funds every year to the police. They can use some funds to take care of some of these issues. Mr Speaker, let look at the money the Government is spending on Medical. If for instance an accident occurs and ten or fifteen people are taken to the hospitals, a lot of money would be spent to buy medicines and medical examination. We can use that money to buy patrol vehicles in order to reduce these accidents.

Having said that, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I promise this House that immediately after the holidays, we are going to engage the police and the SLRSA to find solution to these issues. We are going to devise new methods they can use to license

those vehicles. We are going to embark on nationwide sensitisation to make sure we go to every district and chiefdom to sensitise the drivers and passengers. We are going to include the passengers because they sometimes pose lots of problems. For instance, even if they know that a particular vehicle can only accommodate three, they usually squeeze their ways because they want to go. They usually say, 'are go manage,' S.O.[2]. Sometimes if the vehicles are overloaded and they very old, it is very unlikely that the driver will not be able to control it if something happens. This should also be our concern, as Members of Parliament. We have to make sure that the vehicles are not overload. For areas with 'Luma' trading, we usually see trucks loaded with people and commodities. This is very risky because if, may God forbid, that vehicle lost control, it would be very difficult for the driver to control the vehicle because it has been overloaded.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we used to have the amount of passengers that should be in any public transport or the tonnage, but that just vanished.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, there are certain practical measures we can adopt. The SLRSA should have a free telephone line the public could use to contact them and report any such vehicle on the highway.

HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS: I will make that known to them, Mr Speaker. Honestly, I think the best solution is having patrol vehicles.

THE SPEAKER: In addition to patrol vehicles, there should be a free telephone line. We are not challenging what you are saying, Honourable Member.

HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS: Noted, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: They should make available to the public a free telephone line, so that the public can report such vehicles to them.

HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS: Thank you sir.

THE SPEAKER: I will entertain three more speakers before we close today's proceedings.

HON. SIRAJIN R. KAMARA: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, we are supposed to be in Kono today because one of the C4C Members of Parliament is getting married, but due to this summon, we have delayed our trip. However, I want to remind Members that we are leaving tomorrow in early hours to go and support our brother. That besides, we are also going to play a football match as we have agreed. We are taking Parliament to the people and we have been very successful. We played in Port-Loko and it was very exciting. Football has actually brought us together. However, I would like to report that SLPP Members of Parliament have not been participating these days. I think we want to bring that to your notice, Mr Speaker. We are talking about the Parliamentary Football Team and we want to see the full participation of Members.

Having said that, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we will leave tomorrow to attend the wedding. The match is going to be played on Sunday and return the same day. Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: I think the Leader of Government Business is presently engaged in making sure that needful is done. We were fully conscious of the Standing Orders that when we go on recess and you are compulsorily recalled, there are certain obligations attached. We have conveyed that as forcefully as we can on your behalf. Therefore, I am sure he is currently engaged in ensuring that the needful is delivered [*Applause*].

HON. JAMES O. THOLLEY: Mr Speaker, I stand with a heavy heart to report to this House the death of my elder brother Alhaji Abass Tholley, a prominent business man in Freetown who passed away on Monday. The body would be laid to rest today at 4:00 p.m. at the Kissy Road Cemetery. I want to therefore request the presence of Honourable Members of Parliament to give their last respect to my late brother. He has been a very strong man in terms of promoting unity in Sierra Leone. If you go to the bereaved family, you would realise his eminence in this society and that is why I think the burial will take place around 4:00 p.m. because the Honourable Speaker is also interested to be part of the burial ceremony. I want to thank you and may God bless us all.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member for that information. I have personally paid my own respect by visiting the late man's home to express sympathy and condolence to members of his family. I proposed to attend the funeral later today. I hope it is not too much if I invite members to please rise and observe a minute of silence [*A minute of silence was observed*]. May the soul of the departed Alhaji Abass Tholley and others rest in perfect peace.

HON. KADIJATU DAVIS: Mr Speaker, I represent Constituency 110. I would like to report an unfortunate event that occurred in my Constituency. A certain lady went to Emergency Hospital for medical treatment, but she was turned down. As she was going home, she dropped dead. Again, we need to probe into the activities of the Emergency Hospital. This is a festive season and they need to pay attention to patients who go there for medical check-up. The last time Honourable Timbo raised that same concern. The corpse was there for hours and we had to call the police and later took it to the Mortuary. I also went to the hospital to get the opinion of the medical practitioners, but they refused to comment. It is a call for concern because they normally turn down people. This is a concern we should treat with seriousness.

Again, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, elections are over, but a former aspirant of the SLPP has been going to different places within my constituency to intimidate my village heads. She is also impersonating as a Member of Parliament. As I speak, she wants to organise carnival known as 'Thank You Tour.' This is a call for concern and it is a recipe for chaos in the constituency. I thank you.

HON. IBRAHIM T. CONTEH: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. On behalf of the general membership of this House, we want to wish you a merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous New Year. In the ninth month of the existence of the Fifth Parliament, I am confident it has transformed the minds, mentality and disposition of the people of this country about the opinion of Members of Parliament. We have debated critical issues and we have succeeded, for the first time in a long time, to pass the budget before the end of the year. This is as a result of the erudite and dynamic leadership of the Speaker. Also, Members have demonstrated that the Speaker is a

good leader and Members of Parliament are expected to reciprocate. Today, being the 21st December, 2018, we would not resume until after the holidays; therefore we expect the Speaker to tap us on our backs for a job well done [*Applause*].

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to end by congratulating you and to also thank you for the astute leadership you have displayed so far. I would however like to draw the attention of this House that a colleague Honourable Member [Hon. Shiaka Sama], was on an official assignment when an unfortunate incident happened. It is a concern because it was on social media. It sounds funny, but it has affected the reputation of this House. Whatever the situation, we have to sympathise with the Honourable Shiaka Sama. Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member for the tribute and personal sentiments expressed about me. I am going to reserve the gift all of you were expecting for the next State Opening of Parliament. I am a great respecter of situations and the economic situation in the country does not permit Mr Speaker to stage anything elaborate that will set a bad example. I have not seen it coming from the other branches of government and I do not want to be the first to do it. Therefore, I have decided, on your behalf, that we shall all proceed quietly to our respective places and celebrate quietly with our constituents. When the opportunity offers itself at the next State Opening, we shall do what is necessary. We do not want the public to say with all what is happening, look at them in Parliament celebrating. They will not understand at all. So, at the appropriate time, we shall celebrate, but this is not the time for celebration; it is a time for reflection and I will give the last word to Honourable Shiaka Sama because I have read on the social media about your predicament in Abuja. I have also read that your detractors have been at you on that particular issue. Please clear the air in this House today.

HON. SHIAKA M. SAMA: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I want to thank you very much for this opportunity. I wanted to report a case that my colleague spoke about. When I was going home about two days ago, I saw a vehicle and I think it was green bearing my Constituency Number Plate. I think the person was having the old

Number Plate, which has a yellow colour. The person replaced the yellow colour with white. The driver, together with a man who was sitting on the passenger's seat, was pointing at me. I think he was claiming to be the Member of Parliament. He was pretending to the driver as if I am impersonating. I was driving and could not get to him at that time. I got to Up-gun, but they were already gone. I think the matter should be investigated because someone is using my Number Plate. It is a very old Number Plate, but it has my Constituency. I want to inform this House that somebody was even pointing at me as if I am pretending to be the Member of Parliament and he is the real Member of Parliament.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in relation to what happened in Abuja, my allowance was given to me, including ticket refund. I am used to carrying bags because I always have other materials. I put the money in my bag and went into the Chambers. I left the bag in the Chamber and went to the Rest Room. I also visited the Tea Spot and the Restaurant. Mr Speaker, when I went back into my hotel, I wanted to put the money in different envelopes to separate the ticket refund from my allowance. I went to the Reception and told the lady to give me three envelopes. She gave me the envelopes when I sat down in my room to take out the money, the money was not there. It was about **\$4,900**; **\$2,900** for the ticket refund and **\$2,000** for hotel bills, food and other expenses. I reported the matter to the hotel manager, but they told me the cameras in the hotel are not working. I made the report to the ECOWAS Parliament and we made a statement with the security. We looked at the CCTV camera, but unfortunately, some of the cameras in the areas I visited were not working. So, we were not able to trace the money.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Director of Human Resource in this House, who contested in 2012 but lost, who also raised an objection to my nomination in 2018 elections, Dr Mbawah, posted on the Pujehun forum that I was lying. He also said that the Leader of our delegation has even left Abuja to come and consult the Speaker the next action to be taken against me for disgracing this country. He also went further to say that I have lied. I am very happy to state here that Honourable Chernor R. M. Bah,

Honourable Sidie M. Tunis and Honourable Veronica K. Sesay were very kind to me. They gave me some moneys and even some Members of Parliament from Ghana were very sympathetic with me. They helped me to survive during my thirty days in Abuja. I want to therefore inform this House that a worker of this Parliament, who is supposed to promote the image of this Parliament, went around posting that I am an embarrassment to my country because I was lying. He is a political opponent and contested against me and lost.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I would want your formal complaint.

HON. SHIAKA M. SAMA: I would do that, Mr Speaker. I have not disgraced my country at all. The Leader of the delegation would tell you that I am comporting myself very well. I can never disgrace my country. Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: I want a formal complaint from you, Honourable Member.

HON. SHIAKA SAMA: I will do that sir.

THE SPEAKER: I want to extend to all of you a very Merry Christmas and a very Happy and Prosperous 2019. We shall meet again and celebrate during the State Opening of Parliament. We hope by then things would get better to allow a celebration to take place. I really want to register my appreciation to all of you, without exception, for having had a very fruitful nine months of deliberations in this House.

Honourable Members, I sincerely want to say thank you for the cooperation I have enjoyed from all sides across the aisles. I hope the same spirit would be maintained in 2019 and beyond. We owe it to this country to do what is necessary to advance the course of development in every aspect of this country. Enjoy yourselves over the Christmas period and I hope and pray I will not have cause to summon you back here before it is absolutely necessary for next year.

ADJOURNMENT

[The House rose at 12:10 p.m. and was adjourned Sine Die]