

*OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN*

# **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**

**[HANSARD]**

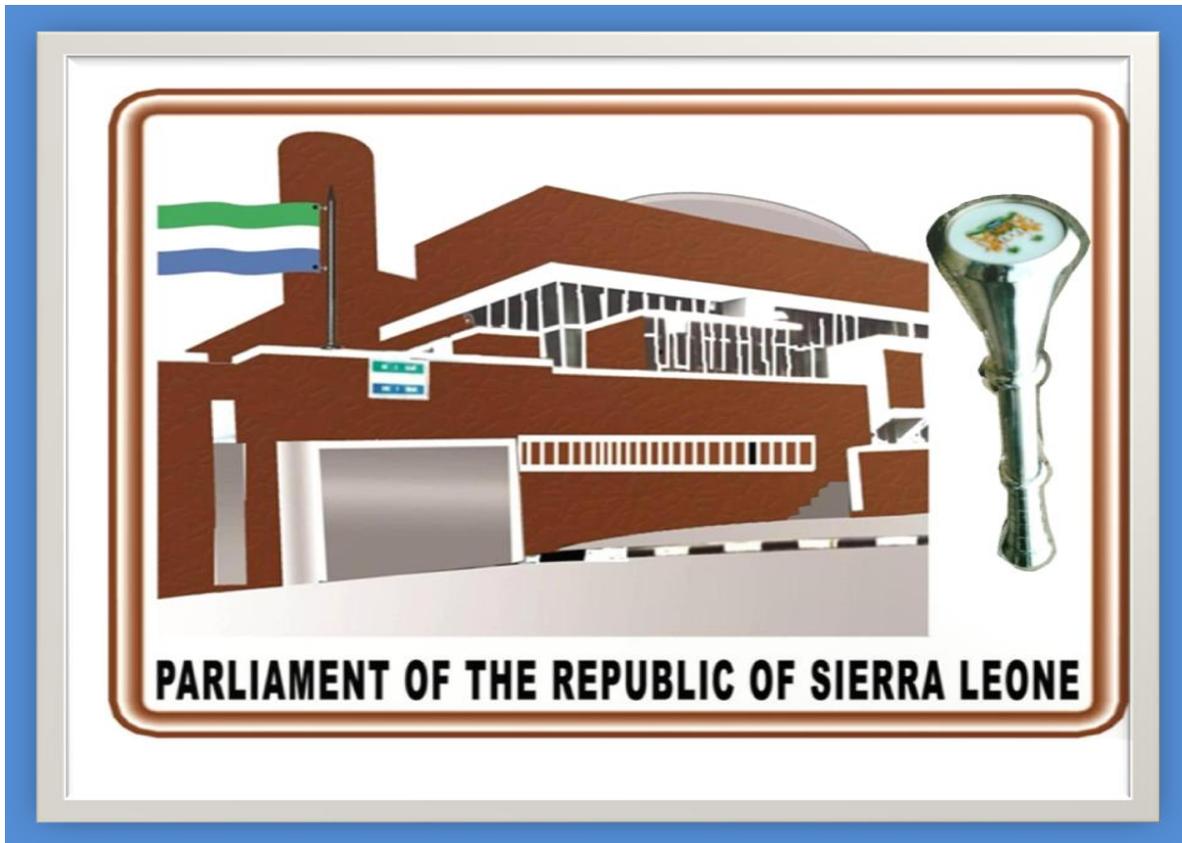
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**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT**

**FOURTH SESSION –FIRST MEETING**

**TUESDAY, 12<sup>TH</sup> APRIL, 2022**

*SESSION – 2021/2022*



*OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN*

# **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**

**[HANSARD]**

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**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT**

**VOLUME: I**

**NUMBER: 54**

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

Proceedings of the Sitting of the House  
Held Tuesday, 12<sup>th</sup> April, 2022

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*THE CHAMBER OF PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE*

## **Official Hansard Report of the Proceedings of the House**

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### **FOURTH SESSION – FIRST MEETING OF THE FIFTH PARLIAMENT OF THE SECOND REPUBLIC**

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**Tuesday, 12<sup>th</sup> April, 2022.**

#### **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 Deputy Speaker, Hon. Segepoh Solomon Thomas, in the Chair]*

The House was called to Order

*Suspension of S. O. 5[2]*

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

**HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA:** *[Leader of Government Business]* Mr Speaker, I rise to amend the Order Paper as follows: Item IV [A] should now be Honourable Mathew S. Nyuma, Leader of Government Business. Please delete the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. On item V, the seconder is not going to be Honourable Hassan A. Sesay, but Honourable Dickson M. Rogers. Mr Speaker, these are the amendments.

**THE SPEAKER:** Any seconder?

**HON KANJA MAADA HAFIJU:** I so second, Mr Speaker.

*[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed]*

*[The Motion to amend Order Paper has been carried]*

**II. CORRECTION OF VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS FOR THE PARLIAMENTARY SITTING, HELD ON TUESDAY, 5<sup>TH</sup> APRIL, 2022**

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, we go through the record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting, held on Tuesday, 5<sup>th</sup> April, 2022. As usual, we shall skip Pages 1 to 4 and start with Page 5. Page 5? Page 6? Page 7? Page 8? If there are no corrections or amendments can someone move for the adoption of the record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting held on Tuesday, 5<sup>th</sup> April, 2022 as presented?

**HON. ALUSINE KANNEH:** I so move, Mr Speaker

**THE SPEAKER:** Any seconder

**HON. TENNYSON SANDY:** I so second, Mr Speaker.

*[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed]*

*[Record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting, held on Tuesday, 5<sup>th</sup> April, 2022 has been adopted as presented]*

**HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA:** Mr Speaker, sorry for taking you aback, but I just realised that the paper I have is different from what was circulated. I have Honourable Mathew S. Nyuma as the Proposer under Motion of the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service. I think the rest of you have Honourable Bashiru Silikie as Proposer. I want us to make that amendment for the records.

**THE SPEAKER:** Noted, Honourable Member.

**HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I so move Mr Speaker.

*[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed]*

*[Motion has been adopted]*

### **III. PAPERS LAID**

[A] THE LEADER OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

**HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to lay on the Table of this Honourable House the following:

The Agreement between the Government of the United Arab Emirates and the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone on Economic and Technical Cooperation.

[B] THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS

**MR WILLIAM I. K. ROBINSON *[Deputy Minister of Tourism and Cultural Affairs]*:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to lay on the Table of this Honourable House the following papers:

[i] 1954 Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict with Regulations for the Execution of the Convention.

[ii] 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property.

[iii] 1972 Convention on the Protection of the World Cultural Heritage.

[iv] 2001 Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage.

[v] 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

[vi] 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expression. I thank you [*Applause*].

#### **IV. MOTION OF THE COMMITTEE ON APPOINTMENTS AND THE PUBLIC SERVICE.**

PROPOSER: HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA

SECONDER: HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS

**HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I present to you the Eighth Report of the Fourth Session of the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service on the parliamentary vetting of Presidential nominee.

##### *1. Introduction*

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service, in tandem with its constitutional obligations, met on Monday, 11<sup>th</sup> April, 2022 and interviewed one presidential nominee for the position of Electoral Commissioner, Northern Region.

##### *2. Procedure*

The Committee maintained strict consistency with its established procedure and interviewed the aforesaid nominee on issues pertaining to his educational background to ensure that he has the relevant education and necessary backup experience to hold such important office of state. Several probing questions put to the nominee covered wide-ranging issues relating to required track records in pertinent work situations, declared assets, tax obligations and vision for a nationally productive tenure. Issues of unsuitability or otherwise were strictly looked into by the Committee.

##### *3. Ninth Sitting of the Committee on Monday, 11<sup>th</sup> April, 2022*

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Committee interviewed the following nominee:

*Mr Abubakarr Mahmoud Koroma- Proposed Electoral Commissioner, Northern Region.*

Mr Abubakarr Mahmoud Koroma hails from the all Mining Port Town of Pepel in Port Loko District, Northern Sierra Leone. He is a seasoned academic and career election professional with over 18 years of credible services at the National Electoral Commission [NEC] now Electoral Commission of Sierra Leone. He ranks the second Election Commissioner now examined by this Committee nominated mainly on professional background from within the elections institution itself that acknowledges his ascendancy from lower cadre to current levels on assuming tours:

1. 2005 – 2006 - Assistant District Electoral Officer, Tonkolili District
2. 2007 -2010 - Senior Elections Officer, Bo District
3. 2010 -2014 - Regional field Coordinator Officer, Southern Region
4. 2014- 2021 - Director of Administration Procurement and Logistics
5. 2021 – 2022 - Director of Administration

Mr Abubakarr Mahmoud Koroma holds a double Master degree in Agriculture and Public Administration [NUC and USL] respectively besides the University of London Bachelor's degree in Law [2018 to 2021].

Responding to the Committee's question on the tasks ahead on the 2023 elections, especially the ones relating to vote invalidation, reforms and poor road networks that will slow the monitoring and mobilisation of resources for elections, the nominee said: **"I am aware of the enormity of the tasks since I have been part of the elections planning and executions. As we speak, the Commission is undergoing transformation to enable us deliver on our mandate and staff are on the ground in all districts doing their statutory assignment which would enable me address critical issues as they emerge. My role is a supervisory and coordination, which I presume would even be reduced tremendously due to my long acquaintances with the people, culture and languages within these geographic and administrative boundaries."**

In conclusion, Mr Speaker, on the note that teamwork at the Commission's level was imperative to uphold and this makes invalidation or nullification of votes in special circumstances a decision of the Commission not the Commissioner.

#### *4. Recommendations*

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Committee adjudged the under mentioned presidential nominee to be adequately qualified for the proposed appointment and is recommended to the House for approval:

*Mr Abubakarr Mahmoud Koroma- Proposed Electoral Commissioner, Northern Region.*

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the eight report reflects the majority views of the Committee Members present after the withdrawal of three Members of the main opposition, APC on alleged contravention of the consultation process as in Section 32[3] of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone. Based on the aforesaid, I therefore move that the Eight Report of the First Session of the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service be adopted by the House and the recommendations contained therein be approved [*Applause*].

**THE SPEAKER:** Any seconder?

**HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS:** I so second, Mr Speaker.

*[Question Proposed]*

**HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I want to start my intervention this morning with regret because this gentleman we are talking about is not from Pujehun District, which is my district. Mr Speaker, I wish Mr Koroma hails from Pujehun District because when I looked at his CV, I was surprised at his qualifications. I asked myself whether there are people who would reject this gentleman. I also asked myself if Sierra Leoneans would afford to miss this gentleman in their electoral process. We have interviewed a lot of Commissioners in the past ten years in this House, but with the CV and experience of this gentleman, I have no iota of doubt this Honourable House will approve him speedily. Fortunately, he is not from Dominion University [*Laughter*].

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am not only talking about paper qualification, but the experience this gentleman has acquired over the years in the electoral processes.

Mr Speaker, this nominee has one quality I want this Honourable House to know; i.e., you will never know which party he belongs to because he is very professional. He worked in Pujehun District in 2007 as Electoral Commissioner; and at that time, the Sierra Leone Peoples Party was in governance under the late Dr Ahmed Tejan Kabba. Whenever we went to him, he would say no, I am not here for that; I am here to do justice. He always treated every complaint he received with the utmost seriousness. He never said because I was employed by the SLPP or he was working under SLPP led government, he should bend the rules. He is a disciplined gentleman and I believe that this country will gain from his experience. I am also sure that the Chief Electoral Commissioner now has a very good team. I wonder if the Chief Electoral Commissioner is here, but I am sure other Commissioners are here to support this nominee. Those offices some of you are now occupying are national offices; you are not employed because you belong to a political party, but you are employed because His Excellency is convinced that you can perform. You are given those appointments because the President is convinced that you would work in the interest of the nation and not in the interest of any political party.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the nominee asked me a question yesterday and it might interest you to know that Mr Koroma has worked under pressure before and I am sure this one will not be different. I want to assure this nation that Mr Koroma has a very strong shock absorber to absorb any shock. I do not want to waste time because I want this gentleman to be approved speedily. This is not because of where he comes from, but because of the qualifications, experiences and knowledge he has accumulated over the past years in electoral process.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I hope this gentleman hails from Pujehun District. I am sure my colleagues from Port Loko District will not oppose him at all. I thank you very much.

**HON. SAHR CHARLES:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, again we have in this House another appointment that I believe is very crucial when it comes to our existence as politicians. This is because the office of Electoral Commissioner of all other offices in

this country is one that is so important that the Constitution of Sierra Leone placed special emphasis on it when it comes to the appointment of individuals to occupy such office. That is why if you look at Section 32[3] of our Constitution, a caveat was given as to how this particular nomination can be done. It was deliberate by the drafters of the 1991 Constitution because we believe that appointing persons for these positions is very crucial. They are going to deal with political parties; they are going to deal with elections matters and electoral matters are not issues that have to deal with an individual political party, but all participating entities in the elections. This is why the drafters of the Constitution were careful enough and cautions the President in the exercise of his duty to consult registered political parties. As I speak, our political party, the Coalition for Change was not consulted for this appointment.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the nominee's CV is rich and there is no doubt about it. He has gone through the ranks in the Commission. Mr Speaker, this is a country of constitutionality and we believe that the Constitution must be respected without any exceptions. As I said earlier, the nominee has everything; vis-à-vis, qualifications, experience and skills, but we are also concerned about constitutionality. The processes and procedures how some of these nominees are appointed is our concern.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Sahr Charles, be very careful not to go into the domain of the Judiciary. In as much as we have the latitude to debate here, we must be very careful as well.

**HON. SAHR CHARLES:** Mr Speaker, I believe I am within the confines of this particular debate. We are talking about people who are going to man elections and we know how crucial electoral matters are, not only in Sierra Leone, but the world over. If people are dissatisfied with the outcome of an election, there is tendency for chaos and this is not a secret at all. I am not envisaging any chaos, but as political parties, we want to see a situation where we can feel our importance in the system. We want the 1991 Constitution of this country to be respected and that is what we are asking for. For the previous appointment of commissioners that have gone through this House for approval, we used to receive letters of notification, but this did not happen in the case

of this nominee. No letter of notification was sent to political parties and this is legitimate.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Member, are you in a position to receive that letter?

**HON. SAHR CHARLES:** Yes, Mr Speaker. I am in the position to receive the letter because I am a member of a political party. Usually, when my political party receives such letter, it is communicated to its members, including Members of Parliament.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Member, let me state with authority that you are not in that position to receive that notification. Whether that notification was given or not, should not be our concern as House of Parliament.

**HON. SAHR CHARLES:** Mr Speaker, I will not contend with that, but as member of a political party, I should be adequately informed about the decisions of your political party. You would agree with me that the issue of consultation is enshrined in Section 32 (3) of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone. If our political party was duly informed or consulted, definitely they would have informed us.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to restate here that the nominee has no issue with regard to experience and qualification. We believe that he had gone through the ranks and I do not think anyone in his/her right senses will deny him the opportunity to serve in that capacity based on his qualification and experience. On that note, let us as a House help the President to do the right thing. I thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much Honourable Member.

**HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS:** Mr Speaker, for the edification of the general public, I do not want our colleague to give the impression as if the Constitution in this case was breached. Section 33[2] the Honourable Member referred to talks about consultation and the Constitution did not define the mode of consultation. I am pretty sure that most or all political parties were consulted, either by telephone or otherwise.

**HON. JOSEPHINE MAKIEU:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, today is another good day for us in Sierra Leone, especially for the political parties. The President has

nominated a dynamic individual. Mr Speaker, I admire our President a lot because he always gives us people of substance; people who can deliver. According to the report just presented to this House, the nominee was a District Electrical Officer in Tonkolili District from 2005 to 2006. In 2007 to 2010, he was a Senior Elections Officer in Bo District. In 2010 to 2014, he was a Regional Field Coordination Officer in the Southern Region. In 2014 to 2021, he was Director of Administration, Procurement and Logistics, etc. You would agree with me that the President is not appointing people based on sentiments; he is appointing them on merits basis. The nominee has worked in areas that matters and after parliamentary approval and eventually sent to that part of the country, we will spread our beds and sleep comfortably because he is going to be a good person who is going to represent the country. He is not going to represent this country on sentiments, but on merits.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, our nominee is the best and I am sure he is going to make us proud. I want him to make the President proud as well. I am sure everybody knows what you have done and you have served this country diligently. We believe people are going to admire you and you are going to do the needful for everybody. We thank you very much and we congratulate you in advance. I am asking my colleagues Honourable Members to speedily approve this nominee, so that he can go and start his job as time is not in our favour. I thank you.

**HON. FRANCIS A. KAISAMBA:** Thank you very much, Mr speaker. I think the issue before Parliament this morning is not controversial. This is because when the Opposition MP from Kono was making his contribution, he did say the nominee is qualified for the position. I am not a member of the Committee on Appointments, but equally by the report I have read, I believe he is qualified. The only contention is that I heard colleagues mentioned Section 32[3] of the 1991 Consultation. Of course, we have heard this argument severally about the mode of consultation; i.e., whether it should be the traditional form of consultation where people are invited to sit together and discuss or other forms of consultations. I think the President has the privilege to choose which one to take.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, by virtue of that position, I believe the nominee presented to Parliament this morning is qualified and he is fit for purpose. He has been in the Commission for a long period and he has now been appointed as Electoral Commissioner, Northern Region. I want to appeal to colleagues to ignore the issue of consultation because it is not within our purview to suggest the mode of consultation. The President has the freedom to choose whatever mode of consultation he deems fit. He has that right and authority to choose. I believe the nominee is highly qualified and the constitutional provision was complied with.

With those few words, I call on my colleagues to speedily approve this nominee. I thank you very much.

**HON. ALUSINE KANNEH:** Mr Speaker, I am the Chairman of the Committee on Internal Affairs and Electoral Commission of Sierra Leone is under my supervision.

**HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA:** Point of Order, Mr Speaker.

**HON. ALUSINE KANNEH:** That has been corrected.

**CHERNOR R.M. BAH:** Mr Speaker, he is on record.

**HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA:** He said Chairman of Internal Affairs Committee.

**HON. CHERNOR R. M. BAH:** He has withdrawn the mistake he made.

**THE SPEAKER:** Deputy Chief Whip let me be your advocate.

**HON. ALUSINE KANNEH:** Thank you sir.

**THE SPEAKER:** The essence of communication is to understand. We all know he is not the Chairman of the ECSL.

**HON. CHERNOR R. M BAH:** Mr Speaker, I refuse to understand because he was very straightforward.

**HON. ALUSINE KANNEH:** Like I said, Mr Speaker, NEC is under the Committee on Internal Affairs. Today is a good day for all of us. I have met this man twice and I observed that he is quiet, meticulous and hardworking. When we first met in

Parliament, he told me that he had been nominated as Commissioner for the Northern Region. I was pleased because I believe he would do the right thing for this country. This is not about political parties, as others have mentioned, it is about Sierra Leone. I believe the nominee will deliver and I am also sure that the President did the right thing by nominating Mr Abubakarr Koroma to represent that institution in the Northern part of this country. I am sure all of us will be pleased if this nominee is approved.

With those few words, I want to implore this Honourable House to approve this nominee. I thank you.

**HON. CHERNOR R.M BAH:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the report is very clear that we did not participate because of certain reasons. Mr Speaker, we have not questioned the capacity of the nominee, but one thing we have made clear and we will continue to do so is that we will not be a part to the bastardisation or abuse of the Constitution. We have made this point very clear and we will continue to do same.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this House is under an obligation to assist His Excellency the President to do the right thing. I have made similar statements before and I am on record. Mr Speaker, with your permission, I want to confirm whether consultations, either by letters or physical meetings were held. The Chief Whip attempted to define the word 'consultation.' I do not know whether he was using the 'dominion dictionary.' You would recall that this is not the first time we are having a nominee to serve as Commissioner.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to remind the House of where we have come from. We have been in this for almost four years now. Mr Speaker, when Edmond Alpha was first appointed by His Excellency the President, the issue of consultation came and His Excellency the President listened to us. He later called the political parties at State House to follow the procedures as per Section 32[3] of the 1991 Constitution. Even though we planned not to partake again in any consultation, our party called on us and all of us came together and approved Mr Edmond Alpha. This means State House knows what to do. This Parliament is ready to assist State House in ensuring that the

constitutional provision is compiled with. I am saying this because when once the constitutional provisions are compiled with, we are left with no option, but to do what we are expected to do.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, political parties were also invited to State House for consultation when Madam Moigua was appointed as Commissioner of the Eastern Region. Consultations took place and we proceeded to approve the nominee. We know that consultations were made for Mr Edmond Alpha and Madam Moigua. We want to ensure that procedures and practices are followed to the letter. If procedures are followed, we have no problem with Presidential nominees, especially when they are qualified. Mr Speaker, you will be shocked to know that it was late yesterday that the Political Party Registration Commission [PPRC] called the Office of the Secretary General of the All Peoples Congress [APC] after the nominee has been interviewed. They called the Secretary General's Office to go and collect a letter at PPRC. The nominee had already been interviewed, Mr Speaker. Therefore, whether it is by letter or otherwise the nominee was nominated and interviewed before consultation. Even though the letter is dated the tenth [10<sup>th</sup>], it was however received yesterday. Well, we informed PPRC that letters are usually delivered and not collected.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, what we are discussing is very serious. I expect us to learn from each other. I said for Mr Edmond Alpha and Madam Moigua, consultations took place at State House. For Mr Edmond Alpha, the consultations took place after this House said there had not been consultations as per Section 32[3] of the 1991 Constitution. Thus, the President, in his wisdom, invited the political parties to State House for consultations the political parties told us to proceed with the approval of Mr Edmond Alpha. I want to state here that the nominee's CV is good and he is highly qualified for that position, but you have to consult.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this is a letter addressed to the Secretary to the President and with your permission I will read. The letter is dated 11<sup>th</sup> April 2022 and we received it about an hour ago from the PPRC. The letter reads:

Dear Sir,

### **Reappointment as Electoral Commissioner, Northern Province**

I write to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated 10<sup>th</sup> March 2022 on the appointment of Mr Abubakarr Mamoud Koroma as Electoral Commissioner, Northern Region. I want to inform you that we find it odd that this letter was written since the 10<sup>th</sup> March, 2022. I am sorry to inform you that the APC Leadership has not, in any way, been consulted prior to the appointment of Mr Abubakarr Mamoud Koroma for the said position in accordance with Section 32[3] of the Constitution.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, for the edification of Members of Parliament, Section 32[3] it reads: **"The Members of the Electoral Commission shall be appointed by the President after consultation with the Leaders of all registered political parties and subject to the approval of Parliament."** Again Mr Speaker the letter was received yesterday after the nominee has been nominated and interviewed. I am under oath and I speak with authority. I will not abuse the oath I took in this House. Therefore, we call on His Excellency the President to adhere to the provisions in Section 32[3] of the 1991 Constitution. Mr Speaker, we collected the letter yesterday from PPRC. It was forwarded to us by PPRC.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as I said earlier, we will not be a party in terms of aiding or abetting the bastardisation of the 1991 Constitution of this country. No consultation took place and that was why we did not participate yesterday. I will urge my colleague [the Leader of Government Business], to take the paper back to His Excellency the President and encourage him [like he did for Mr Edmond Alpha] to consult. I am happy that somebody from the PPRC is here to listen. I am sure they will make similar mistakes in future. Mr Speaker, I want to plead with the Leader of Government Business to do what we did in the case of Mr Edmond Alpha. We want this nominee to be treated the same way Mr Edmond Alpha was treated. I once describe this House as Consumerist of Representation because we are an admixture of different political parties. I thank you very much.

**HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA:** Thank Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to start by thanking the Honourable Chernor R.M. Bah for his presentation. This is

the beauty of democracy. During a particular election at one point, a professor had one vote, while a mad man had one vote and that is the beauty of democracy. So, I agree with your decision, but those were allegations and it left with us on this side to prove otherwise or to explain to the public because we are at the driving seat of our democracy.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, for the edification of the House, I will also read Section 32[3]. It says: **"The Members of the Electoral Commission shall be appointed by the President after consultation with the leaders of all registered political parties and subject to the approval of Parliament."** Mr Speaker, let us look at the literal definition of the word 'consultation.' I am sure consultation could be in written, meeting, etc. It is the process of formally informing someone or group to take part in discussions. I have told my colleagues on the other side to formally write to the Supreme Court or the Chief Justice of this Republic for an interpretation of that provision because it is not in the interpretation section at all. The interpretation is not there. The Honourable Member is a lawyer and he knows that the interpretation is not there.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, what I did for my colleagues on the other side the last time was that when they said they did not receive any notification, I formally informed them by taking the book from State House to the APC Office, but they rejected me. Like I said in my opening statement, the onus lies on us to prove that we have bastardised the 1991 Constitution as he claimed. If you said we have bastardised the 1991 Constitution, those are hard words. So, for us on this side, we need to convince the nation whether we respect the rule of law or doing the right thing. I am sure we are doing the right thing. Mr Speaker, we will change the dynamics this time. We have changed the trajectory because PPRC was consulted through writing.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, S.O 2, are salute Kotho I.B. Kargbo bekos ihn na statesman. I Know Honourable Chernor R.M. Bah is another Statesman and a running-mate. He is challenging a sitting President and I have tremendous respect for him. He is a lawyer for a very long time. He is my comrade and our comradeship is getting

stronger than the APC Comrade. Mr Speaker, I have great respect for them because they carry views of their political parties and try to convince the others. I am sure that is what you can do when you are in opposition. You oppose, so that you can get your vote.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in Pakistan, the oppositions came together and they removed the sitting Prime Minister. So, we are not going to allow them to use the same tool to remove us. We have the onus to convince the people of this nation, not by rhetoric, but through the facts we present to them. I am a Christian and I do not have the moral standing to question the document the Honourable Member has just presented. Mr Speaker, I once visited my Arch Bishop, Tamba Charles. We were in St Lewis with the President; and after his prayers, he turned round and asked whether we know what is known as political holiness. We were baffled and dumfounded. We were looking at ourselves, but the President said, S.O. 2, "watin dis man de tok about? Well, Arch Bishop Tamba Charles told us to be sincere and represent our people in the right way using the Rule of Law. So, if you are not doing it through the rule of law, you will begin to ask your mental state of representing your people. I am not going to question the Honourable Member. Political holiness is in me.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we wrote a letter to PPRC Chairman on the 10<sup>th</sup> March, 2022 and you are at liberty to confirm this information. You have the opportunity to summon any MDA and ask them relevant questions. He refused to accept the book I brought from State House, but I am offering another method of consultation. Immediately after the approval of this nominee, I want the Honourable Member to call the Commissioner of PPRC for confirmation. I am going to read the letter we wrote. The last time we did not write to the Commissioner, but we did this time because we are responsible Government. The SLPP is the oldest political party in Sub-Sahara Africa *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Member, with your leave, let me read this letter. It reads:

Dated, 10<sup>th</sup> March 2022,

The Chairman, Political Party Registration Commission, Tower Hill, Freetown.

Dear Chairman,

Appointment as Electoral Commissioner, Northern Province.

I write to inform you that it has pleased His Excellency the President, Rtd. Brigadier Julius Maada Bio to appoint Mr Abubakarr Mohamed Koroma as Electoral Commissioner Northern Region. Please inform the membership of the Executive of all Political Parties.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I said earlier that there are three modes of consultations; i.e., action, formally informing and discussions. We used second option, which is formally informing those that are concerned and this letter can be tendered to this House. Mr Speaker, I can give you this, but you will give it back to me. As I said, I will not question the Leader of the Opposition because he is an Honourable man. We also sent a letter to the All Peoples Congress; and with the permission of the Speaker, I will give the Leader of the Opposition a copy of the letter we sent to the APC.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, APC stand for All Peoples Congress and not All Peoples Criminals as some people refer to it. I will not call it that way because I know that it is the All Peoples Congress. We wrote to all the political parties, such as the Unity Party, APC, C4C, NGC, etc. I have copies to the effect for reference purposes. After that stage, an appointment was made for Mr Abubakarr Mahmoud Koroma, nephew of the Former President to be interviewed [*Applause*].

**HON. HASSAN A. SESAY:** Mr Speaker, I want the Leader of Government Business to advise himself. He said the Former President and that could mean former President Ahmed Tejan Kabba or former President Ernest Bai Koroma. He did not mention the name of the former President.

**HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH:** The Leader of Government Business said former President and that could mean late J.S Momoh or the late Shiaka Stevens.

**THE SPEAKER:** Let me hear from the Leader of the Opposition.

**HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH:** Mr Speaker, the Leader of Government can say whatever he wants to say. He is right and we will not debate it. Let him continue with his submission.

**HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA:** Mr Speaker, I said the former President and did not call any name. Chinua Achebe once said: **"When dry bones are mentioned, the old woman becomes uneasy."** I said the former President and I expect you to figure that out. The appointment was made on the 14<sup>th</sup> March, 2022.

**HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH:** Mr Speaker, I do not actually like to interrupt the Leader because we are brothers, but he has to be specific with the dates.

**HON. MATHEW S NYUMA:** I\* said the letter was given to Mr Abubakarr Mamoud Koroma, the nephew of our former President on the 14<sup>th</sup> March, 2022. That means we are in conformity with the law. We are not one of those who bastardises the Constitution; we are people who protect the law. We have never sacked our Vice President and this is how we respect the Constitution.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I totally agree with my colleague on the other side when he said that the credibility and qualifications of the nominee are unquestionable. That is a perfect observation to say that the credibility of the nominee is not questionable. Before the approval of the Western Area Commissioner, we had to go through the Anti-Corruption Commission for proper vetting and she was vindicated. So, I stand tall today to say I am a man who looks at things from the right perspective and not from political viewpoint. This is because posterity will judge all of us. This is lent period, which is coincidentally the Ramadan month. We have to face our maker.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to inform my colleagues that we have gone further to involve PPRC as the regulator for all political parties. I am urging my colleagues on the other side to stop ridiculing this House. Let us go to the Supreme Court for interpretation.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to end my submission on Christiana Thorpe. When she was appointed as NEC Commissioner, the late President Ahmed Tejan Kabba

asked Mr Solomon E. Berewa if he knew her. He answered in the affirmative and said 'she is my Catholic sister.' There was no law authorising her to nullify votes, but she did that and we accepted the results. When she was given the mandate to do later, she refused to nullify votes. I am sure the decision of the Chief Electoral Commissioner is final. You can go to court for proper interpretation. When she was questioned, she told us to go to the police. She did not even asked us to go to court, but to go to the police. We accepted in the interest of Unity, Freedom and Justice or one people, one country. Mr Speaker, although she did not refer us to court, but we used the court system to seek redress. We are respecer of the rule of law. The SLPP do not believe in the bastardisation of the Constitution. You have tendered your allegations to the House, but those are not allegations for us on this other. We have given proofs that consultation was done and I have urged you to do the needful.

Having said that, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I move that the Eighth 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. I thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, before I put the question, let me at this stage recognise the presence of three eminent personalities that are in our midst this morning. Two of them are Members the Austrian Parliament. They visited me yesterday and we had some serious and fruitful discussions. I told them to come today because I did not want them to go back to Austria without being recognised by our Parliament. So, I told them to come, so that you too can know them as Members of the Austrian Parliament. Let me first of all recognise the presence of Professor Doctor Axel Kassegner. He is a Member of the Austrian Parliament and he is the President of the Parliament of the Political Academy of the Freedom Party of Austria. We also have Christian Hafenecker; he is the Chairman of the Committee on Research, Innovation and Digitalisation. The last one is Berno Mogel; he is the Assistant to the President for the Political Academy of the Freedom Party. I want to take this opportunity to welcome

you to this House of Sierra Leone Parliament. You are welcome and carry with you to the Austrian Parliament our wishes and pleasure. Thank you very much for coming.

Honourable Members, before I put the question, let me bring to your notice the fact that this issue about consultation has become thorny in this Parliament when it comes to nomination of Electoral Commissioners. Every time we come to this Parliament to approve nominees to serve in the Electoral Commission, the issue of consultation always comes up. I think the only solution to this problem is to see how a citizen of the Republic of Sierra Leone can approach the Supreme Court for interpretation. I am certain that every citizen of the Republic of Sierra Leone has the duty to go to the Supreme Court to seek clarifications. You do not even need to belong to a political party before you can do that. You do not even need to belong to APC or SLPP. Owing to the fact this issue has become thorny, it behoves your duty as a citizen to approach the Supreme Court for interpretation. I think we need this interpretation, so that we put this whole matter to rest. It seems what the Opposition calls consultation is not what the ruling party expect as the definition of consultation. It happened during the last Parliament, when the SLPP was in Opposition and the issue of consultation came up severally in our debates. This is a call for the citizens of Sierra Leone to see how somebody can approach the Supreme Court and seek clarification, so that this matter is laid to rest.

**HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH:** I just wanted to plead with you for this House to refer the matter to the Supreme Court.

**THE SPEAKER:** Of course we will talk about that, but I am not in the position to do that order now. I just wish to bring this to the citizens, so that we have this matter settled once and for all.

*[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed]*

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

**THE SPEAKER:** Let me take this opportunity to congratulate Mr Abubakarr Mahmoud Koroma on his approval by Parliament as Electoral Commissioner for the Northern

Region. Other persons have occupied this position before and they came to this House with pleasing statements that they were going to do something great for the Republic of Sierra Leone or act professionally for the good of Sierra Leone. We have however ended up receiving series of complaints contrary to their promises. My plea is for him to go and do something different from all those who have occupied that seat before. Please go and make the Republic of Sierra Leone proud. Of course your credentials are without doubt that you have the experience and qualification to make a positive difference. Please go and make this nation proud. Prove our detractors wrong. I thank you very much and you are free to go.

**HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH:** Mr Speaker, during the last sitting, I raised few issues and one of them has to do with Zoodlab and Sentinel, but I will not talk about it today because the Speaker had ruled and I am sure the Chair of the Committee is working on something. Fortunately, the Chair of the Committee on Lands is here today, but he was not here the last time. The Acting Leader of Government Business promised to take certain steps and I want to know if steps have been taken. As we speak, the forests are still being depleted. I was talking about the Regent/Grafton Road, but if you go to the Goderich/Tokeh axis, around No. 2 area, you will notice the deforestation. We know that that is the area where we have the largest dam which we must protect and preserve. The Acting Leader of Government Business should have briefed the Leader of Government Business.

**HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA:** I think in terms of global warming, we are third or fourth. It is good for our colleagues on the other side to always bring up issues of national concern. Climate Change is affecting us seriously and we have to do something. Well, I was thoroughly briefed by my Deputy and I called the Minister of the Environment on phone. We spoke about some of these issues and this particular one was also discussed. I told him to come after the Easter break for thorough consultations and to finalise the joint Committee meeting. I am sure there are other places they have not sighted. We have to address this issue once and for all because the rains are around the corner. If we do not address these issues, it will affect us adversely.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if you drive along the Peninsula, you will see exactly what he is talking about. This is a reality he has highlighted and it is a legitimate concern. They have totally removed the forest cover and we need to take strong and positive action. We have to ensure that people stop these activities that are depleting the forest. Well, in some areas, the forests have already gone, but we have to do something to stop it. As recommended by the Speaker, we have to first of all get some discussions with the Minister of the Environment and the joint Committees, so that we can come up with strong resolutions. This is a concern for all of us because it is not only when we have a disaster that we start searching for solutions. We have the Disaster Agency and the Ministry of the Environment, but what are they doing, Mr Speaker? I thank the Honourable Member for reminding us about this issue. I want to however assure you that after the Easter holiday, the first discussion will be with the Minister and the second one will be the setting up of the Committee and the mode of operation. I thank you very much.

**HON. HASSAN A. SESAY:** Mr Speaker, as the Leader of the Opposition was talking about ZULAB, there was an advocacy group in this House that was advocating for the cancellation of death penalty. I want to remind this House that ZULAB has taken over SALCAB. Mr Speaker, we also have the GATEWAY. Another company came here and took over the Gateway, but in the real terms what they are really doing is called aggregation, which is completely different from monitoring the Gateway.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, that Turion Industry used to be very lucrative for Government, but we no longer know what is happening there. I want to draw the attention of this House to some of these issues, so that they will be looked into. They should come here and tell us what they are doing. This is because they cannot depend on AFRICELL or ORANGE. The information they provide is what they use to aggregate the calls and then tell us your money. We are more intelligent than that, Mr Speaker. I just wanted to bring this to the notice of this House, so that they can explain to us. They have no equipment to monitor the Gateway, but if they have, let them show us proofs. I thank you.

**HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA:** Mr Speaker, these are very strong allegations and we just passed into law the Cyber Security Act. I am not in any position to disagree with you at the moment, but trust me, we have to come together as a nation. This has to do with our personal security and we are ready to ensure that the Committee starts its work. Maybe the Chairman has something to tell us regarding this issue. I will also suggest that we allow the Committee that will be set up by the Speakership to intervene first. The Gateway is not something we toy with, especially we the politicians. This is why we are very mindful when we talk about some of these issues. We have the cyber laws and we need to involve the major players. Let the substantive Committee start the ball rolling and report to the Committee that will be setup by the Speakership.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Leader and Opposition Whip spoke about want Zoodlab and Zoodlab is becoming embarrassing to me. We had an understanding last year for us to have an agreement. The Minister and his team have failed to do and we do not know why. He was here in the presentation of the telecommunication deal, we also raised the same issue. I think it is high time we look into this issue very seriously, Mr Speaker. The manner in which our citizens were laid off is worrisome. The transition from SALCAB to Zoodlab was not a palatable situation at all and some of us are concerned. As we speak, people are still suffering because of what happened. So, I believe this is a legitimate concern. I have already informed the Minister about this issue. We do not want to move a Motion to stop their operations. We are very magnanimous and they have shown to us that we are in governance. The question is why are they not bringing the Agreement here for consideration? It is over one year now, Mr Speaker. This is a serious concern and it is no longer a secret. Let them bring the Agreement here. We have to protect our citizens and that is all what I can say for now. Let us allow the Chairman to say something.

**HON. BOSTON MUNDA:** Mr Speaker, I want to thank the Opposition Whip for bringing to the attention of this House the issue relating to Zoodlab and Bradcom. Of course we may have discussed the issue regarding Bradcom and the Whip himself was part of that meeting. We summoned the managements of Bradcom and NATCOM. We

have stated that the Agreement should be here and certainly they will bring it this week. We have got the Agreement for Bradcom and the Zoodlab Agreement will be brought to this Parliament.

**HON. QUINTIN SALIA-KONNEH:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I just want to respond to Honourable Chernor R.M. Bah with regard the issues he raised about the environment. I fully understand the situation he is talking about and at some points we went to Sugar Loaf and detected lots of issues being created by the inhabitants. We also realised that we have over two hundred headmen across the Western Area. It has become a business for those headmen to sell lands indiscriminately or to do whatever they want to do. If you look at the Crown Plan Act, Cap 78, Sections 10 and 11 does not authorise them to sell lands. Their role is to support the authorities in terms of land management. Section 11 strictly prohibits and they should be imprisoned for twelve months. However, this law will be reviewed and the punishment is going to be twelve years and that is the situation.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as a Committee, we have spoken to the Ministry and we will be talking with the Leadership of Parliament, so that we move around the Peninsular and organise meetings with all headmen in their respective locations. We are going to group them by zones and have tet-a-tet with them. We will be telling them the implication and the provisions contained in the Act, so that this whole aspect of environmental degradation is minimised. The current Minister is actually doing his level best, going around the city in trying to minimise the problem, but most of the places we visited are occupied by highly placed civil servants or politicians of the two major political parties. You will realise that when actions are taken, there are calls from different quarters and that is the problem the Ministry is going through as we speak. We have decided that irrespective of one's position, we will act accordingly. We will be having a meeting as a Committee to discuss these issues and there are other matters we will bring to the attention of Parliament, especially those dealing with certain investors who want to take advantage of the state. We want to first of all discuss it at our level before we present it to the House.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, with regard environmental degradation, I am afraid it will come to a time if proactive measures are not taken, we are going to encounter more problems. In fact, the Western Area will go without water because the Guma is almost down; if you go around Sugar Loaf, the hills and the mountains, they are almost gone. We have to put hands on deck, so that we take action irrespective of one's position. If you are found wanting, you have to pay the price. That is the only way we will save the environment from further destruction. I thank you very much.

**HON. PAUL S. SAM:** Mr Speaker, I stand on S.O. 25. I want to give a notice of Motion for us to have a Certificate Audit in Sierra Leone. You would agree with me that for the past the two weeks, there were issues around certificates which are affecting Sierra Leone. This will affect those with genuine certificates, especially when you travel to other countries. In that regard, I want to send a notice of Motion for a certificate audit and it has to start with this Parliament for us to serve as a kind of example *[Applause]*.

**THE SPEAKER:** Did you say certificate audit?

**HON. PAUL S. SAM:** Yes, Mr Speaker. We have to involve the Tertiary Education Commission [TEC] and the Ministry of Education.

**THE SPEAKER:** I think that is very good, Honourable Member.

**HON. PAUL S. SAM:** We have to start with the political class.

**THE SPEAKER:** If you know your certificate has a question mark, you have to do something.

**HON. PAUL S. SAM:** The Business Committee should include that on the Order Paper in our next sitting.

**THE SPEAKER:** However, certificate is not a qualification for someone to become an MP. The Constitution says as long as you can read and write in English. We target those institutions or those individuals whose jobs are predicated on their certificates. I think that is where we have to start. Certificates are not requirements for someone to be an MP. In fact, we have several doctors and professors who were employed into offices as

a result of their qualifications. Those are the individuals we should target. We can start with the professors and the doctors. In Parliament, we can start with the parliamentary staff because they are here because of their certificates. They are occupying positions based on their certificates. Members of Parliament only have to speak English and convince your people to give you the symbol.

**HON. ALPHA A. BAH:** Mr Speaker. May I be heard?

**THE SPEAKER:** Let me hear you.

**HON. ALPHA A. BAH:** I agree that the issue of certificate is not a requirement for us to be Members of Parliament, we should also think about our integrity. MPs are not required to possess a certificate before they come to Parliament, but it is incumbent upon each and every Member of Parliament to ensure that he/she displays high level of integrity. Therefore, I want to support the Motion of the Honourable Member.

**THE SPEAKER:** I totally agree with you. Let the Honourable Member move his Motion.

**HON. HINDOLO M. GEVAO:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I have listened keenly to the contribution of the Honourable Member from Kailahun. As a Member of Parliament, I am particularly concerned with the way the environment is being destroyed along the Peninsula. It throws shed of fear in my spine whenever I think of the amount of rains we get in Freetown. Mr Speaker, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Ministry of the Environment and the National Public Protected Authority [NPPA] are doing their best to protect the forest. However, if this House do not put hands together and give them the necessary support, I am afraid the next rainy season will cause havoc. I am not wishing that to happen, but the erosion might cause damage to lives and properties. Mr Speaker, if you go to those places, you will notice that the forests are being destroyed. This means if we have heavy rainfall, the tress that used to prevent the waters from coming down are no more. If we have heavy rains, there will be erosion. Mr Speaker, we have seen a vivid example in this country with regard land policy. Mr Speaker, if you reside at Regent and Jui, you will realise that the vegetation cover is no more.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the last regime puts in place a policy, prohibiting people from selling those lands from Regent to Jui. Those lands would have been sold had it not been this policy. The forest is growing well. I want this House to take environmental issues serious. The Environmental Protection Agency and the Ministry of the Environment do not have the capacity to man all of the forest areas. People are constructing houses on top of those hills without thinking about the consequences. Five years ago, we all know what happen at Mortormeh. This nation is not ready for any similar incident. I call on this House to put a policy in place, so that the green belt is clearly demarcated. This will help us to save lives and properties on that part of the city. That is my contribution regarding the environment.

**HON. ABDUL K. KAMARA:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to bring an issue to the House. I saw a situation on Social Media relating to Cottage Hospital, which is one of the major referral hospitals in the country. There was a power cut and about eight children that were on oxygen machines lost their lives. Again, the hospital reported that there was no fuel in the generator and this has happened for the second time. This is not for politics, but I think the Committee on Health needs to meet with the managements of the major referral hospitals. It is very important for us and we should not keep quiet and allow some of these things to happen continuously. I thank you.

**HON. MOSES B. JORKIE:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I just want to add to what my colleague has said. The Committee on Health is the only Committee that has not done any oversight activity for the past four years. We have so many problems at tertiary, secondary and primary healthcare. These problems cut across the health sector in this country. Mr Speaker, four years without undertaking an oversight activity is uncalled for.

**HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH:** Mr Speaker, I want to plead with the Honourable Member from Kenema to take that to the leadership. This is a very serious issue and it has to be taken to the leadership. I am sure the Leader of Government Business supervises this particular Committee and he should handle this issue.

**HON. ALUSINE KENNEH:** Mr Speaker, I agree with the Opposition Leader.

### **ANNOUNCEMENT**

**THE TABLE CLERK:** The Office of the Honourable Clerk of Parliament wishes to inform Members of Parliament and the general public about the upcoming event that will be organised by the Parliament of Sierra Leone. The Parliament of Sierra Leone will have its second Open Day from the 5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> of May, 2022 at Tower Hill, Parliament Building, Freetown. The main idea of the Open Day is to promote a culture of openness through access and information sharing to citizens, development partners, academics, think tanks and civil society organisations. Giving the current rehabilitation works in Parliament, President Bio will be in attendance to unveil a plaque.

On the 10<sup>th</sup> of May, 2022, His Excellency the President, Dr Julius Maada Bio, will be in Parliament to proclaim the Fifth Session of the current Parliament and deliver the presidential address during the state opening of Parliament. From the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup> June, 2022, the Parliament of Sierra Leone will host the 52<sup>nd</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Association [CPA] - Africa Region Conference at the Freetown International Conference Centre, Aberdeen, Freetown. The Speaker of Parliament, Honourable Dr Abass Chernor Bundu is the President of CPA Africa Region.

This announcement is coming from the Parliamentary Public Relations Department, Parliament of Sierra Leone.

**HON. CHERBNOR R.M. BAH:** Mr Speaker, the announcement that came from the Public Relations Department is loaded. I will suggest they use the social media because of obvious reasons, but let us get copies of the announcements.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, I do not want you to go by what the social media says about people. We have people PhDs from other universities and until those universities are properly investigated, we cannot say that certain persons do not earn their degrees. As far as I know, individuals have properly earned their PhDs. However, until those universities are investigated and proven that they do not exist, that is the

only when we have reasons to question certain degrees. I know how certain personalities earned their degrees.

**ADJOURNMENT**

*[The House rose at 12:20 p.m. and was adjourned to Thursday, 21<sup>st</sup> April, 2022 at 10:00 a.m.]*