

OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

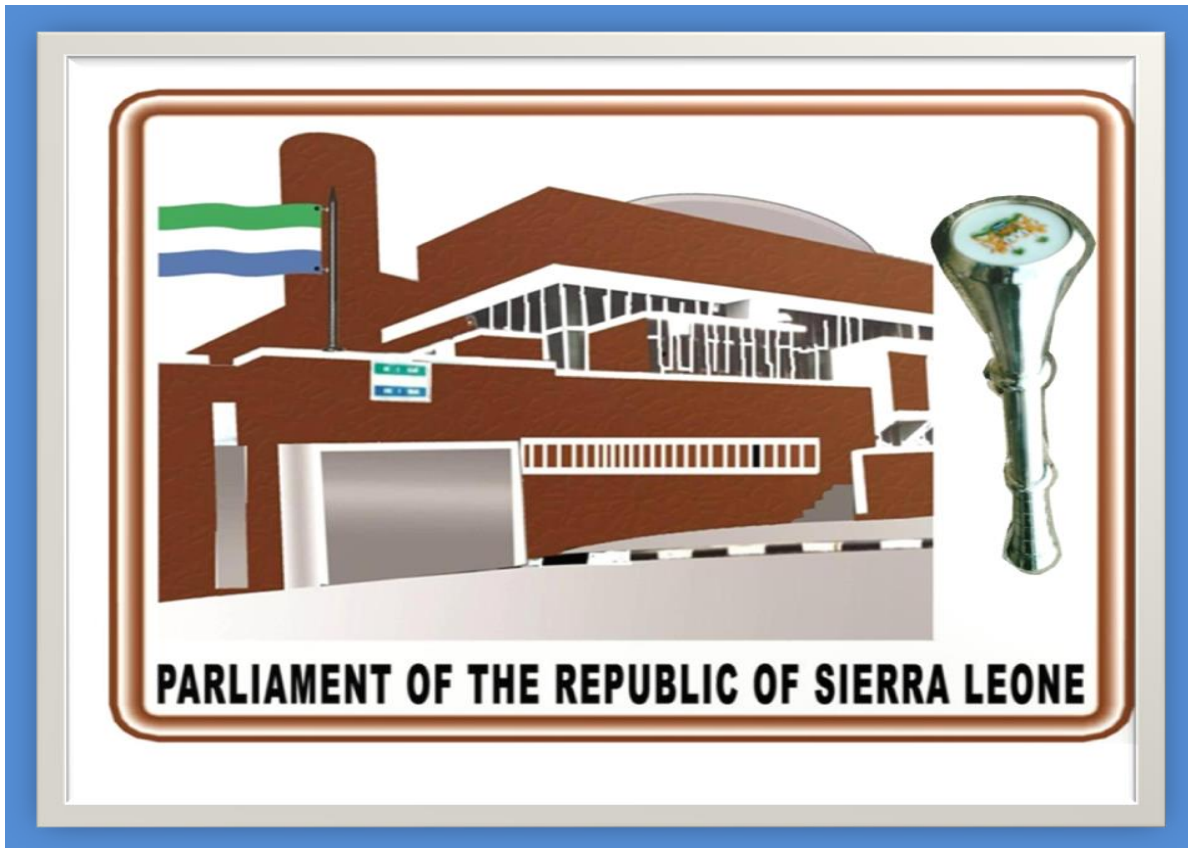
[HANSARD]

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

THIRD SESSION – FIRST MEETING

THURSDAY, 12TH NOVEMBER, 2020

SESSION – 2020/2021



OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMETARY DEBATES

[HANSARD]

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

Proceedings of the Sitting of the House
Held Thursday, 12th November, 2020.

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THE CHIEF MINISTER



THE CHAMBER OF PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE

Official Hansard Report of the Proceedings of the House

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

Thursday, 12th November, 2020.

I. PRAYERS

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

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

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

The House was called to Order

Suspension of S.O 5[2]

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, I cannot conceal my displeasure with Members on both sides of the aisle. In spite of the repeated reminders to all Members to try to be punctual, we continue to observe tiredness in respecting the law of this House. Let me make the final appeal to all of us that we owe it as a duty to ourselves and to the nation as a whole to ensure that we respect the law of this House; Ten O'clock means Ten O'clock [10:00a.m]. If we want to be taken seriously, I think we should be the first to demonstrate seriousness. If we do not then we have no reason to complain when the public treats us as people that are unserious in the execution of our duties. It is not with pleasure that I used such language in the Well of the House, so please spare me the agony of having to use similar language the next time. Thank you.

II. RECORD OF VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS FOR PARLIAMENTARY SITTING HELD ON TUESDAY, 10TH NOVEMBER, 2020.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, as usual, we shall skip Pages 1 through to 4 of the Votes and Proceedings of the 17th Sitting that was held on Tuesday, 10th November, 2020 and commence consideration of the record from Page 5. Any comments? Any amendments? Page 6? Page 7? Page 8? Page 9? Page 10? Page 11? Can someone please move?

HON. BRIMA MANSARAY: I so move Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON. JOSEPHINE MAKIEU: I so second Mr Speaker.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed To]

[Record of Votes and Proceedings for Tuesday, 10th November, 2020 has been adopted]

III. BILL

THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION FOR PEACE AND NATIONAL COHESION 2020;

INTRODUCTION AND FIRST READING

THE CHIEF MINISTER

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: Point of Order Mr Speaker!

THE SPEAKER: Yes.

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: Thank you very much Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members *[Interruption]*.

THE SPEAKER: What is your Order?

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: I am standing on S.O 48[2] and S.O 47[2], but I will start with S.O 48[2]. I want to use this opportunity to first of all commend the Leader of Government Business since he took over in respect of giving Notices as to the items on the Agenda Members should be expecting. To be true to myself, he has been doing better than his predecessor *[Applause]*. In that regard, every time before we adjourn sittings here he always gives Notices. We have to be true to ourselves, but in this case, based on the importance of this Bill, the Notice was not given in accordance with this relevant S.O, but I will put that aside. The S.Os *[Undertone]* you have your copies; you read and make your comments, but more so, for S.O 47[2], Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, with due respect to my most Honourable Chief Minister, in fact I feel embarrassed because he does not deserve this one in the first place and the Bill in question is so important. Mr Speaker, with your leave I will read the long title. It is so important that it is not justifiable for us to skip S.O. 47[2]. With respect Sir and with your leave, may I read the long title: **'Being an Act to provide for the establishment of the Independent Commission for Peace and National Cohesion; to confer on the Commission the power to take measures to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts; to build, promote and maintain sustainable peace in Sierra Leone and to provide for other related matters.'**

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, every Sierra Leonean who is above twenty-five years old is quite aware that nothing can go on in this country in the absence of peace; for which I commend the Chief Minister. To prevent repetition; nothing goes on. This

Parliament cannot sit in the absence of peace and this is not a new phenomenon to us. The importance of peace is not new, so for that Bill to come here *[Interruption]*.

THE SPEAKER: The Honourable Member from Koinadugu,

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: Mr Speaker, I am coming Sir, just one minute.

THE SPEAKER: No, you are not coming.

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: For that Bill to come here without respecting the provisions of S.O 47[2] is disappointing and Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, on that note, I suggest that we follow S.O 47[2] *[Interruption]*.

THE SPEAKER: Which S.O specifically?

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: S.O 47[2] specifically. I ignore S.O 48[2] because the Leader of Government Business has been doing his best in that regard; I must be true to myself and we have to be true. This is no issue of political lens, but for some of us here, based on our method of practice and the way we conceive things, when you say the truth, people will only put on political lens; this is not political lens. The importance of peace does not respect All Peoples' Congress [APC] or Sierra Leone Peoples' Party [SLPP]. In the absence of peace even this Government cannot operate.

THE SPEAKER: I have read S.O 47[2].

HON. DASNIEL B. KOROMA: Mr Speaker, let me read for the edification of those who do not have copies.

THE SPEAKER: Please do and read it slowly so we can digest.

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: Thank you. It says: **'a pre-legislative scrutiny and discussion of a Bill in camera may be arranged where necessary...** *[Interruption]*.

THE SPEAKER: Correct!

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: I am coming Mr Speaker. In fact 'where necessary' is my operative word *[Undertone]* Mr Speaker!

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members please allow the Honourable Member to proceed!

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: Thank you. **'Where necessary between members and the Minister or member in charge of a Bill, such an encounter may be opened to the participation of stakeholders.'** Mr Speaker, there are stakeholders in for the establishment of this Commission; the Inter Religious Council should be here if this opportunity is given; if their participation at this stage is considered necessary *[Applause]*. Mr Speaker, my point here is, this particular Bill is more than necessary because in the absence of peace nothing can proceed in this country, Government cannot function and this is what the Chief Minister in his initiative is trying to prevent a reoccurrence of our eleven years' experience of which we are all aware *[Interruption]*.

THE SPEAKER: The Honourable Member from Koinadugu, who determines the necessity that the S.O refers to?

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: The law makers determine.

THE SPEAKER: You alone?

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: Not me alone, that is why I am making my case; not me alone, but all of us as a Parliament headed by the most Honourable Speaker will decide; this House decides and I am here now to persuade you. I am embarrassed; the only thing because of failure to comply with S.O 48[2], I would have informed you in camera also, but I was not opportune due to noncompliance of S.O 48[2] to see you personally. I only received mine this morning so I do not have time, otherwise, I would have seen you personally, but due to noncompliance of S.O 48[2] I could not do that.

THE SPEAKER: Okay, you have made two important points *[Undertone]* Order!

HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS: Mr Speaker, I am standing on S.O *[Interruption]*.

THE SPEAKER: Hold on. The Honourable Member has made two points; he has drawn the attention of the House to non-compliance of two provisions of our S.Os; 47[2], but more importantly, he also referred us to 48[2]. You have made your point; you need

not belabour it now. I would now turn to the Leader of Government Business to respond to specifically the points he has underscored with regards to 48[2].

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA [LEADER OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS]: Mr Speaker, thank you very much. Thank you very much my colleague on the other side for saying I have been doing the right thing and I will continue doing the right thing. I will refer you to the Hansard. Mr Speaker, we met on Tuesday and I announced from the Internal Notice Paper. My colleague on the other side, Honourable Lahai Marah, at any time I announce the name of the Chief Minister he would give comment; he would say S.O 2 'O Chief Minister dae cam to we?' I always said yes and there is a copy of the Internal Notice Paper I read on Tuesday. So enough time was given for Members to read the Bill and to go to the Clerk's Office to access whatever document they may want to. They started distributing the document since Thursday and I checked yesterday they said they gave the document to some Members and they were about to take the other ones to distribute to the other Members. So they distributed it before 3:00p.m yesterday. Members have their documents; let them check the front Desk. Mr Speaker, let us add some values to what we do. I have tremendous respect for my colleagues on the other side of the aisle. You said I have been announcing this; between me and you, I have done it several times; more than two days as required by the Standing Orders. Look at the Internal Notice Paper, check the Hansard; it is there. They have just given me this from the Desk Office of the Clerk's Office [*Applause*]. It is a Notice; Internal Notice Paper which you said I have been doing. Let me come to the point of you saying you did not receive the Bill. I said the other time, the document, you go to S.O 10 and this document was distributed to all of you yesterday, I can confirm that one; check at the Desk. People signed for it; there is document to the effect. Why do you want to play games for goodness sake?

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: You call this game?

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: It is a game because you have quoted the Standing Orders that I do not think it is relevant here all what you have read in S.O 47 are all conditional statements; they are conditional clauses- 'may', ['may do this', 'may have

done this'] but you have realised that in the introduction of the Bill, when we do the first and second reading, if there are things that we need to discuss we go to the Committee Stage, we say no we need a pre-legislative briefing on this before we commit it to Committee Stage for discussion. We have done this several times but we have not discussed the Bill yet, we are about to introduce the Bill and discuss it. If there is need for us to have a pre-legislative hearing on it, we can do so and despite that you have a Leadership. I am not a man who can work alone; I believe in consultation and working as one; cohesiveness is what I believe in. I did not just bring this Bill because I want to; I did it in consonant with your Leaders and other Leaders. Honourable Dr Kandeh Kolleh Yumkella is over there, when we were in the Committee meeting it was on the Order Paper; I shared it with them. I have read this over and over in the Chamber. For me, to use the word that I have intent to embarrass the Chief Minister, I take great exception to that one. There is no form of embarrassment. That word is hard for me to swallow and I will not accept that one. We have been working in line with the provisions of the Standing Orders. I beg you my brother, I know you have been acting as checkmate, I do not have anything against you but let us move on, we have moved on the procedure. Internal Notice Paper was read, I discussed the Order Paper with Leaders of the House, I also ensured that the Clerk's Office distributed the documents since yesterday and they finished distributing the document. Thank you and I rest my case.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Leader of Government Business. There is no doubt whatsoever with regard to the fact that he did read out from the Notice Paper containing a reference to the Bill that is now before this House. It is also clearly indicated in the Votes and Proceedings of the 17th Sitting.

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: Mr Speaker, before your ruling.

THE SPEAKER: Hold on!

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: Mr Speaker, once you rule, it is final so before your ruling Sir.

THE SPEAKER: Hold on! I have not ruled yet.

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: That is why I said before your ruling.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, take your seat please. The S.O's that you have emphasized in your presentation is S.O 48 [2]. I presume you are making reference to the two days' notice. Are you?

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: Mr Speaker...

THE SPEAKER: I am coming! Is that the burden of your representation?

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: I am making reference to the two days' Notice Paper which cannot be detached from the document in question being served to Members of Parliament.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. I heard you loud and clear. May I ask the Members present in this Well; how many of you received the Bill two days ago or only this morning? Please indicate and be very truthful about it [*Undertone*] but it is very clear that the majority seem to be saying they received theirs a long time ago.

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: Mr Speaker, the earliest was yesterday evening which you will know it is not [*Interruption*].

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

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: The earliest is yesterday and I received mine this morning.

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: If you go to S.O 11, it gives you notice; that is for Order Paper, for Bills you receive it before sitting. People started receiving the Bill since Wednesday.

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: No Sir!

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: And are you telling me? Some Members received on Tuesday and it is not our business to control the front desk here.

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: In fact Mr Speaker, I spent one hour this morning searching my documents with the understanding that I already have it.

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: Mr Speaker, they started distributing the document from Tuesday and Wednesday *[Undertone]* you are not saying the truth. Mr Speaker, it was read on the Internal Notice Paper *[Undertone]* even if it was yesterday, what is wrong with that? Mr Speaker, let us assume it was yesterday, let them show the provisions that we have abrogated or violated *[Undertone]*. What do you mean two days after? I read the Internal Notice Paper, Notice was read five days ago, and I have fulfilled that condition for you to receive the Bill. I read the Notice Paper more than five times *[Undertone]* and let us understand ourselves with all due respect to you Sir. Do not try to ridicule the situation when it is not necessary to do so *[Undertone]* that is exactly what you are doing on the other side of the aisle.

THE SPEAKER: Okay! Let me listen to the Honourable Member from Bombali.

HON. IBRAHIM B. KARGBO: Mr Speaker, we said that far back as yesterday afternoon in your office that the content of the Bill proposed by State House is not controversial and therefore we are quite prepared to take part in the deliberations, but I am surprised this morning that we are trying to gain political points by making points that are most unnecessary. Mr Speaker, I have stated time and again about the need for us as a Parliament to fast-track the business of distributing Order Papers on time, but over the period explanations have been given as to why it did not come yesterday or the other day. I received mine yesterday in the evening, I went through it, I am quite prepared to debate it, but the fact of the matter is that Members of Parliament who said they received theirs this morning are also correct because I saw some people who received their Order Papers only this morning. Mr Speaker, we are not trying to gain political points, we are very much conscious, we want to make sure that this Bill is debated with civility and it must go through *[Interruption]*.

THE SPEAKER: The Honourable Member from Bombali is still on his legs. You know at the retreat in Port Loko we were reminded of certain basic rules which I am sure are very clearly spelt out in our S.Os. When somebody is on his or her legs, let us listen and

allow the person to complete his or her presentation before we start heckling, if we do not listen how we can understand what the person is trying to say. Let us show decorum please.

HON. IBRAHIM B. KARGBO: Mr Speaker, thank you very much and decorum is the word. Mr Speaker, I merely want you to remind us that this House should not appear to be disorganised in the presence of strangers. Mr Speaker, I know we are debating, we will continue to debate, but the fact of the matter is that before we bring strangers here to discuss very serious national matters we should prepare ourselves and what I am trying to suggest is that could we now remind ourselves about the need for us to have access to the Order Paper before time. Thank you very much.

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: Point of Order Mr Speaker, please I beg. I rise on S.O 11 Sub-Section 8; I will read Mr Speaker, **“Not later than the day preceding each sitting, distribute to Members a paper to be known as the Order Paper, setting forth the business of sitting.”** Mr Speaker, it is very clear. Mr Speaker, you are the Presiding Officer, please when did you get your Order Paper?

THE SPEAKER: Well, as Presiding Officer, I can confirm to this House that I received the Order Paper yesterday afternoon; I also received a copy of the Bill yesterday afternoon and in fact, spent the time to complete the reading of the Bill before I left my Chambers yesterday. I want to see all of you properly before I allow you to speak *[Undertone]* okay you may go ahead.

HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS: Thank you Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, our former Speaker always say ‘to thy self be the truth’ and to confirm what you just said; yesterday morning when we were in the Appointment Committee meeting, the Leader of Government Business made available the Order Paper for the approval of the Opposition Leader and his Deputy; all of us looked at the Order Paper and we confirmed that it was okay for this morning. It is just an additional confirmation to what you have said; so meaning the Order Paper was out yesterday even before mid-day.

HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH [LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION]: Mr Speaker, do I have your ears?

THE SPEAKER: You always do.

HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH: Thank you very much Sir. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, probably we are fighting over things we should not be fighting.

THE SPEAKER: Exactly.

HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is true that we discussed the content of the Order Paper yesterday when we had the Appointment Committee, but I still remember telling the Leader yesterday with a statement I even re-echo in your presence later that I am yet to see the Bill. I told him whiles we were down for the Appointment Committee interview; I also said it to the hearing of the Deputy Leader of Government Business. Like yourself, I would have received mine in the afternoon of yesterday, but unfortunately I just got it this morning because I was told by those at the dispatch that they left the dispatch for my office late afternoon yesterday to deliver the Bill, but I had left already, that is what they said to me. So Mr Speaker, no one is right here even the Leader of Government Business is not right. Communication as far as Order Papers are concerned, he has done his bit on S.O 11 which is what he supposed to do, but the administration must find ways in ensuring that Members get access to Oder Papers whether they are in the Chamber or whether they are in Parliament or they are not in Parliament. We must devise ways, but Mr Speaker, for today I want to suggest because I have not read the Bill yet. Mr Speaker, I want to suggest if it is permissible it will be good. We have SO 37; the Bill could be introduced, we do the first reading, we commence the second reading and for those of us that have not read the Bill will be given an opportunity at a future date to debate the Bill based on S.O 37. The Minister has been here since this morning; let us kick start the ball rolling, so at least the Minister will introduce the Bill. Mr Leader, I think that will be a point where all of us will accept *[Interruption]*.

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: I want to take an exception a bit, I want specifically to read S.O 48[2] *[Undertone]* no I am coming, you said everybody is right and I want to prove myself using the standing Orders, you said nobody is right *[Interruption]*.

HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH: No! I did not use 47[2].

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: No! I said I am using 48 [2] I want to read 48 [2] Sir. Please I want to read 48[2], I am coming to your point Leader of the Opposition. Mr Speaker, there is going to be by-partisan approach, but I want to be on record for doing the right thing *[Undertone]*.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member from Bombali please allow the Leader of Government Business.

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: A Bill may be introduced on behalf of the Government after two days' notice without an Order of the House. Upon the introduction of such Bill a Minister shall move that the Bill be now read the first time and in so doing, the question that the Bill be now read the first time shall be put without further debate. I gave Notice. What we have there is the internal Notice Paper, it is a form of Notice and the Notice was given out more than enough, so what we are saying, if the Leader of the Opposition said they want to be given more time, I can understand that they have not read the Bill, but it was introduced using the Internal Notice Paper. For compromise sake, I can say let us read the Bill *[Undertone]* *[Interruption]*.

HON. DR KANDEH K. YUMKELLA [LEADER OF NGC]: Mr Speaker, may I also as a Leader contribute?

HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH: Mr Speaker, I rise on S.O 34.

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: Let me finish, you cannot rise on S.O 34 while I am still on my legs.

HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH: Avert your mind to S.O 11[9] I do not want to bring in controversies.

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: It is not a controversy.

HON. DR KANDEH K. YUMKELLA: Mr Speaker, the Leader of Opposition has yielded to me. S.O 34 Sir.

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: You have made a sweeping statement.

HON. DR KANDEH K. YUMKELLA: Mr Speaker, may we have a bit on this?

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: No! You have your say Honourable Leader.

HON. DR KANDEH K. YUMKELLA: Mr Speaker, can we also have a bit?

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: Mr Speaker, there is a new day, you have to accept the truth that you did not read the Bill, but do not say we did not follow the procedure [*Undertone*] thank you, but that is where I am coming because you have made a plead thank you very much. Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition made a plea, they have not read the Bill, but we followed the proper procedure, so for that sake we can use the S.O 37 to read the Bill the first time and we proceed with the debate the other day so that we can give them chance to read [*Applause*]. I just wanted to prove the point that we did not abrogate any procedure which we have done; we did everything to make sure that the Bill is properly in front of Parliament. Thank you.

HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH: Mr Speaker, the Leader knows that he is a friend and a brother to me, but the rules are the rules. I have suggested the mid-way, S.O 11[9] has been abrogated, but I am saying that we could go under S.O 37. Let us make progress, the Minister has been here since this morning, let us don't waste time on these little things, let him introduce the Bill and let us go to the Second Reading and start the debate then let us make progress.

THE SPEAKER: I think the desire of the House is to make progress.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Take your seat please. The desire of the House is to make progress on this particular matter. Do I interpret the intention of the House correctly if I say that we shall proceed with the First, the Second Reading today and then take an adjournment?

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: Mr Speaker, we start the debate and we adjourn after two, three or four speakers *[Undertone]*. Can we agree, so we cannot finish the debate today?

THE SPEAKER: No! We cannot finish the debate today.

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: Thank you Mr Speaker. Honourable Hassan Sesay, please *[Laughter]*. I am sure you know the nexus between myself and the Chief Minister, forget about the governance side.

THE SPEAKER: Let me repeat the position that I want us to take in the House. Let us allow the Bill to be read the first time, the second time and to start the debate. Maybe we will take three speakers from each side of the aisle *[Undertone]* yes, nobody is under any compulsion and then we take an adjournment and then continue with the Second Reading when we shall resume.

HON. HASSAN A. SESAY: Mr Speaker, can I be heard on this?

THE SPEAKER: On this particular one?

HON. HASSAN A. SESAY: Yes Sir! I just want to clarify and it is a Point of Order because what you are alluding to is for us to get the debate started. The bases on which the Leader of Opposition was saying that we must get the First Reading and then seek for an adjournment because what the whole thing here is about was that the Bill was received only yesterday evening and some only got theirs this morning *[Interruption]*.

THE SPEAKER: That is not in dispute by some people.

HON. HASSAN A. SESAY: It is on those bases that I am saying let us don't start the debate, the First Reading can go on and then we adjourn for the debate *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: I heard you, but that should not *[Undertone]*, let us not prevent those who are able and willing to proceed with the debate to do so.

HON. CHERNOR R.M BAH: Go ahead with the debate, we that are not prepared, the next day or whenever it comes up we will debate, but we will not conclude the debate today, but let us start the debate. That is my point Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Exactly! It is so decided. Let us proceed on that basis please. Chief Minister, you have the Floor.

PROF DAVID FRANCIS [THE CHIEF MINISTER]: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I move that the Bill entitled the Independent Commission for Peace and National Cohesion Act, 2020 be read the first time.

THE SPEAKER: Take your seat.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed To]

[The Bill entitled the Independent Commission for Peace and National Cohesion Act 2020 has been read the first time]

SECOND READING

PROF DAVID FRANCIS: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I move that the Bill entitled the Independent Commission for Peace and National Cohesion Act 2020 be read the second time. Mr Speaker, please permit me to outline the strategic objectives of this Peace Commission Bill and why Sierra Leone needs an independent Commission for Peace and National Cohesion as a permanent infrastructure for peace in post war Sierra Leone. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, today peace has a permanent address in Sierra Leone and that address is the Independent Commission for Peace and National Cohesion. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me simply state that without peace there would be no development *[Applause]*. We all know that peace is a necessary prerequisite for sustainable development and this is true for every community, every society and every country in the world; Sierra Leone is not an exception. So this self-evident truth, this global truism is what has motivated the transformation of societies into peaceful, develop, stable and secured countries.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, you will recall that at the State Opening of Parliament in May, 2018, His Excellency President Brigadier General Retired Dr Julius Maada Bio made the case for the establishment for an Independent Commission for Peace and National Cohesion. This was followed by the Bintumani III National Dialogue Conference in May, 2019 that agreed on a road map for the establishment of the Independent Commission for Peace and National Cohesion.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me take this opportunity to thank Mr Speaker in his capacity as Speaker and all Honourable Members of Parliament for participating in the Bintumani III National Dialogue Conference. Mr Speaker, this Bill today is the realization of the President's audacious vision to build and win the peace in Sierra Leone as a foundation for national cohesion and long term national development, but Mr Speaker, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report of 2004 clearly stated that it requires committed leadership to create a new Sierra Leone; this is what this Peace Commission Bill is all about.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, after fifty nine [59] years of political independence, nineteen [19] years after the end of the brutal and bloody civil war and sixteen [16] years after the end of Truth and Reconciliation Commission process, this is the first time in the modern history of this country that we decided as a nation to build a permanent infrastructure for peace that is locally owned by people as an inclusive agency to use our own society, cultural, traditional institutions, resources and agencies to prevent conflict, manage and resolve conflict before they escalate into arm violence and to promote, build and maintain sustainable peace *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me state very clearly here; we can never develop as a country and no society or country has ever developed without building an inclusive and participatory approach to National Cohesion and long term peace building. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the strategic objective of this Bill is to establish the foundation for inclusive peace in the new Sierra Leone that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report called for. Mr Speaker, the Bill and the Peace Commission will lay a long term and resilience foundation for non-violent conflict resolution and would serve

as an agency to help prevent violent conflict in Sierra Leone. The Bill and the Peace Commission provides the opportunity to build and use our local capacity for consideration of which Members of Parliament are all part of the intermediation framework so that we do not have to rely on external actors and the international communities to always help us to prevent, manage and resolve our own conflict. This is about building our own capacity as a nation, as a people, as a society for the difficulty and complex task of conflict prevention, conflict management, conflict resolution and peace building through National Cohesion.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the preamble of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO] Constitution clearly states; **'since war begins in minds of men and women, it is in the minds of men and women that the defences for peace must be constructed'** *[Applause]*. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this Bill and the Peace Commission will help to construct and build the defences for Peace and National Cohesion in the minds of all Sierra Leoneans and all Members of Parliament.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, now let me turn to the Bill before you today. This Bill is arranged in six [6] parts including: part 1; the plenary provides for the interpretation of certain terms and expressions in the Bill. Part 2; outlines the establishments and functions of the Independent Commission for Peace and National Cohesion. Part 3; outlines the functions and powers of the Commission. Part 4; outlines the administrative provisions; that is the administrative functions of the Secretariat in the Commission. Part 5; outlines the financial provisions; that is the funding of the Commission and part 6 confers the powers to make regulations for the purpose of giving effect to the provisions of this House.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me use this opportunity to further briefly elaborate the specific and unique features of the Peace Commission Bill. Firstly; the Institutional and Governance Arrangement includes a Commission that will operate and function as a body corporate with a Chairman of the Commission and five regional Commissioners for the East, West, North, South and North-West and as well as an

Executive Secretariat with an Executive Secretary or appointed by His Excellency the President. Mr Speaker, the regional appointment of the Commissioners is to create a collective and inclusive ownership of the effort to prevent violent conflict and to build peace. Secondly, the functions and powers of the Commission are clearly articulated and specified in part 3 Article 12 so that there is no ambiguity or duplication of roles and responsibilities with other existing Government Agencies and Institutions. Thirdly, to prevent the Peace Commission from becoming a toothless bulldog. Article 12 Sub-Section 3 vest in the Commission the powers, rights and privileges of a high court in a trial only for the purposes of an investigation and only limited to enforcing the attendance of witnesses compelling the production of documents and the request to examine witnesses abroad.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this is similar to the powers, rights and privileges vested in the Human Right Commission of Sierra Leone Act 2004 article 8 [1A], but Mr Speaker, the important distinction here is that in the case of the Peace Commission; the powers, the rights and privileges of the High Court are only limited to an investigation. Fourthly, Article 13 confirms the Independence of the Commission; in the discharge of its functions under this Act; **'it shall not be subject to the direction or control of any person or authority.'** Again, Mr Speaker, this provision is similar to the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone Act 2004 which also guarantees the independence of the Human Rights Commission as stipulated in Article 14. Mr Speaker, specifying the Independence of the Peace Commission is a bold prescription to guarantee and maintain confidence in the independent impartiality and neutrality of the Commission in carrying out its mandate free from political interference and at the same time maintain its institutional and financial independent. The Independent of the Peace Commission is important if the Commission is to build and secure national and international confident, credibility and legitimacy in the years to come.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me conclude by encouraging a by-partisan support for this Bill because Peace and National Cohesion are in the national interest. Mr Speaker, I am aware that Honourable Members of Parliament are everyday in the

fore front in their constituencies and at national level involved in conflict prevention, conflict management and resolution as well as every day peace making and peace building. So this Bill before this noble House is to support the work and mandate of Honourable Members of Parliament that are in the first line of defence for conflict prevention, peace making and peace building *[Applause]*. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I move that the Bill entitled: The Independent Commission for Peace and National Cohesion Act 2020 be read the second time. I thank you *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Minister. I will now propose a question for debate and if you do not feel able for any reason to participate in the debate today you will be given an opportunity the next time when we resumed. Honourable Members, *[Undertone]* before I put the question *[Undertone]* by all means!

HON. IBRAHIM B. KARGBO: Mr Speaker, I just want to know why the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation [SLBC] has not made coverage of the Proceedings days or perhaps weeks and why we have been cut-off completely?

THE SPEAKER: We would deal with that shortly; let me put the question first.

HON. IBRAHIM B. KARGBO: Okay, put the question.

THE SPEAKER: I will now put the question for debate Honourable Members.

[Question Proposed]

HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS: Thank you very much Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Those who are ready to debate can do so and I am prepared to take as many as three from each side of the aisle for today.

HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, *[Interruption]*.

THE SPEAKER: Maybe Honourable Lahai Marah would want to participate *[Undertone]* you know you are one of my favourites *[Laughter]*.

HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me first of all use this opportunity on behalf of this House and on behalf of the people of this country to say a very big kudos to His Excellency the President Dr Julius Maada Bio for bringing

or sending this Bill through the Chief Minister to Parliament. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when we learnt that the champion of this Bill was going to be the Chief Minister, I said to myself Sierra Leone is now ready to take its rightful position in the region as far as peace is concern. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I believe that all of us in this country particularly us that are representing the people of this nation are very happy for this Bill coming to this Well today. We are going to make history as a nation and as a Parliament that it was under our regime and tenure as Members of Parliament that brought final and lasting peace to this country *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this Bill is not controversial, I believe when you read this Bill you will realised that this Government under the leadership of His Excellency the President Retired Brigadier Julius Maada Bio is at work to bring an end to inequality, tribal war in this country and making sure that Sierra Leoneans goes to bed without thinking that S.O 2 'Mende man nor go fet Temne man, Temne man nor go fet Limba man n dem go also gie den pikin to any tribe for marad' *[Laughter]*. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me draw the attention of this House to page 8[f] '**conduct investigations, research, dispute and conflict in order to identify the following: The nature, scope, extent and causes of disputes in conflicts.**'

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am sure if we are going to Committee Stage or pre-legislative, this House will agree to approve this Bill in retrospect. Mr Speaker, the reason is because most of the causes of the rebel war and particularly 'Ndorgbo-wusu war' emerged long time ago in our constituencies, in our chiefdoms and in our societies. Mr Speaker, if [F] is telling us that we need to investigate or research on those past conflicts, I think it will do this nation very good *[Applause]*. In Pujehun District specifically my constituency where the 'Ndorgbo-wusu war' started we are now seeing some of the causes of the war. Therefore, if the research is being done properly I think we would find a resolution wherein those things will be put to a halt and I am sure this Bill will assured us of everlasting peace in this nation.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me take you to 'I' which says; '**address causes of all forms of discrimination, intolerance, negative ethnicity and**

perceptions’. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, fortunately, the champion of this Bill is a Professor who has lectured in one of the most well-known universities in this world. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there was a time when I was addressing this House, I spoke about ‘perception’ and I am happy that this Bill made reference to that terminology. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, perception can be so dangerous sometimes before you know about it your reputation, your political career, your future and the future of your family members are at stake. Mr Speaker, if this Bill is passed it will address all those issues and it will also speak to ethnicity. Mr Chief Minister, I do not know if the passing of this Bill will eliminate the section which do ask about tribes and regions in our universities form that we normally do fill and as well as the jobs that we do seek.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if we want to implement this Bill to the letter, I want to see in not too distance future wherein my son will be filling form and not asked about his region in order to avoid discrimination. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me tell this House a very sad story between God and man. In the year 2016, there was a friend of mine by the name of Mohamed Koroma and when I was working in Kenema, I used to help pay his school fees and when he was filling form for Sierra Leone Grant-in Aid [SLG], he was from the Eastern Region, but because he was Koroma and he wanted to get the scholarship so he decided to indicate that he was from the Northern Region because he thought that was the only way he could get the SLG. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the reason why I brought this example is to tell the Chief Minister that if we want to enjoy the peace of this country in this Bill, let us stop the use of region or tribe in those forms to help eradicate discrimination.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to ask the Non-Governmental Organisations [NGOs] and the Human Rights Organisations to support this Bill because after the passage, I am very sure we would not be asking International NGOs for conflict resolution because that is the only time they will come into your country to start asking about human rights. Now, they were supposed to support this Bill, some of them were supposed to be in the Well in order to give credence to this Bill, but majority are not

here, they would be waiting for conflict resolution to arise before showing up; but I believe under the leadership of His Excellency the President it will be a thing of a past and there would be no need for Human Rights Organisations to come and settle disputes in this country. Mr Speaker, by next year I am sure we would have reached the age to settle our own disputes. Mr Chief Minister, I want to say a very big thank you for championing this Bill because I believe after the passage of this Bill, Sierra Leone will be in a better position to settle our own disputes instead of calling on International NGOs or Human Rights Commission for their aids. Mr Speaker, I want to implore all colleagues in this House to enact this Bill speedily. Mr Speaker, the Honourable Ibrahim Ben Kargbo always said in this House that they on the other side of the aisle are always in support of Bill that are beneficiary to the people of this country and Mr Speaker, I want to say categorically clear that this is one of the best Bills if passed for the people of this country. I thank you very much *[Applause]*.

HON. MOSES A. EDWIN: Thank you very much Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Member, I am from constituency 090 in the Bonthe District. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, for me as a patriot and a peace loving Sierra Leonean, this Bill is not controversial. If only this country should move forward there is no way that development will prevail without peace and it is high time we pass this Bill speedily for posterity because posterity will judge us if we put aside and forget about all the goods in this Bill. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will draw the attention of this House to part 3, item 2 on page 7 and 8. Mr Speaker, with your leave I read the one which really entices me most; **'without prejudices to the generality of Sub-Section 1 the Commission shall have responsibility [A] to promote peace, reconciliation and unity in Sierra Leone. [B] Build peace, cultures enhance tolerance and support peaceful resolution of conflict throughout Sierra Leone.'** Then the 'E' which goes to all of us as Honourable Members representing our people; to develop programs and provide services that promote awareness activities in local communities, schools and local administration to promote conflict prevention and conflict resolution.

This Bill is not only looking towards conflict resolution, but also to prevent the occurrence of conflict in the communities and in societies at large.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there is great need for the safe passage of this Bill to enhance the establishment of the Independent Commission that will serve this nation. I am with the view that when this Bill is pass, lasting peace will ensued in Sierra Leone. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, without much ado, I grave the indulgence of this entire House for the safe passage of this Bill. I thank you *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member for his contribution to the debate. Let me turn to the other side of the aisle.

HON. IBRAHIM B. KARGBO: It should not be misunderstood because we want to give ourselves an opportunity the next time I debate extensively. Mr Speaker, we will take part in the debate, but I also want to inform my own Members to go and digest the Bill properly before they take the Floor. Thank you very much Mr Speaker *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: Well I hope your Members will take note and I want particularly my good friend to take note. The Honourable Member from Pujehun.

HON. SEGEPOH S. THOMAS [DEPUTY SPEAKER]: Mr Speaker, before the Honourable Member *[Interruption]*.

THE SPEAKER: Okay!

HON. SEGEPOH S. THOMAS: Mr Speaker, I am actually not debating, but I wish to draw your attention to the importance of this particular Bill and we would ask at the final passage of this Bill, for Civil Society Organizations [CSOs] to be here because the CSOs of this nation should not only be interested in conflict situations, they should be interested in the Bill. Mr Speaker, we should invite the CSOs, we invite media houses to be here because this kind of Bill is so historic. I think something very good is happening to this nation now, we should ensure that they are here and listen to the debate. Mr Speaker, of course, I know I have the fullest confidence that my colleagues on the other side are not going to be against this Bill.

THE SPEAKER: I cannot agree with my Deputy Leader the more, all the more reason why I lament the fact that the SLBC is not doing justice to us today. Frankly on a matter of this nature, one would have expected them to be here in full force and not just record the Proceedings, but to carry those Proceedings live so that the entire nation will be afforded the opportunity to follow the debate. I hope this is a message I am sending out to the SLBC and the other media houses and I do hope they will take heed. Honourable from Pujehun you have the Floor.

HON. SHIAKA M. SAMA: Thank you very much Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, when I saw on the social media that we are going to discuss this Bill today [*Undertone*] please allow me to end my debate.

THE SPEAKER: Allow the Honourable Member please! Order! What is happening over there? Will you please allow the Honourable Member to have his say? Honourable Members decorum, I expect all Honourable Members to behave honourably.

HON. SHIAKA M. SAMA: Thank you very much Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I was really very excited this morning when I saw that the Bill before us is going to promote national unity [*Interruption*].

THE SPEAKER: If you want to be addressed Honourable Members, you know what to do, you have to live up to the expectations of Honourable Members and the standard is very high [*Undertone*] I am stating the fact, allow him, give him audience and stop heckling.

HON. SHIAKA M. SAMA: Thank you very much Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I was very happy this morning when I saw that we are going to discuss the Bill as it is going to preach national unity. I have never in my political life uttered anti-ethnic or regional sentiments. Mr Speaker, the first time I met you was in Banjul the Gambia, I remembered you were at that time a business man selling cars, I lead a team of Sierra Leoneans to your office, we organised a program for Sierra Leoneans, I remembered you told us a story about your school days; you said you spent hours listening to Sheku Turay speaks on radio and I am sure you can remember that, you must have been in

form four [4] or form five [5] you told me. I am a Pan Africanist, I put Africa first, I am also a nationalist and I am a Sierra Leonean first. When I joined the People's Movement for Democratic Change [PMDC] in 2005, my main concern was to form a national party that would mobilize Sierra Leoneans from all corners Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, when I see people express hypocrisy, I feel frustrated. I have heard people saying that their party is truly national, I have always said that we have to break a system. In this country we think certain parties belong to certain regions, it is common saying that people think Sierra Leone People's Party [SLPP] belongs to the South-Easterners and the All People's Congress [APC] belongs to the North-Westerners. Mr Speaker, sincerely speaking, I feel very proud when I see Northerners in the SLPP, I also feel equally very good when I see Southerners in the APC. Mr Speaker, the truth is that we have a common destiny. It is not true that when APC was in power, the Northerners enjoy, it is also not equally true that when SLPP is in power the Southerners are enjoying. Mr Speaker, we have a common destiny, there is a lot of hypocrisy around patriotism. I have always said in this House that you cannot claim to be patriotic if you hate other ethnic groups, we must come together based on common ideas, there is no way we can improve one part of the country and allow another part to suffer, we have a common destiny. I am happy that we are going to have a Commission that will preach national cohesion.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as Political Leaders, we have a very important role to play; that is to mobilize Sierra Leoneans to work for our common destiny. It is true that we have a lot of politicians and leaders that preach ethnicity, this is most unfair. I have thought that politicians that are empty will always appeal to the sentiment of voters; real patriot will talk about the issues. If people are saying that there is tribalism in giving jobs to people, those that are saying it are not sincere. We have had a system where certain people in position will always support people from their regions and from their tribes and I find this very shameful for Sierra Leoneans to be treated based on their surnames. We as Sierra Leoneans have to love one another; we have to preach unity, so I am very happy that we have before us here today a Bill that will promote

national unity. We have had a civil war that led to lost of lives and properties; we had a Truth and Reconciliation Commission [TRC] that made some prescriptions and it is sad to say that some of those things that brought the war are still living with us today. Mr Speaker, I have been a victim of corruption, I have been a victim of selfish interest. I want to remind this House about a situation in my constituency in Pujehun, we need a body that will be dedicated in seeking peaceful solution. Mr Speaker, some of these bodies we have today are too busy to play that role so if we have a Commission that is solely dedicated to finding these resolutions of crisis that will be a wonderful thing; for example, as a sitting Honourable Member, I was arrested and imprisoned for a crime I did not commit, this House promised to do an investigation, I have been waiting for nearly two years for that investigation to start.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the problem in Malin was also been addressed by the Human Rights Commission, but they told us that they cannot address that situation and it is only the President's Office that can solve the problem of Malin and I was disappointed. Mr Speaker, under the present regime, the President has promised to resolve the situation in Malin, he assigned the Vice President to mediate, the Vice President did very well by visiting Malin, but it has taken over two years we have not heard from him and all the official reports from Malin are against us. When the President made his inaugural speech, he made the fight against corruption a national threat. Mr Speaker, in Pujehun for example, all official reports are sponsored to operate against the aggrieved land owners, so we need a Commission that will not only sit down in their air conditioned offices in Freetown, we need a Commission that will not only rely on official reports that are doctored, we need Commission that will make site visits and will talk to aggrieved communities, that will not depend on official records to take action. Mr Speaker, I am very happy that we have the Chief Minister before us and I want to use this opportunity to appeal to the Chief Minister. During the 2018 campaign, the President promised to resolve the situation in Malin. Mr Speaker, the people of Malin are suffering quietly, we have no voice, all official reports are against us, I want to use this opportunity to appeal to this House to approve this Commission

and I hope the first start of the Commission is to resolve the long standing conflict in Malin because our people are suffering quietly and we voted for change, we voted for this Government and we expect that this Government will protect our rights as citizens. I thank you very much *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member for his contribution. I recognise the Honourable Member at the back from Western Area.

HON. HORACE E. VINCENT: Thank you very much Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, indeed, since I entered this Parliament I think this is one of the best Bills before us. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, over the past years; one Government after the other, we have been having several Commissions; we have had the TRC, we have had the Bintumani I and II, we also had Attitudinal and Behavioural Change [ABC]; but Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I think under the dynamic leadership of His Excellency Retired Brigadier Julius Maada Bio who is determined to bring lasting peace to this country in his wisdom as President of the Republic of Sierra Leone being so determined to see that Sierra Leone reaches the helm of affairs with regards to peace and cohesion has sent this Bill to Parliament.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I refer this House to page 3, Sub-Section 3 which talks about; **'the governing body of the Commission shall be a board in which shall be vested subject to act as supervision of the Commission. The board shall consist of the Chairman and the following members: 'A' members representing the Eastern Region.'** Mr Speaker, if you go through you will observe that this Commission will comprise of membership from every region in this country and that tells us how independent this Commission would be. Mr Speaker, over the years you will observe that lawlessness has been the order of the day, people do things with impunity; we have political issues and tribal issues that brings conflict within the society. Mr Speaker, I am of the opinion that if this Bill is passed by this House, it will bring a lasting solution to the issue of conflict within this country under the leadership of His Excellency Retired Brigadier Julius Maada Bio *[Applause]*. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank the able Chief Minister for being with us this

morning to Table this Bill before Parliament. I know that he has put in a lot of efforts, hard work and wisdom working with other Ministries put such a very good document together for the betterment of Sierra Leone.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I also want to refer this House to page 4, Sub-Section 5[c] which also speaks on the independence of this Commission. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, over the years, political interference and political backstabbing has been one of the factors that ignite fight and indiscipline within society. Mr Speaker, with this Commission and with the content of this Commission if properly implemented and when implemented will bring lasting peace in our society. I want to thank Mr Speaker and also crave the indulgence of my colleagues on the other side to speedily pass this Bill for us to see that Sierra Leone is a better place for us all. I thank you very much Mr Speaker *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member for his contribution. I was actually looking for Honourable Lahai Marah's neighbour. I was really going to recognise him next. Okay, let me recognise the Honourable Member from Kono to be the last speaker for today. Honourable Lahai Marah, if you can get your neighbour to return I will be extremely indebted to you *[Laughter]*. Thank you.

HON. MUSA FOFANAH: Thank you Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am happy to lend my voice to this Bill. Mr Speaker, this Bill is a good one, but my contribution will focus on the involvement of stakeholders and Sierra Leoneans because if I may quote from the National Medium Term Plan cluster 8, target 1 says; **'the political development for national cohesion.'** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we would want every political party to involve in the planning of this Bill; the simple reason is because it will succeed more when political parties are in the centre because it is not a secret that every conflict in this country is carried out or fuelled by political parties. So if the National Medium Plan, cluster 8 has a bullet or a target that is talking about political development for national cohesion, we want to see political parties in the centre of this particular Bill because all of us can popularise the document and we can also disseminate the Bill.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want the Chief Minister to understand that eighteen [18] to twenty [20] years after the war, we have got lot of other issues that are responsible for conflict; even though when you go through the TRC they would tell you about injustice, human right violations, land issues, but we are sure that lot of other issues have emerged. Mr Speaker, if we want this Bill to succeed and to benefit this nation; a nation that we all love, a nation that we all believe and also being Members of Parliament, we have a stake in it and I think it is good as representatives, we own our constituencies politically and we have a stake, but we just want to talk about the involvement of all the sixteen [16] geographical Districts because before the Medium Term National Development plan was finally endorsed or launched by His Excellency the President Retired Brigadier Julius Maada Bio, I think the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development involved the 16 geographical Districts; stakeholders were involved, civil societies were involved and even the ordinary people were involved in the development and that was why the Medium Term Development Plan is popular right now. Mr Speaker, if we are talking about a very good Bill of this nature, I am asking the Chief Minister to make sure that before we finally enact this Bill, we would want to see a very strong collaboration among the 16 geographical Districts. Mr Speaker, I thank you very much *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member for his contribution. I think this is a convenient point for us to take an adjournment.

HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS: Mr Speaker, please before we take an adjournment I want to make a point.

THE SPEAKER: A point under what?

HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS: What is happening now in this Well *[Undertone]* that is not your responsibility to ask me. Mr Speaker, before the beginning of the debate you did say that you are going to take three Members from each side of the aisle.

THE SPEAKER: I am not compelling anybody to take part in the debate

HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS: Mr Speaker, that is exactly my point. Mr Speaker, since it is the choice of the Honourable Members on the other side of the aisle not to participate in today's debate because they are not prepared, my point is that they should be mindful of the fact that an equal opportunity would also be given to Members on both sides during the final debate of this Bill because we do not want our colleagues on the other side to say because we on this side spoke today therefore they should have more bite in the next debate of this Bill *[Interruption]*.

THE SPEAKER: That is for me to decide.

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: Mr Speaker, S.O 34.

THE SPEAKER: I do not want anybody to pre-empt anything here unless you people want to usurp my seat.

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: No Sir we cannot.

THE SPEAKER: Which I am afraid by law you are not about to do. So take your seat.

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: Thank you. Mr Speaker, I want my colleagues to read the Bill.

THE SPEAKER: I am not going to allow anyone of you to pre-empt.

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: There is no presumption; he is emphasising on the legal things that you are going to do for the House *[Undertone]* no, he is not pre-empting you, he just made a suggestion.

THE SPEAKER: I am not going to compel any Member to take the Floor if they are not willing to do so.

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: Mr Speaker, he just made a suggestion that you are going to *[Interruption]*.

HON. DICKSON ROGERS: Kotor I.B, I am not Mr Rogers; I am Honourable Dickson Momoh Rogers. Thank you.

HON. CHERNOR R. M. BAH: He is not Kotor I.B, but Honourable Ibrahim Ben Kargbo
[Laughter].

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: My Leader, you should not do that because the Honourable reacted to undertone *[Undertones]* the oldest Member of Parliament is Honourable Ibrahim Ben Kargbo.

THE SPEAKER: We shall now bring this debate on the second reading to a close for today. Honourable Minister, thank you very much, you may now take leave of us *[Applause]*. Just so we do not have a repeat of what happened today, when we resume tomorrow, it is my understanding that the Finance Act, 2021 is now in your pigeon holes so please make sure that you receive your copies before you depart from the precincts of the House and it is going to come up tomorrow.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

*[The House rose at 11:45a.m and was adjourned to Friday, 13th November, 2020
at 10a.m prompt]*

