

*OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN*

# **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**

**[HANSARD]**

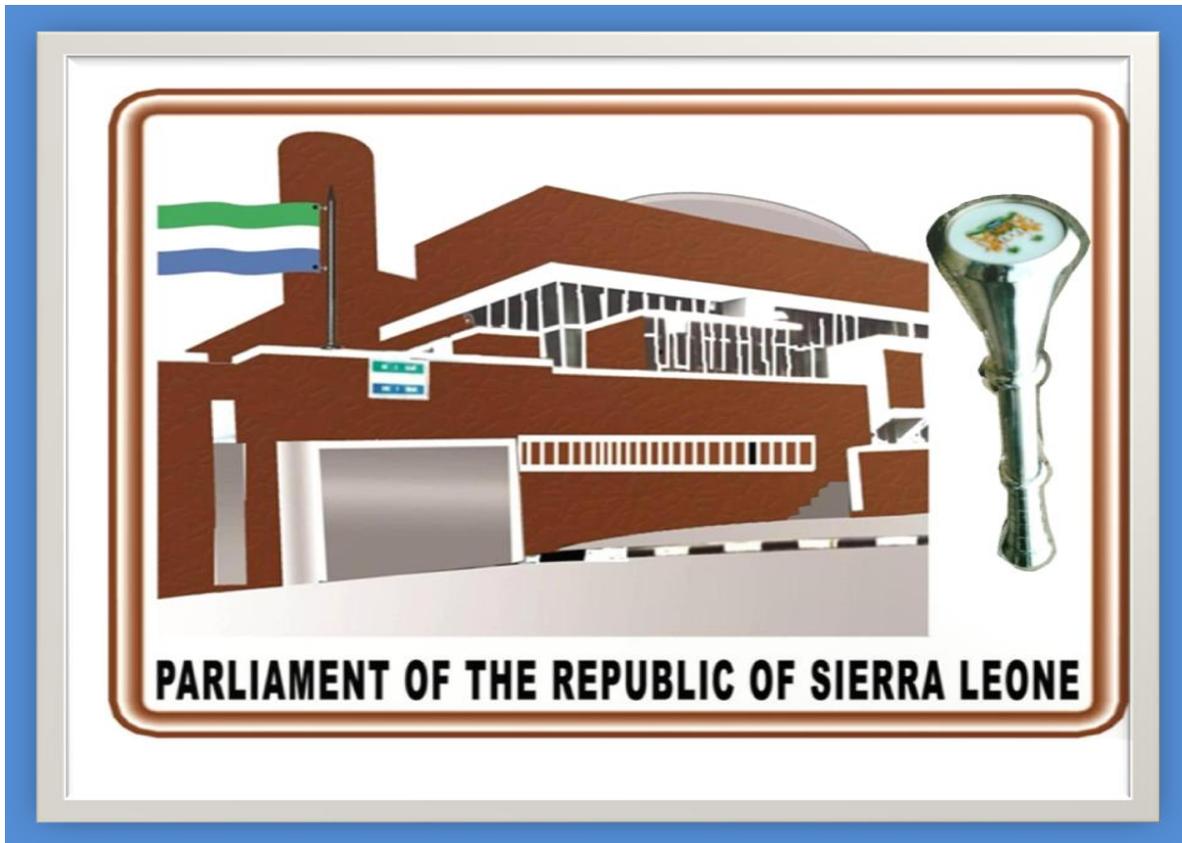
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**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT**

**FOURTH SESSION –FIRST MEETING**

**THURSDAY, 15<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY, 2022**

*SESSION – 2021/2022*



*OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN*

# **PARLIAMEN TARY DEBATES**

**[HANSARD]**

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**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT**

**VOLUME: I**

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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 on Thursday, 15<sup>th</sup> February, 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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**Thursday, 15<sup>th</sup> February, 2022.**

**I. PRAYERS**

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

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

*[The 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

**II. CORRECTION OF VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS FOR THE PARLIAMENTARY SITTING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 9<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY, 2022**

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, we go through the record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting, held on Wednesday, 9<sup>th</sup> February, 2022. As usual, we shall skip pages 1, 2, 3 and 4. We start with Page 5. Page 5? Page 6? Page 7? If there is no correction or amendment, can someone move for the adoption of the record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting, held on Wednesday, 9<sup>th</sup> February, 2022 as presented?

**HON. JOSEPH WILLIAMS-LAMIN:** I so move, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Any seconder?

**HON. ISHMAIL S. SANDY:** I so second, Mr Speaker.

*[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]*

*[Record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting, held on Wednesday, 9<sup>th</sup> February, 2022 has been adopted as presented]*

**III. ANNOUNCEMENT BY MR SPEAKER:**

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, I do not have any announcements to make. Therefore, let us proceed.

**IV. PAPERS LAID**

THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT AND AVIATION

**MR KABINEH KALLON** *[Minister of Transport and Aviation]:* Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, with your leave, I beg to lay on the Table of this Honourable House the following papers:

[A] Air Services Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone and the Government of the State of Kuwait.

[B] Air Transport Agreement between Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone.

[C] Agreement between the Government of the State of Qatar and the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone for Air Services.

[D] Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone and the Government of the State of Qatar Relating to the Operations of Air Transportation.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much Mr Minister you can go.

**V. BILL:**

THE PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERING REGULATORY COUNCIL, ACT, 2021

INTRODUCTION AND FIRST READING

THE MINISTER OF WORKS AND PUBLIC ASSETS

**MR PETER BAYUKU KONTEH** [*Minister of Works and Public Assets*]: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I move that the Bill entitled: "The Professional Engineering Regulatory Council Act, 2021" be read the first time.

*[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed]*

*[The Bill entitled, 'the Professional Engineering Regulatory Council Act, 2021' has been read the first time]*

[SECOND READING]

**MR PETER BAYUKU KONTEH:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I move that the Bill entitled, 'the Professional Engineering Regulatory Council Act, 2021' be read the second time. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the proposal seeks to amend the existing legislation in order to strengthen the engineering profession and more specifically the Professional Engineers Registration Council to ensure greater impact in the country's infrastructural development and increased involvement in national development. This includes, providing technical oversight and backstopping in governments massive investment on roads and other infrastructure sub-sectors. The Professional Engineering

Regulation Council [PERC] has clear objectives in improving the profession, including controlling the practice of engineering, to prescribe or approve courses of study and the conduct and standards of qualifying examinations for registration of any person as a registered professional under the Act, and to maintain and publish a register of professional engineers annually. Efforts by the PER over the years to improve the professional standards have not yielded much effort because the 1990 Act does not adequately provide the authority to address issues and challenges that are relevant to the country.

**Strategic relevance and urgency:** Amending the Act will empower PERC to support government effort towards efficient utilisation of scarce resources and development by ensuring that value for money is achieved in the infrastructural projects. It will facilitate increased participation of local firms in infrastructural and works contract undertaken by foreign companies in line with the Local Content Act. PERC will also enhance supportive services that are integral to maintaining international standards in terms of construction and training educational institutions. There will be appropriate protection of the public which will be of the highest priority for PERC, particularly land surveyors and geologists in exercising licensing regulatory and disciplinary functions. This will lead to increased public trust and confidence in the public service delivery systems.

**Expected benefits and target beneficiaries:** The government will significantly benefit from the revised legislation as it will ensure that quality standards are met on all infrastructural projects, thereby reducing the high public expenditure on works, maintenance projects, the heavy maintenance cost for poor quality constructions that is on roads, buildings, service rendering will be saved and used in other areas or sectors. Furthermore, it will increase participation of local contractors in the infrastructure sector. Foreign firms will not only benefit from healthy competition from local firms, but also from having quality professionals to augment and provide local project management for their contracts. Government may wish to have allowed PERC to monitor and supervise construction of roads, buildings and avoid the payment of exorbitant fees for experts. There will be immense economic benefits from the creation

of jobs, opportunities, trainings, education and value for money. It is quite evident that a lot of construction companies and training institutions are not following standards and procedures and that the country lacks effective regulatory mechanisms or bodies to effectively and efficiently monitor and supervise work done and service rendered.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the proposed regulation will not only put mechanisms in place, but also ensure compliance with established standards. The amendment to the 1990 Act is in line with best practice, as defined by the Federation of Africa Engineering Organisation [FAEO]. For instance, the change of the nomenclature follows best practice from Nigeria, which now has the Council for Regulation of Engineering. The proposed Act will be drafted and implemented in a coordinated manner with relevant MDAs and other stakeholders. The proposed amendment will be drafted by the Law Officers Department in collaboration with the Ministry of Works and Public Assets, and in consultation with relevant stakeholders.

**Implementation risk and Monitoring:** Engineers have been clamouring for improved standards in the profession and we support the Ministry of Works and Public Assets and other stakeholders to ensure effective operationalisation of the reviewed Act. There are other relevant stakeholders, such as the universities and they are also in support of the improved standards of learning in engineering and related fields of studies, external consultations and communication. The amended Act and the new regulation/standards will be conveyed to sector operators, as well as to the general public through officials and public media channels. Public sensitisation will be undertaken nationwide in line with the Ministry`s communication strategy.

With those few words, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I move that the Bill entitled `the Professional Engineering Regulatory Council Act, 2021 be read the second time.

*[Question Proposed]*

**HON: DR MARK M. KALOKOH:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, for giving me this opportunity. I also want to thank you for the correction you made this morning that the

title for ministers is Mr Minister and not Honourable Minister. You are only considered as an Honourable Member of this House after being elected as one.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, two documents have been presented to us this morning, but it will be good for this House to follow due processes and procedures. I wonder how thorough we will vet those documents. In my opinion, it will be difficult, but as a Parliament, we would want to ensure that the laws we make serve the interest of the people and stand the test. I have gone through the Parent Act of 1990 and the proposed 2021 Bill, and I noticed some differences though they are not harmful. I want the Minister and the Draftsman to take note. I am sure this House will definitely commit this Bill to the Legislative Committee for further scrutiny.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will take you to the Memorandum of Object and Reason, and also the Miscellaneous. The question I would want to ask is that, are we repealing the Parent Act or amending it? I am asking because the Memorandum of Object and Reason did not state that at all and it has to be made very clear as to what we are supposed to do. I am sure if we want to amend the 1990 Act, then it should be inserted in the Act, instead of saying to make provision to amend certain provisions. And if that aspect is there, please take us where it is inserted, but if we are going to repeal, it has to be included in the title and even the Memorandum of Object and Reason, so that we forget about the 1990 Act. I did not see anything mentioned about amendment or repealing the existing Act. So, I want a clear picture to be given to us by the Minister because we want to know. I thank you, Mr Speaker.

**HON. JOSEPH WILLIAMS-LAMIN:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Bill we have this morning is the Professional Engineering Regulatory Council Act, 2021. When I saw it, I felt good and I even thought that the professional engineers are up to task because when we talk about a nation's development, we talk about human capital and structural development. We have engineers and they are everywhere in this country. We also have them in this Well of Parliament. In fact, this Well of Parliament was designed and constructed by professional engineers, although it is the 20<sup>th</sup> Century approach which is not energy

efficient. If we are to refurbish or renovate this Well, looking at today's standards, we have to go back to the drawing board to make sure that it is energy efficient. I want to restate here that I really felt good when I saw the Act because there are many efforts in engineering across the country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have advertisement towers across this country. If you go to Masiaka, you will see a collapsed engineering tower and there is one in Bo. Most of the engineering towers are collapsing due to the substandard materials they are using. How many millimetre metals are they using to construct the towers? Are they just constructing them for engineering purposes or for commercial reasons? Are we doing it for money making or for quality? Are the engineers particular about the quality of these products? I have an engineer whom I have worked with for the past twenty-seven years in Freetown. He is from one of the institutes in Sierra Leone, but very professional and extremely good. When I talk about doors, I am not talking about one millimetre or 1.5 millimetres. We are talking about 2 millimetres thickness and that door can stand the test of time.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, with your leave, Page 1, Part 3, under the functions of the Council reads: "The Council shall be responsible to regulate the Professional Engineers and the practice of engineering in Sierra Leone." Part 6[3][e] says 'to determine and to regulate the standard of practice, the competence, the conduct and ethics of registered professional engineers and to monitor the compliance thereto.' You would agree with me that this is very important. You would recall that buildings collapsed in Israel and Nigeria during marriage ceremonies due to poor engineering works and poor practices. We should have engineering clerks to monitor the quality of materials and work done, so that we will have buildings that can stand the test of time.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we now have a situation in this country where people are given building permits without consulting any engineer or without taking soil sample to determine the type of structure to be erected on that land. This is why some buildings collapse. In construction, there is what is known as differential settlement, which occurs as a result of the non-uniform movement of the underlying soils and this

type of settlement can result in cracking to the foundation. In other words, if a structure is erected on unsettled soils, but later settle after construction, the building will sustain some cracks; and if you are not well enforced, the building will eventually collapse and lives and property will be lost.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to state here that this particular Minister deserves the Honourable Minister title because he was once an Honourable Member of this House. We have to protect this title because it should not be given to ordinary people. It is legitimate for you to be called Honourable Minister because you were an Honourable Member of this House. I was asking the type of professional engineers we are talking about. Are we talking about structural, mechanical or civil engineers? Well, every engineer should be duly registered. You cannot come overnight and pollute the profession. You would agree me with that those who are not professionals only come to the profession to make money. They are not doing the things that can stand the test of time, but I am sure this Bill will address some of these lapses.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I call on my colleagues to do the needful to this document. Nothing has been achieved in the last thirty years, but is high time we do something for the future of this country. We have to do something remarkable, so that we can be part of history. It is never too late to go back to the drawing board and do some amendments where necessary. We are fighting towards ensuring that our buildings can stand the test of time. If you go around the advertisement towers as a layman, you will feel fine and have peace of mind, but sometimes when those with engineering backgrounds go to those places, they are scared and they will even say this particular structure will collapse in the not-too-distant future. There was a fuel station at Sanders Street I think it is under demolition now. I have been questioning the engineering works carried out.

On that note, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I thank you very much for giving me this opportunity. There is no mistake made in appointing the Minister to this position. I am sure the needful will be done on this document. I thank you

**HON. ABDUL K. KARGBO:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when mistakes are made in other professions, the effects are not too fatal. If an accountant makes a mistake in the calculations, the institution will lose money. If any other profession makes a mistake, they will lose money, but when an engineer makes a mistake, you will not only lose money; you will lose lives as well. So, the engineering profession is very sacred and technical. Nobody can jump from his or her cacao garden today and becomes an engineer tomorrow; you have to go through trainings. There are calculations you have to make as an engineer and you have to be precise and accurate in your calculation before you can be a professional engineer. That is why I have never seen an engineer that is not intelligent because when he or she makes a mistake, it costs a lot.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, before my first degree in engineering, I read Ordinary National Diploma [OND] and Higher National Diploma [HND] in Electrical and Electronic Engineering. One of the assignments I had as a student was to investigate the causes of fire incidents in Freetown. Mr Speaker, in Electrical Engineering, you should not just connect or electrify the house. You have to ask about the materials or equipment used in the building and it is only when that is done you develop a whole calculation cable and cable selection, as it is called in engineering. You cannot just choose the cable size without doing the calculation.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I have come to the realisation that most of the houses in Freetown were built during the colonial era and the size of the cables they were using were very small because they were only using fans and radios. However, as technology advances or as modernisation developed, people tend to increase the appliances they use. Many homes are now using air conditioners, water heaters, microwaves, laundering machines and many more. Owing to the increase in the wattage in our homes, there has to be a corresponding calculation of the cable sizes, so as to ensure that the cables can carry the load.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I learnt that the quack engineers were not doing any calculations. They were only connecting the cables; and at the end of the day, the

capacity of the cable was too low to carry the load in the house. If you connect an electric iron to an extension, you would realise that the extension cable will melt because the size of the cable is too small to carry the load. This is what is known as cable and cable selection. Nobody knows this if he/she is not a trained and qualified engineer. Therefore, when houses get burnt, people tend to believe that somebody somewhere was using a candle or naked wire. In most times, that could not be the case, but an engineering blunder. It is as a result of lack of proper calculation. This is a profession where someone can come from the provinces today and begins to work as an apprentice with a quack engineer; and after one or two years, this person from the provinces becomes an engineer and begins to electrify houses. This is not a good practice and it is making the professional engineer who knows the calculation almost insignificant. The effect is so grave and it has to be stopped.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Section 18 of this Bill states: **“A registered professional engineer shall not practice as a professional engineer or establish or operate an engineering institution in Sierra Leone unless on the authority of the practicing certificate issued by the Council for that purpose.”**

This is simply saying that it is a crime for those attempting to practice engineering without a certificate issued by the Council. This particular provision protects the engineering infrastructure of this nation and creates a safe environment. For you to see a civil engineer constructing a building, he/she must have done lots of calculations. They have what is known as quantity survey; a situation wherein you have to calculate the strength of the beams and know exactly the positions of the pillar points.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, engineering is not a guess work. You would differentiate a quack engineer from a trained and qualified engineer by the certificate they present. This is another way of informing the public that when you have a contract, but the engineer fails to produce a certificate issued by this Council, then you should not award the contract to that individual. Therefore, it is a blessing that our profession is now secured and protected. We do not want a Jack and Jane to call

him/herself an engineer without going through the academic training to become an engineer.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, what is very serious about engineering is the fact that engineers in Sierra Leone are living a very poor life. I can say that with alacrity because I have been an engineer. When I was employed in a multinational company, I was been supervised by somebody with an ordinary certificate, while I was a degree holder in engineering. My supervisor only had a certificate. The only difference between the person and I was that, he was a foreigner and I am Sierra Leonean. So Sierra Leonean engineers are being subjected to unqualified foreign experts, and they received very small salaries compared to what the foreigners are receiving. The fellow that was supervising me was from Ireland. He did not know what I knew in engineering. So, when there were problems, he had to call and confine in me for solutions. He was receiving fat salary whilst I was doing the work. This is what is happening with our engineers in this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the salaries of the young engineers in this country are appalling unregulated. I know some engineers who are graduates from Fourah Bay College whose monthly salaries are around **Le1, 500,000** or below. So, this Council should ensure that our engineers live a better life. If you are invited for Honours class at Fourah Bay College, you have no alternative but to spend an additional year and thus pay for your cleverness. Mr Speaker, even though engineering is the only course students spend five years at Fourah Bay College, but when you graduate with a law student, the lawyer will feed the engineer. I see most of my colleagues who graduated from Fourah Bay College perambulating on the streets of Freetown. They are paid meagre salaries. So, I want the Council to pay keen attention to that and seek the interest of engineers, especially the local engineers.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want the Council to ensure that government contracts are awarded to Local Engineering Firms. This is the only way we can capacitate the young engineers and protect the profession. I am happy for this document and this House should expeditiously pass it into law. You would agree with

me that Engineering is a respectable profession. We have engineers in this country who are exceptionally good. Please, do not underestimate engineers who have graduated from FBC years back and later went to other countries to do their mater degrees and came back to Sierra Leone to practice. They are very good, but most times we leave them for foreign engineers. This is demeaning to the profession. To me, it is like discarding our engineers.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we also have to develop the curriculum of the tertiary institutions, especially FBC. There is no institution in Sierra Leone that offers engineering courses at master degree level. You must travel out of this country to read your Maters in Engineering. I am sure reviewing the universities curriculum for our engineers will be laudable. We should have engineers doing their Masters courses in Sierra Leone.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there are times engineers perform exceptionally good, but because of certain circumstances, such as age and ill-health, that engineer will tend to underperform, and deteriorate emotionally and psychologically. I am happy that an engineer can now be disqualified if he/she involves in criminal offences or physically unable to perform his/her duties. You will be removed and have your certificate withdrawn. This is similar to the medical field, where your licence will be seized if found wanting. The same thing is happening in the legal profession, where defaulters are prevented from practicing. I want to believe that the engineering field is another sacred and professional area where defaulters and those who have lost their sound mind should be deregistered.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, even firms that will be operating within our territory, they must go through this Council before they are allowed to operate. Mr Speaker, Clause 212 says: **"An engineering firm, primal class and class one construction company or institution engaged in engineering services, whether local or foreign, shall be verified and registered by the Council before registration or renewal of certification with the Ministry."** There are some foreign companies that do not know anything about engineering, but will want to bring along their

relatives to practice engineering. I am sure this Council will ensure effective monitoring by asking for certificates and other background checks in order to ascertain their qualifications. I am certain this is one of the laws that will do this Parliament and the nation good. This will also make the engineers proud to be part of this profession.

With those few words, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I look forward to the day this Bill will become law. I thank you for this opportunity.

**HON. ISHMAIL S. SANDY:** I want to thank the Speaker for granting me this opportunity. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the essentiality of reviewing or amending and repealing this particular Bill before needs some acclamation. I see engineers as the machinery of society because they mechanise society as they design, build, and maintain the physical fabrics of society. The engineering profession is appalling nowadays. We see all Jack and Jane claiming to be engineers. You would agree with me that everybody wants to become contractor. In fact, everybody is clamouring for government contracts, but most of these contractors are not qualified and the construction companies are without qualified engineers. This particular aspect should be captured as well. I thank God because I am the Deputy Chairman of the Legislative Committee. It is now provided that those wanting to register construction companies must have registered engineers. We should encourage our engineers to become contractors.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if you cannot contract a social scientist to be medical practitioner or a surgeon specialist, why are you contracting other people to do construction? We have instances wherein contractors have been given contracts and these contracts are poorly done because they did not have the necessary support or the appropriate personnel. We are not saying you cannot obtain construction licence, but do it with the support of a qualified engineer. One day, we met somebody doing road construction, we asked for engineer, but nowhere to be found. As my colleague was saying, I have seen a construction company with a purported engineer who had just a certificate supervising local engineers with master's degree. This is demeaning and must be stopped. Most of the so called international engineers are merely certificate

holders. Mr Speaker, some of these things should be captured in this Bill if we want to encourage our local engineers. This will enable them contribute to the physical or structural development of this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when you say it to the dog, you should also say it to the bone. I want to inform the regulators of this profession that today, there are people graduating from institutions who are purporting to have read engineering, but what they have read is limited to theory and not the practical aspect. If you give them a kilometre road to design and construct, you will have poor or substandard work done. This is because the training he/she went through was only limited in the classroom and not the practical.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if we want to do justice to this profession and to the society at large, like my colleague was saying, we need a curriculum review. Again, whosoever they are in the association should continue the coaching and mentorship. I admire the legal profession a lot because after you have been called to the bar, you go for pupillage before your final registration. I do not think whether that is applicable in the engineering profession. Sometimes young Lawyers are under the Luminaries, so that they can learn more about the profession. I do not think this is applicable in the engineering field because young engineers are littered all over the place. This is a modernisation era and we must try very hard to meet international standards. It is good to have more engineers, but let the engineers do the needful, so that society will support them and will be proud of them.

With these few words, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to assure the Minister that we will do the necessary things, so that at the end of the day we will help him to come out with a very good working mechanism that will enhance the operation of this profession. I thank you.

**HON. MUSTAPHA M. SELLU:** Thank you, Mr Speaker for giving me this opportunity to take part in this debate. I just want to know from the Ministry and the officials if the engineers themselves are here this morning to witness these proceedings. This is because we are deliberating a document that has to do with their profession. Therefore,

I would have loved to see them here. If you are doing a work for people, let them know that this is what is going on. I am just eager to know if the engineers are here to listen to these deliberations.

Mr Speaker, honourable Members, like the Honourable from Portloko said when some professions make mistakes they lose money; when medical doctors make mistake, we lose lives. I am saying that when other professions make mistakes, the mistakes are hardly seen, but when an engineer does the same mistakes, they are visible because you can see the structures.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want us to look at some other aspects of engineering because we have water engineers, civil engineers, mechanical engineers, etc. You would agree with me that civil engineers are trained and qualified in construction of buildings. Again, most of our houses are not built by trained and qualified engineers from Fourah Bay College or other tertiary institutions, but are built by trained men in this country who have not been able to go to the universities to learn this profession. However, they are very technical and hard working in terms of engineering work. Most of our structures in this country are constructed by these trained local engineers. They do not have universities degrees in engineering, but they are up to the task. They are doing very well and some are doing better than those from the universities.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I can still remember when the University Act of 2020 was brought to this House and there was a particular section that has to do with those who are qualified, but are trained in other fields. However when they enter tertiary institutions, they have to take tests and if they pass the exam, they will be awarded certificates because of their outstanding performance. For example, we have people who are trained in constructing houses, but they are not graduates. In fact, some of them can construct any type of building, but they neither have degrees nor certificates in engineering. Some university students usually go to these local contractors for practical training and knowledge. Therefore, we should not lose sight of that because it is in the University Act. There are people who have trained for the past fifteen to

twenty years, but some have now enrolled in the training centres just to empower themselves.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, water engineering is also suffering. We have institutions that deal with water and sanitation hygiene, but most of the civil engineers have not got the necessary training in water engineering. We do not have qualified people from FBC who can handle this area though they are trained, but do not have the qualification. I want the Ministry to be mindful of these areas, so that by the time we go to the Committee Stage, we can be able to see how we can factor these areas.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Section 18 says: **“A person shall not be qualified to practice as professional engineer or establish or operate an engineering institution in Sierra Leone unless the person holds such qualification and has completed such practical training and for such period as maybe prescribed by the Council.”** As I was saying, we have to be specific. The question is what will be the duration of practice for somebody to be considered as trained and qualified. Well, the Council may determine, but we have to be specific. It has to be something that we specify. Is it five years or ten years or after fifteen years? Is it just after graduation or after one year of graduation? We have to be very clear, Mr Minister.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if we go to the Memorandum of Object and Reason, it is very clear that the function of the Council is to regulate the profession. However, I am still worried about the regulatory aspect because when you regulate a particular profession, there are different categories of people that fall within that bracket. We are talking about engineers, but the question is what type of engineers are we talking about? We have different categories of engineers that make up this profession. We should also have to look at those trained ones who are not from the universities or tertiary institutions. Though not qualified, but they are trained engineers and can perform the practical aspect of the job. We all know that engineering is about practicality.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, my dad had a plan and the beam was like 20 millimetre thick. The top beam was about 16mm and the bottom one was 12mm. A civil

engineer was supervising that job and instead of the Y16 is installed at the top and Y12 at the bottom, he interchanged that particular gridline or beam connection. It was one of the four men who was not a graduate that picked that up and informed the engineer about the mistake. I am just emphasising this because there are people with vast knowledge and experience in construction, but they are not qualified. You would agree with me that most of the structures we are seeing in this country are being constructed by these trained, but unqualified people. So, we should not lose sight of them at all.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in the medical profession, if you want to establish a Pharmacy, a qualified and registered Pharmacist must be assigned to that Pharmacy. It is a law in this country and I also want that to be replicated in the engineering profession. The Council should ensure that one or two qualified engineers are assigned to every construction firm in this country. It must be on paper that before a construction firm renews its license, you must have trained and qualified engineer[s] as a way of giving legitimacy to the process.

With those few words, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank the Deputy Minister of Works and the technical team for this Bill. We are hopeful that by the time we get to the next stage, we would have done justice to same. I thank you very much.

**HON. EMILIA L. TONGI:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have passed into law lots of Bills in this wonderful House of Parliament. I went to Morocco some time ago and a friend said: **"Hey Honourable, I want to come to Sierra Leone; there are beautiful policies there."** We have beautiful policies in this country, but they are not implemented and it is high time we started the implementation of these laws.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to inform the Honourable Minister that this is a beautiful idea, but he has to ensure that the provisions in this Bill are implemented to the letter. Today, cacao farmers are building their own houses. The structure of our renowned footballer at the beach, Mohamed Kallon, has been abandoned simply because the engineers were not efficient enough to know what to do before they started. If you pass by Hill Cut Road, you will see a collapsed building and the same

thing happened in Bo. What we need to do in this country is to create an institution where we have engineers to be supervising construction works. Freetown is expanding everyday with beautiful structures built by local engineers. They learnt the practical aspect of the job, but they do not know the weight of the blocks. They are only interested in the money. I am sure every construction firm should have a qualified engineer and the licence has to be stamped by the engineer. We have lots of engineers in this country who have graduated from Fourah Bay College. They are everywhere doing nothing. So, we have to make sure that the laws, rules and regulations are implemented. We have people in this country with degrees, but are being paid **Le1,500,000**. We have to make a positive change or a difference in this country. We have lost many lives and property due to carelessness. We have not done much as a nation in terms of implementing the laws that we make. I thank you, Mr Speaker.

**HON. PAUL S. SAM:** Thank you Mr Speaker for this opportunity. This Bill is a fine Bill which will help Sierra Leone and the engineering profession. This means those who actually become engineers will have a regulatory body that will manage the affairs of their activities across the country. We have buildings in this country that are over twenty to thirty years old, but they are still strong. When we were going on oversight to Bo yesterday, we saw a collapsed building and we were told that a graduate in engineering from FBC was involved in the construction of that house. If we have a regulatory body, we are bound to believe that the right thing will be done. Of course, I have not seen any provision in this Act that talks about registration of all engineers in this country. If an engineer fails to register with the Council, they should not practice.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the composition of the Council is drawn from different Ministries, such as the Ministry of Works, Ministry of Information, Ministry of Transport and Aviation, etc. Some mining companies have foreign engineers, but they are not registered with any Council and most of the work they did or they are doing are being aided by our local engineers in this country. This Council should also begin to think about registering foreign engineers, so that when they come to work in any part of the country, whether in mining or road construction, they are certified by this

Council. This will enable us to know the kind of work and the engineering activities they will be doing.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in most of the mining companies, experts from other countries are paid thousands of Dollars. In fact, they are only given incentives here, whilst chunks of their salaries are paid in their home countries. The activities of most of these so called experts are nothing to write home about. Therefore, this Council will do this country good as a regulatory body. Construction companies or agencies should also contact our local engineers. This aspect is not captured in this Bill, but I am sure when this Bill is committed to Legislative Committee, these are the areas we should look at critically.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, somebody was saying that our local contractors should not be allowed to practice. I want to state here that not everybody in this country is educated. Some are educated, but some are not educated. Some only stopped at JSS, while others stopped at SSS levels. Some went as far as technical vocational institutions. We should also encourage these categories of people to practice engineering. We should not only limit it to graduates from FBC. If we do that, then we are doing disservice to others.

*[Suspension of S.O. 5[2] being 12:00 noon]*

**HON. PAUL S. SAM:** Honourable Mustapha Sellu said that if the local contractors failed to register, they should not be allowed to practice. We should not discourage them because they are also part of the learning process. The Government has established different vocational institutions across the country and those institutions are also part of the system. The only thing they need to do is to regulate the activities of local contractors and the engineers from FBC or Milton Margai.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, somebody spoke about poor mixture. This is because if you do not have the correct mixture, it is a disaster. In those days, after the completion of a building, local engineers would use their machines to test the viability of that particular building, but it is not happening nowadays. There are buildings

everywhere, but there is no mechanism in place to test the viability of those structures. It has to be stated in this Bill. I want to encourage the Minister to ensure that justice is done before the Bill is presented to the Legislative Committee. We should have the necessary equipment to test the viability of those buildings and bridges. There is going to be strong collaboration between the Council engineers and those in the Ministry. You would agree with me that sometimes when engineers go to inspect buildings or bridges, they will stand on top of the bridge and later present a report that is not reflective of the real situation. They will just certify that the building is good, but as time goes on, you start seeing problems. The question is where were the engineers who certified the bridges and buildings were?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we should have this Council decentralised in the district headquarter towns. This is because if a person cannot move from Kono or Kailahun to come and register in Freetown, he/she should be able to do so in his/her district. Every district should have an office with the necessary equipment to test the buildings, bridges and other construction works. Again, this is also a matter of conscience and honesty of our people in this country. I am saying this because people are sometimes bribed to just you just approve the building or bridge. The **10%** that normally remains with the Ministries and Local Councils is given to the contractor after work completion and after the engineers would have certified the work. However, the building or bridge tends to collapse because of poor work. You would agree with me that most of the bridges and culverts collapsed after being approved by the engineers. So, this Bill should address some of these areas and the Local Councils and other MDAs engineers should be regulated by this Council, so that at the end of the day value for money is achieved. The Bill is good, but certain aspects should be looked into. I want to believe that no Member of Parliament here will go against such a Bill because it will help the people of this country greatly. I thank you very much.

**HON. EMERSON S. LAMINA:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker Honourable Members, this is not a controversial Bill and because it is non-controversial, we will only encourage those who are piloting it to provide enough sensitisation. They

should also encourage civil societies interested in engineering to popularise this Bill for those who want to be engineers. Mr Speaker, my special admiration is on Clause 28, the lines between for Professional Engineers and Non-Engineers. America is becoming powerful because it is a litigious country; i.e., you hardly see people who are not lawyers heading institutions. This is why they are becoming powerful every day.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, what this Bill does with special reference to Clause 28 is that if you are not a Lawyer, you cannot sign a conveyance at all. You cannot, so also the engineers. I am making the distinction here, Mr Speaker. If you are a non-registered professional engineer, you cannot go around doing engineering work. This is also similar to the teachers because those who read education at Njala University and other educational institutions are paid more than those reading humanity at Fourah Bay College. I commend those championing this Bill, but I am also aware of the fact that we still have much to do. I thank you very much.

**HON. CHERNOR R. M. BAH** [*Leader of the Opposition*]: Mr Speaker, with your permission, whilst commending all those who have debated since this morning, we want to crave your indulgence having made some consultations with the Acting Leader of Government Business, we apply S.O.37 to suspend the debate to a date that we may so desire. This is my Motion, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Any seconder?

**HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE:** Mr Speaker, I so second.

*[Question Proposed Put an Agreed]*

*[Motion by the Leader of the Opposition has been carried]*

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, any announcement?

**HON. BSHIRU SILIKIE:** Mr Speaker, this is to inform members of the Committee on Appointment and the Public Service that we have a meeting tomorrow at 2:00 p.m. I also want to inform the general membership that we will be discussing two documents

from the bank of Sierra Leone tomorrow in Committee Room 1 at 10:00 a.m. I thank you.

**HON. MOHAMED B. SHAW:** Mr Speaker, some Members on the other side raised an issue relating to the high prices of cement and iron rod, even though we have deducted **10%** of the total tax the importers were supposed to pay. The prices are still the same despite the deduction we have made. In the recent video released by the Minister and his Deputy, they went to some shops and other warehouses, asking the owners to attend the meeting that they were summoned. The people refused to attend. My concern in that very video was that, the Minister of Trade made reference to a particular importer that had reduced the cost of cement from NLe 95 to NLe 86. If you look at the tax deducted, you will find out that it does not address the problem at all. Mr Speaker, being a representative of the people, we have poor people in rural areas. If we had deducted **10%** out of the **20%** tax they were paying, that should have reflected on the cost of cement and iron rod. It should not be NLe 86. I want you to use your good office to ensure that the deduction we approved here reflects the prices in the markets. Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** I think we spoke about this the last time we met and the chairperson for the Committee on Trade was supposed to have presented a report to this house. I think the report will be ready next week Thursday.

**HON. IBRAHIM KARAMA:** Thank you for granting me this opportunity. I want to talk about an issue that is seriously affecting my people. I want to first of all refer this House to Section 5 [2b] of the 1991 Constitution. With your leave, it says: **"The security, peace and welfare of the people of Sierra Leone shall be the primary purpose and responsibility of government and to this end it shall be the duty of the Armed forces, the police, public officers and all security agents to protect and safeguard the people of Sierra Leone."** Contrary to this provision, there are soldiers all over my chieftom, intimidating and beating my people. They are also forcefully taking away their property, such as power saw machines, Benny seeds, mobile phones, motorbikes. When I heard this information, I had to call some people,

especially the paramount chiefs for confirmation. I also called the Minister of Environment, hoping that he had knowledge of these soldiers. He is in charge of the wildlife conservation parks and he confirmed that the soldiers were supposed to be there, but expressed dissatisfaction over their conduct. On a conference call with the Minister of Defence, he [the Minister of Environment] explained to him [the Minister of Defence] the activities of the soldiers within the chieftdom. He said that nothing of such happened. He said the information was untrue, but I told him that he was not there. Even though I was not there, but I was told by a number of people, including the paramount chiefs.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, some of my people have moved to the border between Sierra Leone and Guinea for safety. I have been told that they are now in the hands of the soldiers. I am appealing to your good office for swift interventions, so that we get this problem resolved and have my people back to their villages. I thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Leader of Government Business, is the Chairman of Defence around?

**HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE:** He is supposed to be here.

**THE SPEAKER:** Please call him.

**HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE:** Mr Speaker, this is a serious issue. The Minister of Defence told the Honourable Member that what the people reported to him was not correct. Well, I want the Honourable Member to bring more pieces of evidence and we will inform the Defence Committee to investigate the matter.

**THE SPEAKER:** Let us have the Defence Committee to intervene without further delay.

**HON. IBRAHIM A. KAMARA:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I think we have heard from the Honourable Member. We will follow-up on this issue. We will definitely do that immediately.

**THE SPEAKER:** I want to know when the report of your investigation will be submitted.

**HON. IBRAHIM A. KAMARA:** Next week Tuesday, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** That is too short Honourable Member. We give you two weeks.

**HON. IBRAHIM A. KAMARA:** Two weeks is okay.

**THE SPEAKER:** Please inform your Chairman about this development. You have to summon a meeting and take the necessary action.

**HON. IBRAHIM A. KAMARA:** We will do that as soon as possible.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much. Honourable Members, let us treat this issue with the utmost seriousness.

**HON. HASSAN A. SESAY:** Mr Speaker, I want to draw the attention of this house to a very important issue that we have never addressed or attempted to address. We should not neglect it because it is very important for us as law makers. Mr Speaker, we are under the 1991 Republican Constitution of Sierra Leone. We attained independence in 1961, but we are still part of the Commonwealth of Nations under the United Kingdom. We attained full sovereignty in 1971, but the issue of having a Republic is now being put in the dust bin of history. We are not observing a Republic anniversary in this country anymore. We had independence in 1961 and we respect that, but we had Republic on the 19<sup>th</sup> April, 1971. Mr Speaker, even in schools, not all students know when we had a Republic in this country. You would agree with me that only few students know about this.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, 1971 was the period we had real sovereignty. I want us to give consideration to this particular issue as law makers. We have to discuss it because it is contradicting for us to operate the Republican Constitution of 1991, but fail to observe the Republican anniversary in this country. We should add a holiday to our calendar in recognition of this. We have to pay attention to this because we are operating on the Republican Constitution. We are not observing a Republican holiday in this country. No matter what, no matter when, we must pay attention to that. I thank you, Mr Speaker.

**ADJOURNMENT**

*[The House rose at 12:20 p.m. and was adjourned to Thursday, 17<sup>th</sup> February, 2022 at  
10:00 a.m.]*