

OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

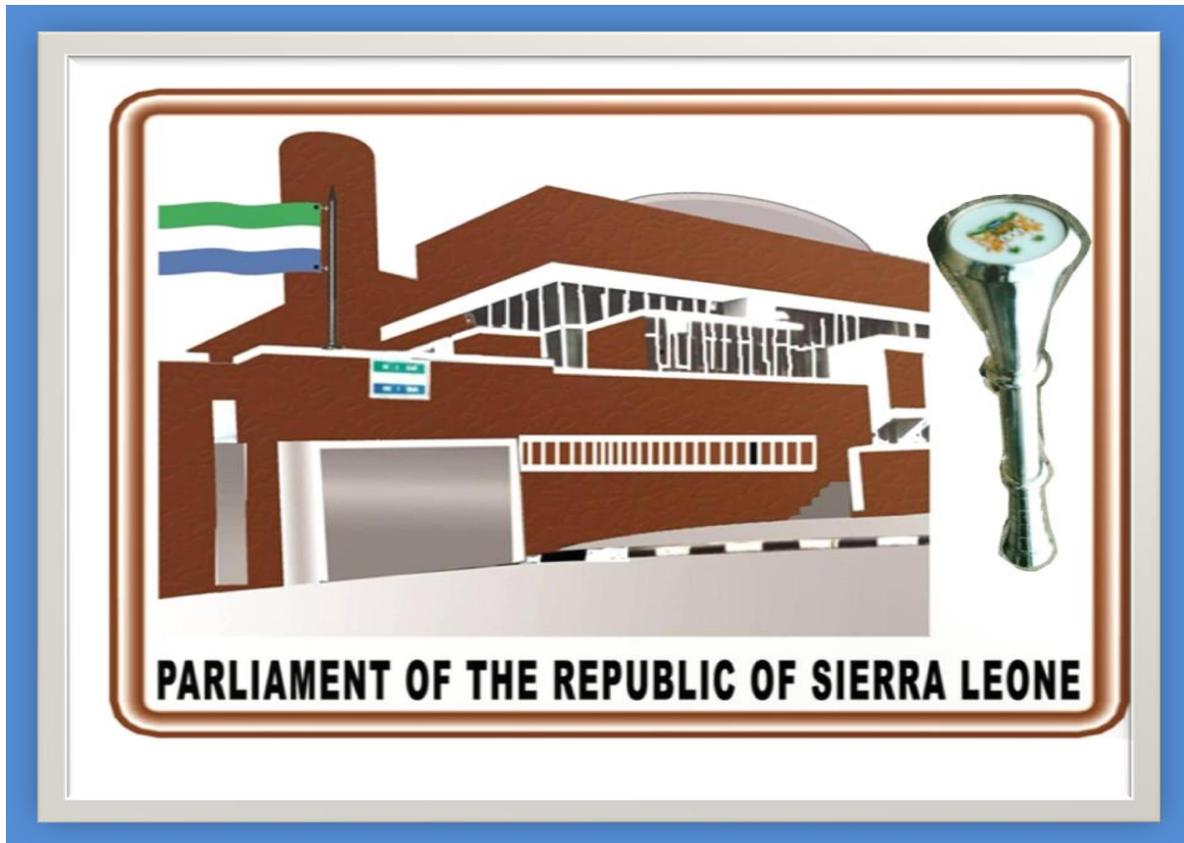
(HANSARD)

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

SECOND SESSION-SECOND MEETING

TUESDAY, 11TH FEBRUARY, 2014

SESSION – 2013/2014



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PARLIAMEN TARY DEBATES

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Second Meeting of the Second Session of the Fourth Parliament
Of the Second Republic of Sierra Leone.

Proceedings of the Sitting of the House
Held on Tuesday, 11th February, 2014.

CONTENTS:

I. PRAYER

II. BILL

THE PETROLEUM REGULATORY AGENCY ACT, 2013

INTRODUCTION AND FIRST READING

THE MINISTER OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY

III. PARLIAMENTARY BRIEFING:

THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
ON THE FOLLOWING:

- (a) THE STATE OF THE WEST AFRICAN SENIOR SCHOOL CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION (WASSCE)
- (b) TEACHERS'S REPLACEMENT AND APPROVALS
- (c) ANY OTHER RELATED MATTER



THE CHAMBER OF PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE

Official Hansard Report of the Proceedings of the House

**SECOND SESSION-SECOND MEETING
OF THE FOURTH PARLIAMENT
OF THE SECOND REPUBLIC**

Tuesday, 11th February, 2014.

The House met at 10:05 a.m. in Parliament Building, Tower Hill, Freetown.

I. PRAYERS

[The Clerk of Parliament, Hon. Ibrahim Sulaiman Sesay, Read the Prayers].

[The Speaker, Hon. Sheku Badara Basiru Dumbuya, in the Chair].

The House was called to Order

Suspension of S. O. 5(2)

HON. IBRAHIM R. BUNDU: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to amend the Order Paper for today. Due to technical difficulties, we cannot present item II, which has to do with the record of Votes and Proceedings for the previous sitting. So, I want to crave the indulgence of this House to defer the correction of Vote and Proceedings to another date. Thank you very much.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, it has been moved that an amendment relating to item II on the Order Paper should be deferred. I hope there is no dissenting view to that motion. Mr Leader I am seeing hats being worn by Members of Parliament with the exception of the Paramount Chiefs.

HON. IBRAHIM R. BUNDU: Thank you very much Mr Speaker for giving me this opportunity. As you are aware, today is the launching of the national census for 2014. All of us know the importance of census in this country. It is a very important national event and the process is going to start today. The launching is going to be done by His Excellency the President, but because Parliament has other matters that are equally important, we have endeavoured to send representatives to the Bintumani Hotel to show the solidarity that we, who represent the people of this country are in very good support of this event. That is the reason why we broke the parliamentary rule by wearing T-Shirts in this Well.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much for that explanation.

III. BILL

THE PETROLEUM REGULATORY AGENCY ACT, 2013

INTRODUCTION AND FIRST READING

THE MINISTER OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY

MR ALIE BADARA MANSARAY (*Deputy Minister of Trade and Industry*): Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I move that the Bill entitled: "The Petroleum Regulatory Agency Act, 2013," be read the first time.

(Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to)

(The Bill entitled: "The Petroleum Regulatory Agency Act, 2013, has been read the first time).

(SECOND READING)

MR ALIE BADARA MANSARAY: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I move that the Bill entitled: "The Petroleum Regulatory Agency Act, 2013, be read the second time. Mr Speaker, you would recalled that the petroleum unit received approval by cabinet in 2003, for the transformation of that unit into a self-financing body, with the authority and mandate to:

- monitor import arrangements and supply prices for the efficient procurement of petroleum products;
- ensure the efficient retail price in true effective harmonisation of local pump prices in line with international trading prices;
- ensure adequate supplies of all petroleum products at all times in all parts of the country;
- provide technical oversight and advice in the implementation and management of the pricing formula;
- institute an ongoing comprehensive downstream petroleum data base, while serving as a reliable and effective for potential investors and will be entrancing to the Sierra Leone market and;
- act as a principal technical adviser to government and its affiliated agencies on all issues that relate to petroleum matters.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, you would agree with me that an industry of such strategic importance and with the potential and susceptibility to neglect and abuse clearly warrant close monitoring and supervision, especially in the private sector. It is, therefore, logical that in such realities, the network of regulatory mechanisms, mandated to the office of the petroleum unit by this government, in consultation with our donor partners, like the World Bank to ensure the objective of all stakeholders of the industry are kept in focus at all times.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the monitoring of oil company operation, viz-a-viz corporate obligation remains an important component of the Petroleum Regulatory Agency. The monitoring and verification of oil movement, with respect to obligation of taxes, duties, product quality and other operational assurances are exercises requiring technical resources with core competence in petroleum business management; especially when the total annual product importation is on the increase. For 2014, we projected an increase of 500,000 metric tons, as compared to 320,000 metric tons in 2012; and 400,000 metric tons in 2013. Notwithstanding its technical capabilities and competences, the petroleum unit has had unfortunate circumstances and faced with quite a number of challenges in the past. The absence of legal authority has impeded its effectiveness. For instance, matters requiring a clear-cut legal authority in order to reach swift and satisfactory conclusions to the benefit of the public and even to government in some instances have been left almost impenetrable.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, you will testify that efforts at achieving the goals of this government are much more effective when adequate legal provisions are at the disposal of its regulatory agencies. The effort of the petroleum unit, viz-a-viz its mandate, is a case in point. The keys to the consolidation of my Ministry's effort to meet the development objectives in the petroleum downstream sector in Sierra Leone lies in the legal provisions, as provided in the document presented to this Honourable House, viz-a-viz the Petroleum Regulatory Agency Bill, 2013 and also the Amendment, as contained in the pending Petroleum Rules, 2013 (Cap 236).

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, a wide range of consultations and discussions were undertaken by my Ministry, including technocrats within the Ministry and stakeholders; discussions amongst government, petroleum industry Executives in and outside Sierra Leone would be investors as well as the public to get us to where we are. Members are particularly invited to note that the emergence of a liberalised market and because of the implications encountered in the inter-locking network of industrial operations, many facets of the local petroleum distribution business, including the registration of new businesses, new investors, issuance of permits, licenses, pricing of petroleum products, local and international bunkering guidelines and the sale of Liquefied Petroleum Gas' now require new sets of rules and regulations. The relevant provisions for all of these and other pertinent areas in the new dispensation are addressed in the pending Petroleum Rules Amendment Act, 2013.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, a regulatory framework, buttressed by sound legal provisions continues to be an inescapable requirement in the modern petroleum downstream markets. And major investors make this an important issue in their due diligent processes. It is, therefore, important that Sierra Leone latches up to levels of recognised international best practices for petroleum product supply and distribution.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will like to assure Members of this Honourable House that the provision of this Bill should be considered as operational controls to ensure transparency and efficiency of service delivery, through best industry practice and the guarantee of required standards. To encourage investors to come and continue their businesses in Sierra Leone, while at the same time making provisions to convert and address industry malpractices where they exist, the need for the enforcement of the laws of Sierra Leone and industry guidelines cannot be overemphasized. I thank you all for your attention.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I move that the Bill entitled: 'The Petroleum Regulatory Agency Act 2013' be read the second time.

HON. SIDI M. TUNIS: Mr Speaker, I stand on SO 37(1). Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, considering the importance of this Bill, I move that the debate be now adjourned so that Honourable Members will have enough time to read and understand this Bill.

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder to that motion?

HON. BUNDU SONGOWA: I so second, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Any counter motion?

(Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to)

(The debate on the Petroleum Regulatory Agency Act, 2013 has been deferred).

III. PARLIAMENTARY BRIEFING ON:

- (a) THE STATE OF THE WEST AFRICAN SENIOR SCHOOL CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION (WASSCE)
- (b) TEACHERS'S REPLACEMENT AND APPROVALS
- (c) ANY OTHER RELATED MATTER

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, today, we have, as our guest, the Minister of Education, Science and Technology. I refer Honourable Members to S. O. 14, Sub-Section 1(J), on Page 28; 'Ministerial Statements and Questions to Ministers.' It is under this provision we have the Minister of Education to explain to Members of Parliament some burning issues. And it is quite in place that whenever there is any subject of controversy or whether there is any issue that has generated so much public concerns, particularly the issue, which in my opinion, has even led to making some people to say so many things. Parliament being the accredited representatives of the people has the right to summon any official to come and explain certain issues. Standing Order 1(J) talks about 'ministerial statement;' but on the Order Paper, we have 'parliamentary briefing.' This is how we feel we should put it. It is not the Minister that has volunteered to come; it is not on his own volition. Parliament has thought it prudent to invite him to come and explain. Having regard to Section 94 of the 1991 Constitution, which gives us

the power and authority to regulate our own affairs, we have decided to caption it that way.

DR MINKAILU BAH (*Minister of Education, Science and Technology*): Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank you for inviting me to make some clarifications and to explain to this nation and to Honourable Members of Parliament about what is happening in the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. I think the topical discussion is the West African Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) results.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Sierra Leone is the only country where, when you catch a thief, you are branded as a criminal. Sierra Leone is the only country where, when you try to enforce the law established by this Parliament, you are considered as a wicked person. And for some of us, we are ready to enforce the laws of this land. I came as Minister of the aforesaid ministry in 2007; and after six months, journalists and some people in certain quarters in this country started saying that I have failed the nation because pupils took the WASSCE and BECE examinations and failed woefully. They said the Minister of Education has failed and the standards of education in this nation are falling every day. It is true that standards are falling, but what are the causes? You cannot judge a Minister that has just served the ministry for six months. Education is a process and not a project. That is why we are putting mechanisms in place to make sure that we regulate the educational system in this country. And because the government of Dr Ernest Bai Koroma has high regard for education, and want to improve the educational standards in this country, in 2009, we set up the Gbamanga Commission of Enquiry to look into the problems that have contributed to the falling standard of education in this country. From the recommendations proffered by the Commission, we have the government 'White Paper,' which I am ready to enforce to the latter.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will read an extract from the report of the Gbamanga Commission of Enquiry, which contains some findings and

recommendations. With your permission, Mr Speaker, it says: *"The Commission found out, after thorough investigation that all sectors of societies bear responsibility for the poor performance of pupils. These sectors include:*

- *the Home;*
- *the schools ;*
- *the society or community; and*
- *the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology."*

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, these are the different sectors of our society that are responsible for the falling standards of education in this country. However, the greatest responsibility rests with the schools and the teachers. Their behaviour and negative attitudes to work, coupled with unethical and unprofessional conduct ranked high among the causes. These were the findings of the Commission. The Commission went further to say, among other things, that evidences obtained in respect of continuous assessment indicated not only incompetence in school administration, but an act of dishonesty, corruption and fraud. Grades that were not earned were given to pupils. Some submissions to the Commission spoke of the schools being market places where grades were bought either in cash or in kind. These are not my words, but the Commissioners of the Commission. Those who did this report are Professors in Education who have worked outside this country for a number of years. We have Professor Gbamanja, Professor Ekundayo Thompson and Mr Lasiteh. Of course, everybody in this country knows who Mr Lasiteh is. He is one the few sober principals we have in this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Commission made the following recommendations:

- we have to criminalise the practice of irregular admission of pupils into secondary schools;

- we have to ban all Access Courses in tertiary institutions. The Commission, however, recommends programmes for Science and Technology base courses to fulfill matriculation requirements;
- opening of new primary, secondary and community schools; and
- implementation of all legal proceedings concerning education.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I stand to assure you that I will enforce the legal regulations of education in this country. This is the law and I will never go against it. I was surprised, when I learnt that Proprietors came to Parliament to complain the Minister, who is ready to enforce the laws passed by this Parliament. The laws you have established for this country, should be implemented to the latter.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Section 15 of the Education Act, 2004 says: "*Subject to this Act, no person shall establish any new private school or extend an existing school without the prior written authority of the Director-General of Education. In the case of the Private School with the prior written authority of the Local Authority for which the Area in which it is intended to establish or extend the school.*" Mr Speaker, we have to go by the law. You cannot establish whether private, public or community school without going through the necessary procedures. If you want to establish a school, you should come first to the Ministry of Education.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Section 8 of the 2004 Education Act says: "*senior secondary schooling shall be for students who have completed junior secondary school course and have obtained the required BECE grades.*" And Mr Speaker, what are the required BECE grades? Our policy says the candidate must have five (5) passes, including English or Mathematics; and that is what I am enforcing now.

THE SPEAKER: Mr Minister, let us have this clear. It is not English and Mathematics?

DR MINKAILU BAH: It is English or Mathematics, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: So, even if you fail English, as long as you pass Mathematics, you can still go to senior secondary school?

DR MINKAILU BAH: Yes, Mr Speaker. And the law says if you don't have your five WASSCE, but pass four, including English or Mathematics, you can go for the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ). That is what the law says Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, when the Gbamanja Commission of Enquiry report was launched in 2010, every Principal was informed about it and the government White Paper was published. We called meetings; we invited the Conference of Principals, both national and at regional level. They were educated on the Gbamanja Commission of Enquiry and what the law says.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in June, 2013, we invited the Conference of Principals and we had meetings in the provinces. We told them that since we have started enforcing the recommendations and the government White Paper, in 2014 academic year, no pupil will be allowed to take the WASSCE exams, if he/she does not pass BECE. The principals of the various schools were supposed to tell their students about the ministry's new policy. It is not the Minister of Education that should do that. The Principals should inform them because we have communicated to the school authorities. That is why, in the complaint that was made to Parliament, you did not see any serious private school that came and complain the Minister of Education.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if you visit some of these schools, you will not allow your child to attend those schools. You will not Mr Speaker because the environment will not allow you. In the Wellington Area, there are over thirty so-called private schools.

Through the Conference of Principals, principals were invited and we told them that the law and government's 'White Paper' will be pursued to the latter. I would have said no, because my child is also in the school system. He was supposed to take his examination last year, but he did not. I am surprised when people are saying my child failed the exam. We have to straighten the records. I have never been a failure and my children will not be failures. I will try to give them quality education and I would do the right thing that will give them quality education.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, my child had aggregate 10 in the BECE. If people want to verify, they can go to the West African Examination Council (WAEC). Mr Speaker, I did not allow him to take the exam because the Gbamanja Commission recommended for four years in the senior schools before you take the exam. Mr speaker, I would have simply told the task force to wait until after my child has taken the exam.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when the entries came to my office, we sent circulars to all the schools, through the Conference of Principals that only pupils who passed their BECE will be allowed to take the WASSCE exam. This is an examination the government is paying for. Government is paying for all pupils who are taking the exam for the first time. Mr Speaker, some principals used to take students outside the school system and later blamed the government for exorbitant charges. This was not done by the government; but was done by some of those principals. We have good and bad principals in our school system. They are also helping to destroy education in this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in August, 2013, we gave them the first criterion that all schools should submit their entries to the Ministry of Education. All schools, whether private, public or community schools should submit their entries with a copy of the candidate's BECE result. Most schools failed to submit the candidates' BECE results to the Ministry of Education, which is the first criterion. They did not meet that condition. When we extended the time to the end of September, not all of them submitted. We even extended the date to the end of October; yet, not all of them submitted and Sierra Leone is not the only country taking the WASCE exam. There are five countries taking the WASSCE exam. Every country has to submit its entries for them to print the question papers. We cannot always continue to be the last in doing things. If you are asked to submit, they will tell you that they are not yet ready.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, some of these principals did not meet the deadline and we have processed the documents and submitted them to WAEC. Some of them

were afraid to submit their entries because they did not have approval from the Ministry. There is a difference between a building and a school. You don't just go and erect a building somewhere and you say I have a school. We will not allow people to exploit the innocent citizens. I think we have to stop them and the law is there to stop them. It is not my creation. That is what we have just done to stop them from doing the wrong thing. Mr Speaker, there is a private school that submitted nine hundred and eight pupils to take the WASCE exam. There is no public school in this country that has submitted that figure. I said no, this is not right. The first thing I asked for was their approval letter from this Ministry. And I visited the school to see things for myself. Honourable Members, it will interest you to know that that school is a death-trap. The name of the school is 'George Washington International Academy.' They use these big names to lure innocent people. The Principal does not even have an office. The Principal is sharing a room with a shop. I asked him where he would accommodate the nine hundred and eight pupils to take the exam. He said: *"Mr Minister, we can reduce the number."* That was the comment he made. He was on television. We made sure we videoed him for this nation to know what these so-called private schools are doing in this country. What criteria are you going to use to reduce the number, after collecting the money from the parents? I think we should stop them, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I visited a school in Waterloo that sent 318 entries. The name of the school is Kankalay Islamic Secondary School. I went there with my professionals to visit the school. I asked the principal about his SSS4 pupils. The principal said: *"My pupils are coming to school at 6:00 p.m."* For those of you, who watched television on that day, you would have heard his confession. I asked him if he knows the laws of the land; viz-a-viz, the time pupils should go to school and when they should leave school. I said if they are coming to school at 6:00 p.m., what provision have you in that regard? This is because if the pupils come to school at 6:00 p.m., they should leave by 11:00 p.m. There is no electricity in the school. I also asked him how the teachers are teaching in the school without electricity. He said they buy these Chinese lamps from the market and use them to teach. This is very serious and

these are the people destroying our educational system in this country. I think we should put a stop to that. We want quality education and all of us should work towards improving education in this country. It is not just the Minister of Education and the proprietors to fight for quality education. All of us should be involved.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, after I have visited Kankalay Islamic Secondary School, one of the proprietors wrote me a letter, trying to defend their action. He said that I went to the school without informing the principal. He said the principal was under duress; and as a result, he was not in his normal state of mind. This means that the principal was put under psychological trauma. Consequently, even if I could have asked him one plus one, the Principal would have said five (*Laughter*). If that is the case, do we call him a principal of a school? A principal should be able to work under pressure and come out with encouraging result. Are these proprietors working towards the development of education in this country? The Education Secretary, Alhaji Rashid Saccoh, signed the letter.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if people are saying the Minister of Education has stopped some children from taking their WASSCE exam, they are not saying the truth. There is a window that government has created. If you don't have your WASSCE, you can take the Private WASSCE. Nobody is stopping you. You can wake up today and say, I want to take the private WASSCE exam, nobody will question you. The Ministry will not ask you because when they are evaluating our educational system, it is our school system they are evaluating. I think we have to sensitise people on that. The pupils that took the WASSCE exam across the country last year were 58,500. Less than 10% of them passed the Exam. As an Engineer by profession, since I came to the Ministry, I have been doing my analysis. We came to realise that 90% of those failing the WASSCE exam are those who have not passed BECE. Do we continue to allow them to continue polluting our educational system in this country? We should not allow our educational standard to continue dwindling and deteriorating? That is why I have announced to this nation and I have told the principals that by next academic year, pupils who did not pass their BECE exams will not take the WASSCE exam. We have started this year and

we are going to continue. Passing their BECE exam is the gateway to the secondary schools and other tertiary institutions.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I have also announced to the school authorities, through the conference of principals that by next year, the Ministry will not allow any pupil who does not pass the National Primary School Examination (NPSE) to go to Junior Secondary School... - (*Applause*). The government has said that even if you take the BECE exams ten times, it will continue to pay for the pupil. You will not pay a single cent for that. There is no restriction in the number of times you take your BECE examination. The only restriction we have is for your WASCE. We want them to be serious. That is why we banned the Access Course in the University. I was a Lecturer at the University and I know what has been happening there. In other words, I was a Head of Department and I know how the Access Course has contributed to the destruction of our educational system in this country. The Access Course was introduced for good intention and for good purpose; but after sometimes, it was misused.

THE SPEAKER: Mr Minister, I want you to go over the question of the BECE fee because Members of Parliament are burdened by their constituents about the number of times government will pay per person?

DR MINKAILU BAH: Mr Speaker, even if a pupil fails the exam ten times, government will continue to pay for that pupil ten times.

THE SPEAKER: Mr Minister, people are still disturbing Members of Parliament to pay BECE fee for their children. So, I want you to explicate more on that area. We should know the distinction between BECE and WASSCE, particularly as it relates to the exams. In the case of WASSCE, if you fail once, the government will not continue paying for that candidate. Government can only pay once for each candidate. If you want to repeat the exam, you have to pay for yourself. In the case of BECE, even if you fail twenty times, government will pay twenty times.

DR MINKAILU BAH: Mr Speaker, you have said it all; but any pupil, who is serious in his/her education, will not take BECE more than three or four times. If you do not pass after taking it three times, then, you are not fit to be in the school system. You have to find another route.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, what I want to make clear here is the NPSE exam. I have received complaints from Members of Parliament that their constituents often come to them to pay for the NPSE exam. I want to tell them that government is paying for the NPSE exam. That is whether you are in a private school or government or community school, government is paying for all NPSE candidates... - *(Applause)*. Not a single cent is asked from any Head Teacher. All their entries go to WAEC and government pays for them. It is part of the free education system in this country. From now on, you should not pay for any NPSE exam for any candidate. Government pays for all candidates that take the NPSE, BECE and WASSCE exams.

THE SPEAKER: Mr Minister, you have said that in the case of BECE, even if you are in a private school, government will pay for you. Does the same apply for WASSCE exam?

DR MINKAILU BAH: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I said that for the NPSE exam, government will pay, whether you are in the private, public or community school. For the BECE exam, government was paying for candidates in the private schools as well, but the Gbamanga Commission of Enquiry recommended that because of the huge amount of money these Private schools are charging the parents, the government cannot continue to pay for them because the parents can afford to pay for their kids. So, the fees they are charging should now be part of their BECE exam fee. That was the recommendation of the Gbamanga Commission of Enquiry.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, I hope you are taking note of what the Minister is saying.

DR MINKAILU BAH: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, for the 2014 WASSCE entries, the Ministry has taken a position on that. The Ministry is implementing the law and I don't want to fall short of the law. That is why we will stand by it and move ahead with it. We have not stopped those schools from taking the exams. We only told them that since they have not got approval from the Ministry, they should cease to operate until they are approved. Those who have not submitted the names of pupils, who are to take the exam in their schools on time, will not take part at all. We have deadlines for all the entries. If WASSCE exam is a national exam like the BECE, we can adjust our time table. But WASSCE is an international exam; and therefore, we cannot make adjustment. So, if you fail to meet the deadlines, you wait for the next academic year or you go for the private WASSCE exam. The school exam is in June; whilst the private exam is in September. If somebody has taken money from the parents and has not paid the money to WAEC or the Ministry, he/she should refund those moneys to the parents. But we have to bring sanity into the system. That is the briefing on the school entries for WAEC.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the other issue I want to talk about is the issue of results that were seized by WAEC. I have listened to a lot of conversation and accusations that are linked to the Minister of Education. I think they have the right to do so because, we supervise WAEC and WAEC is under our Ministry, but WAEC has its own statutes or regulations; these are international regulations. If, while marking examination scripts, there are evidences of examination malpractices WAEC has the right to withhold their results. That is what the international statutes say. You hold the result and investigate the allegation. Those who are not found culpable, their results will be released; and those who are found culpable of the examination malpractices, their results are cancelled. Some of them will have part of their results released whilst others will not. If you are not one hundred percent in collusion, your result will be released.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there were reported cases of examination malpractices in last year's BECE exam. Mr Speaker, although BECE is a national exam,

an international Committee had to come to Sierra Leone to set up an investigation panel and those found culpable, their results were cancelled. The laws are there, Mr Speaker. Let us follow and implement the Law. If this is the guiding regulation of WAEC, let us give them the opportunity to adhere to their laid down rules. And for the information of Members of Parliament, the first meeting of that Committee should start today, to look into some of these irregularities. If those candidates are not found wanting, their results will be released. It is only after the investigation you can come out and tell the public that this is what has happened within the examination period. That is the information I have, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to talk about recruitment and approval of teachers. I told my professionals at the Ministry that there is no need, having a school without teachers. In the process of trying to have teachers in our schools, we have to do the right thing. I was with the opinion that there are no ghost teachers in our educational system. When I became Minister of Education, Science and Technology in 2007, nobody was hearing about ghost teachers, ghost schools or ghost pupils. It is only during my time that we are hearing about them. I told this nation that I would get to the bottom of this, in terms of fishing out all ghost elements in our school system. I promised to take the fight to the schools; to the teachers; and the principals of the schools. Mr Speaker, before that time, we were only hearing about ghost workers in this country. Teachers were not part of the ghost workers. Today, we have ghost teachers, ghost schools and ghost pupils. We have to fight these ghost elements and chase them to their respective tombs.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in 2008, I started the fight in my district, Tonkolili District. It will interest you to know that 27 schools were closed down in the district. I closed them because they were illegal schools, receiving moneys from the Consolidated Fund. The Mission is called the 'Hilltop Mission.' They have 27 schools that were approved on the same day, the same month and the same year. That is why we say we have to use the law to do the right thing. The law spells out who should approve schools in this country. It is not the responsibility of a secretary, or a clerk in my

Ministry to do that. I told my Permanent Secretary that whenever he delegates responsibility to someone to do a job, he should write down their designations. This is because we are going to hold them responsible. That is why I closed down those schools. When I started from my district, people knew that I was serious. If I had started in another district, they would have said this man is bad and he is witch hunting us. Mr Speaker, this is why I started in my own district.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in April, 2008, we recruited 2,536 teachers. I am talking about recruitment not replacement. There was a moratorium because international donor partners said we should suspend the recruitment of teachers. But the question I asked them was, 'do you do that in your countries?' You said by 2015, all school age children should be in school. So, if you say they should be in school, but maintain the current roll of teachers, then, do you expect quality education at all? So, we have to recruit our teachers, but in the process of recruiting them, people want to play smartness. They were using the same ED Form to recruit for the whole country, whether you are in Tonkolili, Koinadugu, Kono or Kailahun District. We have to monitor the system. What we did was to have an ED Form for every District. If I am recruiting from your district, you will know that it is from your district I am recruiting. We cannot use the ED Form for Kono to recruit in Kailahun. The recruitment process starts from the schools, and not from the Ministry. When we make the request for teachers, they should submit to us those teachers that are qualified to be recruited as teachers. The number of untrained and unqualified teachers in our school system, from 2007 to 2008 was about 40%. In 2007, the teachers' pay roll was 38,500. That number has reduced considerably because we have succeeded in getting rid of those that are not fit to be in the school system. We ask them to apply for recruitment; and what some of them did, was to use fake results to apply. I will give you examples of these fake certificates. In the old ED Form, there was no provision for the Minister to check the recruitment; but in the new form, the provision is there. I said the Minister has to counter-sign the form for those that we are recruiting in our schools.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I have a result which I will read to this Parliament and I will leave the exhibits here. These are public documents and there is no confidentiality. This person said this certificate was given to him in February, 1995, from the Freetown Teachers College. February, 1995 was when the certificate was prepared and signed. I will like to read a section of the certificate; and leave the rest to Honourable Members to judge. I want Honourable Members to decipher whether this person is a genuine teacher, or one of the people who are in the habit of defrauding the State. He said he passed the National Council for Technical Vocational and other Academic Award (NCTVA) Teachers Certificate Examination, held in July, 1995, with a Division II. They signed the certificate in February, 1995; and he took the examination in July, 1995. This means that the certificate was signed before he took the exams. These are the kinds of viruses that want to enter into our system and destroy it. For me, he is not a teacher; but a defrauder. He has no business in the class room.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there are people we have not recruited into our school system, but they are already teachers; and Mr Speaker, these are the ones that are shouting all over the media. They go to the radio stations to cast blames on the Minister that he has not recruited them. I have invited them to my office, to defend their certificates, but they did not come. Instead, they go to the radio stations and talk about the Minister. This is the record card of a person from the Western Area...-
(Interruption).

THE SPEAKER: Mr Minister, do you have any such paper from Bo?

DR MINKAILU BAH: Mr Speaker, I will come to Bo.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this person filled his record card. According to him, he was born in 1982. When we asked for his School Leaving Certificate, he entered form 1 in 1989. I did not fill this document for him. He filled the document and his photo is attached therein. This is very serious and pathetic for this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will present different cases of fraudulent behaviour of teachers in our school system. I am happy that their photographs are attached so that they cannot deny. If you want the names, I will call them for your hearing. This is not a hidden secret. I have three documents in which the owners are using the same certificate with different names. These people said they took their WASSCE in 2002. They have the same index number and applied in the same school. That is what they are doing. I investigated from WAEC and I found out that the result did not belong to any of them. I did this in order to ascertain whether this result belong to any of them. The result did not belong to any of these three people. These are the criminals we have in our school system. Mr Speaker, falsification of result is not only endemic in the tertiary institutions, but also in our schools.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, by next academic year, the fight will move to the tertiary institutions. Those who wrote the Gbamanga Commission of Enquiry report are now heading to these institutions. They will help us to fight this fight. We have now realised that people are going to these institutions without the matriculation requirements. Over the years, we use to have over 4,000 students, applying for Grant-in-Aid from the Western Area. We have discovered that students have falsified results to enter tertiary institutions. We have the evidence of a student in the Medical school. We advertised for the Cuban Scholarship, based on the result the person submitted, the person was nominated for the Cuban Scholarship to go and study medicine. But for international scholarship, we usually ask for their results from WAEC to confirm the originals. When we asked for the original, he could not come with it. Later, we asked him to come with the scratch card to cross-check the result in the internet. Mr Speaker, when we got hold of the scratch card, the person had series of F9s with the exception of one subject with an E8. The good thing is, the parents did not condone the person and was withdrawn from the College. We invited the parents to explain the situation and they put the blame somewhere else, which I will not mention here. Because of that experience, we said for last year Grant-in-Aid, every student, whether you are

continued student or not, if you apply for the Grant-in-Aid, you must come with your scratch card. You should send your application letter with your scratch card.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have learnt a lot about the attitudes of Sierra Leoneans. And because of the experiences we have garnered, we are taking our time to award Grant-in-Aid to students. And if the result you used to go to the university is not your result, we are going to withdraw you from the university. So, out of the 4,500 students that were applying over the years, we had less than 1,500 that applied for the Grant-in-Aid last year. That tells you that something is with our educational system. We cannot wipe off these malpractices within one year, because it had been there for the past thirty years. It needs a concerted effort to fight it. All of us should involve in this fight.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there is another case I want to bring to your notice. This person applied to teach in one of our schools. He got this certificate from Northern Polytechnic. All these schools I am calling are Mission schools. As I said earlier, the recruitment does not start from the Ministry of education, but it comes from the Missions and the schools. They have to make sure that these people are qualified to be recruited as teachers. This person's form has been processed, but it has to be signed by the Minister. Mr Speaker, when I looked at the certificate, I realised that the person forged the signature of the Registrar and the Principal. Unfortunately for him, the Registrar was my teacher in school. The Principal of the school taught me Biology in form three. So, I know the Principal. I invited them to the Ministry and showed them the signatures on the certificates whether they are compatible with theirs. Both of them denied, having seen the signatures. Mr Speaker, these are the problems we have in this country. Those who are saying they are not being recruited, is simply because they are not doing the right thing. These are the evidences that we have. Some of them have said they have been in the classroom for three to four years and they have not been recruited.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this one is from Tonkolili District, Mile 91. We don't select the areas we go to. This is because we want to make sure we give quality education in every part of this country. In Ansarul Islamic Secondary School, Tonkolili District, the Principal submitted the name of somebody to be replaced by a teacher who had left the school. He did it with good intention, but I blame them at times because they don't check the results before they are brought to the Ministry. When I looked at the result and statement from the Ministry, I realised that it was a fake certificate. I told them to send this certificate to the Principal of the College for verification. Mr Speaker, I will read to you the comments of the Principal. It says: *"It has been established that this candidate attended the Freetown Teachers College, but her grades are incomplete."* Mr Speaker, if you don't have complete grades, where did you get the certificate?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this is another case of people trying to destroy our educational system in this country. Somebody applied to teach in a secondary school without a certificate. The only certificate the person has is a Sierra Leone Library Board Certificate. This is to certify that Mr X has successfully completed a course at the Sierra Leone Library Board, Rokel Street, from the 31st of August, to 11th September, 2009. This is the only certificate that he has. How can you use a training course certificate to teach secondary school pupils? It means you want to destroy the future of our children.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, another sore problem we have in the Ministry is the duplication of teachers' names on pay roll voucher. That is somebody will be teaching in Freetown and his name will appear in another school in Bo. I will give you an example here. You said I should not call names, but I believe in transparency, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Mr Minister, I would not advise you to call names. Let the instances be cited. And if Members of Parliament are very much interested in the names, let this list be made available to the Chairman of the Education Committee.

DR MINKAILU BAH: Thank you very much Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there is a teacher who is teaching at Forum for African Women Educational

Center in Mogbemu Village. This same person is also teaching at the Kankalay Islamic School, New Site, Moriba Town. These places are very close. There is another person in Amal Evans Vocational Training Centre, who is also teaching at a school called Fatlow Vocational Training Centre, West Two, Freetown. These are some of the examples of people moving from one school to another, receiving two salaries from the same Consolidated Fund. If you are teaching in one school, you don't have to be in another.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have made a pronouncement that we are going to recruit 4,000 teachers and we are expecting to recruit people that are trained and qualified. Instead of giving them the ED Forms, we asked them to submit the names of their qualified teachers in their schools so that we can recruit them. If somebody fills this form and he or she is not qualified, the form will eventually be invalid and they costs us money. So, we asked them to give us certificates of those they wish to recruit, before we can give them the ED forms.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, somebody submitted a result to me to be recruited. But the person did not even know the difference between the period and the date of the examination in the certificate. He sat on a computer and did something for himself. He falsified the signature of the Registrar. The space provided for the date of examination, he wrote August, 2004 to August, 2007.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there is another case from St Theresa Parish School, Bo. The result submitted by this person reads: *"This is to certify that this candidate, university number, 13002 enrolled in Njala University in the 2010/2013 Academic Year to read the T. C. Certificate. The person is now in the final year of the Programme and recently taken the NCTVA, awaiting the result."* Why awaiting results again? They have been in the classroom for two to three years, without been recruited. Now, you are expecting us to recruit them with awaiting result? This is the problem we have in our system, Mr Speaker. I want Members of Parliament to help us to sanitise the system. Honourable Members, journalists are pouring insults on the Minister on a daily basis. They do not know what is happening in the educational system at all. Some of them

know the facts, but they don't want to report them. We are determined to fight against the bad eggs in the system.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will tell you now the number of applicants we received from Bo and those that were qualified for recruitment. We received five hundred (500) certificates from Bo. I took my time and looked at them keenly. Some of them were either falsified or mimicked. Out of the total of five hundred, only sixty of them have genuine certificates. The records are there and if you check with the Deputy Director in Bo, you will see them. It should be in his custody, because I told him not to return them.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in Bonthe they submitted two hundred and fifty names and out of that number, seventy-seven were qualified. I listened to the Debate of the Presidential Address and some Members of Parliament were saying the Minister should now end the ghost teacher issue and recruit teachers. We are prepared to recruit teachers and that is why I am coming to give you evidence of why we should not stop chasing these ghost teachers. You are trying to stop them and they are trying to create other ways of going into the system. We are not going to stop. I am showing you a clear evidence of how people are trying to enter the system through the illegal way. There is somebody in Kenema who has one certificate from Eastern Polytechnic. There is nothing wrong with his certificate, but he applied to teach in two schools, using the same certificate. He applied at Ahmadiyya Primary School, Panguma, and Ahmadiyya Junior Secondary School, Tongo Field. Using the same certificate in two schools? No, this is unacceptable and very preposterous.

THE SPEAKER: Mr Minister, there are some people because of their anxiety to get a school; they could apply to two or three schools at the same time. So, what is the problem here?

DR MINKAILU BAH: Mr Speaker, the problem here is that some of them will end up teaching in two or three different schools, receiving two or three salaries from the same source, thereby depriving others who may want to teach. This is a very big problem, Mr

Speaker. I should have showed you their names, but the Speaker has advised not to call names here. In Luke's Commercial Secondary School, somebody claimed that he obtained his certificate from the Northern Polytechnic. Unfortunately for him, the Principal and the Registrar he purported to have signed the certificate are no longer in that College. He claimed that the certificate was signed by M. A. Jalloh in 2008; whilst in actual fact, the certificate was signed during Mr Muctarr Kabba's time. Muctarr Kabba went to Northern Polytechnic in 2002. He was Principal; while M. A. Jalloh was the Registrar at that time. In 2006, M. A. Jalloh was no longer Registrar of that College. The Registrar of the College is Mr M. H. S. Bangura. Mr M. H. S. Bangura is the Registrar of that College and from that time to now, he is still the Registrar. The space provided for Registrar, it was signed by M. A. Jalloh and under the Principal's signature, Mr Francis J. Foday signed. In actual fact, Mr Francis J. Foday has left the college long time ago. When they were in Freetown during the war, he was acting as Principal of the college. He has left since 2002, and Mr Muctarr Kabba took after him. So, how can Mr Francis J. Foday sign a certificate that somebody obtained in 2008? This is the problem, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Kenema District submitted 450 certificates. After a thorough scrutiny of the certificates, only 139 of them were authentic. The rest were fake certificates. We started the recruitment in the Southern and Eastern part of the country. We cannot do it at the same time, because I want to do a thorough job. I don't want it to be business as usual. That is why I am taking them District by District. We have done ... - *(Interruption)*.

THE SPEAKER: Mr Minister, let us stop here for now let me confer with my Chief Whip about what have been said so far. We will come back at 1 p. m.

DR MINKAILU BAH: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, before now, when they were submitting names to the Ministry, somebody who is supposed to be in grade two, would be placed in grade ten salary. They usually do this without the knowledge of the respective teachers. They create their own document and ask the teachers to sign. At

the end, they give them grade two salaries and they used the balance. That is what our Head Teachers and Principals are doing in the schools. For example, I have a payroll voucher from the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development. There is somebody who is supposed to be in grade seven; but if you look at the pay voucher, this person in grade seven is receiving the same salary as the person in grade nine, which is not the case. Grade seven teachers have their own salary scale and grade nine teachers have their own salary scale. In the voucher, grade seven have more salary than someone who in grade nine. This is not good for the development of this country. We need somebody to confront them; and I am ready to confront them, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when I listened to the debate on the Presidential Address, Members of Parliament were talking about the establishment of Vocational Education System in the country, which is the priority of His Excellency the President. That is why we are trying to establish the Technical and Vocational Centres in different parts of the country. And very shortly, there is going to be one in Pujehun District, Kono District and in Masingbi.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this country is a country where people do not want to do the right thing; and where people think they could circumvent the law at anytime. There are some Technical and Vocational Centres the government is supporting in this country. The records are there to cross check. Government is giving them subvention because we want them to train our youth. But Mr Speaker, the Proprietors of these institutions receive government moneys and convert them to their private schools. They are extorting moneys from parents, and at the same time receiving moneys from government as subvention. How will they run these technical and vocational schools effectively? You have a school that the government has approved and at the same time, government is supporting the school by recruiting teachers for the school. The question is, why are you not using the resources for their intended purpose; instead of diverting these resources to your private school? We have to stop such malpractices in our school system...- *(Applause)*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, people are talking about the conditions of service for teachers. What they are receiving as teachers may not be enough. Likewise, if they ask me, what I am receiving as a Minister may not be enough for me. The same goes for Members of Parliament. But that does not mean that we should not do the right thing.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am very transparent in whatever I am doing. As a Minister, my monthly salary is Le11, 000, 000. Mr Speaker, Le11, 000, 000 is what I receive at the end of every month as my salary. I am a transparent person and I want to be accountable for what I am doing. I will not give up the fight because I will not ask a proprietor to give me an envelope; and I will not give up the fight because I will not ask a principal to give me an envelope. What I am asking them for is to do the right thing for this nation... - *(Applause)*. I agreed for better conditions of service. They said that what they are receiving now is not enough, but what they are receiving today is better than what they were having yesterday... - *(Laughter)*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if the principals, head teachers and proprietors of the schools cooperate with this government and the Ministry, I think we can improve their conditions of service. When we came in 2007, some untrained and unqualified teachers were receiving Le16, 000 as their take home salary per month. Today, untrained and unqualified teachers are receiving not less than Le600, 000 per month. It is not enough, but at least, there is improvement. That will give them the courage to improve their services for this nation. Mr Speaker, Teachers' Certificate (TC) holders were receiving the sum of L129, 000 per month. Today, a Teacher's Certificate holder is receiving the sum of Le702, 000 per month. Mr Speaker, a Higher Teacher's Certificate (HTC) holder was receiving Le154, 000, but today, somebody with an HTC is receiving Le821, 000 net. Graduates were receiving Le229, 000 net. Today, a graduate from a recognised university is receiving Le901, 000 net. Principals of schools were receiving less than one million Leone as gross. Today, they are receiving Le1.752mln net. These are the facts and this is the effort government is making. Let us work together in order to receive something great. We can only do this through cooperation. The Minister of

Education alone cannot do it. We need the effort of everybody for us to bring sanity to the educational system in this country. I thank you very much Mr Speaker (*Applause*).

THE SPEAKER: Mr Minister, on behalf of Members of Parliament, we want to thank you very much for this briefing. Honourable Members, I will allow questions, comments or observations for fifteen minutes.

HON. JUSUFU B. MANSARAY: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when the President was delivering his Address in this Well, he said that 'nobody should stand on his way to see this country moves ahead.' Today, what I do believe is that the governance of this nation is purely done by parliamentarians. The President came from Parliament; the Speaker is coming from Parliament; the Leader of the House and Leader of Government Business is a parliamentarian; and the Clerk of Parliament was also a parliamentarian. Therefore, I can say without any jot of hesitation that this nation is being governed by parliamentarians. We have to be sincere with ourselves. We should do the right thing, as parliamentarians.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to say thanks to the Minister for all that he has said. I am not only going to ask questions, but to lay premises where questions will come from. We are talking about the educational system of this nation. Some have described it as a rotten system. I am going to look at it from the Koribondo perspective. I thank God that the Minister has cited issues relating to Koribondo. It is my obligation, as a Member of Parliament, representing that part of the country to give some reasons for some of these activities. I do believe that the Minister of Education, Science and Technology contributed for these principals to come to Members of Parliament to inform them that you have already appointed them to be Members of the various Boards of schools in their different localities. The Principal of Jaima Bongor Secondary School came to me in this House. He told me that you have appointed him as a Board Chairman of Jaima Bongor Secondary School. After a day, the Principal of Koribondo Vocational School came and asked me to be the Chairman of their Board. She went on to say that the Minister has mandated her to come to me to prepare the Banks

documents so that I will be the Chairman of the Board of that particular School. Another principal from the Ahmadiyya Secondary School made the same request. They wanted my signature and I gave it to them. Being the custodian of the constituency, I believe that if you had fully involved me, the problems in that school would have been solved. I would have done my level best to see that I do what is necessary for this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am no longer Chairman of the Board of all the schools that I have just mentioned. As a Member of Parliament, how will I really monitor the activities of the principals of these schools? You have informed this nation about what is happening in the educational system. I do believe, you can involve Members of Parliament in most of your activities. I want to strongly believe that we can equally help you to solve some of these problems. That is all I want to tell you.

HON. VERONICA K. SESAY: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. The issue of education in this country is unprecedented. It is a very serious matter. I believe that the people we are representing are expecting much from us, in terms of education. Everywhere you go, you hear people talking about education. If we say, we have given the Minister time to explain all what he has said about education, we should be very much serious about it.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to ask the Minister a question. Mr Minister, as the custodian of educational matters in this country, who are to blame and who are we to channel our educational problems to, taking into consideration what you have just explained to us? I am of the opinion that you should be blamed on the issue of the fake results. We are blaming you because you are the head of that particular institution in this country. We don't have to go and ask the Minister of Health and Sanitation or the Minister of Agriculture or Minister of Information about educational matters. You are the Minister of Education; therefore, we should blame you greatly. And by virtue of your position as the substantive Minister, you are there to take all the blames. I believe that it is negligence of supervision on the part of the Ministry that has resulted to this

problem. We will like to know your percentage in the performance target that was set by His Excellency the President. I am not asking you these questions out of malice. We want you to do the correct thing. Those who are now clapping do not like you. We have pointed out the problems confronting the educational sector in this country. We want to see the educational sector in this country as our first priority. Mr Minister, I want you to please answer that question. Thank you.

DR MINKAILU BAH: Thank you very much. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the first Member of Parliament was complementing what I have said here. He made mention of changing his name as Member of the Board. That is why I have given you examples of what principals are doing that the Ministry is not aware of. If we appoint you to serve as Board Chairman in one of the schools, it is not their business to say, you have been mandated by the Ministry. They have to come with a letter of appointment. In fact, we sent letters to all principals of the schools, telling them to inform the Board Chairmen that they had been appointed as Board Members. That is something we have to look into because these complaints have not reached me. Before you even made your contribution, I have already given you documents of where principals tried to change the names of Board Chairmen that were appointed, which resulted to the delay in payment of their salaries. Thank you very much for the compliments.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I now come to the question of who is to be blamed for the poor performance of the pupils? I think I have already answered that question before it is being asked. I have already stated that it is not a one man business. It is not only the Ministry of Education. The Gbamanja Commission of Enquiry provides the following factors for the poor performance of pupils in public exams. These are: the home, the school, the community and the teachers. Let me also appeal to Members of Parliament and parents because they were mentioned in that Report. You also have to play a part in the education of your children. How many parents are looking after their children's educational work? In the evening hours, parents are of the habit of watching movies for one or more hours with their children. We have to appeal to these parents to

take part in the education of their children. I will take responsibility because I am the head of the Ministry, but the responsibility is not the Minister's responsibility alone.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Education Act, 2004, gives responsibilities to people. We are to supervise education in this country. We have the educational administrators and managers of schools in this country, who are the principals. We should hold them responsible. Parliament was clever enough to know that the Minister cannot do it alone; the Ministry cannot do it alone; and that is why they have created the administrative wings within the Ministry. So, let us work together as a nation. We should not only be casting blames on people, but we have to work together for the development of this nation.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I have never failed a performance contract... - *(Applause)*. The President will testify to that fact. He assessed me and he has the prerogative to take any decision. Thank you very much.

HON. FODAY RADO YOKIE: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. To 'thysself be true.' I have been one of the critics of the Minister, but today, I can confess that he has eloquently given a true picture of himself... - *(Applause)*. Mr Minister, I want you to know the Honourable Members from Bo are disappointed at that dismal performance of our teachers. Out of the 500 names sent, only 60 are qualified. In terms of percentage, we are at the bottom. It is appalling and very disgraceful. Therefore, I want to request, on behalf of my colleagues, that we have these documents. We are not going to witch hunt anybody. I am saying this because I know the direction I am coming from. When you take up some of these things, they will want to politicise it. They will be saying that people are witch hunting me because I am not an APC member; and they are witch hunting me because I am not an SLPP supporter. I want, on behalf of my colleagues, to appeal to the Minister to make available those documents for the Bo District so that we will apportion it according to constituencies. We have heard from the Minister and it is time we hear from you. After hearing from the two sides, we can simply arbitrate for the betterment of Sierra Leone. Thank you very much.

HON. DR MICHEL SHO-SAWYER: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I have always stated that if the government is providing budgetary support for all these schools, we should be part and parcels of the implementation process. I am happy that some Members of Parliament are now Members of the Boards of these schools. I want the Minister to tell us what he has done in terms of deterring some of these malpractices in the educational system. Are you going to pursue some of these people that are defrauding the State? These are economic crimes.

DR MINKAILU BAH: Thank you very much, Honourable Member. Over the years, we have been trying to make sure that we do the right thing. We have also tried to persuade people to stop defrauding the State. Since 2007 to date, we have realised that people continue to do the same thing. That is why I said earlier, we are going to continue the fight. I have contacted the Anti-Corruption Commission, now that we have spoken to them as Sierra Leoneans, for them to see reasons and for us to improve our educational system... - (*Applause*). But some of them think that government's money is free and should be accessed corruptly.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, people are always talking about the Ministry of Education not giving subsidies to primary schools and primary schools are devolved functions to Local Councils. When I came in 2007, the Ministry was still paying subsidies to the schools. In 2008, I stopped it. I said all school subsidies should be transferred to Local Councils because they have the schools in their localities and they should monitor them. They are part of the management of the educational system in this country. It is sad to note that even when these moneys are transferred to these Councils, they claimed that the moneys are in their respective Accounts. The matter was reported to the Commissioner; they investigated and found out that some of these Councils are holding on to these moneys in their accounts without paying them to the school authorities. How do you expect those schools to function? These subsidies are paid by the government to run the schools. Mr Speaker, if these Councils are holding on to these funds, how do you expect the school authorities to manage the day-to-day affairs of these schools? Mr Speaker, I have a letter from the Commissioner that they should

pay back the moneys into the Consolidated Fund. This happened in 2012, and we are still monitoring the situation. The Commissioner here wrote directly to me. The letter reads: "Investigation into the conduct liable to allow, encourage or conduct constituting corruption or an economic related offence. I wish to draw your attention to recent monitoring activities, undertaken by the Commission on fee subsidies, the examination fee and a balance of unclaimed fee subsidies for 2011 and 2012 academic year is Le381mln misappropriated by eleven Local Councils. The said amount is yet to be remitted to the Consolidated Revenue Fund. The Anti-Corruption Commission has dispatched letters, directing the defaulting Councils to remit the said amount to the Consolidated Revenue Fund forthwith. Attached are details on each Council.

- Bo District Council, Kebbie Town – Le27, 521,000;
- Tonkolili District Council, Le20, 230,000;
- Bonthe District, Mattru, Bo Road – Le29,000,000;
- Port Loko District Council – Kambia Road Le31, 000,000;
- Kenema District Council – Le105, 000,000;
- Moyamba District Council Le26, 120,000;
- Kambia District Council – Le67, 000,000;
- Kenema City Council – Le2, 130,000;
- Makeni City Council – Le37, 307,000; and
- Koidu New Sembehun – Le5, 840,000

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, these are some of the problems we have in the educational system. Let me make this clear to you that these letters are not for the current district councils. These are checks and balances we are trying to put in place, so that those who are defaulting will be held accountable. We have to start pursuing these people for them to know that what they are doing is wrong and is not good for this nation. Thank you very much... - *(Applause)*.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much, Mr Minister. Mr Acting Minority Leader, I will give you two minutes to round up.

HON. ANSUMANA J. KAIKAI: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Minister has spent a lot of time with us today. I want to say that most Members of Parliament can now go to their various constituencies with the information that we have received. As Members of Parliament, we have to make sure that the Ministry of Education and the District Directors are put to task. We have to be visiting these schools, both the primary and secondary schools, so that those genuine teachers, whose documents are in the custody of the Minister, are investigated. The President reported to this House that about Le841, 000, 000 was saved from the exercises that have been carried out by the Minister. Those moneys should now be used to pay genuine teachers, who have been suffering together with the ghost teachers.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, with your leave, I am asking the Minister to please do that. Mr Minister, you said 90% of those that failed the WASSCE did not pass the BECE exam. Are you asking them to go back and take the BECE exam, so that they will be qualified to take the WASSCE exams? That is a question for you.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Minister mentioned the minimum wage of Le16, 000 for teachers in 2007. I found that to be ridiculous. In 1996, this Parliament passed the Minimum Wage Act. It was Le21, 000. So, I am asking that you ask the Ministry of Labour to make that clarification. And if Le 16, 000 the Minister talked about as the minimum wage in 2007, I want the Minister to make sure that those Sierra Leoneans, whose salaries were shortened, should be given to them. Mr Speaker, I am asking that Members of Parliament and the Minister work together, in terms of doing what had been proposed earlier. I agree with him, as it will better serve the purpose, rather than having a select Committee of this House to look into that issue.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in line with that, I thank the Minister and I want him to know that he will have our fullest cooperation, as long as he is doing what is correct for the future of this country.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Ansumana J. Kaikai, I am of the feeling that setting up a special select Committee to look into such a matter is infact an indirect inditement on

the relevant Committee. There is a Committee on Education in this House. They can look into this issue. And Committees in Parliament can look into anything in this country.

HON. IBRAHIM R. BUNDU: Thank you very much. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members I want to join previous speakers in thanking the Minister for coming here today. Honourable Members, at a very short notice, this Minister came, well prepared. And what he has presented to us this afternoon speaks volume. So, let other Ministers be on the alert. They will be called soon... - *(Applause)*.

THE SPEAKER: Mr Majority Leader, for all I know, this particular Minister, Dr Minkailu Bah, has always been cooperative and he has always been supportive of Parliament. I hope other Ministers will take a leaf from his book. You may continue Mr Leader.

HON. IBRAHIM R. BUNDU: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Honourable Members, if you would recalled, when the President was here, he said that this government and this country is on the move, and let no one stand on his way. I will say this Parliament is on the move, and let no one stand on our way... - *(Applause)*.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much. Mr Minister, we cannot be more grateful. Under my Speakership, Members of Parliament will be having this kind of session from time to time, either by way of question time or by way of Ministerial Statement. Thank you very much, Mr Minister.

DR MINKAILU BAH: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Honourable Members, I want to make some clarifications. I want this House to know that every document that is in the custody of my Ministry is a public document. Any time you want documents from me, I will make them available as I have always done in the past. I have done that in the past and will continue to make them available to Members of Parliament. And the issue I want to make clarification on is the minimum wage. I did not say Le16, 000 for untrained and unqualified teachers. I said Le67, 000 in 2000 not Le16, 000. That is the clarification I want to make.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much, Mr Minister.

ADJOURNMENT

*The House rose at 2:25 p.m. and was adjourned till Tuesday, 18th February, 2014 at
10:00 a.m.*