

OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

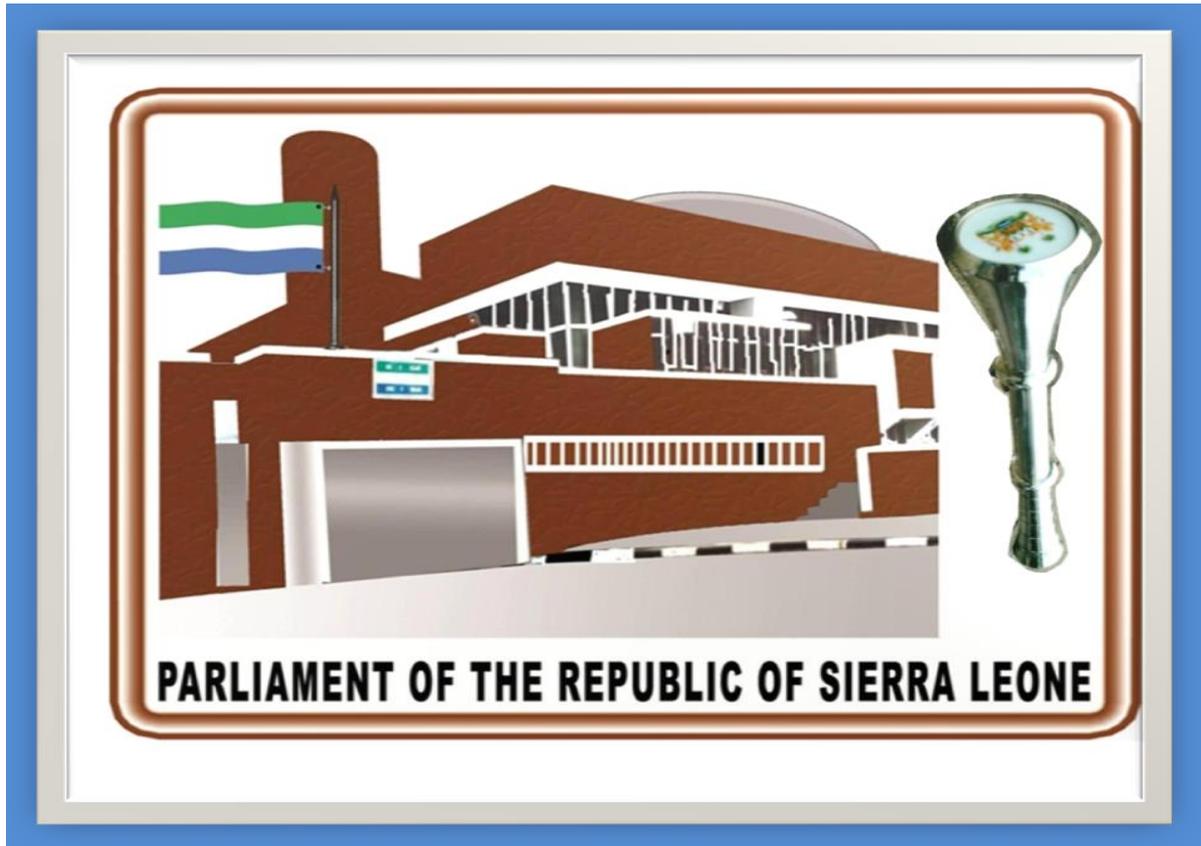
[HANSARD]

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

FIFTH SESSION - FIRST MEETING

WEDNESDAY, 18TH JANUARY, 2017

SESSION – 2016/2017



OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMEN TARY DEBATES

ON THE PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

[HANSARD]

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

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

Proceedings of the Sitting of the House
Held on Wednesday, 18th January, 2017.

CONTENTS

I. PRAYERS

II. RECORD OF VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS FOR THE PARLIAMENTARY SITTING, HELD ON TUESDAY, 17TH JANUARY, 2017

III. MOTION OF THANKS TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT, DR ERNEST BAI KOROMA

PROPOSER: HON. IBRAHIM BEN KARGBO

SECONDER: HON. CLAUDE D.M. KAMANDA

BE IT RESOLVED:

THAT WE THE MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT HERE ASSEMBLED WISH TO THANK HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT, FOR THE ADDRESS HE SO GRACIOUSLY DELIVERED ON THE OCCASION OF THE STATE OPENING OF THE FIFTH SESSION OF THE FOURTH PARLIAMENT OF THE SECOND REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE IN THE CHAMBER OF PARLIAMENT ON THURSDAY, 15TH DECEMBER, 2016.

[SECOND ALLOTTED DAY]



THE CHAMBER OF PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE

Official Hansard Report of the Proceedings of the House

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

Wednesday, 18th January, 2017.

I. PRAYERS

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

[The House met at 10:20 a.m. in Parliament Building, Tower Hill, Freetown].

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

The House was called to Order

II. CORRECTION OF VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS FOR THE PARLIAMENTARY SITTING, HELD ON TUESDAY, 17TH JANUARY, 2017

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, we go through the record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting, held on Tuesday, 17th January, 2017. As usual, we go page by page. Page 1? Page 2? Page 3? Page 4? Page 5? Page 6? There being no amendment or correction, could somebody move for the adoption of the record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting, held on Tuesday, 17th January, 2017 as presented?

HON. DR MICHAEL SHO-SAWYER: I so move, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON. BENNEH BANGURA: I so second Mr Speaker.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[Record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting, held on Tuesday, 17th January, 2017 has been adopted as presented]

III. MOTION OF THANKS TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT, DR ERNEST BAI KOROMA

HON. ALHAJI SERAY DUMBUYA: Thank you, Mr Speaker for giving me this opportunity to contribute to this debate on the Presidential Address that was delivered on the occasion of the State Opening of Parliament on Thursday, 15th December, 2016.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I solemnly stand here to inform you that the World is in economic recession; and that the economies of great countries in the World have stagnated, thereby causing deficit in their financial transactions. President Ernest Bai Koroma is honest enough to inform us that our country is going through difficult times, just like any other country in the World. He said, 'the going is tough.' If the going is tough, then the tough will get going. After all, we are a resilient nation.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Paragraph 7 of the Presidential Address states: **“Every country has moments in which it is tested.”** We were moving up and flying high before the Ebola virus struck and disrupted a once buoyant economy. The price of iron ore prices plummeted; but inspired by the immortal words of our nation’s anthem, I stand before you with a zeal that never tires and together we will succeed. This country has done it before and I have no doubt that with your support and the determination of our people, we will do it again. With our support as Members of Parliament, we will do it again.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the President is not looking for a hand-out for his people, but for his country. He is asking the International Community to give us the opportunity and recognition we deserve as a nation to compete. We are a nation of first in almost everything in Africa. Mr Speaker, in spite of our economic difficulties, [which is due to economic slowdown], we strive well where many have failed. Therefore, I want to thank this abled, capable and willing President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma, for exemplary leadership he has demonstrated. He has encouraged transparency in our governance system. He has upheld democracy and the Rule of Law. He has ensured the participation of our people in governance without fear, favour or intimidation. This is evident in the past elections in Bombali elections, Lunsar and Kailahun. We continue to make gains in the opposition’s strong holds.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to take you to Page 11, Paragraph 54 and 55 of the Presidential Address. With the leave of Mr Speaker, Paragraph 54 says: **“Mr Speaker, my Government also recognises that judicial reform and restructuring is critical for peace and prosperity, and key to promoting good governance and the Rule of Law. Our current Justice Sector Strategy and Investment Plan [JSRSIP 111] has the goal of making justice accessible, efficient, fair and affordable in Sierra Leone.”** It is only the APC Government that can do this. We need peace and I want the Honourable Members on the other side to take notes of that. Paragraph 55 says: **“Our Justice Sector reforms have ensured the deployment of magistrates and other justice sector officials across the country. We have also established the Legal Aid Board to provide indigent persons with legal representation.”** It is only our

government that has provided free advice and representation for the poor. President Ernest Bai Koroma's Government is an action oriented Government. He has demonstrated to us that there is power in action. It is an ideal that I hope to live to achieve and if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die for. Visible examples of action government are evident in massive infrastructural developments that this country has gone through. These massive infrastructural developments have transformed this country into a better place to live.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, President Ernest Bai Koroma has built and will continue to build strong institutions that will continue to deliver services, even when he retires from politics. Examples of these institutions are the Bumbuna Hydro Electricity Dam, the Mini Hydro Dam at Gloucester, Bankasoka Hydro Dam in Port Loko and Makali Hydro Dam and the construction of a National Stadium in Bo. In addition, this Government has also shopping malls in Kenema and Makeni. The Port Loko shopping centre will also be constructed very soon. It is only a development oriented President that can do such wonderful things.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, a colleague Honourable Member reminded us of what the late President Nelson Mandela of South Africa once said that 'it seems always impossible until it is done.' For the opposition, it is impossible, but for Dr Ernest Bai Koroma and his government, it is possible. It has been done and we must support him achieve what is good for this nation. I have lived enough to know that the APC Government has brought more developments into this country than any other political party. These developments are seen everywhere in this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to remind this Honourable House on six basic facts about Ernest Bai Koroma. Dr Ernest Bai Koroma, unlike his predecessors, has done more developments for this country than all other presidents put together. It is also a fact that Dr Ernest Bai Koroma has matched words with action by electrifying this country and the evidence is seen in the electricity we are all enjoying. It is a fact and even Pujehun is enjoying electricity and water supply as we speak. It is also a fact that he has given hope to the youth of this country than any other President. It is a fact that President Ernest Bai Koroma is giving women in the rural areas a sense of belonging by providing better social services than any other

President in this country. This is evident in the Free Health Care Programme. No President has ever done this for the children, lactating mothers and pregnant women. I have lived enough to give this testimony. It is also a fact that President Ernest Bai Koroma has appointed more women in positions of trust than any other President in this country. Finally, it is a fact that President Ernest Bai Koroma cannot be related to any other President, morally, ethically, inclusively and tolerantly, since the independence of this country.

HON. ANSUMANA J. KAIKAI: Mr Speaker, I rise on S.O 34. I would like to remind the Honourable Member on the other side that the sweeping statement he is making includes the late President Siaka P. Stevens, Joseph Saidu Momoh, and Alhaji Dr Ahmed Tejan Kabba. I want him to be very careful with the utterances he is making.

HON. ALHAJI SERAY DUMBUYA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to ask for the commitments of this Honourable House to ensure that the legacies of President Ernest Bai Koroma are protected and maintained. We have seen what he has done for this country. He is a man of exemplary character and it is left with us to guide this country, so that leaders to come will follow his footsteps.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would also like to refer the House to Page 40, Paragraph 9 of the Presidential Address. With your leave, Mr Speaker, it reads: **“Looking ahead, my government is laying the foundation for a permanent solution to the water sector issues in Freetown. Already, various terms of reference have been developed and are awaiting advanced contracting clearance from the African Development Bank to kick-off the relevant feasibility studies.”** As the saying goes, water is life and we believe that by providing electricity and enough water for the people, we would have done it all.

Once again, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank you very much for giving me this opportunity. We should work hard to protect the legacy of Dr Ernest Bai Koroma. I thank you.

HON. JAMES N. D. ALIE: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me add my voice to this Presidential debate, delivered in this Honourable House on Thursday, 15th December, 2016. During the debates on the Budget Speech, I did register my disappointment that the Minister of Finance

failed to reflect the austerity measure as announced by Government. I am also registering the same disappointment in the Presidential Speech, delivered in this House by the President. I was expecting a score sheet from the President, showing his achievements and those that he did not achieve when he promised us nine years ago.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if you turn to Paragraph 5, Page 2 of the Address, the President is imploring the social media patriots and internet nationalists, who criticise them to **"come into the ring for the heavy lifting."** What I am asking for is that the President should have also asked the praise singers and the spinners around him, who were telling him that he has a Midas touch because everything he touches turn to gold. He should tell them that not everything I touch, turns to gold because if anything I touch turns to gold, then there would not have been austerity measures in this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to inform this Honourable House that the austerity did not come by surprise. It is an accumulation of efforts that were not put into action. In fact, we find ourselves in this situation either because of the wrong implementation of good economic policies or the implementation of bad economic policies or both. Surprisingly, Mr Speaker, it was during this situation that a large number of delegates were taken to attend the United Nations Conference in New York. This Government was criticised for the number of delegates taken to attend that Conference. Some of them were dancing to the music, 'sɛn am go dɔŋ;' S.O.2. What were they sending down? They were sending down the economy of the country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, three weeks after that trip, this country was slammed with austerity measures. Unfortunately, we were told in this Speech to tighten our belts. If you you read this Speech, you would discover that the President lays more emphasis on the Ebola virus disease and the fall in the price of iron ore and how they affect this nation. The President used this statement ten times in his Speech. Mr Speaker, we are where we are because Government fails to ensure the diversification of the economy. Why should iron ore be our prime reason for the fall

of our economy? It is because the diversification we were talking about was just on paper. We did not diversify our economy and that is why we are in this position.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, much has not been said about corruption. I want to state here that corruption is one of the factors responsible for our economic decline. The President mentioned the word corruption in 'passing,' either when he mentioned 'Anti-Corruption' or where he made an attempt in Paragraph 47, when he was talking about electricity bills. Paragraph 47 is the only Paragraph he mentioned how to target corruption in the collection of electricity bills. We all know that corruption and integrity are two different words and whenever integrity is mentioned, corruption has no place there. All of us know the level of corruption in this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when we talk of attitudinal change, mentioned by the President, I want to know whose attitude we are going to change. We cannot expect people to behave wisely whilst we are behaving contrarily. During his inaugural Speech in this House, the President told this nation that he would maintained a zero tolerance on corruption. He also said that there would be no sacred cows in his government. The question is has he maintained that? He also said that even members of his family would not be spared if found wanting. We have to find out whether those promises have been fulfilled.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when you look at Paragraph 6, the President says, "**I have been able to put this country in the direction of transforming its roads, of investing more in health and education.....**" I want to target education as mentioned in that paragraph. I want you to tie that paragraph to Paragraphs 26, 27 and 28 of the Speech. I want to inform this House that all the technical and vocational institutions that were constructed during the Sababu Project are still closed. If this Government has invested so much in education, why are those institutions still closed? Despite the massive investments in education, there are still examination malpractices in this country. Thousands of teachers have not been approved and lecturers in tertiary institutions are still going on strike.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Paragraph 27 is the most disappointing part of this Speech. The President talks about the school feeding programme, but what is

stated in this is what I call 'outcome.' In other words, nothing has been achieved as far as Paragraph 27 is concerned and all what is mentioned by the President are simply outcomes. The school feeding programme is yet to be implemented. This is because when I went to my constituency in December, 2016, there was no school that has received money for the school feeding programme. Therefore, for you to say, 'these are the results,' is very deceitful.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to move the House to Paragraph 9, Page 3. The President talked about a four-lane road to be constructed from Wellington to Masiaka. As an Engineer, one of the ways we determine whether the road is a first class or second class road is the traffic congestion on that road. If you look at the Masiaka Road, after Mile 55, the traffic on that part of the road is very small. I am saying this because our people in Moyamba do not need a four lane road. They need a road that connects Songo to Moyamba, and that road is leading to five chiefdoms.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable James N. D. Alie, please let us be educated. What were you saying as an Engineer? Are you saying that until the volume of traffic on the road increases before you improve the road? If that is what you were trying to say, don't you take into account the future trend? Ten years ago, nobody expected traffic congestion on the Masiaka Road as we are currently experiencing. In fact, the volume of traffic from Up-gone to Calaba Town is unimaginable and nobody expected it ten years ago. Are saying that you can only improve roads when there is an increase in the volume of traffic?

HON. JAMES N. D. ALIE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I said that one of the reasons for constructing a first, second, or third class road is because of the volume of traffic on that road and I want to stand by that statement. You can make a future plan, but which one is more immediate or necessary? Is it the one that can solve a problem now or the one for ten/fifteen years ahead? The people in Moyamba, as I told you, do not need four lanes road. They only need a two lanes road that can connect Songo Junction to Moyamba. If that road is constructed, it will connect five chiefdoms; i.e., Ribbi, Bumpe, Kongbarra, Kaiyamba, etc. Again, the people of Matotoka do not need a four lane road because that road will lead to Matotoka from Bo, through Yilleh. I am sure my colleagues from Yilleh and Masingbi will be happy

with a two lane road because it will also link Masingbi, Pendembu and Kenema. That is what I am saying here, Mr Speaker. My colleague from Mile 91 will be happy if the road from Mile 91 to Magburaka would have been constructed. I want this Honourable House to know that this is a misplacement of priority and I stand by it.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in Paragraph 38, Page 8, the President was talking about the Local Content legislation. During the debates on the Budget Speech, I did ask a question about what have we put in place to make sure that the Local Content Policy works. According to that paragraph, the President was talking about **10%** sourcing of local rice for the Sierra Leone Police. Mr Speaker, where are the farms? Where are the rice mills? Where are the cotton farms and the cotton mills? Have we put all of these together to make sure that the local Content Policy works? The answer is no, Mr Speaker.

In fact, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Paragraph 29, Page 7 talks about the rehabilitation of Fourah Bay College. Paragraph 29 does not tie with Paragraph 38 simply because that contract was awarded to a foreign company. Do you want to tell me that we don't have local contractors in this country? Of course, I can testify here that the consultancy was awarded to us. We have to be very careful, Mr Speaker.

In Paragraph 12, Page 3, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the President was talking about the National Revenue Authority [NRA]. He said he would continue to improve its effectiveness and efficiency to enable them increase domestic revenue collection to **20%**. That is fine, but what are the measures being put in place to realise that dream? Three years ago, we were talking about tiller machines. The question is have those tiller machines arrived? Are they available in this country? So, if the tax collectors do not have anything to measure their performance, then we are nowhere. Yesterday, my friend was telling me that NRA has met revenue target. I told him that most of these moneys collected are not being registered. This is captured in the Auditor General's reports.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to look at education. I was expecting the President to have told us, in his Speech that all the technical and vocational institutions built during the Sababu Project are reopened and the two-shift school system is reverted to one-shift system. This is one of the recommendations in the

Professor Gbamanja's Enquiry. He should have told us that he has reduced some MDAs because of wastages and that some Embassies have been closed.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the President should have told us that the Attitudinal and Behavioural Change [ABC] Secretariat that was set up to change the attitudes of people and some Civil Servants is closed for failing to achieve its mandate. Lawlessness is on the increase and our youth have transformed into cliques to cause mayhem. He should have also told us that they have instructed the Anti-Corruption Commission [ACC] to investigate audit reports for the past three years. We are curious to know the status of youth unemployment in the country. We also want to know if this country is now a donor country and we are living in paradise, as was promised in his inaugural speech.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the President should have also told us that they have provided safe drinking water in all the district headquarter towns; and that they have provided an uninterrupted electricity to all district headquarter towns in the country. He was also expected to have told us that the 400 Agricultural Business Centres [ABC] are running and food sufficiency is **100%**. We were expecting him to have informed this House that corruption has been reduced to zero and that there is no sacred cow in his Government.

Furthermore, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the President should have told this nation that examination malpractices in our educational institutions are being resolved. We were expecting him to have come out strongly against women in higher learning institutions and girls in our schools who are luring their tutors to have sex with them in exchange for grades or vice versa; and that all qualified teachers have been approved and there are no more strikes in our tertiary institutions.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if the President would have told us all these, I would have said thank you, Mr President. With these few words, I want to thank you, Mr Speaker, for giving me this opportunity.

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker for giving me this opportunity to lend my voice to the motion of thanks to His Excellency the President for a Speech he graciously delivered in December, 2016. Mr Speaker, without

wasting time, I have to start my contribution by responding to some of the issues raised by colleagues Members of Parliament. As I was listening to the Honourable Member from Moyamba, he made reference to the austerity measures taken by this Government. He also said that this Government should have provided a scorecard. Well, I want to inform my colleague and the general public that there is already a scorecard in two fronts. The first scorecard is stated in Paragraph 3, Page 1. According to that paragraph, the President clearly stated what he has done; and the second scorecard has to do with what the people of this country have said the President has done [*Applause*]. With the leave of Mr Speaker, Paragraph 3 reads: **“We know there are some who questioned the actions we took before Ebola struck and iron ore prices fell....”**

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want the Honourable Member to know that the country needed massive investment in roads, and we have done that; this country needed free health care for pregnant women, lactating mothers and children, and we did that; this country needed to triple salaries for teachers, lecturers, nurses, doctors and civil servants, including Members of Parliament, and we did that; this country needed to pay for pupils taking public examinations, and we did that; this country needed to get women in the sciences in tertiary institutions and we did that; this country needed to improve its electricity, and we did that; and this country needed to put more resources into Agriculture and other sectors, and we took actions.

To me, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we need to highlight some of these points to educate our colleagues. There was also the dire need to improve on the dignity of the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces [RSLAF] and the Sierra Leone Police from the status of a disbanded army to an army with a minimum wage of five hundred thousand Leones and a bag of rice to keep their families happy at home. Again, there was also the need to construct a mini stadium in the second city of Sierra Leone, which is Bo City and we have done it. What other scorecard do you want?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there was also the need to improve on energy production and that prompted this Government to provide standby solar energy in every district headquarter town and other townships in the provinces and even in

Freetown, including Moyamba and we did that; there was the need to give a facelift to the Lungi International Airport, and we did that to international standard. This Government saw the need that the people of Bonthe Island needed safe ultra-modern ferry to convey them from the main land to the Island with first aid facility, we did that as well. Since the colonialists left us in this country, they left us with this Parliament building and we saw it that there was a need to construct a new ultra-modern administrative building to provide working environment for staff and Members of Parliament, it was done. Mr Speaker based on the salaries we used to earn, there was the dire need for increment of salaries and this Government made sure that salaries were increased by **15%** and it was implemented since July, 2015.

Furthermore, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there was the need for emergency water supply for all provincial headquarter towns and some districts headquarter towns, and we ensured that it happened. There was need to empower the youth by creating the Youth Ministry, Youth Commission and even creating youth villages and we have also done that. This Government also saw the need to electrify Bo City and we have signed all necessary documentations for the provision of solar energy.

With those few clarifications, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to ask simply questions. The questions are: What more do you want, having done all these developments? This question is the title of the President's Speech.

With that title, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to refer the House to the penultimate sentence in Paragraph 80, Page 18. With your leave, Mr Speaker, it reads: "**, as we again pledge our devotion, our strength and our might, this Parliament, this Government, all of you seated here today, all of our people at home and in the Diaspora, together, as we raise our hearts and voices on high, nothing can stop our recovery, growth and our development**" What else do you want?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the speech before us is a motion of thanks and I would like to rephrase my own thanksgiving to His Excellency the President. I am not thanking him for this Speech, but what he has done for this nation. If he had not done anything, he would have got nothing to write. What is in this document is a clear manifestation to tell this Honourable House what the President has done. Mr

Speaker, there are many ways of saying thank you. You can say thank you by word of mouth; you can say thank you by dancing and singing; you can say thank you by praising; but the most important way of saying thank you to His Excellency Dr Ernest Bai Koroma is by votes cast. Votes cast is one of the most important ways of saying thank you. I will tell you what the people have been saying and how they have applauded the President's developmental drive.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma became President from 2007 to date. I would like to use the four regions of this country and explain how the people of this country have expressed their profound thanks and appreciations to President Ernest Bai Koroma. I would like to start with the Eastern Region purportedly the stronghold of the opposition. Mr Speaker, for the Eastern Region, I will take Kailahun District as a case study. How the people of Kailahun District expressed their thanks to the President? They did that by casting their votes in favour of the President. For instance, during the 2007 elections, the APC party got **4%**. Mr Speaker, after he has led this country for five years, the first opportunity for the people of Kailahun District to say thank you Mr President came during the 2012 elections. The APC scorecard in Kailahun District rose from **4%** in 2007 to **25%** in 2012. To me, Mr Speaker, that way of thanking the President is more important to the President than any other way. During the 2013 bye-election, the APC scorecard further rose to **30.4%**; and in 2016 bye-election, the APC consolidated its gains in the said district and obtained **35.3%**. Again, during the bye-election in Ward 10, the APC emerged as winner with **60.9%** in Kailahun District. This is how the people of Kailahun District expressed their thanks to President Ernest Bai Koroma.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I move to the Southern Region. For the Southern Region, I am aware of two Local Councils bye-elections in Moyamba and Bonthe Districts. I will take Moyamba as a case study. In Ward 301, Moyamba District, this Honourable House would agree with me that the APC emerged as winner of that Ward. This shows that the people of that district appreciated Dr Ernest Bai Koroma by allowing the APC to win that election.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I move to the Western Region. For the Western Region, I will not use Constituency 107 as a case study, but Constituency 094 and

Ward 329 in the Western Rural. During that election, the SLPP got **19%** whilst the APC obtained **64%**. That is a way of saying thank you to His Excellency the President for what he has done.

HON. ANSUMANA J. KAIKAI: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Honourable Member was correct, but only that the Ward he was referring to, the Member of Parliament in that Constituency is an APC Member of Parliament; and as far I am concerned, that Constituency has only gone SLPP at one time and that was during the time of the late President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah. Apart from that, that Constituency has been an APC stronghold since 1962. That Constituency is between Port Loko District and Tonkolili District, where there are movable voting. Normally, movable voting takes place by voters coming to vote in elections in Moyamba District in that Constituency.

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: Mr Speaker, in response to the concern raised by the Deputy Minority Leader, the Councillor, whose death gave rise to that bye-election, was an SLPP Councillor. Besides, if we go to the definition of a bye-election, it simply means a special election held between regular elections to replace someone who has died or resigned from office. In fact, the acronym SLPP stands for the 'Sierra Leone People's Party' and Ward 329 is part of Sierra Leone. Therefore, these people are Sierra Leoneans and they have the right to say thank you to whosoever they choose. They can equally say thanks to the SLPP, but they chose to say thanks to His Excellency the President based on what he has done for this country. This Speech is a true reflection of what is on the ground.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I move to the Northern Region and I will use Koinadugu District as a case study. I am using that district [Ward 157 to be specific] not because I come from there, but because it is located in Sierra Leone and I am a Sierra Leonean. The Ward in question is located in my Constituency, Constituency 046. The outcome of that bye-election saw the SLPP with **5%** and APC **93%**. The election took place immediately after the announcement of the economic measures and removal of fuel subsidy.

THE SPEAKER: The Honourable James N. D. Alie was asking whether you are working for the National Electoral Commission [NEC]. I really want you to take it

slight heartedly because Honourable James N. D. Alie is one of the most decent Honourable Members in this Parliament.

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: I take your advice, Mr Speaker. In that regard, when I was in college, they used to say, 'know your lecturers.' It is believed that if you know your lecturers, you hardly fail exams. When I was in court, they usually say, 'know your Judge.' It is also believed that if you know your Judge, you hardly loose cases. Now that I have been in Parliament for past four years, it is also said, 'know your Speaker' if you want to continue catching the Speaker's eye.

In that light Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I know that Mr Speaker hates repetition and that is why I will not waste time to talk about the Youth Villages because that issue has been eloquently addressed yesterday by my colleague from Koinadugu District. Also, I will not talk about the division of Koinadugu District or the amalgamation of chiefdoms in Koinadugu District because it has also been addressed yesterday.

Finally, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to refer the House to Paragraph 58. According to that Paragraph, the President is asking that if we are thanking him, we have to do that with integrity. With the leave of Mr Speaker, it reads: **"Integrity should not only be displayed in public offices; integrity should be exemplified in our relationships because it is a driver of employment, growth and success. When hard working compatriots in the Diaspora send money to start businesses, build houses or support their communities, do not squander it. Working with integrity with their money will create more jobs and encourage them to create more opportunities in the country. Wealth creation depends on working diligently when employed by international investors..."** With those few words, I thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

HON. MOSES B. JORKIE: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker for giving me this opportunity. We are here to say thanks to His Excellency the President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma, for the Speech he so graciously delivered on Thursday, 15th December, 2016. As the Honourable Member from Koinadugu District was making his presentation, he titled the Speech in the form of a question' i.e., **"What more do**

Sierra Leoneans want?" I think we are here to represent our people and I am going to base my contribution on that title in the form of a question.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will thank the President because he has done well for this country and it is a fact we cannot belittled. I know that governance is continuity; i.e., what has been done by the late President Ahmed Tejan Kabba is what is to be continued by the current President. The Honourable Member on that side should not be oblivious of that fact. The infrastructural developments the Honourable Members on that side of the House were talking about were as a result of the plan work of late President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah. Today, I am going to read some parts of his handing over speech for the edification of this House. Probably, Members of Parliament on the other side were unable to see this particular document. With your leave, Mr Speaker, it reads: **"I understand that you have visited the Bumbuna Hydro Electric Project and have seen the state of progress for yourself."** Dr Ahmed Tejan Kabba was reading this to the current President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma. **"In the meantime, measures to further improve Electricity situation in the capital city are currently in progress with the help of the Moroccan Technical Team."** Therefore, this tells you that the electricity we are talking about today was also the handiwork of late President Ahmed Tejan Kabba. What the current President is doing now is a continuation of what the late President Ahmed Tejan-Kabbah has started.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the late President Ahmed Tejan Kabba also talked about infrastructure. From his handing over Speech to the current President, it reads: **"With regard the roads, as soon as the war ended, my Government assiduously embarked upon the task of repairing and restoring the road network with the help of the Kuwait Fund, BADEA, World Bank, African Development Bank, Islamic Bank and the European Union."** This tells you that the late President was also on infrastructural work. He also said: **"The following roads were being reconstructed or were under construction; Blama/Gendema Ferry Road in the South, Makeni/Kamakwei Road in the North; Mathora/kabala axis and the Masiaka/Makeni Road in the North."**

Work is in progress on several other roads such as the Masiaka/Bo Road, mainly in the South and the Tokeh/Lumley Road in the Western Area.”

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I also found out before Dr Ahmed Tejan Kabba handed over power, he had already solicited funds for most of the roads being completed by the current Government and some that are under construction. The handing over Speech says: **“Funding had been secured for several planned road projects; such as the Bo/Bandajuma Road, Kenema/Koindu Road, Makeni/Matotoka Road, Matotoka/Koidu Road, the Songo/Moyamba Road and the Moyamba/Moyamba Junction Road. With regards to the Hill Bye-Pass Road that will run behind Pademba Road Prisons and exit behind Kissy Road Cemetery, delay in starting this project had been too long with protracted negotiations with property owners.”**

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we need to thank the current President because he thought it fit to continue from where his predecessor stopped. He has done well because he wants to see Sierra Leone on the map. Therefore, he deserves thanks for what he has done and is still doing for this country. However, I want this House to know that he inherited most of what he is implementing now.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank the President for the Free Health Care initiative. I want the Honourable Member from Koinadugu District to know that the Free Health Care Programme is being placed in the hands of our medics. I want the Honourable Daniel B. Koroma to tell us whether these health workers are doing the right thing. The answer is no because the Government failed to provide serious monitoring of the programme. Therefore, I am saying that we want more monitoring of this process. The Free Health Care is meant for three categories of people; i.e., the pregnant women, lactating mothers and the children under-five. Are these pregnant women receiving the Free Health Care? These health workers are not doing the right thing at all, Mr Speaker. In fact, they are not supposed to take moneys from pregnant women, lactating mothers and for children under-five.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when I visited the Rokupa Government Hospital, I interviewed a woman about the Free Health Care Programme. Before she was registered, she was asked to pay a registration fee of **Le10, 000;** and for any

subsequent visits, she was paying **Le5, 000**. Mr Speaker, when she finally gave birth, the person who was taking care of the Placenta was paid **Le10, 000** and she also paid **Le10, 000** for the room. Mr Speaker, any lactating mother who goes to that hospital for immunisation, you will be asked to pay **Le2, 000** per child. If that is the issue, my question is that is this called Free Health Care for this category of people? The answer is no. The President has said that it is free health care programme. Those who are implementing this programme are not doing the right thing. Therefore, what do you want Sierra Leoneans to do? Please, you have to ensure that the programme is well monitored for it to be in the right direction.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would also like to talk about the Democ Centres. Approximately, we have sixty-five Democ Centres in this country. These are centres meant to take care of pregnant women and children under-five. The question is who are taking care of those centres. Do we have medical doctors or surgical assistants in those centres to immediately respond to emergency situations? I don't think so, Mr Speaker. There are no medics in those centres at all. The centres are there, but nothing is being put in place to respond to emergency situations.

Furthermore, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I come to the referral system, which is a very big problem in this country. How can you travel with a woman with either anti-partum or post-partum haemorrhage on top a motorbike? Haemorrhage simply means bleeding; and if that is the case, do you think this will work? How possible is it to travel with a bleeding woman on a motorbike? In those days, our ancestors were using hammocks in their villages to attend to such situations. In other words, when such cases were reported, the patients were usually placed in hammocks and taken to the health centre. Nowadays, however, that system of transporting patients has been replaced with motorbikes. I think we have to go back to that system because the ambulances you are talking about have not even got to those centres. Most of the patients usually died on the way. We want the Government to put things in place, so that this issue is resolved.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to briefly talk about drug supply to health centres. It is true that the Free Health Care Programme is in existence and we are not denying that fact, what about the drug supply in those centres? It will interest

this House to know that the four drips we usually give for those drugs are in three categories; viz, hypertonic freeze, hypotonic freeze and isotonic freeze. These drips are being handled by MCHAs, who do not know how to administer these particular drugs. If you go to these health centres, you will discover expired drugs in those medical stores.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want this House to know that whenever I go to my Constituency, I always go around the Constituency to see what is happening. I have visited a lot of health centres in my Constituency and I know what is happening there. We have a lot of expired drugs. These are the drugs they give to our people, even when they have not demanded for those drugs. Why are you wasting money on buying expired drugs. Therefore, I am asking Sierra Leoneans to always look at the type of drugs they receive from the MCHAs.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, my district, Bonthe District, is not benefitting from the Free Health Care Programme. This is because the terrain is not navigable. Normally, whenever Bonthe District is mentioned, people think that the Island is overwhelmed by water. Well, I want to state here it is a false impression. We have areas being engulfed by water, but other areas are not. We have complete mainland, half mainland, half inland. That is the topography of the Island. For some people, it is very difficult to travel from the Island to Madina because of the distance. In fact, you have to use a canoe or boat to come to the Democ centres, which is located at the Madina Community Health Centre. Those people are suffering, Mr Speaker. My colleague on the other side was asking 'what more do we want.' We want improved health centres, so that the health workers can take care of our people.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me come to the educational aspect. To be frank, I want to tell you that **70%** of our primary schools are being marginalised. Government brought the idea of 'Education for All,' which means that every child can access quality education. I want to know if this is really working. To me, it is not working because majority of the schools are not benefitting from these learning materials. Few primary schools are supplied with learning materials while the others are not. Is this good for the progress of this nation? Are those left out not Sierra

Leonean children? Why are you selecting the schools? I want Government to discourage the idea of serial number before given learning materials. Every school going child has the right to benefit from this gesture. The introduction of serial numbering for every school is tantamount to marginalisation of other schools without serial numbers. Currently, Mr Speaker, if your school cannot provide the voucher, you will not be supplied with learning materials.

Again, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, majority of the schools are not benefiting from the school feeding programme because they do not have the voucher or serial number. These schools are not benefiting at all from what Government is providing to schools. Some of the school going children cover long distances from their villages to go to their respective schools without lunch. Why are these schools excluded? Is that a good idea? Our children are suffering because Government failed to include those schools in the school feeding programme. I want to suggest that Government stops the programme because it is creating more problems for our people.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me go to Agriculture. In the first place, I want to inform this House that Bonthe District is a unique District, as I have already stated, because the mainland of Bonthe District is endowed with fertile land for mechanical rice cultivation. You are aware of that, but you have chosen to neglect that District in terms of agricultural activities. According to historical records, this country was used to export rice from the Tormabom Rice Development Corporation to other countries in the 1950s. We have completely lost that prestige as exporter of rice. Therefore, we have to pay attention to Bonthe District, with particularly reference to Tormabom and its environs. Also, there are other chiefdoms in my Constituency and all of them are endowed with fertile lands, fit for agricultural activities. Those chiefdoms are being neglected for the past years. I want to plead with the President to pay attention to Bonthe District.

With those few words, I want to thank the President for what he has done for this country. I want him to continue doing more for the people of Sierra Leone. Let him take note of the few points I have highlighted. I thank you, Mr Speaker.

HON. DR ROLAND F. KARGBO: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to lend my voice to the motion of thanks to His Excellency the President for the Speech he

so graciously delivered on the occasion of State Opening of Parliament. The Presidential Address is an annual event and it is a very important event because it gives a rundown of all the activities undertaken by Government during the course of the year. It is an event where the President is also expected to tell this nation his plans for the following year. It is my opinion that this Address should not be treated with levity. When arguments are flagged up, they should be seriously treated. There are many important issues highlighted in the Speech for which we need to say thanks and I will look at three areas.

In the first place, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank His Excellency the President he has been very consistent in the face of the numerous challenges. He came into governance under the noble ticket of the APC, and he introduced the 'Agenda for Change.' At the end of his first five years, he went to Bombali District with a Performance Scorecard Card, which showed excellent. On the basis of that performance assessment, the people of this country decided that because of his successes and his potentials to take this country forward, he deserved another five years. Mr Speaker, what I am seeing in this Speech is another performance assessment result, showing what he has done in the last four years. I need not go through all of these because many speakers have said a lot about them. Therefore, the APC Government should be lauded for its outstanding performance in the areas of health, education, Agriculture, etc. You can also thank him for specific development in our own areas in our constituencies.

In 2012, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the President came with a clear vision for the development of this country. Yesterday, an Honourable Member from Bo was telling this House that the President should thank the opposition [SLPP] for directing him to take the right development trends. I am surprised because these plans were not accidental. He came into office with those plans and he did not pick them from anyone. He had those plans when he was campaigning for the presidency. The outbreak of the Ebola virus and the drop in the price of iron ore disrupted the work of this Government, but we stood firm against the disease and we defeated it.

Therefore, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when the President presented his report to this House on the 15th December, 2016, it is our duty, as the

representatives of the people, to point out certain areas he promised to do for the people that he has done and those he has not done. I want to remind my colleagues on the other side that they were present when the President delivered the Speech. This means that he owes them nothing. So we need to be very thankful for what this President has done for us. We on this side are very pleased because the President has made us proud. There were other aspirants, but our party is a united party to present one aspirant. We had our differences, but we were focused to ensure that we take over the governance of the state. We are happy that we have a very strong opposition, but we cannot rule out what the Majority Leader of this Parliament used to say in this Well, 'this is the age of specialisation.' In other words, the Party on the other side has specialised position and we will allow them to be in opposition. We on the APC side are specialised in governing this country and we will remain in governance for the next twenty to thirty years.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to focus on my Constituency. I have a lot to thank the President on behalf of my people for the development he has brought to that part of the country. For instance, the road project is going on very well in my Constituency; i.e., the Makeni/Kamakwei Road. I want to inform this House that the Makeni/Kamakwei Road is one of the Government funded projects in the country. It was not in existence when Dr Ernest Bai Koroma took over power in 2007. He ensured that the project is created with **100%** Government funds. I also want to thank him for the continuation of the road project from the Kambia District to Kamakwei and Kabala. Again, I want to thank the President for the reinstatement of Karina District. I dreamt that the new chiefdom will be Kamakwei and I want to share it with His Excellency the President.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I also want to thank the President for the creation of a second constituency in my area. Before the census was conducted, Constituency 036, which covers Selah Limba and Tambaka Chiefdoms, has been divided into two constituencies. I am very grateful for that and I want to thank the President.

Additionally, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to say thanks to His Excellency the President for the inclusion of Kamakwei in the energy distribution

sector. The Government project for the electrification of all district headquarter towns was only meant for the district headquarters, but he graciously extended this gesture to Kamakwei. Few months ago, officials from the Electricity Distribution and Supply Agency [EDSA] went there to survey and they brought the good news to us.

Finally, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want you to join us in thanking His Excellency for the good work he did for this country.

HON. BAI J. KALOKO: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am lending my voice to the Speech of the President, which was graciously delivered in the Chamber of Parliament, on 15th December, 2016. This is an annual event and its strict observance is very important. We have to express thanks to the President for what he has done for this country and what he intends to do. We are following the trend of what has been happening for the past four years. We should thank him because he has performed exceptionally well.

In this Parliament, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we always thank and praise God Almighty before starting the business of the day and I think it is very proper to do that. Even God has asked us to be praying to him. In the ninth 'Surah' of the Holy Quran Verse seven, Allah has asked us to be thankful to Him and if you refuse to thank Him, He will not give you more, but when you thank Him, He will give you more *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to talk about honesty and sincerity displayed by the President, which is clearly manifested on Page 1, Paragraph 1. With leave of Mr Speaker, it reads: **"On becoming President in 2007, I vowed to move this country forward, to transform its roads, improve electricity, invest more in education and health..."** That is clear indication to show President Ernest Bai Koroma's honesty and sincerity. Mr Speaker, let us look at how he has done that. Before now, people were thinking about the ordeals they would have to go through when travelling to the provinces because of bad roads. They were not thinking about the fare they would have to pay, but they pains and sufferings caused by unpaved roads. Today, Mr Speaker, you can leave Freetown to Conakry and come back the same day without exhaustion. Again, you can leave Freetown to Kono and come back the same day. I want to emphasise here that the

APC led-Government is here to develop this country and not to destroy it. It is here to do better things for the people of this country. This is exactly what this President is doing for us. If you take Bo, Magburaka, Makeni, Pujehun and other towns, you will see the amount of improvements this Government is doing in terms of roads construction.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I think it is also prudent to give praise where praise is due. In that case, I want to remind this Honourable House that the SLPP did some development during its eleven years rule. For instance, they constructed one street in Bo City, which starts from Shellmingo to Y Junction. They did even expand that road to Christ the King College [CKC]. The APC led-Government has extended that road from Y Junction to CKC. Presently, if you stand around Fenton Road, you will see the Police Station. The APC is also doing a marvellous job at Tikonko Road and Prince Williams Street in Bo, purportedly the opposition's stronghold. I want to thank the President for all those developments in those areas he has been doing his work.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to look at the youth. Yesterday, a colleague from Bo was saying that the youth have taken stone mining as their profession. He said that wherever the Chinese are constructing roads, or building, our youth go to those sites as stone miners. Well, I want to remind him that stone mining is a profession that enables stone miners to feed their families. These youth do not want to stay idle and cause social problems. If stone mining is their only source of livelihood, it is better for them to engage in it, so that they can take care of their homes and solve their problems. I think this is better than being arrested for loitering.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want inform this House that the people of Moyamba are appreciating the APC and they are waiting patiently for the APC. I sympathise with APC Member of Parliament who has got only one Councillor. I hope that he will get four Councillors in the next elections. More Councillors and more people are coming to the APC from that part of the country. There is an adage in French, which reads in English: **"That men and women in the political**

spectrum are always like butterfly, they are here and there” [Applause]. So, we want them to come and the APC will lead them.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to make an appeal because whenever there are problems in your Constituency, your constituents are always counting on your leadership and wisdom to resolve those problems. I am coming from an area where mining activities are rampant and the people in that part of the country depend on alluvial diamond mining. In that light, I am kindly asking Government to involve our indigenes in the distribution of mining companies to those areas. Our local people are usually consulted and by all indication, they should be involved. If a particular company has come to an area for the purpose of mining, I think the local people should be involved from negotiation to implementation. This is very important and it must be treated with all seriousness.

Also, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if a mining company is only interested in a particular mineral like iron ore, I think it would be good if other companies that are interested in other minerals are encouraged to work side-by-side with the company interested in iron ore. A single company cannot utilise up to 2, 300 acres of land, thereby depriving the other companies. I think this is very important and there must be guidelines for these companies to operate.

On a final note, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Makali was mentioned in the area of energy. I think that is a very good work and since that dam has been completed, I think it is going to serve the people in that area. My people in the Kasseh, Masimera Chiefdom, Kunike Chiefdom, etc., expressed their thanks to this Government because they are always considered. We hope that this Government will continue to do more for them. On that note, Mr Speaker, I want to thank you very much.

HON. FRANK KPOSOWA: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I consider this opportunity to be very significant because this is the last time I am going to contribute to the Presidential Address in my capacity as Member of Parliament. The purpose of this exercise is to say thanks to His Excellency the President for his Speech. If not anyone else, I am in a privileged position to say thanks to His Excellency the President for the special role he played in securing

medical facilities for me outside the boundaries of this country *[Applause]*. I would remain grateful to him. One would say it is my right, but is a right of many people in this country. My illness was not unique because many other people are also suffering from it. However, that is not the case because for President to have used his resources to ensure that I see the light of the day, I think it is, but prudent for me to say thank you, Mr President.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am going to look at events as they have unfolded during my nine years in this House. I am no longer a young man, like most of you here. What I have seen and experienced is going to leave an indelible impression in me for the rest of my life. I am going to miss this House, miss the usual uproar that takes place when points are made on either side and I am also going to miss the Speaker of this House. I will also miss those issues you handled, using your parliamentary experience and those experiences have formed the letters of Cicero, the State man. I want to promise here that I will always be with you.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, my former boss, who is also a distinguished Member of this House, did articulate eloquently on the achievements made by the President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma. I am not in disagreement with him, but I have to make certain clarifications. As an SLPP Member of Parliament, I would not like people to judge us by what is factual. On the area of the Bumbuna Electricity Project, the SLPP played a formidable role in that regard. The Majority Leader of this House is not here, but the Deputy Minority Leader, Ansumana J. Kaikai and some other Members of Parliament, who were members of the parliamentary oversight Committee on Energy would attest to this House that by the time the SLPP was leaving power, the Bumbuna project was almost **95%** complete. Those who are honest can attest to this, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the SLPP, as a responsible Government then, behaved like a pregnant woman, waiting to give birth. How did the SLPP react? We carried out studies like a pregnant woman who buys napkins and pay regular visit to gynaecologist. Therefore, we carried out studies to determine and secure our preparedness for the eventual landing of Bumbuna. How did we do that? We invited a Moroccan Company to come to Sierra Leone and service the transmission lines

inherited from our colonial masters. Those transmission lines were so bad that the current transmission losses were around **37¹/₂ %**. In that regard, we brought the Moroccan Engineers here to work on those transmission lines. They were here to prepare for the eventual landing of Bumbuna. Therefore, the Bumbuna Electricity Project was not only an APC completed project because the SLPP laid the foundation for its completion. We have to accept the fact that governance is a continuous business.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, some years ago, if an HIV patient wanted to go to America, he/she would not be allowed. However, efforts were made by the Obama Administration to restructure the immigration requirements and he succeeded. But that arrangement started during the Bush Administration. Therefore, I want to inform Honourable Members on the other side of this House that most of these achievements started by the SLPP. The SLPP carried out fourteen engineering studies on the Bumbuna Electricity Project. I have the records with me because I was acting as the Media Consultant to the Sierra Leone Roads Authority. We carried out the studies for the Kailahun Road because we wanted to use that road to benefit from transshipment of facilities to the Republic of Mali.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to admonish Honourable Members not to be subjective in discussing national issues. We should learn to judge people by the facts available. This is why I have respect for the Deputy Speaker of this House, Honourable Thomas Segepoh and Honourable Daniel B. Koroma, who are from the legal profession. In their profession, they always admonish people to learn to listen to the other side. In Latin, it is said: "**Audi alteram partem.**" You have to listen to the other side before you can make an informed judgment.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when revenue from iron ore started plummeting, the economy also started stagnating but we failed to advise ourselves earlier. This supports the saying that 'diamonds are not forever.' We never put ourselves in a position to wait for the raining day and this was why we found ourselves in this position. I want to remind this House that we on this side have cooperated with the President in many areas; i.e., the various legislations we passed in this House are

meant to facilitate the successful implementation of government's programmes. I think we deserve some praise and recognition.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, somebody spoke about rural/urban migration. I want to state here that Rural/urban migration is a by-product of over centralisation of development. Most of the people coming to Freetown are not resident in Freetown and some of them could not find accommodation here. This Honourable House would agree with me that some of the facilities in Freetown are not found in the provinces. I think we have to review our policies in terms of ensuring effective decentralisation of some of the facilities in the rural areas. I think tourism is the most effective sector towards the realisation of that dream. In other words, it is one of the most effective mechanisms for ensuring the decentralisation of wealth and opportunities.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when I was a journalist, I attended a conference in Harare, Zimbabwe. According to the documentation we had, we were supposed to hold that conference in Harare; but when we arrived there, we were taken to the Broncery Park, which was about 300 miles from Harare. I asked one of the protocol officers why they decided to take us to another place when the conference was supposed to take place in Harare. We were told that the place you have been brought to is where you would buy your oranges and other fruits from our local people. They said this is how our people survive and we want to ensure that they realise their dreams. This was what I meant by 'decentralisation of wealth creation.' If we move relevant aspects of development to certain parts of this country, this business of people wanting to come to Freetown will stop.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want this House to ensure that robust policies are put in place in order to ensure that rural areas are made attractive to investors, even if that has to do with foreign direct investment.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the President spoke about security in his Speech and every serious Government must take security issues very seriously. This is because there is a security threat that has taken the centre stage in modern governance structure; i.e., the cybercrimes. Cybercrime has to do with crimes involving the internet. Mr Speaker, I want this House to know that this country is

losing approximately **USD 70mln** through cyber related offences annually. As a concern citizen, I have not seen the urge and urgency to address this surging menace. With the cooperation of the Majority Leader of this House and the Government, the Chairmen of the parliamentary oversight Committees on Presidential Affairs and Defence will be laying on the Table of this Honourable House a report on a workshop he attended on how to address issues relating to cybercrime and cyber security. I was part of that workshop and cyber security issues were eloquently discussed.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, a lot has already happened, but we should try by all means to address this challenge. It is a challenge that has come to confront us as a nation. I want to emphasise here that there has not been an instance where an issue came up that we on the opposition have not been included. The Government has enjoyed a healthy working relationship with the opposition. That is the Government has benefitted from the cooperation of the opposition in terms of legislations to improve lots of people in this country. I think there is evidence to show this claim, if only you take your time to look at the Hansard. We supported the Government to ratify documents relating to climate change. This is why I want to say that in doing all of that, we should not forget our culture. Let our culture be a hidden strength for our development, Mr Speaker. I thank you very much.

[The House was adjourned at 12:23 noon for lunch and resumed at 1:40 p.m.]

HON. REGINA MARAH: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to lend my voice to this very important Speech that was so graciously delivered in this House by His Excellency the President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma. On behalf of Constituency 005 in Kailahun District, I want to say thanks to His Excellency the President for all the development programmes he and his government have implemented in that Constituency. If my constituents and I fail to give thanks to the President, it means we are very ungrateful. A lot of development programmes have been implemented in that Constituency, especially in my own Chiefdom, Malema Chiefdom. Mr Speaker, since communication was brought into this country, it was only last year a pole was erected in part of the country because of the support of His Excellency the President and the Committee on Information

and Communications. As I speak, I can communicate with my people with ease because of that development. I want to thank the President for that gesture. If you go to my Constituency, you will see visible developments, i.e., the construction of feeder roads and provision of many other facilities. Therefore, I want to say thanks to President for those developments.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I also want to thank His Excellency the President for empowering the women of this country. Our President believes in the effectiveness of women in this country. This House could recall that in March, 2016, quite a number of women were appointed to serve in ministerial positions. I also want to remind this noble House that all the women who were appointed to serve in various capacity are doing very well. For instance, when the President was delivering his Speech in December, he talked about the great improvements in the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources in terms of revenue generation. The Minister in that Ministry is a female, but she is doing very well. In fact, all the female Ministers are doing very well in their various offices. The deputy female Ministers are also doing well and the women will continue to prove to the President that we can perform. All the female parliamentarians are doing very well, and we will continue to prove to the President and this government that women can do great things.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I also want to thank His Excellency for the support he has been giving to my constituents in the area of Agriculture. The Ministry of Agriculture gave a lot of support and is still supporting the women, youth and other age grades in my Constituency.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, a lot has been said about infrastructure since yesterday to date. I would like to emphasise here that it is only the APC-led Government that has improved on the infrastructure in every corner of this country. I believe that when the time comes for us to appreciate the President and his Government, we will do that through the ballot box. Kailahun District has been doing it because the people of Kailahun District are grateful for the developments that are taking place in our district. We will continue to be grateful because we love development. There are people who, even if they see developments at their doorsteps, they will choose to turn blind eye on those developments. They would

pretend as if they are not seeing anything good because they do not want to say thank you, Mr President. We need to appreciate development and that is exactly what Kailahun District is doing.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to assure this House that Kailahun District will continue to do more for this Government and His Excellency the President. With these few words, I want to say thank you, Mr President.

HON. ABU JAJUA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, my colleagues have been showering praises on the President for what he has done for this country. I also want to thank him for the political will he provided to the Ministry of Agriculture. He appointed a dynamic and pragmatic Minister, Prof. Monty Jones. In 2016, Prof. Monty Jones and his team went to every district to inform the local farmers that **80%** of Government's subvention would be given to them directly. As I speak, I am feeding on locally produced rice.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I also want to also thank the President for supporting my Constituency in the rehabilitation of the Nixon Memorial Hospital and the referral hospital in the Moa Barracks. I host the Moa Barracks and during my last visit, I was able to inspect that structure. I want to report to this House that the structure was perfectly renovated. The only challenge we have is electricity. We need electricity in that building.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I also want to thank the President for the political will he demonstrated to the Ministry of Water Resources. This House could recall that we have had water crisis in Freetown last year, but he was able to provide support in resolving that issue. If you turn to Paragraph 39, Page 9, under 'Water and Environmental Protection,' I am very pleased to inform this House that this particular issue is already in the form of a draft Bill by the Ministry of Water Resources, which is a call for the sustainability of water for the people of this nation. This particular paradigm is the practice of 21st Century in sustaining water. How can you supply water to the people without destroying the environment? In the 19th Century, nations were involved in constructing high infrastructural water structures, wherein the environment is destroyed. Sierra Leoneans are currently undergoing some training on how to manage the water provided to the communities.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, one of my colleagues asked a rhetorical question, i.e., 'what more do we want.' I want to tell him that we need electricity in Moa Barracks and we also need the streets of Segbwema to be paved. The President promised us that every community that has natural resources would be utilised for the development of the community and we provided the quarry deposit for the construction of the Kenema/Pendembu Road. As I speak, the Segbwema Township is very dusty. We are pleading to the President to ensure that the township of Segbwema is paved.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in 2013, the rehabilitation of Segbwema Water System was commenced, but after 2014, the work has stopped. We heard that the consultant went to do social impact assessment, but no work has commenced since that time. I am calling on the President to support us for the rehabilitation of the water system in the township. Segbwema is a very big town which has a modern settlement. We now have twenty-four hours electricity from solar energy which is not sponsored by Government. We have a very large population in Segbwema, which means that we don't need water wells.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, just out of interest, who did the solar light installations if it was not sponsored by Government?

HON. ABU JAJUA: Mr Speaker, it was sponsored by the European Union [EU] and implemented by Welt Hunger.

Finally, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to refer the House to Paragraph 53, Page 11. With the leave of Mr Speaker, **"Mr Speaker, our commitment to moving forward the decentralisation process is unshakable. It is in this light that we commend the contribution of our partners to our decentralisation process and urge them to speed up support to our efforts at overcoming the remaining challenges."** My colleagues have been saying that there is no more problems, but the President was very sincere in his Speech when he acknowledged the fact that there are still challenges. We all know that decentralisation is one of the key components of good governance, but the President did not say anything concerning the date for the general election in 2018. He should have indicated it in his Speech.

At this junction, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to end my contribution and to thank you very much for this opportunity.

HON. DAN Y. SESAY: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank you for allowing me to express my profound thanks to His Excellency the President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma for this Speech. I wish to join the rest of those who have expressed their appreciations to the President for the wonderful job he has done for this country. Mr Speaker, since he took over the leadership of this country, he has been tolerant, caring, focused and responsive to the needs of the people of this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank all of you that have tried to bring out the reality about Dr Ernest Bai Koroma for what he has done for this nation. Some people are very sincere, whilst others are not sincere to themselves. I want to state here that the most sincere person in this country is the President because the people of this country loved him and they voted him to become President of this country. Therefore, he has proven himself to be very sincere and appreciative for what the people have done for him. This is evident in the development strides he has made on Education, Health, Agriculture, Roads, etc.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, may I remind you that I am not here to repeat what others have said, but to thank Mr President for one basic thing he has done for this nation. That is, creating an enabling environment for us to have a teaching hospital. This is an important aspect of this nation's existence. Few months ago, when I was attacked by an ailment that could have been treated here, I had to go to Ghana, where they have the necessary instrument for diagnosis. Today, I am here speaking as if nothing happened to me. What brought about that is the teaching hospital, which the people of Ghana had long established. Today, the people of Ghana are enjoying that facility.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I spoke with the Ambassador of Sierra Leone to Ghana and I told her the facilities we still need in this country. I am sure she discussed it with the President; and as I speak, there is light at the tunnel for a Teaching Service Hospital to be constructed at Kerry Town. That is a special blessing for this nation and I want people to be thankful to the President. We should not be

sending people to other countries to cure some of these diseases that could be easily cured in this country. The President has a very good vision for this nation's development. He has ensured that lots of resources are allocated to the Ministry of Health and Sanitation, but the Ministry has not done much to realise the President's dreams for this nation.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if you go to Youyi Building, there are many doctors there, the question one would ask is, what are they doing at Youyi Building? We have provincial headquarter towns where these experienced doctors should be sent. They should be doing their jobs, rather than sitting in those offices. In fact, that will even create jobs for other people. Mr Speaker, having all these experienced doctors as directors is affecting the Ministry. I am appealing to the President for them to review that structure in the Ministry. The Minister should be at the Ministry, but all other experienced doctors who have studied overseas should not make Youyi Building their hospitals. They should be deployed in different hospitals in the provinces. They should be there to render their tutelage to the young and inexperienced doctors who have been trained in this country. This will make our people enjoy good health.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to talk about Agriculture. We are grateful to the President for appointing a dynamic Minister to that Ministry, Pro. Monty Jones. Prof. Monty Jones has done so much on the area of Agriculture. He has come up with special rice that other people are enjoying today, i.e., 'Abu Rice.' The Ministry has been assisting local farmers. Government is willing to ensure food sufficiency, which is very paramount for the people.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, during the reign of Siaka P. Stevens, the Military was made to involve in rice production. There is no other way of producing rice, but to make use of the soil. This country is blessed with fertile soil and is endowed with a lot of minerals; i.e., diamonds, gold, iron ore, etc. Where do you expect rice to come from? Is it from the air or the wind? We need to utilise the soil for the benefit of this nation. We have a lot of bolilands in this country, but nobody is utilising those lands. The youthful population in the provinces have migrated to Freetown to ride motorcycles, push wheelbarrows and do other menial jobs. I am appealing to

Government to also review our agricultural policies. We should get better machines to till the soil for agricultural purposes. We are always paying huge sums of Dollars to import rice to this country. Why are we doing that? We have to revisit our agricultural sites and engage in not only subsistence farming, but even cash/commercial farming. If you continue to give these moneys to some of these local farmers, they are going to eat the money without producing anything. We have so many agricultural centres, but do we have rice in those stores. The answer is no because people are not taking Agriculture seriously.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we need farm machines, so that our youth are trained how to use those machines. We have to make sure that these youth, who are seated in Freetown, Makeni, Bo and Kenema, are utilised. Let us have good machines from Germany, so that we can become self-sufficient. We cannot become self-sufficient by giving them money; and we cannot become self-sufficient by building more agricultural centers. We have to make use of the soil.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, on the area of education, the President has done a lot in that regard. I want to admonish all lecturers and teachers that if you want to be a politician, then come into the ring, instead of remaining in the classroom to indoctrinate our children with politics. Our children are no longer taught moral ethics. They teach them hatred politics and that is too bad for the development of this country. We need lecturers who can teach our children how to become good citizens, so that this country will move forward. Therefore, I want to ask the Principals of the different training colleges to monitor there lecturers. If a lecturer sells grades to students, when those students shall have eventually become lecturers, they too will sell grades to their students. We have to stop this menace because it will not take this country anywhere. I want to appeal to the President to also look into this issue with the Minister of Education very seriously.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have wasted too much time allowing people to play around this nation. We have no other country but Sierra Leone. There is only one Sierra Leone, but people are bent on destroying this country. People are very wicked in this country. Party politics has become the order of the day in this country. Donald Trump has won the elections in the United State of America [USA]. I am sure

he is going to work with the Republicans and other parties. I am also sure that they are going to produce results. Dr Ernest Bai Koroma is a man of inclusion and a very good gentleman. If you look into his Government, you will find out that those who are saying that tribalism and sectionalism have increased will be ashamed to say so. If you go through the officials in the Ministries, Departments and Agencies [MDAs], you will be shocked to find out that majority of the managers in those MDAs are not APC supporters, especially the Permanent Secretaries [PS]. They do not love this country, but their parties. They are not working for the interest of this country, but the President is very sincere with this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am appealing to this House to demonstrate love for this country. Though we still need more, but this current President has done a lot for us. I like the leadership style of a particular Committee Chairman in this House because whenever his Committee summons Votes Controllers, they become jittery. Why do you think this development is not happening in other Committees? Mr Speaker, the dignity of this House has to be reinstated, so that this Parliament regains its glory. We don't have to listen to any body any longer to do this, but to work very hard for the people of this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, whenever the Chief Whip of this House, Honourable Claude D.M. Kamanda, is seated before the witnesses, they become jittery because the Chief Whip is one of the few Members of Parliament who does his work diligently without fear or favour. Mr Speaker, even the officials of the Anti-Corruption Commission, they are afraid of the Chief Whip. Therefore, I want to appeal to all Committee Chairpersons, deputies and Members of these Committees to help Dr Ernest Bai Koroma in ensuring sanity in the Civil Service. The President is fighting corruption with all his might, but we have to help him in that fight because we are the watchdogs of the people. It is our job and we have to do it. When things happen in this country, they keep on pointing wrong fingers at the President and Members of Parliament. Why are they always blaming Parliament? It is because we are too sympathetic to people. We have to turn a new page and stop sympathising with corrupt officials.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, before I conclude, I want this House to know that when you have a good leader, you would always want him/her to be with you. In the same manner, when you have a good partner, you will always want him/her to be with you. Therefore, we still need Dr Ernest Bai Koroma to be with us for the main time because this country needs a leader of such calibre. We need visionary leaders like him. Those who are supposed to succeed him are busy fighting themselves. Let me remind all and sundry that if you want to give leadership position to somebody, make sure that person loves you. Don't give leadership position to anybody that does not love you, but the one who loves you. We need a leader that loves Sierra Leone. We don't need to love him/her. If you choose a leader who does not love the country, that leader is going to maltreat you as soon he/she assumes power. This is not about a particular party, but about Sierra Leone. Please, we have to think of someone who loves this country and not somebody who would come to destroy it. The current President has done his best and we have to make sure that we choose somebody who will follow his footsteps. I thank you very much, Me Speaker.

HON. MOHAMED L. MANSARAY: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me take this opportunity to thank the President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma for what he has done for this country. I want to draw the attention of this House to Paragraph 76, Page 16. With the leave of Mr Speaker, it reads: **"Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I call on you, as representatives of the two biggest parties in the country, as the elected, battle-tested and most legitimate voice of all the people of this country, to continue to support the extraordinary measures we have taken to move this country forward. The true measure of politics is not about fighting to divide the people; the true mark of leadership is about finding the common ground wherein we can work together to build a better life for our people."** Mr Speaker, if we are to forge ahead, if we need more development, we need to adhere to that admonition, especially the two biggest political parties in this nation. We must think like the current President, so that we move this country forward.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we are always blaming the youth of this country, but if you do a post-mortem of what is happening amongst us, we are more lawless than these youth. If these youth are exhibiting tendencies of lawlessness, it is because the authorities that the youth are expecting much from are not upholding the tenet of law abiding. If you investigate, you will find out that the most Members of Parliament, Ministers and other high profile officials are doing exactly what these youth are doing for political reason. This is what the visionary President is calling on us Members of Parliaments, APC and SLPP, to focus on developing this country. This is what the APC is doing through the leadership of His Excellency the President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, my colleague spoke about health, which is my area of study. Sometimes I feel very uncomfortable when somebody talks about something he/she is not well informed to do so. If you turn to Page 5, the President did talk about the Free Health Care Programme. Our Government is operating on push system as far as the Free Health Care Programme is concerned. What do we mean? Mr Speaker, because stakeholders in the field of medicine consult themselves based on the disease condition that is presently in all the communities, they would have to go through the Unit that is responsible to procure drugs and order the needed drugs to combat that disease. There is no country that does not procure drugs or have drugs for all types of diseases. As far as medicine is concerned, it is not possible. This is very important because if there is an outbreak of any disease, they put heads together and find ways and means of curing that particular disease. They would have to look at the available drugs in the store and use them to take care of the outbreak. That is how we have been operating and it is working. So, if a senior health worker is saying that the Free Health Care Programme is not operating well, I wonder what he is telling the people of this nation.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, please turn to Paragraph 23, Page 5. I am now referring you to the refrigerators which the President, through the Ministry of Health and Sanitation has procured. According to the President, '100 solar powered refrigerators to store vaccines and other medicines have been installed' in all the PHUs. So, why can't we say thanks to His Excellency the President, Dr Ernest Bai

Koroma? We must be very grateful to him for these developments. Today, we have a lot of DEMOC centres, manned by community health officers. We used to have women moving from the rural areas to the district centres. Today, with the initiative of the Free Health Care, they are doing community service in all DEMOC centres without any cost. I can attest to this because before I became a Member of Parliament, that was what I used to do and I am still doing it. Our colleagues in the medical profession are still doing it. So we must say thanks to His Excellency Dr Ernest Bai Koroma. We used to have one ambulance in all district headquarter towns. Today, if you go to every district headquarter town, you will see more than two or three ambulances; unless people may want to conceal the truth, but what I am saying is the truth. Therefore, we must thank the President for this gesture.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, people say water is life because **95%** of the human system is made up of water. Two per cent [**2%**] is urea another **2%** is organic. Therefore, water is very important and you are required to drink a lot of water. That is why in the vision of the President, there are lots of water projects in most district headquarter towns.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to refer the House to Page 18. His Excellency is reminding all of us because Sierra Leoneans are quick to forget, especially those on the other side. Today, we have twenty-four hours electricity, but people are still saying that there is no electricity. People are quick to forget and that is why His Excellency is reminding us.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, my colleague has just spoken about the health sector. Today, I want to inform this House that we have a Dialysis machine at the Connaught Hospital. As I speak, it is working. I can take any doubting Thomas to the Connaught hospital. Mr Speaker, most of the professionals in the medical field are public health workers, thereby leaving the curative aspect. That is why His Excellency acknowledged the work of the Community Health Officers [CHOs]. These CHOs should be capacitated, so that they will do what the doctors are supposed to do. That is what we are planning to do. Therefore, with the passage of this Bill, most of these problems in the health sector would be laid to rest. His Excellency acknowledged the work of the CHOs in his Speech; and because he acknowledged

their work, a Paramedical School has been established at Makeni, which will start work in February. Therefore, I want to call on the elders, authorities and Honourable Members of this House to join me in ensuring that the CHO Bill is passed into law, so that they would continue to render their services to this nation. I thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

HON. PATRICIA U. DANCAY BANGURA: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to join my colleagues in thanking the President for the Address delivered by the President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma, on the occasion of the State Opening of Parliament, on Thursday, 15th December, 2016. A lot has been said already in this House. Therefore, I just want to highlight few issues. I will not be reading, but will be referring colleagues to the opening paragraph of the Speech.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Honourable Member from Moyamba referred this House to Paragraph 5. I would like to refer the House to Paragraph 6, Page 2. It is very important for us to examine what Paragraph 6 is saying to everybody. With your leave, Mr Speaker, I read: **"I hear people say the country is not ready for them. But no country is ready for its people until its people are ready for it. I was ready for my country, so I jumped into the ring to contribute, and against great odds, I have been able to push this country in the direction of transforming its roads, of investing more in health and education, of improving energy and enhancing our country's standing in international forums. Come to the ring, don't wait until challenges mount and you start saying how patriotic and wise you are because you never joined in the battle."** That is very important and I think it goes for all of us in this House and the general public.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to talk about education. I think a Member of Parliament from Moyamba District was saying that some primary schools are being marginalised. Well, as far as I am concerned, there has never been a time in the history of this country wherein more school children passed public exams than what we are seeing today. This is mentioned on Paragraph 28, Page 7 of the Speech. If you read that Paragraph, you would find out that more children passed the National Primary School Examination [NPSE]. If they were marginalised, how

come they passed with such magnitude? If their learning environment was not conducive, they would not have passed these public exams.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the issue of overcrowding is also addressed in the President's Speech. I think we should be grateful and thankful to President Ernest Bai Koroma for transforming this country from where it used to be to its present state. Unless you are not a citizen of Sierra Leone, but if you are a citizen of this country, you have the right and you should be able to see the difference between how this country was and its present state. He addressed the issue of overcrowding in the primary schools. According to the Address, there is a proposal to construct 500 classrooms nationwide, but out of that number, 225 classrooms have been completed. This is very important for this country and we should be grateful.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when I came back from overseas in 2001, I was not a Member of Parliament, but I visited some schools. It was very discouraging and disturbing to see the unhygienic environment the children were learning. They were going to these schools without proper toilets. They had to go to the bushes to defecate. If you visit these schools today, you will see the transformation in those schools. Comparatively, the difference then and now is great. This country was once considered as the Athens of West Africa, but we have lost that glory. However, starting from 2008 to date, there are positive transformations in all the schools of this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if you turn to Paragraph 29, Page 7 of the Speech, the President spoke about the rehabilitation of Fourah Bay College, Sub-Saharan's oldest university. I am emphasising on education because education transform a country within a twinkle of an eye. If our attention is focused on education, like what Ghana and Rwanda did when they came out of difficulty, this country's educational standards would improve for the better. Their attention was focused towards developing education and today, they are singing a different tune. If we do same in Sierra Leone by putting our attention on education, all other issues or challenges relating to education would be resolved. Education is the foundation of a nation's development and we must ensure that the foundation is strengthened for

the generation yet unborn. If we focus on education, this country would once again be the envy of the sub-region.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if Fourah Bay College is rehabilitated as planned, it is going to regain its old glory. It is going to be an attraction for the rest of Africa because they still have in the back of their minds that Fourah Bay College was the best university in the sub-region. I am sure that if the required facilities are made available, students from other countries would like to come to Fourah Bay College.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to say something on private sector development. In any modern country, government doesn't do everything. The private sector is the backbone and the thriving force behind any government. Dr Ernest Bai Koroma has even mentioned that on Page 8, Paragraph 35. According to that Paragraph, the President said his Government was going to empower 1,000 Small and Medium term Enterprises [SMEs]. If the private sector investment is made attractive, there are lots of things this country is going to benefit from. The private sector could invest in such areas as tourism, fisheries, mining, education, etc. This is because Government cannot do everything. The private sector can make a country develops faster. For instance, in America, it is the private sector that is responsible for the country's development. It is the private sector that makes America what it is.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if Sierra Leone can concentrate and ensure private sector investment, this country can move faster in terms of development. I need to thank President Ernest Bai Koroma for the construction of the road from Rogbere Junction to Pamalap. As a Member of Parliament from Constituency 037, Kambia District, Magbema Chiefdom, I would like to say thank you, Mr President. There was a time in my life I have decided not to be a Member of Parliament from that area because when I travelled from Kambia to Freetown, I usually take three days to heal the pains sustained from travelling on bad roads. It was only in 2008 we were able to see improvements on the road condition from Kambia through Rogbere Junction to Pamalap. This is a reason why I should be thankful to President Ernest Bai Koroma for doing such a marvellous job for the people of Kambia District.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to move to gender equality. I think the women of this country need to thank Dr Ernest Bai Koroma for empowering the

women of this country. Mr Speaker, before I became a Member of Parliament, I first visited Parliament to see how many women were on both sides. By then, Mr Speaker, the SLPP had more women than the APC. Today, when Dr Ernest Bai Koroma assumed power, he doubled the number of women on this side from four to nine female Members of Parliament. This is why we must be thankful to him because he has been able to include women in his Government more than any other President. In his current Cabinet, over **30%** of the Cabinet members are women. In other words, his Cabinet has more than **30%** of women as Ministers and in other MDAs.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when we shall come back to Parliament in 2018, the women are going to lead this House because we are going to have more women in Parliament. We are going to lead Government in 2018 because the evidence is quite clear and the people of Sierra Leone are going to pay back Dr Ernest Bai Koroma in the polls. They are going to vote for the APC in 2018 because of all the good things he has done for this country. If you go to the recent census results, you will find out that the women are more than the men and the President has done so much for the women of this country. He has been able to include the women of this country in every sphere of governance. He is there to make sure that the women are taken care of, including the women in this House. Therefore, the women of this country are going to lead other women to vote for APC in 2018. What he is doing now is to prepare for next government, so that his legacy would be appraised and continued by his successor. We are fighting very hard to ensure that his legacy would not be continued by people who would not appreciate what he has done.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to talk quickly about teachers. Since I was born, I had not known any government that has comforted teachers more than this Government. I want somebody to tell this House any government that has increased teachers' salaries more than this Government. Please name any government in Sierra Leone that has exposed ghost teachers, ghost pupils and ghost schools more than the Ernest Bai Koroma's Government. This Government undertook that venture to ensure that the right people get their pay, instead of pay those moneys into the wrong hands. We have had situations in this country wherein few people were busy

embezzling government's funds by putting names of people in the schools vouchers who were not even receiving those salaries. We have done all that as a government to ensure that the right people benefit.

Again, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want somebody to tell me any government that has taken care of Paramount Chiefs [PCs] in the past more than this Government. Today, PCs are receiving salaries from the consolidated fund. Which government has ever come to this country that you have seen them doing things like we are doing now. Therefore, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma deserves thanks and we say thank you, Mr President. We ask that God continues to protect and guide you and live long for Sierra Leone. I thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

HON. PATRICK L. M. KARGBO: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker for this opportunity. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, before I start thanking the President, I want to go back to my secondary school history text book, F.K. Buah. If you look at that book, there is a symbol on the text book that shows the author. Therefore, the President, in his wisdom, has made it possible for us to think about our primary school days. If you go to Page 6 of his Speech, he spoke about the School Feeding Programme. Some of us seated here have enjoyed that facility when we were going to school. If some of us are boastful of the little education we have, it was due to the effort of the government in those days, with the help of the Christian Relief Service [CRS]. In those days, children would go to school forcefully because of those benefits they were provided with by the government in the form of school feeding. Some of them went to school because of those benefits. Today, if President Ernest Koroma is thinking in that direction, he is also urging school children or those that are not fortunate to go to school to start going to school. He is urging parents to send their children to school, so that they can be educated.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to emphasise here that if some of us are able to talk about the development of Sierra Leone, it was as a result of the encouragements we received in schools. Those encouragements kept us going; and today, we are contributing towards the development of this country. It was as a result of the initiative that was brought by the government in those days. This is what the present Government is trying to emulate. If this is done, many children will

start going to school. As a responsible Government, we want to see a lot of children attending schools, so that they can be educated.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the School Feeding Programme will ensure that the businesses of our local markets flourish because women would be required to supply cooking condiments like pepper, onions, salt, Maggi, palm oil, fish, etc. for the cooking programme in the schools. However, Mr Speaker, my fear is that some of those teachers who would be in charge of the cooking programme would be selling those condiments at night, thereby depriving the children. We have seen some illegal transactions between the teachers and local residents. Therefore, I want the authorities in the villages to be vigilant and monitor the implementation of the programme in their localities. They have to make sure that the beneficiaries of this programme are satisfied.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me hasten to state here that my people in Constituency 039, Tonko Limba Chiefdom and part of Brima Chiefdom are worried because we have been promised several times about good road network in that part of the country. I receive calls on a daily basis from my people, reminding me about the promises made to them about the construction of Kambia/Kamakwei Road. We are still waiting for this road to be constructed. We have explained things to them, but they are running out of patience. As our people used to say, when somebody is hungry, give him/her food; otherwise he/she would run out of patience. Therefore, I want to call on Government to think about my people in Constituency 039, Tonko Limba Chiefdom. We know that Tonko Limba has always been APC's stronghold. Those people would remain to be APC, including the next generation. That road is going to be a legacy for us after it would have been constructed. We will be telling people that it was through our effort that this road was constructed. Therefore, Mr Speaker, I want to appeal to those who are fortunate to discuss some of these issues with the authorities concerned to put our case across. The people are waiting patiently for the construction of that road.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to look at Page 11, under decentralisation. If you put my constituency and that of Dr Foday I. Suma and Honourable Umu Bangura, the population of these three constituencies is possibly more than the

whole of Bonthe District; but Bonthe District has more Chiefdoms than we have. Therefore, if Government, through the leadership of Dr Ernest Bai Koroma, is saying that he is going to effect decentralisation, I am very happy about that because that would bring development to those districts through the creation of new chiefdoms. We have many amalgamated chiefdoms in Kambia District and I want these amalgamated chiefdoms to be de-amalgamated. We have Masungbala Chiefdom, where Honourable Alieu Badara is coming from; Gbinle Dixing Chiefdom, where Honourable Henneh H. Raddar is coming from; and Brima Chiefdom, where the Honourable Dr Foday I. Suma is coming from.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if you take Kabala, where a new district will be created, it means Kabala is going to have a lot of chiefdoms and the district itself is so big that if it is going to be a district on its own, it will bring development. In fact, the road is very bad and it is limiting the movement of people and goods from that area. We have known Kabala to be a place where Agriculture flourishes and we know that they are doing very well in terms of providing food for our people in this country. However, that district is not developed in terms of road network and we are finding it very difficult for agricultural produce to be brought to Freetown and other areas where people can benefit from their produce. Therefore, I am calling on Government to speedily do the de-amalgamation, so that we can get more chiefdoms in this country. I would not say that the North is largely forgotten, but we need more facilities to develop our chiefdoms and our districts. I want to thank you very much for this opportunity.

ADJOURNMENT

*[The House rose at 2.55 p.m., and was adjourned to Thursday, 19th January, 2017
at 10:00 a.m.]*