

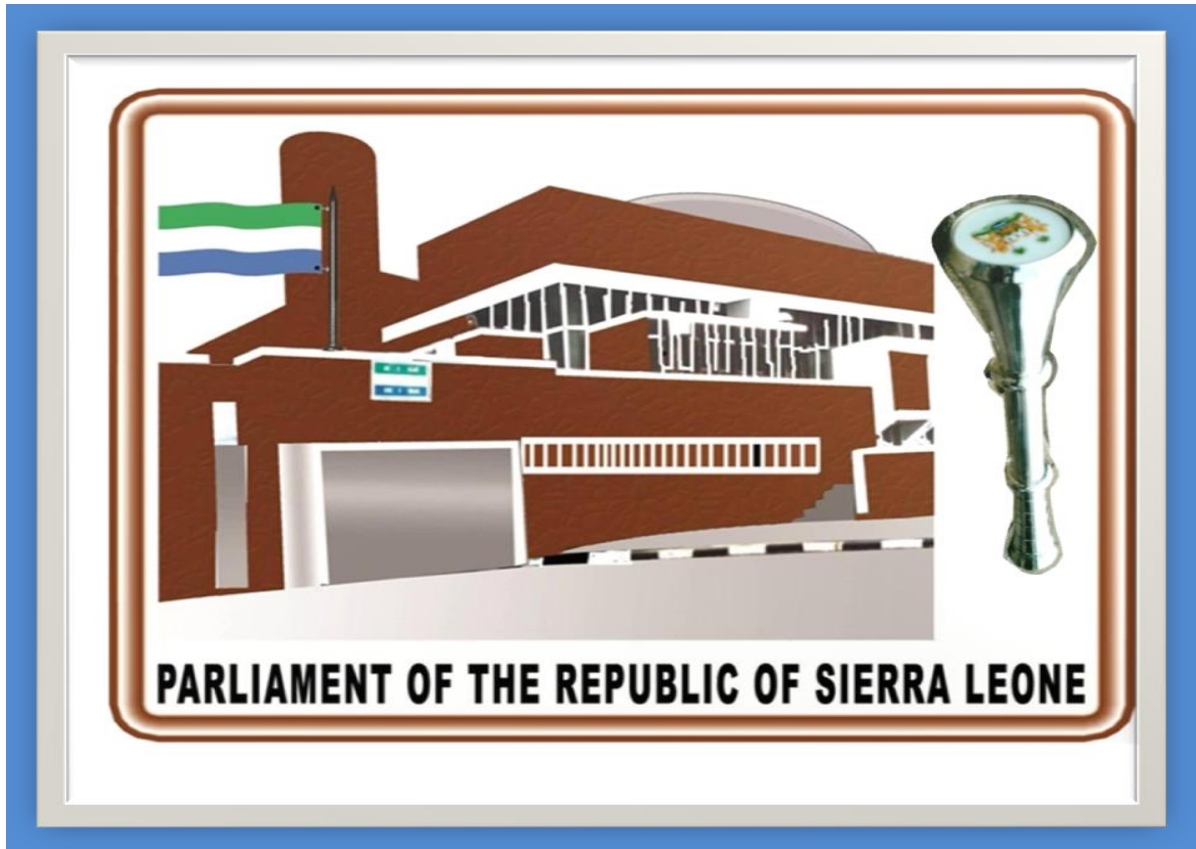
OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES ON THE PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

[HANSARD]

**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT
FIFTH SESSION - FIRST MEETING
THURSDAY, 19TH JANUARY, 2017**

SESSION – 2016/2017



OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

[HANSARD]

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

VOLUME: I

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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 Thursday, 19th January, 2017.

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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.”

[THIRD 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**

Thursday, 19th January, 2017.

I. PRAYERS

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

[The House met at 10:37 a.m. in Parliament Building, Tower Hill, Freetown]

[The Deputy Speaker, Hon. Chernor R.M. Bah, in the Chair]

The House was called to Order

II. CORRECTION OF VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS FOR THE PARLIAMENTARY SITTING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 18TH 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 Thursday, 18th January, 2017. As usual, we go page by page. Page 1? Page 2? Page 3? Page 4? Page 5? There being no amendment or correction, could someone move for the adoption of the record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting, held on Wednesday, 18th January, 2017?

HON KUSAN SESAY: I so move

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON. MOSES B. JORKIE: Mr Speaker, I so second.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[Record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting, held on Wednesday, 18th January, 2017 has been adopted as presented]

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

PROPOSER: HON. IBRAHIM BEN KARGBO

SECONDER: HON. CLAUDE D.M. KAMANDA

[THIRD ALLOTTED DAY]

HON. LEONARD S. FOFANAH: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am sure we have showered so much praises to the motion of thanks to His Excellency the President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma. I want to say the President deserves more than what has been said about him and what he is doing for this country. To me, the President is the pace setter in this country; and being a pace setter, he has done more than any other President in the history of this country; not only during his presidency, but when he was serving as the Minority Leader in this House. As the pacesetter, he has set many good examples in this country. The good example he

has set has made it very difficult to find a perfect replacement, even within the APC party. It is extremely difficult for us to find a flagbearer that has all the attributes and qualifications of Dr Ernest Bai Koroma. I believe this is also evident in all other political parties that are in the process of finding their flag bearers. I am saying this because in finding a flag bearer, you would want to make sure that the person expected to lead the party does his/her very best or attempt to do more than his predecessor. It is in that respect I would want to bestow my sincere thanks on the President for what he has done, not only for the APC party, but as a President of this nation.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the major part of this Speech that I have kept reading repeatedly is Paragraph 1, Page 1. To me, Mr Speaker, Paragraph 1 captures all the programmes executed by His Excellency the President for the period he has served as President of this nation. The rest of the Speech is a detailed narration of what he has done. Therefore, I am glad to thank the President for what he has done for the people of this country and what he is about to do.

Mr Speaker, one cannot withstand the temptation of reading Paragraph 1 of this Speech. Having said that, I want Honourable Members to reflect on the possibility of what might have happened, if Ebola had not struck this country. We have come a long way and we were about to be turned into a paradise when the Ebola virus struck this country that set us aback. Notwithstanding that, the momentum is still going on, even though we have not reached where we were heading to when the deadly virus struck this nation. All of us know the devastating effects of the Ebola virus on the economy and on every activity that we were doing.

As I have said, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the momentum is still on-going and the President has not relented at all. He is fighting to ensure that the transformation programme is on course. Mr Speaker, even though we have not reached where we were before Ebola struck, I am sure we are almost getting there. This is why we need to thank the President because of his passionate love for this country. He is not living any stone unturned because he wants to ensure that the transformation programmes continue to flourish. The President said in his Speech that Government's activities are presently felt in almost every district and chiefdom

of this country. It is indeed the very first time that the President stands in this country to say that Government activities and development are decentralised simultaneously. I am sure the President deserves a lot of thanks.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, since the eradication of the Ebola epidemic from this country, the President has come up with presidential priorities that are being implemented. If you look at the Speech, specific areas of these priorities under implementation are Education, Agriculture, Social Security and Fisheries. These are the specific areas that have direct impacts on the economy of this nation. On the area of Education, the President is ensuring that additional classrooms are added to every overcrowded school. According to Speech, over 200 classrooms have been constructed and he has promised to do more, so that these overcrowded schools are decongested to an acceptable level.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the fact of the matter is that no government in the past has spent much more money on education than this Government. Like what an Honourable Member said, the pivot of this country's development lies on the provision of good education. Record shows that this Government has done much in Education than any other previous governments has done in this country and for that alone, the President needs to be thanked.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Government has again, for the very first time, encouraged a National Price Giving Ceremony for pupils who perform exceptionally well in public exams. For example, in the just concluded Basic Education Certificate Examination [BECE] and the National Primary School Examination [NPSE], the Ministry of Education organised a National Price Giving Ceremony where pupils who did extremely well in their national exams were given prizes. We believe that it is going to motivate school going children in this country. This is because giving prizes to pupils who have performed well in their NPSE, BECE or WASSCE examinations would not only encourage them to do better, but would motivate others to work harder. It is a national recognition and every sober minded pupil would want to be recognised nationally. In fact, teachers who were teaching in those specific schools were also acknowledged and recognised for their dedication and hard work. This is

the first time a programme of that nature was organised in this country and I am sure this Government would want to continue with it.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, because of those innovations in the education sector and because of the creation of the Teaching Service Commission, we are once again making the teaching profession more attractive, so that teachers can go and do their very best in the schools where they are teaching. If this Government is doing this, we need to appreciate it because if you appreciate a good work done by somebody, he/she will do more. The President's promises to do more are dependent on how gratefulness.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Honourable Member from Kenema spoke about the unavailability of a university in the Eastern Region of the country. He said that that had been the only Region without a university. Mr Speaker, the issue of a university for the Eastern Region is not only a concern of my colleague from Kenema, but a concern to me. I come from the East Region and I want to assure the Honourable Member that the issue is currently under review by a Committee that has been set up to look at the Eastern Polytechnic in Kenema and find ways of upgrading that institution into a university status. That programme is ongoing and we would be very glad if a university is established in that part of the country.

As at now, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to inform this Honourable House that courses are being shared between Fourah Bay College and Kenema Polytechnic. Kenema Polytechnic is always required to give lectures in the first two years of those courses and later transfer those students to Fourah Bay College to complete their courses. The process of transforming the Polytechnic into a university is ongoing, but that again is predicated on having sufficient facilities, including people of repute to man the university. Fortunately, the Kenema Polytechnic is headed by an eminent and prominent educationist in the person of Professor Dr Lahai, the husband of the Minority Leader of this House. I am not saying that he should continue as principal of that institution after it shall have been upgraded into a university, but he has already got the necessary experience and he is doing well in terms of ensuring the transformation of the college into a university status.

Therefore, I want to assure this House that the university will be established to serve the entire Eastern Region.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Member, an Honourable Member from Bo also talked about the School Feeding Programme. I was not expecting the Honourable Member to have decried this gesture because whilst the Programme is being applauded and appreciated by everybody, he has negative impression about the Programme. I was surprised at the information he gave to this House. We would investigate the source of his information. I want to inform the Honourable Member that the issues he outlined have not arisen in any of the schools in this country and school feeding programme is ongoing without any of the allegations he mentioned. We have started seeing positive results from the School Feeding Programme. The Honourable Member from Bonthe confirmed that the School Feeding Programme in Bonthe District has attracted a lot of intake into the schools. The increase in the number of children in those schools is as a result of this Programme.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, apart from the eradication of hunger this Programme would usher in, the issue of malnutrition these children have suffered for the past years is going to be minimised. Therefore, I want to inform this House that the School Feeding Programme is meant to bring a lot of advantages to school going children. When we were going to school in those days, we did not have such facility. We used to leave home and return home hungry. It was indeed a miracle that some of us were able to go through those turbulent times. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology is dedicated towards ensuring that everything works as planned and I am sure they would continue to offer the best to the children of this country.

Having said that, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when the President leaves office, I am sure he would leave a lot of admirable legacies in this country. Most importantly, the major legacies he would leave in this country would be his successes in the educational sector. Those legacies would continue to develop this country. The transformation he has brought into this country makes him an outstanding leader and he is indeed going to be remembered for a very long time.

On that note, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I thank you very much for giving me this opportunity.

HON. ROSALINE J. SMITH: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable members, I want to join my colleagues in thanking His Excellency the President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma, for delivering this Address on the occasion of the State Opening of the Fifth Session of the Fourth Parliament of the Second Republic of Sierra Leone. The Speech was so graciously delivered on Thursday, 15th December, 2016.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am going to preface my contribution on what the President said on Page 18. It reads, **“Sierra Leoneans don’t often tell good in them that pushes this country forward; we don’t often tell the story about how we are a most religiously tolerant nation, a most friendly citizenry, a very beautiful land with a solid history of achievements. We must not be too quick to forget our collective achievements. We have again been tested, but we must resolve to overcome our challenges with faith that wisdom inspires. Together, showing forth the good that is ever in this country, we shall move forward with recovery. Together, having in mind the truth and knowledge that our forefathers spread, and the mighty nation they led, we will do it again.”** With these words, I want to draw the attention of Sierra Leoneans as to what is expected of us. Sierra Leone is the only country we have, and nobody should love this country more than us. The people of Sierra Leone should begin to appreciate this country and appreciate the leadership of Dr Ernest Bai Koroma. President Koroma is a God given blessing to this country because he has passion for this country. We are blessed to have such a leader. We only need to appreciate what we have as a people. If we start appreciating this country, Sierra Leone would transform itself to become the envy of many people. We are a developing nation and we have to stop thinking and talking negatively about this country. Those in the opposition have good things to say about this country, even when the country is progressing. They are always saying negative things about Sierra Leone. How can Sierra Leone... - *[Interruptions]*.

HON. ANSUMANA J. KAIKAI: Mr Speaker, we are on the opposition bench and for the Honourable Member to describe us in such words is derogatory. Let her repeat what she said, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: I heard her very well, Honourable Member. Honourable Rosaline J. Smith, please continue.

HON. ROSALINE J. SMITH: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Sierra Leone is ours and we are all citizens of Sierra Leone. We all have our Sierra Leone Passport it is about time we start thinking about Sierra Leone. We have to start loving this country and say good things about Sierra Leone. If we start saying positive things about this country, it will help us to change our mind sets and focus on transforming this nation for the better. Mr Speaker, our mind sets must be committed in transforming and rebranding this nation. We should start examining our attitudes if we want this country to develop.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the President's Speech is one of the most important documents in this Parliament, but if you look at the seats in the Chamber, they are very empty. What is the impression we are sending to our constituents and the International Community? There are Members of Parliament receiving salaries and sitting allowances but they are not here to give thanks to the President. They are not here to take part in this debate. We have to start by examining ourselves if we want to develop as a nation. Are we ready to transform Sierra Leone? Can we change Sierra Leone with such negative attitudes? When the President came into office, he told all and sundry to change our attitudes. He introduced the Attitudinal and Behavioural Change concept, so that this country moves forward. Let us begin to change our attitudes. Sierra Leone can only develop if we change our attitudes. Sierra Leone was ahead of countries in the Middle East; but today, they are way ahead of us. Why that happened? It is because their people were focused and determined to get to work on time. If this country is to progress, we need to change our attitudes for the better.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me refer you to Page 1, Paragraph 1. With your leave, it reads: **"On becoming President in 2007, I vowed to move this country forward, to transform its roads, improve electricity and invest**

more in education and in health an improve Sierra Leone’s reputation as peace-loving, democratic and resilient nation” The President has done all that is stated in the excerpt above. We must say thank you, Mr President for bringing laurels to this country. He is still determined to continue doing good things for this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, because of his commitment, devotion and tenacity, he has developed this country. I am saying this because notwithstanding the economic recession Sierra Leone is going through, we are still seeing investments due to the confidence reposed in this Government. Investors are still coming to this country to invest. We must thank His Excellency the President for his sleepless nights to ensure that he puts Sierra Leone on the map. For example, Bolorie has invested the sum of **\$120mln** in expanding the Sierra Leone Ports Authority. The **\$120mln** would help to give the Sierra Leone Ports Authority a facelift and the Ports would become a force to reckon with in West Africa. Therefore, we want to thank the President for these developments.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am pleased to inform this House that Bolorie is in my Constituency and the country Director, Mr Fabian Kokokan, is determined to bring more investments into this country. This is because of the ‘political will’ expressed by Dr Ernest Bai Koroma. As a responsible Company, Bolorie is responding to its Cooperate Social Responsibilities through the payments of its licences and taxes to Government. The President deserves a tap on the back because he has done extremely well for this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me also talk about the Paris Agreement. The ratification of the Paris Agreement is indeed a testament that this country is moving towards the right direction. Our voices are now being heard in the international arena. Our efforts have been applauded in the international forum that Sierra Leone is very serious in the fight against climate change and its attendant effects. Thus, I want to thank the leadership of this Honourable House for ratifying the Paris Agreement. That has given us a very high place in the international arena.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me also talk about social protection. Government has made firm commitment towards helping the youths of this country

to realise their dreams because they are the future leaders of this country. Mr Speaker, over 11,000 youths have been incorporated into the system through the Intensive Public Works Programme. The Ministry of Health and Sanitation has also absorbed volunteer nurses into the system. This means that those volunteer nurses have been gainfully employed by Government.

Once again, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we must applaud Government's commitment for focusing on youths development. I want to thank the President for his continuous support he is giving to our youths. Much has been said about the women of this country and I also want to thank the President for recognising the women of this great country. I also want to thank the male counterparts, who have always been supporting women issues. The males have been very instrumental in supporting the ratification of women who were nominated to this House for approval.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to talk about decentralisation process. I want to thank the President for emphasising on the decentralisation process. I believe that the decentralisation process is pivotal in reviving the economy of this country. If you look at Rwanda, for instance, they have made progress in advancing the decentralisation process. If fully embraced, the decentralisation process would be a turnaround for our local governance in this country. It is in that direction I want to appeal to Government to strengthen the capacity of the Ministry and institutions that have been given the responsibilities to coordinate the implementation of the decentralisation process. It is needless to underestimate the challenges confronting our decentralisation process, but we still have about 25 functions that are still within the purview of the MDAs; and even those that have been transferred to the Local Councils, the process is still faced with so many challenges. For instance, the issue of transparency and accountability of the Local Councils needs to be giving rapt attention. I want to call on the Chairman of Local Government to ensure that these issues are addressed with immediate effect.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to once again thank the President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma, for what he has been doing for this country. He said that every country has its moment and the moment is now. 'We have been tested during the

civil war but we emerged stronger than ever.’ I want to appeal to my colleagues to stop casting blames on others. We have to come together for the betterment of this country. Let us transform and rebuild this country. There are lots of potentials we can tap in Sierra Leone. Let us exploit those potentials for the benefit of the people of this country. If we work together as a people, we will continue to shine on the international stage. We will continue to fly high the Green, White and Blue flag internationally. Mr Speaker, anytime we go to represent Sierra Leone outside, people are always impressed with our performance. Let us begin to examine ourselves as Sierra Leoneans and figure out possible solutions that would help us overcome the challenges we are facing. Let us inculcate the principle of determination to move this country forward, let us work in the interest of Sierra Leone. If we do these things, Sierra Leone would be transformed into a country that more investors would like to come and invest.

Again, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let us change our attitudes for the better; let us think positively of Sierra Leone and stop spreading negative information about this country; Let us invite our brothers and sisters in the diaspora to come and help us transform this country; and let us stop saying that Sierra Leone is backward. Sierra Leone is now fifty-three years old. Those who are comparing Sierra Leone to countries like the USA and the UK are not doing justice to neither this country nor to themselves.

With these few words, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank you for this opportunity.

HON. UMAR PARAN TARAWALLY: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am going to be as brief as the President Address. I am equally going to be as short as the remaining term of the President.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when the Honourable Member from Constituency 103 was talking about Parliament and Members of Parliament, I saw ingenuity in her and I knew exactly the kind of woman she is. I also knew she was saying the truth. I want to thank her for what she has said. What she has said clearly indicates that Members of Parliament, the Press, the MDAs and the people of Sierra Leone are not treating the Presidential Speech in a manner it should be treated. The reason being

probably because they are disinterested, or may be the Speech does not address the issues they are yearning for or probably they distrust the content of the Speech.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if you look at the attendance of Members Parliament this morning, you will find out that there are twenty-two [22] SLPP Members of Parliament who are present for this debate, constituting **53%**; and thirty-one [31] APC Members of Parliament, constituting **38%**. This tells you that the APC Members of Parliament are not treating the Address of the President very seriously. I want to inform the President that those he relies on are not treating this Address seriously. I am saying this because the percentage of those present in today's debate are not even up to **40%**.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I had a dream that I was a footballer, a Lionel Messi for that matter. In that dream, I started playing football; but unfortunately, I had a very bad coach. The coach failed to advise me well in my dream; and at the end of the day, I was not able to make an impact. I was unable to score a goal. What happened later was the fact that I metamorphosed from being a footballer to a boxer; and in the ring, I became a boxer and a wrestler. Unfortunately, I was calling on people to come and wrestle with me, but they refused. My dream came to pass because few years ago, the President was known to be Messi. Few years down, Messi became tired of playing football and he could not score the required number of goals. Years down the line Messi became out dated he has abandoned football. Ronaldo is now at the driving seat and Messi has now vegetated into a boxer, a wrestler and a weight lifter.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the President should be carving the democratic path for this nation and not inviting citizens to come box with him; he should be carving the democratic path of this nation and not inviting citizens to come wrestle with him; and he should be inviting us to carve the democratic path and not inviting us to come to the ring because there is nothing good happening in that ring. In the ring, people fight; in the ring, people wound each other; in the ring, people damage each other and Sierra Leone is not prepared for that. We are prepared to move through the democratic path and Mr President should invite us to the democratic path because we want to move ahead. With the leave of Mr Speaker, the President

said in Paragraph 5 thus: **"We applaud the armchair patriots and internet nationalists who criticise us. They may mean well for this nation, but we also implore them to come into the ring for heavy lifting, to come into the ring to start businesses, to contribute your education to our schools, your expertise to our youths, and your global experience to the advancement of the nation."**

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, is it now that you are calling on experts you have neglected eight to nine years ago? For eight years you put the wrong people in charge and for eight years the wrong people misdirected this nation. Why are you calling on experts at the nip of your tenure of office? You have only one year left to the end of your tenure. I want to inform this House that the President's call for experts is unreal and is too late. We are coming to the ring not as boxers.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to talk about infrastructural development. Mr President, I want to thank you a bit in this area. However, I have a problem with the way resources are distributed in this country. The national cake of Sierra Leone belongs to the people of Sierra Leone; therefore, whatever comes out of the national purse should be evenly distributed to the people of Sierra Leone. Unfortunately, throughout the nine years of your Government, you have unevenly distributed the national wealth of this nation. For example, I am a Member of the Committee on Works and we have been providing oversight to all roads across the country. I want to thank Mr President for those roads. Nevertheless, I am not happy because the President has unevenly constructed those roads. That is development in the roads infrastructure is not even.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if you take the Bo City, which is the second city in Sierra Leone, the President allocated 8.6 kilometres road to the township of Bo, whereas 38 kilometres was allocated to Makeni. I don't hate my brothers and sisters from Makeni, but if you give more than expected, they would be asking themselves why the President is giving them everything. How can you give Bo, the second city of Sierra Leone 8.6 kilometres of roads and 38 kilometres for Makeni? The entire Southern province is allocated 29 kilometres roads, while Makeni is allocated

38kilometres. What are you telling us in effect? Are you telling us that Makeni, as a township, is more important than the entire South? Is that what you are telling us?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the last time we went on oversight, we discovered a situation wherein additional 21km of roads was allocated to Bo, Kenema and Makeni. Out of the additional 21km, 7km was allocated to Kenema and 14km to Makeni. This distribution is uneven and we cannot afford to continue in that direction. The national resources of Sierra Leone belong to all of us and they should be evenly distributed.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to refer the House to Page 11, Paragraph 52 [ii], of the Address. The President has the intention to bring a proclamation for the creation of a new district, of Karene District. That is Koinadugu is going to be divided into two districts and a new province is going to be created as well.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I have three concerns on what the President has said. The first concern is that if the President intends to create Karene District, what is the rationale behind that? Historians would agree with me that that place used to be Karene District. We have historians in this Well and I am also sure that the President read some history when he was reading Economics at Fourah Bay College. The Karene District was already there and if that is the rationale, then the President should create the Panguma and Bandajuma Districts because those were the three original districts in Sierra Leone. The point I am making is, if you are creating Karene District because it has been in existence, then you should also create Panguma and Bandajuma Districts because these were the three original districts in Sierra Leone.

Secondly, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have barely a year to election and if the President is busy creating new districts and a new province, is this not a tactical manoeuvring to delay the electioneering process? This is because as soon as a new district and a new province are created, you are indirectly telling the National Electoral Commission [NEC] to start all over again. We are not going to start afresh but to move on.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the President told this nation if he needed a third term, nobody would have stopped him. Well, I want to tell the President that the people of this country would have stopped him. In fact, the 1991 Constitution of this

country would have stopped him. When he was delivering his Address, he kept saying 'me and my party would be in power on and on.' Mr President, you would not continue to be in power 'on and on.' We will use the peaceful and legal means to remove you from power. The people of Sierra Leone will be behind us to remind you that your time is up and you must leave. By the end of February, 2018, the President would have gone and we would give him a peaceful retirement. However, what is lacking throughout the Speech is the date for the elections. This is the first time the elections date has still not been announced. We have barely a year to elections. In other countries, elections dates are usually announced two or more years to elections. Mr President, we need a date for the elections. I thank you.

HON. KERIFALA S. CONTEH: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, on behalf of the people of Wellington and in particular Constituency 098, I wish to thank the President for his appraisal statement he delivered to this House and we would continue to appreciate him. To say thanks is a basic etiquette that permits every sober minded individual to at least say thanks for something good or being done for him/her.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, before going into the details of my contribution, please permit me to stop those who are misleading this House. Sometimes we pretend to know when in fact we don't know. If you don't understand how things are unfolding, please stop the pretence. Don't jump into conclusion when you have not understood the premise. Logic tells me that when the premise is faulty, the conclusion cannot be correct as well.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to start with the issues raised by the Honourable Member from Bo. Many people have been saying that Mathematics is a difficult subject, but others are not taking that statement seriously. Presently, we have 41 APC Members of Parliament. Interestingly, Honourable Members would agree with me that when we were attending primary schools, one of the difficult areas in Mathematics was how to calculate percentages. That has been clearly demonstrated by the Honourable Member from Bo. I want to inform him that we may have the same number, but the same understanding in terms of calculating

percentages. On the side of the APC Members of Parliament, we have **59.4%** and for the SLPP, there is a slight deviation from his initial percentage.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will be expressing my thanks to the President based on the inroads his Government has made on Energy, ICT the environment. The President spoke about Energy on Pages 9 and 10, Paragraph 43 - 47. Mr Speaker, if you read the first sentence on Page 9, Paragraph 43, all the facts written in that Paragraph are undisputable because electricity is one of the sectors that ensures economic development in a country. Even at the midst of Ebola, when camps were established, electricity was highly demanded in all the Ebola centres. In a nutshell, electricity forms an integral part of the recovery programme of the President. Mr Speaker, before 2007, this Honourable House would agree with me that the Energy aspect in this country was absolutely zero. I am saying this from a professional point of view.

HON. ANSUMANA J. KAIKAI: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is obvious to utter statements in this House, but when you make it your business to utter misleading statements, some of us are tempted to rise and set the records straight. The provision of Energy in this country before September, 2007 was not at **0%**. This Chamber used to have electricity before 2007. If the Honourable Member does not have the statistics, I want to inform him that there was electricity. Let him stop calling figures that are misleading.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Deputy Minority Leader, the Presidential Address is meant for debates and he is making his submissions. The statements he is making could be refuted and corrected by those who intend to participate in these debates. There are Members of Parliament who would vehemently refute what he is saying now.

HON. KERIFALA S. CONTEH: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, I consulted a senior Member of Parliament about Section 75[d] of the 1991 Constitution of this country, which states that a Member of Parliament should be able to read and write. Interestingly, I told him that the said clause does not make provision for Members of Parliament to understand what they read and write. Presently, we are experiencing some amount of deficiency in knowledge and it is demonstrated here. When we talk

about electricity, it could be provided by Government or generator we usually called Kabbah Tiger.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, you would all agree with me that during the reign of SLPP, if electricity was not at **0%**, there would not have been any need for Kabbah Tiger generators in this country. Kabbah Tiger generators were the most popular products in this country and that was why I said that electricity was at **0%**. When we assumed power in 2007, electricity was prioritised and this House ratified the purchase of a 10 Megawatt and installed at the King Tom Power Station. I was not a Member of Parliament at that time, but it was the first time the APC Government bought and installed that Power Plant at King Tom.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as a responsible Government, we realised that the previous SLPP Government has failed woefully because of their incapacity to provide electricity for the people of this country. We conducted a study and we realised that for the Western Urban and Western Rural, we required 100 Megawatts. We started the preparation, but as affordability to electricity increases, the demand for electricity increases. That is why, if you go to Paragraphs 43-44, you would realise that the initial target of this Government was 75 megawatts as against 100 megawatts. We have even increased the wattage to 150. The previous President, Dr Ahmed Tejan Kabba [May his soul rest in perfect peace], was provided with a private generator. Parliament, Youyi Building and many other Government institutions were provided with private generators.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, another legacy, apart from Kabbah Tiger, that the SLPP left for the people of this country was called Souza. For those of us who were born in Freetown, the word Souza 1 or Souza 4 was very common. This is the second legacy after the Kabbah Tiger. When the APC came to power, we eliminated all forms of Souza Machines and we are presently benefiting from the initiative of His Excellency the President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma. Therefore, we must appreciate Mr President by thanking him for what he has done for this nation. I call on Honourable Members on the other side to help me thank the President as basic etiquette demands.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Honourable Member from Bonthe spoke about what the SLPP did during their tenure of office, but failed to mention the fact that it was during the SLPP's regime that Sierra Leone was described as the darkest city on Earth. Today, Sierra Leone is a glorious country under the leadership of the His Excellency Dr Ernest Bai Koroma. However, I don't want to blame him because he usually comes to Freetown to attend proceedings of the House and return to Bonthe after parliamentary sittings. I don't blame him at all because he does not understand anything about Freetown.

HON. IBRAHIM R. BUNDU: Mr Speaker, I stand on S.O. 32[9]. As Leader of this House, I want to admonish Members to take note of that provision and not to impute any improper motive.

HON. KERIFALA S. CONTEH: Thank you, Mr Majority Leader. During the weekend, I attended a wedding ceremony at Kissy and we were at the middle of the reception when we experienced power outage. Interestingly, nobody panicked and the bride and bridegroom told us to be patient because APC Government does not take electricity for five minutes. As we were enjoying the comedians, light came within three minutes and the reception continued.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, diversification in the Energy sector was also mentioned by the Honourable Member. He failed to realise that diversification does not only mean one source, but it could be solar, thermal or hydro. Therefore, I want to use this opportunity to inform the Honourable Member that Bumbuna Phase 2 would provide about 50 Megawatt. I would not elaborate further on Bumbuna Phase 2 because Members of Parliament are aware of the ongoing development. Members of Parliament have contributed towards the development of Energy in this country through the ratification of CEC, RAP, etc.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to talk about environmental protection. The President of this nation and Members of Parliament are respecters of climate change phenomenon. Members of Parliament demonstrated that by ratifying the Router Protocol, the Paris Treaty. This is a clear indication to show our willingness to corporate with international best practice. However, what we need to know is that the consequence of climate change is one of the challenges of Government; and the

consequence of climate change is poverty. Mr Speaker, because of poverty, water catchment areas are presently under destruction by cutting down trees. We have to work in unison for us to resolve some of these artificial problems. The President has been able to secure several funds to support projects geared towards mitigating the effects of climate change in this country. I think that is imperative upon us to join him in that direction.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to conclude with the ICT, which is also important. Prior to the landing of the Fibre, many people would with me that the IMF and the World Bank had once requested the then SLPP Government to land the Fibre in this country, but because of either kickbacks or arrangements leading towards personal benefits, they refused. When the APC Government came to power, we ensured that the Fibre landed in the country. Mr Speaker, the landing of the Fibre has opened the doors for ICT development in this country.

With those few words, the people of Wellington and I would like to thank His Excellency the President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma. Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

HON. ALHASSAN KAMARA: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, on behalf of the Calaba Town and Allen Town, I want to thank the President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma. He has proven to be thoughtful, smart, and intelligent. He was prepared to bring development into this country and he has done a lot in that direction. He was democratically elected as a Member of Parliament, where he studied the art of governance. He eventually became the Minority Leader of this House and he was in that capacity when he eventually led the APC party to State House in 2007. Mr Speaker, experience, knowledge and going through institutions are valuable tools people can use to do something great.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to know if we can afford to leave Sierra Leone in the hands of perpetually unemployed idler. I am asking this question because the Honourable Member from Bo was castigating my constituents at Calaba Town for making themselves useful. If those youths are involved in stone mining, I think they should be applauded for that venture. They have shown the people of this country that they are responsible youths. They do not exclusively rely on other

people for their survival. My constituents at Calaba Town and Allen Town are more useful tax payers than those you think can lead your party.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, what is democracy? Democracy is the right to vote and be voted for. If you have not voted for anyone in this country, why do you expect people to vote for you? If you have not voted for someone in this country, why do you want them to vote for you?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to emphatically state here that the APC and the Government of Dr Ernest Bai Koroma do not lack leadership. We are a party that has a clear direction and a clear leadership. I must thank Mr President for empowering the youths of this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to refer the House to Paragraph 75. With the permission of Mr Speaker, it says: **"Mr Speaker, 2016 has been a difficult year for all of us; but we shall move forward with greater energy and strength and determination. That was why I brought more young people into the Cabinet and other leadership positions than ever before...."**

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, I will start sending some of you outside if you continue to disturb.

HON. ALHASSAN KAMARA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we cannot entrust this country to an unemployed individual. Presidency comes with experience and presidency comes with leadership. A fragmented leadership cannot be perfect for the development of Sierra Leone.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, before I was interrupted, I was talking about the youth. The President mentioned 'Youth' and 'Young' people in this Speech over twenty times. We should appreciate this President and this Government for what they have done for this country. The Honourable Member from Bo spoke about the national resources not being equitably distributed. Did that come from the Honourable Member from Bo? I don't want to believe so because if you go to Moyamba, Pujehun, Kailahun, Bo, Kenema and other areas in the South/East, you will see development everywhere. Are these places in the North? Napoleon once said, **"To do all that one is able to do is to be a man. To do all that one**

would like to do is to be a God.” Ernest Koroma is not God, but a human being. No one amongst you on that side will dispute or discredit his records for making sure that this country is what it is today. Where are all these ill thoughts coming from and why?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want the people of this country to know that it is going to be very difficult to replace Dr Ernest Koroma. We will never get a leader of such calibre. Dr Ernest Bai Koroma has provided leadership and held this country as a cohesive unit and still respected by the international community is not a child's play. He is one of the few men to reckon with.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Honourable Member from Moyamba said that he is an Engineer. Well. He is one of the Engineers who benefitted so much from the Sababu Education Project because he was classified as senior Engineer during those projects. During his contribution, he was vehemently criticising the educational policy of our Government. He was just doing a disservice to himself. That was why the Sababu Education Project never succeeded in this country. If the Sababu Education Project could have an Engineer like him, no wonder they were building schools as if they were building thatch houses. We were having thatch houses and not schools. If you go to Moyamba, Pujehun and Gbondapi, you will see those thatch houses.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Honourable Member from Bo was saying that we should stop providing seedlings and fertilizers to the farmers. I think this is a good reason why farmers have turned their backs against the SLPP. If the Honourable Member was asking this Government to stop supporting our farmers, then I wonder how our farmers will survive. How will they go about farming? I think the farmers will continue to reject them in the forthcoming elections in 2018.

To conclude, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have to continue to appreciate Dr Ernest Bai Koroma for what he has done for this country. Again, I want people to know that we cannot entrust this country into the hands of somebody who is unemployed person and has never voted for anyone. I thank you.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE:, Thank you very much Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker Honourable Members, I want to also start by thanking the President for delivering

this Speech to this Parliament. Having listened to those who are fooling the people of this country by praising and trumpeting what has not been done by His Excellency the President, I believe I am very convinced that in 2018 the people of Sierra Leone will have to reward them accordingly.

With those opening statements, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, discussing the Presidential Speech is a serious matter. It is serious because it hinges on the livelihood of our people. You don't laugh when discussing very serious matters like the Presidential Speech. The current situation that is unfolding in this country shows how precarious it is to even survive. The situation is very serious issues and we should treat this Speech with some amount of seriousness.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as soon as I got this Speech, I took time to carefully read and comprehend its contents. I want to state here that this Speech lacks vision the President was claiming to have for this country. It is clearly stated in this Speech that it does not have a vision. If you turn to Page 1, Paragraph 2, it reads: **"Then Ebola struck; then iron ore prices fell. The projection did not foresee these events coming...."** The Agenda for Prosperity is a document meant to be implemented within thirty years. In those thirty years, projection should be made and we should prepare for the worse of governance system in this country; and you should prepare for the worse debate. You should not just prepare a document of that nature without forecasting on unforeseen situations. Some of us prepare similar documents for our homes and we make provision for any unforeseen circumstances. We are being paid as Members of Parliament that does not guarantee us that we are going to be Members of Parliament for the rest of our lives. Being a Member of Parliament does not mean it will be better for you all the time. You have to prepare for difficult days ahead.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this government has not prepared for difficult moments that is why the little resources they had were used to implement some funny projects like roads. I have been a member of the Committee on Works and I know what is happening. For instance, the township roads are even more expensive. These township roads are being financed by taxpayers' money of this country. They are more expensive than trunk roads that are being financed by donor partners. I

have raised this as an issue during our Committee meetings. This is very serious and we must do something about it. How can the township roads be more expensive than the Kenema/Kailahun Road. I think donor funded projects are usually implemented with caution. When Government awards roads contracts, we spend more money than donor funded projects. These township roads are funded by moneys generated by the National Revenue Authority [NRA] and other partners. That is why we see many Members of Parliament building skyscrapers and Ministers are building and buying 2017 vehicles. Where are they getting these moneys from?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to reiterate that this Government lacks vision. For instance, when the Ebola epidemic struck Liberia and Guinea, this Government would have put things in place to avert the disease from reaching Sierra Leone, but because the Government lacked vision, nothing was done until the disease reached us. The Minister of Health and Sanitation was summoned to this House and she gave us a lot of confidence. She told this House of her Ministry's preparedness to withstand the epidemic. Two months later, the Ebola scourge came and Government was saying that the epidemic took them by surprise. The disease was anticipated because it was in the sub-region, but you treated it with levity.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there was a time we know that our only bread basket in this country was iron ore. How can you give an institution a source where you get your bread basket? African Minerals, for instance, signed a lease contract for ninety-nine years. Government did not do due diligence because in less than ten years, the Company went into liquidation.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I wanted to say you are about to mislead the House. There is a Mines and Minerals Act that gives time limit to mining companies. It is not ninety-nine years.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Speaker, whatever the number of years it was the only source where Government was using to support this nation. You should not have given that contract to an organisation that is not able to continue its operations for ten years. These are clear indications to show that this Government is not serious about the welfare of the people of this country. Mr Speaker, these mining companies

went into liquidation almost at the same time. London Mining, for instance, failed to pay benefits to staff who have worked for that Company for the past five years.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have to be sincere to our people and they are listening to us. This Government is not responsive to the plights of the people of this country. Honourable Members on the other side of this House are creating the impression that this Government is doing us favour. Government is not doing us any favour. The President is not doing us favour either. There is a contractual agreement between the Government and the people. During the electioneering period, we went all around the country, telling the people to support us and we have to reciprocate. What we have been telling the people is contractual agreement between us and the people. It was based on that contractual agreement that the people of this country voted for Dr Ernest Bai Koroma. Frankly speaking, they are not doing us any favour. The services of those who have worked for London Mining for four to five years were terminated without paying their benefits. How can you treat your fellow Sierra Leonean like that?

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

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: On Page 1, Paragraph 3, the President said: “**We know there are some who questioned the actions we took before Ebola struck and iron ore prices fell....**” That is very correct because we questioned the actions they took before now. Mr Speaker, because of sycophancy and because some Members of Parliament intend to come back to House, they are not saying the truth. We questioned a lot of activities that were undertaken by this Government, but they did not answer those questions. They went ahead in doing what was not supposed to be done.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Calaba Town/Masiaka Road is currently under construction. It is a four-lane road project, but I want to inform this House that the widening of that road is going to increase the sufferings of our people because users would be charged to pay a toll of **Le 500,000**. This is going to bring untold sufferings for our people. How can you pay a toll for a road that has been in existence? Mr Speaker, for some of us who have travelled and for those who were washing dishes or carcasses in America know that you cannot make a toll road on an

already existing road. Toll roads are meant for convenience. We still have uncompleted roads like the Hill Cut Road. This is why the President is still using the Wilkinson Road to go to his office. If you look at the pace at which the work is going will tell you that the people of this country are going to suffer. With those few comments, I want to thank you for this opportunity.

HON. FREDERICK S. SOURIE: Thank you, Mr Speaker for this wonderful opportunity. Mr Speaker, since this is a debate, before I make my intervention on the dubious statements made so far, I want to start with the immediate speaker. If the Member of Parliament who is daydreaming to be the government in waiting is seeing the widening of the Calaba Town/Masiaka Road as bringing sufferings to our people, then I am disappointed. I want to inform the people of Sierra Leone that the SLPP has no good dreams for this country. Mr Speaker, the statement by the Honourable Member is very disappointing and I believe that Maada Bio is not in support of them.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, he did say people are building houses and buying 2017 model vehicles. That statement is untrue and some of us are businessmen. There is no company that has manufactured 2017 model vehicles. That is the 2017 model vehicles are yet to be launched. The latest model vehicles we have are those manufactured in 2016. The Honourable Member is a crying baby. That is how we call such people. In fact, there is a key SLPP functionary who is sleeping in one of the luxurious houses at Minah Drive in Juba. This man is unemployed, and he is a student.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if the Member of Parliament is questioning people who are building houses, then he should have questioned the unemployed man who has nothing and a babysitter for that matter. The lamentation of the Honourable Member shows that he is an immature personality because of the premature statements he is making. Mr Speaker, I did say that I wanted to make some clarifications on some of the dubious statements made by some Members of Parliament.

Mr Speaker Honourable Members, the Honourable Member from Bo City did say that development projects have been distributed inequitably. I just want to take the

water sector to refute his assertions. There is a three-town water project. If you go to Bo/Kenema, they are by far larger than the one in Makeni. So, if Bo benefitted from a larger water project than Makeni, what is wrong with Makeni benefitting from more roads? Makeni is the city of the largest province in this country. Again, in Bo town and Bo city, we constructed a mini stadium, but no mini stadium has been constructed in Makeni, Kenema and Koidu City. This means that the people of Makeni should also be grumbling. We are equally entitled to such recreational facility. In fact, the people of Kono District are contributing to the country's GDP more than Bo District. The Honourable Member is leaving the Chamber. Well, that is how crying baby behaves; when others are saying things against them, they do not want to listen. I want to assure them that their brothers and sisters will convey the message to him.

Mr Speaker Honourable Members, the Honourable Member from Bo City bragged about the division of the country. He said that this country was once divided into three districts. Mr Speaker, I want to say that he was lying to this House. The country was divided into four districts; viz, Karene, Panguma, Koinadugu and Bandajuma. He should not lie to some of us because we know the history of this country. I want the journalists to take note of that correction.

Mr Speaker Honourable Members, the Honourable Member quoted the President to have said that if at all he wanted a third term of office, he would have put plans together for that reason. Mr Speaker, President Obama made similar statement in Kenya. He said that he was a good President and that if he were to be allowed for another term, he would still win, **"But our law does not allow that."** He also said in America that if he had contested against Donald Trump, he would have defeated him; although that statement is questionable.

Having said that, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Honourable Member from Bonthe District said that Tormabom used to be a prosperous place, but he did not tell us during which period Tormabom was booming. Well, I want to say it was during Momoh's regime. The PL480 was implemented as part of the revolution programme of President Joseph Saidu Momoh of blessed memory that made

Tormabom an icon for agricultural productivity in this country. It was not during SLPP era at all, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, on behalf of the people of Kono District, I want to thank and appreciate Mr President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma, for forthrightness. Somebody will ask me to give reasons why I should thank the President. I will just give two legacies of the President in Kono District. Mr Speaker, when I went to Kono recently, I asked my father for an excursion. I said father, I want to show you why I supported APC. I took my father to Bumpeh. During the 90s, late Dr Ahmed Tejan Kabbah was in power. I asked my father if Dr Ahmed Tejan Kabbah had come here to campaign. I mean no disrespect to the late man, Mr Speaker. When the late man was campaigning in 2002 elections, he said, S.O.[2]: **"we a win, mi pipul of Kono, da joyin we di SLPP en DCP joyin so, na a building rock for a very strong/long term relationship en we a win, a go make di road."** That was his statement to the people of Bumpeh. The question is, did he construct the road? The answer is no. During the 2012 elections, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma also went to Kono and told our people thus: **"Mi Kono pipul dem, if una continue for put una trust in me by voting for mi en mi APC, da road a de do am."** Mr Speaker, do you know the importance of that? It is history and I wanted to remind them.

THE SPEAKER: Order!

HON. FREDERICK SOURIE: I would have loved to see the Honourable Ansumana J. Kankai because he is the most experienced Member of Parliament. Prior to the 1967 elections, Sir Albert Margai of blessed memory and Siaka P. Stevens of blessed memory went there to campaign. The Late President Siaka P. Stevens told the people of Kono said, S.O [2]: **"mi pipul den na Kono, SLPP don treat una bad, na in mek den want le una waka 346 miles for go Freetown. If a win, if una support mi a win, da bridge oba Sewa, a go mek am."** Sir Albert Margai also went to Kono and said that there is no way Siaka Stevens could make that road.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is rather unfortunate that they do not know the history of SLPP. It is unfortunate and I pity them. I am going to relate these historical facts with the 2012 elections and then ask you the question. It was the same thing they said to us when Maada Bio went to campaign in Kono. He said that

what the APC promised to do for the people of Kono were all lies. Today, however, if you go to Kono, you will see tarred road. This was done in less than five years, Mr Speaker. Somebody was saying yesterday that it would be impossible to construct the Kailahun Road within three years, but the Kono Road was been constructed in less than three years.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the SLPP-led Government could have constructed the Kailahun Road during their second term of office, but they did not because it was not a priority for them. They were busy holding fruitless meetings; meetings that were not responsive to the needs of the people. Mr Speaker, the people of Kono are grateful to the President and we want to thank him for that gesture.

On the area of electricity, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the people of Kono are enjoying electricity. The Deputy Minister of Finance confirmed to all of us that by next year, they are going to start the water project for the people of Kono. This means that we are going to have three principal legacies of 'Pa Ernest Bai Koroma.' Therefore, I have to thank him for the developments he has brought to the Kono District. The President has given us the opportunity to even ask for more; therefore, Kono is going to ask for more. On behalf of the people of Kono, I want to inform the President that the Kono electricity project is being undermined by some people. Anytime we confronted those in charge, they would tell us that they don't have electric cable, electric poles, etc. Those excuses were found to be incorrect. I therefore want to ask the President to look into this issue.

With those few words, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank you very much for this opportunity.

HON. EDWARD S. JENGO: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to lend my voice to the Speech delivered in this House by His Excellency the President, on the occasion on State Opening of Parliament, on Thursday, 15th December, 2016.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am not here to fake myself as an oracle of the most high; I am here as an epitome of a true Sierra Leonean. I have a problem with the education sector of this country, especially issues relating to leakages of examination papers, bribery by pupils and students to obtain grades they do not deserve. Lecturers are sleeping with our daughters and sisters, and give them good

grades in return. These examination malpractices are on the increase and the Government should do something fast in order to curtail such fraudulent acts. When we talk about Government, we are referring to those in opposition and those on the ruling side. It is therefore our responsibility, as Members of Parliament, to ensure that the necessary measures are put in place. The Chairman of the Committee on Education should work towards addressing some of those issues confronting our educational system.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the aforementioned issues deserve our utmost attention if quality education is to be provided. With the permission of Mr Speaker, I want to refer the House to Page 6, Paragraph 27. It says: **“Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am pleased to report to you that in spite of the challenges, my Government has launched the national school feeding programme....”** Therefore, as Members of Parliament, I want to inform this House that some of us who sat for the Selective Common Entrance and GCE O’ Level Examinations benefited from the School Feeding Programme. If Government has decided to reintroduce it, it is a laudable project and we should embrace it. The President’s statement on the School Feeding Programme is very clear and we must support it *[Applause]*. This is timely and every comment or criticism must gear towards ensuring its sustainability.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this Honourable House would agree with me that ‘water is life.’ This is why I want to suggest here that the Committee on Water Resources summons the Minister of Water Resources to come and share his challenges with us. The issue of water in Freetown is a topical issue and I have realised that about **60%** of water related problems in the city is as a result of the wastages. It is true that there is an increase in population, but we also need to manage our reservoirs. You have to manage what you have until you get what you want. He should come and share his Ministry’s challenges with us, so that we can find possible ways of resolving those issues.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me put the debate into perspective. The SLPP produced one of the finest Presidents in Africa - the late Dr Ahmad Tejan Kabbah. I say so because most of the institutions we are seeing today were set up by his

Government. For instance, the DDR and the RRR Programmes, now called the National Commission for Social Action [NaCSA], were very successful. The SAPPA Project was also successful. Institutions like the National Social Security and Insurance Trust [NASSIT], the National Revenue Authority [NRA], National Commission for Democracy [NCD], the Anti-Corruption Commission [ACC] and the Decentralisation Secretariat were set up by the former President, Dr Ahmed Tejan Kabba and his team. You would agree with me that he was a fine President and I believe that those who were here used to thank him for what he was doing for this country. In other words, the late President used to deliver his Speech in this Well and I am of the view that Members of Parliament used to thank him as we are doing here today. Therefore, it is our responsibility to thank Mr President.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, with sincerity and honesty, I want to state here that Sierra Leone is progressing. After comparing certain developments that I met and those I am seeing now, President Ernest Bai Koroma is truly an icon for Sierra Leone. We have to be very honest to ourselves, Mr Speaker. When it comes to infrastructural development, he is a force to reckon with. Today, we have a lot of good roads in this country, and Honourable Members would agree with me that it used to be very difficult to drive from Lumley to Calaba Town; but today, within the twinkle of an eye, I can find myself from Lumley to Grafton. Sometimes I imagine how it would have been like, if the Congo Cross/Lumley Road had not been upgraded to a four lane road. I am saying this because in spite of the present status of that road, we are still struggling with traffic. If these roads were not constructed, believe you me it would have been more difficult for us. Therefore, as far as infrastructural development is concerned, I give President Ernest Bai Koroma a tap on the back. On behalf of the people of Moyamba District, I want to thank him. The road linking Songo Junction to Moyamba has awarded and work is in progress. Road construction work is also in progress from Moyamba Junction to Moyamba Town. He deserved to be thanked for all these developments.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, governance they say, is continuity. There is no way a single regime can complete it. There are challenges we usually face and it

would be good if these challenges and achievements are highlighted, so that we give the debate a balance look.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, what I would like to draw your attention to is the issue relating to electricity. This House would agree with me that before this time, we had electricity even in the provinces. We used to have the Panguma Hydro and in Freetown, we had the Souza and other machines. For the past five years, however, there has been a considerable improvement in the electricity supply across the country. For the past weekend, I tried to switch on my standby generator because we had electrical faults due to the road construction that was going on in my area. Mr Speaker, the generator could not start because for the past couple of years, it has not been used as a result of the constant supply of electricity. Sincerely speaking, I should thank the President for these developments. Mr President, thank you very much for efforts and I want to appreciate you and your administration.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to get into issues relating to security in this country. However, sometimes I am tempted to ask myself if I have the testicular fortitude to take my debate to that direction. When I said testicular fortitude, I meant strength. Do I have the testicle to talk about security issues in this country, when my party is perpetuating violence in the heart of the city? That is why I told Honourable Members that I am going to give myself a national face in discussing issues of national importance. This is very serious and the issue of violence being perpetrated needs Government's attention. It is a threat to national security and the SLPP is not the only party that is practicing politics in this country. The SLPP started this in the provinces and it has been openly exhibited in the heart of the city, distracting business peoples and disturbing the peace of this country. I want the Government to pay attention to this issue.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, a party that is always claiming to have restored democracy in this country has a responsibility to uphold that tenet. I am appealing to the security sector to pay attention to the violence that the SLPP is perpetuating in Freetown.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I also want to draw the attention of the leadership of this Parliament that even where I do not have the authority or the

'testicular fortitude' to talk about security issues, but we want maximum security in this Parliament. Cases relating to theft are still on the increase and we have to ensure that the necessary provision is made for our protection. A theft case was reported during last year's State Opening of Parliament and it is happening. As Members of Parliament, we should have a reserved car park where we can park our vehicles during such occasion. We should be given priority in this House. The police would usually tell you, S.O [2] "Yanda don ful." Members of Parliament should have a special place to park their vehicles during State Opening of Parliament. We should not continue to reduce ourselves to that level. That is why the Executive Arm of Government is taking a lot of chances. We should tell them the truth and they should adhere to our condition.

HON. AMADU M. KANU: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in my contribution to this ongoing tradition, I want to start by thanking the Speaker for giving me this opportunity to lend my voice to the motion of thanks to His Excellency the President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma. Mr Speaker, when the President took his rightful position in the Chamber of Parliament on the occasion of the State Opening of the 5th Session of the Fourth Parliament of the Second Republic of Sierra Leone on Thursday, 15th December, 2016, I was moved by the true notion that indeed the President is a God given servant to work for the people of this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Honourable Paramount Chief who has just entered the Chamber did express his satisfaction over the developments ushered in by Dr Ernest Bai Koroma. In his kind sentiments expressed about His Excellency the President some time in 2009, the Honourable Paramount Chief did say, among other things, that Sierra Leone is blessed to have the likes of Dr Ernest Bai Koroma as President of this nation. He even attributed the physical appearance of the President as an asset to this great nation.

With your leave, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to embellish those statements said by the Honourable Paramount Chief by stating here that indeed the physical structure of the President can even encourage or attract investors to surgeon with him both in business and in politics. The President needs to be commended for spending almost two hours performing his constitutional

responsibility without quenching his thirst. That in itself is a clear manifestation of his determination to push this country forward. Therefore, we need to thank and commend him for his selflessness and his outstanding performance in putting the business of this country forward.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as legislators, it is our constitutional responsibility, as the previous speaker stated, to adhere to the dictate of our own creation – the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone. That Constitution is our own making and it is consistent with the Revised Standing Orders of the Sierra Leone Parliament. According to the Order Paper, our responsibility is to give thanks to the President for the Speech 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.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as the representatives of the people, we must not deviate from our responsibility. Our role in this direction is to thank the President for a job well done. What we are witnessing here today is a blatant display of intellectual deceitfulness to the highest order. What is embedded in this document is very simple and straight forward. The embodiment of what is contained in this document is nothing to doubt about because you have the facts here. It is a message for all of us. This document contains the message of hope in exchange for hopelessness. This document is against those, who for very obvious reasons, wanted to kill hope. Our responsibility is to say thanks to the President.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, having listened very attentively to what has been said by the previous speakers on the motion before us, I want to thank the President on my personal behalf and on behalf of the people of the Southern Region. I am the only Member of Parliament representing them on this side of the Well. Therefore, I want to thank the President on their behalf, especially those Bumpeh and Ribbi Chiefdoms, Moyamba District. That is the people of Constituency 086 appreciate what you are doing for this country. For specificity, I am referring to the people of the ten sections of Ribbi Chiefdom and a cross section of the thirteen sections in Bumpeh Chiefdom. I am representing seven sections in Bumpeh Chiefdom and my junior colleague representing Constituency 084 on the other side of this House is

representing the rest of the other six sections, including Rotifunk Township. Therefore, I want to thank the President on behalf of the other five colleagues on the other side, especially my colleague Honourable Member from Kaiyamba Chiefdom, Constituency 081.

HON. PC JOSEPH ALI-KAVURA KONGOMOH II: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we are here to thank Mr President for what he has done for this country. I want to thank all those who have contributed, especially the last speaker. I was not a debater, but according to today's Order of Paper, we the Members of Parliament wish to thank His Excellency the President, for the Address he 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. This motion is saying that we should say thanks to the President for all the work he has done; for all the roads he has constructed; for all the educational facilities he has provided to people; and all that he has written in this document. There is nothing written in this particular Speech that is false. It is all true. In my opinion, everything written here is nothing but the truth.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to start by saying that any good structure depends on its foundation, but some people tend to forget about the foundation. Some people tend to forget about yesterday and focus on what is happening today. Those who are only focusing on today's happenings will not be able to make a better tomorrow. If you want to make a better tomorrow, you have to look back. There was a rule in the Kamajor Game that says: **"You don't look back and if you do you would die."** In development, you have to look back if you want to make a better future. There is an adage in Mende that says: **"You should not boast of pregnancy, but the child because you don't know the end of that pregnancy."** You may see or not see the child alive, Mr Speaker. So, it is better to see the implemented intentions and most of these intentions have been implemented by Ernest Bai Koroma.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the second point I want to bring to the notice of this House is that what operates in governance today depends on how people appreciate the history of what happened yesterday. This is really lacking in some

people. People are condemning other leaders, but they are in this Well that was built when Sir Milton Margai was the Prime Minister of this nation. Why are we forgetting what others have done for this country? Why do we say the best person is this and condemn the other person? I want to state here that nobody in this world does more than his best. Sir Milton Margai did his best to start the peace and when he passed away, his brother took after him. However, some people did not agree with his ideologies and those who did not agree with his ideologies rose against him. I want to sympathise with those who only opened their eyes and saw this Parliament. We used to see a mountain where this Parliament is located. It used to be a residential place for people. Some of us were witnesses to the colonial rule.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, what we are enjoying today started with the Legislative Assembly. During that period, the Legislative Assembly was under the control of the Chairman and you would agree with me that he did something for this country. This House started as Assembly and later became a Parliament. This was done by that leader at that time. Mr Speaker, Sir Milton Margai and Sir Albert Margai did their best. Later, somebody by the name of Captain Valentine E. M. Strasser usurped power. As a soldier, he was of the view that the leaders who came before him were not doing well. He brought his own ideas and during his reign, nobody went to his office late. That was a good idea, but his ideologies were not accepted and a counter coup ousted him because his ideologies were not accepted by his colleagues. Brigadier Julius Baada Bio took after him and decided to hand over power to a civilian government. Brigadier Julius Maada Bio was totally condemned, and ensured that power went back to the people. The late Dr Ahmed Tejan Kabba took over power and he did his best. Today, however, he is being condemned. There is another adage in Mende which says: **"When you are present, nobody wants to praise you. They will only praise a good leader when he is gone."** Today, all those who are praising Ernest Bai Koroma are on the right track. We are Paramount Chiefs and we are not sycophants. By convention, we have to support the Government of the day. If it is People's Movement for Democratic Change [PMDC] leading, we are to support it. We are to support any party that is in governance. I want to thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

HON. AMADU FOFANA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, on behalf of the people of Constituency 109, which covers Brookfields, Congo Market, Dwarzak, Sumaila Town and New England, I stand here this afternoon to thank the President for the wonderful things he has done, particularly in my Constituency and the country as a whole. Mr Speaker, before I go to the Speech, I want to make few clarifications. I will start with my colleague from Bo who spoke about the **95%** completion of electricity before the APC came into governance. I want to remind this House that when Dr Ernest Bai Koroma won the elections, he told this nation that he would bring electricity within ninety days, i.e., three months. Colleagues on the other side were in all the radio stations in this county, stating that it is impossible to bring back electricity in three months. If your Government had done that, would you have said that? You did not complete **95%** of the Bumbuna electricity project. Today, we are enjoying constant electricity supply because of the APC-led Government. I want to state here the APC is synonymous to development.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to respond to the Honourable Member from Bo District who spoke about revenue generated from the mining sector. According to him, the revenue generated from the mining sector was not properly managed. Let me say to him that he is not being true to himself.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to refer the House to Page 1, Paragraph 3 of the President's Speech. With the leave of Mr Speaker, it says: **"We know there are some who questioned about the actions we took before Ebola struck and iron ore prices fell. But my Honourable friends would agree with me that the country needed massive investments in roads, and we did that; that the country needed the Free Health Care for pregnant women and for children and we did that; that the country needed to triple salaries of teachers, lecturers, nurses, doctors and civil servants, and we did that...."**

Those are the areas I want to lay more emphasis as far as this debate is concerned. Honestly, when President Ernest Bai Koroma pronounced the salary increments for the workforce, I was baffled because in the history of Sierra Leone, no President has tripled the salaries of workers. Some of us who are financial analysts know what that means in financial terms. Even at the midst of the Ebola epidemic, he increased

salaries by **15%**. In fact, the salaries of Members of Parliament are usually paid on time despite the massive increment.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if Members of Parliament are asking what the President did with this revenue, I would like to remind them about the salary increments made by this Government. Increasing the salaries of workers is not a child's play, but we needed that increment. In one of late President Kabba's Speeches to Parliament, he was emphasising on the Anti-Corruption Commission and the people of Sierra Leone said that it would be difficult for the Commission to work effectively because workers used to receive **Le 150,000** per month. Now that salaries have been tripled to match up expenditure, you are asking the whereabouts of the money. I want you to please stop exhibiting educational ignorance. That is exactly what people are doing here. If your people in your Constituency are thanking the President and you are standing here refusing to do same, then I am sure you have a problem.

Again, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to take you to Page 12, Paragraph 56, where the President spoke about audits. In all the Speeches of the late President Ahmed Tejan Kabba, he never mentioned anything about audit. Mr Speaker, financial prudence and stability in any country, you need a straightforward and hardworking audit team. This is what the President is doing and he mentioned it in his Speech. He has empowered Audit Service Sierra Leone, so that they keep an eye on every Ministry, Department and Agency [MDA] to do their work diligently. That is what the President is doing.

Also, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to read the last sentence in Paragraph 58. It says: **"The availability of jobs does not only depend on opportunities Government creates, they also depend on work ethic, discipline and integrity of individual citizens."** My emphasis here is discipline. This nation will develop if we continue to exhibit some amount of discipline. I want to refer this statement to colleagues on the SLPP side. Honourable Edward S. Jengo, from Moyamba District said that if you are leading a political party but you continue exhibiting indiscipline in this country and you are claiming to have the authority to do that, you are not helping the people of this country. If you continue to display

indiscipline in this country, particularly at your party offices and few days ago at the Law Court Building, I am sure we have to alert the security, as the Honourable Member said. We will keep an eye on those disturbing the peace of this country. They have extended their lawlessness to Freetown, the capital city. I am sure the people of Sierra Leone will never elect SLPP to office because you are not truthful to this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me take you to President Kabba's 2004 Presidential Speech. He said: **"The fiscal programme of my Government will continue to focus on growth, while contributing to micro-economic stability the programme targeted higher economic expenditure, especially in infrastructure, power, and water supply."** You are crying today for water, but where is that money? Where is the huge sum of money given on behalf of the people of this country by donors during your time? You are now enjoying free water services in your districts and the people are thanking the President Ernest Bai Koroma. As the Honourable Member said, the results of the bye-elections indicated that the APC is gaining popularity every day. We will continue to maintain popularity until we win the 2018 elections and come here again as government. You will continue to be in opposition.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, on behalf my people of Constituency 101, I want to thank the President for the developments he has brought to my Constituency and the people of Sierra Leone. I thank you.

HON. SAHR FATORMA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to make my humble contribution on the Speech delivered by Dr Ernest Bai Koroma, President of the republic of Sierra Leone on the occasion of State Opening of the Fifth Session of the Fourth Parliament of the Republic of Sierra Leone. As esteem representative of the people of Constituency 004, I have two issues to discuss this afternoon. One of the issues I would like to discuss is that Parliament is the only community that have a Well that does not produce water. That is why S.O 2 'wi lidas dɛm dry eye.' The other issue I want to discuss is that Parliament is the only community wherein we are compelled to say thanks to people who have failed us. Parliament is the only community that you are compelled to say thanks even when you are hungry.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to comment on the contribution made by my colleague from Koinadugu District yesterday. He asked us a question, 'what do we want?' We have many answers to that question. One of the things we want is that we want Mr President to start preparing his handing over notes, so that come February, 2018, he hands over power peacefully to another elected President of the Republic of Sierra Leone. Again, we want Mr President to immediately give us the date for the next Presidential and Parliamentary elections.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, my colleague Honourable Member also said that in 2007 Election, the APC presence in Kailahun District was only **4%**. I want to agree with him. He also said that in 2012 Elections, the percentage rose from **4%** to **18%**. I also agree with him. Do you know why, Mr Speaker? I want to refer you to a Speech delivered by His Excellency Dr Ernest Bai Koroma on Friday, 9th October, 2009. With your leave, Mr Speaker, it reads: **"Contracts have been awarded for the construction of the Kenema/Koindu highway."** This was the only reason why the percentage rose to **18%** for the APC in 2012. In other words, the President promised the people of Kailahun District and they were highly in need of that road. Guess what, Mr Speaker; he failed the people of Kailahun District.

Mr Speaker, some Members of Parliament are not helping the President. Today, we the people of Kailahun District are driving on the worst road on planet Earth. We will ask our people to vote you out of power. That is why we are not going to encourage any judiciary Member of Parliament in that District. We are not going to encourage any law court Member of Parliament in that District during the 2018 Elections.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, my colleague also said that the APC scored **69%** during the last bye-election in Ward 10, Constituency 003; where my nephew, Honourable Sahr Tengbeh is representing. Yes, it is true that the APC scored **69%** because of the message that the Vice President took to our people in that part of the district. He told the people of Kailahun District or Koindu to be specific, that he has a radio station prepared for the Kissydom. He promised the people of Kailahun District that after the census, he would make Kissy-Bendu as a District on its own. Mr Speaker, the President has again failed the people of Kissy-Bendu. The Honourable

Member also spoke about the Bo Stadium. I want to remind this House that the Bo Stadium was **85%** complete before Dr Ernest Bai Koroma took over power.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would also like to comment on what the Honourable from Bombali District said. He said that those who are supposed to win the 2018 Elections are fighting themselves. This is a clear message to my colleagues and supporters of the Sierra Leone Peoples Party to come together and support the most popular candidate, so that we can win the 2018 Elections.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Honourable Alhassan Kamara from the Western Urban said that they are not interested in giving this country to a jobless person. I want to tell him that our President to be is not so selfish like President Ernest Bai Koroma. In 2002, before giving the parliamentary job to the youths of Makeni, he decided to use the roundabout to go to State House. Our leader is not going to use a roundabout. He will be leaving from the party office to State House in 2018.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, some of you are making unnecessary noise. It is sometimes difficult for some of you to stand in this Well and say good morning, Mr Speaker. Why are you distracting those who are contributing to debates? If you cannot contribute, stop misleading those who are doing so. I want to refer this House to Page 16, Paragraph 77. With your permission, it says: "When he was President, Dr Siaka Stevens appointed a great opponent, Alhaji Sanusi Mustapha as Vice President. Mr Speaker, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma did not do that at all. When he became President, instead of appointing great opponents, he dismissed great opponents from his Government. For instance, he terminated the service of the then Bank Governor, Dr J.D. Rogers, which was very unconstitutional. Mr Speaker, when Dr Ahmed Tejan Kabba was President, he restored unjustly seized property to their owners. Dr Ernest Bai Koroma on the other hand seized the land from the great opponent, Charles Francis Margai.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, because of time, I want to say belated Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to the people of the Sierra Leone Peoples Party; the people of Kailahun District and to be specific the people of Constituency 004.

HON. MIMA Y.M. SOBBA-STEPHENS: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to thank the Honourable Member from

Constituency 103, for her brilliant opening speech. In deed we praise our leaders who have gone before us and I hope the Honourable Member from Wellington will take note of that. I hope he listened to what the Honourable Member from Constituency 103 said. We should praise our leaders that have gone before us. They have definitely done a great job for this country. The Honourable Member from Bo also highlighted some of the achievements made by the former President, Dr Ahmed Tejan Kabba. What he did for this nation should be acknowledged by all and sundry. I want to reemphasise here that we have to acknowledge the works of past leaders. We all know that the current President has done his part for this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the President has delivered several speeches to the people of this nation and he has been talking about the 'Agenda for Prosperity.' I want to state here that the people of Constituency 084 had not benefited from the 'Agenda for Prosperity.' For instance, the Government has been promising the people of that Constituency to construct the Moyamba/Shenge Road.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, are you saying that Shenge has benefitted?

HON. MIMA Y.M. SOBBA-STEPHENS: Mr Speaker, I am talking about the Moyamba/Shenge Road. That road has not been constructed as promised by this Government and I wonder whether that will happen during this last Session of this Parliament. The amount of fishing activities that are going on in Shenge would have helped to reduce the price of fish in this country if that road would have been constructed. According to Page 7, Paragraph 33 of the Speech, the President said: **"That the Ministry's capacity to combat Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated [IUU] fishing has been scaled up."** If that road is constructed, I don't think whether you will spend so much money in scaling up unreported and unregulated fishing activities.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to talk about issues relating to youths, especially those in my Constituency. Every year, Mr Speaker, the President talks about unemployment, and his Government's readiness to provide jobs for the youths. He has been promising the youths in terms of providing skills trainings, but he has failed the youths in my Constituency. The unemployment rate in my constituency is very high and it could be easily rated as the highest in this country.

The Agenda for Prosperity is farfetched for the youths in my Constituency. Sometimes I wonder what will become of these youths, taking into consideration the high rate of unemployment in this country. We should actually treat this issue with seriousness because an idle mind is the devil's workshop. I think this is why lawlessness is on the increase.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to move to education. On Page 7, Paragraph 28, the President spoke about the construction of 500 classrooms across the country with support from the United Kingdom. It is a laudable project, but I don't think whether my Constituency is included in this project. If you go to my Constituency, you will only find a good school structure in the headquarter towns. In the interior part of that Constituency, schools are built with thatch roofs. If you go to those schools, you will shed tears for those children because of the inconveniency of the environment. No wonder the drop in our educational system. Majority of those schools are without benches, tables and libraries. The only chairs you find in some of those schools are the teachers' chairs.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, these children are meant to be the future leaders of this country, but the educational system that would enable them to build their human resource base is very poor. That is why we have less trained and qualified teachers in the provinces. When you think about the teaching environment in the provinces, it is terrible. Trained and qualified teachers do not want to go to the interior of this country to teach. Those who are teaching in those schools do not even have up to three GCE O' Levels or WASSCE.

THE SPEAKER: Are you referring to Moyamba District?

HON. MIMA Y.M. SOBBA-STEPHENS: Mr Speaker, I am referring to my Constituency. The parents have no choice than to accept those teachers in the schools.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I now move to the Health Sector. This Government has been talking about Free Health Care Programme. It is not visible in my Constituency. If you go to those health centres in my Constituency, you will discover that the lactating mothers are paying for their drugs. If that is happening, I don't know what is meant by Free Health Care. What we are hearing is not what we

are experiencing at all. This is a very serious issue we have to pay attention to. When we say something, we have to do what we are saying. The Free Health Care Programme should be properly monitored.

Conclusively, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to re-echo the words of Honourable Paran Umar Tarawally, when he said that the national resources have not been evenly distributed in this country. I thank you very much.

HON. DAUDA KALLON: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, please allow me to bring greetings from the people of Constituency 093. The people of the Peninsular extend their thanks and appreciations to His Excellency the President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, the Honourable James N.D. Alie wanted to know when you last went to your Constituency.

HON. DAUDA KALLON: Except for Honourable Veronica k. Sesay, but I am always with my people. My constituents expressed their unconditional thanks to His Excellency the President, for not only delivering the Speech, but for putting Sierra Leone on the map of development. Today, Sierra Leone is known for so many good things that we Sierra Leoneans and the international community are proud of. Mr President, thank you very much.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to make some clarifications. The last speaker, the Honourable Member from Moyamba said that the Free Health Care is not visible in her Constituency. She also said that the drugs are being sold to lactating mothers, and that there is no proper monitoring mechanisms being put in place. Well, I asked myself, what she has done for her people as a representative of that Constituency. Those people elected her to represent them and to channel their concerns to Government and to take Government policies to them. They are expecting much from the Honourable Member, but she has failed them because she failed to monitor the Free Health Care in her constituency. As a Member of Parliament, she is expected to oversee every development in her constituency.

Having made those few clarifications, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to comment on the leadership and commitments. When Sierra Leoneans decided

that in order to move this country forward, they thought of the willingness, readiness and preparedness of a leader. Sierra Leoneans believed that this country should elect a leader who is willing, committed and prepared to move this country forward. In fact, Sierra Leoneans have been looking forward to a leader who can deliver and save them from poverty. They were also looking for a leader who would bring peace and stability for them. Therefore, in order to show that His Excellency the President is that kind of leader the people of this country wanted, I would refer you to Page 2, Paragraph 6. With your leave, Mr Speaker, it reads: **"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 would like to expound on this sentence. Mr Speaker, before His Excellency the President aspired to rule this country, we used to call him Ernest Koroma. Ernest Koroma prepared himself well and he was ready for the battle ahead of him. He was ready to develop this country and he was ready to shoulder the responsibility of Sierra Leone and Sierra Leoneans. Let us all look at the dictionary meaning for the word 'ready.' For those without dictionaries, the word 'ready' means 'to prepare.' In other words, Mr President was prepared and he was destined to develop this country. He was ready to lead this country and it was based on his readiness that the people voted for him.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, before Mr President aspired for the leadership of this country, he was a full time employee in this country. He owned and operated a company in this country and he employed so many Sierra Leoneans. I would proudly lift up my hands and say I was a beneficiary of his investment in this country. It shows that Mr President was prepared and ready to lead this nation. I will give you another instance in terms of his readiness and preparedness to rule this country. Mr President was not only working, but he was an investor as well. He invested his resources in this country. I am saying this because I want some of you to ask yourself the question, who is as prepared as Mr President to take over leadership of this country?

Again, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Mr President constructed his own house and lived peacefully in that house. How prepared are we, in terms of providing the required leadership to our people? This is a question for all Members of Parliament.

Before he aspired for the leadership of this country, he was an expert and he gave his expertise to this country. He also provided his expertise to then Government of Dr Ahmad Tejan Kabba when he was consulted to formulate and put in place what we call today NASSIT. The question is who did that? In leadership, you have to look for people who are prepared and ready to move this country forward.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Mr President was a respecter of human rights and this is why he is always needed to wine and dine with the international community. Some of you are not allowed to even interact with the international community. Are you ready to lead this nation? Is that a sign of readiness to lead the people of this country? Mr President is a man who has got a lovely wife and raised his children in a friendly environment. Let us ask ourselves which example we want to show as leaders of this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, another area I want to bring to your notice is that because Mr President was ready and prepared to lead this nation, he obeyed and followed democratic principles in this country. As we speak, his records before and now still remain clean in terms of human rights records. How many of those records holders do you have in your domain? Who can stand tall in the international forum and talk about issues relating to women's rights? If you are ready for democracy, you must practice democracy. Can a coupist talk about democracy? In his Speech, the President said that the country is not ready for such people. The truth is we want Mr President to know that we will continue to tell them that this country is not ready for them. This country is not ready for coupists; this country is not ready for men who beat women; this country is not ready for human rights violators; and this country is not ready for jobless people.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to ask my fellow Sierra Leoneans what example will unemployed people bring to the highest seat of this country. How can somebody depend on hand-outs? How can somebody who cannot even pay tax to Government be entrusted with the leadership of this country? Let us be honest with ourselves, Honourable Members. The message is that let us tell them that they are not ready to lead this country. Are we ready to entertain babysitters to be talking about an enviable position? What will they tell the international community if we

allow them to lead this country? In this Parliament, we rely on our elders like the Honourable Ansumana Kaikai from Pujehun District [*Laughter*].

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you have been warned to respect the Standing Orders.

HON. DAUDA KALLON: Thank you very much. We also rely on Honourable Ibrahim R. Bundu to tell us their experiences, so that we can build on that for the betterment of this country. But what experience can we get from others? Is it Joblessness or babysitting? We should not allow that to happen in this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to take you to Page 2, Paragraph 5. The Honourable Member from Bo was deceiving the people of this country and that is what we call 'intellectual deception.' He was deceiving the public when he said that Mr President has invited people into the ring because he wants to go out. Unfortunately, if you read this document, you would realise that Mr President highlighted the area he was inviting people. He wants people to move from being a social media politician, a What Sapp politician, a Facebook politician or from a babysitter and come to the ring. You have to come and talk about democracy. He was inviting people with experience to join in moving this country forward.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I cannot imagine Sierra Leoneans in this 21st century to entertain joblessness and idleness. People who depend on hand-outs cannot contribute to national developments. If we allow them to take the leadership of this country, it is going to be a recipe for chaos and we cannot do that.

Finally, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I salute you for being a very good President; I salute you for being a democratic President; I salute you for your human rights records; I salute you for your global respect; and I salute you for the development you have brought into this country.

With those few words, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank you very much.

ADJOURNMENT

*[The House rose at 13:55 p.m., and was adjourned to Friday, 20th January, 2017 at
10:00am]*