



OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

[HANSARD]

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

FIFTH SESSION - FIRST MEETING

WEDNESDAY, 1ST NOVEMBER, 2017

SESSION – 2016/2017



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PARLIAMETARY DEBATES

[HANSARD]

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VOLUME: I

NUMBER: 56

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 Wednesday, 1st November, 2017.

CONTENTS

I. PRAYERS

II. RECORD OF VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS FOR THE PARLIAMENTARY SITTINGS HELD ON THURSDAY, 26TH AND FRIDAY, 27TH OCTOBER, 2017

III. LAYING OF PAPER

[A] THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

FINANCING AGREEMENT, ADDITIONAL FINANCING FOR EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT IN SIERRA LEONE PROJECT BETWEEN THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE AND THE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION [IDA], DATED 7TH JULY, 2017.

[B] THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT AND AVIATION

BE IT RESOLVE THAT THIS HONOURABLE HOUSE RATIFY THE FOLLOWING AGREEMENT WHICH WAS LAID ON THE TABLE OF THE HOUSE ON THURSDAY 26TH OCTOBER, 2017:

ADDENDUM No. 1 TO THE CARGO TRACKING NOTE SYSTEM AGREEMENT [27TH NOVEMBER 2014] DATED 20TH SEPTEMBER 2017 BY AND AMONG SIERRA LEONE PORTS AUTHORITY ["SLPA"] AND THE GOVERNMENT OF SIERRA LEONE, REPRESENTED BY THE MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT AND AVIATION [THE "GoSL"] AND NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR PRIVATISATION ["NCP"], GLOBAL TRACKING AND MARITIME SOLUTIONS HOLDINGS [GTMS HOLDINGS - THE "SPONSOR"] AND TRANSPORT AND SPORTS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM, WEST AFRICA, SIERRA LEONE- [TPMS, WA-SL - THE "CONTRACTOR"]

IV. BILL.

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

THE APPROPRIATION ACT OF 2018.

BEING AN ACT TO AUTHORISE EXPENDITURE FROM THE CONSOLIDATED REVENUE FUND FOR THE SERVICES OF SIERRA LEONE FOR THE YEAR 2018, AND OTHER RELATED MATTERS BE READ THE SECOND TIME.

[FIRST ALLOTTED DAY]



THE CHAMBER OF PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE

Official Hansard Report of the Proceedings of the House

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

Wednesday, 1st November, 2017.

I. PRAYERS

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

[The House met at 10:58 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

Suspension of S. O. 5[2]

II. CORRECTION OF VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS FOR THE PARLIAMENTARY SITTING HELD ON THURSDAY 26TH AND FRIDAY 27TH OCTOBER, 2017 RESPECTIVELY.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, we go through the record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting, held on Thursday, 26th October, 2017. Page 1? Page 2? Page 3? Page 4? Page 5. Page 6? Page 7?

Honourable Members, we go through the record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sittings, held on Friday, 27th October, 2017. Page 1? Page 2? Page 3? Page 4? Page 5? Page 6? Page 7? There being no correction or amendment, could somebody move for the adoption of the records of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sittings held on Thursday, 26th and Friday, 27th October, 2017 respectively as presented?

HON. AMADU FOFANAH: I so move, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON. MOHAMED K. THOLLEY: I so second, Mr Speaker.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[Records of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sittings held on Thursday, 26th and Friday, 27th October, 2017 have been adopted as presented]

III. PAPERS LAID

[A] THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC

MR MOMOH VANDI *[Minister of State, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development]*: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to Lay on the Table of this Honourable House the following documents:

Financing Agreement, Additional Financing for Education Development in Sierra Leone Project between the Republic of Sierra Leone and the International Development Association [IDA], dated 7th July, 2017.

Again, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I move that the Bill entitled, 'the Appropriation Act of 2018, being an Act to authorise expenditure from the Consolidated Revenue Fund for the services of Sierra Leone for the year 2018, and other related matters' be read the second time.

HON. DR BERNADETTE LAHAI: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is not a matter of politics, but we have to be honest with ourselves. The SMS text message that has been circulated was that this debate should be guillotined to three days. In that case, you have to put it into vote.

HON. HASSAN B. SHERIFF: Mr Speaker, I rise on S. O. 63[3] in tandem with S. O. 82 to reduce the period of the debate to three allotted days

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON. MUSTAPHA BRAIMA: I second the motion, Mr Speaker.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[Motion to reduce the number days from five to three has been carried]

IV. BILL:

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

THE APPROPRIATION ACT, 2018

BEING AN ACT TO AUTHORISE EXPENDITURE FROM THE CONSOLIDATED FUND FOR THE SERVICES OF SIERRA LEONE FOR THE YEAR 2018 AND OTHER RELATED MATTERS

[FIRST ALLOTTED DAY]

HON. HASSAN B. SHERIFF: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. This is the 2018 Budget which deals with the statement of economic and financial services for this country. I will try to catch up the profile for this debate. I intend to open up this debate and I want to call on my colleagues in the Finance Committee to make their valuable contributions in this year debate before the close of the session. In my opinion, it is important to look at facts and figures because we have heard many people on the radio

making wrong statements. They are misinforming the public about this Budget. All of us should read this budget and educate the public about its contents. I think it will be fine for all of us as Members of Parliament if we treat national issues important. To do justice to this budget, we have to look at the figures and the budget profile. It is attached at the back of this report. That is the area I am going to anchor my arguments.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to take you to the revenue aspect of this budget. If you look at the expenditure in this budget, you will realise that we have deficits. Annexe 1 of the Budget Profile of 2016, 2017 and 18 highlight the total revenue, starting with domestic revenue for 2018. Domestic Revenue is projected at **Le 4.556 tln**. I want to remind every Member of Parliament that budgets are projected figures. It is through those projected figures you work towards actualising your aims and objectives and that responsibility falls under the purview of the National Revenue Authority [NRA]. For this reason, I will take you to revenue collection by the NRA. The Income Tax Revenue is made up of Corporate Tax, Personal Income Tax, including PAYE and other taxes. Projection from those areas for 2018 is **Le 4.556 tln**. In 2017, the projection was **Le3.5 tln** and **Le 2.8 tln** in 2016. The reason we had an increase is because of the increase in the Private and the Public Sectors budgets. For those who are talking on the radio that unemployment is on the increase, I want to tell them that unemployment is not on the increase in this country because there is an increase in the PAYE. Please take note of that and advise yourselves.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Corporate Tax is as a result of increased in profit margin reported. In other words, when there is an increase in the profit margin, the tendency is that you pay more tax. That tells you that business is growing. These are the facts and figures I am talking about.

Again, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to talk about the Goods and Service Tax, which includes importation, GST, etc. In 2016, it was **Le 666bln; Le 826bln** in 2017 and we are now talking about over **Le 1tln**. What does that mean? For the Accountants and Economists, it means that 'businesses are growing or businesses are

getting better; and when businesses are getting better, you have more sales, more gains, and more tax for Government. Please take note of that; and if you have any doubt, please consult me after the sitting.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, taxes are collected with a view to generating revenue to run corporate programmes. Again, when there is an increase in taxation, there will be enough money for Government programmes and for the people of this country. Therefore, I want to congratulate the Minister of Finance and his team for providing these figures in this Budget.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have the Customs and Excise Department in this country. We have import duties, excise duties, and excise duties on petroleum, as well as freight levies. That constitutes the Customs and Excise Department Revenue Collection in this country. Again, when the business climate is good for businesses, we expect them to pay at the Port of Entry their excise duty for the goods they import into the country. When that figure shoots up, it tells you that more businesses are coming into the country or more goods are being imported into the country. Mr Speaker, more goods will be available to be purchased or distribution to their business houses. That is an improvement on the business climate. Please take note of that, Honourable Members.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to briefly look at road-users tariffs and vehicle licences. This has been the tradition that when you import a vehicle in this country, it is not a no man's land. You are expected to pay your tax at the Port of entry. The tax is collected by NRA and remitted into the Consolidated Revenue Fund. This has been the work of the NRA and they have been doing that over the years. I am sure they will continue to do the good work as long as we have the NRA boss, Madam Haja Kala Kamara.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, looking at the expenditure part of this budget, I want to start with the Ministry of Local Government. Do not forget that the expenditure part captures wages and salaries, pensions and gratuities for the working class, including Members of Parliament. Those who are not coming in the next Parliament and

those who will be somewhere else can apply for their pension. I want to inform Honourable Foday Rado Yokie that his pension will be available at any time. That is why we have revenue line to pay pensions and gratuities to those who deserve it or those who have worked for it. I am one of those who has worked very hard, together with my friends on this side.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, with particular reference to the Minority Leader, we have done the calculation and she will get her pension and gratuity on time. We cater for those who deserve pensions and gratuity.

Mr Speaker, Speaker, Honourable Members, permit me to look at the expenditure pattern of MDAs. I have selected a few that I feel should be well examined in this debate. One of them is the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development. Some people may want to know why. I want to state here that we have two new constituted districts in the country; i.e., Karina and Falaba Districts. The creation of Karina District resulted in the creation of the North/Western Region. When you look at the figures for all the five regions in this country, they are very alarming. The cost of the de-amalgamation of the chiefdoms is also is very high. This budget captures the cost of the de-amalgamation, the cost of the Falaba and Karina Districts and increases the Vote for the five regions in this country. I want the relevant parliamentary Committees to take note of this fact, particularly the Committees on Local Government, to do their oversight functions. I believe that is very important.

Mr Speaker Honourable Members, the sum of **Le5.6bln** was allocated to all the regional offices. It is a lot of money and this is how a responsible Government operates. This is the planning stage and I want to believe that the Minister of Finance has put resources together for the execution of government programmes and for us as a Parliament to come and conduct oversight functions. That is very important.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me talk briefly on Parliament. Parliament is allocated **Le15.3bln**. It used to be far less than this amount. The increase is because of the twenty additional seats to be occupied by majority on this side. We will continue to maintain the majority seats in this House.

HON. DR BERNADETTE LAHAI: How does what you are saying link to this budget?

HON. HASSAN B. SHERIFF: I am saying that the **Le15.3bln** is an increase to Parliament's budget for our oversight activities and to cover the additional seats for Members of Parliament. There is a fair and equal distribution of wealth in this House and I want to believe that it is our responsibility to make it very transparent and accountable to the nation. We must be accountable to the people of this country. We must be able to account for our stewardship to the people we represent in this country and it has be done in a transparent and accountable manner.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to assure my good friends from Kenema that we will never forget their concerns in terms of rehabilitating the roads in Kenema. This Government is seriously engaged in road construction across the country. This Government has done a lot to ensure that electricity is provided in this country and nobody can challenge that. When Government was trying to develop the infrastructure in Kenema, the authorities of Kenema came up with different programmes. What happened? The Government decided to vacate that city and take the development to another city, a city that would appreciate the work of this Government. That was exactly what we have done to Kenema. Until Kenema Members of Parliament and their Mayor get back to us, it will be very difficult for those roads in the city to be rehabilitated. You must pay attention, especially when the debate is ongoing, so that you will be able to make valuable contribution when you have time to do so.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in as much as we empathise with you, we want to encourage you to do more for Kenema District, with particular reference to Kenema City. Kenema is a city and we must be able to improve that City like the other cities such as Makeni City and Bo City and Freetown. But you have to be forthright with the issues, so that we will be able to know what to do as a Government. Please take note of that as well.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we make friends all over the world and we always sign Multi-National Agreements to accommodate other friends around the world. I want to believe that is why we have Embassies and Foreign Missions, and we have to

maintain them. This Government has allocated **Le38.6bln** for the Foreign Missions. I am bring these issues, so that my friends on the other side will have very little to say but to join me and convey the message to the people of this nation. As a Parliament, we are expected to be doing the right thing for the people of this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I move to the Security Services. It is the responsibility of the Government to provide security for its people. This Government has allocated **Le301bln** to the Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Police Force, the Correctional Service, Fire Force, Immigration and the Office of National Service [ONS]. It also captures the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency for us to enable Government to control the use of drugs in this country. I want to believe that majority of the consumers usually abuse drugs in this country. This is why we have established the Drug Enforcement Agency to make sure that we control the use of drugs in this country. This is not a Government that allows everybody to go out on the streets and purchase and consume drugs as and when they like. As a responsible Government, we are making sure that we put control on the use of drugs.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to briefly talk about the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. A lot has been said, even the last couple of days, when I heard political argument on both sides, especially on the other side, condemning the work of this Government under the Ministry of Education. Some are still saying that Government is doing little or nothing about education. This Budget captures major areas to improve on education, including vocational institutes for those who are not able to go to University or College. Technical and Vocational Institutes [TECVOCS] have been created and they are going to be funded by this budget to encourage high school drop-outs to improve their skills, so that they can make a better living for themselves and their families. That is a very good thing the Ministry of Education has done.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to inform this House that plans are underway to provide access to education for handicapped school going children. This Government has catered for handicapped students. The same is true for school-feeding programmes. Some years back when some of us were going to school in this country,

there was a school feeding programme at primary level. However, that beautiful idea was abandoned long time ago. It has been captured again by this Government and this Government has provided funding for school going children. One of the best outcomes of this programme is to encourage the little kids or pupils at pre-primary and primary levels to go to school on a regular basis. It is believed that when the child hope to be provided with food when he/she gets to school, the child will continue to go to school regularly. The child will be very happy to attend classes and improve on his/her knowledge. To me, those are the bases for the child to move from primary to secondary school and even to tertiary institutions or vocational institutes. That is very important.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have the Girl-Child Education Programme that is also funded by this budget. Fees are paid by this Government to the West Africa Examination Council [WAEC] for the West Africa Senior Secondary Certificate Examination [WASSCE] for some students. So, when I heard politicians exaggerating the drop in the standard of education, I said to them that 'they are not being sincere to themselves and their families.' I believe that is deceitful to themselves and their families. You call things by their names. Whatever happens on a daily basis, you have to be frank to the people you represent. For the other politicians who have not been privileged to be part of this sitting in Parliament, please tell them the truth. It is up to the individual to improve himself. You can take the horse to the stream, but you cannot force it to drink. The same thing goes for education because the school doors are open to all regions, tribes or ethnic groups, etc., but it is up to the individual to take advantage of that privilege. Had it not been for the education you acquired, you would not have been in this Parliament.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let us work together and help the people we represent here. You must be able to be honest to the people of this country. I want to state here that things have changed from then to now. We have as young as 21 year old student graduating from the University. Some years back, we were talking about twenty-six and twenty-eight years old to get the first degree. Today, we have people who are twenty-one years old graduating from universities because the foundation they

have got. When the foundation is strong, you have the strength to improve your knowledge on a daily basis. You do not have to stay in the classroom. You can stay home and turn on your computer and do distance learning programmes and still graduate from that class. This is ongoing now in Sierra Leone and in other countries. Technology has improved and that is why we have a special provision on education. It all depends on us as parliamentarians to do our work. That is why we have the parliamentary Committees to hold government accountable. The Committees should go on oversight and oversee the activities of MDAs.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we do not blame the Government per se, but should also blame ourselves. When funds are being provided to these MDAs that should be the time we undertake oversight functions. Are we doing that as Members of Parliament? Yes, we are doing that, but are we doing that perfectly? The answer is no, we are not doing that to satisfaction. Well, some of us we do. Leadership is responsible to do oversight? If the Leadership is not there to give instructions, you must be strong enough to perform your function. Some Members of Parliament do not take their work seriously because when they go on oversight, they will take maybe one or two days and then disappeared. I am sorry to bring that up, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, before I move away from education, we are going up country in Koya Chiefdom where we found the Barefoot Training College. This institution is encouraging the uneducated rural women to improve on their skills. This Government has catered for those people to improve their skills and to improve their livelihood. For instance, when the vehicle of a Member of Parliament breaks down on the highway, they are ready to help. They could be asked for water or food and they should be able to provide for you. That is why we have to encourage them. As a family, we must be able to approve this budget on a timely basis. It is our responsibility to cater for those who cannot take care of themselves. Please take note of that.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I look at the end product of this report, which has to do with the deficit. Well, countries all over the world, including the United States, report a very high deficit in their administration. Members might want to make reference to

the deficit. If you have a business to run, you have to expect two things; i.e., profits or loss. We cannot give what we do not have. This is the case when we projected revenue collection. If we fall short of revenue projected, we will not be able to meet our expenditure. What I will personally recommend is that when we have a deficit, we have to sacrifice to balance the budget.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I have given you an indication of the whole budget, so as to improve your knowledge. We will cut down our benefits and salaries of the working class to be able to meet government programmes. This has been done in the USA, where the Government suspended operations for three months. We have to make sacrifice and I am willing to do so. I want to call on Members of Parliament and representatives of this Government to work together. We know what is right or wrong and we know what is right for the people we represent in our various constituencies. If you know of any leakage in any of the MDAs in this country, the best thing to do is to report to the appropriate parliamentary Committees. If you know of any NGO or Civil Society receiving huge sums of money overseas without reporting it to Government, we as Parliament should report that to the Ministry of Finance to put all the funds together at the Bank of Sierra Leone, so as to monitor all those seepages. My friends used to call me 'new Sheriff in town.' Maybe when we usher in the next Parliament, there will be a new Brigadier General on this side *[Laughter]*.

With those few words, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to call on Members of my Committee; i.e., the Committee on Finance and those who have served in the Committee to debate this budget. This budget is necessary for this country and we must ensure that it becomes an Act. I want to thank you for listening.

HON. MOHAMED K. THOLLEY: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me add my voice to the Budget Speech delivered here in this Honourable House on 27th October, 2017. Having heard from the Honourable Chairman of the Finance Committee, I picked up one thing; i.e., the truth. The Honourable Member has said, he was indirectly saying that the APC cannot give what they do not have. And where you cannot give what you do not have, it means we will ask you to bring a new management. To me, it is really

unfortunate for the Honourable Member to say that the people of Kenema refused to accept development. He was also saying that because the people of Kenema could not sing to the tune of the APC, Kenema would remain to be like that. That is what he said, Mr Speaker.

HON. HASSAN B. SHARIFF: Mr Speaker, I stand to correct the Honourable Member from Bo for misrepresenting me as Chairman of the Finance Committee. That simply testifies that he was not paying attention to what I was saying.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, what did you say?

HON. HASSAN B. SHARIFF: I did say that the people of Kenema City failed to accept the development this Government wanted to take to that district.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Mohamed K. Tholley, you have just said that you did not say what you said. Please be careful with your choice of words. I will go back to the record when I am ready to do so.

HON. MOHAMED K. THOLLEY: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I want to draw the attention of this House to Agriculture on Page 8. Mr Speaker, Paragraph 40 on Page 8 states: **“To reduce dependence on imported rice, emphases will continue to be placed on increasing domestic rice production to attain self-sufficiency.”** I do not think if this Government is serious in achieving food sufficiency because year in and year out we have been hearing this same thing. Some years back, I did say in this Well that if we eat what we produce and produce what we eat, it would be better for this nation. Some years back, we used to see the Military producing the food they eat. They have professionals in the military. I think we should capacitate them, so that they will be able to grow the food they eat. There is so much money they always spend on procuring uniforms; and to me, it makes no sense.

Again, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have people who are bringing fertilizers every year. For those of us who have agricultural background, I want to state here that it makes no sense at all. When you continue to bring fertilizer, there should be some amount of production. When you go to the farm, you expect very good harvest. I tell

you this Government is a disappointment to the people of this nation. How can you feed the people with the food the Minister was talking about; i.e., 'made in Sierra Leone brand?' If you go to his office, you will notice that everything is from Europe. Sometimes let us just accept the fact, Mr Speaker. I am not just talking from an opposition point of view, but because I am a Sierra Leonean. You are putting untold sufferings on the people of this nation. This budget is not friendly to the people of this nation. Again, the Chairman of the Finance Committee said that because the Government have done so much, employment is no problem. Oh my God!

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I was trying to draw your attention to the much talked about education. Whenever I leave Bo to Freetown, I usually see children carrying food on their heads to take to school. If this government is serious with the school feeding programme, this should not be happening. This Government has abused the rights of our children. The Ministry of Education is not serious because if you ask Heads of schools, they will tell you that it has taken six months without supplies. The children have not been fed for the past two or three months.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the type of mess in our educational system is alarming. Examination malpractices are everywhere, from primary schools to Universities. For instance, during the last National Primary School Examination [NPSE] five to seven children were clustering around one question paper. You have children going into the examinations hall by shift. Some of you know that, but because you do not want to lose your party symbol, you do not talk about it.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if you look on Page 26, paragraph 116, this Government made use of Queen's language to bring untold sufferings to the people of this nation. If you look at the statement on that paragraph, you will see that this Government is again trying to fool the people of this nation. There is an intention on part of this Government to increase the cost of fuel. I want to state here that if this Government attempt to make any increase on the price of fuel, this will be the 'last straw that breaks the camel's back.' They want to play tricks but we are ready to respond. The last time you increased the cost of fuel from **Le3, 750** to **Le6, 000**.

Again, you are fighting to increase the cost of fuel. If you dare make that attempt, we will push you from the corridors of power completely.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if you look at this year's budget, they are just playing with figures to fool the people of this nation. These figures are just expressed on paper, but the reality on the ground is fake. This Government has misused the money and the people are now suffering. I thank you, Mr Speaker.

HON. PATRICIA U. DANCAY-BANGURA: It is indeed a big day in this House, as we are debating the last budget in this session before the House is dissolved. We are very grateful and thankful to God for the fact that we are all together. We will move forward after today's sitting.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I had the opportunity to go through the budget and the first thing I noticed is the budget made to all MDAs. There is no MDA whose budget was reduced. In other words, every MDA has had an increase in the 2018 Budget. And it is only a Government that plans to come back that would do something of that nature. This Government wants continuity and there is going to be continuity of what they have been doing. If they had not got that at the back of their minds, they would not do all these good things for this country. I noticed that the GDP is projected to grow by **5%**. We need to know that if it rose to **5%**, whether the people of this country will benefit from this increase.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will like to thank the Chairman of Finance Committee, who is also the Deputy Majority Leader of this House for his contribution. His contribution shows that he has gone through this budget and that was why he was able to make important points for our consumption. For instance, he highlighted the sacrifices we have to make. I just want to bring this to the attention of this Parliament that throughout the four to five years, we have made a lot of sacrifices to save this country. I say this because all Honourable Members of this House do not fly Business Class. Our counterparts in the Sub-Region are flying Business Class. There is a huge chunk of savings for the Government. When we meet at the Airport, we do not know where they are getting their funding... - *[Interruption]*.

Suspension of S.O 5[2]

HON. PATRICIA U. DANCAY-BANGURA: I want to thank the Leader and Chairman of the APC, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma for appointing women in strategic positions in decision making positions in this country. This is because we are seeing institutions like the NRA doing in terms of mobilising revenue for our country. We can also say that they have done a lot, but we can do more. We plan to do more because we have strategic areas where revenue could be mobilised. I am talking about Kambia District, where we have customs, which is a place where revenue is collected on a daily basis. I know what is happening there and I know that if we come back as a Government, things will be put in place to increase revenue mobilisation from that part of the country. I will encourage all MDAs, private companies, individuals and good citizens to please continue to pay their taxes as part of the revenue mobilisation drive for the country. If we pay our taxes, we will be able to realise what is in this budget. What we have in this budget are projections; and if we do not raise the required revenue to meet the demands of the budget, we will fall behind. We need to encourage everyone to pay their taxes.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I have already talked about controlling expenditures, and I want to encourage all MDAs to do something in terms of controlling expenditure and bringing the expenditure down, so that other areas will benefit from the cut down.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I just want to talk about the allocations to Gender and Women's Empowerment. That is commendable and it is a little bit more than what it was in the last four years. The Project is for Gender and Women's Empowerment and as such, it could be increased and we are advocating for more in that area.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to talk about the Ministry of Tourism and Cultural Affairs, and the National Tourist Board. These sectors have also been increased in terms of allocations. All of us know the reasons. Since Ebola struck this nation, the tourism sector was greatly affected. However, this Ministry and the National Tourist Board have done so much to bring tourism to where it used to be before the Ebola. And any amount of money allocated to these two sectors is not enough because Sierra

Leone has the potential to be number one again in Africa or even in the world when it comes to tourism. There are so many different sectors in the tourism industry. We have sport tourism and cultural heritage tourism. These areas need to be encouraged in this country. We are not talking about leisure because we have the best beaches in the world. If we can only concentrate on tourism, we will have more revenue. I know all these because I was in the tourism sector before I came to Parliament and I have an idea what we can realise much from this sector. Once we encourage and improve our tourism potentials, more revenue will be realised. The moneys allocated to these two MDAs; i.e., the National Tourist Board and the Ministry of Tourism and Cultural Affairs, is fairly adequate, but we need to do more because these two sectors have the potential to sell Sierra Leone's image to the World. For example, Sierra Leone came first in Africa Beach Volley Ball. If you were not along the Lumley Beach this last weekend, you must have missed a lot. We were able to defeat countries like South Africa, Mauritius, Seychelles', Ghana and Nigeria. We will be representing Africa in Australia in 2018. That is one area of tourism that will benefit this country. We will concentrate on tourism and bring world's sport tourism.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there are many opportunities in the tourism industry to be exploited. I want to encourage all of us to do something to save this country. The Deputy Majority Leader was saying that everyone should make a sacrifice for the progress of this country. Sacrifice is very important and we are already doing it as a Parliament. So, I am encouraging everyone to contribute to the revenue mobilisation. Please pay your taxes, and encourage others to be on-board. Thank you very much.

HON. BRIMAH CONTEH: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to remind my colleagues that this budget is about house-keeping. It is about providing resources for the progress of this country. We have before us the presentation made by the Minister, the Macro-Economic framework within which we will operate in the next few months to achieve our objectives. 'Ceteris paribus' as we say 'everything being equal,' the objectives should be achieved.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to focus on the Micro-Economy, which is one of the aspects of what makes the economy to operate. I want to refer to a few issues the Chairman of the Finance Committee was talking about. The most important thing is revenue generation. How do we mobilise the resources to ensure that the objectives highlighted by the Minister of Finance are achieved. He spoke about putting in place mechanisms on our foreign exchange, export proceeds and so on. We have been there before and the Bank of Sierra Leone is prepared to achieve some of these objectives. I am sure that the Minister works with the Bank of Sierra Leone under my watch as Director. We get foreign exchange through exportation. We also have foreign exchange and we know exactly what is coming from Bauxite. Some of us know that these companies sell in advance. So, it is not anything strange and I would like the Minister to know that.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have not gone where we were before the War. We have cash crops such as coffee, cocoa, but we have not really achieved much from these crops. This means that Government has to turn or ought to turn its attention to those areas where these crops are grown. We have not got there yet, but the proceeds from the export of these cash crops ten years after the war were encouraging.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, with respect to cash crops, we also need Export Lenders of Credit. We do not have to fight for that because year in and year out, we are talking about food self-sufficiency. I am wondering why we cannot properly manage the resources we have. We have to be visiting the areas where these crops are produced. In terms of economic management, you have to go to the growth centres because that is where we should start. Sierra Leoneans should have backyard gardens and every village should have a farm. I will also urge that you first start with those areas where you can say 'this is our bread basket.' You are always talking about Tormabom, but nothing is happening there. We have a Minister who is well-trained and he should be able to feed this country within twelve to twenty-four months. Is it that the Ministry is denying him the resources to make this achievable?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I said before that when Mr S.A.T. Koroma was the Minister of Agriculture, he went to Tormabom. Also, there is a place in Port Loko known as Rombeh Swamp; and in Makeni, we have vast areas of farmland. Let us start with the growth areas and identify them one after the other.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to talk about Education. We cannot achieve our goals and objectives if education is not revived. We cannot go anywhere without a trained manpower. We are talking about the tertiary institutions, but we also need the skilled institutions as well as the vocational institutions. We wasted four years to five years running after ghost teachers. You know that you cannot catch a ghost, but you have begun to hunt ghosts. Ghosts are not people, but they are spirits. We wasted a lot of money and I want to state here hunting ghosts will not solve the educational problems in this country. Nobody catches a ghost. Let us optimise the resources we have, rather than going after ghosts.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I had an interview with a principal few days ago in my Chiefdom. I listened to the report of the Principal of St Edwards Secondary School in February. We are not encouraging our teachers. Majority of the teachers are not on payroll. At the St Edwards Secondary School, the teachers who are not on payroll are usually given **Le200, 000** monthly because they are not on the payroll. Another Principal told me that he is giving his teachers **Le100, 000**. These are trained and qualified who deserve the best. How do we want to push education forward if we focus our attention on fighting ghost teachers and forget about the teachers who are active in the service? I speak from experience, experience from yester years.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am a trained teacher with a Diploma in Education from Durham University. So, I know what I am talking about. The teachers must be paid. There are challenges and fiscal risk the Minister spoke about such as the mudslide. He also talked about flooding at Dundas Street and Mends Street, but that is unacceptable because people were allowed to clog the gutters or drainages. I have been living at Mends Street for two years. The drainage between Mends Street and PWD is expected to flow through Kroobay. During the Colonial period, water flowed

freely. As we speak, we have allowed people to remove the slabs and this is unacceptable.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want talk about infrastructural development. I just wanted to mention roads and the unfortunate statement made by the Chairman of the Finance Committee about Kenema City. He said that Kenema is being punished for rejecting development. It is unfortunate and I want to state here that we do not punish any part of this country. I come from Bonthe; and every year, our colleagues always say that Matotoka/Bo Road is almost complete. I usually spend over a million Leones every week when I am travelling. There are many things one could have talked about, but time is not on my side. However, this is a good budget, I must say [*Applause*]. It has everything you will require. It is the implementation that greatly matters because of political gains things get eschewed and we should avoid that as a nation. Thank you.

HON. DR ROLAND F. KARGBO: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the budget before us is a good budget. It seems to deviate from the normal budget because each time a budget is read in this House, we look at taxation as the way out. This time, the Ministry looked at other sources to diversify the Economy. The Ministry identified the gaps in revenue generation, which are very genuine and we can justify it. These are caused by circumstances beyond our control. This budget is however different from the previous ones because the Ministry is looking within the country to see how best we can put our thoughts and resources together to make sure that the better part is realised from our own pockets.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Ministry identified four key areas that are important in our revenue generation drive; i.e., Agriculture, Fisheries, Tourism and the Local Industries. They agreed that mining activities have been the cause of our problems. We built our hopes on the revenue from mining and when something happened, we became helpless. We built our hopes from the revenue we get from our Development Partners who have their Agenda and they have their conditionality. If we fail to meet those conditions, they pull the strings and we are left helpless. This is why

it is important for every Sierra Leonean to treat this budget with seriousness because they are actually the driver for our economic independence.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to briefly look at agriculture. We have already been told that the bulk of our foreign currency goes into importing rice. The Ministry has emphasised on rice production, which is very good. For rice production to be revolutionised in this country, we need the big players; i.e., big companies as we employ hundreds of thousands of people that will not only be the output of rice, but it will also reduce unemployment in the country. Again, we need the small farmers, **70%** to **75%** of our people are farmers and I am sure that **60%** of them are peasant farmers who cannot afford the services of the tractors. These are areas that one will consider to involve them.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Fishery Industry is an area with great potentials, not only in terms of income tax or foreign currency, but we now have the possibility of sending our fish to the Euro zone. Again, this sector will provide employment opportunities for our youth. For example, the Ministry of Youth Affairs launched the 'Youth in Fishery programme and they were given outboard boats and fishing gears in the Riverine Areas. I just do not know why it did not appear in this presentation because I personally thought that it was a laudable venture not only to increase fish production, but to increase employment of the youth. I want to graciously ask that if this was an oversight, we sort it out. I am not sure because we do not know how the loan gains are performing; whether the youth who took the loans are paying back to the revenue or not. But if they are paying, then this area could be exploited more.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, tourism also comes into focus and several areas are being mentioned; i.e., Tacugama and other places around Freetown, but I did not see Tama in the extreme North of Tambaka Chiefdom. It is such a huge project which I think will be a great deal, especially for my Constituency, if revived. There are lots of good things to talk about in this budget. I must say that this is a very good budget. I must say it is the beginning of us taking responsibility for the economic growth of this

country. And whichever way you look at it, this is a budget that we should pass. I thank you very much Mr Speaker.

HON. NAVO KAIKAI: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I am going to focus my debate on two areas; i.e., health and education. I want to start with health. Any nation that wants to develop must care about the health of its people. As far as I am concerned, this country does not care about the health of its people. Why did I say so? I was here when the Free Health Programme was launched in 2010 or early 2011. It was actually launched in Kailahun and I thought it would have made a difference, but it has not. You would agree with me that if you have been listening to the radio, there was somebody from the Ministry of Health who was talking about the health of this nation. It is sad to note here that women are still dying at childbirth. The person was referring to some beggars, but in this country, more than **15%** of women are dying.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am an Honourable Member of Parliament in Kailahun and I usually pay a lot of money for pregnant women and lactating mothers. Sometimes I doubt the existence of the Free Healthcare Programme. When you go to the Clinic or any government hospital, you are asked to pay and if you refuse to pay, they will only give you a couple of paracetamol tablets. That is all they will give you. So, the Free Healthcare Programme, as far as I am concerned, is not working. It is not going to work and we have to be looking at other ways of saving this nation.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when we talk about saving this nation, if you go to immunisation aspect, this is a country where we still depend on donors to give us immunisation vaccines, although they are the cheapest all over the world. If we care for our people, I think we should be able to pay for vaccines to reduce the diseases we are talking about. We only see vaccines during a health crisis in this country and that is not the way it should work. For example, hepatitis is only considered now. It should be routine for every child to save the children of this nation from having hepatitis 'b' as they get older. The Government is talking about caring for this nation, which of course, they do not care about the nation. Majority of the Ministers and Honourable Members' children are abroad and that is why they care less about the health of the children of

this country. Sometimes I wonder whether this Government thinks we are stupid or we do not understand the English Language. If you go to Page 14, Paragraph 63, some diseases are being mentioned. In many of these cases, majority of the people cannot afford to seek medical attention abroad, but Government officials are seeking medical treatment abroad. I know of Honourable Members in this House who are sick, but the government refused to sponsor them. This is misleading because you have not paid for the majority in this country who continues to die from diseases they are not supposed to die from. This is intriguing because we are not showing anything and people continue to die.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I am sure some of the information are not to your knowledge and the statement you just made I am sure is not within your purview.

HON. NAVO KAIKAI: What I said is that the medical cost of majority of people in this country is not paid for by the Government.

THE SPEAKER: You cannot pay for the majority of the people in this country. It is impossible, Honourable Member.

HON. NAVO KAIKAI: Mr Speaker, the statement in this budget states that many of these cases are paid for by the Government.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I had earlier advised. I wish you keep to my advice from now onwards.

HON. NAVO KAIKAI: I will move on, Mr Speaker. The same paragraph says, 'this triggers in addition to the expensive family healthcare.' Consideration should be given to the global cost. I am looking at the words 'the expensive family healthcare programme.' I am now talking as a professional, working with the primary health care. The primary healthcare programme is a preventative medicine. It has to prevent people from getting the cancer and diabetes we are talking about. I have been in this country for the past twelve years and I have never heard anybody being called by the General Practitioner [GP] to come and check their blood pressure, check their hepatitis status, let alone check their cholesterol level.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, my colleague on the other side was making comparison with America. When you compare Sierra Leone to America for the bad things, you need to also compare for the good things. In the UK, for instance, once you attain the age of 40, you get what is called MOT Test. They check the entire chest to make sure that you are fine and you are not at risk. That is fine, but in America, they are doing examination when necessary. A good Government that cares for its people should ensure that they are healthy through primary health care.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to impact some of my knowledge into the Government to help them achieve their goals. This is a serious challenge and I still do not believe that this Government cares for its people. A Government that cares for its people will not allow children to be selling cigarettes on the streets at night. How are you going to prevent teenage pregnancy and other dangers? You cannot advertise cigarettes and still be seen as serious about reducing the risk of Cancer. Cancer cannot be reduced because we continue to sell cigarettes.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I now go to education. I come from Kailahun. I was sitting one day by a sister-in-law of mine and she said S.O [2], **"enti nar una sabi book; me nor sabi book, but me nar Board Member and Director of a whole School."** What I know in Kailahun is that all the Board Members belong to the ruling APC. These people were not given positions based on merits, but they can change the way things are happening in this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we were told that no Government Minister should travel in 'Business Class.' I am going to tell you that I have travelled twice when I came back from the United Kingdom in March and I saw Government Ministers travelled in a Business Class. I will not give their names, but if they are listening to me, they will know exactly I am referring to them *[undertone]*. I can give you the dates of my flight, so that you can go and crosscheck.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we are talking about raising funds. Since I have been in Parliament, the amount of debts this Government has incurred, some of us will be in our 70s before we finish paying them. How do we expect this budget to function

when we are still incurring debts? And if these debts are paid in Leones, it would have been better, but we are paying in Dollars. That is the hypocritical part of this Government. They have been telling us to be using our currency, but we are paying debts in Dollars. Where do we expect this country to survive if we pay in Dollars on a daily basis? I am sure the Dollar rate is still high, but still we continue to incur debts. There is no way we are going to manage this budget in terms of revenue collection. There are many people who are not paying taxes and these people are not indicted. When we come into governance, we will be looking at this budget and make sure we implement the things that are good and leave the others that are not good. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, make sure you keep your eyes on the clock.

HON. AMADU FOFANAH: Let me respond quickly to the Honourable Member, but I want to state here that it is better for some Members of Parliament to serve as nurses than a parliamentarians. The budget is inclined to show that this Government is surely ready with solid plan to continue governing this country. That is why the people of Sierra Leone will continue to vote for the APC as long as they can.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when you look at the 2006 Budget that was laid in this House by the Minister of Finance during the SLPP regime before the people of this country rejected them in the ballot box, let us get it clear that this problem started with them. With the leave of Mr Speaker, the 2006 Budget states: **“Mr Speaker, improving the health status of Sierra Leone is perhaps the biggest challenge of our nation.”** And he continued to say on Page 27, Paragraph 81 thus: **“The provision of health infrastructure is only part of the challenge. While we are also faced with acute shortage of trained staff, there is the additional problem of retaining even the few that are with us.”** But with this Government, I will assure you that there are better facilities for civil servants, including the nurses and doctors and that is why we have more doctors as compared to the days of the SLPP.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Honourable Member from Kailahun was talking about the Free Healthcare Programme that was launched in 2011. I want to take her

back to the 2006 Budget, which is full of deceit. Mr Speaker, it reads, **"To increase the available drugs and services, Government has made it a priority to provide free drugs for children under five years, vulnerable persons, women with disability, pregnant women and women of child bearing age that actually go as destitute."** You are confirming it now and you have heard about Free Healthcare Programme that was launched in 2011 and that is why you were booted out of power. As the saying goes, 'to thyself be true.' She was talking about the Free Healthcare Programme in the UK. I know the dynamics in the UK and the UK economy is pretty okay. You must be aware that in the U.K, you have to wait for four hours before seeing a doctor and nobody will call you for an appointment. You have to make appointments before seeing the doctor and that can take about four weeks.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will quickly go to electricity. This Government has allocated more funds to electricity and by the end of next year, the other plans put together will kick start. However, I want to remind my colleagues on the other side that we now have more electricity than before. I am saying because others are claiming that the electricity that the SLPP left was more than what is available now. Well, I want to read what the then Minister of Finance said. Mr Speaker, with your permission, I read: **"Mr Speaker, the energy situation in the country is very poor, our medium and long term plans to ensure power generation will soon begin to reach fruition. Currently, the total output in Freetown is below 10 megawatts."** Today, we are enjoying over 20 megawatts of electricity in Freetown. This is what this Government is doing for its people and will continue to do more.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will go to the youth. This morning, an SLPP Member of Parliament from Bo was talking about youth unemployment. I want to encourage you to listen to what the then Minister of Finance said in 2007. This was an issue that started from the NPRC days and they had the obligation to change things because money was made available to restructure the Civil Service. We are aware of the high unemployment rate in the country, particularly among the youth. We are making effort and that is why our Development Partners continue to put more money in

the projects of this government. This is a manifestation of our hard work and the transparent and accountable nature of this Government to deliver on behalf of this people of the country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Honourable Member said that the amount allocated to the Ministry of Youth was **Le13bln**. What about the **Le62bln** that was allocated to tertiary education and all moneys allocated to the Local Councils? Who is going to benefit from those allocations? I want to state here that the youth are the beneficiaries. So, why are we failing to be honest? I am strongly debunking the assertion that the former Government left institutions in place. I would want to let you know that what they did was to kill viable institutions in this country. To substantiate this, let me take you again to Page30, Paragraph 22 of the 2007 Budget, presented to this House by the then Minister of Finance under the SLPP. It reads: **"...financial management and sufficient incentives, there is no reason why the poor performance cannot be reversed."** There was a television discussion programme and a particular Member of Parliament was casting blame on our flag-bearer at that time during the SLPP. With the leave of the Speaker, the Finance Minister said: **"Mr Speaker, I will like to extend my gratitude to my colleagues Ministers and the management and staff of the Ministry of Finance and especially want to recognise the hard work, commitment, support from the out-going financial secretary"** [*Applause*]. I thank you very much.

HON. ALBERT DEEN KAMARA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, during my debate last year, I tried to compare the 2015/2016 Budgets. The one talked about accelerating and the other talked about recovery. This year taking from one of the last statement of the Minister of Finance said the 'last lap.' He was referring to this budget as the submission of all the budgets from 2008 to date. The theme of this year's budget is 'Strengthening Resilient for Inclusive Growth.' The two operative words here are 'resilience' and 'growth.' When you talk about resilience, it is an endless issue, but has the capability and the propensity to propel development and that is exactly what this

budget is all about. Having received a lot of shocks from the Ebola scourge, mudslide and drop in the price of Iron Ore, we are working very hard to revamp this economy.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as I said earlier, the operative words in this year's budget are 'resilience' and 'growth.' The Economists are always passionate about growth. I think it is the genesis of every economic activity. Let me say this again that development specialists are also passionate about growth, but they are more passionate about the growth you are talking about. Does it trickle down in terms of development? I am going to highlight the impacts of this growth from 2008 to date. Mr Speaker, please permit me to highlight some of the indicators. The first is building human resource. I will start with education. I will not be talking about WASSCE, BECE and NPSE. What I want to say is the fact that for the past 555 years [from **1462** when Pedro da Cintra discovered this country], no Government, including those of the Colonial, has done what this government is doing now in terms of education. This Government has reduced **70%** of tuition fee of Fourah Bay College and IPAM and **80%** of Njala tuition fee.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as a show of appreciation, the Public Relation Officer of the National Union of Student [NUS] put out this statement: **"Conclusively, we would be remiss and prosperity will judge us harshly if we fail to express profound thanks and appreciation to the authorities of the University of Sierra Leone and Njala and more especially to the Central Government for the show of magnanimity."**

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to look at health. As the saying goes, 'a healthy nation is a wealthy nation.' Before the introduction of the Free Healthcare programme there were 227 under-five deaths per every 1,000 children born in Sierra Leone between 1998 and 2003. Since the introduction of the Free Healthcare, the under-five mortality rate has dropped to 156 deaths per every 1,000 children born in Sierra Leone. This means that 71 lives are saved per every 1,000 births. I believe it will not be done instantly, but there is no doubt that we have done a lot for this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, infrastructural is key for the development of any nation. Constructing good roads is not a secret that this country has enjoyed for the past few years. If you look at the roads in our cities, you will see massive improvement in terms of roads. In other words, we have seen lots of improvements in our road network. Today, we have constructed about 1,700 kilometres. We have about 380 kilometres in the North, 187 in the South, and 257 in the East. I want you to know that we have the roads connecting Mile 91 and Bo, Bo and Kenema, Bo and Matotoka by Mongabay, Kenema and Zimmi, Koidu and Matotoka, and Masiaka and Freetown. The list goes on. Out of 1,168 miles roads, 642 miles have been paved, giving us about **54%** of the road network and 522 are unpaved. This Government has decided that the remaining roads would be paved by Dr Samura M. W. Kamara.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to look at electricity. My colleague was talking about the five megawatts before the 2007. Most of us saw the influx of Kabba Tiger Generators in this country. Today, we have moved from those five megawatts to 120 megawatts, which is about **240%** increase. A total of 307 megawatts is on the pipe line; 57 megawatts from the CEC awaiting ratification from this Noble House, 140 megawatts from the Bumbuna Hydro Electric Phase II, 30 megawatts from the Chinese Government, and 50 megawatts from Solar Power.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me briefly talk about water supply. I know that a lot of people will want to say I should not talk about water. The Water Sector is one of the sectors that has provided the greatest improvement in this country. I lived in Makeni as a young man and I have never seen water as I am seeing now. Look at what is happening in Kailahun town today. Again, look at what is happening in Kono and Kambia. One of the most important things that had happened is the rehabilitation of the Dam. When this Dam was constructed in the 1960s, it was 230 metric metres, which is about 230 billion litres of water for a population of over 1.5 million people for six months. We need to rehabilitate that dam. What I am seeing in this budget is something which, with our support, can go on and on.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank the staff of the Ministry of Finance and the Minister for this document. Lastly, I would like to thank His Excellency the President for this wonderful work he has done for this nation throughout his tenure of office. I want to again congratulate the incoming government that will be led by Dr Samura M. W. Kamara and the right Honourable Chernor R.M. Bah.

HON. SAIDU MANSARAY: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I have listened to lot of colleagues on the other side, starting with the Deputy Majority Leader. A lot of praises have been showered on Dr Samura M. W. Kamara, but forgetting the fact that Dr Samura M.W. Kamara served under a fine gently man, Retired Brigadier Julius Maada Bio, who is now prepared to take over the reign of this country. When I looked at this Bill, I realised that this country is about moving towards a steady stage of inflation. I will refer you to Page 25 of this budget, which deals with 'rising inflation.' It says: **"Any significant rise in inflation will result in high expenditure and in nominal terms, this is likely to create deficit."**

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, one thing I would like to state in this House is that the expectation that there will be inflation in this country will always affect their demand for money. In other words, whenever there is inflation to about **5%** for instance, the demand for money will increase by **5%**.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, what I am trying to say here is that we have been experiencing constant inflation. The people of this country are expecting more money in their pockets. For the past few years, this Government has been cheating on the people of this country, especially the poor people. It is not the value of the money, but the face value in dollars. There has been several moments of inflation in this country; and since there has been inflation in this country, the people of this country, especially the work force, will want to meet their purchasing power. What matters most to people is the value of the money to purchase what they want.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to state here that this Government has been cheating on the people of this country for the past years because whenever there is **5%** of inflation, the workforce will begin to match up with the price of the market. This

is why some of us are expecting this particular Government to have increased salaries and wages of workers.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to look at taxation. Year in and year out, this Government has been increasing taxes in this country. I want to inform this Honourable House whenever the Government increases taxes, the prices of commodities will also increase. For instance, the prices of commodities rose by **30%** last year and this Government has not done anything to complement the expenditure pattern of the workforce of this country to match up with the inflation matrix.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will round up by saying that there are so many ambiguities in this particular budget because the Minister failed to explain when and how they are going to expend the resources of the people of this country. Over the years, they have been making allocations for construction of roads in this country. I was expecting this budget to clearly state the completion of those roads. I was expecting the Minister to come forward and identify the Kenema City roads in this Budget.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will not round up my speech without talking about the people of Kenema District, whose roads have been in a very deplorable state in this country. I was expecting the Minister to have mentioned Kenema City feeder roads, Blama and Hanger Roads. This Government has just shown to us that it is one sided rather than for the entire people of this country. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member your time is up.

HON. KARIFALA S. CONTEH: Thank you, Mr Speaker. If this budget is to be appraised, I will rate it at **98%**. I am going to be very specific relation to this budget. During the first session of this Parliament, His Excellency the President promised us complete diversification of the energy sector so as to increase efficiency in the supply of electricity. And what is allocated in this budget for energy is a testimony to that fact. If you look at Page 11, Paragraph 51, you will see what I am saying. I will not read the paragraph, but I am only making references. Initially, the Kabba Tiger Generators ruled the day, but they are no more. As we are seated here, we can boastful say that thermal

generators rule the day. I know that clean energy and solar power rule the day as we speak. These different categories of energy supplies are as a result of direct diversification of the energy sector.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it has been said that without energy, there would be no economic activity. For the Economists to exist or for somebody to speak about Economics, certainly electricity should be readily available. Energy forms a universal solvent for all economic developments. Economists can work with a computer that requires power because he will be seated in his office and work on economic principles. This area is very important and I am not surprised when the growth and progress in this sector is quite significant to our satisfaction.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, during the second session, the Honourable Member from Bo, Honourable Foday Rado Yokie was saying that the economy should be converted into bread and butter. Interestingly, the Honourable Member was not really referring to bread and butter per se. What he was referring to was the fact that there is significant development in the private sector as a result of progress in energy sector *[Applause]*.

HON. FODAY RADO YOKIE: Mr Speaker, the Honourable Member from Western Area is misconstruing me and I did not say that.

HON. KARIFALA S. CONTEH: Mr Speaker, the fact is that if you go around Freetown, Bo, Makeni and Kenema or any town in this country, you will find out that even the welders and other middle level workers are using electricity. It is a rule to use electricity and it has a song that says, 'give us electricity.' There are more electrical equipment than ever before in this country. If you go to the carpentry shops, you will see different types of mechanical machines. This is as a result of the development of electricity in this country and we can say thanks to this Government. We started electricity with accessibility and this is not politics. This Government took the issue of electricity from zero. This is for the domestic consumption. And as we speak, the only way I can transform the figures written in this book is to understand the fact that as we are seated in Sierra Leone, all what we are seeing now is about 100 megawatts. As my

colleague said, we now have 120 megawatts of electricity and he was very correct, but we are presently from 100 megawatts and this is a fact.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, As the Honourable Member was saying, if you go through this budget, you will realise that the projects mentioned here are over 300, which means that despite the fact we have about **2000%** increment, we can still boast of over **300%** awaiting implementation. The irony about this is the fact that this current Government is putting mechanisms in place to ensure that the people of this country benefit in the next ten to twenty years. We have laid the foundation for the incoming Government that will be led by Dr Samura M. W. Kamara and his running mate, Honourable Chernor R. M. Bah.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when we shall have satisfied the domestic needs of the people, we will then focus on industrialisation. Mr Speaker, before this Government came to power in 2007, we came to the realisation that big companies did not connect to the EDSA, but if you go around the country today, these companies operating in Bo, Kenema, Makeni, and other towns are now connected to EDSA. What did they do? If you go to any company, at the time when EDSA took full responsibilities of electricity in the country, it was technically called 'outage.' When there was outage, we saw a changeover. If you go to the Airtel and LEOCEM for example, some of us realised that they were on Government's grid because they are not using generators again. To confirm this, I want you to go to town and ask the cost of a generator. The cost of a generating has depreciated. We do not need generators anymore. I am not disputing the fact that Kabba Tiger Generators are not produced in large numbers, but the fact is that they are no longer needed in Sierra Leone. We do not have a market for Kabba Tiger generators anymore.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this is very serious. We have received 57 megawatts from CEC. The CEC Project is something that we should confirm because the document has come to this Parliament and I presume all of us have read that document. The CEC is certainly located in the East and the essence of the CEC is to satisfy the people of the East End of Freetown. It is about 57 megawatts. Honourable Members, this is not

Mathematics or Arithmetic. If the total megawatt for Sierra Leone is hundred and presently this Government has provided more than 100 megawatts, it means we have done well. We are also working towards getting 57 megawatts, which means that we will have more than what is required of us.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to look at second phase, which is Bumbuna Phase II. As we speak, there is mobilisation at Bumbuna and the machines are ready to do the work. If you are living in Bo or Kenema, the network cables are being installed for the construction of the Dodo Dam. Interestingly, this is not just meant for Bo and Kenema because the essence of installing these transmission lines is to extend the facility to the villages around Bo and Kenema. Therefore, if you are living in a village around Bo or Kenema, I want assure you that the APC Government will make you comfortable. If you look at Page 11, the third item is talking about 30 megawatts of Heavy Fuel Oil [HFO] and it is to going to be funded by the Government of Sierra Leone. Initially, when we failed to open bars for people to go there and enjoy themselves, they were saying that there was no money. If you choose to take the tax payers' money to purchase thermal plant for the supply of electricity, I do not believe you will still have money to go to the bar. This Government is financially disciplined and responsible. You cannot spend this money on thermal plant for the provision of electricity and use same to buy Star Beer.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the next point I want to make is the 50 megawatts solar energy. This is not a secret and everywhere you go in this country, you must see solar light. I will not deliberate on this. Members of the Energy Committee would agree with me that as recent as four months to elections, the British Government took their tax payers' money to support this Government, so that we succeed as a nation. Again, three months ago, we received about Twenty Two Million Pounds from the British Government to beef up our electricity supply across this country. How was that conducted? The 124 Chiefdom Health Centres are now boasting of solar energy. When the installation was done, it was not based on where we have strong holds or popular

support because as far as we are concerned, every part of this country is our strong hold.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I represented an SLPP Member of Parliament in Kenema and I spoke on his behalf. Presently, that project is still benefitting the people of Kenema. Also, we went with other SLPP Members, which is an indication to show that what we are doing is not based on partisan sentiments but for the benefit of the people of this country. And the people of this country do not have APC or SLPP adjective to their names. The fact is if there is success in Red, so be it.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the next item, as indicated in the budget, is Cote d'Ivoire. Honestly, there is need for this to come again because this has been debated in this House that Cote d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea signed the West Africa Power Pole Agreement, which is geared towards providing enough electricity to the people of this country and neighbouring countries. This will enable electricity to be supplied across Sierra Leone in every household, factory, industry, etc. Work is presently ongoing. If you look at the newspapers, you will see tender notices relating to West Africa Power Pole electricity supply. Indeed, it is very important and that is why this Government has enough time to bolster hydro energy in this country. We have the Charlotte, Makali, Bankasoka and Yele hydro. They are at the closing stages, but as a responsible Government, you get a system wherein if there is a fault with a particular hydro, there is an alternative. We are poised to have electricity for the rest of our lives in this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to briefly talk about Communication. You would recall that when we were debating the Fibre Optics in this House, I did say here that the Fibre Optic is the eye-opener for technological development in this country. Prior to the landing of the Fibre Optics, we were not having Airtel Money or Africel Money; and prior to the development of the Fibre Optic, we were not having YouTube, Instagram and as such could not download heavy files. The essence is for us to be at par with international standards and that is reflecting now. All the banks are now connected to Fibre. If you go to the Sierra Leone Commercial Bank and other major

banks in the country, you will find out that those banks are benefitting from the Fibre because they are inter-linked.

Again, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we are moving towards the digitisation of the broadcasting system in this country. The people of Wellington, who are not enjoying graphics on Sierra Leone Broadcasting Cooperation [SLBC] TV will be poised to watch all political activities going on in this country. We are now creating an environment wherein the people of this country will be viewing exactly what is going on in this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the last thing I want to talk about is the minimum wage. Honestly, when you have a problem, you will sense its intensity and when the problem is solved, we do not seem to appreciate the intensity of that problem. When people were paid **Le21, 000** in this country, they were crying in this country. However, when the minimum wage was raised from **Le21, 000** to **Le500, 000** people are now benefitting. There are thousands of Sierra Leoneans who are benefitting because a lot of them are now paid **Le500, 000**. There are quite a number of people who have been up graded, but they do not seem to realise that at all. We have done something significant in this country. There are times when we experienced a problem, but when the problem is solved, we tend to forget. We should continue to reflect the fact that there were problems and this Government has solved those problems. In the same token, we should accept the fact that there was darkness and this Government brought electricity.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, on behalf of the people of Wellington, I want to state here that this budget is very positive and it is meant for the development of this country and to help the people of Sierra Leone to realise their dreams. I want to thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, before I ask whether you have announcement, I want to acknowledge the presence of Mrs Fatu Taqi, President of the 50/50 Group is my brother's wife. I also want to acknowledge the presence of Madam Nemata and the Honourable Paramount Chief from Moyamba, Paramount Chief Charles Caulker. I want

to kindly request that we observe a minute of silence in sympathy with our colleague Honourable member, Honourable Kadie Sesay, who lost her daughter. She was 33 years of age.

Honourable Members, I know where we are coming from. I know what she said and how long the lady has been with her. She does not refer to her as niece, but her daughter. On that note, I am requesting that we observe a minute of silence.

[A minute of silence was observed to her memory]

ADJOURNMENT

[The House Rose at 1:40 p.m. and was adjourned to Thursday, 2nd November, 2017 at 10 a.m.]