

OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

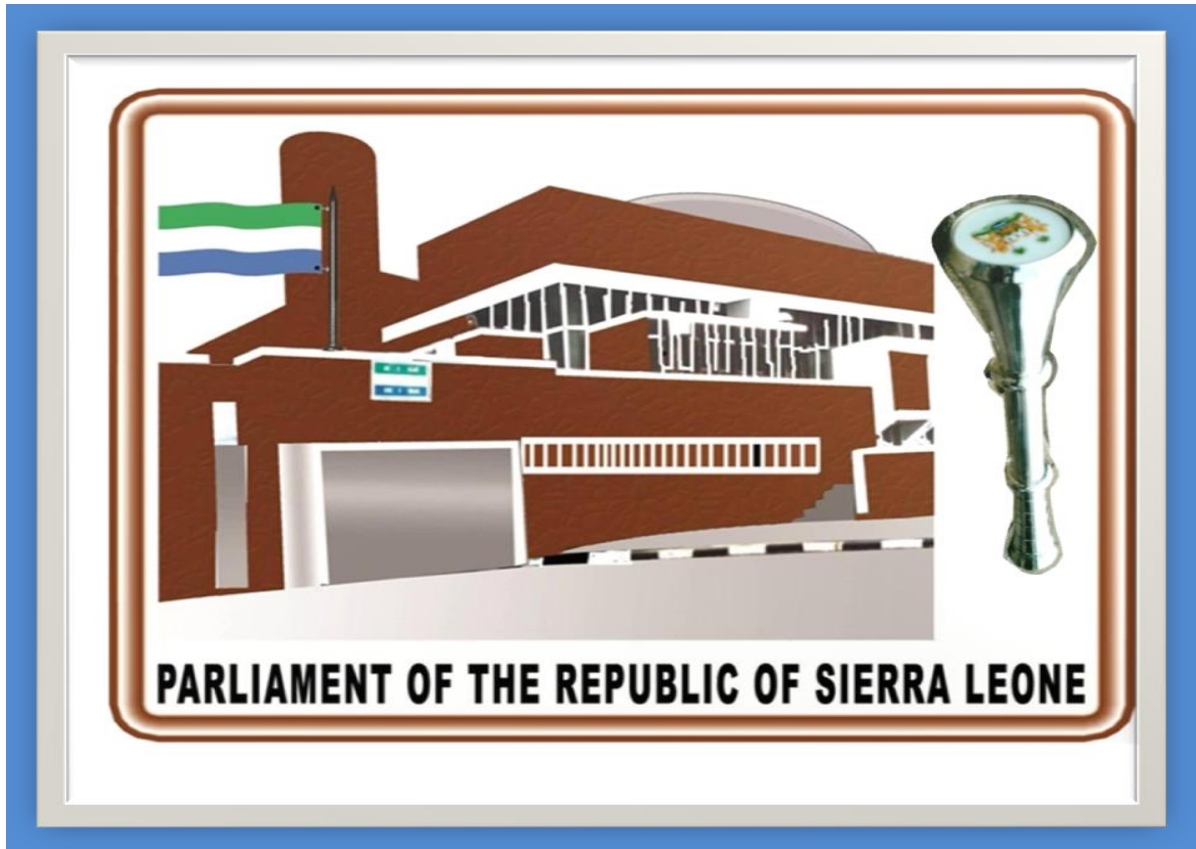
[HANSARD]

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

FIFTH SESSION - FIRST MEETING

THURSDAY, 25th MAY, 2017

SESSION – 2016/2017



OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

[HANSARD]

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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 Thursday, 25th May, 2017.

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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, 25th May, 2017.

I. PRAYERS

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

[The House met at 10:53 a.m. in Parliament Building, Tower Hill, Freetown]

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

The House was called to Order

Suspension of S. O. 5[2]

HON. HASSAN B. SHERIFF [Acting Majority Leader of the House]: Mr Speaker, Honourable members, I would like to amend the Order Paper to accommodate one more item and that will be the laying of paper to come after item two. So number three to be four and four to be five.

THE SPEAKER: I take it that there is no objection. Proceed!

HON. HASSAN B. SHERIFF: Thank you very much. Please take note! So the caption is Laying of Papers.

II. CORRECTION OF VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS FOR THE PARLIAMENTARY SITTING HELD ON TUESDAY, 23TH MAY, 2017.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to look at item V on the Order Paper that has to do with Bill. Mr Speaker, this is a very important Bill and as we speak, we have still not received explanatory note from His Excellency the President and we should do that in tandem with the original Bill. Some of us got the Order Paper this morning and we did not bring the original Bill.

THE SPEAKER: Were you in Parliament yesterday?

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Yes, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: You did not get the Order Paper?

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: I was here till after 3:00 p.m.

THE SPEAKER: The Order Paper was circulated yesterday. Well, I think I should come in and apologise on behalf of the Administration. I think there has been some delay in that regard. It cannot be attributed to irresponsibility, but rather a technical fault.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, we go through the record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting, held on Tuesday, 23rd May, 2017. As usual, we go page by page. Page 1? Page 2? Page 3? Page 4? Page 5? Page 6? There being no correction or amendment could somebody move for the adoption of

the record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting held on Tuesday, 23rd May, 2017?

HON. LAHAI MARAH: Mr Speaker, I so move.

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON. DR AIAH DABUNDEH: Mr Speaker, I so second.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed To]

[Record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting held on Tuesday, 23rd May, 2017 has been adopted as presented]

III. PAPER LAID

THE MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

IBRAHIM H. KALOKOH *[Deputy Minister of Local Government and Rural Development]*: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to lay on the Table of this Honourable House the following document:

STATUTORY INSTRUMENT NO. 60 of 2017

THE PROVINCES [ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION] AMMENDMENT ORDER, 2017

IV. MOTION OF THE COMMITTEE ON APPOINTMENTS AND THE PUBLIC SERVICE

PROPOSER: HON. HASSAN B. SHERIFF

SECONDER: HON. JUSUFU B. MANSARAY

HON. HASSAN B. SHERIFF: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to present to this Honourable House the Fifth Report of the Fifth Session of the Committee on Appointment and the Public Service on Presidential nominations.

1. Introduction

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service, alive to its constitutional responsibility of vetting and approving appropriately qualified candidates for appointment to public offices, met on Tuesday, 23rd May, 2017 and interviewed one Presidential nominee for appointment as Chief Executive of the Small and Medium Enterprise Development Agency.

2. Procedure

The Committee conducted the hearing within its set framework of procedures. The nominee was interviewed on issues pertaining to his educational background to ensure that he has the relevant education and necessary backup experience to man such an important office of state. Further probing questions put to the nominee covered wide ranging issues relating to his track records in pertinent work situations, declared assets, tax obligations and his vision for a nationally productive tenure. Issues of unsuitability or otherwise were also closely looked into.

3. Sixth Sitting of the Committee on Tuesday 23^d May 2017

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the following nominee was interviewed on oath:

Mr Raymond Kai Gbekie, proposed Chief Executive, Small and Medium Enterprise Development Agency

Mr Raymond Kai Gbekie is a self-motivated and goal oriented professional with excellent analytical and creative thinking skills, strong knowledge in International Finance and Foreign Direct Investment. Mr Gbekie has a wealth of experience and expertise in delivering solutions for business development strategies, economic policy problems, and value-chain analysis for International Institutions and Governments on matters of corporate strategy, finance and investment.

Mr Raymond Gbekie has served his country in the following positions:

[i] Chief Executive Officer, Sierra Leone Investment and Export Promotion Agency [SLIEPA] 2014 – date.

[ii] Chairman, Growth Sector Sierra Leone [2016-2017] Performance Management and Service Delivery, Office of the Chief of Staff]; and

[iii] Director of Investment Promotion [SLIEPA], 2008-2014.

Responding to probing questions on his vision for the Agency, Mr Raymond Gbekie said that the Agency was created to support the economy of Sierra Leone. According to Mr Gbekie, more than sixty per cent of businesses in this country in the informal sector fall within the Small and Medium Enterprises [SMEs]. The remaining forty per cent that are available in the formal sector also fall within the SMEs. This means that virtually all businesses in Sierra Leone fall within the SMEs. Mr Gbekie believes that the Agency should be treated very seriously because it holds the economy of the

country. **"It triggers down to the livelihood of grass-root people. The daily subsistence living of the people, the jobs, household incomes, consumer spending, all happen within the ambits of SMEs that are operating in the country, and the greater number of jobs that are provided by the country are provided by SME's. But we have not actually been able to exploit, to maximum, the SME's in this country because we have not been able to profile them, to cluster them, to look at them from a bird's eye view to see how they stand in supporting government agenda for prosperity,"** he said.

Responding to further questions, Mr Gbekie said, **"My dream is to see how we can realign the SMEs system, profile them and cluster them and how we can provide training for them. One of the areas where the businesses of this country have been missing out has been backward linkage programs; i.e., foreign investors find it very difficult to link up with domestic players. Having worked with Foreign Direct Investors, I now know their appetite and what the expectations of the local players are. Having also worked in government, I know the drive of the local content policy is moving the country forward and what Government plans to do about the 'made in-Sierra-Leone products. All that put together, I want to cluster the SME's, ensure that those who are trainable are trained, those that need access to finance are provided access to finance, those that need market linkages are partnered with foreign investors that will come into the country. Even when they are not joined to foreign businesses, they can stand on their own."**

4. Recommendation

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Committee adjudged the following presidential nominee to be adequately qualified for his proposed appointment and he is accordingly recommended to the House for approval:

Mr Raymond Kai Gbekie, Chief Executive, Small and Medium Enterprise Development Agency.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Fifth Report is the unanimous decision of the Committee. I therefore move that the Fifth Report of the Fifth Session of the

Committee on Appointments and the Public Service be adopted by the House and that the recommendations contained therein be approved. Signed by Honourable Hassan B. Sheriff Ag Chairman.

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON. JUSUFU B. MANSARAY: Mr Speaker, I so second.

[Question Proposed]

HON. JUSUFU B. MANSARAY: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is very much fortunate for many good people of Sierra Leone to see His Excellency the President nominating citizens of Sierra Leone who have made marks in their lives and for those who can really deliver. In other words, we still have people who have made their marks and they believe that this nation moves forward. Today, we have a fine nominee in the person of Mr Raymond Kai Gbekie. If you look at the gallery, you will realise that the people of this nation are in support of his nomination.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we expect Mr Raymond Kai Gbekie to live up to the expectations of the people's representatives and the President of this nation. This country has to move on and the Agenda for Prosperity must be realised. Today, we are talking about Small and Medium Enterprise, which is very important for the people of this country. The nominee before us is one of the few Sierra Leoneans who can help to move this nation if given the chance. Mr Raymond Kai Gbekie has told the Committee that thus: **"My dream is to see how we can realign the SMEs System, profile them and cluster them and provide training for them."**

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, one of the areas where the businesses of this country have been missing has been the downward lineage programmes. In other words, foreign investors find it very difficult to align themselves with local businessmen and this Mr Raymond Kai Gbekie has been in the SLIEPPA as Chief Executive Officer for quite some time now. He has dealt with many investors in this country; and the President, in his wisdom, has again nominated him to use his experience, so that other business people in this country could benefit. Being a member of the Appointment Committee, I asked the nominee how he was going to link SLIEPPA and other business people in the country. I also asked him how he

would ensure that our local business people are properly funded. Based on his experience, he promised to ensure a level playing field where our business people could be supported. I want to inform Mr Raymond Kai Gbekie that Members of Parliament are equally looking forward to him, including the people of this country. If he fails us, automatically there is going to be a problem because failure is not an excuse.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, please stop the interruption.

HON. JUSUFU B. MANSARAY: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I was telling Mr Raymond Kai Gbekie that failure is not an option and he must work diligently towards achieving the aims and objectives of that institution. We believe in his ability to perform and it is on the basis on that I want to ask my colleagues on this side and those on other side to approve his nomination. I also want to remind Mr Raymond Kai Gbekie that our business people are facing some difficulties in terms of managing their own businesses and this was why the President has nominated him to serve in that position because he believes that Mr Raymond Kai Gbekie will perform. This House will approve your nomination because we also believe that you will not disappoint us.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Mr Raymond Kai Gbekie also made another promise when he faced the Committee on Appointments. With the leave of Mr Speaker, he said: **"I know the drive of the local Content Policy is moving to and what government is planning is the 'made in Sierra Leone products...'"**

We equally believe that since he has been out of this country as an Economist, he will make sure that this country competes with other countries. Again, I want to remind him that this country has difficulties in terms of doing businesses. You are going to serve as the Executive Chairman if this House approves your nomination. I want Mr Raymond Kai Gbekie to always do the right things for the people of this country. The boys and girls you are seeing in the gallery have to exist or to survive. Majority of their parents are business people who do not even have the means to make profit that can send their children to school. Their parents suffer on a daily basis. Therefore, make sure the promises you have given to us when you appeared before the Committee on Appointments are fulfilled.

On that note, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to conclude by craving the indulgence of this House to rapidly approve Mr Raymond Kai Gbekie I thank you very much.

HON. IBRAHIM PATEH BAH: Thank you, Mr Speaker for giving me this opportunity to join the debate on the approval of Mr Raymond Kai Gbekie. Let me hastily seize this opportunity to express my profound gratitude and appreciation to His Excellency the President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma, for nominating Mr Raymond Kai Gbekie.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I believe in one thing; i.e., attitude, as the President rightly said, must change for the betterment of this country. Attitude is a small thing that makes a difference. I also believe that the things that actually matter in this life are the things that God gave to us freely and is something that I see in Mr Raymond Kai Gbekie. I am sure Members of this Honourable House and the public would agree with me that Mr Raymond Gbekie is not only qualify to do this work, but also has the character and the humbleness to respond to the needs of the people that he is going to serve if his nomination is approved today by this Honourable House.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if I may make reference to some of the responses Mr Raymond Kai Gbekie made to the Committee on Appointments. He said that more than **60%** of businesses in this country in the formal sector fall within Small and Medium Enterprises. He added that **40%** of businesses in formal sector also fall within the Small and Medium Enterprises. This means that **100%** of businesses are within the Small Medium and Enterprises. Therefore, Mr Raymond Kai Gbekie is expected to respond adequately to the needs of our people.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, anytime I go round my Constituency, one of the things that women usually ask for is 'micro-credit.' I am sure other Members of Parliament are also experiencing such demands from the women of this country. This is going to be one of the responsibilities of Mr Raymond Kai Gbekie if his nomination is going to be approved by this Honourable House. I am also sure that Mr Raymond Kai Gbekie would address some of these issues from our constituents.

On that note, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am sure my colleagues would want to contribute to this debate and I want to respectfully ask this Honourable House to speedily approve the nomination of Mr Raymond Kai Gbekie. Thank you very much.

HON. P.C. SHEKU A. T. FASULUKU SONSIAMA III: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker for giving me this opportunity. Mr Speaker, I rise to add my voice to this debate this morning on the approval of Mr Raymond Kai Gbekie. In the first place, I would like to thank His Excellency the President and the people of Kono and the youths of this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the first paragraph of the report of the Committee on Appointments describes Mr Raymond Kai Gbekie's long standing experience. As the saying states, **"When the going goes tough, the tough gets going."** I want to believe that those with dreams will still continue to go ahead even when the situation is tough. I want to remind Mr Raymond Kai Gbekie that he has a dream in the last paragraph of this report and I want to kindly ask him to pursue that dream without hesitation.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when I was in Primary school, my class teacher once told me thus: **"Young man, make use of your time because someone will take note of what you are doing one day."** I think the President of this nation, this Parliament and the people of Sierra Leone are aware of what you have done in the past. Please, we do not want you to go to that office and sit complacently without working towards achieving the aims and objectives of that institution. This nation is expecting you to ensure that the right thing is done. The most difficult thing in life is stepping on a great man's toes. This means that you have to double your efforts if you want to do more great things.

Having said that, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to state here on behalf of the people of Kono District, I wish you well in advance. I pray for good luck and to actually ask my colleagues to see how they can speedily approve your appointment. Thank you very much Mr Speaker.

HON. IBRAHIM BEN KARGBO: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service has

performed a very good job by probing into the history and experience of Mr Raymond Kai Gbekie. The report of the Committee on Appointments is very clear when the Acting majority Leader said that the Committee was satisfied with Mr Raymond Kai Gbekie's capability to perform the duties for which the President has nominated him.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma's led Government came to office with a clear vision and programmes. Among the programmes listed by the President of this country is his interest to ensure the development of the people of this country is realised. I am of the opinion that the introduction of the SMEs is one of the ways we can address the poverty aspect of this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Agenda for Prosperity is a very important Government policy deliberately created by the President to address issues relating to poverty and to improve the economic status of the ordinary Sierra Leoneans. By nominating Mr Raymond Kai Gbekie to man such an important position, I am very certain that the dream of the President would come to pass. Apart from the fact that the Committee is certain that Mr Raymond Kai Gbekie is capable of performing the duties for which he has been nominated, may I also state here that I have found Mr Raymond Kai Gbekie to be a very modest gentleman. If he is going to address the issues of the poor people, the issues of the youth, the women, he must also be a humble man who understands the needs of these people.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I came across Mr Raymond Kai Gbekie years back as a young man. As I was struggling with my luggage at the Brussels Airport, this young man came forward and said: **"Sir, can I help you with your luggage?"** He held on to the luggage until I boarded the plane to London. He is also a gentleman who usually consults before taking a decision. Within my very short stay in Parliament, he has being to my office more than three times, consulting and asking questions on issues that were not clear to him. And this is the kind of mentality he needs for a young man who wants to succeed.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am very certain that Mr Raymond Kai Gbekie will continue to consult and ask questions, so that he will continue to achieve great things. I want to also state here that the choice of Mr Raymond Kai Gbekie by the

President of this nation is no mistake. I am looking at Mr Raymond Kai Gbekie from three angles; vis-à-vis, his academic credentials, his youthfulness [which is very important because we are trying to ensure that we hand over power to the youth of this country], and his humility and recognition.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if we take these three components into consideration, and also take the *raison d'être* for which the President introduced the SMEs, you would discover how Mr Raymond Kai Gbekie fits into it. This is because we are determined as a Government to change the face of this country. We are determined to ensure that the youth and the poor people of this country become part and parcel of the development of this country. In other words, even where we must continuously change the phase of this country, like what we are doing at the moment, we should not forget the participation of people like Mr Raymond Gbekie, who will fit into the whole system to make sure that poverty is wiped out from this country. The SMEs, for instance, will be an excellent vehicle through which the development of this country is going to be realised.

Having said that, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am convinced that Mr Raymond Kai Gbekie is suitable for this job and I would ask this Honourable House to support the approval of his nomination. I thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

HON. DR BERNADETTE LAHAI [*Minority Leader*]: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am going to talk on behalf of all those who wanted to speak, but did not have time to do so. I know what they want to say and I would say it, maybe aptly for them, especially for those who have very long standing association with the Kono people.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am happy also to lend my voice to the approval of Mr Raymond Kai Gbekie for the position of Chief Executive Officer [CEO] for Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency in Sierra Leone. His nomination could not have come at a better time because Sierra Leone is not an island. We are not only a member of the ECOWAS, but we are also a member of the Africa Union [AU]. Currently, what is being discussed in the AU is the creation of a continental free trade. We want Africa to trade more with Africa, than what is currently happening. If that should continue to happen, then we must look internally to strengthen our

production base and the players concerned, so that we will be able to produce and trade continentally.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Mr Raymond Kai Gbokie has been with SLIEPA, trying to loom investment, trying to strengthen our production base and to promote investment in Sierra Leone. When we interviewed him, he catalogued a lot of successes he has made, all geared towards improving SLIEPA to be positioned for that job. I cannot enumerate all his achievements, but we are very much impressed with the catalogue of achievements he made while he was serving at SLIEPA from 2008 to the present. Of course it is true that our businesses are mostly in the SMEs area, whether the business is in the formal or informal sector. What we mean is that if you look at the quantum of capital available to our business people, the size of the business people in this country and the destination of the exports, you will find out that our business people fall within the SMEs.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, what I have just said is not the vision we want for this country. That is to say, our vision is to change from SMEs to medium and large enterprises and to even move from domestic consumption to export consumption, especially when Africa, as a continent, is putting in place the legal frameworks for such consumption. I want to state here that Africa will soon start having the one Africa passport. This means that all Africans will have the same passport. Again, Africa will soon dispel the issue of visas, especially visas dealing with leaving your country to go to another Africa country. And at least, when you enter and having done due diligence, it means that you have all the qualifications and you are eligible to enter that country at least an initial stay of ninety days as it is happening in the ECOWAS countries. After that, if you want to stay more than ninety days, then you go through the prescription of that country. By so doing, it would help to open up our goods, services, and expertise from moving within the borders of Africa.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we are also trying to put in place one stop immigration borders in Africa. For instance, we have the Mano River Union and if you are going to Guinea, we should be able to put the Guineans and the Sierra Leoneans under one roof, so that within one hour, you have done all your paper

work and your goods cross easily. Similarly, if you are going to Liberia, we should be able to put Sierra Leoneans and Liberians under one roof to do all their businesses as quickly as possible; and once your papers are all in place, you get your businesses done and you move across. However, we must have the goods and that is where the SMEs Agency comes in.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Agency should prepare, train and capacitate our SMEs technically and financially, strengthen their institutions and coordinate them because the informal sector is so uncoordinated. They need to be coordinated, marked and properly profiled, so that we put them according to typologies and create packages that fit the typology of SMEs. For now, they are found everywhere. Questions like who is this, what do they need, and what capacities they have, are a very big work and that is what should be his vision. Mr Raymond Kai Gbokie should make sure that there is a clear mapping, so that you can predict with some level of certainty the needs of a particular group, their capacities, their characters, etc.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to emphasise here that we were very impressed at Mr Raymond Kai Gbokie's responses to the Committee. He was thoroughly scrutinised, but he responded eloquently and remarkably. He was alone in that interview and we used that opportunity to spend over thirty to forty-five minutes because we also wanted to learn from his wealth of experience. In fact, when we sit in those interviews, we also get a lot of information from the interviewees, especially when we probe more into issues.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to agree with the Honourable Ibrahim Ben Kargbo that Mr Raymond Kai Gbokie is a humble and a very nice person. These are the types of characters that you need to work in this type of Agency. We must have the goods for our SMEs to be integrated continentally. Our aim is to ensure that we move most of the people in the SMEs to the medium or large scale enterprises. I want Mr Raymond Kai Gbokie to be consulting Parliament, especially when he is not sure of something. Please, do not wait for Parliament to call you. Sometimes come to Parliament and give us more information as to what you have done and what are your plans. This is very much important and can also contribute to your road map.

With those few words, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we really enjoyed interviewing him and he was very composed. These are the types of people we want, especially when he is going to be interfacing with a lot of investment that is coming into this country. We would want our front runners to be very confident because that is the start of building the confidence in our investors who are coming to this country. He is, indeed, real personification of that. We saw no reason why he should not be given the job. I thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

HON. HASSAN B. SHERIFF [*Acting Majority of the House*]: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I believe Parliament has spoken on the nominee before us. I would make a very few comments about this nominee to confirm what the other previous speakers have said about him. That is, when he sat before the Committee, he appeared very humbled and disciplined. He was well composed, filled with courage and enthusiasm. With all the questions being put to him, he had the courage to respond accordingly. Therefore, I admired the courage he exhibited at the interview. I think it is on this same principle that the Committee recommended him to the House for approval.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I must state here that Mr Raymond Kai Gbokie is going to that office with the readiness to work as the CEO OF the SMEs, but I want to remind him to start preparing his mind to deal with the women of this country. In this business environment of our country, he deals with more women, both professional and non-professional. So, I believe you have to prepare your mind to deal with the business women because they will be going to you more often than ever to ask for supports in form of loans to improve their businesses.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Mr Raymond Kai Gbokie has an open mind and he is ready to move from SLIEPA to SMEs. I believe he also wants to leave an indelible mark as he has done at SLIEPA. He used to come to me as Chairman of the Finance Committee for consultation and somebody mentioned that. He has great interest in improving international businesses in this country. I want to believe that if this House approves his nomination, he will make a lot of difference in terms of promoting the Local Content Policy. I think we have got somebody who is ready to promote that Policy in this country.

With these few words, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would also recommend to this House that we approve the nomination of Mr Raymond Kai Gbekie. Thank you very much.

[Question, Put and Agreed to]

[Motion of the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service has been]

THE SPEAKER: Mr Raymond Kai Gbekie, on behalf of Parliament, I want to congratulate you and wish you well.

V. BILL

THE FINANCE ACT, 2017

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA *[Acting Chairman, Legislative Committee]:* Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, be it resolved that this Honourable House amend the Bill entitled, 'the Finance Act, 2017 to accommodate the comments made by His Excellency the President, in accordance with Standing Orders 58[6] and Section 106, Sub-sections 7 and 8 of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone.

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON. HASSAN B SHERIFF: I so second, Mr Speaker.

[Question Proposed]

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: Thank you very much. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, today marks an important landmark in the political and administrative history of the Parliament of Sierra Leone. While I was listening to the Good Morning Salone Radio Programme on Radio Democracy this morning, this issue was raised and it was concluded that they 'are waiting to see the outcome from Parliament.' For the information of the general public, I want to state here that this is a clear indication to show democracy at play at the highest degree under this Government. It is also an indication to show Parliament's compliance to constitutional provisions. Again, for the benefit of the general public, what we are about to do is not unusual. It is constitutional and what His Excellency the President has done is also within the ambit of law.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, for the education of the general public, I would like to ask for your permission to read exactly what this Parliament has done and

why we are doing what we are doing now based on the constitutional provisions. Section 106, Sub-sections 7 of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone states: **“When a Bill has been passed by Parliament, but the President refuses to sign it, the President shall, within fourteen [14] days of the presentation of the Bill for his signature, caused the unsigned Bill to be returned to Parliament given reasons for his refusal.”**

Sub-sections 8 of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone states: **“Where a Bill is returned to Parliament pursuant to Sub-section 7 and that Bill is thereafter passed by the vote of not less than two third of the Members of Parliament, it shall immediately become law and the Speaker shall thereafter cause it to be published in the Gazette.”**

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as stated in this Constitutional provision, the President was bound to return the Bill to Parliament within fourteen [14] days. I am pleased to inform the general public and this Honourable House that he has rightly done so [*Applause*]. It is now our constitutional mandate based on Sub-section 8 of Section 106 to follow the rules. Therefore, I want to encourage this House to use our mandate in good faith.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I also want to inform this Honourable House that the explanatory notes given by the President and the various references given are not one hundred per cent dissent. There are certain areas he agreed with Parliament and disagreed on other areas. This means that democracy is at play; i.e., Separation of Powers and Checks and Balances. I want to restate here that what has been done is not unusual. As we proceed with the debate, I want to encourage all of us to take this debate in good faith.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please take your seat for a while. Honourable Members, I must report to this House that this is not unusual and I will urge new Members of Parliament to please take note and learn. The leadership of Parliament, comprising both the governing party and the opposition, was invited. The Leadership was invited and we sat with the President, Officials from the Ministry of Finance, Officials from National Revenue Authority [NRA] and other related bodies for two days to discuss the issues. We all agreed on what is to be presented to this House.

According to the Constitution and according to relevant provisions in the Standing Orders, the comments are here for us. Somebody was asking why not the Minister? The Bill is now the property of Parliament and not the Ministry. The Bill is going to be piloted by Parliament and in this case by the Chairman of the Legislative Committee consistent with the relevant provisions of the Constitution and the Standing Orders. That is why you see us acting in this way.

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. On that note, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is now my privilege to read the comments made by His Excellency the President with regards to the Finance Act, 2017. The comments read:

"I write with reference to your minute, dated 16th May, 2017 under cover of which you forwarded seven [7] copies of the Finance Act, 2017 for the gracious Assent of His Excellency the President. Please be informed that His Excellency is unable to give his Assent to the said Act. Pursuant, therefore to Section 106, Sub-section 7 of the Constitution of Sierra Leone, 1991, Act No.6 of 1991, please find stated hereunder the reasons for His Excellency's refusal to sign the Act which is hereby returned to Parliament.

[1] Minister of Finance and Economic Development propose an Import Duty Rate on juices of **30%** while Parliament approves **20%**. The President recommends to Parliament the rate for juices and other related beverages to **30%** as proposed by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development.

[2] MoFED proposed specific Excise Duty of four [4] dollars per litres of alcoholic content greater or less than ten **10%** Excise Duty of **0.6 dollars** per litre. And Parliament approved ADVO rent tax of **40%** for alcoholic content less than **45%** for alcoholic contents greater than **10%**. The President recommends to Parliament specific Excise Tax Duty of **0.4 dollars** per cubic litre or **4 dollars** per litre for alcoholic contents less than **10%** and greater than **10%**. Excise Duty of **0.6 dollars** per cubic litre or 6 dollars per litre as proposed by MoFED.

[3] MoFED proposed specific Excise Duty of **30%** duty on cigarettes and tobacco products while Parliament approved zero rates. The President recommends to

Parliament Excess Duty rate of **30%** on cigarettes and tobacco products as proposed by MoFED.

Suspension of S.O 5[2]

[4] MoFED proposed full implementation of ECOWAS Common External Tariff [CET] Rate which will replace Schedule One of the Customs Tariff Rate that is currently in use, while Parliament left them out. H. E. the President recommends to Parliament full implementation of ECOWAS Common External Tariff [CET] rate which will replace Schedule One of the Customs Tariff that are currently in used as proposed by MoFED. The Minister of Finance and Economic Development is in agreement with the under mentioned proposals which Parliament has approved in the Finance Bill, 2017:

[i] Although MoFED proposed an Import Duty Rate on Wheat Flour of **30%** while Parliament approved **20%**. The Minister of Finance and Economic Development agrees with the proposal of Parliament. In his view, the Freetown Flour Mill is currently not adequately prepared;

[b] Although the proposals for all revenues collected by or due to National Minerals Agency [MNA] shall be paid into its special Treasury Account of the Consolidated Revenue Fund, provided that the following revenues shall not be paid into the Special Treasury Account of the CRF;

[c] Monies accrued to the Agency in the course of its operations;

[d] Minerals and trading rights application fees; and

[e] Regulatory fees, fines and other monetary sanctions imposed by the Agency.

[This was not part of MoFED's initial proposal submitted to Parliament]."

The Minister of Finance and Economic Development agrees with the proposal of Parliament. **"I shall be extremely grateful for Parliament's consideration of the recommendations contained herein."** Signed by E.B. Osho-Coker, Secretary to the President.

[Question Proposed]

HON. EDWARD S. JENGO: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is unfortunate that our Leaders hung heads and agreed on the proposals made by H.E. the President with respect.

HON. FODAY RADO YOKIE: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to make some corrections here. I was part of the team and there was no consultation. The Bill was sent to His Excellency the President for his assent. When the President refused, he had to invite Parliament and the Ministry of Finance. It was Parliament who went there to defend their position. That was what we did and we believed in what we did. Officials of the Ministry of Finance also said they believed in what they did. There was no consultation. We defended what we did before it was returned to us. This is the correction I wanted to make.

THE SPEAKER: I should also add that these comments that have now been read to all of us were agreed upon.

HON. EDWARD S. JENGO: That is the angle I am coming from, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I think I am on the right footing. Mr Speaker, you will agree with me that the Finance Act, 2017 was excessively dealt with. In fact, the pushing and shoving around the Finance Act, 2017 has geared towards the taxes relating to beverages, tobacco, etc. If what we have agreed on is going to be altered, it is going to be a complete contravention with the intent of the 2017 Finance Act that gears towards revenue mobilisation. This was seriously discussed that the imposition of **30%** tax would bring serious revenue loss to this country. If you are protecting a Company like Sierra Leone Brewery, one may be tempted to ask the question, who are the shareholders of that company? I want to state here that majority of the shareholders are Dutch. How many of them are Sierra Leoneans?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the NRA representative came and educated us on this and we were convinced that it would result in revenue loss. We have been grumbling here about the lack of resources to meet the needs of Sierra Leoneans. As a Parliament, we have the responsibility to see how we can help Government to mobilise resources to move this nation forward. In the event where most of these issues are not in the interest of Sierra Leoneans, we have to be very careful, so that posterity will not judge us wrongly. As Frank Fanon, one of the revered philosophers once said, **"out of relative obscurity, every generation has a mission to fulfil, and when you fail to fulfil that responsibility, posterity will hold you**

responsible.” We know what we are going through when it comes to mobilising the resources to meet the needs of Sierra Leoneans. I want to state that if you are deviating now, one day you will be judged on the grounds of posterity. I thank you very much.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, today in this Parliament we are faced with a challenge of performing our responsibilities as Members of Parliament. We are about to concede to the whims and caprices of the Executive. Constitutionally, what has been done by His Excellency the President is right, but the supreme Authority to make laws in this country rest on us as Members of Parliament. It has been said by our Speaker that the decision taken by this Parliament to amend the Finance Act, 2017 was well done by all of us. It was thoroughly scrutinised and we stand by that and it was based on that the leadership of this House went to defend that decision in the presence of His Excellency the President.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the President has made his recommendations to the House. We are bound by law to respect those recommendations or we affirm our position as Members of Parliament in terms of doing what we think is right. Mr Speaker, I want to remind this House that the 1991 Constitution of this country is very clear. This challenge is between the Ministry of Finance and Members of Parliament. Section 106, Sub-section 8 reads: **“Where a Bill is returned to Parliament, pursuant to Sub-section 7 and that Bill is thereafter passed by the Vote of not less than two-thirds of the Members of Parliament, it shall immediately become law and the Speaker shall there upon cause it to be published in the Gazette.”**

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the decision taken by this Parliament was a very good decision for the people of Sierra Leone. Look at the taxes being levied on beverages. Mr Speaker, I want to state here that the Sierra Leone Brewery is not prepared.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Bashiru Silikie, how do you know that the Sierra Leone Brewery is not prepared? These issues were exhaustively discussed by us, both by

the Opposition and the Government. Brewery assured us that they are ready and are fully capacitated to meet the challenge.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Thank you very much. It is unfortunate that it has not been communicated to Members of Parliament. We should have met in Committee Room No. 1 for the Leadership to have explained to us the decision taken. Again, I want to inform this House that from 2016 to date, the Sierra Leone Brewery was seriously constrained. Mr Speaker, we will have an opportunity in 2018, when the SLPP would have been in governance, to bring another Finance Bill. All of us know that the Economy is seriously constrained. In fact, this Parliament is in financial constrain.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we should not do things that will negatively affect the people of this country. We should not vouch to protect Brewery at the expense of our people. These taxes are too heavy for these foreign importers. The reason is that we barely have eight or nine months to elections. We need to generate more funds and Brewery will not provide those funds for this country. All of us know that Ministry of Finance and this Parliament are financially constrained, but we shall be moving into election within ten to eleven months.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if these proposed taxes are implemented, we will not generate the required revenue. We need money for the election because National Electoral Commission is financially constrained because the Minister is saying that there is no money. We should encourage importers to bring us money, so that we will bring a Finance Bill in 2018 that will empower Brewery. Looking at the current state of the Economy, I want to advise that we put our feet down, as Members of Parliament, to display our authority and supremacy. It is stated in 1991 Constitution that in the event the President refuses to sign an Act passed by Parliament, Parliament also has the constitutional right to stand by its earlier recommendations. Our decision is that we review these taxes and we should adhere to that decision. We are not going against the President's decision. We are just respecting the Constitution of this country.

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

THE SPEAKER: And in respecting the Constitution of this country, Honourable Member, we should, as Honourable Members, behave in a very honest and realistic way. Mind you, Honourable Member, we did pass in this Parliament the Local Content Policy. Let us not do anything that will be a contradiction to what we have accepted. It will not only be ridiculous, but it will be most preposterous. The argument is that are we going to abandon the sorghum farmers we have in this country? Even if Brewery belongs to people from the sky, they have to buy products that our people produce here. That is what you should realise.

HON. CHERNOR R. M. BAH [*Deputy Speaker of the House*]: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will be very brief with my presentation. I want to start by saying that I am in sympathy with this House, especially the Honourable Members from Bo and Moyamba. I also want to agree with them from the angle they are coming from. We might not be happy as a Parliament because as I speak, we still believe that what we did was the right thing. As a Parliament, we have three responsibilities; i.e., law making, representation and to provide oversight. It is this very Parliament that approves the Minister of Finance to lead the Economy of this country. I want to encourage all of us to allow the Minister to shoulder this economic burden. I want to encourage colleagues to exercise patience. Again, the Minister of Finance should come back to this House in three months after today, to come and brief us on the developments of the Bill [*Applause*].

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have given him the responsibility and since this is what he believes, the Honourable Foday Rado Yokie has done the same when he said that Parliament has taken a position on this issue. However, after the meeting with the President, the President is still convinced that what his experts have told him should be the direction we have to follow. I want to encourage all of us to allow them to do their work. As the peoples' representatives, if he fails us, he will be here before us again and people will pay the price. We do not want to take away his responsibility because our duty is to advice and guide when it comes to legislations. In the case of providing the necessary expertise, they are responsible to do that. And that is why when Bills are brought to this House, the Speaker usually

asks for the position of the Minister who is piloting the Bill. It is the responsibility of that Minister to guide this House in the process of law making.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to encourage all of us to listen to what the President has said based on the advice he has received from his experts. I am saying this because we are representing the people of this country and we have to provide answers to those people. In that regard, when things go wrong, Members of Parliament are the ones who are usually blamed. For instance, when we were at State House to witness the dinner that was organised for the President from Ghana, the President of Ghana mentioned a specific document that this House is supposed to have ratified, including the Parliament of Ghana. The public's comment is that the document in question is with Parliament and has failed to ratify it. In such a situation, it will be very difficult to defend ourselves. As we speak, that very document is still not with this Parliament, the executive is yet to bring the document to us but the blame was on Parliament. The Minister of Finance was there and he knows that the very document was signed in China sometime in December, 2016. The document is yet to come to this House and we are told that there are benefits this country could get if Parliament ratifies it.

Therefore, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this is a clear indication to show that Parliament is not always aware of some of these issues, but when the blame comes, it is usually shifted to Parliament. As a Parliament, we are no longer ready to take any blame for anybody [*Applause*]. Based on that, I would want to encourage my colleagues to heed to the request of the President. These are recommendations to this Honourable House and we are at liberty to either accept or reject them. However, it is not usual to refuse the President's request and we do not want to begin that today. Therefore, I want to encourage my colleagues to accept the recommendations of the President and allow the Minister to perform his duties. Again, if the Minister fails the people of this country, he will come before us again. I hope he will succeed because failure is not an option.

On that note, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to allow other Members of Parliament to make their contributions, I thank you very much.

HON. FODAY RADO YOKIE: Mr Speaker, I am just going to queue from the last speaker. Mr Speaker, when we went for that meeting at State House, it was Parliament versus the Ministry of Finance and we defended our position. We apologise for not letting you know after our meeting with the President. After the deliberations, the only thing we did not achieve was issue relating to the beverages. On the issue relating to wheat, we succeeded. I have ten pages where the necessary calculations were done and we succeeded. We only have one controversy with the issue relating to beverage and it is based on that I am going to queue from the last speaker that we allow the Ministry to collect the revenue he wants to collect.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I made some statistical analyses from what obtains at the Custom. Parliament discussed the quantum of money we would stand to lose, but the Minister and his team were convinced that it is good for them to have the **30%**. He is in the driving seat and we expect him to know better. Like what the Deputy Speaker said, let us give the Minister three months. When the Deputy Speaker was making his presentation, it appeared as if we compared notes because he said exactly what I was going to say. I was also going to say we are going to charge him with the responsibility because we have defended our position and we have told him that from September to December last year, we lost **Le6.9bln**. However, if you still believe in your position, you can go ahead and we are giving him 90 days from today. After the 90 days, we will be in a better position to know who was actually saying the truth.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Bashiru Silikie, you have to understand simple administrative procedures. If the Minister is sacked today, the policy continues.

HON. FODAY RODO YOKIE: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, I want to inform Honourable Bashiru Silikie that we should not sound very pessimistic in this case because we are dealing with the Ministry of Finance and Parliament. I am talking as Honourable Foday Rado Yokie and I am still defending Parliament. When we went to that meeting, there was neither Sierra Leone Peoples' Party [SLPP] nor the All Peoples' Congress [APC] because we went there as a Parliament and we still believe in that. Therefore, even if the Minister of Finance is still on that seat or not, somebody would have to come and tell us that Parliament said 'x,' 'y,' and 'z,' and

somebody was against 'x,' 'y,' and 'z.' Therefore, we are in this precarious situation and we want you to come and explain to us. It is on this note I am also joining the Honourable Deputy Speaker to appeal to this Honourable House that, we succeeded in all what we demanded; with the exception of beverages. Let us agree with them and allow them to go and execute their duties. For instance, wheat was **30%**, but we succeeded in reducing that percentage. For the Mines and Minerals, they wanted to be paying into the CRF, but we said no to that. Negotiation is a give and take situation. We won some, we lose some and the midway point is, to allow the ministry to re-impose the **30%** on beverages so that we can move forward.

On that note, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let us allow them to go and do their work. I thank you very much and I want to urge this House to approve what is being proposed to us.

HON. FRANCIS A. KAISAMBA: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in accepting the recommendations of President and as the Deputy Speaker has said, the Ministry should and must be here in the next three months to give reasons to this House Parliament as to how far their policies have been implemented. As Chairman of the Committee on Trade and Industry, I summoned Brewery few days ago to come and tell us how they have been conducting their business. Mr Speaker, 2016 Finance Act makes provision for the protection of our infant industries, including Brewery. However, Brewery has not been able to meet the demands of the public. I am saying this because I consume beer, but whenever you go to these pubs, there are shortages of Brewery products. Beverages like Star Beer and others are not always available.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when Brewery appeared before the Committee, I asked them to state their challenges. We asked that question because despite the protections we have given to Brewery, they have still not been able to meet the demands of the public. Well, they told the Committee that they have been expanding their infrastructure and other preparations. They shared with us some leaflets and promised to live up to expectations of the public.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the other aspect I think we have to look at is that even though heavy taxes have been levied on imported beer, the NRA said that they

have collected little or nothing on imported beer, but we are seeing imported beer in every pub you go. In other words, if you ask for Carlsberg, which is one of the imported beers, you will have it. How do we solve those problems? They are smuggling the beer into the country and Government is not receiving a cent. Therefore, the Ministry or the relevant authorities should be able to detect some of these seepages and find possible ways of closing those leakages. However, Brewery has promised to live up to the expectations of Government and the people of this country in terms of paying the required taxes.

On that note, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to equally plead with this Honourable House to approve the recommendations of His Excellency the President. We expect the Ministry of Finance to return to Parliament after three months. I thank you very much *[Applause]*.

HON. DR BERNADETTE LAHAI *[Minority Leader of the House]*: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I think we are really at this point because we have not demanded certain things in the past from the Ministry of Finance. In other words, we would not have come to this point had the two sides really done their homework well. What do I mean? We have passed the Appropriation Bill without the Finance Bill. It was with the understanding that the two documents should always come to Parliament, so that the Finance Bill will inform the Appropriation Bill. This means that the Minister and his ministry would report to us on the performance of the Finance Bill, whether the performance was good or moderate or poor; and that would have informed the Finance Act and even the subsequent Finance Bills. We failed to do that entirely. I want to state here that when you impose taxes, you should know whether it is as a result you have collected more money or you have lost more money and how that is going to play in our subsequent tax imposition. We failed to do that, Mr Speaker. So that is why we have found ourselves in this situation.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am happy that we are now demanding from the Ministry and the Minister that we let this go, but on the proviso that in three months, today being the 25th May, 2017 we are expecting on the 25th August, 2017. But if we are not on recess or immediately after recess, the Minister should come with detailed documentation as to how this Finance Act has performed. This is very important;

otherwise the public will not understand what we are doing. That is why I am happy that the Deputy Chairman for Legislative Committee took his time to really say what we were doing.

This morning, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we all listened to 98.1 and 'Daddy Wakabot' was saying that the President has sent it back and that they do not know what would happen, but they would keep the public posted. So, I hope that 98.1 and other media outfits are here to report exactly what we have done. I want to state here what we have done is in keeping with the provisions of the 1991 Constitution of this country. Whenever the President sends back Bill to us with recommendations, we can agree on the recommendations or disagree with the recommendations. If we agree with the recommendations, then it passes into law. Based on the fact that Parliament and the Ministry went to defend their positions, as Honourable Foday Rado Yokie and the Deputy Speaker have said, it was only one aspect that the President did not agree with us or we did not agree with the Ministry out of the four issues we presented.

Therefore, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I think we have won the day. A warrior, as the saying goes, lives to fight another day. In that regard, let us give up that issue. Three months is going to run like anything and we pray that the Minister is going to be healthy and alive, so that he will come here with detailed information as to how he has performed.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I think with this explanation that has been given, let us pass this Bill and wait for the 25th August, 2017 to see what the Minister would have to tell us. I thank you very much.

HON. HASSAN B. SHERIFF [*Acting Majority Leader of the House*]: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. We believe in the principles of checks and balances. Usually, this House approves and the approval is communicated to the Executive for the Presidential assent. In this case, the President has made it very clear by agreeing with this House on four areas and disagreeing with this House on one issue. This is why my colleague on the other side simply said that 'in life, you will not win everything.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to state here that this Parliament is not on the losing side because we did a tremendous job. I think we should applaud ourselves for what we have done as a Parliament. Like what my colleague said, the Minister of Finance would take full responsibility after the passage of this Bill into law in terms of implementing the necessary provisions in this Bill. The Minister will come to Parliament to tell us, through question time, what he has done in terms of implementing the provisions contained in this Bill. As a Parliament, we have that authority to invite him to come to this Parliament and question him were possible, on areas that we think should be improved or not. On the intent of this Bill, we have looked into it and the other issue. We have also looked into the issue of the Local Content Policy; i.e., protecting the citizens of this country. We have done our bit and I believe it is going to work for all of us as a nation.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, like what the Minority Leader was saying, we are to review four areas and the President has recommended that we work with the Minister of Finance on some other areas where the Minister has agreed with us. I take no offence on that, as Chairman of the Finance Committee. We can do more for this nation in the near future. I thank you very much and I want to recommend that we approve this Bill.

[Question Proposed, Put and agreed to]

[The Bill entitled, 'The Finance Act, 2017' has been amended to accommodate the recommendations of His Excellency the President]

THE SPEAKER: Mr Minister, please move to the podium. Honourable Members, this has been a very good debate. Mr Minister, the Minority Leader, echoed by the Acting Majority Leader did say that Parliament is now going to accept what has been sent to us; but with a very important proviso that in three months time, you will be summoned to Parliament to tell Parliament how the Finance Bill has been performing based on what has been agreed upon. So, please be reminded on that and Parliament reserves the right to call you before that time for anything connected with this Bill. Please be informed and be advised. Thank you very much.

HON. NAVO KAIKAI: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I stand on S.O 23. I just want to ask the Chairman for SALWACO and probably the Minister of Water

Resources to explain to the people of Kailahun why we have not been able to get water as it is happening in other areas. I spoke to few people in Kailahun on this issue. They have given me several reasons on this issue. So, I want to know why we do not have pipe borne water in Kailahun. Thank you.

HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH: Mr Speaker, the notice is for the Minister to explain to her and the people of Kailahun, not to this House. Therefore, the Minister should not come here.

THE SPEAKER: But she made reference to the Chairman of Water Resources.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have been here for four years and above and this is our last year. I am graciously asking the leadership of this House to invite His Excellency who is one of us, so that we can have an interactive session in Committee Room 1. We usually see the President here during the State Opening of Parliament. I want to ask the leadership to invite him as one of us, so that we have an interactive session before the end of this Session.

THE SPEAKER: Okay. Your request is noted.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, I wish to inform you that the Turkish Ambassador accredited to Sierra Leone [I say accredited because the Ambassador is not resident here but he is still the Ambassador of Turkey to Sierra Leone], will be coming to visit Parliament tomorrow. She will be here to see me in particular and Members of the Parliamentary Service Commission on the directive of the President of Turkey. She is coming to discuss issues relating to the two Parliaments to come together as a body. I think the President did tell me something about this when he returned from Turkey and this is a follow up visit. Therefore, this is a very important meeting and it is my pleasure to invite the leadership of Parliament to be present at that meeting tomorrow at 10:00 a.m.

ADJOURNMENT

[The House rose at 12.55 a.m. and was adjourned to Tuesday, 30th May, 2017 at 10:00 a.m.]