

OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

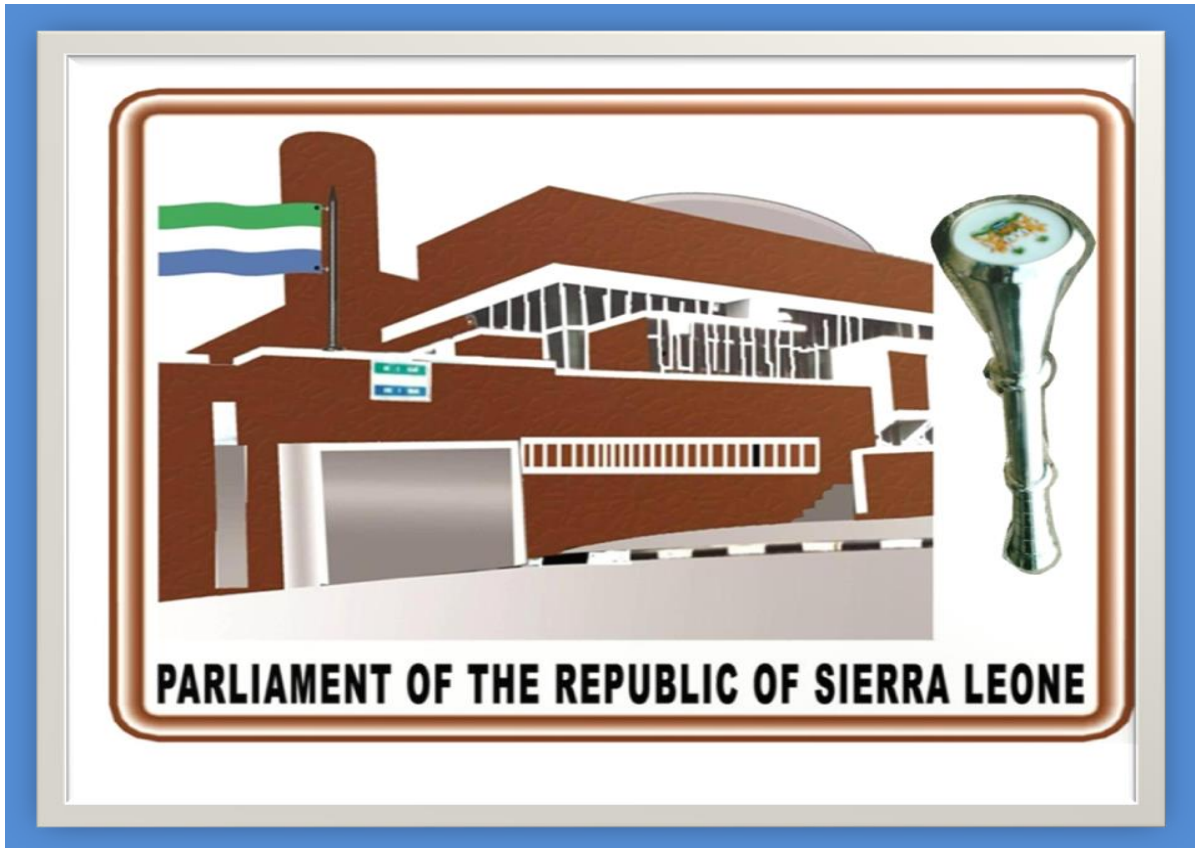
[HANSARD]

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

FIFTH SESSION - SECOND MEETING

TUESDAY, 29TH AUGUST, 2017.

SESSION – 2016/2017



OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

[HANSARD]

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

Proceedings of the Sitting of the House
Held Tuesday, 29th August, 2017.

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SECONDER: HON. PATRICK L. KARGBO

BE IT RESOLVED:

THAT THE FOLLOWING REPORTS WHICH WERE LAID ON THE TABLE OF THE HOUSE ON TUESDAY, 11TH APRIL, 2017, BE ADOPTED:

[A] REPORT ON A WORKING VISIT TO THE PARLIAMENT OF GHANA BY A DELEGATION FROM THE PARLIAMENT OF SIERRA LEONE FROM 19TH TO 24TH JUNE, 2016.

[B] REPORT ON A WORKING VISIT TO THE PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA BY A DELEGATION FROM THE PARLIAMENT OF SIERRA LEONE, FROM 30TH OCTOBER TO 6TH NOVEMBER 2016.

IV. BILL

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THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND SANITATION

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THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND SANITATION



THE CHAMBER OF PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE

Official Hansard Report of the Proceedings of the House

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

Tuesday, 29th August, 2017.

I. PRAYERS

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

[The House met at 10:35 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]]

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

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, we go through the record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting held on Thursday, 17th August, 2017. As usual, we go page by page. Page 1? Page 2? Page 3? Page 4? Page 5? Page 6? Page 7? There being no correction or amendment, would somebody move for the adoption of the record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting held on Thursday, 17th August, 2017 as presented?

HON. KEMOKOH CONTEH: Mr Speaker, I so move.

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON. KUSAN SESAY: I so second, Mr Speaker.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[Record of Votes and Proceedings for Thursday, 17th August, 2017 has been adopted]

III. MOTION

PROPOSER: HON. FRANCIS A. KAISAMBA

SECONDER: HON. PATRICK L. KARGBO

HON. FRANCIS A. KAISAMBA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, be it resolved that this Honourable House adopt the following reports which were laid on the Table of the House on Tuesday, 11th April, 2017,

[a] Report on a working visit to the Parliament of Ghana by a delegation from the Parliament of Sierra Leone from the 19th - 24th June, 2016; and

[b] Report on a working visit to the Parliament of Uganda by a delegation from the Parliament of Sierra Leone from 30th October, - 6th November, 2016.

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON. PATRICK L. KARGBO: Mr Speaker, I so second.

[Question Proposed]

HON. FRANCIS A. KAISAMBA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the delegation to the Parliament of the Republic of Ghana comprised of three Members of Parliament, the Clerk of Parliament, Director of Finance and the Head of Parliamentary Assistant Coordination Office [PACO].

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the purpose of the visits to those two sister institutions was to do a case study of how they will be managing their research materials, particularly on Public Financial Management and Legislation. Mr Speaker, parliaments across the Globe have traditional functions they perform; i.e., law making, oversight and representation in order to ensure transparency, accountability and open government and to hold the Executive accountable on how it implements projects to ensure that the needs of the people are achieved. In doing so, Parliaments therefore perform very key functions:

- ensuring that there is openness and transparency in government delivery services to the people, to equally hold the Government to account through the various parliamentary Committees that are being created for oversight functions; and
- ensuring that government live up to its responsibilities of Human Rights and the Rule of Law and financial probity.

It is therefore very important that Parliament is availed with very important information devoid of the Executive. And for two key reasons why Parliament should have these information; Parliament does not have professionals in financial management and experts to advice Parliament on budget that comes to Parliament for scrutiny. But the problem is, many a time Parliament rely on the Executive, professionals in the Executive to guide its operations and even where for example these information are available, Parliament just complement the efforts of the Ministry of Finance so as to operate effectively, Parliament should not solely rely on those pieces of information from the Executive. Therefore, the visits to these two sister countries were very important and viable.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in Ghana, for example, they have been on it for quite a long time doing research and their research institution is very strong in terms of providing the required information to Members of Parliament in holding the Executive to account by scrutinising the budget, international loan agreements and other statutory and legislative

instruments. They are providing those pieces of information to support the Parliament of Ghana. In Uganda also, they have been on it for quite some time. But in 2001, they were able to propose a motion to two hundred Honourable Members of Parliament and they were able to pass the parliamentary budget, which comprised the Parliamentary Budget Office to support Members of Parliament of Uganda to be able to hold the Executive to account. In Sierra Leone, we have parliamentary Committees that were created by Standing Orders in tandem with the 1991 Constitution. And year in and year out, we go out to hold the Executive to account to ensure that moneys given to them are being used judiciously and efficiently in helping the people of this country to realise their dreams. But we must accept that we do not have the required expertise and professionals to guide us to do our job properly and thoroughly and to examine all what the Executive is doing. So, we have been faced with difficulties on how to properly hold the Executive to account.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, many a time, the budget process in Sierra Leone is so cumbersome, difficult, and complex for Members of Parliament to understand. Therefore, it is but very important for the establishment of the Parliamentary Budget Office, which is expected to provide an independent research that will enable it do its job well. If for example, such an office is to be created in the Republic of Sierra Leone Parliament, they will basically revolve around key instruments. For example, there would be something like what we called 'legislative scrutiny.' Again, such an office, once created, will be able to analyse legislative instruments that will come to Parliament to help Members of Parliament draft Bills, for example, Private Members Motion etc. They will equally help Members of Parliament to do financial scrutiny and even look at other documents that are coming to Parliament emanating from the budget and international agreements signed by the Executive.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we do not have the wherewithal to really look at documents submitted to this House. So, when such an office is created, they will be able to provide the required expertise for Members of Parliament to be able to scrutinise financial documents coming to Parliament. They will equally do what we call 'Bill Costing.' Many a time, Bills come when the estimates are not readily available for Members of Parliament. Mr Speaker, when these estimates are provided, Members of Parliament will be able to analyse reports and by so doing, government implemented projects are

scrutinised properly. For example, the Healthcare services, infrastructure, housing, etc. will be well monitored.

In doing these, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Parliamentary Budget Office should revolve around the following requirements; i.e., there must be what we called legal establishment, with regards to what we shall be doing if this document is adopted. It will have the legal basis, so that institutions or persons coming after will not have the authority to just change it because it is not favouring them. We equally have what we call staffing for such an office to be effective. There have to be competent and professional staff to man such an office as experts in public financial management. To look at drafting of Bills, for example, highly professionals, trained and competent people are required. For example, the Parliamentary Coordination Office [PACO] in Parliament here is working with the Parliament to sign a Memorandum of Understanding, so that they can send advertisement for professionals and qualified persons to apply for such an office. Such an office should be non-partisan because you are talking about highly professionals, trained people to be able to help Members of Parliament to do their jobs properly.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, over and above all, this office is being created to enable Members of Parliament do their jobs diligently. If Members of Parliament do not collaborate or do not work with all of the information provided, it will be meaningless. So, with such an office, Members of Parliament should be adequately informed which will help them do their job properly. They should use information given to them so as to be able to scrutinise budget and look at international financial agreements.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, with all of the above advantages enjoyed by the Parliament of Ghana and that of Uganda, you will agree with me that the Parliament of Sierra Leone is deficient in carrying out its job properly with regards to scrutinising and holding the Executive Arm of Government in ensuring that they do what is right for the people of Sierra Leone.

On that note, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank you very much.

HON. PATRICK L. KARGBO: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as stated by my colleague from Kenema, the two visits were very essential to the Sierra Leone Parliament based on the experiences and documents we

received from those visits. It is important that on a regular basis, Members of Parliament pay visits to sister countries to see how their Parliaments are functioning. The experiences in Ghana and Uganda are so key to us that when once their practices are followed here, I believe we are going to have improved systems that will give us a better Parliament, a Parliament that will be appreciated and accepted by society as a whole.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the establishment of the Parliamentary Budget Office is key to the development of Sierra Leone and Parliament in particular. Like the Honourable Member has highlighted, we have been passing budgets here and most times Members of Parliament are not involved in the budget process. We are only given the opportunity to debate and even the debate period is not enough for us. We are usually given five allotted days which to some extent will not allow Members of Parliament to go in-depth on what is being stated or what is being brought before us by the Ministry of Finance.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, with those countries mentioned, from the start of the budget processing onto the Appropriation Bill, Members of Parliament are always involved even before the budget is brought before Parliament. In Sierra Leone, however, it is very difficult to involve Members of Parliament and that is why Members of Parliament in Sierra Leone find it extremely difficult to understand the details of the budget process. Therefore, the visits to these sister countries, if the recommendations are implemented in Sierra Leone, will give us a better standing for us to know what should be done and what not to be done. With that, Mr Speaker, we would be able to tell our people that Parliament is an institution that is part of the nation building process.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is very important for Members of Parliament to know the procedures and processes involved in budget implementation. In that regard, it is but necessary for Members of Parliament to play a very active role in the budget process. As the representatives of the people, it is important for our participation, so that we know the various allocations that are being sent to various Ministries, Departments and Agencies [MDAs]. This will enable Parliament to know the allocation made to every MDAs for implementation.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is but necessary for the Parliamentary Budget Office to be established and equipped, so that it will help in building a better Parliament.

With those few words, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to second the motion proposed by my colleague and to urge Members of Parliament to adopt the Report. I thank you very much.

HON. HELEN KUYEMBEH: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank the Honourable Member that has just presented the Report to us and to thank the team, particularly the Clerk of Parliament who went on these missions. As stated by the proposer, it is really very important that we make these visits to other Parliaments.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, one of the key issues I have with these visits that we made and all the lessons learnt, is the fact that and I am going to put it in a form of a question. The question is, do we actually implement them when we come back home? And to a very large extent my personal answer is no! So, what is the essence at the end of the day? It is very vital based on all that he has laid out here that we put it into practice in our country. Are we willing and ready to put our shoulders to the wheel to set up and implement them?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, one of the issues the Honourable Member mentioned is that we do not have the institution or the manpower. We do have those things in this country. They may not be enough, but honestly this House of Parliament do have the manpower. It is just that the manpower is not effecting itself or putting itself to the services that it should put itself to and give us the desired result. That is the problem we have in this country. However, that institution or the manpower could be expanded. I agree with you, and it could be elevated or expanded to a point that we may perform probably more than what we are doing. The institution is here, the only problem is that we are not utilising it properly.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, coming to the budget we are talking about, I have stood in this Well times without number and other Members of Parliament have done same, particularly Members of the Finance Committee and other parliamentary Committees that are vital in working with the budget process to be part of it because it will take away the issues that we are having or the problems that we are having. Mr Speaker, I want to state here that budget preparation is done without any input from Parliament, when in fact at the end of the day, the budget is being approved by

Parliament. With all due respect, if we were a part of the process, how easy it would be in terms of ratifying or doing whatever we could do to make the budget process easier.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the other thing I wanted to talk about is the fact that the Honourable Member mentioned that Parliament would benefit and Members of Parliament. Undoubtedly, that is true, but let me ask a question, Mr Speaker. How many Members of Parliament in this Well have offices? Let us put the Leadership aside, because the Leadership is not part of this situation. How many Members of Parliament have offices? I want what I am going to say to be recorded that if you want effective performance from any organisation or any employee, you have to provide an enabling work environment. I have said this over and over that you cannot hire me and expect me to provide maximum performance when I do not have the enabling work environment. Honestly, some people might not see it as an issue, but I do. I am pretty sure that other Members of Parliament in this House see it as an issue because, performance relies on what you are given; i.e., the enabling environment and the resources. Therefore, when people sit down in public and say Members of Parliament are just rubber-stamping, let me just make this very clear that we have pigeon holes and every day you come to this House you will find volumes of documents in those pigeon holes. Members of Parliament are expected to go through those documents, but we do not have offices to sit and read those documents.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, some of us take these documents home and pack them in our boxes and by the time a particular document is slated for debate, we cannot find that document again. So, we sit here not having a clue of what is being said. You all know what I am talking about. It all boils down to what the Clerk and other Members of Parliament went to do in finding ways to improve our capacity building. Mr Speaker, in order to build these capacities and to improve on them, let us go to the very beginning by providing the enabling work environment for Members of Parliament before you start aiming at the sky. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

HON. IBRAHIM R. BUNDU: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I just want to buttress and correct maybe few observations made by colleagues in the area of the implementation of good lessons learnt from sub-regional Parliaments. I

want to submit here that we do implement some and maybe few. We do not implement most of them and I must just draw your attention to two important lessons learnt from both Ghana and Uganda that is of benefit to us. Fortunately, Mr Speaker will bear me out or those of us who were in this House that one of the topical areas we have implemented is the Parliamentary Service Commission. This was as a result of a visit to the Parliament of Uganda, which has a similar Commission. We derived a lot of benefits from it and that made the Sierra Leone Parliament to replicate it here. That Bill was one of those Bills that was championed by the current President, His Excellency Dr Ernest Bai Koroma. That visit was made by the current Speaker, the former Speaker of this House [Honourable Justice Edmond Cowan]. The Honourable Dr Bernadette Lahai was also part of that delegation. Honourable Ernest Bai Koroma was then the Minority Leader and I was part of that visit. So, I just want to draw your attention to that area. If we are enjoying the good benefits of a Parliamentary Service Commission in this Parliament today, it was as a result of that visit.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the second issue is the Votes and Proceedings. Members of the Public Accounts Committee, chaired by the late Honourable Chukuma Johnson and I were part of that delegation. It was during that visit that we saw the need for Votes and Proceedings which is actually a very good document for Members' memory for things we have done and the things we do. So, in the area of implementation, I just want to highlight that as a way of not totally implementing what we do learn from others and maybe the example of a budget office being replicated here. I just want to highlight those two successes. Thank you very much.

HON. SUALIHO M. KOROMA: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to follow from where the Proposer of this Motion ended with the issue dealing with partisan politics. I believe the issue of partisan politics has eaten up the real essence of this Parliament. Sometimes there are very serious issues that come before this Parliament and we as parliamentarians trivialise it because of partisan politics. And sometimes it is neither in policy document of the All Peoples' Congress [APC] nor in the Sierra Leone Peoples' Party [SLPP]. It depends on who is coming here to present such a document. What is before us this morning is what I am talking about. Mr Speaker, we

know we are representing political parties, but sometimes let us be seen doing our work for the people of this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if I may talk about the Parliamentary Service Commission that the Honourable Leader just spoke about, if you look at countries where these researches are carried out, those countries did not choose to do all these researches and keep those documents on the shelves in Parliament. If you go to Uganda, Ghana and even Rwanda, you will find out that even what we are saying here today is all embedded in the Parliamentary Service Commission. If we implement what is in the current Parliamentary Service Act, there is no need for us to go to other countries, conducting other researches.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if you give few MPs the opportunity maybe five from that side and five from this side of the House to do a desktop review, we can come up with a very powerful and blueprint document that this Parliament could implement for the betterment of this nation. Like what the Honourable Helen Kuyembeh has said, it is not about going out to conduct research or studies and come back to lay the reports in this Parliament and later shelve those reports without action. This has been the practice of this Parliament; i.e., shelving reports without action, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there is one thing I would want to bring to the attention of this Honourable House. I want to state here that this Parliament has been allowing the Executive branch to hold us to ransom [*Applause*]. The Executive is in control of the resources of this country and that is why they hold this Parliament to ransom. If you look at their per diems when they go to the provinces to supervise projects, it is very much unimaginable; and yet, they cannot provide basic resources for parliamentary oversight Committees to see what they are implementing. I want to state here that it is a very deliberate attempt to frustrate this House. It is not that the resources are not there, Mr Speaker. It is like Sierra Leoneans are dramatising poverty that we cannot even have resources to fix the foundation of democracy. And the foundation of good governance is this Parliament. So, if we do not have resources to really fix the foundation, I do not think we can fix a country and our country is never going to stand on a very good footing. Therefore, I am really appealing to the Leadership of this Parliament to step up their

efforts for this House to have a very good foundation, so that this Parliament can serve the people of this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to say that couple of weeks ago, the Honourable Kemoh Sesay came to this Well and made utterances here that there is nothing Parliament, all over the World, cannot do. According to the Honourable Kemoh Sesay, the only thing Parliament cannot do is to change a man into a woman and to change a woman into a man. That is a food for thought for this Parliament. I rest my case.

HON. EDWARD S. JENGO: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to give credence to the Clerk and team for the visits they made and the presentation that they have done to Members of Parliament this morning. From the contributions made by my colleagues, it is really sickening to go through what is happening in the Sierra Leone Parliament. We need the enabling environment to work as Members of Parliament. We cannot be the People's representatives and we engage the Canteen or Dining hall as our offices.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I met somebody at the corridors of the New Building, little did I realise that she was an intern. I met her sitting in front of a computer whilst I was going to the canteen. That is sickening and so disheartening. But who are we going to blame? This is a Parliament where the Speaker of Parliament is the third gentleman of this country, but we know that there are directorates whose salaries are more than the Speaker. They take home more than the Speaker and we say he is the third gentleman of this country. This is a very serious situation and we must act fast. If you go through the budget books of this country, you will find it very difficult to understand the take home salaries this Parliament approves for some officials in some of the commissions and other directorates. Mr Speaker, this very Parliament takes home nothing more than **\$ 1,650** a month. What will **\$1,650** do with your wife and children as dependants? Members of Parliament do not have the provision for fuel. It is sickening and they are expecting results. How does it come? Today, we have a Bill here entitled 'Food and Feed Safety Authority' Bill and as Honourable Helen Kuyembeh was saying, not even **5%** of Members have that Bill on their desks. So, I start to wonder and ponder what we are going to debate here. The Minister is going to come and read and we will allow everything to pass

because the document is not in front of us. We expect those documents to have been looked at before the commencement of the debates.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Edward S. Jengo, what are you saying? This is a Bill that is to be debated very soon. Are you in fact saying that not everybody has a copy of the Bill?

HON. EDWARDS S. JENGO: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to say it with alacrity.

THE SPEAKER: Well, if you are saying it with alacrity, that is almost uncertainty

HON. EDWARD S. JENGO: Mr Speaker, I am **100%** correct.

THE SPEAKER: Mr Clerk, are we sure that everybody has a copy of the Bill? Honourable Jengo, we will deal with that issue later.

HON. EDARWD S. JENGO: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we need to stand up as a Parliament. For those of you who watch football matches, goals come within seconds. Mr Speaker for some of us who will be fortunate to come back and for those of us who will not be fortunate to come back, let us change the face of this Parliament for the better. Let me draw your attention to a very sad event. Today we are here, but we will have to leave tomorrow. We have to be aware of the law of the law of gravity that whatever goes up will come down. As I stand here today, the gratuity of our colleagues was calculated on their last salaries. So, we have to go for what we think is good for us. Whether or not you do the right thing, people will always have something to say about you even when our take home is **\$1,650**; the public is giving people an exaggerated version of what we are earning. And before I came to this Parliament, I was also of the same view that Members of Parliament are taking huge amounts of money as their salaries.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to challenge Members of Parliament that we have colleagues here today who hire taxi and our local transportation system called "poda poda" to come to Parliament. Who do you blame? Are we to blame the Speaker or the Majority Leader? The answer is no. Many a time when the appropriation Bill comes to this House, the Speaker and Leaders are not there. So, why do we want to play the blame game? One may be tempted to say that they may have the final say and if they have the final say about hundreds of us, we have no reason to be in this Well. Who is going to say

the Ayes and the Nays? As Honourable Suahilo M. Koroma said, the Nays and Ayes are based on colours. It is going to destroy this country. Let us fix Sierra Leone. We have to sleep, dream and wake Sierra Leone, otherwise posterity will judge us. I thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

HON. HASSAN B. SHERIFF: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to join my colleagues to contribute to this debate with reference to the visits made to these two parliaments; i.e., the Parliaments of Ghana and Uganda, with particular reference to the budget. Personally, I feel very disappointed as a Chairman of the Finance Committee who should have been at the top of the list to nominate at least two Members of the Finance Committee to join the staff of our Parliament to visit these two Parliaments. I was not given that opportunity but I cannot say it has to be done S.O 5[2] 'pa-o-pa' or at all cost. It had to be done, but I believe the reference has to be made to me as Chairman of the Finance Committee. I have been to the Parliament of Uganda as well as the Parliament of Ghana on this same subject. The practice is almost the same, though there is very small difference.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the World Bank Institute is about to set up a Budget Office in this Parliament. It is now a matter of time. I have been informed about that early this year. They are working on it and I know it will materialise. Recently, if you take a walk to the parking lot, you will see a bus dedicated to the Committee on Finance and Transparency. That bus was provided by the World Bank in support of the operations of these two Committees. What does that mean? The World Bank wants these two Committees to make their presence felt to the MDAs as well as the Local Councils. There is a problem I have noticed in this Parliament and we also have to change our attitudes. I say so because whenever I call Committee meetings of Members of the Finance Committee, very few showed up. And as recent as last week, Three other Members of my Committee and I took part in the budget discussion, which is the budget of Parliament. Honourable Helen Kuyembah was one of them and Honourable Mabinty Bangura on this side was also part of the budget discussion of Parliament. For people to say that Parliament is not involved in the budget process is incorrect. We got involved in the budget discussions as a Parliament. We also extended invitations from the Ministry of Finance to have the Committee on Finance involved in the budget process at the Miata

Conference Hall. When I received the call from Mr Mathew Dingi, Director of Budget, I was not able to locate Members of the Finance Committee.

THE SPEAKER: Mr Deputy Majority Leader, I hope you understand the import of what the particular Member of Parliament was saying in that respect. If members were present or if members are normally present in all of such discussions, then why is it that so much is not being done for Parliament? *[Applause]*.

HON. HASSAN B. SHERIFF: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. My answer to that question is very simple, Mr Speaker. You have seen in the past my engagement with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development [MoFED] and the Minister of Finance in particular in this Parliament, especially when we have the Finance Bill before us. You have seen my engagement of the Finance Committee when it comes to the Budget process. Why things are not done according to the wishes of the Members of Parliament is because down there, we have Ministers of Government who are not cooperating with Parliament, particularly with the Finance Committee. But we always make sure that we make ourselves available in discussing the budget. Our presence in discussing the budget is key. Can we have them to accept all that we submit to them? The answer is impossible. We cannot get **100%** of our request, but much has been done from the time we took over as a Government in 2007 to now. If you are clear with your conscience, you will know that much has been done from 2007 to now. For some of us who were here in 2007, we were receiving a salary of less than **\$500**. Much has been done because in 2007... - *[Interruption]*.

THE SPEAKER: Mr Deputy Leader, I am sorry, I will not allow you to proceed beyond that point.

HON. JUSUFU B. MANSARAY: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank our younger brother on this side and our colleague, Honourable Patrick L.M. Kargbo for presenting to us a report that has taken the centre stage in this Parliament regarding the study they made to Ghana and Uganda. Honestly, we have deceived ourselves in many ways as parliamentarians. We have deceived ourselves in the sense that we have three arms of Governance; i.e., the Executive, Legislative and the Judicial branches of Government. The Legislature is being watched by

the world and the whole of Sierra Leone to be the body that can watch the Executive. This is embedded in our constitution. We do oversight, but that is the same body that is riding us back and front. We are talking about not having offices for parliamentarians and not having proper funding for Parliament to do our oversight works. We are also talking about partisan activities in Parliament. This is very unfortunate because if you have been listening to Sierra Leone Broadcasting Cooperation, Mr Fatorma was there castigating Members of Parliament. Is it because we have not done anything or we are not even doing the right thing for this country? We are going on study tours, but we have not been able to put those studies into proper perspective. It is unfortunate, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, Honourable members, references have been made to the way the Speaker of this House and parliamentarians are being treated. Sierra Leone Parliament came into existence in 1961 and up to this moment we are still dealing with the 1991 Constitution that has not made proper provisions for the very Parliament that is supposed to be doing the right thing for the people of this country. We are representing our people and our roles are representation, oversights and legislation. We make laws against ourselves and we allow the Executive to ride us day in and day out. For heaven sake, we have the Minister of Health here now to discuss the Food and Feed Safety Authority Bill. He has a car, an office, a Permanent Secretary, nurses and everything he needs. If he wants to leave here now to go to Koribondo, he has to be provided with fuel, a driver and official vehicle. I am driving a 2013 hybrid Highlander. The question is how did I get it? I got it from my hard work from other sources.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the studies have been done and we appreciate them, but let me queue from where my big brother ended. Honestly, being the Chairman of the Finance Committee, he has done much. But can we allow him alone to be doing it? Have we given him the support? I am not talking based on party lines, but to ensure that our conditions are put in proper perspective. The answer is no. Sometimes when some of us want to castigate the Minister of Finance, somebody will come from nowhere to defend him. Mr Speaker, if Ministers are getting all these facilities, what about us? Each time we make the request, they will say they are in a smaller number. When we want to go on oversights, we sometimes go to the very Ministries to support us. How can you do that oversight? Let me give you an example. Few weeks ago, the Committee on Energy went

on oversight. The oversight was funded by the Energy Department and when we went to a particular village in the South, we detected that the work was not properly done. Mr Speaker, before we made any comments, the guys who were with us started lamenting that we should not make any bad report. That is because they provided the funds for us. What can we do? All we said was for them to correct the mistakes.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this Parliament has to wake up. We are talking about budget. The Clerk of Parliament and the Commission can defend our budget, but have we really told these people that some part of the budget of this nation, like **15%**, has to be allocated to Parliament. If you look at the Maputo Protocol, **15%** of our annual budget should be allocated to the Ministry of Health and Sanitation. Let us make sure that some percentage of the budget of this nation is given to Parliament, rather than giving us the **Le8.7bln**, which is the **Le62mln** that we are being insulted for every day. Take **Le62, 900, 000** for the constituency development which is widely discussed in this nation, can that build even one 'Barray?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Chairman of Finance Committee and I went to Liberia and we discovered that the Liberian Members of Parliament are taking **\$45,000** every year for vehicle, and **\$65,000** as constituency development fund. They also receive allowances for dress. Interestingly, the Members of Parliament are receiving **\$15,000** as salary per month. Above all, they have six staff. In Sierra Leone, I have to buy my car, pay my driver and buy my fuel. That is the situation we have found ourselves. Yet still we sit here and say we are supervising the Executive. Where are we? I appreciate my younger ones on this side who have really given us a proper understanding about the way Members of Parliament are suffering. So, I only want to state here that whatever effort that has been made, let us make sure that this Parliament is catered for. The Judiciary is not crying. They cannot insult them. They interpret the laws, but we are the representatives of the people. Day in and day out the people are looking up to us to take the national cake to them. If that is the case, let us make sure that offices are provided for us and let us have researchers. We are here to debate the Food and Feed Safety Authority Bill and the Order Paper only came in this morning. How can we handle that?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have to make sure that provisions are given to this Parliament for us to do our job properly, otherwise the people of this country will continue to blame us. I thank you very much and I am asking all of us to adopt the Report that is before us.

HON. LEONARD S. FOFANAH: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this morning we have witnessed a very spirited debate following the Motion for the adoption of the Reports from Ghana and Uganda. However, may I caution here that comparisons are obvious and difficult to make because there are differences between not only the countries we are discussing, but like a lot of other contributors have said, among even the parliamentarians.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I was fortunate to have gone to Kenya in July, 2017, just about when they were going to elections. And for God's sake, the issues that we are discussing here were equally discussed over there. And if we were to take that as a yardstick, we will not be sitting here today. Nobody will come to the Sierra Leone Parliament.

In Kenya, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Members of Parliament are paid **\$12,000** a month, plus a string of other allowances. That being the case because they do not only have the resources, but they as Parliament demanded it, negotiated for it and stood for it and in the end they won. Even the little improvements we have seen in this Parliament are not uncharacteristic of what had been obtaining previously. The changes we are now seeing have come in at a very short time. The Parliamentary Service Commission, like the Honourable from Portloko said, it came about as a result of the Motion moved by the former Minority Leader, now the President of this country. The Parliamentary Service Commission has been provided for us without all the details that should come with it and we are discussing the Parliamentary Budget Office. Fortunately, that has been approved and is going to be funded by UNDP for one year. The issue of capacity building for Parliament is entirely left with Members of Parliament because there are things you should demand and there are things that you can let go. The question now, however, is that do we have time enough to be able to do all these negotiations? Let us give the next coming Parliament the opportunity to continue the fight. I am not saying that you should not start

it today, but this should be an ongoing effort on the part of everybody who will be coming back to the next Parliament.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we started this fight as far back as 1982. The Honourable Dr Bu-Buakie Jabbi can testify to that. Members of Parliament then were paid a pittance here. We have a society that is gullible. This is because immediately you become a parliamentarian you are the enemy of the nation without knowing that you have come to work for them.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Parliamentary Budget Office is a total requirement because if you look at all the Members of Parliament sitting here, there are few of us who know Accounting or who are Specialists in Financial Management. And the most important function of Parliament is the approval of budget for the Executive to operate in this country. The Parliamentary Budget Office should be established to advice and guide parliamentarians on how they should discuss and go about budget approval processes. That is the *sin quo non* for a Parliament, otherwise we are not going to be doing justice to ourselves in discussing financial matters that we do not sufficiently understand. If we did not have a competent Finance Committee in this Parliament, I wonder what we will be doing when the next budget comes here.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we need to thank the Committee on Finance for the role they are playing in advising us and in directing us. Honourable Members, the ball is in our own court. Fortunately, I want to submit here that we have a listening President as of now. We would not know what will come next year when we go into elections and whether there is going to be a transformation. The only hope is that it is going to be an APC President and we hope he will continue to listen. I am not being prophetic, but telling you the facts. We hope, when we have the Budget Office next year, we will be able to continue and make sufficient provision for it, so that when the one year provision is finished, we would be able to adequately fund it.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, without wasting much time since we have a Bill that is coming before us, I want to urge that we approve the Motion and adopt the Reports that has been laid before us. Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, before I put the question, there are few things I want to say. Honourable Hassan B. Sheriff, indeed you were certainly making a point but the point that you were trying to make I can state here that it has been overstated in this Parliament and to the knowledge of everybody. What Members of Parliament are saying is that they are certainly not disputing the fact that there has not been improvement. There has been progress from 2007 to date. But effectively, what they are saying is that it is not enough. They want more and if they are asking for more, I dear say the request is legitimate.

Honourable Members, the Honourable Suahilo M. Koroma is not here, but the Honourable Kemoh Sesay, who is the current Minister of Works, Housing and Infrastructure, did say here that the only thing Parliament cannot do is to make a man into a woman and a woman into a man. That is very true. However, I can tell you that when I was in form Six in our days, we did the British Constitution instead of Government that they are doing now. When I was in form Six, I challenged my teacher then. The teacher was saying that Parliament cannot do everything. I said Parliament can simply legislate that from now onwards all women should go in men's dress and all men should go in women's dress. The teacher said well-done Dumbuya *[laughter]*. So, there is nothing that Parliament cannot do. As far as I am concerned, Parliament is the most powerful institution in any country.

Honourable Members, there is another impression I want to correct because people are now talking about the Parliamentary Service Commission. They are making a very serious mistake thinking that Parliament is a Commission. No! The Commission is equivalent to a Board. Most Parliaments now have a Commission. So strangely, but perhaps, mischievously, they are treating Parliament as a Commission and that is why they feel that Parliament is a sub-vented agency. That is very unfortunate. I was going to use a stronger word than that. It is a very serious misunderstanding. All Parliaments have these Commissions. The Commissions exist as the Board. So that is the situation.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[Motions for the Adoption of the Reports of the working visits to the Parliaments of Ghana and Uganda have been carried]

III. BILL.

THE FOOD AND FEED SAFETY AUTHORITY ACT, 2017

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND SANITATION

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, how many people have copies of this Bill here? Those that have copies of the Bill show it by raising your hands. Mr Clerk, I am afraid I will not allow any debate on this Bill today.

HON. LEONARD S. FOFANAH [*Majority Leader of the House and Leader of Government Business*]: Mr Speaker, I am not in any way attempting to challenge your authority, but unfortunately the Office of the Clerk has informed me that the Bill had been circulated long time ago and notice has been given that this Bill was going to be discussed today. In as much as I respect your decision, Mr Speaker, I want to call on my colleagues that in future they should ensure that when they are coming to Parliament, they should bring their documents. This Bill was circulated and the urgency is so important that we are requesting that they go and search for this document. We cannot now afford to print and re-circulate the same Bill to every Member of Parliament. I thank you very much, Sir.

HON. ROSALINE J. SMITH: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have stressed earlier in this House the importance of the Order Paper coming out before the next sitting day. Indeed, the Bill has been circulated, but the information about the Bill being debated today was not communicated to Members of Parliament. It is very important for Members of Parliament to receive text messages from the Chief Whip and the Deputy Whip or the Clerk's Office to notify Members of Parliament before the House resumes. Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, the point made by Honourable Rosaline J. Smith is very much in place. The Clerk can bear me out that having served as Majority Leader, and now as Speaker, I know too well that the Order Paper must be circulated at least a day before the next sitting, particularly when times are not now normal. Strictly speaking, Parliament should have been on recess by now, but we cannot because of the prevailing

situation. So, whenever we want to meet, please let the Order Paper be circulated at least twenty-four hours before the meeting. If I have my way, it should be forty-eight hours.

HON. LEONARD S. FOFANAH: Mr Speaker, we will take your directives and proceed accordingly in future. Thank you very much.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I wonder if I have the permission to make an announcement now to the rest of my colleagues. We are testing the waters today. We have a meeting in Committee Room 1 with all Honourable Members of Parliament. This is a very private meeting and we do not want any Press personnel there or any functionary of Parliament. There will be other announcements that will be made in Room One. So, if you do not go there, you will not avail yourself of the opportunity to hear other announcements. The meeting will take place immediately following the adjournment of this sitting by the Speaker. Thank you very much.

HON. HELEN KUYEMBEH: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I stand on S.O 23 to bring two or three issues to the attention of this House. The first one is to humbly ask Mr Speaker of this House, Members of Parliament, the Executive and the Government as a whole to consider extending the exhibition process that is going on. Most of us were here last week and we did not know that this was going to happen. Mr Speaker, we were in our constituencies when we got telephone calls that this is going for one week. The reason why I am saying this is the fact that, we already have an issue in our hands, which Government is spending most of its time and resources; i.e., which is the Disaster that happened a week ago. Undoubtedly, that needs total attention. It means most other issues have been put on hold. For instance, the other side's Lower Level Election has been put on hold, which we respect greatly. On our side too, our Lower Level Elections and the Convention have been put on hold, which we all respect. In that vain, I would have thought that Government would think that there are people up country that are affected by the mudslide that happened. This is because their relatives were killed and some could not be traced. They have to come to Freetown to locate their relatives. They are not able to go to their respective Wards or Centres to check their information. On those grounds, we are pleading, through the Government, for the exhibition to be

extended, so that people will have the opportunity to actually go and crosscheck their information.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, added to that even with the one week exhibition, a whole lot of discrepancies have happened. I strongly believe that the National Electoral Commission [NEC] and all the authorities that are responsible are going to diligently take a look into those discrepancies and try to fix them up.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I also want to bring to the attention of this House that we did pass the agreement for the Toll Road. We have ratified it and we are in agreement with the Minister. However, I passed through that road yesterday morning. I usually leave Bo to come to Freetown at 5:00 a.m. in the morning and get here at 8.30 a.m. without excessive speeding. I usually come to Parliament first, so that I will not be late for sitting. When I left Bo yesterday, Mr Speaker, I did not get here until 9:45 a.m. The reason is because there was traffic in every toll point. I had to wait approximately about twenty-five to thirty minutes at all of those three gates. Mr Speaker, when you put that calculation of time together, it is almost like an hour wasted. I am not here to criticise, but to point out an issue that needs to be corrected.

Normally, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in countries where toll roads are installed, there is what we call the 'easy pass' and that 'easy pass' means the area that is not manned by human but by electronic system. Again, those who have been placed in charge of the toll boxes are just learning and they are not as pretty fast as expected. Honestly, I am asking Government to talk to the Chinese folks to create an 'easy pass' lane. It is me today, it could be the Minister, and it could be a private sector person that has an important appointment in Freetown and could not make it due to the delay caused by the toll gates and that could result in loss of money for that person. So, when we are doing these things, let us consider not just what it brings, but the repercussions that may come. If I may advise, I would like the Chinese firm, through the Ministry of Works, to inform them that an 'easy pass' lane is very necessary. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Kombor Kamara, you have heard what the Honourable Helen Kuyembeh said. Please discuss those issues during your Committee meeting.

Honourable Helen Kuyembeh, on the first point of this voter verification or exhibition, it is my view that the credibility of all elections all over the World is contingent on the voter registration. Let the Chairman of Local Government and Rural Development take that up.

HON. IBRAHIM PARTEH BAH: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I still stand here with a heavy heart and I want to seize this opportunity on behalf of my constituents to express my appreciation and thanks to the Leadership of this Honourable House and of course my Honourable colleagues and friends for the support, solidarity and the visit that this Honourable House and staff made to my constituency where the mudslide occurred. I want to share with this Honourable House that the visit helped in healing my people. My people are traumatised and in pain. The visit helped because they talked to me about it. This healing process is not going to take a month or two, but perhaps it may take up to a year. On that note, I want to express my special thanks to you all. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, the point made by Honourable Rosaline J. Smith might well have been that Members of Parliament did know about the Bill and have it in their possession, but did not know that it was going to come up today because the Order Paper was late. Mr Clerk, you will bear me out that I am always emphasising the point that the Order Paper in fact if I have my way, the Order Paper will come out forty-eight hours before the time. Let Members of Parliament be in the known for God sake.

Mr Minister, we are very sorry, I always admire your eagerness and you are always ready. You are a good worker. Keep it up! We are very sorry. I am sure by next week this Bill will come up.

ADJOURNMENT

[The House rose at 12:18 p.m. and was adjourned to Tuesday, 5th September, 2017 at 10.00 a.m.]