



OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMETARY DEBATES

ON THE:

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS, DELIVERED BY THE PRESIDENT, DR ERNEST BAI KOROMA, ON THE OCCASION OF STATE OPENING OF THE SECOND SESSION OF THE FOURTH PARLIAMENT OF THE SECOND REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE, IN THE CHAMBER OF PARLIAMENT, ON FRIDAY, 20TH DECEMBER, 2013.

**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT
SECOND SESSION-SECOND MEETING
THURSDAY, 30TH JANUARY, 2014**

SESSION 2013/2014



OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

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

Proceedings of the Sitting of the House
Held on Thursday, 30th January, 2014.

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PROPOSER: HON. CLAUDE D. M. KAMANDA

SECONDER: HON. ANSUMANA J. KAIKAI

BE IT RESOLVED:

“That we the Members of Parliament here assembled, wish to thank His Excellency the President, for the Address he so graciously delivered on the occasion of the Second Session of the Fourth Parliament of the Second Republic of Sierra Leone, in the Chamber of Parliament on Friday, 20th December, 2013.”



THE CHAMBER OF PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE

Official Hansard Report of the Proceedings of the House

SECOND SESSION-SECOND MEETING OF THE FOURTH PARLIAMENT OF THE SECOND REPUBLIC

Wednesday, 29th January, 2014.

The House met at 10:00 a.m. in Parliament Building, Tower Hill, Freetown.

I. PRAYERS

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

[The Deputy Speaker, Hon. Chernor Ramadan Maju Bah, in the Chair]

The House was called to Order

MR MOHAMED LEBBIE (*Deputy Clerk of Parliament*): Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, pursuant to Section 2(10) of the Standing Orders and Section 88(b) of the Constitution of Sierra Leone, Act No. 6 of 1991, it is my privilege to call on the Deputy Speaker of this House to preside.

Suspension of S. O. 5(2)

II. CORRECTION OF VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS FOR THE PARLIAMENTARY SITTING, HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 29TH JANUARY, 2014.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, we go through the record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting held on Wednesday, 29th January, 2014. Page1? Page2? Page3?

HON. P.C. BAI KURR KANAGBARO SANKA III: Mr Speaker, my name is recorded under those who were absent with excuse, but I was present in yesterday's sitting.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Paramount Chief, which page and which item are you referring to?

HON. P.C. BAI KURR KANAGBARO SANKA III: Mr Speaker, Page 4, item 11.

THE SPEAKER: Mr Clerk, please take note. Page 4? Page 5?

HON. DR BERNADETTE LAHAI: Mr Speaker, the statement, 'the following Honourable Members contributed to the debate for the first allotted day' is not correct. This is because yesterday was the second allotted day. Let us have that corrected.

THE SPEAKER: Any more on Page 5? Page 6? There being no further amendment can somebody move for adoption of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting, held on Wednesday, 29th January, 2014?

HON. MULUKU SULAIMAN SISAY: I so move, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON. ALIE KALOKOH: Mr Speaker, I so second.

THE SPEAKER: Any counter motion?

(Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to)

(Record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting, held on Wednesday, 29th January, 2014, was unanimously adopted as amended)

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

PROPOSER: HON. CLAUDE D. M. KAMANDA

SECONDER: HON. SIDI M. TUNIS

(THIRD ALLOTTED DAY)

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, I would want to crave your indulgence, without putting pressure on any Member, to consider the time when making your contributions today. I am saying this because there are many people who want to contribute to the presidential Address. Please, take note of the time.

HON. ALHASSAN KAMARA: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I stand here this morning to thank the President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma, for a graciously delivered Speech to this Honourable House, on Friday, 20th December, 2013. On behalf of my constituency, Constituency 096, I want to thank the President for what he has done for the people of this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to start my contribution by setting the records straight. For the past two days, we have heard claims, counter-claims suggestions and opinions that are doubtful to me. Mr Speaker, I want to start with the contribution made by Honourable Sualiho. In his contribution, he said that the Dr Ernest Bai Koroma's led-government is paying lip service to the Ministry of Water Resources. That statement is very disingenuous and misleading to this House.

HON. BENNEH BANGURA: Mr Speaker, I stand on S.O. 34. I want to crave the indulgence of my colleague Honourable member not to mention names here. He should simply address a Member of Parliament by his/her constituency.

THE SPEAKER: Proceed, Honourable Alhassan Kamara.

HON. ALHASSAN KAMARA: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I am happy because the Honourable Member thanked the President for the establishment of the Ministry of Water Resources in this country. With the leave of Mr Speaker, I will like to read out these figures to the membership of the House and the general public. Mr Speaker, Le7.1bln has been allocated to the Ministry of Water Resources; Le5.1bln is a grant to the Sierra Leone Water Company (SALWACO); \$37.3mln is for water supply and sanitation projects for Bo, Kenema, Makeni; and \$43.7mln for water supply and Sanitation project for Bonthe, Pujehun, Kono and Koinadugu Districts. Again, the IDB and BADEA provide \$13.1mln for the Kabala water supply project. The government has proposed to provide Le9.7bln for the rehabilitation of existing water facilities in this country. The sum of Le3.1bln has been allocated to improve access to portable water in selected areas in Western Area. Mr Speaker, this is not lip service. This is a comprehensive, coherent and consistent package, designed to alleviate the suffering of our people in this country *(Applause)*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the next area I want to talk about is education. Education has been labeled as rotten, poor, and ill-equipped social phenomenon in this country. Those descriptions match what education is, but the fundamental truth is that, it is not the making of this APC government. Honourable Members, I will put that into perspective. If you want to judge the current APC government, in terms of its strides towards ensuring quality education in this country, you have to start from 2007 to 2014. Six years in academic pursuit is from class 1 to class 6. That is, if you want to judge the APC government on education, start to judge us from class 1 to class 6. The Honourable Frank Kposowa said the SLPP government... - *(Interruption)*.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you were advised earlier; please take note of that advice.

HON. ALHASSAN KAMARA: I am very sorry, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Order!

HON. ALHASSAN KAMARA: Mr Speaker, the Honourable Member from Bo stated that the SLPP Government built more schools in this country than any other government. That statement is very correct. It is correct because during the SLPP Government, we saw the proliferation of schools. But the question is, what sort of schools that were built under the SLPP Government? Under the SLPP Government, we saw the proliferation of thatch schools erected in this country (*Applause*). The gluts of schools built by the SLPP Government were built with mud bricks. These were the kind of schools that were constructed under the SLPP Government (*Applause*).

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is very simple to associate with development, especially when you have a President, who is ready to transform this country. The government of Dr Ernest Bai Koroma, under the 2014 budget, states that all schools in this country will be provided with computers. The schools in this country will be provided with savers and Wi-Fi. Mr Speaker, I want people to tell me how we should cable thatched schools, mud-bricks and schools built with tents with Wi-Fi, internet and provided with computers? It is totally impossible, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me hasten to clarify another point raised by an Honourable Member from Bo. I am pretty sure that two Honourable Members spoke about the bank rate in this country. I accept the fact that the interest rates in our commercial banks are very high, but to demonstrate that the President cares, I want to move the House to Page 10 of the national budget, Paragraph 59, Roman No. II. Mr Speaker, with your leave, I will read this portion. It says: "*Given the current low interest rates across all tenets of government securities, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, in collaboration with the bank of Sierra Leone, will engage commercial*

bank to ensure that with the client rendering, all tenors Treasury bill rate is reflected in their lending rate, to improve access to credit.” Mr Speaker, the proposals given by the two Honourable Members from the other side of this House is not a novelty. It was captured in the government’s budget and we appreciate your genuine comments. Your comments will be addressed as soon as possible.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will be doing injustice to myself, if I fail to talk about the youth in this country.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please don’t forget about the time.

HON. ALHASSAN KAMARA: Noted, Mr Speaker. I represent the youth in my constituency because I am within the age bracket (*Applause*). Sometimes, it borders me, especially when certain people are saying that the government is apathetic to the problems of the youth in this country. But this is a government that has committed to solving the problems of the youth in this country. The President has promised to lay his life for the youth. He has dedicated his tenure to the welfare of youth.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we must thank the President for his initiative, in terms of youth empowerment within our political discourse. If I should put that into perspective, various governments that have existed in this country perceived the youth as thugs, brutes, hooligans, ex-combatants and criminals, manipulated by politicians for political gains. Under the astute leadership of Dr Ernest Bai Koroma, he chose a different path the youth of this country should follow. He chose a path that supported and encouraged the youth of this country. He chose a path that would ensure the contribution of the youth in all sectors of this country. The President does not perceive the youth as criminals and thugs, but rather, he sees them as sons and daughters of this country. He considers the youth as partners in development. Today, youth are part of the decision making process in this country. Mr Speaker, because of this, I want to say thanks to the President for encouraging and supporting the youth of Sierra Leone (*Applause*).

However, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, much has been said about youth unemployment. But I want to inform Honourable Members that youth unemployment is a global problem. Unemployment is a problem in every country. For instance, amongst the developed countries in the world, Spain has 40% unemployment rate. There is also unemployment in the United Kingdom and the United States of America. Therefore, this is not the time to cry foul. This is the time to find solutions to this problem. I think, we should thank the President for what he has done for the youth.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the President said that his government has done more for the youth of this country than any other government in the history of Sierra Leone. I want Honourable Members to know that what the President has said is the truth. Thus, I will humbly request that we should not be seen as lawless citizens. We have to follow the path the President has chosen for the youth of this country, in terms of identifying and developing their potentials. The President is encouraging and leading the youth in the right direction. He is encouraging the youth to take part in the development of this country. With these few words, I want to implore the President to continue to do more for the youth of this country (*Applause*). Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, I want people to make their contributions as brief as possible, so that more Honourable Members who will want to contribute could do so.

HON. BRIMAH CONTEH: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to support the motion of thanks to His Excellency the President, for the Address he so graciously delivered to this Honourable House on Friday, 20th December, 2013. The Address touches on a variety of relevant issues of this country. The Address talks about cohesion and unity, so that economic transformation and development is achieved.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the first thing I want to talk about is the salaries for all government workers. There had been an effusion of praises for what has happened recently. I want to remind ourselves that the responsibility of setting salaries or agree on salaries rest with this House. By default, we have been sending what we normally

agreed on, in terms of salaries, for consideration of the President. But I want to inform Members of Parliament that this authority lies with this House. We must try very hard to take back that authority which most jurisdictions employ and exercise.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Bank of Sierra Leone was also mentioned in this Address. How important it is for us to appreciate and realise that the Bank has exercised monitoring policy in a way of controlling inflation, so that foreign exchange rate is stabilised? There is a budget deficit. What has happened recently, and for those of you who may know, there was a time in this country when the 70 Leones was equivalent to one Dollar. But by the time this country hosted the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) Summit, it was Le1, which was equivalent to \$1, owing to several factors which we need not explain here. Today, we all know what the exchange rate is. What is happening in this country? What is the Bank of Sierra Leone and the Ministry of Finance and Economic development doing? In Ghana, the Cedi is almost equivalent to the Dollar. The Leone is what we know as our national currency in this country. Foreign exchange accounts and foreign exchange holdings have not been abolished. This means that you can control and maintain your foreign exchange account; you can bring dollars and deposit it in your foreign exchange account; you can go to the banks and buy foreign currencies, you can pay school fees abroad by buying foreign exchange; you can go for your medical check-up by buying foreign exchange. But at the end of the day, when you put the Leone in the market for people to understand and appreciate that the Leone is the currency of this country, you will be doing this economy a lot of good.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Address is anchored around economic transformation and cohesion. Cohesion in this context means all of us should work together towards achieving common objectives. In his conclusion, the President says in Page 23, Paragraph 149: *"We need all hands on deck to move the country forward."* You would recalled that in his previous Address to this House, he insisted to invite us to a journey with him in a concerted and cohesive manner as one people in this country.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, they are asking you for the reference.

HON. BRIMAH CONTEH: Mr Speaker, the document is the 2012 Budget and the page number is Page 3, Paragraph 11. It says: *"Our ambition in this Agenda for Prosperity is to ensure that all Sierra Leoneans, in every region, district, city, town and village benefit from the endowment that God gave us."* It goes on to say: "Of great importance to be put in place constitutional guarantee for overcoming the challenges of ethnic divide in the political life of the country." Mr Speaker, ethnic divide is what I want to talk about here. The President is aware of ethnic divide and he mentioned it in this Address. He wants us to nurture the culture of the Separation of Powers and encourage the regionally representative government. He appealed to us for our political tolerance to fashion greater political understanding. The President encourages all of us to strengthen and utilise our ties of 'demiya and Komans' to transcend ethnic divisions in our politics.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I decided to talk about the issue of ethnic divide and the need for cohesion to achieve common objectives simply because there are quarters where issues were raised as to what is happening in this country. Do we push away our 'demiya's' when it comes to political appointment, or we favour them. Should we make our 'demiya's' the Chairmen and Directors in our institutions? On the other hand, should we appoint all our 'komans' to the exclusion of our 'demiya's,' or we appoint all our 'demiya's' to the exclusion of our komans? These are issues for all of us. The President was talking to all of us to be mindful of the issue of ethnicity in the country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the President went further to suggest the setting up of regional assemblies. I was skeptical about this, but having listened to those who have contributed to the debate, series of questions have been asked. People are asking what is happening or what the opposition is doing in this House. But I tell people that we are not silent. Mr Speaker, all hands should be on deck, so that we will know exactly the direction we have to take to support the Agenda for Prosperity. In fact, the Speech

talks about inclusiveness more than any other concept. We have to work hard in order to achieve inclusiveness.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I know that the economy has been doing well and exports have been booming (*Applause*). The question is, does this boom seem to be coming from only one sector – the mining sector or not? We have Iron Ore and Rutile as the most frequently exported minerals from this country. Although prices have fluctuated in the Rutile sector, it will take some time for this to permeate. It has not permeated at all and therefore, people ask how the economy is doing. If you say the economy is doing well, the common man should be able to realise and feel that change. We are not seeing any economic boom as far as I am concerned. The price of our staple food (rice) is skyrocketing every day.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, those are the questions people are asking. The lives of our people depend on us entirely. The prices of commodities, such as coffee and cocoa have soared considerably. Mr Speaker, we need to know our status if we are progressing as a nation. Are we achieving our target as a nation? Mind you the crops were destroyed in the growing areas of Kailahun and Kenema Districts. And Mr Speaker, the comparison to the pre-war years or the aftermath of the war is a bit invidious because we were in the stage of rehabilitating this country at all levels, in order to get things into normalcy again. Therefore, we were not expecting the prices of these raw materials to go up immediately after the war. You have to be careful when you make comparison of this nature. The economists are witnesses to what I have just said.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we used to have inspectors who were assessing the quality of our produce from the provinces. Do we still have those inspectors in this country? We need to have them so that quality produce are exported in a competitive basis. According to this Speech, we are told that Agriculture is booming. Well, we want to congratulate this government and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security for their efforts. The production of staple food is on the increase, which is very

good news to hear. But we were not told from what to what, but they said productivity is about 34%.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to tell this Honourable House that no tractor was supplied to Bonthe District last year. In the past, Bonthe used to be the rice basket of this nation. The Chairman of the Committee on Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security is quite aware of this problem. Mr Speaker, how can we get rid of subsistence agriculture when some of these problems are still persisting. We are bringing the private sector to help the government. Mr Speaker, with your permission, Page 15, Paragraph 92 of the Speech says: *"Private sector participation in agriculture continues to expand. Last week, my government signed a 1.3bln with the Hynan Rubber Industry Group and several other Chinese to cultivate rubber and rice."* The question is, what are the repercussions? In the Lunsar, people have been crying; in Samalen, we have seen the commotion in that place; and in the Rutile, there is tension. If you take the land from the people and nothing is given as reparation; if you pay people only \$5 per acre of land; or pay pittance for the crops that you destroy, then what are we expecting. Are we really helping our people? As people used to say, 'hill fears the land.' We got this maxim from the St Edwards Secondary School. If you allow the peasants to get them off the land, there is nothing we can do. In a very short period, we will be losing our culture. We are gradually wiping off the Poro bushes. We don't want this to happen in this country. You have the Shinto shrines in Japan. There are astronauts who have gone up to the moon, but they still maintain that tradition. We are giving away our traditional bushes. A colleague mentioned that when you get people off their land, or when you deprive them of their land, let the land be part of the capital that you invest.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the President has said and he was mindful of what happened in other areas like the River States in Nigeria. The host communities must be properly catered for in order to avoid commotion. If you fail to provide the needs of land owners, you are planning for hostility and chaos. We don't want that to happen here. So, the President said that we should take care of host communities. We have ADDAX, the Lion Plantation and SOCFIN of Samalen. We have to put mechanisms in

place to take care of our people in the provinces. We should not deprive them of their land by giving them \$5 per acre. They should not be given five thousand Leones for a heap of cassava, when you know that they are going to get rid of their plantations.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I had discussion with one of the officials of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security on compensation. What the government has done is indicative prices. From 2002 to 2007, the price of rice per cup was around Le400 to Le500. Today, we are talking about Le1, 000 per cup. Therefore, we need to have the interest of our people. We are their representatives and they therefore, deserve to live decently.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there is no provision made in this Speech for road construction in Bonthe District. Mr Speaker, this is very sad for my people. I don't know how many people in this Well know that the largest island in West Africa is the Sherbro Island. I don't know whether we all know where Sherbro Island is located. I don't know whether they know, but there is a place in south of the Atlantic Ocean called Sherbro Island. That Island is larger than some of the other countries in West Africa, like Cape Verde. Do you want Sherbro Island to drift away from the rest of this country?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the President asked me how Bonthe is doing. I told him that Bonthe is gradually sinking. And he said, you mean Bonthe is sinking? I said, yes Mr President. I was being figurative, Mr Speaker. He remembered what happened at St. Louis, the Catarena broke down. That was the Dite that had been put up in Bonthe had disappeared about 100 years and nobody has been doing anything. They had all disappeared, Mr Speaker. I am not praying for tsunami to take place. The Leader of the House and some of us were looking at these matters somewhere in Freetown. We have been talking about disaster prevention in this country. Mr Speaker, something needs to be done for Bonthe. In fact, there is no single meter of paved road in Bonthe District. I want the Chairman of Works to take note of what I have just said about Bonthe District. With these few words, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I thank you for your attention.

HON. AJIBOLA MANLEY-SPAIN: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to lend my voice to thank the President for his Speech, delivered on Friday, 20th December, 2013.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to say that I as a Member of Parliament, I consider myself to be a member of the government of Sierra Leone. I am saying this because at the end of the day, what we do here and what we achieve here will contribute to the development of this country. I believe that life is made up of the past, the present and the future. Therefore, government is made up of the past, the present and the future. As a government, we have a goal in mind, in terms of developing country and to alleviate poverty for the existing population. In this regard, I would like to refer you to three documents: the 2007 Budget speech, delivered by the then Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Mr John O. Benjamin. The title of that Budget is 'Improving Infrastructure to support rapid growth, job creation and poverty reduction.' That was the reality of the day and I want to submit here that it is also the reality of today. The budget delivered by the present Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Dr Kerifala Marah, subtitled 'Improving the Livelihood of Youth, Women and our Workforce.' If you go through those two documents, they exhibit the same characteristics. But the present situation is different. There has been tremendous improvement from 2007 to date.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, There are certain facts in the presidential Address that are indisputable. This means that you cannot deny them. They are undeniable facts, Mr Speaker. I want to submit here that the President delivered his Speech well. If you take your time to read the first three pages of this particular Address, you will be tempted not to continue because he has said all that needs to be said in those first three pages. I want to commend him for that summary.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the President's presence is now being felt in all aspect of parliamentary life (*Applause*). That is also an undeniable fact, but as Honourable Members of Parliament, we have to recognise this and try to help the

government and the people of Sierra Leone to achieve poverty reduction in this country. We have to ensure that the people of this nation become proud citizens of their country and they should be able to stand up and say, things are now better than ever. We should also admit the fact that things are not as good as expected. The President himself admitted to this. There are several areas in his Speech where he says there are challenges. We need to do more, so that we can overcome these challenges. In Paragraph 54, he said that more needs to be done. This means that this government has done more for the youth than any other government in this nation's history. But he said this with a caution that 'more needs to be done.' Mr Speaker, it is only when a person admits to a fact that he/she can be in a position to improve on weak areas.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I believe that with the help of a united Parliament, we will surmount those challenges. It has always been my position that since Parliament is the second Arm of government, we have certain responsibilities we have to perform, so that when we leave here, we will have something to show that these are things we have done for this nation. As a Parliament, we have the responsibility to pass Bills into law for the smooth and orderly functioning of society. In doing so, we have the privilege to state our criticisms and proffer solutions (*Applause*).

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to submit here that we passed eight Bills last year which were very necessary and timely. We have passed the Appropriation Act of 2013. This Act is very important for financial aspect of the country. We also passed the Sierra Leone Produce Marketing Act (Repeal Act) of 2013. It used to be the Sierra Leone Produce Marketing Board (SLPMB). The assets of this Board were misused in the past; therefore, the government thought it necessary to bring those assets together, so that the country can benefit from them. We had to pass the Supplementary Appropriation Act of 2013, piloted by the Minister of Finance and Economic Development. We also thought that it was timely and very relevant to do so. Mr Speaker, we also passed the Produce Monitoring Board Act. This was meant to supplement and buttress the Sierra Leone Produce Marketing Act. Most importantly, we had also passed the 'Right to Access Information Act of 2013.' This has been a sore in

our flesh because we all remember that this Act came before us in 2011 and for certain technical reasons, it was not passed. But having clarified some of the obstacles that were hindering the passage of that Bill into an Act of Parliament, we are now expecting to reap the benefit of it in every corner of this country. The provisions embedded in this Act have been acclaimed. In fact, certain people, who have been agitating for it, are now satisfied. But again, those who are going to monitor and oversee the implementation of this Act should ensure that the Act is not just a white elephant, but put into effect.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we also passed the Finance Act of 2013. We knew its importance. I want to dwell a little bit on the Constitutional Amendment Act of 2013. This was a very bold step taken by the parliamentarians; and we believe that that was the right direction for Parliament in particular and the country as a whole. It was argued that the Constitutional Amendment Act of 2013 is meant to promote the interest of all Members of Parliament. It was also advanced that the promotion of the interest of Honourable Members, as far as this Act is concerned, can only be possible, if one of us is elected as the Speaker of this House. I believe that the Act was overwhelmingly supported. However, there should be a word of caution. Mr Speaker, now that Parliament has attained some amount of independence from the Executive, we should use our powers effectively and efficiently.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we are all aware that most of the Bills coming to this House are from the government. I will be happy to debate Private Member Bills in this House from time to time (*Applause*). Since I came to this Parliament, I have been privileged to participate in the debate of Private Member Bill in this House – the HIV and AIDs Bill. Mr Speaker, if we are claiming autonomy, I think we should be able to bring Private Member Bills. We should not only rely on the Executive, in terms of bringing Bills to this House. Members of Parliament have the ability to help in that regard. I am aware that it involves a lot of money and expertise for us to develop a Bill, but we have to get the services of experts who are proficient in such areas. Mr Speaker, as a Parliament, we should start thinking in that direction. In all this, the Speaker of this

House should create the level playing field for Private Member Bill. It would not make sense for us to stand for our independence and stop there. We have to show tangible things in the future. Those are the things that will vindicate us as an independent Parliament. Our independence should mean something to all of us.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, because you have cautioned to be brief, I will just look at two aspects of the Speech. In Paragraph 125, the President refers to his government as a government of infrastructure. For me, the word infrastructure is the Alpha and Omega of everything that a serious government in developing countries would like to do. This is because without proper infrastructure, no other development will take place. In the context in which the word is used here, 'infrastructure' is not only limited to the construction of roads alone, but covers other facilities like jetties, schools, markets, public offices, recreational facilities etc. We need more jetties in this country. We cannot underestimate the importance of jetties because if we fish, you need to have a safe jetty to land. We have many waterways we need safe transportation. So, everything hinges on infrastructure for other development to take place. Mr Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, Mr John Oponjo Benjamin's budget was looked at improving infrastructure to support rapid growth, job creation and poverty reduction. If we develop this area, I believe there would be rapid economic growth, job creation and there would be poverty reduction in the country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the next area I want to talk about is the youth. Much has been said about the youth and I know that there are people who will say you are no longer a youth, but I believe that once a youth is once a man and twice a youth or twice a child. When the Paramount Chief from Moyamba District was debating, he said that when he was young, he thought that only kids go to the rest room. He failed to realise that older people were doing the same thing. That is very significant because our youth are proclaiming that they know more than the aged, but life is based on experience, Mr Speaker. If you have not experienced certain things in your life, you cannot talk about them. I always give an example that you cannot have somebody to arbitrate between two couples who are married when the arbitrator is a bachelor

(Applause). That arbitrator is a novice in marital problems. He wouldn't come to the right judgment at the end of the day.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the President has given his life to the youth of this country. The President said that as this country is on move towards development, "*let no man stand on our way,*" but I want to say here that there is only one group of people who can stand on the way of the youth - the youth themselves *(Applause)*. Opportunities are being created for them to make use of them. Are they making use of these opportunities? Are they waiting in their houses for funds to go and meet them? Are they reading their books for them to go to the universities? We have programmes being created for the youth and they must seize this opportunity to make use of themselves, especially in the mining industries. Are they taking this opportunity or are they going to college to study Greek and Roman culture skills? Are they going to the universities to study easier courses? These are the questions we should ask ourselves. The youth of this country should give us the full assurance that when this country is left in their hands, they will move it forward *(Applause)*. We do not want them to tell us that there are no bad youth. But we all know that there are bad youth in our homes. Therefore, we have to admit, like the President said that there is more to be done. The youth should admit that there is a lot to be done.

So, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to appeal to all of us that the more we are united as a Parliament, the stronger we will be. Let us make sure that we seize this opportunity in this new dispensation to do the right thing and move this Parliament forward. I thank you very much *(Applause)*.

HON. P. C. BAI KURR KANAGBARO SANKA III: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Paramount Chief, please adhere to the time.

HON. P. C. BAI KURR KANAGBARO SANKA III: Noted, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Order!

HON. P. C. BAI KURR KANAGBARO SANKA III: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we are here to graciously thank His Excellency the President, for the good work he has done and the good work he has proposed to do for this nation. Anybody, who has seen Sierra Leone from 2006 to now, will know that there is improvement in the country. I am sure that by the end of the year, more improvements will take place. The President, before he became president of this country, he has travelled around the world. Having seen the developments in other countries, he decided to go into politics to make a difference. Members of Parliament know that there are improvements in all the sectors in this country; but as politicians, we have to criticize and criticisms are good, if they are objective.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, people who have travelled to this country in recent times would tell you that the President is doing a good job; but I want to say here that development is a process. For me, I would want to differ greatly with all those who have contributed to this debate. Thanking the President does not mean that we have to thank everybody who works in his government. I am saying this because there are government officials who are very corrupt; and who are fighting against development (*Applause*). We should start fetching them out and disgrace them publicly. It does not matter which party they belong. If they fail to work for the good of this nation, or for the good of the party, we have to get rid of them from the system with disgrace (*Applause*).

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the President has made up his mind to develop Sierra Leone; therefore, if we don't put hands on deck, then we are exposing the President. We should stop being hypocrites and sycophants to the President. We should not give lip service to the people of this nation. We have to give our entire service towards the development of this nation. Corrupt officials should not be condoned (*Applause*). We have to stand firm, in terms of supporting the President by doing the right thing. Parliament should support those who are doing the correct thing in this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to talk about education. The Ministry Education, Science and Technology had been the hub of corruption. The Minister of Education is trying very hard to reclaim the lost glory of this nation, as *"the Athens of West Africa."* I wish the Honourable Member from Kono is around to listen to what I am about to say. He was saying that the Minister of Education was only interested in chasing ghost teachers. That is a terrible mistake on his part to have uttered such remarks as a retired teacher. Corruption is endemic in our educational system. We have teachers in this country whose names are on three or four different vouchers (*Applause*). I have document to the effect to substantiate my claims. I can challenge every Member of Parliament to go and ask the Accountant-General, if these allegations are false. We have over seven thousand teachers who were receiving salaries in more than two or three schools.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, corruption had been a culture of our teachers in the schools. There were teachers in the educational system, who were in the habit of photocopying other people's certificates in their names and used those certificates to receive salaries. Mr Speaker, how did that happen? They covered the name of the certificate holder and photocopied the certificate. The same certificate would be used by two or three teachers. They pretended to be degree holders and received the salaries of degree holders. This is corruption to the highest level. This is what the Minister of Education has discovered. We have to congratulate him and say good things about him, instead of castigating him. Mr Speaker, if this Parliament cannot fight or expose those who are defrauding the state, we should not discourage the Minister of Education in his fight against corruption. He is a young man trying to eliminate corruption from that Ministry (*Applause*). I want the public, including the Press, to go and see those documents for themselves. There are people in the Ministry of Education who are not supposed to be there, because they were there defrauding this country. This Minister has been on his legs, in terms of fighting those corrupt officials in this country. For instance, there were people claiming to be Directors in our technical

vocational institutions, who were not qualified to hold such positions. There were people claiming to be Directors with 'Allowed to Pass' (ATP) certificates.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Minister was left with no option but to solicit the help of the Public Service Commission (PSC) to advertise for those positions, previously occupied by corrupt officials in the Ministry. Those are the people who were crying foul. The records are there for public consumption. As of now, the Minister has stood up to ensure quality education in this country. Parents were in the habit of offering bribes to the Principals of schools to admit their children, even when their children did not sit the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE). Today, the Minister of Education has sworn to discourage such practice in this country. The Minister is saying that if you don't pass the BECE with at least five credits, including English Language or Mathematics, you will not go to Senior Secondary School. Mr Speaker, why are our people feel offended over a man who is ready to sanitise our educational system? This is totally preposterous and unacceptable. We cannot continue to mortgage our educational system for the benefit of some rascals.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Freetown used to have more than four to five thousand students applying for the Sierra Leone Grants-in-Aid (SLG) scholarship in various universities in this country. He is not averse to this, but student who applies for the Sierra Leone Grant-in-Aid should bring along their scratch cards from the West African Examination Council (WAEC) to cross-check the authenticity of their certificate. Mr Speaker, the Minister discovered that thousands of children, whose parents are in high positions of trust in this country, who should not have been to Fourah Bay College and other universities, were expelled. They are back to school, as we speak. The Minister discovered that they did not have the necessary credential to enter Fourah Bay College. Children of some Ministers and prominent people in this country were expelled. Mr Speaker, is it a crime to do the right thing? Children from Prince of Wales, St Edwards, Grammar School, Bo School and Albert Academy etc. went to Fourah Bay College with falsified results.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Paramount Chief.

HON. P. C. BAI KURR KANAGBARO SANKA III: Yes, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: You should be addressing me.

HON. P. C. BAI KURR KANAGBARO SANKA III: Mr Speaker, by the mid of this year, a University will be opened in Freetown for the purpose of technology. It is presently under construction at IMMAT, through the Ministry of Education. We need quality education in this country. Education is key to the development of any nation. A nation cannot be industrialised without 70% of its population being educated.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Paramount Chief.

HON. P.C. BAI KURR KANAGBARO SANKA III: Mr Speaker, we have to look at this government in terms of education. The Government of Sierra Leone has advocated for the minimum wage of Le489, 000 per month. A Teacher's Certificate (TC) will be receiving a minimum of Le600, 000 per month. In 1996, we legislated the minimum wage of Le 21, 000, piloted by the then Attorney-General and Minister of Justice. I am now appealing to this august body, through the leadership of this House to amend the Act of Le21, 000 to at least Le 500, 000 per month (*Applause*). Government is paying Le 480, 000 as minimum wage to all government workers. We are saying now that any private person or institution that employs anybody in this country should pay at least a minimum wage of Le 480, 000.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member.

HON. P.C. BAI KURR KANAGBARO SANKA III: Yes, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: You have few more minutes.

HON. P.C. BAI KURR KANAGBARO SANKA III: Mr Speaker, this means that we are well taken care of by this government. How can we say we cannot afford to pay our drivers a minimum wage of Le500, 000? Are we not being selfish and greedy? We have to congratulate our President, but let our drivers and other workers congratulate us too. Should we not be congratulated by our workers or our constituents? Therefore, I am

appealing to this noble House to stand up and say thank you Mr President. Let our workers thank us for what we are doing.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the laws of the banking industries here are too archaic. When you look at the Foreign Exchange Banking Act of 1965, you will notice that that Act is too old. The Act should be amended. If we talk of the Agenda for Prosperity, the banking industry should take the lead in providing the facilities for people to really start their businesses and employ Sierra Leoneans (*Applause*). Government cannot afford to take care of everybody. The United States of America employs less than 7 million people, including the military, CIF and the PIA, but the rest are from the private sector. This is because they can go to the banks and borrow money to start their businesses. Mr Speaker, the banking laws we pass in this House are not catering for the needs of our people who want to do business. Our people take loan money from our banks for more than a year.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Paramount Chief, you have a lot of supporters on what you are saying.

HON. P.C. BAI KURR KANAGBARO SANKA III: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if the Agenda for Prosperity is to succeed in this nation, we have to revisit our mining contract agreements. Sierra Leone is the only country in the world that has what is known as a surplus balance of trade with China, including the United States, Japan and Canada. The dollar is not coming back. That is why the dollar is still Le4, 000 to a dollar. They said you cannot collect dollars from the bank and the rate of black marketing is high. Therefore, we should formulate a policy to take care of some of these issues. They are telling us that they are investing \$3.5mln to our mining industry, but they cannot even deposit \$50mln in our local banks. They only bring money they use to pay their workers monthly. What about the money they get from our raw materials? Why can't they bring at least 10%, 15% or 20% of that money to be deposited in our local banks? Mr Speaker, these people don't even invest in our local banks. They put moneys into the Standard Chartered Bank, Guarantee Trust Bank (GTB) and other foreign banks. They have no confidence in our local banks.

Therefore, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we should look at that and also look at their conditions of service. In fact, for every nine weeks they work in Sierra Leone, they have 3 weeks of leave. They are taking our moneys away because those moneys have to be accounted for as recurrent cost. They are getting 18 weeks off the year without doing anything. And Mr Speaker, that is why they now have the British Airways and SN Brussels coming to this country to take them out (*Applause*). Are these people considering our Local Content Policy? They brought in a company to look at what we call Ports Authority. Today, if you want to bring iron ore, you have to go through them. They use what we call in economics 'other people's money' (OPM) to benefit themselves. Mr Speaker, it is high time we stood up as a Parliament to ensure that the Local Content Policy is being implemented. We have to work for this nation. The President wants to see legislations in the form of Private Member Bills. He cannot do it all by himself. Mr Speaker, the banking industry should be looked into and come up with proposals for enactment into law. We have to amend that Act for the Agenda for Prosperity to succeed. The Agenda for Prosperity will only succeed if we support the President and point out the bad people who are not doing the right thing.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to talk about energy. Much has been said about Energy and in modern society, no country can develop without energy. People cannot bring in factories because there is no energy. A single factory may need up to 40 to 50 megawatts and all what we are boosting of now is 50 megawatts from Bumbuna, but Bumbuna cannot even supply us with 30 megawatts. NPA is not in the position to supply 50 megawatts. Mr Speaker, the energy sector needs serious overhauling. The whole world is now using 33kv and we are still using 11kv. Look at the poles that we are using. I have been in my house for the past two weeks and there was no light. This is very terrible, Mr Speaker. Is that the Agenda for Prosperity? The people at Kissy and Wellington were without electricity for months, if not years. Why can't you say it? Most of us are staying there. Mr Speaker ... - (*Interruption*).

THE SPEAKER: Order!

HON. P.C. BAI KURR KANAGBARO SANKA III: Mr Speaker, the Coal Industry was used to build factories in England. Today, we cannot even produce what England was producing in 1774. Where are we as a nation? Now, they are using oil to generate energy. We need energy to develop this country. We need renewable energy in this country. The gold and the oil we have in this country are enough to give us billions of dollars. The President is now embarking on the supply of solar lights all over this country. Today, Kailahun is part of Sierra Leone because you can leave there to come and attend parliamentary sittings. Today, Kailahun District is boasting of having good roads and the best bridges you can think of. This is a district that did not even vote for the President. But this is a President for Sierra Leone. He is not a regional President, but a President for all Sierra Leoneans.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members on my left, I want perfect decorum in this House.

HON. P.C. BAI KURR KANAGBARO SANKA III: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Minister of Water Resources hails from Bonthe District. We have to congratulate the young man in that Ministry. If we have Ministers like him in this country, Sierra Leone will be a place for us to live with pride and honour. The young Minister from Bonthe identified by the President is a hardworking young man who cares for the people of this nation (*Applause*). He is working towards the achievement of the Agenda for Prosperity and he is obeying the rules of the game. He is doing everything to see that the Agenda for Prosperity works in Sierra Leone (*Applause*).

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to talk about the Ministry of Tourism and Cultural Affairs. This is one of the lucrative industries we are ignoring in this country. Mr Speaker, people are coming from California to visit New York City. We have the best tourist sites in the world. Today, if somebody is sent as Minister to that Ministry, he/she will think that he/she is being punished. They are given resources but they don't know how to use those resources to make that Ministry lucrative. So, we thank the President for knowing that Tourism is very important in Sierra Leone. Mr Speaker, if you go to the best tourist sites in Freetown, you will feel terrible. Our beautiful beaches are being

polluted with Houses and other activities. Is this what a beach should look like? If you go to other countries, they don't have a good tourist sites like ours, but the structures in those beaches are very beautiful.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Paramount Chief.

HON. P.C. BAI KURR KANAGBARO SANKA III: Yes, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: You should be concluding now.

HON. P.C. BAI KURR KANAGBARO SANKA III: If they are saying we should export 40mln metric tons of iron ore, why can't we smelt part of that quantity to produce iron-rods. Why can't we have a smelting industry in this country? We have all the minerals in this country to produce a steel industry. Mr Speaker, I want to congratulate the President, but we should able to use our resources prudently for the benefit of our people. The tourist industry in this country is collapsing every day. We must have people in that industry who would attract tourists to come to Sierra Leone. The bank must work together with interested Sierra Leoneans to revitalise our tourist industry. For example, we have a premier company in Sierra Leone that embarks on construction. All our moneys are going to the Koreans, Chinese, Senegalese, Australian companies. We have good engineers in this country. Why can't they come together and seize this opportunity? Munda Rogers should form a construction company and we will support him (*Applause*). He can do better because he knows the secret of investment, in terms of roads construction. Some of the moneys we have should not go to foreign companies. We want these moneys to stay in Sierra Leone, so that we can construct better roads and employ more Sierra Leoneans.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I think the government of Sierra Leone has done a lot for this country. The Minister of Education has done a lot for this country. The sum of \$36.6mln has been ratified to rehabilitate Fourah Bay College (FBC). Part of that fund will be used to improve the infrastructure of Fourah Bay College, in terms of roads, erection of new buildings, water supply, electricity, etc. Mr Speaker, that Project has been awarded to foreign company. We don't have any premier company in Sierra Leone

that would have been hired to execute this contract. Even the top companies in this country, are owned by foreigners. The moneys they get from Sierra Leone are immediately transferred to their countries. The President is ready to lay his life for the youth of this country, but are the parents controlling the youths? The President cannot go from house to house and control the children. If these youth are not controllable, it means their homes will not control them. Mr Speaker, the amount of alcohol that is consumed by our youth is unbelievable (*Applause*).

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, some people have been saying that about 80% to 85% of our population in Sierra Leone are Muslims, but are they Muslim? Mr Speaker, please make it a point of duty to drive from Allen Town to the city and see how the youth we are talking for are misusing themselves. The way the girls dress is nothing to write home about. Mr Speaker, when I was coming from Masingbi late at night, I saw these young girls in beautiful cars. They have beautiful cars we don't even have in this House. If you set eyes on those beautiful girls, you wonder what would happen when they get old. In fact, if you interview them, the first thing they talk about is enjoyment. If you have not achieved, you cannot enjoy. Mr Speaker, a professor of Economics, Professor Max Webber, once said: "*All what you learn about economics is nothing without productivity.*" You should have surplus, in terms of productivity. You cannot consume more than what you produce; and if you do, you will have the vicious cycle.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when I was growing up in the village, whenever somebody died, the creditors used to come and tell the bereaved family members that the deceased had to pay him/her a bushel of husk rice. Mr Speaker, we have to be firm in terms of inculcating discipline in them. The parents must discipline their children. It is rather unfortunate that alcohol is almost free. For example, a sachet of Pegapak is Le500. Our children will develop liver or kidney problems in the future. When I was in one of the universities in the United States of America, only people who have attained the age of 21 were allowed to drink alcohol. It was only in the 18th amendment of their Constitution that people who have attained the age of 18 years were allowed to vote. This enabled some of them to go to night clubs, but we don't have age limit in this

country. Children under the ages of 10, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16 years can enter any club. Parents are sending their children to purchase alcohol for them. This is not happening in developed nations at all.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, why should we allow people from India, Pakistan and other countries to manufacture alcohol of the lowest quality and sell it to our youth. Alcohol and cigarette are not good for ones health. If you buy a packet of cigarette, it is boldly written that smoking is not good for your health, but people don't care at all. Mr Speaker, I think Parliament should do something, in terms of passing legislation that will minimise night clubbing in this country. People below the age of 20 years should not be allowed into night clubs. The youth of this country are terrible. If you go to Bo town, there is a night club at the turn-table. Mr Speaker, you will see 14 and 15 years of age girls entering the night clubs.

THE SPEAKER: Order!

HON. P.C. BAI KURR KANAGBARO SANKA III: Mr Speaker, Honourable members, we have to control the youth of this nation. We have to congratulate the President for his commitment towards the welfare of the youth. He is not vindictive. He has respect for every Member of Parliament; he has respect for every Paramount Chief in this country; he is not abusive; he is not wicked; he is not mean; and above all, he is a great man.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to conclude with the sanitary situation of this House. I think Parliament should have good toilets and good sceneries (*Applause*). I am of the opinion that the leadership of this House cares about our welfare. We want to work with you so that we will make a difference. You are not the first Member of Parliament to be elected as Speaker of this House with no legal background. William Conteh was once a Speaker in this House and a Paramount Chief was the Deputy Speaker. I don't want to challenge you, but I want the leadership to consider this (*Laughter*). I want people from both sides to be united. Division will not help this House achieve its goals. The Paramount Chiefs want unity in this House. I thank you very

much and I want to congratulate the government and the President of Sierra Leone. We should work together for the good of this nation.

HON. IBRAHIM R. BUNDU: Honourable Members, I have a few announcements to make.

- The Committee on Appointments and the Public Service will meet immediately in my office after this sitting is adjourned for lunch.
- The opening of the book of condolence for the late Abdul Franklyn Serry-Kamal will take place at the APC Office at 3:00 p.m. We encourage all Members of Parliament to support the process this afternoon. Thank you very much.

(The House was adjourned for lunch and resumed at 1:00 p.m.)

HON. ALHASSAN JERO KAMARA: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. On behalf of the people of Koinadugu District, I want to thank the President for the Speech he so graciously delivered in this Chamber. We are here today to remind ourselves of where we are coming from and to claim the future, not only for ourselves, but for the people of this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have heard series of sentiments being expressed by Honourable Members. Some have expressed good hopes and dreams for the betterment of this country. But Mr Speaker, having a vision for a country is one thing, but realising that vision is another thing. The mechanical appliance of the rhetorician design to give a picture of a present, which does not exist and of a future, which no man can predict are as unreal and short-lived as steal. They pass with a moment of defect, but let us be real to ourselves. President Ernest Bai Koroma's honesty of mind; his fearless look into the faces of all facts, are qualities which can never go out of fashion and which we should all try to mimic.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the performance of Sierra Leone's economy for the past few years is satisfactory (*Applause*). This can be attributed to both domestic and external factors. The prudent micro-economic and stabilisation policies, which this

government has instituted for the past few years had led to the low and stable inflation, sustainable budget deficit and appropriate exchange rates. This sends important signal into the private sector about the direction of our trade policies and the commitment of our authorities to manage the economy efficiently.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, an analysis of Sierra Leone fiscal structure reveals the imbalance between government revenue and expenditures, which have led to large and chronic deficit and financing such deficits, especially through foreign borrowings. Additional foreign financing may have considerable effect on the balance of payment, the exchange rate and the external value of domestic currencies. Mr Speaker, in order to mitigate this effect, this government has instituted large tax reforms with diverse objectives, such as:

- broadening the tax bases, especially the non-mineral revenue to avoid overdependence of mineral wealth; and
- strengthening tax compliance, through robust tax enforcement, especially that of the non-mineral revenues (*Applause*).

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if taxation is well designed, it has the capacity to raise the incremental savings ratio, which is one of the major determinants of growth (*Applause*). As a result of these reforms, the revenue collected by the National Revenue Authority (NRA) has increased to Le1.65trn. This increase in revenue has trickle down to every sector of this economy. It has reflected in the income of the teachers, the military and even we the Members of Parliament (*Applause*).

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if we continue to pay our taxes, this government will do more for the people of this country (*Applause*). Mr Speaker, on behalf of the people of Koinadugu, especially the three Yalunka Chiefdoms, I want to say thanks to the President for the support he has continued to give to the farmers of this country (*Applause*). Mr Speaker, I was born a farmer, I represent farmers and I have remained a farmer all my life. Some of us are here today because of the opportunity they extended to us and it would be wrong to forget them. The story of our farmers is a

story I didn't read in the book or learn in a classroom. These farmers did not ask government to do their farming for them. What they asked for was to create the opportunity to work and make this country a better place for their children. This government, under the leadership of Dr Ernest Bai Koroma, is doing exactly what the farmers want (*Applause*).

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, under the smallholders commercialisation programme, this government has identified, organised and trained farmer-based organisations, using the farmer-school approach with the sole aim of making these FBOs potential agricultural production entities (*Applause*). Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this government has constructed ABCs centers across the country and equipped them with mini-rice mills, cassava grinding machines, generator and water supply to enable these farmers add value to their products and market.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the establishment of Community Banks and Financial Service Associations, across the country has helped our farmers to access credit facilities, so that they can make business transactions. The rehabilitation of feeder roads, bridges and culverts had led to the linkage between the Agricultural communities and the Rural/Urban market centers. This has allowed the free movement of agricultural input to production areas; and output to urban market centers. This government has supported smallholder farmers for multiple cropping and intensifications.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the prices of our agricultural produce are volatile in the international market. This has affected our farmers considerably, in terms of mitigating this effect. This government has recently established the Sierra Leone Produce Marketing Board or Company to help our farmers. There is no argument over the choice between poverty and development, but there is only one guarantee which we can have development. This government, under the leadership of Dr Ernest Bai Koroma, is committed to the education of everybody. He has provided tuition subsidies for 18,000 students in the universities. This government has provided tuition subsidies

for 1,350 students in secondary schools. Mr Speaker, the President has increased the salaries of teachers and this has reduced the movement of teachers in and out of the classroom. Mr Speaker, because of these subsidies, an opportunity has been created for every student in this country, regardless of his background to acquire the best education.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, unlike other Presidents, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma believes in sharing this country's wealth honestly, reasonably and fairly without expecting bribes from anybody. If you go to Bo, you will see solar lights and paved roads. These developments are everywhere. So, it is good to say thanks to the President of this country for what he has done.

HON. PATRICK FOYAH: Thank you very much Mr Speaker, for giving me this opportunity to make my contribution to the Address delivered by His Excellency the President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma. On the 20th December, 2013, His Excellency the President fulfilled one of his many presidential duties by delivering a wonderful Speech in this House. The Address centered on his stewardship to the people of this nation. The Address explains its transformation from the 'Agenda for Change' to 'Agenda for Prosperity.' The Agenda for Prosperity, which the President presented to us in this Parliament, stands on eight pillars:

- economic diversity indications;
- management natural resources;
- human development;
- international competitiveness;
- labour and employment;
- social protection;
- governance and public service reform; and
- gender and women empowerment.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, for the past few days, my colleagues, on both sides of this House, have made contributions on most of these pillars. For my part and

because of time, I will limit my contribution to Pillar 7. Before I proceed, let me join the rest of my colleagues to say thanks to the President for his Address and also to say thanks for acknowledging the good works of parliamentarians by appreciating us and increasing our salaries (*Applause*). The President has also put mechanisms in place for the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) for all Members of Parliament. Thank you very much, Mr President. We are grateful and we will ensure that we do what is right to ensure that the 'Agenda for Prosperity' is achieved. I am saying this because the 'Agenda for Prosperity' is very important to us. This is important in the sense that the success of the 'Agenda for Prosperity' will make a very strong foundation when the SLPP shall take over the leadership of this country in 2017 (*Applause*).

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, permit me to make it very clear here that governance is not an event, but a process. This means that governance is an ongoing process. The governance process started in this country in 1961, when we had our independence. It all started with Sir Milton Margai and continued through the past Presidents to the current President, Ernest Bai Koroma. Therefore, governance is an ongoing process. The late Siaka Stevens left legacies behind which all of us today are enjoying. President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah also left legacies; legacies which sadly and unfortunately have not been appreciated or made reference to by most of our colleagues in this House. With the permission of the Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity (before I get to the specifics and for the benefit of some of my colleagues on the other side), that when President Tejan Kabbah took over this country, this country was at war. 2/3 of this country was littered with the presence of rebels. You cannot move from here to Waterloo without being escorted.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when Dr Ahmed Tejan Kabbah took over power in 1996, the economic, social and political life of this country was in cessation. They were not in existence and both infrastructural development and the security sectors were in disarray. President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah brought IMMAT to structure our Army, in terms of training. Mr Speaker, the Honourable Komba E. S. Boya, who was in the military will bear me witness that the army at that time was referred to as SOBELS

because most of our military officers were part of the rebel groups in this country. We brought the Commonwealth police from England to train our police officers to become a force for good. Mr Speaker, the few institutions became defunct institutions. It was President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah and his government that established such institutions as the Office of National Security (ONS). I was one of the founding members of the ONS. He also established the National Commission for Social Action (NaCSA). Both institutions were established to address the ills of the war in this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, somebody talked about the constructions of schools, health centers and clinics in this country. I would challenge any of my colleagues on the other side to bring pictures of schools built with tents by the SLPP government (*Applause*). Mr Speaker, besides ONS and NaCSA, the SLPP government also established the National Social Security and Insurance Trust (NASSIT), National Revenue Authority (NRA), Maritime and Administration, Anti-corruption Commission (ACC), etc. All these institutions were established by President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah. Mr Speaker, without these institutions, I don't think anything would have taken place in this country. We trained the army and more importantly, we brought the war to an end in 2002, which gave us the opportunity to move this country forward. The development the SLPP did in this country cannot be quantified by any scale. In Fact, you will not walk five miles distance without seeing what President Tejan Kabbah did under the SLPP government in this country. You will either find a school, a clinic or a local court.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, people have been talking about roads in this country. We constructed the Masiaka-Magburaka Road, we never made too much noise about it. We did not make loud noise about it because we thought it was the responsibility of the government to do that. Development is a continuous process.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, give the Honourable Member chance to make his presentation.

HON. PATRICK FOYAH: Mr Speaker, it is important to note here that President Koroma is doing very well. But I want people to forget that he met a very strong foundation which he is working on.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to take the House to Page 2, Paragraph 4 of the Presidential Address. With your leave, Mr Speaker, it says: *"Under our watch, our country has known greater peace and non-violence than witnessed under the previous government.."* We have to be honest to ourselves. Sometimes, I pity President Koroma because some of these speech writers don't even know what was happening in this country at the time. Now, you talk about greater peace in 2007, our party office was attacked by the APC thugs.

THE SPEAKER: Order!

HON. PATRICK FOYAH: Again, in 2008, the party office was attacked by the APC hooligans and ruffians. Our women were raped and the office was put on fire.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please be guided by your last statement.

HON. PATRICK FOYAH: In addition to that, there was a bye-election in Segbwema. The election was marred with violence to a point that the Shears Moses Commission found most of the government officials wanting. In fact, UNIPSIL was involved to address those issues. When we went to Tongo, Mac-P had to be invoked because there was violence in the place. Our flag bearer, Julius Maada Bio, was attacked in Bo. If those were not violence, then what is violence? During the 11 years of President Kabbah's regime, there was not an incident of attacks. So, as far as I am concerned, I will say thanks to the President for at least realising that development can only move forward in a peaceful atmosphere. I thank him because, after those incidents have taken place, he was been able to put this country under his control.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, that is not what the sentence is saying.

HON. PATRICK FOYAH: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when the Chief Whip was making his contribution, he cautioned every one of us to proffer recommendations. I want to commend him for that because there are indeed problems that need to be

addressed. The President has done very well, but we still have a long way to go. As Honourable Members, it will be difficult to get to the 'Agenda for Prosperity' if we fail to address these problems. I want to thank the President for what he has done for this nation. Mr Speaker, the Paramount Chief, Bai Kurr Kanagbaro Sanka III talked about issues which most of us here are not even aware of. As Honourable Members of Parliament, we should try by all means to address these problems appropriately. If we do this, as the Chief Whip has advised, we will be doing justice to this country and justice to President Koroma.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to move to Page 3, paragraphs 10 and 11. With your leave, I will read: "*There are times when we have been slowed down by old habits, there are moments when some amongst us have been inhibited by inattentiveness to the urgency of the task at hand; there have been occasions when some agencies and groups of people have taken steps backwards, rather than moving forward. I am the first to admit that we still face many challenges that we are not yet at the summit of achievements; that there is still a way to go to bring home the fruits of this country's immense potentials.*" The President is being frank and magnanimous, as far as these paragraphs are concerned. I thank him for that because he knows very well that there are challenges that need to be addressed. Those are the areas we should be looking at. When we commend the President, we should bring out those lapses to his notice. He might not be in a position to know most of these lapses. It is our responsibility to bring out some of these lapses to his attention for further action. Mr Speaker, because of his honesty and sincerity, I say thanks to the President (*Applause*).

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to talk about the roads. Any time I listen to the presentations of Honourable Members on the other side of this House, I giggle because the much talked about the Kailahun Road, Bo Road, the Kenema-Kailahun Road, the Kenema-Pendembu Road, Pendembu-Kailahun Road have been discussed in this Well in 2006. As we speak, the constructions of those roads are still in progress, but at a slow pace. It is a fact because I am just coming from Kailahun District. It has been ongoing for six years and I would assure Honourable Members that if this pace is

not accelerated, we on this side will have to commission that road in 2017 (*Laughter*). We agree that here are infrastructural improvements in the country, but I don't think four lanes highways are necessary in residential areas. What about our Waterloo-Freetown road? That is where we need four lanes road. We all know the reason for that, Mr Speaker. It can ease the traffic congestion and reduce the level of accidents in the country. Those are the roads that need urgent attention because they are needed and are necessary.

However, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is important not to take anything from the President's commitment to construct the other roads. But I think there should be some amount of urgency and focus, where necessary. In fact, the feeder roads are very important. Most of us here are from the provinces. We know the difficulties our people are facing with their produce. Our people are encountering series of problems, in terms of taking these produce from the interior to Freetown and other major cities and towns. I am just coming from my constituency, Constituency 001. I took two hours and thirty minutes from Kailahun Town to Pendembu, which is about 17 miles.

THE SPEAKER: Order!

HON. PATRICK FOYAH: I will like to discuss with the Chairman of the Committee on Works for some discussions about that road. I will also invite him to go to Kailahun with me with a video camera and Pressmen to see the realities on the ground. The President has good intensions for this country. We have to help him in terms of achieving these good intensions.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, please allow your colleague to make his presentation.

HON. PATRICK FOYAH: As I was saying, the President has good intensions for this country and he can only fulfill those good intensions, if we are honest with him. Now, let us look at Page 11, Paragraph 65. The President said: "*We have changed the face of our provincial cities by ensuring that they have several tarmac roads in Makeni, Bo, Magburaka, Kenema, Lunsar, Port Loko, Kambia and Kailahun.*" Mr Speaker, I was in

Kailahun District few days ago, and I can tell you that there is not a drop of tar on any street in Kailahun. Again, this tells us how people are misleading the President who is so hard working; and who wants to move this country forward. Some of his followers are painting pictures that are not real. Most of the issues they are reporting to the President are incorrect (*Applause*). With the permission of the Speaker, I would personally invite the Committee Chairman on Works on Saturday to Kailahun District, so that he can see things for himself.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as Members of Parliament, we were elected by our people to perform three major functions: law making, representation and Oversight. We cannot sit here (in spite of what the President has said that there are lapses), and pretend that all is well out there. We have to work together, as a Parliament, to help the President. The relationship between the SLPP and the APC is symbiotic. We need each other in terms of development. We have to be frank and honest, so that we can be able to move this country forward. If we do this, it means we are moving in the right direction for the 'Agenda for Prosperity.' Now, if we fail to do this, I will call that a travesty of reality. We will not be doing justice to the President and the people we do represent.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I turn to the issue of corruption. In 2003, the United Nations Security Council, knowing very well how corruption is evil in the sovereign nations declared the 9th day of every December as the 'Anti-Corruption Day,' a day which all countries should recognise to get the awareness of the evils of the corruption itself. On the 9th December, 2013, President Koroma, in recognition of that date said: "Corruption is the biggest challenge this country is facing. It slows down development, distorts trade, undermines security and weakens the economy and social fabric of society, and it is responsible for the vast inequalities in Sierra Leone and washes poverty." These are very strong words by our President. This shows the magnanimity of our President and his commitment to move this country forward (*Applause*). We all know that this is a problem in this country. In a bid to wipe off corruption from this country, the first statement made by the President when he became President in 2007

was 'zero tolerance in corruption.' He also said that there would be no sacred cow in his government, but over the years, we have seen sacred sheep and goats (*Applause*). He repealed the Anti-Corruption Act that was passed in this House, under the presidency of Dr Ahmed Tejan Kabbah and then broadened the scope of offences and even gave the Commission prosecutorial powers to do their work properly. That amendment Act was passed in this House, but notwithstanding that in his Address to this nation, he told us that in 2010, there were 5 indictments, 11 indictments in 2011, 10 indictments in 2012 and 15 indictments in 2013.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, taking into consideration the measures being put in place and the scope being broadened for the offences, those figures are dismal and there is more to be done. On the 15th January, 2014, one of the most popular newspapers in this country, the Standard Times came out with a report on NASSIT. Mr Speaker, with your leave, the headline reads: "*Massive blunder and misappropriation at NASSIT.*" Besides, in 2007, the funds that were generated by the SLPP, through NASSIT were used to buy a ferry under some dubious circumstance, which is still being investigated. In addition to that, colleague Honourable Members have been talking about corruption in certain areas like health, education, etc. So, we should be honest to ourselves. Mr Speaker, when the President says corruption is the worse evil in undermining the development of this country, we should take that statement very seriously and help him to tackle these problems. As Members of Parliament, we should be able to minimise these problems. We have Oversight functions which I am sure, with the new leadership in this Parliament, if enough funds are provided to perform our Oversight functions, we will be able to tackle most of these problems. We will be able to take this country's prosperity.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am appealing to my colleagues on the other side for us to work together. The SLPP is equally eager and anxious for this country to develop. We are not averse to progress and development. I would assure you that we on this side need that procession to prosperity and no one will stand on our way (*Applause*). Before I conclude, I want to state here that the APC and SLPP have

common destinies. We are interrelated and we have common vision. The same way the APC wants development in this country, is the same way the SLPP would like the development of this nation. When we come to power in 2017, we will be ready to work with you. For now, you need to accept our constructive criticisms or else it would be difficult.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to conclude by saying by quoting a Civil Right activist, the late Dr Martin Luther King Jnr. He said: *"you ought never to be, until I am what I ought to be, and I cannot go what I ought to be, until you are what you ought to be."* By extension, we can never be what we ought to be, until our people out there are what they ought to be, and they cannot what they ought to be, until they are there what they ought to be (*Applause*). I want to say thanks to the Speaker for this opportunity he has given me. With your permission, Mr Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to say thanks to all Honourable Members for the support they gave me when I lost my wife on 26th April, 2013. The support, contribution and assistance I received from this Parliament were so immense that I will never forget it. I am grateful and I want this to be recorded in the annals of parliamentary history that I expressed thanks and appreciations.

HON. ISATA KABIA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to lend my voice to the motion of thanks to His Excellency the President, for the Speech he so graciously delivered on the State Opening of Parliament. I want to say thank you. Mr Speaker, S.O. (2) I want to say 'tɛnki', 'unuwali', mɔmo, jarama,' 'buwa,' and 'baika.' We say thanks to the President in all the languages because all his efforts have touched every corner of this country. Mr Speaker, even if we say thanks in every language, it is still not sufficient to express our gratitude for the work he is doing for God and his country (*Applause*).

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, a colleague from Koinadugu District mentioned, in economic terms, about 'Opportunity Cost.' There is no 'Opportunity Cost' in the two terms of Dr Ernest Bai Koroma's presidency. We are privileged and honoured to have him as our President at this time. We have no regret at all, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, by

speaking to Members of Parliament for the eighth time on the occasion of State Opening of Parliament, our President was fulfilling part of his constitutional obligation. It is a shame that on this particular day, half of our Members of Parliament failed to fulfill theirs (*Applause*). Those who wanted themselves absent made themselves most visible, as the world watched their empty seats. It sends the wrong signal to the world. It paints a poor picture about our growing democracy at the time when the whole world is watching Sierra Leone; and at a time when there is so much international good will for this country. It is a shame that they should find a Parliament divided, a House in disarray. This is the time when we should be united for the development of our beloved Sierra Leone (*Applause*). We should be the leaders and show leadership qualities to the young generation. We should show good example for our people to follow. I want to say here that the sacrifices we make can only be measured by our results or good deeds. The sacrifice and service we make to this country can only be registered by the fruits we bear. We've believed in the past that implementation was very much up to the 'implementer,' but we now know that implementation is very much up to the monitor. At the time when our President is so committed to the wellbeing of our people, our Parliament should be second to none.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Page 23, Paragraph 149 says: "*I joined Politics to lend my skills to putting a stop to the pain of these contradictions. We are in politics to end the indignity of being at the bottom rung of many indicators of human progress...*" The Honourable Member from Bo, a few days ago, spoke about collective credit as a new term. He spoke about collective credit as a way of sharing acolyte between governments and the people. Mr Speaker, I would like to enlighten this Parliament that indeed schools on shelves cannot educate our children (*Applause*). Mr Speaker, roads on paper cannot accommodate vehicles (*Applause*); and Hospitals in pockets do not help patients (*Applause*). Simply put, 'action pass intention.' Something about the sincerity of purpose should be our guiding principle to ensure that we achieve the full potential of our humanity.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, pillar six talks about 'gender equality and women's empowerment.' This is found on Page 22, Paragraph 142. It says: *"During the implementation of the 'Agenda for Change,' my government made remarkable strides in promoting women and girls in an effort to closing the gender disparity nationally. Notably, women were appointed in substantive positions at all levels of decision-making, including ministerial, judicial, security sector, commissions, heads of agencies and departments, boards of directors, diplomatic service and more."* Indeed, there are many positions on the list for the women of Sierra Leone. We should recall our achievements, as women with very little opportunity that are being given to us. We must register our successes, even as we ask for more. Today, we can boast of having the first female President of the Sierra Leone Football Association (*Applause*); the first female Members of Parliament from Constituencies 051, 042, 065, 037, 061, 005 etc. Mr Speaker, we must break records so that we can finally break the class ceiling. We also have the first female Party Leader in Parliament. We must show the world for what we have done with the little opportunity given to us as women, in recognition of what women can do.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members on my right, please allow the Honourable Member to make her submission.

HON. ISATA KABIA: Mr Speaker, with all the energy spent with few good men to stand by our side, we still have detractors. We find those who don't think there is room for the women of this country to discover their potentials. We still have people who use gender-based intimidation, as a political strategy to derail the efforts of our government and good intentions of the President. Mr Speaker, as I stand here today... - (*Interruption*).

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, we need decorum in this House.

HON. ISATA KABIA: As women in Parliament, we represent all women who have been told that they are not strong enough and not good enough to be heard. When the President of the United States of America, Barack Obama came to Africa, he spoke about strong institutions for Africa. Mr Speaker, he should have as well said that Africa

also needs strong women. The Women's Empowerment Fund and the Social Protection Funds are the first of their kind for the first time in our country's history. The words 'free and healthcare' co-exist. The word of this week is 'double' and the word double has already been used in a sentence to describe new salaries. But according to the new United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) report, we can also use the word in these examples. The use of modern family planning methods, amongst married women has doubled; the use of treated mosquito bed nets against malaria for under-fives has doubled; the use of insecticides treated nets amongst pregnant women has doubled; deliveries at health centers and facilities have doubled. This is the right direction the country is going. This government is so compassionate that if people like lactating fathers exist, they will also qualify for the Free Health Care (*Laughter*).

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Pillar 2, talks about managing natural resources. Mr Speaker, to say that South Africa, as a developed state is a mission accomplished, is over-simplified, and to say that this ramble nation has accomplished its development is a little bit of an exaggeration. This ramble nation has its own contradictions. In South Africa, there are super highways, crossing over shanty towns; and there are also world class educational institutions, as well as schools without windows and doors. Nelson Mandela stood up to the challenge, but he couldn't do it alone. Why can't we stand up and solve our problems together? How come our President asked this question over and over in this Well of Parliament?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, development cannot be left to one man. Development is not up to one person. This means that we all have a role to play towards the achievement of our goals and objectives. Our natural resource management is an opportunity for us to finally take care of our most vulnerable citizens. It is an opportunity for us to realise our full potentials as a nation. We are placed at the opportuned moment in history, where the resources can be reversed forever. We are opportuned at this moment in history to play the greatest role in developing our nation. Our President said that this is not about the APC; it is not about party politics; but it is about Sierra Leone (*Applause*). Sustainable development has to

start with sustainable mining. This means that at the onset of extracting the mineral deposits, land reclamation plant must be laid. That is, mining should not negatively affect agriculture, but it should spur its growth and development in order to avoid a possible outbreak of disease. Mr Speaker, the welfare of our citizens must be secured at the beginning of every mining agreement.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as a Parliament, we should be responsible and attentive to ensure that our citizens are protected. Mr Speaker, jobless growth would be the greatest cry in Sierra Leone, if we allow this to happen. Our Local Content Policy is meant to transform this country, through the Conference on Development at a time when the donor partners stated that it was not needed, but our President saw the urgent need for it because development does not happen by accident. The plans laid within the transformation conference are now bearing fruits. The Local Content Policy, once realised would be the source of comfort for every citizen of Sierra Leone.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, with this present Parliament, we have great hopes and expectations. My people from Constituency 050, who are very close to job opportunities should benefit from their God given minerals. We cannot always be at the bottom of development. We must make sure that we take our roles, as monitors and overseers very seriously. Mr Speaker, if we fail to do what is right, our country will not move to where it is supposed to be. The President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma is doing his best to make this nation prosper. He cannot succeed, if we fail to work with him. We must have the same agenda in our minds - the Agenda for Prosperity for entire country. The 'Agenda for Prosperity,' however, would not succeed, if we don't have all hands on deck. The 'Agenda for Prosperity' is an agenda designed to take care of the ills of this country; and an agenda designed to make sure that this government fulfills its promises to the people of this nation.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have to make sure that this Parliament is on the front line for this particular fight to save Sierra Leone. I thank you and I thank the President of Sierra Leone for his gracious Address, presented to the public through the

representatives of the people. I know that the glut of promises contained in this Speech would be fulfilled (*Applause*).

HON. HASSAN A. SESAY: Mr Speaker, I want to thank you for affording me this opportunity to lend my voice to the Presidential Speech that was delivered in this Well by Dr Ernest Bai Koroma on Friday, 20th December, 2013.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Honourable Member from Constituency 001 made certain statements that were partly correct. In other words, some of the statements he made were correct, while others were not correct at all. But the main issue here is to say thanks to the President for a job well done. My colleague Honourable Member from Bo said that we are thanking the President for the little he did for this country. The word 'little' is a relative term; and if what the President has done for this country is still seen by some individuals as little, I will permit them to use the word they want to use. Mr Speaker, we know that this President has done so much for this country that he deserves thanks from Members of Parliament (*Applause*).

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in the first paragraph of the President's Address, he made this statement thus: "*This Honourable House continues to be the bastion of freedom, where the central tenets of democracy are upheld...*" It is against that backdrop that people have the right to say what they say, even if it is not that correct, but political correctness depends on where you stand in the political eyes." In Paragraph 2, the President also made it very clear that his ambition is to build roads, to support the growth of the economy, to increase salaries of teachers, police, soldiers, health workers and lecturers and to reform the public service. Now, talking about reforming the Public Service, our President is so honest that he is the first President to accept the fact that there are challenges confronting his government. Mr Speaker, if Dr Ernest Bai Koroma is not a honest President, he would not have known the challenges of our country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, reforming the Public Service is not only the duty of the President, but the willingness of the people to actually accept change (*Applause*). The public servants must not resist change, because they want to maintain the status

quo. It is that status quo that would benefit the individual and not the nation as a whole. That is why reforming the Public Service is being mentioned by the President, as one of the key areas to look at, if we are to succeed in achieving the Agenda for Prosperity. We have already moved from the 'Agenda of Change' to the 'Agenda for Prosperity.' Mr Speaker, if that is the case, then the reform of the Public Service is vital towards the achievement of our goals. The President did not waste time in accepting the fact that there are challenges. And if there are indeed challenges, we should collectively responsible in making sure that we overcome those challenges for the betterment of this country. It is not only the voice of the President, but the willingness that he has shown and the political will to implement change and improve this country is one thing that we must thank him for (*Applause*).

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in Paragraph 5, the President also stated that today is better than yesterday and I'm sure every parliamentarian, seated in this Well today, will agree with me that today is better than yesterday (*Applause*). And there is a correlation between the Speech of the President and the budget speech of the Minister of Finance and Economic Development. This shows how coordinated and how active these policies are. This is not a lip service, as some Members of Parliament were saying, but the President is committed towards the achievement of the welfare of his people (*Applause*). Yesterday, some body was talking about quality education. I don't want to continue, but let me also reiterate what the Paramount Chief was saying about the Minister of Education, Science and Technology. I want to say here that those deserve praises should be praised where praises are due. Let us be honest that if in just one month, the Minister of Education recovered over 800,000,000 million from ghost teachers, this money is going to be used to recruit up to 4,000 teachers in this country. Mr Speaker, over 900 teachers have been retired from the teaching service.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Minister of Education is committed in getting rid of people who have reached the retirement age. These are areas where the government is losing lots of funds. There are people in the public service who are bent on exploiting this country for their personal gains. What has been recovered by the

Minister of Education will be directed to other areas. Providing quality education is one of the priorities of this government. If some of us can stand in this Well and speak good English, it is because we were provided with quality education. We should not deprive our youth from getting quality education by compromising standards.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, a colleague was saying that the Minister of Education is only trying to deny pupils who failed the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) to take the West African Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (WASSCE). That statement was very misleading. Most of the laws and policies this Minister is implementing have been in our law books since 2004, but certain people from certain quarters were benefiting by ignoring the tenets of the law. Mr Speaker, I can challenge anyone of us here to go and check whether the law, which the current Minister of Education is implementing, was not in existence during the SLPP regime. It was inadvertently ignored by certain people to suit their comfort.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to also say here that the Conference of Principals was called upon and warned that they must stop accepting pupils who did not get the criteria to enter senior secondary school, but the principals refused and they continued indulging in malpractices. Again, after the Gbamanja Report, the Minister of Education made it very clear that we are going to stop accepting pupils who do not pass the BECE exam to take the WASSCE exam. Mr Speaker, if this nation is to improve, in terms of getting quality education, the principals should not compromise standards, thinking that they are helping our children. They are not helping them at all. If we want to restore quality education in this country, we must start somewhere. If we are not going to start the implementation of these policies because people will be affected, I don't think we are ready for quality education. Some people will be affected at any time we start the implementation of a policy. Therefore, we have to accept it now and move forward as a nation. We have to restore quality education to this country. This country deserves quality education. Mr Speaker, this government spends over Le87bIn on subsidies to students in tertiary education.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, today, we are talking about a minimum wage of Le480, 000 for all government workers, including teachers. This is unprecedented and we should be grateful to the President for thinking in that direction. Our past presidents were not as innovative as this current President. Mr Speaker, education, youth and sports are interrelated in terms of the characteristics exhibited. If education is to get better, then we must try to get rid of those who are trying to circumvent the educational system to improve themselves. These people are doing all they could to stifle the development of our youth. We should not allow them to wreck this nation. As Members of Parliament, we must stand against these nefarious people who want to exploit the system for their personal gains at the expense of the masses. We want to see this nation moving forward and not individuals.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if a nation grows, all of us will grow, but when people stand to benefit themselves at the expense of the masses, we will not improve as a nation. We will not allow those who want to move this country backward. We are not going to let them do that. No one should stand in our way because we are moving forward (*Applause*). In 2008 to date, we have recruited over 6,000 teachers. This government met a plethora of untrained and unqualified teachers in the system. What this government is doing is to get them out of the system, so as to give chance to those who are trained and qualified. Most of these teachers cannot even speak good English. The Honourable Member from Bo will testify to the fact that when we were in school, we had quality education because we had trained and qualified teachers to teach us. We don't have to deprive our children from having quality education.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the President mentioned his commitment towards improving the skills of youth of this country. This government has just revitalised what has been happening in our schools, in terms of providing diets to boarding schools. In fact, the Ministry of Education is spending over Le180, 000, 000 a month on diet for schools like the Bo School and others. Honourable Members, what I have just said is nothing but the truth. This is a clear manifestation that this government is not shying away from its responsibilities.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, much has been said about youth unemployment. I want to inform Honourable Members that this problem is not only limited to Sierra Leone or Africa, but it is a global issue. During the recent EU Commission, the issue of youth unemployment was the topical issue in countries like Spain, Italy, Germany, America, England and Portugal; it has become an issue for discussion. We want to see a public/private partnership to actually absorb the youths into the workforce. We want to see the public and private sectors, including the companies to come together and hold a consultative conference to discuss the way forward for the youth of this country. The government is building technical and vocational institutions all over the country to give the youth the necessary skills needed. The private sector should intervene to complement the President and this government. We need the collaboration of the private and public sectors to improve on the skills of our youth. People should be expunged from the system, if they want to stand against the development and progress of this nation. Mr Speaker... - *(Interruption)*.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you have 10 minutes more.

HON. HASSAN SESAY: Mr Speaker, I want to ask for your permission because... - *(Interruption)*.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you are wasting more of your time. The sitting will be adjourned at 2:30 pm.

HON. HASSAN SESAY: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the youth must be given the opportunities they deserve in this country. In fact, we need the private sector to work with the public sector, so that more opportunities would be created for the youth. We cannot deny the youth jobs because job experience requirement. If people are not employed, how can they acquire experience? I am of the opinion that providing jobs for the youth should be our first priority, before we think of job experience. We have people who are coming from college, seeking for employment for the first time. So, we need the private sector to compliment the effort of the government. If both parties see the need to work together, they can create a vibrant and a more progressive youth population. We owe a lot to the youth of this nation. We

have to make sure that we do our best to develop their potentials. The President has pledged his commitment towards alleviating the problems of the youth when he was delivering his Speech in this Well. Today, we have youth as Cabinet Ministers and Deputy Ministers; and we also have youth in every public corporation, which means there is political will. Where is the private partnership to compliment the political will to make sure that we achieve youth empowerment in this country? I think we need to do more for the youth.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if our memories could serve us well, the last time we made some success, in terms of soccer, was in 1996, when we went for the Africa Cup of nations. We went to Tunisia in 1994 and in South Africa in 1996. Mr Speaker, these competitions, it has taken this country decades without positive result. The sport industry in this country is going down the drain every day. Mr Speaker, the President has spent more money and energy than any other President in terms of encouraging the sport industry in this country. Of course, the President is a sportsman, but what is needed is people's collaboration. To achieve this, we have to think about Sierra Leone, rather than individual. The relationship between education, youth and sports is that the youth are recruited in educational institutions, where they are opportuned to sporting activities. In these educational institutions, you will find the youth playing with each other, while the aged watch. Therefore, we need to develop our sporting activities in this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if we are talking about quality education, we must also think about the quality of teachers in our educational institutions. More teachers will be recruited; therefore, people should stop blaming the Minister of Education for doing the right thing. If we want to develop as a nation, we have to do the right thing in this country. Those who are studying the processes must respond to change and they must accept change. On that note, Mr Speaker, I want to thank you (*Applause*).

HON. KOMBA E. S. BOYA: Thank you very much Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Honourable Members on that side of the House are alleging that

Honourable Members of this side do not appreciate the efforts of the President. I think we should not see it that way at all. Issues like criticisms and comparison between the present and the past governments have been raised. I am of the opinion that the debate on the presidential Address is an annual exercise, aimed at supporting good governance in this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to say something about the youth of this country. We do admire the youth for their courage. We are of the opinion that the youth can change the political landscape of this country. We don't want them to come and begin where we have started.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, praise singing has been the norm of this Parliament since I came to this House. And this is not helping this country at all, Mr Speaker. I want the youth to change the character of politics in this country. They should not sit down and wait for things to happen naturally. The people you are representing are watching your actions; and they are listening to what you are saying here. The presidential Address is to look at what the President has done and what needs to be done. The debate is not about the failure of the President, but looking at the challenges and proffer solutions. The Honourable Member from Kono District was talking about lawlessness yesterday. He was sending a message to the Executive Arm that lawlessness is not the best option for the progress and prosperity of this nation. Mr Speaker, prosperity cannot thrive in lawlessness. So, if we encourage lawlessness in this country, our aim to ensure a prosperous nation can never be achieved. If the problem of lawlessness is not addressed, the efforts of the President and other well-meaning Sierra Leoneans will be in vein (*Applause*).

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to talk about education briefly. We are not blaming the Minister of Education for what is happening in our educational system, we are saying that there is problem in our educational system. We have to accept that fact if we really mean well for this nation (*Applause*). Those of us, who listened to the Monologue Radio programme would recalled that during the discussion, it was

discovered that there are problems between the Minister of Education and the Principals of schools. So, if there are problems between the Minister, the Principals, the students and lecturers, then there is problem everywhere. This is why we are saying that there are problems in our educational system.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I think we have to be honest with ourselves. I am saying this because everybody is saying that everything is rosy. I want us to do something, Mr Speaker. With the permission of the Speaker, I want every Member of Parliament to assess his/her constituency in those priority areas such as education, roads or infrastructure, health, energy etc. Mr Speaker, if we do this, I think we will know who is saying the truth. Our findings will be compiled, compared and presented to the President. The Honourable Member from Sella Limba was talking about what is happening in that part of the country. I am finding it difficult to comprehend because I know what is happening there. I know what is happening in Sella Limba, in terms of roads, health and education.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there are lots of challenges we have to overcome as a nation. We have challenges in the educational sector. I met a teacher in my constituency few days ago and I asked him series of questions. The name of the teacher is Mr Thomas. When I asked about the number of pupils in his class, he said that there are 130 pupils in his class. I asked him another question: *"Do you know all of them?"* He answered me and said: *"No, but I know the clever ones, the stupid ones and the stubborn ones."* Mr Speaker, this is very serious. With such scenario, we will not get quality education at all.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the teacher also told me that there was a time he saw one of his pupils being chased by his colleagues. He intercepted the pupil and asked him about his form: *"What form are you?"* The pupil said: *"I am in your form sir"* (Laughter). These things are happening and they are real. Mr Speaker, these are the problems in our educational system. My colleague from Sella Limba also said that we are doing very well. All of us want good things to happen in this country. There is

nobody in this Well who will want this country to fail. Mr Speaker, we have to work together as parliamentarians, and as Sierra Leoneans to move this country forward. I thank you, Mr Speaker (*Applause*).

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much, Honourable Member.

HON. LEONARD FOFANAH: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I stand on S.O.38 (3), regarding the five allotted days. I want to move that S.O. 82 be evoked to end the presidential debate tomorrow.

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON. ANSUMANA J. KAIKAI: Mr Speaker, I second the motion.

THE SPEAKER: Any counter motion?

HON. PATRICK KARGBO: Mr Speaker, I think it is prudent if some of us are given the chance to make our contributions to this debate.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I asked for a motion.

HON. PATRICK KARGBO: Mr Speaker, I rise to counter that motion.

THE SPEAKER: Which motion are you referring to, Honourable Member?

HON. PATRICK KARGBO: I move for the continuation of this debate, rather than guillotining the debate.

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder to that motion?

HON. ALHAJI DUMBUYA: Mr Speaker, I so second.

THE SPEAKER: It has been moved and seconded that the debate on the presidential Address be continued. This means that we have two motions on the Floor. The first motion is to end the debate tomorrow; and the second motion is to continue the debate till Monday. We are going to vote on the first motion before the House. Honourable Members, after the voting exercise, those in favour of the debate to be concluded on Friday, instead of Monday are 44 and those against are 5. This implies that the debate on the presidential Address will be concluded on Friday (*Applause*).

ADJOURNMENT

*The House rose at 2:40 p.m. and was adjourned till Friday, 31st January, 2014 at 10:00
a.m.*