



OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

[HANSARD]

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

FIFTH SESSION - FIRST MEETING

TUESDAY, 4TH JULY, 2017

SESSION – 2016/2017



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

Proceedings of the Sitting of the House
Held Tuesday, 4th July, 2017.

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PROPOSER: HON LEONARD S. FOFANAH

SECONDER: HON KOMBA E. KOEDOYOMA

BE IT RESOLVED:

THAT THE SEVENTH REPORT OF THE FIFTH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON APPOINTMENTS AND THE PUBLIC SERVICE BE ADOPTED BY THE HOUSE AND THAT THE RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED THEREIN BE APPROVED.



THE CHAMBER OF PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE

Official Hansard Report of the Proceedings of the House

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

Tuesday, 4th July, 2017.

I. PRAYERS

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

[The House met at 10:11 a.m. in Parliament Building, Tower Hill, Freetown]

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

The House was called to Order

Suspension of S. O. 5[2]

II. CORRECTION OF VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS FOR THE PARLIAMENTARY SITTING HELD ON TUESDAY, 20TH JUNE, 2017

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, we go through the Record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting, held on Tuesday, 20th June, 2017. As usual, we go page by page. Page 1? Page 2? Page 3? Page 4? Page 5? Page 6? Page 7. There being no correction or amendment would somebody move for the adoption of the record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting held on Tuesday, 20th June, 2017 as presented?

HON. AMADU M. KANU: I so move, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON. ABU B. KOROMA: I so second, Mr Speaker.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[Record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting, held on Tuesday, 20th June, 2017 has been adopted as presented]

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

PROPOSER: HON. LEONARD S. FOFANAH

SECONDER: HON. KOMBA E. KOEDOYOMA

BE IT RESOLVED:

THAT THE SEVENTH REPORT OF THE FIFTH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON APPOINTMENTS AND THE PUBLIC SERVICE BE ADOPTED BY THE HOUSE AND THAT THE RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED THEREIN BE APPROVED.

HON. LEONARD S. FOFANAH: Mr Ambassador the Rt Honourable Speaker, before I move this motion, to amend the Order Paper... - *[Interruption]*.

HON. FODAY RADO YOKIE: Mr Speaker, any time the Majority Leader adds the phrase, Mr Ambassador the Honourable Speaker, he is asking for something more.

THE SPEAKER: Well, I was a very senior Ambassador because I was a Dean of the African Group of Ambassadors, Dean of the Commonwealth Group of Ambassadors and Dean of the Afro-Asian Group of Ambassadors *[Applause]*.

HON. LEONARD S. FOFANAH: Fortunately, Mr Speaker, I have seen the Honourable Komba E. Koedoyoma, so I would no longer move an amendment.

THE SPEAKER: Mr Majority Leader, would you like to resume your seat?

HON. BENNEH BANGURA: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I decided this morning to correct no less a person but the Majority Leader of the House for addressing our Speaker as Ambassador before Speaker. To me, 'Mr Speaker,' is most important and senior title to that of the 'Ambassador.' You cannot put the cart before the horse. Mr Speaker, may I have your protection please?

THE SPEAKER: Order!

HON. BENNEH BANGURA: Mr Speaker, in future, I would like the document to read 'Mr Speaker' before 'Ambassador.' I thank you very much.

HON. LEONARD S. FOFANAH: Mr Speaker, before your intervention, I know you would rule on this matter, but if the person correcting does not even know how to proceed to correct, I do not know what he is correcting *[Laughter across the Floor]*.

THE SPEAKER: Mr Majority Leader, before I allow you to present your report, I would like to take liberty of this situation to recognise the Honourable Chief Justice. The Honourable Chief Justice was one of my best students whom I taught at the St Edwards Secondary School. I would also like to recognise the Director of Public Prosecution. He was my former student. You would like to know that I have many former students on the Bench and many on the Bar.

HON. LEONARD S. FOFANAH: Honourable Members, that short statement from the Speaker is enough ruling Honourable Benneh Bangura. The seniority and the

performance of our Speaker is nationally acknowledged; and if we are meeting here this morning and he introduced and recognised the Chief Justice as his former student, what else do we want. All the accolades given to this man he has merited them. In other words, he merits them more than ever before now that he is Speaker of this Honourable House. Having said that, I would lay to rest the unnecessary comments coming from my colleague.

THE SPEAKER: But Mr Leader, I do not want to agree with you. The comments by the Honourable Member are not unnecessary.

HON. LEONARD S. FOFANAH: You are a diplomat my Lord and I recognise that.

THE SPEAKER: Proceed.

HON. LEONARD S. FOFANAH: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I present to you the Seventh Report of the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service on Parliamentary vetting of Presidential Nominations.

1. Introduction

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service, cognizant of its constitutional responsibility of vetting and approving appropriately qualified candidates for appointment to public offices, met on Wednesday, 28th June, 2017 and interviewed ten Presidential nominees for appointment to the Superior Courts of Judicature.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I must however hasten to inform you all that only five of the ten nominees are going to be presented to Parliament this morning. Naturally, this approach, procedure and methodology will give you all sufficient time in the plenary to do justice in the approval process. With only five nominees, you will be given more time. if it pleases the Rt Honourable Speaker. The other five nominees will be presented to you on a later date to be determined by the Rt Honourable Speaker. I have absolutely no authority to either presume or anticipate him. The five candidates to be presented this morning are as follows:

- i. One Supreme Court Judge;

- ii. One Judge of the Court of Appeal; and
- iii. Three Judges of the High Court.

2. Procedure

The Committee conducted the hearing within its set framework of procedures. The nominees were interviewed on issues pertaining to their educational background to ensure that they have the relevant education and necessary backup experience to man such important offices of state. Further probing questions put to the nominees covered wide ranging issues relating to their track records in the judicial service and other pertinent work situations as the case may be, declared assets, tax obligations and their vision for a nationally productive tenure in the superior courts. Issues of unsuitability or otherwise were also closely looked into.

3. Eighth Sitting of the Committee on Wednesday 28th June, 2017

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the following nominees were interviewed on oath:

i. Ms Glenna Thompson, Proposed Supreme Court Judge

Ms Glenna Thompson is a highly trained and result oriented lawyer of 24 years working experience. She is a specialist in commercial and corporate law, criminal law, law and development, policy development and delivery, implementation of donor funded projects, facilitator of projects in the Security and Justice Sectors, particularly in the Anti-Corruption Commission, Judiciary and the Attorney-General's Department.

Responding to probing questions on rulings in political party matters, Ms Glenna Thompson said, **"One of the prerequisites of a judge is integrity, which I do not have in short supply. I do not think I would have got to this point today in my career if my integrity was in any way questionable. I am used to handling difficult matters. However, all that is needed is to take on board the relevant and leave out the irrelevant and to use one's integrity and good judgment to make sure that you do not deviate from what is supposed to be done. I do not think that I can be influenced by anybody no matter who the witnesses are and above all I am not easily flattered."**

Questioned on reasons for the delay of matters in the courts, Ms Glenna Thompson said that she has been a practicing lawyer all these years. **“The delays of matters in the courts,”** she said, **“are more often if not always due to either the litigants, their lawyers or their witnesses than from the Bench. But when such matters are delayed the first person they blame is the Judge, who may not have all the answers.”** The nominee promised to do her best to ensure that unnecessary delays are cut to the minimum. **“I assure you that I have that at the back of my mind and I will try as best as I can to ensure that anything that I can control, will be controlled, and that which I can make happen I will make it happen, because that is why I will be there,”** she assured the Committee.

ii. Mr Eldred Taylor-Camara, Proposed Judge of the Court of Appeal

Mr Eldred Taylor-Camara is a legal practitioner with over 35 years of work experience obtained in both the private and public sectors in the United Kingdom and Sierra Leone. He has spent many years in conducting civil litigation and providing in-house legal advice at the highest political and managerial levels in both national and Local Government. Mr Eldred Taylor-Camara specialises in civil and commercial law, in particular, Local Government Law, corporate governance, strategic partnerships, international public procurement and contract law. Mr Taylor-Camara has a wealth of experience in senior management positions in large public sector, legal institutions and brings with him well-developed advisory, analytical, drafting and negotiation skills.

Reacting to the Committee’s inquiries on the issue of adaptability to the legal environment in Sierra Leone and the culture of the judiciary after so many years of practice out of Sierra Leone, Mr Eldred Taylor-Camara, said; **“For the last twenty years I have been practicing in London but I have been in and out of Sierra Leone, following up on judicial changes and keeping very close ties with most of my legal colleagues in the judiciary. Besides that, I had spent several years practicing with the Betts and Berewa Chambers and working with other legal practitioners. In view of these, I am very much au fait with both the legal practice in Sierra Leone and London.”**

iii. Magistrate Manuela A. J. Harding, Proposed High Court Judge

Magistrate Manuela A. J. Harding, is a legal practitioner in the service of the Sierra Leone Government, Magistrate Manuela A. J. Harding was appointed... - *[Interruptions]*.

THE SPEAKER: Mr Majority Leader, may I at this juncture interrupt the proceedings to recognise a former Speaker of this Parliament, the Honourable Justice Cowan, who was Speaker when Honourable Sheku Badara Basiru was a vibrant Member of Parliament from the opposition *[Applause]*.

HON. LEONARD S. FOFANAH: Magistrate Manuela A. J. Harding is a legal practitioner in the service of the Sierra Leone Government. Magistrate Manuela A. J. Harding was appointed Magistrate soon after her legal education. She is currently a senior Magistrate and has worked extensively in the Western Area and in the District Headquarters of Bombali, Tonkolili and Koinadugu. She has also served as a part-time lecturer in the Faculty of Law, University of Makeni from 2007 to 2013.

Questioned on what would be her input to the justice system in Sierra Leone if approved by the House, Magistrate Manuela Harding said, **“I will ensure that matters brought before my court are dealt with without any undue delay. I believe that will help to reduce the backlog of matters before the High Court.”**

Answering to further questions on the delay of land cases in the courts, Magistrate Manuela Harding said **“the country needs to develop a national land policy which should involve all stakeholders, the bar, the judiciary, traditional leaders, land owning families and the Government. Legislations emanating from such policies could be used by the courts to make judgments on land issues swiftly,”** she concluded.

iv. Magistrate Mrs Tonia Barnett, Proposed High Court Judge

This young lady comes from the Kenema District. Magistrate Mrs Tonia Barnett is a senior Magistrate with twelve years of work experience in adjudicating criminal and civil cases at the magisterial level. The nominee has a wealth of knowledge and experience

in customary appeals from the Local Courts to the District Appeal Courts. While serving as magistrate of the Juvenile Court, Mrs Barnett became a campaigner for an improvement in the treatment of children in conflict with the law. The nominee has served as:

- i. Magistrate, Court No.1 - 2013 to date;
- ii. Magistrate, Court No.2 - 2011-2013;
- iii. Magistrate Court No.5, Juvenile Court & Waterloo Judicial District - 2008-20011;
- iv. Magistrate, Kenema Judicial District/Circuit to Tongo and Coroner - 2005-2008.

Answering to questions on the challenges envisaged in her new appointment, Magistrate Tonia Barnett said, **"I think the first challenge would be my gender. Our provincial male chauvinistic societies regard women as not fit to sit on certain cases dealing with secret societies and other customary laws and practices. The real issue should not however be about my age, gender or stature but what I can deliver."**

Answering to further questions on what she will do as a Judge to expedite cases within reasonable time limits if approved by the House, Magistrate Tonia Barnett said, **"As President of your own court, you have the liberty to tell the lawyers or litigants that you are tagging any particular case file to a time limit of say a few months i.e. verdict should be given and the case-file closed within the time limit so set. If you are really serious about it, the lawyers and all the players connected thereto will comply by coming to court, bringing witnesses as and when needed and abide by the dictates of the judge,"** she concluded.

v. *Magistrate Dr Abou Bhakarr Muhammed Benneh Kamara, Proposed High Court Judge*

Magistrate Dr Abou Bhakarr Muhammed Benneh Kamara is a highly trained legal professional who is currently serving as Principal Magistrate in the Sierra Leone Judiciary from 2016-date. He had previously served as Senior Magistrate from 2010-2016.

Answering to the Committee's inquiries on law reform, Magistrate Dr Benneh Kamara said that there have been recommendations for some of the laws of Sierra Leone to be reformed. **"Society,"** he said, **"is not static so its laws must be dynamic and must take into account the challenges of contemporary Sierra Leone and the World at large. We have been finding it extremely difficult to implement these obsolete laws in accordance with modern trends,"** he said.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, questioned on the possible remedy out of this situation, Magistrate Dr Abou Bhakarr Benneh Kamara said that it was the business of the Law Reform Commission to review the obsolete laws and to take their recommendations to the office of the Attorney-General and Minister of Justice. The office of the Attorney-General would then look at the recommendations and forward them to Parliament to be enacted into laws. The commitment of all stakeholders in the judiciary is therefore needed for us to work together to improve the justice system in Sierra Leone," he said.

4. Recommendations

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Committee adjudged the following Presidential nominees to be suitably qualified for their proposed appointments to the Superior Courts of the judicature and they are therefore accordingly recommended to the House for approval:

- Ms Glenna Thompson, Supreme Court Judge;
- Mr Eldred Taylor-Camara, Justice of the Court of Appeal;
- Magistrate Manuela A.J. Harding, High Court Judge;
- Magistrate Mrs Tonia Barnett -High Court Judge
- Magistrate Dr Abou Bhakarr M. Benneh-Kamara- High Court Judge

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the first part of the Seventh Report is the unanimous decision of the Committee. I therefore move that the first part of the Seventh Report of the Fifth Session of the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service be adopted

by the House and that the recommendations contained therein be approved. Presented by Honourable Leonard S. Fofanah, Chairman.

[Question Proposed]

HON. KOMBA E. KOEDOYOMA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I won't be talking about students in this gathering, but about the personalities presented to us to act as judges of our superior courts. Unfortunately, I do not have any student amongst them.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am extremely happy to rise and say few words about these Sierra Leoneans who are seated before us. I must first and foremost thank the Judiciary for improving and resurfacing its image by getting another batch of experienced Lawyers who will now be challenged to man our high courts. The good thing about the people before us here this morning is that all of them are committed to ensuring that issues brought before their courts are quickly dealt with, so that we do not have delays in deciding cases, as it used to happen in the past.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to plead with these nominees before us to ensure that they do the right thing. I hope we will not have recourse to refer you to what you have told the Committee. According to report, you promised to do everything humanly possible to ensure that you fast-track your work at those high courts. We know those of you who were serving as Magistrates have been burdened with lots of cases. And because of the procedure of the judiciary, you have been sent up to the higher courts and now you are going to move up to those higher courts and a stockpile of cases are there for you. We hope you will help the Chief Justice of this country, who is seated before us, so that those matters are fast-tracked. I know a situation wherein people spend years in jail without hearing their cases. There is no doubt that those of you who are going to the more superior courts will do well.

For Ms Glenna Thompson, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am sure she is going to continue building on the legacies of her father. You need no promotion from anybody outside to keep in track with what you have just said. I hope integrity will be beaconed and other judges will follow. This is because the delay, like you rightly said, is not due

to the Bench alone, but to all other factors connected with matters before the court. Please, go there and ensure that you do what you have promised to do.

For Mr Eldred Tailor-Camara, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, he has had his experience in this country and in the United Kingdom [UK]. I hope that will make lots of difference and matters that are referred to you at the Court of Appeal are quickly dealt with, so that we do not have delay in deciding cases.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to end my submission by appealing to these nominees that they owe it a duty to this Parliament to be making regular reports of their stewardships in the various courts they had been nominated to serve. It is a responsibility for this Parliament to know what is happening in those courts and we will keep an open mind on those reports. Those who would have fallen below what they had told this House will have themselves to blame.

On that note, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to urge this House to approve these nominees. I thank you, Mr Speaker.

HON. HELLEN KUYEMBEH: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to lend my voice to the approval of the nominees before us this morning. There is no doubt in every body's mind that they are capable people because we all know the huddles they have gone through at the Law School. That is a clear indication to show that we can rely on them. I am most impressed by some of the things mentioned by some of the nominees during the interview process. For instance, Magistrate Dr Abou Bhakarr Benneh Kamara talked about changing obsolete laws. I cannot but agree with him **100%** and even more. He also mentioned that the Law Reform Commission was set up to look into obsolete laws and things that were not relevant to be thrown out into the garbage. If such statements are coming from a lawyer, it makes me happier and I want to acknowledge him for that. To buttress that statement from Magistrate Dr Abou Bhakarr Benneh Kamara, the Land Lease Laws of this country are very obsolete. I am not just talking to you the Judges or the Judiciary of this country, but the fact of the matter is that we need to look at the Land Lease Laws of this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Land Lease Law of this country was enacted in 1928. That is a very long time and nothing has been done to change it. For instance, if I am a foreign investor who has come to invest into this country and somebody wants to lease a piece of land to me, the law says that for every hectare of land, I should pay the sum of **\$12**. From that period [1928] to now, are we thinking about inflation? Things have changed so much that **\$12** is almost nothing to a farmer; and a whole family would want to lease a piece of land to somebody who is going to make profit out of it. That **\$12** is not going directly to the land owner because part of that amount is going to be shared among the Local Council and the Chiefdom where the land is located; and very little of that amount goes to the land owners. The question is, what do you think the land owners are benefiting from that **\$12**. We need to sit back and take a careful look at it and find suitable solution. We do not want incidents to happen again. It has happened before in areas like the Samalehn, where people were complaining because the moneys they got were not commensurate to their land; and at the end of the day, the chicken came home to roast with nothing.

Therefore, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank God because somebody has remembered that our laws are obsolete and those laws should be looked carefully into. If this House approves the nominations of these nominees, I would kindly ask them to look into these laws. Go to those offices and do the job you have been nominated to do. All those obsolete laws are harming us; therefore, you must address that issue, so that the people of this country will benefit from not just the laws, but from your service. I thank you very much.

HON. FODAY RADO YOKIE: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, my intervention this morning basically is just a word of caution to these nominees. To me, we will be faced with lots of challenges in 2018 as far as politics is concerned. Therefore, the Judiciary should be faced with that herculean challenge to dispense justice for the benefit of the people of this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I was moved by Ms Glenna Thompson, proposed Judge of the Supreme Court. She said that she had excess supply of integrity. In other

words, she has enough supply of integrity. That is touching and you are yet to prove that when you are faced with such situation. We have heard so many people uttering such statement. As the saying goes, it is easier said than done. There are people who have said they would do 'A' or 'B,' but those people have disappointed this House and the President. However, I will not judge you on that until you are faced with that kind of challenge and prove what you have said to us. That will be the time I will say you have fulfilled what you told us.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to state here that a precedent has been set and I would like to make reference to somebody who is not a nominee, but has done very well for this country. I am saying that we need to reform Sierra Leone and the reformation has to start with the Judiciary. We should start with the Judiciary. The last speaker before me spoke about obsolete laws. My question to her is that who enact those laws. Well, those laws were enacted by parliamentarians. We are responsible to enact laws governing this country and the Judiciary is there to interpret those laws. Therefore, if we are serious about that reformation process, we have to start from there.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to state here that the Chief Justice of this country has started a very good job and I will single out the just concluded Sierra Leone People's Party [SLPP] court case. In that case, there was neither a winner nor a loser. They were so magnanimous. In other words, both parties cried for certain things and in their own wisdom, they gave some to one party and some to the other party which was a win win situation. I want to say kudos to the Judiciary and it is left with the SLPP to reorganise themselves. No one party has claimed winning the case. That is exactly the kind of challenge the nominees will be facing. For instance, if Honourable Foday Rado Yokie, who is your best friend, is guilty of an offence, I think it is but fitting to say you are my friend and the best I can do for you is to plead guilty and see what I can do in terms of reducing your sentence. If you decide to do otherwise because he is a Member of Parliament and dispense justice in his favour, deep down in your conscience you know it is not correct, that is not the reformation I am talking about in this case.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we need to change the perception that people hold about the Judiciary. You have to stand up and do what is required to change the negative perception of the public. This is why I am very happy about the faces I am seeing before us this morning. The nominees before us are very young and the ladies are very beautiful. For the man there I don't know him much. He has spent most of his time out of Sierra Leone and we are expecting him to use that experience from the UK for the benefit of our people.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to briefly address the women. They have started from grassroots to where they are; and in the process, they have faced with E. lots of challenges. However, I want to remind them that they would continue to face more challenges than ever. You have a very long way to go and there is going to be life after the Bench. It is those judgements you make that you would have to live with.

Having said that, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am asking that we speedily ratify these nominees.

HON. AJIBOLA MANLEY SPAIN: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to focus back to the report that is before us; and in doing so, I am claiming the right to do so as the oldest member of the bar in this House *[Applause]*. Looking at this report, I would like to submit here that this is a very good report because it is comprehensive. The report entails all necessary details about every nominee before us this morning. If it were left to me alone, as I was saying to the Honourable Ibrahim Ben Kargbo, we should just approve, particularly after the admonition that has been given by the seconder of the motion. I would also recognise what has been said by the other two speakers before me. However, I have been saying for a while that the onus is on us to amend and do make laws that are required to move the Judiciary, but Parliament is handicapped. I have talked about this before that we cannot provide the necessary facilities to prepare Bills. Therefore, the Bills have to come from the Executive and that restricts Parliament from doing so.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if you look at the report, I would like to start with the most senior lawyer, Mr Eldred Taylor-Camara. I want to take this opportunity to

welcome him back to Sierra Leone. He has been at the Bar for 35 years, and I know him very well. We practiced together and I know that he is somebody who does things according to his conviction. I want to assure Honourable Foday Rado Yokie that if you appear before Justice Eldred Taylor-Camara, there will be no aspersions. In other words, whoever appears before him will get the right judgement, and not according to how he has been influenced by unseen forces.

For Ms Glenna Thompson, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would also state here that she is very hardworking. This is because I have worked with her for a number of years at the Special Court and I know how hard she can work. She has excelled herself at the Bar and she has appeared in all the courts of Sierra Leone. Recently, she was instrumental in throwing out a case that challenged the right of Parliament to pass resolutions to extend the registration of voters. I think we can give her a very big hand for that decision *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, with regards the other nominees who are being nominated for promotion from the Magistracy to the Bench of the High Court, I have no doubt in them. I have worked with every one of them for over 12 years. With regards to the two ladies, they started around 2005 and 2006. They were a little bit nervous at the Bar, particularly when the older ones, like the late Serry Kamal, the late Osho Williams etc. appeared before them. However, after a while, they became accustomed to the judicial system and they have got a lot of experiences. They worked hard and they were able to deliver judgements which went unchallenged. In others words, appeals against their judgements were very few. I want to believe that all of us who are lawyers know that they will follow the admonition of the seconder of this motion to do well.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Committee did well in flagging up issues relating to speedy hearing of court cases and speedy dispensation of justice. As the saying goes, 'justice delayed is justice denied.' I want to state here that this is not just a maxim, but a fact. If you are not at the Bar, you would not understand why you should have a case and you spend three years defending that case. You go for so many

hearings and they are adjourned without you knowing why. Ms Glenna Thompson tried to give the reasons for that and I believe the other Magistrates who are being nominated also touched on that point. However, it is a very important and salient point that we should all consider in this country that litigation should be faster and concluded earlier.

Having said that, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to ask all of us here to approve the nominees who are before us this morning. I want to thank the Committee for presenting this report to us. I thank you very much.

HON. ROSALINE J. SMITH: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise this morning to add my voice on the eminent personalities who are before us this morning. I will not stop thanking His Excellency the President of Sierra Leone, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma for empowering the women of this country. Nominations after nominations we have seen women coming before this Honourable House for approval. Most people will say I am a feminist, but I am here representing the women of Sierra Leone. I am proud of seeing women of this country ascending to higher offices.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Ms Glenna Thompson quote said, “**One of the pre-requisite of a Judge is integrity.**” I am sure all the women present here before us today do not lack integrity. That is to say, they have integrity and that is why they have been nominated to the Supreme Court of Judicature of Sierra Leone. I want to congratulate them in advanced and to whom much is given much is expected. The women of this country are, for a very long time, being disadvantaged, especially when it comes to issues relating to rape.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Rosaline J. Smith, you said all the women here have integrity and can we infer from that that the men here do not have that?

HON. ROSALINE J. SMITH: No, Mr Speaker. That is not what I meant.

THE SPEAKER: Well, it could be inferred.

HON. ROSALINE J. SMITH: I am emphasising the fact that when you talk about integrity, women takes the lead. This is because we have seen women in higher positions in this country. We have also seen women leading reputable institutions and we have seen the results of their leadership. Madam Taylor Pearce is seated right here and we have seen her magnanimous leadership as the Auditor-General of this country. Again, we have seen Madam Haja Kalla Kamara as the head of the National Revenue Authority [NRA]. She has been an astute leader in revenue mobilisation for this country. Under her leadership, we have seen revenue being mobilised in the trillions. This has never happened in the past. Thus, the women of this country should emulate her example. We have great women in this country, and we must celebrate the women of this country. We will continue to celebrate them and we will continue to thank His Excellency the President for providing the level playing field for the women of this country. Dr Ernest Bai Koroma has taken the lead the lead in the region in terms of empowering the women of this country.

In conclusion, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, all the nominees seated here are even overqualified, both the women and the men. In that regard, I want to recommend that we speedily ratify their nominations. I thank you very much, Mr Speaker [*Applause*].

HON. EDWARD S. JENGO: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank the Almighty God for the beautiful faces that are before this House this morning. Mr Speaker, I was at the Canteen when a colleague of mine came in and asked for the synonym of the word 'integrity.' I promised to help him, without giving the literal meaning of the word integrity. I told him to use Glenna Thompson, Magistrate Mrs Tonia Barnett and Magistrate Manuela A. J. Harding as synonyms to the word 'integrity.' I partly agree with my colleague, Honourable Rosaline J. Smith, that if you want to talk about integrity in Sierra Leone, you have to put women first.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the women seated in front of this House are indication to show that there is a future in the Judiciary. They are amongst the few lawyers in this country whom God communicates with on a daily basis. These are

women of substance and integrity. For the men, I am not going to talk about them. I want to give my full support to the recommendations of the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service. The recommendations are perfect and I want to give my fullest support. I am of the strong conviction that the ladies facing this House will not disappoint the people of this Republic.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Let me use my legislative latitude to single out Tonia Barnett whom I have known for decades Mr Speaker

THE SPEAKER: Sorry, Honourable Member, who are you singling out?

HON. EDWARD S. JENGO: Mr Speaker, I am singling out Magistrate Mrs Tonia Barnett. I have known her for decades and she is a God fearing person. She grew up from a very strong catholic background and I know her very well. Mr Speaker, Magistrate Mrs Tonia Barnett is a magnanimous character and her magnanimity has placed her where she is today. That attribute is going to take her to another level within the next couple of hours *[Applause]*. Magistrate Mrs Tonia Barnett is celebrated because she dispenses her responsibilities positively. She has never failed in all the positions she has held in this country. I said she is celebrated because she has never found herself in a state of intelligential incarceration.

THE SPEAKER: That is well said, but I hope you are not provoking the Speaker *[Laughter]*

HON. EDWARD S. JENGO: As the Honourable Rosaline J. Smith remarked, the number of women holding higher positions in this country cannot be overemphasised. We have a woman as the Auditor-General of this country and she has been performing exceptionally well; i.e., delivering the deliverables *[Laughter]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if you take a keen look at their faces, you would agree with me that they are noble and generous in spirit. However, I would like to give them pieces of advice. I am still toeing the line of the Honourable Rosaline J. Smith when she said, 'to whom much is given, much is expected.' Their future in the Judiciary should and must be championed by themselves. I decided not say anything about the

male nominees because I know that there are thousands of them out there who want to be in your shoes. You have been the chosen few and I would want you to take the lead. Please take the challenge and with the support from God, the sky will be your limit.

Without much ado, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to crave the indulgence of this House to speedily ratify the nominees before us this morning. I thank you very much, Mr Speaker

HON. JUSUFU B. MANSARAY: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, much praises have been showered on women. I would want to believe that as mothers, they should work towards ensuring that this nation moves forward. As a Member of the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service, I want to start with a gentleman who is very hard working. He is a man of class, a man of integrity and a man whom I believe can say the truth. He has proved himself in in this country. He has been running behind thieves to make sure that they are put into prison. He has proven beyond all reasonable doubt that he can work for the progress and peace of this country in his capacity as Magistrate. This is the man who has put every bit of his life on limelight to get educated.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, during his interview, he asked why he had no property. In his response, Magistrate Dr Abou Bhakarr M. Benneh Kamara said, **“Honestly, I was spending my life learning, making myself very comfortable to defend Sierra Leone wherever Sierra Leone is found wanting.”** He has good dreams for this country and he wants the people of this country to go about their businesses without harassment or intimidation. He promised the Committee that every thief is put in jail.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Magistrate Dr Abou Bhakarr Benneh M. Kamara is humble man with good reputation. If we can talk about women in this country, we also have men who are always ready to ensure that Sierra Leone moves forward. With the leave of Mr Speaker, Magistrate Dr Abou Bhakarr Benneh M. Kamara said, **“Society is not static, therefore laws can be dynamic. We do not want society to be**

static, and we want laws to be dynamic. Therefore, society can move with new laws, laws that can make a nation better.” Mr Speaker, Magistrate Dr Abou Bhakarr Benneh M. Kamara does not know me and I do not know him either, but I know him to be a very honest young man. For Magistrate Dr Abou Bhakarr Benneh M. Kamara, I would want to ask the indulgence of this House to make sure that he is approved.

Again, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Magistrate Dr Abou Bhakarr Benneh M. Kamara said, **“It is the business of the Law Reform Committee to review obsolete laws and to take their recommendations to the Office of the Attorney General and Minister of Justice. Much of we are talking about using parliament to enact those laws, the Law Reform Committee equally has that responsibility.”** We want these obsolete laws to be replaced. I want to thank God because the Chief Justice is here and I want to crave his indulgence to make sure that these people are on board. Please help them or get back to the Law Reform Commission, so that some of these obsolete laws are amended. Some of these laws are so obsolete that they are no longer proper for the development of this country. Therefore, let us make sure that Sierra Leone becomes a dynamic society by putting in place new laws.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to believe that Magistrate Manuela A. J. Harding is a fine nominee to go to the Bar again to do her job. She was sick the very day she was being interviewed. I hope she has recovered from that ailment.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to briefly talk about Magistrate Mrs Tonia Barnett, proposed High Court Judge. Some of us believe in her hard work and forbearance. During the Kenema case, she was there and I want to believe that she can do it. I want to admonish all proposed judges to protect this country. You are interpreting the laws we make in this House. His Excellency the President has chosen you to help dispense justice.

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

HON. ALHASSAN KAMARA: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to learn my voice to the approval of the nominees before us. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to start with Magistrate Dr Abou Bhakarr Benneh M. Kamara. If one is a criminal living around the Eastern part of Sierra Leone and hears the name Benneh Kamara, it strikes fear in you. If you are a fraudster and you have been brought before Magistrate Dr Abou Bhakarr Benneh M. Kamara's court, you would think twice before you indulge into any other criminal act. This is because Magistrate Dr Abou Bhakarr Benneh M. Kamara is a no nonsense man. He is a man that does lot of research; a man that spends every penny he earns in buying books, and a man that reads widely.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would also want to add that in the 21st Century, and in contemporary judicial jurisdiction, the law is progressing. We are in the 21st Century and we are very progressive. This is because these are judges who would decide matters based on the present prevailing conditions. Sometimes if you have old laws that are no longer applicable, we see these liberal thinking judges dispense their judgement in an acceptable manner. They have been making sure that the judgements they deliver reflect the current reality of the 21st century. So, when I heard that one of the nominees is the champion for issues relating to children I was very pleased. These are the kind of judges we need in Sierra Leone. As a country, we must think positively and progressively.

Therefore, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Magistrate Dr Abou Bhakarr Benneh M. Kamara is a very good man and I know that he would add value to the High Court and we would see matters been handled very quickly, especially matters that come from the SLPP.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please withdraw that statement.

HON. ALHASSAN KAMARA: I withdraw, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Nonetheless, it is not unparliamentarily, but I do not want any controversy to be generated here.

HON. ALHASSAN KAMARA: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I want to mention a point that each time people talk about things that are derailing the progress of this country, they point fingers at politician, the police and the court. I am sure of the present Chief Justice and these new recruits. We hope that they would work assiduously to extricate themselves from that perception.

Without much ado, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I thank you very much.

HON. DR MICHEL SHO-SAWYER: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank you for giving me this opportunity. I want to first of all take this opportunity to recognise a 'Congotonian son, the Chief Justice of this country. I want to take this opportunity to recognise him.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to inform this House that if Ms Glenna Thompson, Magistrate Manuela A. J. Harding and the other nominees are approved, they are going to perform their duties in every possible way that could move this country forward. I also want to assure this House that these women of substance will execute their duties diligently. My advice to all the nominees is that, those young inmates who have been in jail for years for simple mistakes they did should be looked into. Some of them committed minor offences but they are still incarceration, learning more criminal activities from those ardent criminals. If approved by this House, it would prudent to look into that issue and come up with a solution.

With those few words, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to ask this Honourable House to speedily approve these nominees. I thank you, Mr Speaker.

HON. SIDI M. TUNIS: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have heard a lot from people who know the law and from colleagues who know these nominees. One thing that is very clear is that these are all people with high integrity. This is why I am in support of their nominations and to call on this Honourable House to speedy approve their nominations. These nominees are going to the Judiciary as judges at a very critical time. The general elections are around the corner and the present President has done a very good job in terms of nominating them

to such positions. I want to appeal that they do their job diligently and dispense justice in a very speedy and fair manner.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in the past, the Judiciary has not been very good and nothing good has been said about our judicial system. Probably because of the systems that we find ourselves, but the situation the lawyers, the judges and the magistrate find themselves is very tainting. However, I must state here that with the appointment of the new Chief Justice, we have seen a lot of transformation in the Judiciary. Therefore, I want to believe that nominating this crop of judges is all part of the capacity building process for the Judiciary. In that regard, I want to urge them to do their jobs diligently if this House approves their nominations. We are politicians, as somebody was saying. It is not just about SLPP. If we are talking about the SLPP, I want to assure you that the APC has a lot to deal with in 2018 General Elections. As the Honourable Speaker has said, we do not want any controversy.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I know that the Chief Justice has now got a very strong team. I am personally proud of him because of the astute leadership he is demonstrating. I want to assure this House that the current Chief Justice is determined to take the Judiciary to another level. The transformation is fantastic and I want to wish him good luck. I want to assure the Chief Justice that when the SLPP takes over the leadership of this country in 2018, he is going to remain as Chief Justice of this country and the Judges in the Court of Appeal, High Court and the Supreme Court are going to remain as Judges.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, a lot has been said about all the nominees before us, but I want to single out one nominee who has been nominated to the Supreme Court. I am not really surprised to see her here because her father was a great man. She is no less a person but Ms Glenna Thompson. This is because few years ago, we had Honourable Tholla Thompson of blessed memory in the Supreme Court. This was a man of very high integrity. He has contributed so much for the progress of this country. He has positively influenced the judicial system in this country. Therefore, I have no doubt that his daughter, Ms Glenna Thompson, is committed in ensuring that she build

on the gains made by her father. She has a very high integrity and I have no doubt that she would contribute positively to our Judiciary. I know you very well that when something is not right for you, you would quit. I am sure we would never get to that point with somebody like the Chief Justice in charge.

Finally, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to encourage you and all the other nominees to remain committed and I want you to be fair in your line of duty. Again, you have to dispense justice without fear or favour. Let me tell you that nobody is going to sack you. When it is due for promotion, you would be promoted. I want to thank you very much.

HON. LEONARD S. FOFANAH [*Majority Leader of the House and Leader of Government Business*]: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would want to avoid the very presumptive declarations that had been made. I want to call the attention of the Acting Minority Leader to remember the principle of security of tenure of the Judges of the judicature.

THE SPEAKER: Precisely Mr Majority Leader. The Honourable Sidi M. Tunis should know that the Judges are secured, whether it is All People's Congress [APC] or Sierra Leone People's Party [SLPP]. I was going to give that assurance. Thank you very much Mr Majority Leader. You have just taken the wind out of my sails.

HON. LEONARD S. FOFANAH: If there is a Government in this country that has done and that is going to do much more for the Judiciary, it is going to be the APC led government. The faith that our President has in the Judiciary is phenomenal and monumental. We do not want to dwell on the politics in the Well when we are approving nominations of good citizens who are going to the Superior Courts because we want to totally remove politics from the deliberations this morning.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, lots of praises have been heaped upon the nominees and I know that they are up to the task. A lot of accolades have been put on the Chief Justice which he merits equally. I want to assure you that these nominees are suitably qualified to go to the Superior Court. The elementary constitutional law says that there

are three arms of Government, the Executive, the Judiciary and Legislature. Of course, there has been continuous debate whether they are equal or not. Some want to know which one comes first. Well, I want to inform you that the Judiciary is so important in the lives of Sierra Leonean citizens that they constitute an important segment that gives people confidence in their lives. For example, when a litigant goes before a Judge and his case is decided on the merit of the matter, honestly he leaves satisfied and that would give him a lot of faith in the Judiciary. Therefore, they are going to be the barometer of the degree of faith that people have in the Judiciary.

Indeed, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Ms Glenna Thompson called on those with sufficient integrity to withstand the test that might be facing them. I want to assure you that we would continue to do everything possible to enhance your capacity and to give you whatever it takes to do your job properly. Once that is done, we hope you would have yourself to decide.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I was attracted by one of the submissions of the Magistrate Mrs Tonia Barnett when she said, **"The Judge is the President of his own court."** It is entirely left with the Judge, therefore to accept or not to accept any dictates coming from any quarter because you have to decide how your court is going to be administered without any interference. I want to urge you to go in that line. A lot of felicitations have been showered on all the nominees. We would want to thank the President and the Chief Justice for nominating all of you. You are eloquently qualified and competent. We have no doubt in our minds that when you go to the High Court, the Court of Appeal and for Ms Glenna Thompson [to the Supreme Court], you would be able to do your work diligently and successfully.

With those few words, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to congratulate you and to thank Members of Parliament for the felicitations they have showered on you. Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed To]

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

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, the Honourable Sidi M. Tunis heaped so much praise on the Chief Justice. Well, I want to state here that that should not ring a bell because he went through the Speaker of this House at the St Edwards Secondary School.

Honourable Members, I want to congratulate all the nominees before us for having been endorsed by this House. Normally, Honourable Members, it is said that 'like father like son and like mother, like daughter,' but here we have a case like father like daughter in the case of Ms Glenna Thompson. This is because her father, as all of us know, incidentally he used to be a senior friend of mine. He was one of the eminent jurists that this country had ever had. Therefore, I am sure Ms Glenna Thompson is going to follow in his footsteps.

Honourable Members, I want to believe that all the men here have integrity. I have often said in this Chamber that I like women not because of what they have physiologically, but because of what they can do and offer. Believe you me I believe that the women are less corrupt than men and in many cases they are more efficient than men. That must be said in admission. I think I am on record on that that I have so much faith in women. In other words, I have an abiding faith in them. They are really excellent wherever you put them you would see results. Equally, I know that the two men we have here are going to perform creditably. I wish you well and congratulations.

HON. LEONARD S. FOFANAH: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to profusely apologise for bringing this late amendment on the Order Paper. I want to crave the indulgence of Mr Speaker and this House to amend item IV on the Order Paper. I have advised myself to withdraw the debate on this Bill until the next adjourned date when it will appear on the Order Paper.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, we cannot proceed with this Bill because according to our Standing Orders, the document must be first laid on the Table of the House and until that is done, we should have nothing to do with it.

Honourable Members, I have two very important announcements. In the first place, it is with a very heavy heart that I announce the death of the father of one of the Leaders of this House, in the person of Honourable Dr Bernadette Lahai, who is the Minority Leader of this House. Her father died a few days ago. So, since she is a Leader, I want to respectfully ask that we stand and observe a minute silence in remembrance of her late father.

Honourable Members, the second announcement has to do with the elevation of our colleague, who was the Majority Leader and senior Member of this Parliament, in the person of the Honourable Ibrahim Rassin Bundu. He was elected President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the African Caribbean Pacific [ACP]. I will read a letter that was addressed to me from the Parliament.

“The Right Honourable Sheku Badara Bashiru Dumbuya,
Speaker of Sierra Leone Parliament.

Dear Mr Speaker,

I have the pleasure to inform you that Honourable Ibrahim Rassin Bundu was unanimously elected as President of the ACP Parliamentary Assembly and Co-President of the ACPEU joint Parliamentary Assembly at the 46 Session of ACPEU Parliamentary Assembly and 33rd Session of the ACPEU joint Parliamentary, held in Malta from 14th to 24th June, 2017. He was elected to serve out the remaining term of office of the two assemblies previously held by Honourable Netty Baldeh of the Gambia on behalf the West African Group of the ACPU Group, which ends in December, 2017. The Secretariat will do all it can to support Honourable Bundu in the exercise of his functions.

In this regard, the Secretariat kindly request the assistance of your good office in facilitating the work that Honourable Ibrahim Rassin Bundu will be required to undertake on behalf of the ACPU Group in the framework of the ACP Parliamentary Assembly and ACPEU Parliamentary Assembly in furtherance of the objectives of the ACP Group and the Cotonou Partnership Agreement. I would also like to mention that with the elevation of Honourable Bundu in the two assemblies the Parliament of Sierra Leone in keeping with past practice will be entitled to nominate another member as

Head of the Delegation of Sierra Leone with all the rights and privileges accorded to Honourable Bundu by the ACP Secretariat.

Please accept Right Honourable Speaker the assurance of my Highest Consideration.

On behalf of you, all Honourable Members, I want to congratulate Honourable Bundu most heartily on this elevation [*Applause*]. You would like to know that Honourable Ibrahim R. Bundu is the longest serving member of the joint Parliamentary Assembly, i.e., ACP-EU.

Honourable Ibrahim Rassin Bundu, the second paragraph of the letter is that I should give every assistance that will help you with your job. Please be assured of that and also the cooperation of the entire Parliament. We wish you well. I had known you before and for the past fifteen years, I have no doubt in your capability to perform. I have so much confidence in you. Once again, congratulations and well done.

HON. BENNEH BANGURA: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. After your announcement, I thought it fit to say something as Chairman of the APC Portloko District. I want to congratulate Honourable Ibrahim Rassin Bundu, who was our Majority Leader and Leader of Government Business. Let me say that we members of the Portloko District are very happy and I want to assure this House that we have a pool of brilliant members and wherever we go, we excel.

Honourable Ibrahim R. Bundu is a clear indication of that testimony. In Portloko District, we have level-headed people. I want to congratulate him on behalf of the Honourable Members from Portloko District. We are not surprised at his international performance because he has done so at national level. Please continue the good work and we hope that this new promotion will not interrupt your desires to become the number one man in this country. It takes hard work for you to reach the level you have reached. With this new additional responsibility given to you, we hope you will be able to blend both in performing your duties. I thank you very much.

HON. FODAY RADO YOKIE: Mr Speaker, on behalf of this side, we wholeheartedly congratulate the president elect, the Honourable Ibrahim R. Bundu. To me and on this

side, we are not surprised at all. As the saying goes, 'coming events cast their shadows.' That is telling you that Honourable Ibrahim R. Bundu has been a very good Leader. He has manifested that internationally. It was based on that performance that the people out there saw leadership in him to bestow that responsibility. It is in light of that we, even though we are in the opposition, but Honourable Ibrahim R. Bundu is not representing SLPP or APC. He is representing the Green, White and Blue Flag of Sierra Leone. He has made us proud and I want to crave his indulgence to continue whatever leadership position he is aspiring to attain. The letter the Speaker of this House has just read asked him to replace his leadership role out there. I believe in Mr Speaker and I believe he would choose somebody else who can perform, if not as much as Honourable Ibrahim R. Bundu, but somebody who can close that gap. This is because he has been in that Parliament for the past two sessions. I do not know if he was there before I came to Parliament. He has performed and his performance has been outstanding. I hope that whoever succeeds him will perform even better.

On behalf of the SLPP, we want to thank you and congratulate you whole heartedly
[Applause]

HON. LEONARD S. FOFANAH: Mr Speaker, I hope I have your permission to speak on this side since you have spoken on behalf of the whole of Parliament. I want to also talk on behalf of the APC on this side. I have known the Honourable Ibrahim Rassin Bundu as far back as in the 80s, when both of us worked at the Ministry of Agriculture. At that time, he was a much younger man than he is. In my perception, however, at that time I saw the potential in him, I saw the leadership traits in him. When I came to this Parliament after the General Elections in 2012, I met him here as the Majority Leader and Leader of Government Business. And by some coincidence, I was made to deputise him. I must say again that it was an opportunity for both of us to work and I knew him again in that capacity. We worked very well and I must say that I learnt a lot from him as to what is required from my office. All that time gave me the opportunity to know the Honourable Ibrahim Rassin Bundu very well. We were in Portloko a few times and we have a very special relationship verging on some matrimonial

arrangements. That is beside the point, we were pleasantly surprised when we were informed, even before his arrival back home, that he had been elected as President and Co-President of the ACP. We received that with happiness and like what other people have said, he has a far greater ambition than merely becoming the Co-President of the AU-ACP.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in the APC, we have not opened that fight yet and I have advised myself not to make any pronouncements on his ambition to run as a flag-bearer. The fact of the matter is that we have a lot of confidence in Honourable Ibrahim R. Bundu. His human relationship is extremely good. During the time we worked together, his office was always opened to a lot of people, not only in Parliament, but from the public side as well. When I went to his home and I stayed with him for few days, I saw the number of people who were coming in and out of his house. He would have only been a good person, otherwise he would not have those people following him.

In his present achievement, we want to congratulate him and we on this side are very proud of him. He is indeed a true son of the APC. After that appointment, he has done a few interviews. He has an abiding faith in the Constitution of Sierra Leone. Here is an aspirant saying **"I am only presenting myself and I am not praising myself and if the issue were to be settled one way or the other, there is always another time."** For a man who is running for an office to say that, it convinces me that he has a lot of faith in the system. He even told the interviewer thus, **"We in the APC have two systems. We proceed either by an election or selection."**

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, without wasting the time of this House, we want to congratulate the Honourable Rassin Bundu and wish him well in his new tenure on the ACP-AU. I thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

HON. IBRAHIM R. BUNDU: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Today is a silence-breaking day in this House. Let me at the outset thank God for this opportunity and to also thank the Parliament and Government of Sierra Leone. If this Parliament had not given me this opportunity, I wonder if this event would have happened today in terms

of giving me that opportunity to serve for that long period. I want to unreservedly thank Mr Speaker and the Parliament of Sierra Leone for that opportunity; and by extension, the Government of Sierra Leone. As we have three arms of Government, you must be endorsed by the Government and ratified by the Parliament of this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I must say that I feel fulfilled for a task of that nature to be given to me. I feel fulfilled because my delegation has come with the laurels that will make the Sierra Leone Parliament proud. Seventy-eight Parliament makes up the ACP; the African, Caribbean and Pacific and twenty-eight European countries makes up the European Parliament. It is a very big Parliament. To make it to the top, it takes the delegation such as ours from the Government of Sierra Leone. Fortunately, we have other people who have served in that Parliament in the person of Honourable Brimah Conteh, one of the pioneers in 2000 to 2002 when the ACP Parliament was established. The others are now former members of Parliament; i.e., Honourable Eric Jumu, the late Honourable Augustine B. Torto and the Honourable Alhaji Buya Kamara.

Today, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the delegation from Sierra Leone Parliament comprised the Honourable Helen Kuyembah and Honourable Alpha B. Lewally. All of their efforts that they have put together actually moved that Assembly to look at Sierra Leone and their delegation to be the President and the Co-President of that Assembly. With that, I must also come to say that we feel fulfilled. We are very grateful and thankful to the Parliament of this country and to the Government of this country. Thank you very much *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Ibrahim R. Bundu talked about the former Members of the Parliament of the ACP, but he left out Honourable Dr Bernadette Lahai. She was a member as well.

HON. IBRAHIM BUNDU: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I am only human.

ADJOURNMENT

*[The house rose at 12.10 p.m. and was adjourned to Wednesday, 5th July, 2017
at 10 .00 a.m.]*