

OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

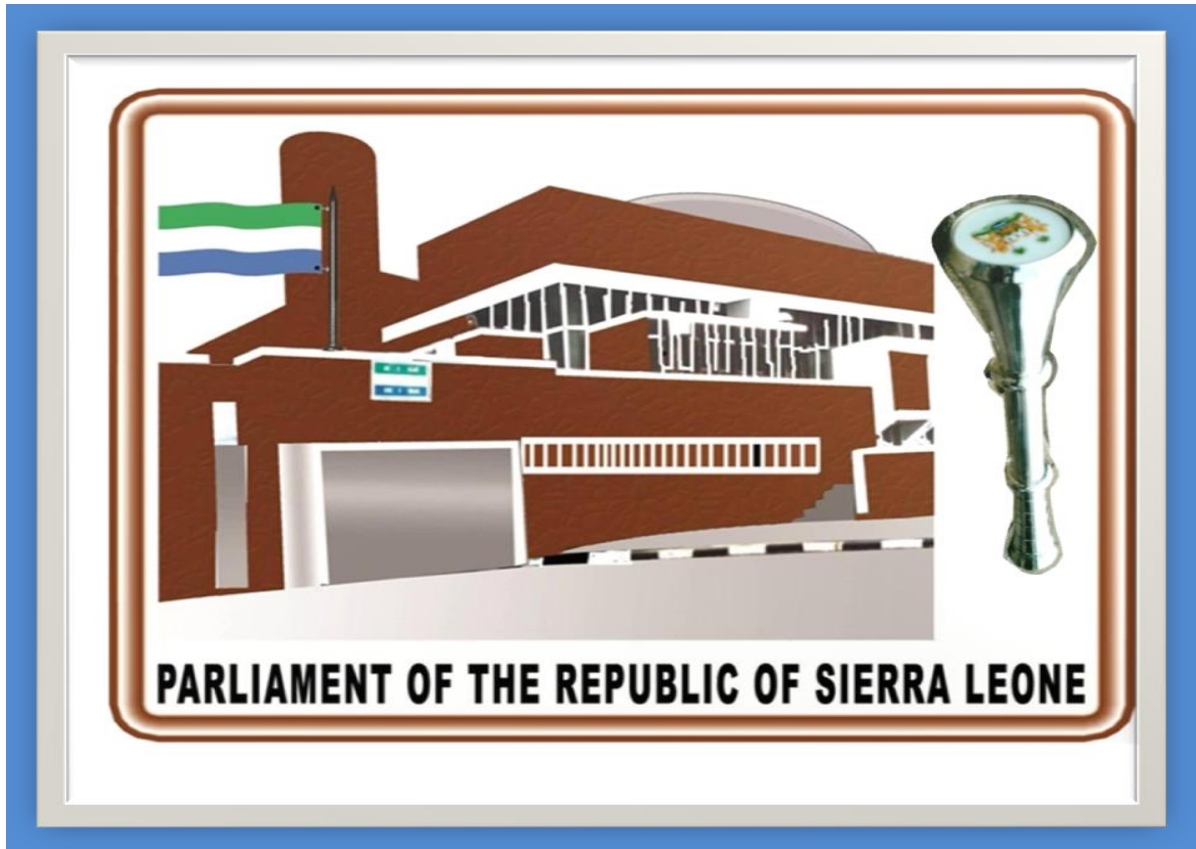
[HANSARD]

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

FIFTH SESSION - FIRST MEETING

WEDNESDAY, 5TH JULY, 2017

SESSION – 2016/2017



OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

[HANSARD]

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

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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 Wednesday, 5th July, 2017.

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

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SECONDER: HON. KOMBA E. KOEDOYOMA

BE IT RESOLVED

THAT PART TWO 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.

V. BILL

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INTRODUCTION AND FIRST READING

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SECOND READING, COMMITTEE STAGE AND THIRD READING

THE MINISTER OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS



THE CHAMBER OF PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE

Official Hansard Report of the Proceedings of the House

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

Wednesday, 5th July, 2017.

I. PRAYERS

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

[The House met at 10:23 a.m. in Parliament Building, Tower Hill, Freetown].

[The Deputy Speaker, Hon. Chernor R. M. Bah, in the Chair].

The House was called to Order

II. CORRECTION OF VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS FOR THE PARLIAMENTARY SITTING HELD ON TUESDAY, 4TH JULY, 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, 4th July, 2017. As usual, we go page by page. Page 1? Page 2? Page 3? Page 4?

HON LEONARD S. FOFANAH: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to look at Page 4, item 6, the fourth line thereof. In as much as Honourable Komba E. Koedoyoma is a very effective Member of the Committee, he is not the Deputy Chairman of that Committee. I want that to be corrected.

THE SPEAKER: Mr Clerk, please have that corrected. Mr Clerk, in future, do not give me a different copy from what you have given to Members of Parliament. Page 6? Page 7? There being no further amendment, could someone move for the adoption of the record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting, held on Tuesday, 4th July, 2017 as amended?

HON KEMOKOH CONTEH: I so move, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON MOSES JOKIE: I so second, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: I am sure there is no counter motion.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[Record of Votes and Proceedings for parliamentary sitting held on Tuesday, 4th July, 2017 has been adopted as amended]

III. PAPER LAID

HON AJIBOLA MANLY-SPAIN

CHAIRMAN, LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

HON. AJIBOLA MANLY SPAIN: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in May of this year, this House passed the Bill entitled, "The Community Health Practitioners Act, 2017." This bill was submitted to the President for his signature, but pursuant to

Section 106 of the Constitution, the Bill was returned unsigned. By the provisions of Standing Orders 58[6], it says: "**When an unsigned Bill is returned to Parliament signifying dissent of the President, the Chairman of the Legislative Committee shall lay on the Table the President's reasons for his dissent.**" At this stage, Mr Speaker, please permit me to lay on the Table the President's reasons for his dissent *[Applause]*.

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

PROPOSER: HON. LEONARD S. FOFANAH

SECONDER: HON KOMBA E. KOEDOYOMA

HON. LEONARD S. FOFANAH: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, please permit me to delete the title 'Ambassador' from Report.

THE SPEAKER: I am afraid I will not permit you to do so.

HON LEONARD S. FOFANAH: I will proceed, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much.

HON. LEONARD S. FOFANAH: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I present to you Part two of the Seventh Report of the Fifth Session of the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service.

1. Introduction

Mr Ambassador and the Rt Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members, the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service presented five nominees to you yesterday, the 4th July, 2017 who were interviewed on Wednesday, 28th June, 2017. Today, we are presenting the remaining five nominees for the High Court, and one nominee for the office of the Chairman, National Assets and Government Property Commission for appointment to public offices.

Mr Ambassador and the Rt Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members, the six candidates to be presented this morning are as follows:

[A] Five nominees for the High Court; and

[B] Nominee for the position of Chairman, National Assets and Government Property Commission.

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 visions for a nationally productive tenure in the superior courts and the public service. 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. Ansumana Ivan Sesay Esq., Proposed High Court Judge.

A legal practitioner of no mean standing, Ansumana Ivan Sesay Esq. is currently the National Legal Aid Manager and Chief Counsel, Sierra Leone Legal Aid Board-2005 to date. He has also served in several institutions that include:

[a] Head of prosecution, National Social Security and Insurance Trust [NASSIT] 2014-2015.

[b] Deputy Justice Advisor, Access to Security and Justice Programme [ASJP], a DFID UK sponsored project [2013-2014]

[c] Senior Council and Legal Consultant, Pilot National Legal Aid [2010-2012]

[D] Part-time Lecturer in:

[i] Njala University College

[ii] IAMTECH, and

[iii] Institute of Public Administration and Management [IPAM]

Responding to the Committee's inquiries on what new ideas he would add to the Bench if approved by the House, Ansumana Sesay Esq. said, **"I think it is a great opportunity for me to be appointed as a Judge by His Excellency, the President, to the Superior Courts of the Judicature. I have worked very hard and acquired valuable experience in many justice sectors. I have also served professionally to warrant my appointment as a Judge; and if**

approved by the House, I will help in no small way in the administration and dispensation of justice. It is my vision in joining the judicial team to ensure that justice is administered to those who deserve it."

Responding to further prompts on his views of the present justice sector in Sierra Leone, Ansumana Ivan Sesay Esq. said, **"There are not enough judges on the Bench. I believe that is why His Excellency, the President, has decided to appoint some qualified legal practitioners to fill the existing vacancies in the superior courts of the judicature."**

ii. Mrs Jamesina Essie L. King, Proposed High Court Judge

As a private Legal practitioner, Mrs Jamesina King could boast of 22 years of legal work experience obtained locally and internationally. The nominee has also served in the public sector as a Commissioner for ten years, Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone.

Reacting to questions on how she would be of help to prisoners who have been imprisoned for very minor offences, Mrs Jamesina King said, **"Coming from a Human Rights background, I have visited all the prisons in Sierra Leone. But I believe it is left with this Honourable House to amend the laws. At the moment, we are talking about decriminalising petty offences because many people are actually behind bars for very minor offences like breaking traffic regulations. I also believe that once we have an Act of Parliament that allows punitive measures like community services, there will be an entire judicial reform in Sierra Leone. We should not allow people to be detained or imprisoned for those minor offences. Bail is another burning issue that is worthy of a parliamentary review. As far as I am concerned, I want to promise this House that I will do my best to faithfully discharge my duties according to the law. I will ensure that people are not arbitrarily detained but receive the justice they deserve."**

Col. I.M. Koroma, Proposed High Court Judge

Colonel I. M. Koroma is presently a serving officer in the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces. [RSLAF] He is a trained Legal Practitioner with many years of work experience. He is currently the Principal Legal Adviser to the Minister of Defense

having previously served as Director of Defense, Legal Department of the Ministry Of Defense.

Answering to the Committee's inquiries as to why he has opted to go to the Bench, Col. I. M. Koroma said, **"The Bench is the ultimate climax in my profession as a lawyer. I have served in the military for sixteen years and my retirement is due shortly. On the Bench, I would have the opportunity to continue serving my country for a little more time."**

Responding to further prompts on the value he hoped to add to the Bench if approved by this House, Col. I M Koroma said, **"I have served on the Bench since 2012 and during that time period, I dealt with many matters without any undue delays. If you care to ask Counsels, they will tell you that I don't allow them to apply for bail. If a bail is due to the accused person I give them automatically. When witnesses are available, I hardly adjourn for long. My adjournments were usually for forty-eight to seventy-two hours at most, and that is on record. There are instances where I delivered judgment within ten days or in two weeks at most."**

iii. Magistrate Alfred Athanasius Tommy Ganda Proposed High Court Judge.

Mr Alfred A. T. Ganda has been a Senior Magistrate of the Sierra Leone Judiciary from 2005 to date. He has previously served in the following judicial districts of Sierra Leone:

- [a] Kailahun District, 2005 - 2008;
- [b] Port-Loko/Kambia Districts, 2008 – 2011;
- [c] Waterloo, 2013 – 2017; and
- [d] Freetown, 2017.

Answering to probing questions on what challenges he envisaged on the Bench, Magistrate Alfred Athanasius Tommy Ganda said, **"The challenges envisaged would not be very different from those we are currently facing: inadequate logistics to do the job. I fervently hope that with our promotions to the Bench, we will be given the required logistics to**

effectively and efficiently do the work. There are also challenges in the dispensation of justice but those challenges are not insurmountable."

iv. Unisa Kamara Esq., Proposed High Court Judge.

Unisa Kamara Esq. is a Legal professional with experience in pre-trial hearings, trials, appeals, document review, Immigration Law, appellate writing and oral advocacy experience. Coming from the Diaspora, Unisa Kamara has an accumulated practical Legal work experience in the United States of America, 2011-2017

Reacting to the Committee's probing questions as to whether he would be satisfied with the remuneration package for Judges in the Judiciary, Unisa Kamara Esq. said, **"What is of paramount importance to me is the desire to return home to serve, thus contributing to the development of the judiciary in my country and not the money."**

Answering to further questions on what new innovations he will bring to the Judiciary if approved by the House, Unisa Kamara Esq. said, **"I have experienced the judicial system in the United States as I was licensed to practice in the State of New York. I have seen the improvements in their system. I have seen the way judges handle cases. A judge has to ensure that the clients are protected at all times because they are presumed innocent until found guilty. They are at the receiving end of the dispensation of justice. We have to ensure that lawyers serve their clients properly in court. The function of a judge is not to take sides but to apply the law based on the facts of the matter. If there is need for any amendment of a law, the judge could submit a recommendation to the Law Reform Commission for necessary action,"** he concluded.

4. Ninth Sitting of the Committee on Monday, 3rd July, 2017

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

Mr Idrissa M. Funna, Proposed Chairman, National Assets and Government Property Commission

Mr Idrissa M. Funna is a former Deputy Ambassador to the People's Republic of China and former accredited Real Estate Agent who served in the United States of America for over thirty years.

Responding to probing questions on how he would manage the Commission, Mr Idrissa M. Funna said, **“I am humbled by His Excellency’s trust to graciously nominate me to this position, subject to the approval of Parliament. When I received the appointment letter, I looked at the scope of work involved, i.e., the inspection of national property, management, disposal, utilisation, transactions of the national property as well as co-ordination and allocation of the national property and other property related matters. I consider the scope of work to be within my competence to handle and I promise to draw on my experience in real estate management of over thirty years for the success of the Commission. I assure you I will do the best I can.”**

5. Recommendation

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Committee adjudged the Presidential nominees to be adequately qualified for their proposed appointments and they are accordingly recommended to the House for approval:

[i] Ansumana Ivan Sesay Esq., High Court Judge;

[ii] Magistrate Alfred Athanasius Tommy Ganda, High Court Judge;

[iii] Mrs Jamesina Essie L. King, High Court Judge;

[iv] Col. I. M. Koroma, High Court Judge;

[v] Mr Unisa Kamara, High Court Judge; and

[vi] Mr Idrissa M. Funna, Proposed Chairman, National Assets and Government Property Commission.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, part two of the Seventh Report is the unanimous decision of the Committee. I therefore move that the second 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. I thank you all. Presented by Honourable Leonard S. Fofanah Chairman [CORSL].

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder to the motion?

HON. KOMBA E. KOEDOYOMA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, before seconding the motion, I would crave the indulgence of the people making the comments at the background to understand that to be a Member of Parliament is

not just to come and warm the benches here. You must be seen to be doing the work.

THE SPEAKER: Order! Honourable Member is there any seconder to this motion?

HON. KOMBA E. KOEDOYOMA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to second the motion.

[Question proposed]

HON. KOMBA E. KOEDOYOMA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am not going to mind comments coming from the background. I have been elected here to perform a duty and that is precisely what I am doing.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is very interesting to note that the Judiciary is doing wonderfully well for this country. This morning, we have very young, energetic and hardworking people who have been nominated and are before us here for approval as judges in our superior courts. This is a good sign because for far too long our Judiciary appeared to be too old in terms of personnel who sit as judges. Mercifully, through the good works of the Chief Justice and his hard working team, we now have a new brand of young judges in the judicial system. This means that they are no longer going to look backwards, but are going to look forward in the dispensation of justice in this country.

As you would have heard, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, from what the Chairman of the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service has presented to us, these judges are determined, if they are approved by this House, to work hard and make sure that people are given their rights. As you have heard from Mrs Jamesina Essie L. King, who had served as a Human Rights Commissioner for ten years, said that for petty cases; i.e., traffic offences and pickpockets, need not be determined by jail sentences. There could be some other ways by which the offenders would be punished. I hope that message is taken down very seriously by the office of the Chief Justice in terms of encouraging the Law Reform Commission to come up with new ideas on how to address these issues to Parliament.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Parliament is more than ready to accommodate such new amendments.

THE SPEAKER: The Director of Public Prosecution [DPP] is listening and we are still waiting for the Criminal Procedure Act [CPA]. The CPA has been in and out of this building three times now.

HON. KOMBA E. KOEDOYOMA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we hope that what the judges have said at that Committee level would be taken down very seriously. This is because we now need new set of laws in line with our new judges, so that they can carry out with their works unhindered. As I always say, I am happy to say at this juncture that when you work hard and you see that the tail end of your results is yielding fruits, you become happier. I have been a teacher and like Mr Speaker would always say that his students have done well. I am also saying here that my own students have done well, with a particular reference to Mr Ansumana Ivan Sesay Esq. He was a normal and hardworking student. I am proud of him and I hope what he has done that makes him to stand tall in the area of performance in the Judiciary. Failure should not be an option and he must do what he has told the Committee.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the other person I want to briefly comment on is Colonel I. M. Koroma. I am sure he has been in the military, but with a focus of doing the correct thing, he has decided to take this appointment. I am sure as he completes his services in our military, he now comes into the civilian sector this time in a different role as a judge. I hope what he told us at that Committee level will be done. I have no doubt that he will do what he has promised to do.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to briefly talk about Mr Idrissa M. Funna, proposed Chairman, National Assets and Government Commission. In fact, he provided us with a lecture. The old man going to the Asset commission did say what was wrong with the Asset Commission. The Asset Commission has been a moribund Government institution. It has not been doing very well in maintaining a record of Government assets. However, Mr Idrissa M. Funna, proposed Chairman has told us that he would do exactly what the President has told him to do, in terms of keeping an up to date record of all Government assets, including the vehicles.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, during the colonial days, all Government vehicles were packed at the end of the working day at the now road safety area; but today,

even at the earliest time in the day, you will see Government vehicles plying the city doing work which is not related to their official duties. I want Mr Idrissa M. Funna, proposed Chairman to ensure that the correct record of all Government assets, as he has told us, are maintained. Make sure even those lands which are now been illegally occupied and owned, including the buildings not only in Freetown but also in the provincial areas are recorded. Government buildings have now been taken over and owned by persons. Please ensure that you have proper record of those properties which belong to Government.

On that note, Mr Speaker, Honourable members, I will crave your indulgence to quickly approve the lady and gentlemen, so that they can go and continue their work. I thank you.

HON. AJIBOLA MANLEY SPAIN: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I was going say that if you were sitting by me, I would have delegated this task to you.

THE SPEAKER: Unfortunately, Honourable Member, I am not by your side today. Therefore, I am now delegating that responsibility to you now.

HON. AJIBOLA MANLEY SPAIN: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to start by thanking the Committee on Appointment and the Public Service for interviewing these nominees seated before us this morning. I will straight away recommend that we approve the recommendations of the Committee as written on page 7 of the report. I want to state here that what has been written about the nominees, particularly those nominated as High Court Judges in the Judiciary is nothing but the truth. It is obvious that they are all qualified and experienced in the profession. So, I also would recommend them and implore this House to adopt the recommendations and grant them the opportunity to serve in the positions they have been nominated.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, each of the nominees touched on salient facts regarding the Judiciary. The first nominee, Ansumana Ivan Sesay Esq., stated that justice should be dispensed to those who deserve it. With regards Col. I. M. Koroma, he has dealt with the issue of Bills. That is an important issue in the courts of this country.

Again, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Magistrate Alfred Athanasius Tommy Ganda touched on inadequate logistics. That is an undisputed fact because the logistics which are usually provided for the Judiciary are inadequate. Mr Unisa Kamara touched on the fact that a judge should ensure that litigants are protected at all times. We have people who are very experienced, but the speaker before me has cautioned the nominees and he has also congratulated the Chief Justice for doing a wonderful job. I was going to do so and I am doing so because from yesterday to today, the amount of people who have been nominated to fill in positions shows that the Chief Justice is doing lots of work for us to have an efficient Judiciary. Although I do not disagree with my predecessor that the Bench is younger now, we have been having young people on the Bench. I could remember when we had about three ladies few years ago and he said that we were having young people. Well, I told him that those people may look young, but in reality, they are not. My point is that we have experienced people, whether they are young or not, they are all experienced.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, before I take my seat, I want to state here that inasmuch as the Judiciary should work towards improving the judicial system of this country, Parliament also has the responsibility because at the end of the day, we pass the laws here. We should not sit down and wait for the recommendations from the Law Reform Committee or from the Executive. We should take some initiatives in terms of playing our part. Alas again, we do not have the necessary facilities to do that. In other words, we do not have the facilities to prepare a Bill. So, I want to crave the indulgence of the Ministry of Finance to enhance the capacity of the Judiciary when it is time for the budget process. We have to make sure that the Judiciary is equipped, so that the problem of inadequate logistics is laid to rest. One of the nominees stated it during his interview and it is a concern for all of us. If allocation is inadequate in any institution, it will not work as expected. So, I would crave the indulgence of the Ministry of Finance to look into this aspect and enhance the financial position of the Judiciary.

Finally, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to ask all of us to adopt the recommendations of the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service. For the

other nominee, my colleague who knows him very well will say something about him. I thank you very much.

HON. VERONICA K. SESAY: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I was very unlucky yesterday to catch the Speaker's eye, but what I wanted to say here this morning is that S.O 5[2] 'Judge na Judge;' i.e., a judge is a judge. The message I wanted to send will flow. I went through Ms Glenna Thompson's Curriculum Vitae, I admired a lot, especially when she remarked that to be a judge is to maintain your integrity. I tried to underline the word 'integrity.' If you want to be who you are, then you need to maintain your standards and your integrity.

With that introductory statement, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would want to talk about the lady amongst the nominees. This is not about being bias, but she is the only woman amongst the nominees. We are talking about **30%** and people keep asking where the women are? She is no less a person but Mrs Jamestina Essie L. King, proposed High Court Judge. Jamestina is a household name in this country in terms of advocacy for women and children. I have no doubt in her ability to perform. I am very proud of her. Now that she has been nominated to serve her country, and I want to believe that we are going to convince both sides of this House to approve your nomination. I hope and believe that she will continue her good work and maintain her integrity like what Ms Glenna Thompson said that she could not be easily bent. You need to maintain that because you are representing the women of this country. I have no doubt that women are pushers. They are builders and multipliers. If you give a drop of something to a lady, she will make something out of it. So, I have no doubt in Mrs Jamesina Essie L. King's ability to perform. Please keep it up and do not compromise your integrity for anything like what Ms Glenna has said. You are going there to serve the people of this country and we are going to use the tax payers' money to pay you. On the basis of that, you have to make sure that you work for the interest of this nation. Do not allow 'orders from above' to compromise your integrity. You have to continue the good work you have started. Please work with integrity and put every other thing that is tantamount to compromising your integrity. This is because we want to see more women in the public sector.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I hope that our blessings and the blessings of all the women in this country will protect her because she has been fighting for the women of this country and I have no doubt in her. We will be here and I will come again to continue to motivate you, so that more women are given a fair chance. That is why we have a slogan that says, 'more women better politics.'

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me go to Mr Ansumana Ivan Sesay Esq., proposed High Court Judge. His resume is so good that I have no doubt in his ability to perform as expected. As a Judge, please go with the underlined word, 'integrity.' The people of this country are proud of you and Members of Parliament are equally proud of you. As far as education is concerned, I think we should be taking Moyamba District as first among the lots. You are one of them, my brother. Keep it up and do work with integrity. Maintain your integrity at all cost. We the people of this country, especially Moyamba District in the Ribbi Chiefdom and even the Honourable Member from that part of the country, Honourable Amadu Kanu are proud of you. He is here and he is proud of you because we want to see good products from Ribbi or Moyamba District. I am so proud of you and I want to encourage you to keep it up.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to briefly talk about the soldier, Col. I. M. Koroma, proposed High Court Judge. Well, I want to state here that a soldier is a soldier. This means that soldiers are known for discipline and I have no doubt in Col. I. M. Koroma's aptitude to perform. Discipline in the Army is sine qua non and I know that he will do exceptionally well. I know you will be protecting your colleagues out there and even the other forces. There are many things that are going wrong out there you will be there as an Army officer to make sure that the right thing is done. I do not say you have to compromise but let the truth come out. They are there and they rely on you and the other forces rely on you as well. I know one of your colleagues is here to help you. Your Minister is here with other people and they are watching you closely. We are here to give you our blessings because you are there to protect our lives and properties. I want to believe that in the performance of your duties, you will always be there to protect the lives and

properties of the people of this country. I want to say thank you and bravo to all of you.

With these words, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to say thank you very much. However, I want to remind you that 'Justice delayed is justice denied.' It is now my pleasure to ask this Honourable House to approve your nominations. Thank you very much, Mr Speaker for giving me this opportunity.

THE SPEAKER: I am now going to make sure I fix my eyes on the clock because it seems as if there is a handful that wants to contribute.

HON. IBRAHIM BEN KARGBO: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we are going to respect the time, but may I state by way of my preamble that once more the President of this country has demonstrated to us that he has not forgotten the recent history of this country by ensuring that he puts together a Judiciary that will ensure justice in this country. For those of us who constantly read the Truth and Reconciliation Commission [TRC] Report will always remember that the Commissioners who compiled that report stated that one of the causative factor for the civil war in this country was the absent of acceptable judicial system. Today, this is what the President is trying to correct. When the same President said that he was going to fight for the youths of this country, he was not just talking about appointing the young people of this country to cabinet positions. He was also thinking about the Judiciary; and today, we have a young Judiciary. I feel very proud that more and more young people are occupying very important positions in this country *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when the Chief Justice of this country was appointed, I felt very proud because it was a bold step taken by the President to bring on board the running of this country a cadre of young people who will develop this country. I am very proud that we have a very active Chief Justice *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the business about being a judge always takes me back to the days of Justice M. S. Turay, who always have this joke about a young man whom he sent to the Pademba Road Correctional Centre for six months because he felt sorry for him. However, Justice M. S. Turay said that when he took his car to British Petroleum for washing on a Saturday, the same young man he

sentenced for six months imprisonment came and said, **“Please sir, can I help you?”** Justice M. S. Turay realised that it was the same man he sent to jail a few days ago. How the young man came back from Pademba Road Prison to wash his car baffled him. Mr Speaker, I am merely stating the fact that for the judges to perform well, they need the collaboration of other institutions. If you do not have the collaboration from other institutions like the Police, the Prisons etc., they will not get the necessary results.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am going to emphasise one more point because I do not want to spend much time talking about things we already know. We must respect our Judges. I remember when Justice C.E.O. Cole was Chief Justice of this country. When he retired, it was very shameful for us to behold a former retired Chief Justice sitting in a Poda Poda [Commercial van] and the message was taken to State House and the President had to give instructions that Justice C.E.O. Cole should be given a vehicle. Presently, if you go to Court, you will spend some time because the Judge has not arrived due to lack of mobility. Therefore, Judges find it very difficult to come to work on time. This is why people wait for long hours before the Courts commence proceedings.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to believe that anybody who is a Judge, considering the fact that the Judiciary is a very important Arm in the governance of this country, must be treated seriously. He or She must be given the respect that is due him or her. You do not expect a judge to move around the city on board a ‘Poda Poda or an ‘Okada’ [Motorbike]. They should be given beautiful cars, so that they feel responsible. In order words, for us to get the dividend which must come from these Judges, we must also treat them as respectable members of society. I want to also plead with the Chief Justice about the Law Reports. I am here to mentor some of you [*Undertone*].

THE SPEAKER: Why are you looking at Honourable Benneh Bangura?

HON. IBRAHIM BEN KARGBO: I am mentoring him, Mr Speaker. Like our Speaker will say, there are people whom we teach and sometimes you feel proud that you taught them. Sometimes when I go to court to listen to our Judges, our lawyers usually quote from the reports of United Kingdom, Ireland etc. That is very

good and global legal practice is acceptable. However, for goodness sake, let us also make sure that Law Reports for Sierra Leone are kept up to date *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we in this Parliament should give them the support, so that they keep the Law Reports. They are very important for this country. The reason why Shears Moses and myself went to Atlanta at one time and took part in the Access to Information Conference at the Carter Centre was to give Shears Moses the opportunity to explain why it was necessary for a Judiciary of any given country to keep its record straight for posterity. In the case of Parliament, we have the Hansard. I can easily say that this is very important and the funding of the Judiciary should be treated with all seriousness. I want to ask the Chairman of the Finance Committee, Honourable Hassan B. Sheriff to ensure that the Judiciary is treated with all seriousness. There is no point talking about the Judiciary being an important Arm of Government if they do not have the necessary funding to run that institution. At short notice, information is given that Judge 'A' or Magistrate 'A' should transfer to point 'A' to point 'B' without the necessary resources to get the transfer effected. So, these are some of the problems we have in the judicial system. As we congratulate the nominees, we must not forget the fact there should resources to make them functional and effective.

Finally, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to talk about Mr Idrissa M. Funna, proposed Chairman, National Assets and Government Property Commission. Mr Idrissa M. Funna comes from a very good family. If all of you know the late Jim Funna, he was the Governor of the Bank of Sierra Leone. Sullay Funna is a Professor in the USA. He has another sister, Mariatu, who is the Principal of Portloko Teachers College. This is a very good family, but I also know that when he was Deputy Ambassador in China, I used to visit him ladies and Gentlemen *[Undertone]*.

THE SPEAKER: He is not addressing you, Honourable Members. He is addressing ladies and gentlemen.

HON. IBRAHIM BEN KARGBO: Mr Speaker, I experienced some difficulties when I was travelling from Inner Mongolia to Beijing. At that time, Mr Idrissa M. Funna was the Deputy Ambassador and he came in very quickly and took me to a nearby restaurant, where we ate and provided accommodation for me. He is a very kind gentleman. He did so not because I knew him or he knew me in the past, but because it was his job as Deputy Ambassador. He is very respectful gentleman and I want to congratulate him for this appointment if this House approves his nomination. He is now going to occupy a position that is very challenging because we are talking about the assets of this country. Presently, we are talking about the toll system now and that road is the property of Government and it should be seen as part of our national assets. If you are approved today, you have the authority to go there and tell them that this is a state asset and I want to know what you have done. You have that authority to ask questions.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, somebody said that our government buildings in Bo, Kenema and Makeni had been sold to private people. This is the fact and it is your responsibility to go there and find out how this happened. These are some of the responsibilities you have to be doing. I listened to the radio the other day and somebody was complaining that people are selling our assets. It is your business to find out why this is happening and report to us.

With those few words, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to implore this Honourable House to accept the findings and approve the recommendations of the Committee. Thank you very much, Mr speaker.

HON. HASSAN A. SESAY: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker standing in front of everybody here to talk about people whom I taught in class is always very fulfilling for me as an individual to see those people excel in life. Before I start with those people, as a women's advocate... - *[Interruptions]*

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Lewally is patiently listening to you.

HON. HASSAN A. SESAY: I want to start with the lady, Mrs Jamesina Essie L. King, proposed High Court Judge. I have never met her before, but I have heard the name. She has served there for over 22 years and she must have learnt quite a lot. So, I believe that if the President thought it fit to nominate her to such a position, it

must be because of her proven records. I am sure she will not disappoint us because I always believe that women give their best when given the opportunity. That is why I will never stop advocating for them. However, the name is always familiar because I thought there was another Jamestina King before her, who was a politician. And that Jamestina King did well and she was on this side.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to look at those nominees I have taught in school. I must say that going to the Bar is like restoring hope to our Judiciary. Going there will give us the belief that we have people we have trained and prepared to take up the mantle of leadership and make sure that they steer the ship of state to where it is supposed to be. If you look around, the outgoing older cadre is in this Chambers; like Francis Gabidon and a host of others. They are here to support the young ones. They want to make sure that the new judges have the confidence they will require from those people who are going out. The Honourable Manley Spain and others are making way for the younger people to practice. This means that the Judiciary has come a long way and the backlog of cases based on the energy and zest of these people because they have more inspiration to do the job.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I taught Mr Unisa Kamara, proposed High Court Judge at the St. Theresa. He was one of the exceptional pupils I had in my class. Therefore, seeing him here as one of the nominees is no surprise to me. In other words, I am not in any doubt as to why he is here. I interacted with him whilst he was practicing in New York. I was in the United States and we were in touch with each other until I saw him last week, when he came to this House for this job. I am sure he will never disappoint us, especially those who have taught him and those who have played a part in his life whilst he was trying to become somebody.

Also, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when I was teaching at the Ahmadiya Secondary School, Mr Ansumana Ivan Sesay Esq., proposed High Court Judge was there. He was very humble and modest individual. I am sure those attributes have contributed positively for the job he has been nominated to serve. I want to believe that he knew what he was capable of doing and that is why he has carved something for himself. Like what my colleagues were saying, the underlining word

here 'integrity.' Integrity must be the watchword for any judge because that is what makes you a good Judge.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I have a friend whom we usually call 'IMF.' We were in college together he was Deputy Ambassador to China. He is back to serve his country in another capacity. He is Mr Idrissa M. Funna, Proposed Chairman, National Assets and Government Property Commission. I want to congratulate him and I hope this House will quickly approve his nomination. However, I want to remind the nominee that we have seen a lot of our national assets going down the drains simply because people do not want to pay attention in terms of taking care of Government properties. People usually say, S.O. 2, 'na government property.' They fail to understand that government property' belongs to all of us. Your private property is your property and not mine, but government property is the property for all of us and must be taken care of. I want to remind Mr Idrissa I. Funna that we have lost a lot of our national assets. I am sure the President decided to give you this job, so that what has been lost is regained. That is where you are going to face the biggest challenge.

Finally, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, a colleague of mine was talking about the indiscriminate use of Government vehicles by drivers driving Government vehicles. If you have a private vehicle and get a Government driver to drive your private vehicle, he will take good care of it than he takes care of the Government vehicle. That is because they do not believe that this is what belongs to everybody and it should be misused. We have to ensure that this practice is put to an end and I think Mr Idrissa I. Funna will be of help.

Having said that, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank you very much and I hope we will approve these nominees, so that they get to work as fast as possible.

HON. NAVO KAIKAI: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker for giving me this opportunity to say few words. Yesterday, I was unfortunate to catch the Speaker's eye.

THE SPEAKER: Well, the Honourable Jusufu B. Mansaray did on your behalf. Today is your turn to say what you wanted to say yesterday.

HON. NAVO KAIKAI: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it always gives me pleasure any time women are nominated for certain positions. It is a privilege and honour to see Mrs Jamesina Essie L. King, proposed High Court Judge, seeking parliamentary approval. I have heard so much about her and I have heard her on radio and television. However, this is the first time of seeing her in person. I want to congratulate her in advance because I am sure she is going to be approved. Mr Speaker, we all know that for a nation to progress, we must have women in positions of trust. Countries like Kenya and Rwanda have more women in governance and we have seen how those countries have progressed. And for the fact that I am seeing many women being nominated to serve in various positions in this country is going to move this country forward. And I want to thank the President for nominating women of integrity who will not only act in the positions, but will act as inspiration for other girls and women in this country. I want to state here that women are usually honest and fair in their judgement. In other words, women are honest and fair in their decisions. Yesterday, Ms Glenna Thompson said that women are not easily bought over. We do not always feel flattered when it comes to making decisions. And for that reason, I am very happy that we have more women as judges in this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will zoom in on a gentle man whom I met in Kailahun; i.e., Magistrate Alfred Athanasius Tommy Ganda, proposed High Court Judge. If I knew he was coming here, I would have made a proper research a bit more. However, I would only talk about the few years that I met him when we were in Kailahun. It was between 2005 and 2008 and we know how Kailahun can be when it comes to politics. At that time, he was a very young, simple and he did not mingle a lot with people. I want to state here in politics, you need people around you. I have never heard about any bias judgement he has made. He was honest in his duty, effective and diligent. We know the political struggle in 2007 and Kailahun is a place that always struggles when it comes to politics. He never interfered and that is what I expect from all these nominees who are going to the High Court as Judges. We expect you to be transparent and you should not involve in certain things that have the tendency to undermine your integrity. I want you to deal with issues according to the law. Magistrate Alfred Athanasius Ganda is going to be a judge, you

probably do not remember me but can remember the name. I thank you and I hope you will continue with the good example you have set when you were in Kailahun.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would also like to talk about the nominee with the military background, Col. I. M. Koroma, proposed High Court Judge. Mr Speaker, although I do not know him, but I appreciate people with military background. If it were not for their intervention during the bye-elections that brought me to this House last year, probably Kailahun could have been on fire or there would have been no Kailahun again. When the Military went there, the discipline they instilled helped a lot to calm down the situation. They were not bias and they were very objective. They went to my house and other houses in terms of combing the area. I want to congratulate him in advance and I hope he would bring his military experience to make sure that a diligent job is done.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Mrs Jamesina Essie L. King, High Court Judge said that we need to look at some of the laws we have in this country, so that the judiciary functions properly. You cannot do that in isolation and luckily enough, we have the Minister of Internal Affairs. I was in Kailahun last week when something very funny happened. As Mrs Jamestina Essie L. King has said, we have many petty cases going to the police station. Somebody came to my house and asked my husband to bail somebody from the police station. They could not ask me because the issue was about two lovers. Anyway, my husband went to the police station. When he asked why the two lovers were arrested, my husband was told that those people were arrested because a married man was caught with somebody else's wife in a room. They were not doing anything [*Undertone*].

THE SPEAKER: You cannot say that, Honourable Member. Where you in the room?

HON. NAVO KAIKAI: Well, it was reported that they were not doing anything in the room, though they were caught there. They took them to the police station and when my husband came back, I said 'why did you go to the police station?' What has this got to do with the police? Was the lady in question an underage person? He said no. So, why were they at the police station? Therefore, as Mrs Jamestina Essie L. King has said, these petty issues should be dealt with outside the confines of the police station because they are not only wasting our tax payer's money, but they are

wasting police time as well. The police should be dealing with more important issues than this one. I hope the Minister of Internal Affairs is listening and you need to do something about it.

Again, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have got instances where many women have been arrested because they took micro-credit. We have been in the UK for years and you and I know that these issues are usually dealt with by the civil court. Why do they have to be arrested and taken to the police station? So, apart from us looking at the law, we can still do something without being passed as a law. I am sure the Minister of Internal Affairs and the Judiciary will look at those issues to make sure that our women are not arrested based on the fact that they are micro credit debtors. Also, people should not be arrested for doing what they think is okay for them.

With those few words, I want to thank you for giving me this opportunity. I hope that all the nominees before us will be approved. Thank you very much.

HON. AMADU M. KANU: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to start by thanking the distinguished Honourable Speaker of the House for giving me this opportunity. I have listened attentively to the presentation made by the Majority Leader of this House and Leader of Government Business. Considering the very composition of the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service, if you would recall Mr Speaker, I always maintained that the Committee has a galaxy of experienced, seasoned and knowledgeable abled men and women from both sides of this Well. For instance, we have the likes of the Minority and Deputy Minority Leaders, the Majority and Deputy Majority Leaders, the legal luminary and Deputy Speaker of this House, Honourable Chernor R. M. Bah, etc.

You would want to know why I am diving into... - *Interruption*].

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I was not present for the interview.

HON. AMADU M. KANU: Thank you, Mr Speaker. The point I wanted to underscore is the fact that the Committee is made up of people with integrity. Therefore, the Committee must have surely done justice to the nominees seated

before us awaiting parliamentary approval. And by extension, the Committee must have done justice to the people of this country.

Having said that, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am making this point because I see no need to talk about the fitness and qualifications of these nominees because when I listened to the submission made by the seconder of this motion, the Honourable Member from Constituency 027, who is an experience teacher on the other side of this Well. In his submission, he adequately addressed all the issues related to the subject matter for which the nominees seated before us are being nominated. Therefore, I will not bother to go into the profile of these nominees. I want to subscribe that all the nominees are suitable and qualified for the positions they are being nominated.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank His Excellency the President, Dr Earnest Bai Koroma, a man I will refer to as 'business President and teacher' in the business of politics in Sierra Leone. I want to thank President Koroma for the nomination of Mrs Jamesina Essie L. King, not because I want to subscribe to the notion of the Speaker that he loves women, not because I want to subscribe to the notion that women can do it better. I want to support and embrace the nomination of Mrs Jamesina Essie L. King because I have been with her for a very long time. If you would recall, Mr Speaker, when His Excellency the President, Dr Earnest Bai Koroma, took over the leadership of this country in 2007, the President did say, on the occasion of the State Opening of the Third Parliament of the Second Republic of Sierra Leone, that the women folks will now sit side by side with their male counterparts. This is why I am supporting the nomination of Mrs Jamesina Essie L. King because I believe that she is not only qualified, but a woman of substance. I have no doubt in her ability to deliver justice in the interest of the people of this Country. I want to congratulate her in advance.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to talk about my brother, Ansumana Ivan Sesay Esq., proposed High Court Judge. Today, we are witnessing yet another era of comfort in the political landscape of Ribbi and Bumpeh Chiefdoms. I want to recall sometime in 2007 and 2012, I received a call from Mr Ansumana Ivan Sesay, congratulating me on my victory in the elections.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I am afraid you do not have enough time.

HON. AMADU M. KANU: Mr Speaker, I was only trying to emphasise on the importance of the message I wanted to pass to the public. I was congratulated by my brother in 2007 and 2012. Honestly, that was a clear indication to show at that material time that if my brother, Mr Ansumana Ivan Sesay Esq., was magnanimous and courageous enough to concede defeat and congratulated an opponent in such critical elections. Honestly, that act of acknowledging defeat is sending a message that if my brother is approved, he is going to be the kind of Judge that will be ready to dispense justice for the benefit of this country. He is going to be the kind of Judge that will be ready to accept things and call things by their real names, irrespective of whatever relationship or position he would find himself. Ansumana Ivan Sesay Esq. will dispense justice judiciously in the interest of the people of this country.

Against that backdrop, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to congratulate Ansumana Ivan Sesay Esq. on my personal behalf and the people of the Southern Region of this country. I am the only Member of Parliament representing them on this other side of the Well. Therefore, I want to thank and commend His Excellency the President for nominating Ansumana Ivan Sesay Esq. on behalf of the people of the Southern Region, particularly those in Bumpeh and Ribbi Chiefdoms and Constituency 086.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the achievement we have got today is not just an achievement for the nominee himself, but an achievement for us as a family and the Moyamba District. We are proud of Ansumana Ivan Sesay Esq. We will take home this achievement for our people to know and our children to emulate your examples.

Having said those few words, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to register my support for the approval of all of the nominees and to solicit the support of the general membership of this House to speedily approve the nominees before us. I thank you.

HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to start by thanking His Excellency the President for making ten appointments to the judiciary.

As I said yesterday, the citizens of this country have been complaining about our Judiciary. The Judiciary is the third arm of Government, but for a very long time, it has lacked behind. The citizens of this country would put all the blame on the Judiciary, but we should not also forget the fact that they are human beings and they are qualified to do their job. They have not got the necessary support to do their jobs. In other words, they do not have the facility to influence certain things to happen. Like what Honourable Ibrahim Ben Kargbo was saying, you would see a judge going to his/her office late because of flat tyre or no vehicle at all. I really want to thank His Excellency the President for making these appointments.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, these are highly qualified nominees seated before us. We discussed five nominees yesterday and we are here again this morning to discuss about the other five nominees. But I want to believe that the President should not just stop at appointing these people, but he should ensure that they have the tools to do their work effectively. If they do not have the necessary logistics, believe you me we are going back to square one. This is something that the President should not leave in the hands of the Ministry of Finance alone. He must ensure that he is in touch with the vibrant Chief Justice, who has impressed the people of this country so much since his appointment. I believe he should be given all the support that the Judiciary needs.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when this debate was going on, it was also made very clear that there are problems with our laws. I am calling on Government again to give support to this Parliament, so that the necessary adjustments are made. We have the manpower; we have our parliamentary staff and we have the Lawyers in our midst, who are capable of bringing these laws in the House. Definitely we do not have the capacity to do so. I am therefore calling on Government to do everything possible to provide the necessary resources to Parliament, so that we could start reviewing some of these laws.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, a lot has been said and as I said yesterday, these are qualified legal practitioners with very high integrity. I have personally interacted at least with few of them. For example, I have known Colonel I.M. Koroma for over ten years. I have known him to be a man of very high integrity. He is a very strong

and committed character. In fact, being a soldier would only add to what I have just said.

Furthermore, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I have also interacted with Ansumana Ivan Sesay Esq. I met him during a very difficult time in my life. I had just returned to Sierra Leone and in less than six months, I found myself in the court of Sierra Leone. I had no idea and I did not even know where to start from and somebody directed me to Ansumana Ivan Sesay Esq. Mr Speaker, how he handled the issue, only God knows. I am still in doubt as to how he handled that issue. The only thing I knew then was that, the matter was laid to rest. Thank you again, Ansumana Ivan Sesay Esq. for taking me out of trouble. I wish you the best of luck and I have no iota of doubt in your capacity to perform as a Judge.

Having said those few words, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am calling on this Honourable House to speedily approve these nominees. Thank you very much.

Suspension of S.O. 5[2]

HON. LEONARD S. FOFANAH: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it has been a very spirited debate in terms of approving the nominees that are before us. That shows how interested the Honourable Members are about the status of the Judiciary. Mr Speaker, as we are in the process of approving these nominees, I want to inform you that even in the absence of new Judges, the Chief Justice was doing wonders in the Judiciary. I am formally informed that in a matter of 19 days, two Judges have been assigned to hear and dispose of nearly 300 cases. The Chief Justice has introduced such measures to be able to deal with the backlog of cases in two specific judicial districts in this country because of the shortage of Judges. But now that we are giving him a handful of new Judges, I am sure the issue of backlog of cases is going to be a matter of the past. What we need to do and what this House needs to urge Government to do is to continue the good work that the President has started in terms of capacitating the Judiciary.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we would want a situation wherein if this House approves these nominees, they are not deprived at all. They should be provided with the necessary wherewithal to enable them do their job. To put people in positions is one thing, but to adequately support them to do their work is quite another. I have

no doubt that the President is up to the task and he has already effectively started the good work. You need to know that for the very first time in the history of this country the Chief Justice is adequately provided for just like the Speaker. The three Arms of Government are adequately provided for and because of that, the new Judges would also be given the logistics and whatever it takes to do the job. I have no doubt in my mind that these nominees will perform exceptionally well.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank all the Honourable Members who have contributed so eloquently to the debate. I want to thank all of you and wish you well. I 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: Lady and gentlemen, on behalf of Members of Parliament, I want to congratulate you. I am sure I know all of you very well. I do not need to say anything about you. Ansumana Ivan Sesay Esq. a lot has been said about you we were in class together and I know you very well. I am not surprised that the DPP is here today because my first day at Fourah Bay College in 1992 my first encounter was with him; Justice Unisa Kamara. I was in their room for the very first day and I was surprised when I had the name Unisa. I used to know him as 'Kingdom' whilst Honourable Foday Rado Yorkie was holding my bag. I want to congratulate you and wish you well.

II. BILL

THE MINISTER OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS

THE CITIZENSHIP [AMENDMENT] ACT 2017

INTRODUCTION AND FIRST READING

MAJOR RTD PALO CONTEH *[Minister of Internal Affairs]:* Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I move that the Bill entitled the Citizenship [Amendment] Act, 2017 be read the first time.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[The Bill entitled, the Citizenship [Amendment] Act, 2017 has been read the first time]

[SECOND READING]

MAJOR RTD PALO CONTEH: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members of Parliament, I move that the Bill entitled the Citizenship [Amendment] Act, 2017 be read the second time.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the main thrust of the amendment of this Act is centred on the biasness of the parent Act, which did not take into account our female folks. This came to the fore when in 2017 Sierra Leone failed in the gender rating in the economy indicator of the Millennium Challenge Corporation [MCC] score card, and so the debate started. It was found by their accessing institution that is the World Bank that married or unmarried women could not confer citizenship to their children the same way a married or unmarried men can. In Part 2, Section 4 of the 1973 Act, **"Every person born outside Sierra Leone on or before the 19th day of April, 1971 of a father who was or would, but for his death, has been a citizen of Sierra Leone by virtue of Sections 2, 3, 4 and 5 is a citizen of Sierra Leone by birth."** This clause implies that only a Sierra Leonean father unmarried or married can confer citizenship to his child born to a foreign mother outside Sierra Leone and not to a Sierra Leonean mother in a similar situation. An amendment was made to the parent Act in 1976, which did not address the apparent gender issues of the Act. The 2006 amendment, however, was designed to make the Citizenship Act more gender friendly and address the following points:

[1] Section 2 amends Sub-section [1] of the parent Act to include mother and defines person of Negro decent.

[ii] Section 3 repealed Section 2 of the parent Act to define citizen as **"provided that his father, mother or any other grandparents is born in Sierra Leone."**

[iii] Section 4 repeals Section 9 of the parent Act as it relates to naturalisation;

[iv] Section 5 repeals Section 10 of the parent Act to make provision for dual citizenship;

[v] Section 6 repeals Section 16 of the parent Act as it relates to the deprivation of citizenship by the Minister; and

[vi] the rest of the Act are insertions after section 19 of the parent Act.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, whereas the 2006 amendment successfully addressed some of the gender prejudices of the 1973 Act, none of the repeals or amendments address Section 5 of the Citizenship Act of 1973. Based on the amendments that were made in 2006, Section 5 of the 1973 Act could be interpreted as every person born outside Sierra Leone to a father who was or would have been a citizen of Sierra Leone by virtue of Section 2. This Section of the parent Act has been amended by the 2006 Act to read **“provided that his father, mother or any other grandparents is born in Sierra Leone.”** Sections 3 and 4 remained unchanged by birth.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, upon review of the above statement, it is clear that the amendment cures the gender bias related to the father, whose citizenship is defined by Sections 3 and 4; and not the child that the citizenship is being conferred to. This suggests that only a father who is a citizen has the right to confer citizenship to a child that is born outside Sierra Leone to a foreign mother. To address this inequality of the law, the proposed amendment to add mother to the clause will now ensure that a child born to a Sierra Leonean mother who is a citizen as defined by Sections 2, 3 and 4, and has a child with a foreign father that is born outside of Sierra Leone can confer citizenship status the same way as a married or unmarried man can.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I move that the Bill entitled the Citizenship [Amendment] Act, 2017 be read the second time.

[Question Proposed]

HON. ROSALINE J. SMITH: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to add my voice on the Bill entitled the Citizenship [Amendment] Act, 2017. I want to start by thanking the Minister of Internal Affairs for bringing this very important Bill that has disenfranchised the women of this country. Sierra Leonean women, if you are married to a foreigner, your child cannot be a citizen of Sierra Leone. I want to thank the Government for responding to the call of the women of this country. This is because for far too long our children have been denied of their rights. Children born with other nationalities who are not of Negro decent are not considered as Sierra Leoneans. It was a wrong phenomenon

and I am happy that we are amending that Section to ensure that children who are not born by Sierra Leonean fathers from Negro descent are now considered as Sierra Leoneans. It is their right because they are Sierra Leoneans and we are glad that it is being brought before us for amendment.

Once again, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this is a straight forward amendment and it is non-controversial. In that regard, I want to crave the indulgence of my colleagues to speedily ratify this Amendment. Thank you very much.

HON. P.C. BAI KURR KANAGBARO SANKA III: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this is a straightforward amendment. The laws that are now in place, all over the world, are the same sex marriage laws; i.e., lesbianism, etc. They are citizens going to church or mosque. If you go to London, you will see naked people and you will begin to wonder what is happening in the world.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have to just say that this is a forgone conclusion because some of us have daughters. If you go to America, England, and Germany, you will not know the background of those children. The great grandmother might be from India and the great grandfather is from Russia and the father is from China and the mother comes from Sierra Leone. So, you do not know where that son/daughter belongs.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, please allow me to address the Minister of Internal Affairs as the Chairman of the Internal Affairs Committee. I want to state here that with all the problems surrounding the police, immigration, prisons and the fire force, you are doing extremely well. However, I am worried about the people you give our passports. We are having calls from China, Russia, where people are going there with our passports. Two days ago, I had a call that four people were arrested with our passports from the Embassy. I tried to call you but could not get you. They said that the four people were Sierra Leoneans. However, further investigation into the issue revealed that they could not even speak the 'krio local language. The question is who is their father or mother? Mr Speaker, I will support this amendment a million times.

THE SPEAKER: Mr Minister, please take note.

HON. P. C. BAI KURR KANAGBARO SANKA III: We have to scrutinise the people we give our passports. This is very serious and we must treat it as such. In fact, a Sierra Leonean in China said that when he went in one of the provinces in China, the authorities did not even allow him to stay in a hotel. He had to call the Embassy for him to be picked up and taken to the Embassy. China is not joking with foreigners on any crime.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, people are being caught in India for drug smuggling; and in Venezuela, with our passports. As a nation, we should be proud of our passports. I could remember when I was in this Parliament, the former President of this nation Dr Ahmed Tejan Kabbah, took all our Diplomatic Passports away from us. He said the Diplomatic Passports are so many that they do not even carry respect anymore. He took them from Members of Parliament. Therefore, I want to appeal to the Minister to ensure that we work together to make Sierra Leone a very beautiful, lovely, and respectable place for us to live. When you go through Ghana, I do not even use my diplomatic passport. I use the Pan-African Parliament passport because they will tell you Sierra Leoneans use too many Diplomatic Passports. The Immigration Officer told me this news. I am not using my diplomatic passport. Luckily, I have the Pan-African Parliament passport and it is more respectable and acceptable all over Africa than our passports.

THE SPEAKER: Mr Chairman, you and your Committee members have a lot of work to do.

HON. P. C. BAI KURR KANAGBARO SANKA III: I want to appeal to the workers to know that our passport is a picture of Sierra Leone. It should not be given to anybody who comes in with whatever gift or present to get a passport from Sierra Leone. So, if I have the opportunity to make my contribution, I support the amendments, but I am worried about our passports, the image of this country, the image of this Government and image of our Parliament.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to plead to all of us to work together for the progress of this country. There are people who are now crying, but they are the same people who usually go to the immigration officers, begging them to give passport to other people. We are responsible for some of these problems. We are

making certain recommendations to people who are not supposed to have our passports.

With those few words, Mr Speaker, Honourable members, I want to thank you very much, for this opportunity. I know you will carry the message well to the Chief Immigration Officer, Mr Kolifa Koroma. I thank you.

HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS *[Acting Minority Leader]*: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this is a straightforward amendment. The Honourable Minister of Internal Affairs said that in the past, our women used to be behind. Our sisters, our mothers and our aunties were left behind. This Bill is going to take everybody on board. The most important thing here is that a mother can now confer Citizenship status to her child; not just the father. Like the Honourable Paramount Chief said, the passing of this Bill is going to trigger a whole lot of issues. Therefore, I would want to join him in terms of calling the attention of the Minister of Internal Affairs to do everything possible to ensure that our passports are kept safe. They should be issued to people who are qualified to receive them.

Having said that, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to call on my colleagues to support this Bill. Thank you.

HON. LEONARD S. FOFANAH *[Majority Leader of the House and Leader of Government Business]*: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Bill before us is the amendment of the Citizenship Act. We do not have to necessarily juxtapose that amendment and the issue of our passports. Even though they are related, it is a related matter because passports are for the Citizens of this country. However, the Administration in the Immigration Department is charged with issuing out of these passports. You will need the Committee and the Minister and the Ministry itself.

THE SPEAKER: Mr Majority Leader, in addition to that we are not talking about the Ordinary Passports alone, but also Diplomatic and Service Passports.

HON. LEONARD S. FOFANAH: The granting of the Diplomatic Passports should also be investigated and streamlined because it is unacceptable for those who should not carry these passports are seeing with them. This country is such a small country that we know each other. You will want to know in what official capacity

[like what Honourable Foday Rado Yokie was saying], he or she is given a Diplomatic Passport. So, it is not only demeaning, but it has the tendency to undermine the integrity of the passport holder. That has a corresponding effect on those carrying a Sierra Leonean Diplomatic Passport. This is why other countries question us and just dismiss us and say we have many people with Diplomatic Passports. Therefore, we need to know the integrity of the person carrying the passports.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, apart from this Bill the Minister has brought for ratification, this issue needs a thorough investigation and follow-up; otherwise we will be printing passports for people who do not deserve them. Passports are very expensive for this country because we pay a lot of money for them. Therefore, should not be given to every Jin, Jack and Harry. We need to follow up on that and know that our Diplomatic Passports are not given to everybody. The amendment to this Bill is a welcome decision because if parents go out and have issues, those issues belong to this country. In that regard, granting them citizenship is a good thing. The women have suffered and they have been left behind for a very long time.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this amendment is a welcome decision as the Honourable Members have said. It is not controversial and I will therefore urge that we support and ratify the amendment. I thank you, Mr Speaker.

MAJOR RTD PALO CONTEH: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members of Parliament, let me start by thanking you for your interjections and let me do a deep dive into the issues raised by the Honourable PC Bai Kurr Kanagbaro Sanka III. It is absolutely a fact that our passports are held by people who are not entitled to them. This has been the case for over twenty years; but with the introduction of the biometric passport, that practice has been curtailed. I think we can still do better. That is why I am pleased to bring before this Honourable House the Civil Registration Act of 2017. With the various contributions, which I was very impressed, we were able to see that the Bill becomes law. With the mass civil registration, the technicalities involved and all the bio-data from Sierra Leoneans and non-Sierra Leoneans who are

resident here, we would be able to make sure that only Sierra Leoneans are entitled to Sierra Leonean passports for the first instance.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, on the issues relating to the Diplomatic and the Service Passports, I would have a word with my technical team, particularly the Chief Immigration Officer and his team in terms of establishing clear definitions of entitlement. In other words, we have to establish those who are entitled to a Diplomatic or Service Passports. Once we have the clear distinction, we will make sure that those who are not entitled will not receive our passports. It is disheartening to see people who are not entitled to Diplomatic or Service Passports are allowed to carry them. Of course it shows our nation in a bad light because a passport is one of the most important documents in any nation.

Having said that, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I move that the Bill entitled the 'Citizenship [Amendment] Act, 2017' be read the second time.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[The Bill entitled the Citizenship Amendment Act, 2017 being an Act to amend the Citizenship Act, 1973 to take into consideration the amendment made to the Citizenship Act in 2006 providing for citizenship by birth to be granted through the mother has been read the second time].

[COMMITTEE STAGE]

[THE HOUSE RESOLVES INTO A COMMITTEE]

CLAUSE 1 PROPOSED

MAJOR RTD PALO CONTEH: Mr Chairman, Honourable Members of Parliament, I move that Clause 1 stand part of the Bill.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[Clause 1 form part of the Bill as amended]

[THE HOUSE RESUMES ITSELF]

MAJOR RTD PALO CONTEH: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I report that the Bill entitled the 'Citizenship Act, 2017' having gone through the Committee of the Whole House, I now move that the Bill be read the third time and passed into law.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[The Bill entitled the Citizenship Amendment Act 2017 being an Act to amend the Citizenship Act, 1973 to take into consideration the amendment made to the Citizenship Act in 2006 providing for citizenship by birth to be granted through the mother has been read the third time and passed into law].

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, before the Minister leaves, I want to kindly request on the background that tomorrow is going to be the civic laying of the late Honourable J. B. Dauda, who was a very long standing member of this House, a former Vice President and the immediate past Minister of Internal Affairs. In that regard, I want to kindly request that we rise for a minute and observe a moment of silence in his honour. May his soul rest in perfect peace.

ADJOURNMENT

[The House rose at 12.45 p.m., and was adjourned to Tuesday, 11th July, 2017]