

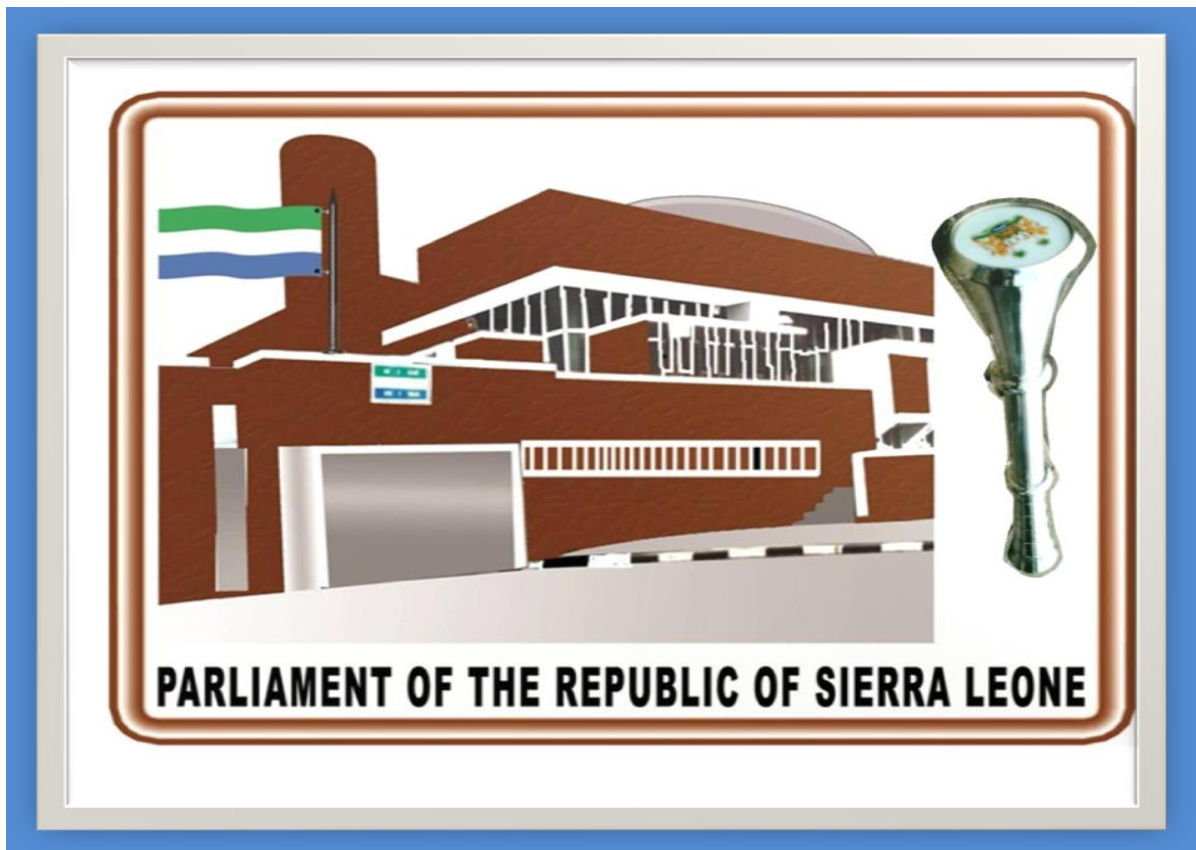
OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

[HANSARD]

**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT
FIFTH SESSION - FIRST MEETING
TUESDAY, 9TH MAY, 2017**

SESSION – 2016/2017



OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

[HANSARD]

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

VOLUME: I

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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 on Tuesday, 9th May, 2017.

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HON. MOHAMED L. MANSARAY



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, 9th May, 2017.

I. PRAYERS

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

[The House met at 10:25 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, 25TH AND WEDNESDAY 26TH APRIL, 2017 RESPECTIVELY.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, we go through record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting, held on Tuesday, 25th April, 2017. Page 1? page 2? Page 3? Page 4?

HON. PATEH BAH: Mr Speaker, on Page 4. I was absent with an excuse. I went on an oversight.

THE SPEAKER: Did the Clerk's Office receive any notification to the effect?

MRS BINTU WESTON [Table Clerk]: Yes, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Please mark him as absent with an excuse. Page 5? Page 6? Page 7? Page 8? Page 9?

There being no correction, would somebody move for the adoption of the record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting, held on Tuesday, 25th April, 2017 as amended?

HON. MOSES B. JORKIE: I so move, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

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

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[Record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting, held on Tuesday, 25th April, 2017 has been adopted as amended]

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, we go to the record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting, held on Wednesday, 26th April, 2017. Page 1? Page 2? Page 3? Page 4? Page 5? There being no correction or amendment, could somebody move for the adoption of the record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting, held on Wednesday, 26th April, 2017 as presented?

HON. BENNEH BANGURA: I so move, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON. MOHAMED KAMARA: I so second, Mr Speaker.

[Question proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[Record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting, held on Wednesday, 26th April, 2017 has been adopted as presented]

III. PAPER LAID

THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT AND AVIATION

THE SPEAKER: Mr Leader, is the Minister here?

HON. LEONARD S. FOFANAH, [Majority Leader of the House and Leader of Government Business]: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I have received absolutely no communication from the Minister. Therefore, I cannot say anything on his behalf.

THE SPEAKER: All the papers outlined on the Order Paper have to be laid by the Minister of Transport and Aviation.

HON. LEONARD S. FOFANAH: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this is the work Parliament is doing and they go on complaining. We have listed all these documents and he knows that he has to lay all of them. These papers have been here for some time now.

THE SPEAKER: Mr Leader, was he informed?

HON. LEONARD S. FOFANAH: In deed Mr Speaker he was informed and he is not here today.

THE SPEAKER: In the absence of the substantive Minister, the Deputy Minister should have come.

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

PROPOSER: HON. LEONARD S. FOFANAH

SECONDER: HON. GLADYS G. GBAPPY-BRIMA

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, I would support the acclamation *[Applause]*.

HON. LEONARD S. FOFANAH: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Honourable Gladys Gbappy-Brima is an outstanding Member of the Committee on Appointments

and her elevation to that position, even though temporary, is commendable *[Applause]*.

Having said that, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is now my privilege to read to you the Fifth Report of the Fourth Parliament of the Second Republic of Sierra Leone, Fourth Report of the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service on parliamentary vetting of presidential nominees.

1. Introduction

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service, alive to its constitutional mandate to vet and approve appropriately qualified candidates for appointment to public offices, met on Thursday, 4th May, 2017 and interviewed two Presidential nominees for appointment as follows:

- i. Chairman, National Protected Area Authority [NPAA]; and
- ii. Member, Minerals Advisory Board.

2. Procedure

The Committee conducted the hearings 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 pertinent work situations, declared assets, tax obligations and their visions for a nationally productive tenure. Issues of unsuitability or otherwise were also closely looked into.

3. FIFTH SITTING OF THE COMMITTEE ON THURSDAY 4TH MAY 2017

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

- i. Dr Nana Claris Efua Pratt, Proposed Chairman, National Protected Area Authority [NPAA].*

Dr Nana Claris Efua Pratt is a retired Lecturer in Chemistry, who could be counted amongst the longest serving lecturers in Fourah Bay College, [FBC] University of Sierra Leone. She was:

- Lecturer in Inorganic and Analytical Chemistry, Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone, from 1974 – 1982;
- Senior Lecturer and Divisional Head, Inorganic and Analytical Chemistry, Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone, from 1981-1982;
- Lecturer, Gender Studies, Fourah Bay College, from 2002-2008; and
- Head of the Chemistry Department, Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone, 1998-2003.

Dr Nana Pratt is an active participant in women's issues, particularly those relating to the promotion and empowerment of women from 1992 to date.

Reacting to the inquiries of the Committee about her knowledge of the NPAA, Dr Nana Pratt said that the NPAA was established in 2012 for the purpose of conserving forested areas and protecting the wildlife within those areas. Questioned on her readiness for the daunting challenges of seaside wetlands which were illegally being cleared for the construction of houses, Dr Nana Pratt assured the Committee that she was quite prepared. **"I believe that with the cooperation of the other Members of the NPAA Board, we will sustainably tackle the challenges together. I am prepared to provide the leadership,"** she said.

Responding to further questions on the massive encroachment on mangrove swamps for human settlement, Dr Nana Pratt said, **"Some strategies are already in place. I will wait to get there to see what the strategies are, what the gaps are, what more is needed to be done to ensure enforcement and compliance with the law. There are many laws and bye-laws on how people should interact with the environment in a sustainable manner. If there are people who do not want to do the right thing, I think we will have a way to get them to do so. It is for all of us, including the various institutions to collectively enforce it."** Dr Nana Pratt believed that people need to be conscientised on the importance of sustainable use of the environment.

Questioned on her personal limitations, Dr Nana Pratt said, **"Sometimes I have the knack of wanting to coerce people into doing the right thing, but these days, people resist a lot by talking about their human rights. People want you to be over-tolerant and I am having difficulty with that at my age. I**

want to instil discipline and firmness for people to know the boundaries. If they try to resist, well I use both the carrot and the stick,” she concluded.

ii. *Brigadier General Usman Turay, Proposed Member, Minerals Advisory Board*

Brigadier General Usman Turay started his working life with the noble profession of a classroom teacher from 1988-1991. In 1991, he was enlisted in the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces [RSLAF] as a cadet officer. Through hard work and dedication to duty, he rose to his current position.

Responding to probing questions on the functions of the Minerals Advisory Board, Brigadier General Usman Turay said that the Board is meant to advise the Ministry of Mines and Mineral Resources on the licensing and sale of the minerals of this country to potential investors. He did not see his appointment to the Minerals Advisory Board as a diversion from his military duties; but rather, he viewed it as a fulfilment of the oath he had sworn to faithfully serve his country in whatever capacity his Commander-in-Chief might require of him.

Answering to further questions, Brigadier General Usman Turay promised to ensure that licenses are given in the best interests of the country. **“I will insist that the background checks on prospective investors to ensure their genuineness of intention and suitability in terms of financial strength before given such mining licenses is always strictly adhered to,”** he said.

On the issue of some mining companies using hazardous materials like mercury in the mining process, he said, **“we will do our best because coming from a science background; I know mercury to be very dangerous. It kills. If we find any company using such hazardous materials, we will warn them against the use of such materials and if they persist, the necessary recommendations for punitive action will be made,”** he said.

4. Recommendations

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

[i] Dr Nana Claris Efua-Pratt, proposed Chairman, National Protected Area Authority [NPAA]; and

[ii] Brigadier General Usman Turay, Member, Minerals Advisory Board.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Fourth Report is the unanimous decision of the Committee. I therefore move that the Fourth Report of the Fifth Session of the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service be adopted by the House and that the recommendations contained therein be approved. Signed by Honourable Leonard S. Fofanah, Chairman.

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON. GLADYS GBAPPY-BRAIMA: Mr Speaker, I so second.

[Question Proposed]

HON. GLADYS GBAPPY-BRIMA: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I feel honoured to serve in this capacity, but also very happy to be the first person to open the debate on the approval of the nominees before us. Honestly, when good people are appointed to serve in diverse capacities, even the walls of this Parliament smile in acceptance. And it is only left with people who have developmental eyes to see the smiles and interpret those smiles.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the two nominees before us are fine nominees and they have served in diverse capacities in both good and bad times, especially when we had the civil war in this country. Though these nominees were sufficiently capacitated and adequately trained to serve outside of this country, they stayed back to see the end of it all. Honestly, when the two nominees appeared before the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service, their presentations caught the admiration of Committee. In fact, the interview session was very interactive and educative for even the Committee Members.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the two nominees are before us not by coincidence, but because His Excellency the President thought it fit even though the tenure of his Government is almost ending, he was of the opinion that they still have people whose expertise and experiences could be tapped for the betterment of this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the two positions that these people have been nominated to serve are interrelated. I am saying this because if you go through their Curriculum Vitae [CVs], you would realise that they are efficiently educated, well exposed and experienced to actually serve in those capacities. For sure somebody just whispered to me about the God's intention when he created man. According to the creation story, God created man and woman. So, when a capacitated man and woman are appointed to serve in various positions of trust, I want to believe that they will do their best to ensure that the right thing IS done. When they appeared before us, we saw enthusiasm and exuberance to serve the people of this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the two people, especially our senior brother who would be serving as a Board member in the Mineral Advisory Board is aware of the challenges ahead of him. However, I want to state here that he is ready to serve this country diligently. For a very long time we have been doubting whether our minerals are blessing or a curse to us. Coming from a diamondiferous area, I am convinced that our teacher is ready to work with others. The interesting side of the debate is that both of them are very conscious of the fact that they are not going to work in isolation. In fact, they were well informed about the existing laws we have in this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, before I go to the next nominee, I would want the Brigadier-General to understand that serving in that capacity is a herculean task. Again, his acceptance to serve in this capacity, if approved by this House, would mean a lot in the security sector. Questions were posed to him as to how relevant he would be in that position. It would interest this House to know that Brigadier General Usman Turay knows his limitations and he is well informed about his responsibilities. I want to emphasise here that Brigadier General Usman Turay is going to serve as Board member and not as the Director or the Minister of Mines. The Mines and Mineral Act of 2009 clearly states his responsibilities and limitations. For instance, the Act states that the Board is an Advisory Board; therefore, he is expected to advise and even make recommendations. He is not expected to pass directives or command. With his wealth of experience, I have no doubt in his ability

to change the dynamics of the mineral sector. We have suffered for too long and this is the time to correct some of the mistakes we have made in the past.

Additionally, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to state here the civil conflict in this country has not been analysed properly in the past. In most cases, people have been talking about the damages and not the root causes. If you analyse the civil conflict in Sierra Leone well, you will find out that it is related to the minerals that we have in this country. Therefore, if this House approves your nomination, I personally want you to ensure that the communities where these minerals are extracted are protected. I would say use a conflict sensitive approach. I went through your CV and I discovered that you are well trained in handling and analysing conflict. In most cases, we have been hearing stories of how the Police were shooting people because the people were protesting for their rights. Most of the people in diamondiferous areas were protesting because their concerns were not addressed. These things are not being adequately analysed in the past at all, Mr Speaker. Using your conflict analytical skills, I want you to look at those areas and see how the minerals of this country would benefit all of us, especially people in those communities. A lot of poor people in this country are mostly living around mining areas. People who are supposed to be rich are the poorest among Sierra Leonean populace.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if you go to those mining areas, there are lot of things that are happening which are not good at all. For instance, the rate of child abuse and violence against women are very common in those areas. We also have a lot of people who are homeless because of the mining activities that are going on there. As you have expressed and promised the Committee during your interview, please go there and ensure that most of these problems are solved within the shortest timeframe. You have to be consulting other Board members when you want to take any decision.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would now definitely zero on somebody whose contribution is responsible for my being here. She has saved so many lives in this country. If we are talking about the emancipation of women in this country, it means we need more women in politics, security, etc. and the brain behind this is Dr Nana

Claris Efua-Pratt, proposed Chairman, National Protected Area Authority [NPAA]. She did not leave this country because of her education or even parental background, but she stays in this country despite the difficulties she has gone through. She is the founder of many women organisations and gender related institutions in and out of this country. The name Nana Claris Efua-Pratt is a household name in this country. I told somebody that if you 'Google' her name, it says it all. I always say she is also a blood pressuriser because she is a task oriented person and that is why she always wants to see positive results.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Dr Nana Claris Efua-Pratt has served in so many capacities in this country and has contributed immensely in terms of ensuring the development of this country. If this House approves her nomination, I am quite sure that with her academic qualifications and experience, she will not disappoint the President and this Honourable House. Again, Dr Nana Claris Efua-Pratt has the professional exposure and experience to perform exceptionally well. Mr Speaker, what interest me most is the fact that a lot of times when you see people of her age, especially in Africa, you begin to think of their retirement. However, despite her age, Dr Nana Claris Efua-Pratt still thinks that there is a lot she can offer. She is a mentor and I want to inform her that her mentees are still ready to tap from her experience.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would want to state here that failure is not an excuse once approved today by this House. I want to also state here that while sitting in our little corners and blaming Government and parliamentarians in particular for certain things that are happening in this country. What we do here is what we are doing as Members of Parliament. You have been nominated and sent to this House for scrutiny. We have sat as a Committee and we have seen your capabilities and it is based on your qualifications and experience we thought it fit as a Committee to recommend you to the Committee of the whole House for approval. I am convinced that this House will approve your nomination based on your qualifications and experience. But there are times when people are blaming politicians and this is why some of you tend to say 'me no to politician, S.O 2. My sister, I want to tell you that you are a politician when once you accept to serve in this capacity. If this Government fails, it means you have failed as well. I always love

to hear what one musician says that when you point one finger at somebody, the rest of the fingers will point at you. How many times have you played your part to ensure that this country moves forward?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the President has nominated her to serve in that capacity. I want to encourage her to go there and prove her mettle. All of us cannot be there at the same time, but she has been the lucky one and we must support her. You have the interest to serve in that capacity and you should go there and play your part. Please use your academic qualification and experience to make things work as expected.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I always say that one thing leads to the others; i.e., the environment leads to mineral. If the environment is destroyed, then where will you find the minerals? If you do not use the minerals judiciously in terms of making sure that the environment is sustained, this country will not progress. Please use your strength and experience to change the dynamics of this country. We have a lot of environmental challenges in this country, but I have no doubt that you will do your best to resolve those challenges. We would continue to be proud of you and all of us here are your mentees.

Finally, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me end by saying that indeed the people we have before us are ready to serve this country. They have the required skills to ensure that things happen. Therefore, I want to encourage this House to approve these nominees before us. Thank you very much, Mr Speaker *[Applause]*.

HON. PC SHEKU A.T. FASULUKU SONSIAMA III: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I want to join the Honourable Member from Moyamba to congratulate in advance Dr Nana Claris Efua-Pratt and Brigadier General Usman Turay. For Dr Nana Claris Efua-Pratt, she is before us this morning seeking the approval of this House for the position of Chairman, National Protected Area Authority. It is a very big challenge and from her resume that was presented to us, I do not have any doubt that she is going to face some challenges and she should be prepared to face and resolve those challenges. Until we pay adequate attention to land use and land planning in this country, we would always have environmental issues. As far as I know, our relationship with the environment is of a symbiotic relationship. This

means that if we do not look after the environment, the environment would never look after us and that is a very big challenge. If you look at the recent Sustainable Development Goals [SDGs], interestingly the mining and water sectors, as natural resources, are not included in the SDGs. As we speak, there are discussions in certain fora outside Sierra Leone on those issues.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to state here that the Aberdeen Creek had been made a Ramsar site since 2002 by Wetland International. We have to find a way in this country to emphasise on land use and planning because if this House approves Dr Nana Claris Efua-Pratt's nomination to serve as Chairman of National Protected Area Authority, she has to determine areas called protected areas and residential areas. She also has to determine where people should cut timber and where not to cut them. I want to use this opportunity to inform Dr Nana Claris Efua-Pratt that the protected areas outside Freetown like the Kangahi Hills, the Gola Forest, the Loma Mountains, and the Tigi Hills are under serious threat from timber loggers. I want her to work with key line ministries and other agencies like Ministry of Agriculture, specifically the Forestry division, the Environmental Protection Agency [EPA], the Ministry of Mines and Mineral Resources and the Ministry of Lands. I am saying this because sometimes exploration licenses are being issued by the Ministry of Mines and Mineral Resources in protected areas of this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to briefly talk about Brigadier General Usman Turay, proposed Member, Minerals Advisory Board. I have known him for over forty years now. We were together in secondary school and we later went to Njala University. I knew from that time that where ever he finds himself, he would excel.

Having said that, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to inform Brigadier General Usman Turay that there are challenges ahead of him. I come from Kono and I am one of the Paramount Chiefs that come from the diamondiferous Chiefdoms. I have seen cases where exploration licenses are being issued to companies in places that are known for mining minerals even before I was born and this is creating a lot of problems for the Paramount Chiefs. In distinguishing the responsibilities of the Chiefs from the artisanal mining and at the same time satisfying the conditions of

the exploration companies, it will interest this Honourable House to know that some of these exploration companies take licenses without doing anything for four years to five years and they expect the Paramount Chiefs not to issue artisanal licenses in those exploration areas. This is very big challenge and I think we have to face it because in the Mines and Minerals Act, there is something they called the Diamond Area Community Development Fund, which is a function of the total number of artisanal licenses issued per Chiefdom. All the revenue that comes from exploration license is paid directly to the Consolidated Revenue Fund and nothing is paid to any Chiefdom in this country.

Therefore, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if we are getting the bulk of our revenue from mining related resources from the total number of artisanal mining licenses we are issuing, there is bound to be a conflict of interest. And I want to suggest here that if this House approves of your nomination, you have to look at places wherein exploration companies are applying whether those places have been known for mining minerals before or not, otherwise there would always be a conflict.

With these few words, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to wish the nominees before us good luck and ask my colleagues to speedily approve them.

HON. VERONICA K. SESAY: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is nice to be making felicitations when people are alive and when they are dead and you make a tribute. Now that we have heard the felicitations being made by the Honourable Member from Moyamba about Dr Nana Claris Efua-Pratt, I want to continue in that direction.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to start by thanking His Excellency the President even though his tenure is expiring, but at least he has recognised some important people like Dr Nana Claris Efua-Pratt. She is indeed a woman of substance, a mover, a shaker, a multiplier, a developmental oriented mother and above all, a God fearing mother in whom I have no doubt. I have known this woman for the past twenty or more years. She has served as the national Chairman of National Organisation for Women. She started it before organisations like the 50/50 and Women's Forum. I have no doubt in her ability to perform.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am very sure that Dr Nana Claris Efua-Pratt would do her best because she has been doing it. When I saw her name this morning, I was very happy to the extent that I said if I fail to talk about Dr Nana Claris Efua-Pratt, I would not do justice to myself because she is my mentor. She is a woman who always smiles and provides the appropriate advice as a woman. Like what the Honourable Member from Moyamba has said, Dr Nana Claris Efua-Pratt made me who I am through her counselling and words of encouragement. In other words, if I have nerves to stand in front of a crowd like this, I think part of that accolade goes to her.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to remind her that this award she is receiving today is above her, but I know that she is going to continue with it. I want to assure this House that Dr Nana Claris Efua-Pratt will do exactly whatever assignment she will be given to do. Dr Nana Claris Efua-Pratt is not that type of person whom you would say she is a politician. She believes in fairness in terms of treating her fellow human beings. We are talking about **30%** for women, but she is more than **60%**. She is a woman of substance and these are the women worth giving state assignments. I am quite sure if she goes there, she will lead and we will follow. I want to once again congratulate her in advance and I hope and pray that she will do justice to the institution she will be going to serve if approved by this House.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to talk about Brigadier General Usman Turay, proposed member, Minerals Advisory Board. Brigadier General Usman Turay is a very disciplined man. I am not coming from diamondiferous areas, which means that we do not have mining activities in our areas, but we are hearing about mining activities in other areas. I want to remind you that whenever there is a problem in Kono District, the spill over effect is felt in other parts of the country. In other words, when Kono sneezes, other areas catch the cold. People usually say that wise people came from the East and settled in the West where we are. With that in mind, I know you would do justice and you are going to serve the people of this country.

As a cautionary note, Mr Speaker Honourable Members, I want to remind Brigadier General Usman Turay that there is Board Chairman he is expected to work with for

the benefit of the people of this country. He does not have to do more than the Chairman but he is expected to give his expertise and advice, so that team works as expected.

With those few words, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank His Excellency the President for nominating them to this House. We are talking about 50/50 and from what we have in front us this morning, the 50/50 is working because we have one man and one woman seeking for this House's approval. If this House approves their nominations, I want to wish them well. On that note, I want to ask my colleagues to say "**Hallelujah**" and approve their nominations. Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

HON. HASSAN A. SESAY: Thank you, Mr Speaker for giving me this opportunity this morning. When the first speaker started her presentation, she started with Brigadier General Usman Turay. However, I am coming from the old school which says, 'ladies first.' It is based on that note that I want to start with Dr Nana Claris Efua Pratt, Proposed Chairman, National Protected Area Authority [NPAA]. I first interacted with Dr Nana Claris Efua Pratt when I was a student at Fourah Bay College. She was a Lecturer at the Chemistry Department and I was in the liberal Arts Faculty. Since that time, I knew she would be one of the inspiring people in that Department and she demonstrated her leadership attributes in the early 80s, when I was a student.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Dr Nana Claris Efua Pratt had always shown signs of leadership qualities. She has always been steadfast in whatever she does and has shown commitment to whatever course she finds herself. When I came to involve in issues relating to women, I interacted with Dr Nana Claris Efua Pratt. We have met at different conferences meetings, workshops, etc. During my acquaintance with her, I came to understand that she has been nominated to serve in this position. I remind those in the National Protected Area Authority that it is no longer going to be business as usual because she is an achiever and she is always committed to what she is doing.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Dr Nana Claris Efua Pratt is an activist, but she is here today seeking for this House's approval to serve in another capacity. I think the

President made no mistake in nominating her to serve in that capacity. The President has always thought about people who are going to serve in areas where they can perform. I am sure she is going to make a difference when she takes up that office. I want to say that even though she is yet to be approved by this House, but I am sure my colleagues Honourable Members will definitely approve her nomination because of her track records. I am sure she will not disappoint this House. We have approved many people in this House and I want to state here that most of them failed to fulfil their obligations. However, I am sure that we will not be disappointed and we will support her to achieve the objectives that she has set to achieve.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I to want talk about Brigadier General Usman Turay. I must say that he was fortunate to attend the Government Secondary School for Boys in Magburaka because that school has produced the best President in this country. Again, he is fortunate to have an admission number. Brigadier General Usman Turay has a military background, which implies that he is very disciplined. And for somebody to have gone through the ranks to become a Brigadier-General like what he has turned out to be speaks volumes.

Having known him for quite some time now, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, he will definitely be able to influence things in the Mineral sector. Recently, when we were debating the Finance Bill in this House, an area was included in that Bill which has to do with resource allocation. The Paramount Chief from Kono said that resource more resources should be allocated to areas that are more affected by mining activities. I want Brigadier General Usman Turay to pay more attention to those areas, so that those who live around those areas could benefit from the resources that are coming from their areas.

With those few words, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to wish them well in their new appointments if this House approves their nominations. I want you to do your best for the development of this country. I thank you very much.

HON. SIDI M. TUNIS: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have two nominees before us who are seeking parliamentary approval. As somebody was saying, this nomination is a 50/50 affair because we have one man and one woman. Both

nominees are achievers in their own rights. Dr Nana Pratt is a household name in this country and she has contributed towards the development of Sierra Leone. She has also contributed towards the development of many people in this country. I have no doubt that her new role as the proposed Chairman of the NPAA will definitely not be a major challenge for her achievements.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want Dr Nana Claris Efua Pratt to know that the challenges in the protected areas are very severe. The problems we are having in the protected areas are coming from individuals that are supposed to know better in this country. The poor people are totally excluded from those challenges. We are talking about mangrove areas that people are building zinc sharks. The question is, what about the forest areas? Guma Valley Water Company is facing huge challenges today because those who are supposed to know better are pretending not know anything. Knowing the kind of person you are, and as Chairman of that institution, I am convinced that you will put to rest some of these challenges we have in those areas. For the mangrove areas, I know that the responsibilities do not just lie with the people who are occupying those areas; i.e., the poor people, but with the Government. I am saying this because the Government should provide other place where those occupants could move and settle. You cannot move them from the mangrove areas and abandon them without providing other areas for them. You must provide a place for them to settle. Therefore I want to encourage you to work with your colleagues to ensure that those people are relocated to other places. You have to name and shame those 'big men' who are destroying our forests in this country, especially the Western Area forests.

For Brigadier General Usman Turay, I always admire people with a military background because I had always wanted to be a soldier, but unfortunately, I could not. I am pretty sure that I will be the Commander-in-Chief when that time comes. I want to remind Brigadier General Usman Turay that his role in the Minerals Advisory Board is not a small one. A lot of people are always thinking that the Mineral Advisory Board is something that should be treated with seriousness. The issuance of mining licences in this country rests with your recommendations. In other words, the recommendations should always come from this Board. Those

recommendations from the Board are what the Ministry of Mineral Resources and NMA will consider for the issuance of licenses. Considering your background, discipline, commitment and patriotism, I believe that you will make a lot of positive changes in the mineral sector. I want to state here that if the Advisory Board has been doing its work well, we will not have so many problems in the mining sector.

Therefore, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to ask Brigadier General Usman Turay to work with his colleagues to bring discipline and sanity in the Mineral Advisory Board. I want to inform him that the Ministry of Mines and Natural Resources and the National Minerals Agency depend on his advice and recommendations. You are coming in at the right time because the opening of the bid for the 709 Carat Diamond will take place at the Bank of Sierra Leone Conference Room in two days. I will be there to witness the bid opening. I am sure the Brigadier General Usman Turay will be there as well.

Having said that, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will encourage my colleagues to support the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service's recommendations. I thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

HON. LEONARD S. FOFANAH *[Majority Leader of the House and Leader of Government Business]*: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, you will agree with me that I have nothing more to say after listening to the spirited contributions made by both the mover and the seconder of the motion. They have said it all and I only want to encourage them to approve the nominees before them. However, I want to assure the nominees, on behalf of Parliament, that this Committee has the power to recall them. I want them to know that their appointments are not forever. I am saying this because we have a right to recall you even before your term of office expires if we feel you are not performing as expected. I have been given the same information to the nominees that were before you.

Having said that, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members and the fact that we have a lot of visitors waiting for another pending Bill for this House to debate, I want to move that we approve expeditiously the nominees before you. I thank you very much.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

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

THE SPEAKER: On behalf of Parliament, I want to congratulate Dr Nana Pratt and Brigadier General Usman Turay.

Honourable Members, the seconder of this motion has said it all about Dr Nana Pratt that her name is a household name. All I have to say here is that Dr Nana Pratt is a national celebrity as well as an international icon. Those who know her can testify that she is a highly disciplined woman. She is highly disciplined and scrupulously strict. I will even say she is uncompromisingly strict and a very kind-hearted somebody. I say kind-hearted because in our days at Fourah Bay College, she used to give us ride from Model Junction to Fourah Bay College. At one time we were at Model Junction almost stranded. After she had given some students a ride to Fourah Bay College, she would come down again to take the others. Some of us will never forget her. Some of us have the greatest regard and respect for her. I know she will perform if approved by this House. She is still physically fit; and above all, she has assured me that she is still fit to serve this nation.

For Brigadier General Usman Turay, the Paramount Chief has spoken so much about him. I have no doubt that you will excel. Please acquaint yourself creditably and diligently. I wish you well and you can now go.

V. PRIVATE MEMBER'S BILL

THE COMMUNITY HEALTH PRACTITIONERS' ACT

HONOURABLE MOHAMED L. MANSARAY

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, I want you to please listen, especially new Members of Parliament. I want you to learn from your colleague. You will recall that we had dealt with this particular Bill, but what remained then was just a presentation of the Report from the Legislative Committee. So virtually we have almost finished with it. However, we did not conclude it before the beginning of this session and that is why we have to begin all over again. That is our own rule here. I want you to understand that, particularly the new Members of Parliament. Therefore, I will expect an accelerated debate. We do not have time to go over

everything again, but we will have to begin afresh. That is what our Standing Orders say and we must go by the Standing Orders.

HON. MOHAMED L. MANSARAY: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I move that the Bill entitled 'The Community Practitioner Bill, 2017' be read the first time.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[The Bill entitled, 'The Community Health Practitioners Act, 2017' has been read the first time].

[SECOND READING]

HON. MOHAMED L. MANSARAY: The Right Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members, I am again honoured and privileged to present to this noble House the 'Community Health Practitioners' Bill, 2017.' The key aim of my presentation is to provide clear understanding on the Community Health care in Sierra Leone and the need to regulate the practice and community health practitioners.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the concept of community health is about the health of the whole population and prevention and treatment of common diseases from which the community suffers. The establishment of the Institute of Health Science, the development of the department of Community Health and Clinical Sciences in the University of Sierra Leone and the training programmes for medical assistants had been recommended since 1973 by the then President, Dr P. Stevens, in his Inaugural Address as Chancellor of the University of Sierra Leone in 1983. The presidential school was established in furtherance to this recommendation and the first set of Community Health Officers [CHOs] and Community Health Assistants [CHAs] were recruited. Since then to date, there has been no legal instrument to regulate that status of CHOs and CHAs in the performance of their duties in line with best practice.

Therefore, Mr Speaker, Honourable members, this Bill will not only bring CHOs and CHAs in line with other medical practitioners such as doctors, nurses and pharmacists, but will also hold the CHOs and the CHAs responsible for their actions during practice. The Bill further seeks the establishment of a regulatory Board for the practice of community health in Sierra Leone. There will also be a clear

understanding on the concept of community health cadre and the role of the community practitioners in Sierra Leone.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the training of CHOs and the CHAs lasted for three years, followed by the post basic supervised internship. The first set of CHOs graduated in 1986. The training of CHOs lasted for two years, followed by other years post-basics supervised internship. Unfortunately, since the inception of the CHOs Programme, there was no visible skill of service for CHOs until 2015, when it was finally endorsed and adopted by the grading Committee of the Civil Service. There has been no law to regularise the practice of CHOs and CHAs. This led to a greater dissatisfaction and feeling of being neglected by the Government amongst the CHOs cadre; hence the decision by the Sierra Leone Community Health Officers; [SLACHO] to lay down their tool [strike action] in 2012. The strike action led to intensive negotiation between the Ministry of Health and Sanitation [MoHS] and SLACHO that year. The negotiation was facilitated by the Human Rights Management Office, [HRMO] and some civil societies, including the Health for all Coalitions and Health Alert, which resulted in an agreement. The MoHS and the SLACHO body among the issues discussed was the upgrading of the CHOs and with certificates of Higher Diploma from Health Technical Grade 5 or Grade 6 and the remaining of these sets of CHOs as Community Health Technicians. However, CHOs with Bachelor Degrees or Master Degree remained to be CHOs. Also, the negotiations led to the establishment of the office of the Chief of CHO which today is now functioning.

However, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I must give the rationale or the aims of this Bill. The primary aim is to establish the school of Community Health and Clinical Sciences, formerly Paramedical School in order to train health workers to meet the requirement of primary health care, including all facets. Accordingly, the training programmes for CHOs and CHAs were based on the fundamental of primary health care. This includes mental and child health, reproductive health, family planning, nutrition, immunisation, water and sanitation, surveillance and effective control of epidemic prone diseases, diagnosis and treatment of common diseases, the health

education and community engagement and empowerment, mental health, oral health and community based rehabilitation.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I must present to this noble House some of the achievements that this institution has done. As we speak, close to fifty CHOs are pursuing Bachelor degrees in Community Health and Clinical Sciences and over thirty to forty CHOs have done their Master degrees. At least, we can boast of having ten to eleven CHOs pursuing their doctorate degree and we have CHOs who are currently PhD holders.

However, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, some of the challenges we are facing as an institution are:

- uncoordinated movement of CHOs and CHAs;
- falling standards of CHOs and CHAs training programme;
- lack of policy treatment framework for CHOs at national level; and
- no Act of Parliament to regulate the practice of Community Health Practitioner.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, with this brief analysis of the proposed Community Health Practitioner Act, 2017, I move that the Community Health Practitioners' Act, 2017 be read for the second time.

[Question Proposed]

HON. DR ABDULAI SESAY: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I want to start by saying that there are over 2,500 to 3,000 CHOs working in government hospitals and in the private sector. They are the ones manning our community health centres. If you look at the bulk of the work force in the medical field in this country, it is done by this group of professionals. It is therefore very important for this body to be regulated. Since the establishment of the medical school in 1983, the first group of graduates was in 1986. Other countries like Malawi, Liberia, Ghana, Tanzania, and Uganda they have enacted laws to regulate their middle manpower. If you go to other parts of the world, you will find out that the middle manpower professionals are being trained and regulated. Unfortunately, this has not been achieved in our country and today will be a milestone for the people of this country if this Honourable House enacts this Bill into law.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the CHOs are in charge of our PHUs, the STPs the Surgical Training Programmes. If you go around our districts hospitals, you will find out that most of the basic surgical procedures to save life are being carried out by our STPs and we owe a lot to them because of the tremendous work they are doing. I want to state here that they are well appreciated throughout the country. Today, we have CHOs who are doing anaesthesia, ophthalmology and public health. Therefore, this cadre of professionals is so important that they need to be regulated. Again, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we can also talk about a new school that has been established in Makeni - the School of Clinical Services. Presently, we have a cadre of clinicians who are not regulated. The question one would want to ask is that what does the future holds for this new group of people who are presently doing their preliminary? Sooner or later, they will be doing a four year training course; and if the first set of people who have been trained are not regulated, what about this new group that is being trained? Therefore, I want to believe that it is compelling that we enact a law that would regulate them.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if we pass this Bill into an Act, it will help us to:

- motivate the CHOs, the STPs and all the people that are in this cadre of professionals because they will feel secured in performing their duties; and
- encourage the new students who are being enrolled in the school of Clinical Sciences.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I believe that all of us seated here who are representatives of various communities have a community health centres and our love ones; i.e., children, wives, brothers, sisters and other relations are being treated by CHOs. In Parliament, we have a health centre that is being managed by a CHO. I therefore feel that it is sad to say that with all the good work these professionals are doing, they are not regulated at all. Many a time there is a feeling of neglect and marginalisation because of this issue. In fact, this has made some of the young professionals to quit the profession because they feel there is no future for them. In that regard, enacting this law will open a new opportunity for these young professionals to know that they are pursuing a field that has a brighter future
[Applause].

THE SPEAKER: Though your time is up, I must state here that you have made a very good and excellent contribution.

HON. MOHAMED K. THOLLEY: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me join the Chairman and the presenter of this document before this House to really bring forth to this Honourable House the importance of these fine gentlemen and ladies in the medical profession. Since the inception of this institution in 1983 to date, these fine ladies and gentlemen in the medical profession have done so much in terms of bringing the medical profession to the forefront. During the dark days of this nation, we did not have enough medical doctors, these fine ladies and gentlemen have done good jobs in terms of making sure that they save life. Majority of us seated here only come to know about these professionals today and their relevance in society. I need not waste too much time elaborating on their importance because during the civil war, a good number of our medical doctors left this nation for fear of one thing or the other, but these particular CHOs and few others were with us in this nation. They helped to take care of the wounded and sick. Again, during the Ebola epidemic, had it not been for the intervention of these CHOs, believe you me, Mr Speaker, more terrible things would have happened. Therefore, I want to say that these professionals are heroes and heroines. We must give them this accolade and as the saying goes, 'if you labour, you must expect.' These people have laboured for far too long, but we have not tapped from their expertise.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I do not know whether it is by coincidence, this institution was established by the then President of this nation, Dr Siaka P. Stevens and today again, we are bringing life to these same people. I want to believe heaven has indeed come for them. These people should be admired at all times, Mr Speaker. To me, if they are to be effective, they must be efficient.

On that note, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to call on this Honourable House to speedily enact this Bill into law. I thank you very much.

HON. HANNAH BUNDU-SONGOWA: Thank you, Mr Speaker for giving me this opportunity. In the first place, I want to complement my colleague Member of Parliament who has so proudly presented this Bill to this noble House. I want to

thank him very much. I also want to thank my colleague healthcare professionals who are here to witness these proceedings. I want to thank His Excellency for his continued support in promoting the healthcare system in this country. During the pre-legislative hearing on this Bill, a good number of the concerns we raised have been addressed; and today, we are here to enact a Bill which will promote the health of individuals in this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I know that these people are professionals, but my advice is that I do not want a situation where CHOs will replace the services of healthcare professionals and nurses. All of us should work in close collaboration and cooperation to protect the health of our people. I want to thank everybody for coming here this morning. Once again, I want to admonish you because you are in our most rural communities to always do your best to save the lives of people in the villages. If you have any concern, make sure you channel that concern to the appropriate authority. This is not the time for 'pa-o-pa, S. O. 2.

With those few words, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank you and to ask this Honourable House to speedily enact this Bill.

HON. NAVO KAIKAI: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker for recognising that I am a health professional and a very senior one for that matter. It makes me proud to stand here and talk about a Bill that I have knowledge of and understanding. I want to thank my colleague from Koinadugu for bringing this Bill to this House. As a health professional, I was so shocked to realise that CHOs in this country are not regulated. If that had been the case, it is about time we put the necessary legislative framework for that purpose.

THE SPEAKER: Sorry, Honourable Member. I realise that Honourable Moses is also a professional in this area, but will be the last to speak because of certain reasons.

HON. NAVO KAIKAI: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, CHOs are so important in our communities, especially where I come from in Kailahun. There was a time we did not have a medical doctor in Kailahun and there was a CHO they used to call him doctor. I was asking myself why people were calling him doctor. I came to realise that it was because of the wonderful things he was doing. He performed surgeries and if it was not for the very CHO, my uncle would have been dead by now

[Applause]. I want to thank you and I encourage you that when this Bill is passed into law, as my colleague have said from the other side, you need to know your limitations. I am a nurse and not a doctor. I am a health visitor and not a midwife. Therefore, you need to know your limitations. Again, we need to work together and understand each other.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to encourage these young and dynamic professionals to step up and give advice where they need to give advice. I am saying this because sometimes when you are a nurse or a CHO, you might feel inferior to even tell the doctor that what you are doing is wrong. However, with this legislation, I am sure it is your responsibility now to ensure that you challenge where you have to challenge. Do not, at any point in time, carry out duties you know you cannot handle because you have been asked by the doctor or the practitioner to do so. You need to be regulated and stand by your medical ethics. You have to be bold enough to tell the doctor that you are not capable of handling a particular case. This is only possible if you are regulated. Again, please make sure that you are regularly updated because without regular update, you will not perform the duties you should perform. I want to encourage this House that when the time comes for us to pass this Bill into law, we will do so without further delay. If this Bill is passed into law, I am sure it is going to make a lot of difference in the medical field. For instance, if these professionals are regulated, it is your duty to question a person if something goes wrong.

With those few words, I want to thank you very much for giving me this opportunity to say few words.

HON. SIDI M. TUNIS *[Acting Minority Leader of the House]*: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I do not think there is much to say about this Bill. We have already completed the debate before now and I would want to call on my colleagues to support its passage into law. I thank you very much.

HON. LEONARD S. FOFANAH: Thank you Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, for the CHO attached to Parliament here, I would have been a dead man last week *[Applause]*. As I move around, this is the second doze of 'Lockmal' tablet that I am taking now. I had a very serious attack of malaria and it was almost going

into my brain. After the doctor's examination, he did the prescription and I thank God and Mr Kamara that I am able to stand here this morning *[Applause]*. Having had that experience, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am **100%** in support of this Bill *[Applause]* and I would urge every Member of Parliament, especially those from the provinces to wholeheartedly support this Bill. I am saying this because like the Honourable from Kailahun said, there are places that do not have any medical doctors. Our doctors are the CHOs and those are the people we rely on.

Having said that Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to support this Bill and to urge every Member of Parliament to do likewise. I thank you, Mr Speaker *[Applause]*.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[The Bill entitled, 'The Community Health Practitioners Act, 2017 being an Act to establish the Community Health Practitioner's Board for the purpose of regulating all Professional Community Health Service providers in the performance of their duties and for other related matter, has been read the second time].

[COMMITTEE STAGE]

[THE HOUSE REVERT ITSELF INTO A COMMITTEE]

HON. LEONARD S. FOFANAH: Mr Speaker, I stand on S.O 51[1]. I move that the Bill be committed to the Legislative Committee.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, that is quite understandable. What could have happened today was strictly the presentation of the Legislative Committee Report. Honourable Members, is there any seconder to that motion?

HON. HANAH BUNDU SONGOWA: Mr Speaker, considering the importance of this Bill, I so second the motion.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, the Bill is now committed to the Legislative Committee. When we come next, we are only going to have a presentation of the Report.

[The Bill has been committed to the Legislative Committee]

[THE HOUSE RESUMES]

HON. ABU B. KOROMA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, on behalf of myself and my beautiful wife, the Deputy Minister of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs, we wish to express our sincere thanks and appreciation to all Honourable Members who went to Lunsar and Port Loko on the 27th and 28th to grace our wedding. I want to single out the Rt Honourable Speaker of this Parliament, the Rt Honourable Sheku Badara Basiru Dumbuya, who accepted my request to be one of my Godfathers. He was there in person.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Abu B. Koroma, the only regret is that I should have been there with the Honourable Veronica K. Sesay *[Laughter]*.

HON. ABU B. KOROMA: Mr Speaker, we want to thank you very much sir. Secondly, we want to thank the Honourable Dr Bernadette Lahai, who also graciously accepted the request of my wife to become one of her Godmothers. We also want to thank the Honourable Ansumana J. Kaikai, who was also one of my Godfathers. Again, I want to thank my brother, the Honourable Foday Rado Yokie, who gave a very wonderful speech on behalf of the SLPP, the APC and the guests. I thank you very much my brother. Finally, I want to thank all those who went to grace that occasion. We had a very good time.

THE SPEAKER: I would want to associate myself with those sentiments, particularly the tribute paid to the SLPP Members of Parliament. Although Honourable Dr Bernadette Lahai and Honourable Ansumana J. Kaikai were there, but believe you me, the person I like to commend here is the Honourable Foday Rado Yokie because he always present in such occasions, whether it was SLPP or APC. In this Parliament, we are one and the same. Let the people outside quarrel over their politics, but we are a family here and that has always been demonstrated. Thank you very much.

ADJOURNMENT

*[The House rose at 12:15 p.m. and was adjourned to Thursday, 11TH May, 2017
at 10a.m.]*