



OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

[HANSARD]

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

FIFTH SESSION –FIRST MEETING

TUESDAY 10TH JANUARY, 2023

SESSION – 2022/2023



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

Proceedings of the Sitting of the House
Held Tuesday 10th January 2023

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Official Hansard Report of the Proceedings of the House

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

TUESDAY, 10 JANUARY 2023

I. PRAYERS

[The Table Clerk, Mrs Bintu Weston, Read the Prayers]

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

[The Speaker, Hon. Dr Chernor Abass Bundu in the Chair]

The House was called to Order

Suspension of S. O. 5[2]

HON. MATHEW NYUMA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to amend the Order Paper. I move that Item V[D], which is the Sierra Leone National Commission on Arms Act 2021 be removed from the Order Paper.

THE SPEAKER: Any Seconder?

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: I so second, Mr Speaker.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[The Order Paper has been accordingly amended]

II. CORRECTION OF VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS FOR THE PARLIAMENTARY SITTING, HELD ON THURSDAY 22ND DECEMBER 2022.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, we go through the record of Votes and Proceedings for the Parliamentary sitting held on Thursday, 22nd December, 2022. As usual, we shall skip pages 1 to 4 and start with Page 5. Page 6? Page 7?

HON. MARRAY CONTEH: Mr Speaker Page 7. The 't' is missing. It should be 'The Senior Table Clerk' instead of 'he' table clerk.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, which paragraph are you referring to?

HON. MARRAY CONTEH: Mr Speaker, the first paragraph after the table.

THE SPEAKER: Table Clerks, please take note. Page 8? Page 9? Page 10? Page 11? Page 12? Page 13? If there is no correction or amendment, can someone move for the adoption of the record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting held on Thursday, 22nd December, 2022 as amended?

HON. SAHR CHARLES: Mr Speaker, I was here, but I have not seen my name on the attendance.

THE SPEAKER: The Table Clerks will take note of that.

HON. SAHR CHARLES: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

HON. ALIEU I. KAMARA: Mr Speaker, I so move.

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON. HABIB K. LEBBIE: I so second, Mr Speaker.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[Record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting, held on Thursday, 22nd December, 2022 has been adopted as amended]

III. ANNOUNCEMENT BY MR. SPEAKER

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, you would agree with me that this is the first sitting of 2023 and I want to take this opportunity to extend the warmest imaginable New Year; the warmest and happiest New Year to everybody in this House, including members of the Press Gallery and all Staff of the Parliamentary Service. I wish all of us good health as we struggle along in translating the aspirations of the people of our dear country into the action that they deserve. I want to thank all of you for your cooperation in diverse ways during the year that has just ended [2022] and look forward to enjoying your cooperation in the months ahead in the run-off to another general election. Thank you and I wish all of you the very best in all your individual and collective endeavours. For those of you who are fallen far of any role in the course of 2022, may I ask that you please endeavour to do better in 2023. One particular area I would ask all of us to be conscious of is our time keeping. Am afraid, that one we cannot write any beautiful letters home about it. The little said about that the better. I can only hope for the best. I thank you.

IV. PAPERS LAID

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL AND MINISTER OF JUSTICE

ATTORNEY GENERAL AND MINISTER OF JUSTICE: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to lay on the Table of this Honourable House the following papers:

[A] The Magistrates' Court [Small Commercial Claims] Rules 2021
Statutory Instrument No. 8 of 2021

[B] THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

The Right to Access Information Regulations 2022

The Right to Access Information Act, 2013 [Act No. 2 2013]

Statutory Instrument No. 9 Of 2022

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I was expecting the Minister of Information to be here, but he had not even communicated to us. They are not around and I cannot lay this Paper. I did not receive any excuse from them. I want to be very honest. We shall lay the Paper later. With your leave, I would like to amend the Order Paper.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I will allow you to do that, but was the Minister well informed?

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: Table Clerks sent out notices since last week Thursday or Friday. We do not know what has gone wrong because nobody communicated to us. In this regard, Honourable Members, I beg to amend the Order Paper by removing item 'B' under laying of Paper by the Minister of Information and Communications.

THE SPEAKER: I hope it will not see the light of day for some time.

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: In light of explanation received, I hope we will all bear that in mind.

HON. HASSAN A. SESAY: Mr Speaker, the Leader of Government Business has just said that notices were sent to the Ministry, but did not receive any communication from the Minister. Therefore, I want to support that this document should not see the light of day until the Leader so wishes. The Minister should have called the Leader of Government Business and explain why he will not be able to come. This is an affront to Parliament and the Leader must be given the necessary support to deal with this matter.

THE SPEAKER: Well noted. I have a Motion. Is there any seconder to that Motion?

HON. HASSAN A. SESAY: I so second, Mr Speaker.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[The Motion to amend the Order Paper has been carried]

THE SPEAKER: That virtually brings us to the end of the day's proceedings.

HON. DR MAMOUD KALOKOH: S.O. 23. Mr Speaker, with your leave, I would like to implore you to inquire into the issue of the price of passport. This is because the price of passport, according to grapevine source, is going now at **Le 2,500,000**. I want to suggest that the head of Immigration Department is summoned, so that he can explain to us the cost of a passport.

THE SPEAKER: I think we have to invite the Minister of Internal Affairs, instead of the head of Immigration.

HON. DR MAMOUD KALOKOH: That is the situation and it is so alarming.

HON. BASHIRU SLIKIE: Mr Speaker, my colleague on the other side said it is a rumour. I do not want this House to act on rumours. I am sure the passport agreement calls for \$100. I am certain that they transact according to the current dollar rate.

THE SPEAKER: Well, the Honourable Member is asking for the Minister of Internal Affairs to come and offer an explanation.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Speaker, we need some clarifications. We are dealing with a gullible populace. The Agreement we passed in this House calls for **\$100** per passport. As we speak, **\$100** dollar is not **Le2.5mln**. That is the clarification I wanted to make. I am not against inviting the Minister to come and explain to us, but I want the general public to know that passport is not **Le2.5mln**. This is the situation, except you want to bring the Agreement for review.

HON. DR MARK M. KALOKOH: Mr Speaker, I started by saying that it is a rumour.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, did you take any step to ascertain the veracity of the rumour?

HON. DR MARK M. KALOKOH: Well, this is my step and this is the forum I decided to use.

THE SPEAKER: You could have helped the House by finding out whether the rumour has any validity or not.

HON. DR MARK M. KALOKOH: Mr Speaker, it would be precise if the Minister comes and tell us the cost of a passport. It will be good for this nation.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I understand the point the Honourable from Bombali is putting across. In the last Parliament, when the Agreement was brought here, the passport was increased from **Le100,000** to **Le500,000**. There was another Agreement which came to this House that pegged the passport price to dollars. The cost of a passport at that time was **Le500,000**, but when it was pegged to the dollar **\$100** the price changed to **Le750,000**. We said at that time that the original Agreement was **Le500,000** and not **\$100**. This was pioneered in this Parliament by Paolo Conteh who was then the Internal Affairs Minister. As Members of Parliament, we are supposed to know the cost of passport. The cost of passport is one hundred dollars [\$100] plus or minus increases in inflation.

THE SPEAKER: The Honourable Member based his point on a rumour and rumours could be unfounded. I would have liked to hear that having heard the rumour, you went a step further to ascertain whether it has any basis or not. I will still give you the Floor to make your point.

HON. DR MARK M. KALOKOH: I have merely presented the concerns of the citizens of this country and particularly the masses.

THE SPEAKER: Your concern is based on a rumour.

HON. DR MARK M. KALOKOH: That is why I implored this House to call the authority concerned to come and explain to us the cost of a passport. We are emphasizing on the issue of dollar. We have passed a law here that Sierra Leone transaction in terms of monetary issue should be done in Leones. We are confusing things, and even this house is a part and parcel of confusing things. There is a law which states that all transactions are to be transacted in Leones What are we saying?

THE SPEAKER: let us confine ourselves to the issue. The issue is that this House would like to ascertain what the correct price of a passport is. If that is so, we shall invite the Minister here.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Speaker, the passport price was passed in this House. Let us go back to the Hansard and check.

THE SPEAKER: There is no dispute about that, Honourable Member.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: I am sure the only thing we need to do is to call for the Agreement. We should know, as a Parliament, the cost of a passport. It was in this Parliament that we set the cost of a passport. Some of us challenged it, but we were in opposition. We considered it then as a bad law, but the majority got their way and it is a law. It should not be in contention at all. As Members of Parliament, we should know that the cost of a passport is **\$100** and the determination of the hundred dollars should be based on inflation. If the inflation of the dollar is **10%** then it should increase and if the price of the dollar reduces then the price of a passport reduces. That was what was brought to this House for ratification.

HON. DR MARK M. KALOKOH: What is the cost of dollar now?

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: I don't know.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, we are bringing strenuous issues. The point before us is the concern you have expressed about the price of a passport. You said you have reasons to believe that the price is escalating and that is the case, we shall invite the Minister to come and tell us the correct price for a passport.

HON. DR MARK M. KALOKOH: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

HON. EMILIA L. TONGI: Mr Speaker, I stand on S.O.23. There is a very important message I would like to send to the Mayor of Freetown. I met some ladies around Hill-Cut Road this morning sweeping the road and this might cause another catastrophe. They have no right to be on that street during odd hours. So, we should tell the Mayor of Freetown about this development.

THE SPEAKER: How do you know it was the Mayor who sent them there?

HON. EMILIA L. TONGI: Mr Speaker, I do not know. She is the Mayor of Freetown.

THE SPEAKER: You do not know, but you are bringing it to the House?

HON. EMILIA L. TONGI: Mr Speaker, I am bringing a concern to the House.

THE SPEAKER: Yes but you say you are inviting the Mayor and you say you don't know.

HON. EMILIA L. TONGI: It is a message Mr. Speaker; please try to understand with me.

THE SPEAKER: Yes but try and ascertain who put those old ladies on the road first.

HON. EMILIA L. TONGI: Those on the road are old women.

THE SPEAKER: Who put them there?

HON. EMILIA L. TONGI: I don't know, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Well, try and find out.

HON. EMILIA L. TONGI: No, but I am talking about the protection of those women.

THE SPEAKER: I am also concerned about the dignity of this House.

HON. EMILIA L. TONGI: Mr Speaker, I am foreseeing danger that happened at Lumley. I do not want that to happen again at Hill-Cut Road, especially when the women are sweeping. It is dangerous and the women have no choice because they are working for money. Although they are working for money, we also have a responsibility here to protect them. They should not be sweeping between 8:00 and 10:00. I am sure if they do that between 5:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m. it will be fine.

THE SPEAKER: I think this matter should be sent to the Committees on Works and Transport.

HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS: Mr Speaker, I think it should be the Committee on Local Government because those women are employees of Freetown City Council. I can

say that with authority. Most times they have uniforms with the inscription, Freetown City Council.

THE SPEAKER: Well, let them look into it please. I think we have exhausted the S.O. 23 for the day. Thank you very much.

ADJOURNMENT

[The House rose at 11:40 a.m. and was adjourned to Thursday, 12th January, 2022 at 10:00 a.m.]

