

*OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN*

# **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**

**[HANSARD]**

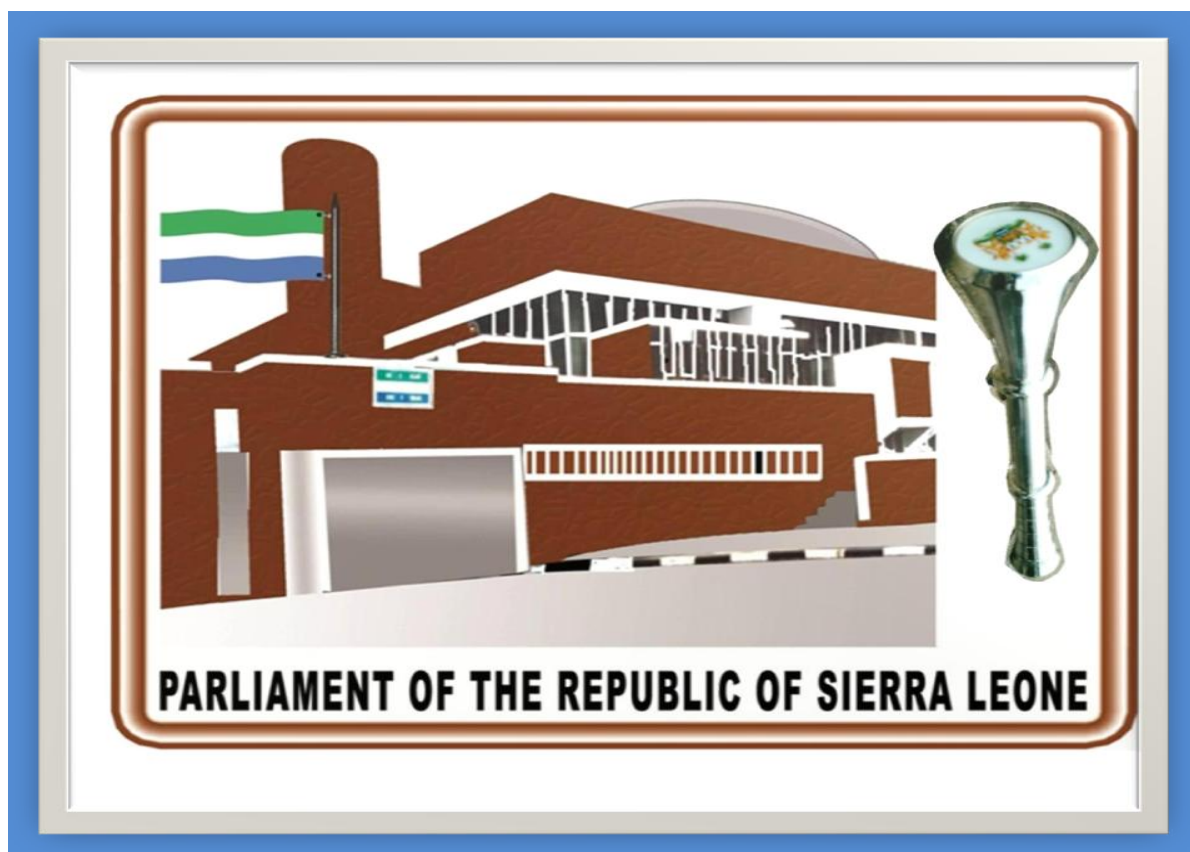
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**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT**

**FIRST SESSION – FIRST MEETING**

**FRIDAY, 10<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY, 2025**

*SESSION – 2024/2025*



*OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN*

# **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**

**[HANSARD]**

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**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT**

**VOLUME: 1**

**NUMBER: 26**

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

Proceedings of the Sitting of the House  
Held on Friday, 10<sup>th</sup> January, 2025

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*THE CHAMBER OF PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE*

## **Official Hansard Report of the Proceedings of the House**

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### **FIRST SESSION – FIRST MEETING OF THE SIXTH PARLIAMENT OF THE SECOND REPUBLIC**

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**FRIDAY 10<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2025**

#### **I. PRAYERS**

*[The Table Clerk, Esther Boima read the prayer]*

*[The House met at 10:15 a.m. in Parliament Building, Tower Hill, Freetown]*

*[The Speaker, Hon. Segepoh Solomon Thomas, 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 FRIDAY, 20<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER, AND SATURDAY, 21<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER, 2024.**

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, we go through the record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting, held on Friday, 20<sup>th</sup> December, 2024. As usual, we shall skip pages 1-4 and start with Page 5. Do you have any comments or correction to make on Page 5? Page 6? Page 7? Page 8? Page 9? Page 10? Page 11? Page 12? Page 13?

We now go to the record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting held on Saturday, 21<sup>st</sup> December, 2024. As usual, we shall skip pages 1-4 and start with page 5. Do you have any comments or correction to make on Page 5? Page 6? If there are no comments or corrections, can someone move for the adoption of both records of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sittings held on Friday, 20<sup>th</sup> and Saturday, 21<sup>st</sup> December, 2024 as presented?

**HON. JOSEPH WILLIAMS-LAMIN:** I so move, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Any seconder?

**HON. IDRIS SAHID KAMARA:** I so second.

*[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]*

*[Records of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sittings, held on Friday, 20<sup>th</sup> and Saturday, 21<sup>st</sup> December, 2024 have been adopted as presented]*

**III. ANNOUNCEMENT BY MR SPEAKER**

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, my attention has been drawn to the conduct of a particular individual who is parading in this Parliament as journalist and his name is Melvin Tejan Mansaray. I have been informed by Members of Parliament from both sides of the aisles that on the day we came here to vote regarding the report related to the Auditor General, he was here and just after the vote, he has

been engaging several media houses, criticising the decision of Parliament. When we came here on that day, I tried as best as I could to ensure that the procedures and processes of Parliament relating to that particular matter were conducted in a transparent manner. We did that in the full view of the gallery. We also ensured that people were in the Chambers of the Parliament to observe the process. In fact, the Clerk went out of his way to go very close to where the Opposition Members were seated in order to see exactly what the votes were. I made a ruling related to a particular constitutional matter. When we make rulings in Parliament, if you are not satisfied with a particular ruling, it behoves you to seek redress in the Supreme Court. As a citizen of the Republic of Sierra Leone, you are free to go to the Supreme Court for interpretation of certain provisions.

Honourable Members, Parliament has been a free institution. We are not operating as a closed Parliament; we are operating an open Parliament where citizens are free to approach us regarding the decisions that we take here. We also explain exactly why we make certain decisions. However, this individual has taken upon himself to go all over the place, criticising not only the ruling of Mr Speaker, but the decision of Parliament. I do not consider his act to be journalism; the kind of journalism we want this country and this House to tolerate. He has taken upon himself to be the opposition to whatever Parliament does. Members of Parliament have informed me and I also believe that any decision we take in Parliament he goes around criticising Parliament. I do not know what he wants Parliament to do. Maybe he wants Parliament to be dancing to his tune. So, I hereby rule that henceforth, he shall not have access within the precincts of Parliament until such a time Parliament shall decide. I so rule, Honourable Members. Mr Sergeant-At-Arms, if the individual in question is here, make sure that he leaves the precincts of Parliament. Please inform the Inspector General of Police that Melvin Tejan Mansaray shall not have any access to the precincts of Parliament until such time when we shall decide. Let him go out immediately if he is here.

**HON. ABDUL KARGBO:** Mr Speaker, of course S.O.42 is very instructive and clear that the decision of the Speaker cannot be challenged. However, when a journalist does something that is not correct, I want to implore your good office and the

general House that we get the attention of the governing bodies such as the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists [SLAJ] and the Independent Media Commission [IMC]. They are the most appropriate institutions to investigate the conduct of Journalists and we will suggest to them the punitive actions to be taken.

**THE SPEAKER:** We will come to that later, Honourable Member; we will determine that later. He shall not have access to the precincts of Parliament and this serve as a warning to other journalists who have the opportunity to be in Parliament. This is my Chambers and I have the authority to allow you to be here or not to come to the Chambers at all. I am so impressed with majority of them regarding their conduct. Majority of them have been practicing responsible journalism, but we have few bad eggs among them and I will eventually weed them out. This is because we want responsible journalists in the House of Parliament. This is a House of the people, but we cannot tolerate recklessness here at all. Apart from that, immediately after sitting of Parliament, I want to meet with the Leaders of the Opposition in my Chambers and on Monday, I would want to meet with the Leaders of the Ruling Bench at 10:00 a.m.

**HON. MOHAMED BANGURA:** Mr Speaker, let me just have clarification on the ruling that you have just made. This ruling has to do with the Freedom of Speech. I want to know if this ruling is for temporary measures.

**THE SPEAKER:** I have said it clearly that until such time when Parliament shall determine. We are going to take further steps to ensure that he is properly investigated; and after the investigation, I will determine whether he will come back or not. But for now, we shall not allow him.

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

PROPOSER: HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA.

SECONDER: HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE.

**HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA:** Mr Speaker, before the Motion, I want to make an amendment on the Order Paper relating to item V, which has to do with Bills. I

propose the removal of Roman two, which is Electricity and Water Regulatory Commission Act. I did this in consultation with my colleagues on the other side.

**THE SPEAKER:** Any seconder?

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

*[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]*

*[Amendment by the Leader of Government Business has been carried]*

**THE SPEAKER:** Do we have the Minister of Energy or the Deputy here? Leader of Government Business, please inform the two ministers to wash their dirty linen before coming here at the next sitting relating to that particular Bill.

**HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I present to you the Sixth Report [Excerpt of the Fourth Report] of the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service on Parliamentary vetting of Presidential Nominations.

### *1. Introduction*

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service that is charged with the responsibility of vetting presidential nominees met on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> December 2024, and interviewed amongst others the following nominees:

- i. Proposed Deputy Permanent Representative 2 [Legal] of the United Nations; and
- ii. Proposed Member, Electricity Generation and Transmission Company [EGTC].

### *2. Procedure*

The Committee conducted its hearing within the framework of procedures and interviewed the nominees on issues pertaining to their backgrounds to ensure that they have the required education and proven track records in pertinent work situations for such appointments to important offices of state. Further probing questions put to the appointees covered wide ranging issues relating to declared assets, tax obligations and their visions for productive tenure. Issues of unsuitability or otherwise were also closely looked into by the Committee.



### *3. Fourth Sitting of the Committee on Monday 9th December, 2024*

In tandem with the above the Committee interviewed the following Presidential Nominees on oath:

*Madam Michaela Barbara Eddina Swallow, Proposed Deputy Permanent Representative 2 [Legal] of the United Nations*

Madam Michaela Barbara Eddina Swallow is an acclaimed Barrister by profession with no mean standing. She is a hard working woman that has excelled in several assignments both nationally and internationally. She holds a Master Degree in Law (LLM) in International Business and Commercial Law with Distinction from the University of East Anglia, Norwich, United Kingdom [2010-2012]. She was called to the Bar in 2007.

Amongst her several professional services, the Committee noted the following:

- ❖ 2008-2012 - Barrister and Solicitor of Wright and Co Solicitors, Freetown ,Sierra Leone;
- ❖ 2014-2015 – Head of Legal and Corporate Affairs;
- ❖ 2015-2019, Company Secretary, SKY Bank Ltd, Freetown; and
- ❖ July 2019 –Senior Legal Counsel, Petroleum Directorate of Sierra Leone.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the nominee has offered pro bono services as:

- ❖ 2020-2024: President, Sierra Leone Bar Association;
- ❖ 2023-2024: Transitional Chairman, West African Bar Association; and
- ❖ 2022 to date, Elected Governing Member, Commonwealth Lawyers Association, etc.

Responding to probing questions on her role as legal representative of the Government of Sierra Leone at the United Nations, Mrs Eddina Swallow said "The United Nations has a lot of protocols, conventions, agreement and contracts that it enters into with Member Countries and International Organizations. These need legal minds to ensure that Sierra Leone is fairly represented. One of my prime roles is to advise the Permanent Representative and the Government of Sierra Leone on the merits and demerits of all legal agreements entered into for and behalf of the Government of Sierra Leone at the United Nations."

*Mr Allan Spaceline Tuboku Metzger, Proposed Member, Electricity Generation and Transmission Company [EGTC].*

Mr Metzger is a trade unionist with adept knowledge in entrepreneurial development and management, networking of businesses and a teacher in Computer Science. He has profound experience working with the Chamber of Commerce and has always exhibited hard work and loyalty.

The nominee holds several certificates to his credit and has proven records of producing excellent results in any assignment. He promised to work with colleagues to improve on the service delivery of EDSA, especially in areas of revenue accountability.

#### *4. Recommendations*

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

[i] Madam Michaela Barbara Eddina Swallow, proposed Deputy Permanent Representative 2 [Legal] of the United Nations; and

[ii] Mr Allan Spaceline Tuboku Metzger, proposed Member, Electricity Generation and Transmission Company(EGTC)

#### *5. Conclusion*

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Sixth Report reflects the unanimous view of the Committee. I therefore move that the Sixth Report of the Second Session of the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service be adopted by the House and that the recommendations contained therein be approved.

Signed .....

Honourable, Mathew Sahr Nyuma, JP

Chairman & Leader of Government Business

**THE SPEAKER:** Any seconder?

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

**THE SPEAKER:** Mr Leader, as far as I know, I think she is Mrs Edina Sandy.

**HON MATHEW S. NYUMA:** You have to pardon me of reading what is in front of me sir.

**THE SPEAKER:** Do not be in conflict with the presidency. Thank you very much Mr Leader.

*[Question Proposed]*

**HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have been presented with two nominees by His Excellency the President for Members of Parliament to do due diligence in terms of their approval. I am sure the nominees have been carefully selected among lots of Sierra Leoneans who supported His Excellency the President. They were deemed fit to come and help the President in achieving his agenda. We are sure and confident that His Excellency has done due diligence in selecting them; and when once you occupy these offices after parliamentary approval, you have to deliver on behalf of His Excellency and the people of Sierra Leone.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me talk about one of the nominees, Madam Edina Swaray. I have known Madam Swaray for the past twenty seven years, when we were at the Saint Edwards Secondary School at Kington. I could still remember that during the 1998-1999 academic year, Madam Edina Swaray was one of the few people we used to admire at Saint Edwards. She came from Saint Joseph Convent Secondary School and she was at Upper Six at the Saint Edwards Secondary School while I was at Lower Six. If some of us are here today, eloquently presenting issues relating to governance, Madam Edina Swaray played a pivotal role. She was the leader of the Literally Debating Society [L&DS]. She was one of the students that encouraged some of us to be members of the L&DS. She always visits our class to convince us to join the L&DS. The L&DS was meant primarily for pupils who were in the sixth form, especially the Leadership cadre. However, few of us that were in form five were identified by Madam Edina Swaray and we were encouraged to join the L&DS. We were convinced and I was one of the few members who decided to join the L&DS.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Madam Swaray made sure that the Saint Edwards Secondary School led every debating competition organised in Sierra Leone, especially in the Western Area. When we went to the L&DS, it was a fun, especially when they had to call names. It was a period when we use all sorts of names. Most times when I listen to the Opposition Leader, I see exactly what we were doing at the L&DS, using all types of grammar to describe people and issues in

the House. Today, when he speaks, I see ourselves in form six, but he is now speaking as a Leader of the Opposition. I doff my hat to you, Madam Swaray. I know you cannot remember all these, but you did a great job and I still remembered that. If I am speaking on behalf of the people today, you play a part. You have been carefully selected by His Excellency to represent him at the United Nations. We are confident on this side that you will perform well on behalf of His Excellency the President and the people of this country. We know the role she played as President of the Bar Association. She went unopposed on her second term election. That means she provided the leadership that the Legal minds wanted. That was why she went unopposed on her second term election. Thank you very much, Madam Swaray. We hope that the leadership you provided at the Bar Association will be taken to the United Nations. I want to congratulate you on your nomination.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would also like to talk about Mr Metzger. I presided over his interview as Acting Chairman of the Appointments Committee. He extremely mesmerised the Committee and he was able to convince us. I believe that as a Board Member, you are going to work with other members. This is why you should work as a team. Make sure you deliver because it is no secret that the current state of our electricity is challenged. Make sure you work with other Members of the Board, so that we can generate sustainable electricity. The Electricity Generation and Transmission Company [EGTC] is extremely important in terms of generating electricity. The Board, which provides policy guidelines, should work as a team, so that you provide directions for the management of EGTC. I wish the nominees well and I hope you will perform on behalf of his Excellency and the people of Sierra Leone. You will not fail us because excuses will not be tolerated in 2025-2028. So, your good performance must be the focus and that is what we have to campaign on. Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much. Since no MP stood up, I now call on the Leader of the Opposition.

**HON. ABDUL KARGBO:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, first, I want to thank the Committee on Appointments for the due diligence they did regarding these appointees. Today, we are looking at the legal representative to the United Nations

and also the Member of the EGTC. I would like to start with the nominee for EGTC. He is going to a very crucial company. Electricity is crucial for Sierra Leoneans and those who are in the capital city will attest to the fact that electricity is crucial. During the holidays, it was very strange for us to live without electricity. You are going to serve on the Board not only in the city, but in other parts of the country. I always spend my weekends in Port Loko District, Lungi to be specific. The working days are being spent in the city. I had to leave Lungi with the intention that I will meet electricity in the city, but to my greatest surprise, there was no electricity during such a crucial holiday season.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to remind the nominee that he has been appointed to make the requisite changes. Electricity should be a fundamental human right. We should not deprive our citizens of electricity. We have seen on several occasions where very aggressive actions are being taken to ensure that the Boards are being dissolved and new appointments are being made. Ministers have also been replaced, but all those actions have not produced what we are looking for as citizens. It is undeniable and we all agree that electricity tariffs are exorbitantly high. If Sierra Leoneans are paying for electricity, why is it not made available in the city and in the provincial areas? It is a cause for concern because all of us who were elected and our supporters are concerned. Like I always say, Sierra Leoneans are content. Content in the sense just give them their basic amenities, such as water, electricity and reduce the prices of goods. We always struggle to provide these basic amenities to our citizens. So, you have been given a crucial responsibility and you will be held responsible if you fail to do your work. I want to use this opportunity to implore all those serving at the EGTC to ensure that they provide the citizens of this nation constant electricity. It is very crucial.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I now go to Madam Michaela Edina Swaray, proposed Deputy Permanent Representative [II] to the United Nations. Of course you are going to a place that has the face of Sierra Leone. You will be representing our country and whatever thing you do there, it is done on behalf of Sierra Leone as a nation. We do not want to see a situation where you act otherwise or bring disrepute to your country. The Deputy Leader of Government Business has

showered accolades on you based on the fact that you attended the same school and you have exhibited some leadership qualities whilst you were in school with him. Similarly, he spoke about the L&DS and it was compulsory in the school I attended, even though it was a village school. So, you should ensure that you do your best. I have always said that there are Sierra Leoneans all over the world and it has come to my notice that we have some representatives of this country who are discriminating against Sierra Leoneans. They only care about those Sierra Leoneans who are out there supporting their own political party and disown those Sierra Leones who are not supporters of their own political party. You are not going there to serve SLPP supporters only. You are going there to serve your country and you have to do that judiciously.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I have always said that our actions and inactions will be judged by posterity. Make sure you act appropriately, so that Sierra Leoneans will clap and praise you. You will not be there forever. I have always said that we are Members of Parliament and these positions are not forever. However, the question one would want to ask is, will you be bold enough to lift your head and look other Sierra Leoneans after your tenure as a Member of Parliament? These are the questions that we should be asking ourselves while being appointed into these offices. Some of us consider ourselves as gods when we are in office. We always assume that we will never leave office and create a lot of enemies. As soon as you are fired, even to walk on the streets of Freetown is a problem because of what we did while in office. So, I want to advise you based on what I have heard from the Deputy Leader of Government Business that you conduct yourself judiciously. I want to advise you to translate that in the office you are going to occupy. I want you to see every Sierra Leonean as Sierra Leonean. Make sure you create a level playing field for all Sierra Leones. Do not discriminate any Sierra Leonean. This is an opportunity over seven million people are looking for. If you have had it now, make good use of it because posterity will judge us for whatever services we are rendering to our nation.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to appeal to my Members of Parliament who are on this side of the aisle to approve these presidential appointees. I thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much, Leader of the Opposition.

**HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, having read and presented the two nominees for approval by this Honourable House, I want to say something about gender. When we were checking for gender policy in terms of appointments, we first of all recognised gender parity. Today, it is a testament that we have one man and one woman. We have placed them in the position of trust based on their qualifications. We are not making you retrogressive in terms of appointment, but we want you to climb up the ladder by serving in very important offices.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if you look at Madam Swaray's Curriculum Vitae and what she has contributed to this nation, tells you that she is a great woman. First, we stated in the report that 'her works have national and international recognition with the associated works she has done in life.' So, what we have done as a government is to make sure we cement her CV to a more palatable way of serving the nation. We have given you that platform to serve the nation at the United Nations and in the office of the Legal Affairs. So, we are not taking you off-balance at all. We want her to continue doing her good job. She stated clearly that we have conventions and legal instruments that we have passed in this very House and the one that we are dealing with presently. Thank God we are in the Security Council now. So, it behooves all of us to place people like Madam Edina Swaray in the position where she can serve with her conscience and represent the state very well. We want to deliver especially at the Security Council.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in November this year, we are going to chair the UN Security Council for a period of hundred and one months. So, you have been placed in a better position to do your work. You have served in the Bar Association and many other institutions on pro bono basis. When things were very difficult, you were giving free services to people. There is no iota of doubt in what she can do. What we are doing for this nation is to make sure we interpret our laws judiciously.

We are not making appointments for appointments sake, but your appointment was based on your CV irrespective of your gender or status. So, I want colleagues, especially the female MPs in this House to understand that since we have taken this drive to empower the women by giving them positions where they can serve, they should do so with their conscience and in good faith. So, we are happy for you nomination and I know you will serve well.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, with the help of God, all of us should be serving with our consciences whenever we are in positions of trust. I have said that people jubilate when they are appointed, but they do not jubilate when they are fired. In fact, the first time they get the appointed they thank God and Mr President because among seven million people, you were selected and by the wisdom of Mr President for you to serve.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Leader of Government Business, what are you saying? Are saying that when people are fired, they should say thanks to Mr President?

**HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA:** They should thank him, Mr Speaker. People are doing it sir. They thanked Mr President for giving them the opportunity to serve this nation and even thanked the people of Sierra Leone. I am just saying that in a democratic state, we need to encourage people to start imitating some of these things. What we have seen these days is that people have the temerity to resign when difficult situations arise. So, we also encourage people to look at all of these things when they are serving. I am very proud that we have Madam Edina Swaray serving in that capacity. I believe she will do well and make us proud. I want to admonish every Sierra Leone to feel free and contact her whenever they have issues relating to legality. She has the requisite skills and knowledge to give the information that you need.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we know electricity is a challenging issue these days, but we are gradually trying to stabilise it. So, we need more professionals and those who can give themselves to serve. You would agree with me that what we have in our CV is completely different from when you are working with people. So, Mr Metzger is going to serve on the Board and he is going to serve with his colleagues. I believe based on what I read during the interview and the confidence



he gave us that he would serve with due diligence, I have no iota of doubt that he will perform his utmost best as professional. I believe he can deliver for the people of this nation. The purpose of vetting presidential nominees before approval is to determine their competences, qualifications and their readiness. They should serve the nation with the interest of the country at heart and not individual interest. It is Sierra Leone you are going to serve and not yourself. Today, we have one nominee who is going to serve at the international stage and one at the local level. The Board that is very strategic and we are very concerned about electricity in this country. We want you to deliver well for the people of Sierra Leone. I know he can deliver and he has a free mind to say the right thing. Please make sure that we succeed.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank all those who contributed to this approval for their numerous comments. You made us proud as a Committee and to make sure that the Committee is always on their toes to do the right thing. I thank the Speaker for presiding over us. I therefore move that the Sixth Report of the Second Session of the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service be adopted by the House and the recommendations contained therein be approved.

*[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]*

*[Motion of the Committee of Appointments and the Public Service has been approved]*

#### **IV. BILL**

#### **THE NATIONAL PETROLEUM REGULATORY AUTHORITY ACT, 2024.**

##### **INTRODUCTION AND FIRST READING**

##### **THE MINISTER OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY**

**MR IBRAHIM ALPHA SESAY** *[Minister of Trade and Industry]*: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I move that the Bill entitled the National Petroleum Regulatory Authority Act, 2024 be read for the first time.

*[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]*

*[The Bill entitled the National Petroleum Regulatory Authority Act, 2024 has been read for the first time].*

[SECOND READING]

**MR IBRAHIM ALPHA SESAY:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I move that the Bill entitled the National Petroleum Regulatory Authority Act, 2024 be read for the second time. Mr Speaker, all of us are aware of the entrenched global crisis and its related oil price vitality has affected various governments all over the world to search for home-grown solutions, including appropriate policy developments. The long-term trend of shifting products demand, misalignment of demand and supply and ensuring that Sierra Leone remains an attractive destination for new business is the spirit behind this Bill. The objective of this policy is to mitigate the supply chain challenges in downstream petroleum sector and to take practical steps that will impact the effective and efficient service delivery in the sector in this country. The expectation is to promote the development of strong and competitive downstream industry, operating safely, efficiently and economically in harmony with government objectives. Today, the industry remains volatile and a long time global view is that the current global downturn is therefore foreseeable period which is an action that triggers every government's preparedness. The current fundamentals are looking bullish with cut in global supplies that are unmatched with growing demands. Petroleum importing countries, like Sierra Leone, are definitely more vulnerable to this price increases and attendant shocks. With all these shocks and global developments affecting the sector, please be informed that the PRA Act has not been reviewed or amended since its enactment in 2024. It is just a critical time for us to review this Act in order to reflect the current trends and to prepare for the future. For example, reference to the available data clearly supports the need for us to review this Act.

The data available: in 2018, we were importing **345,894** metric tons. In 2024, the figure is **525,482** metric tons, registering an increase of **52.17%**.

**Sales and distribution:** In 2018, we were selling and distributing **409 million** litres of petroleum products. Today, that number has increased to **28.6%**. It means that, we were distributing **526million** litres of petroleum products in 2024.

**Storage Capacity:** In 2018, this country's national storage capacity was **235,404**. Today, that capacity has increased to **237,904**, registering an increase of **75.6%**.

**Retail Gas Stations:** Again, we have seen a tremendous increase. In 2018, we had **171** retail gas stations, but as I speak, we have over **483** gas stations. We have an increase of **482.46%**.

**Petroleum Jetty:** In 2018, we had just **one**. Today, we have **three** which means we have **200%** increase.

When the **PRA** was established, they had just **one** office in Freetown. Today, they have **three** regional offices and they have up to **16** monitoring officers.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the objectives of this Bill varies, but the most important ones are;

- ❖ to ensure enforcement mandate to protect the public interest;
- ❖ to ensure continuous supply of petroleum products, as we did last year;
- ❖ to discourage the tenancy of forming cartels, monopoly and unfair competition and unfair business practices; and
- ❖ to achieve efficiency and cost reduction through mandatory minimum stock balances by licenses operators.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the latter one is key because it is not mandatory and we find it difficult whenever we go to monitor to make sure we have reserve in stock. It is crucial in terms of emergencies, whether it is local or international emergencies. It is always good to have stocks and the only way we can do that is through enforcement. So, one of the critical things this Act will be addressing is by making sure that there are mandatory stocks in all the Oil Marketing Companies [OMC] or those who are importing petroleum products. It will also eliminate barriers for market entrance. As the government rightly pursues its ambition for an open and efficient market, the Ministry is firmly behind the goals that will benefit consumers, investors and the economy. This is precisely why the sector is seeking for the national petroleum industry. For the purpose of this Act, the commercial practices include:

- ❖ we have national DEPO operations
- ❖ open access to storage tanks and pipeline utilisation; and
- ❖ joint responsibility and actions on oil spill control and fire prevention.

Some of the key justifications for this include:

- ❖ open access and non-discriminatory policy. The key factor for the National Petroleum Regulatory Act is to maximise market efficiency and improve service delivery through an open access and non-discriminatory policy;
- ❖ again, because the environment is changing following external factors, the regulatory and industry landscape has evolved over the years that demand a review of licenses, codes and regulations that exist today;
- ❖ regulatory enforcement and compliance are important. The way we are experiencing the market, both in terms of demand and supply, compliance is no longer enough for such a complex sector. A new enforcement power is required, enabling the regulatory authorities to require operators that reach license conditions or other relevant regulatory requirements to provide redress to consumers who suffer detriment as a result of this.

Moreover, when this Act is passed into law, it will also serve as a deterrent to those who bring license conditions. This will improve private sector participation, a fair and favourable industry that will attract private sector investment, create jobs for the youth and increase revenue for the economy.

Having said that, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I move that the Bill entitled, The National Petroleum Regulatory Authority Act, 2024 be read for the second time.

*[Question Proposed]*

**HON. VERONICA K. SESAY:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I want to wish all of us a happy new year. Let me take this opportunity to thank the Minister and the team from PRA for putting these documents together. It is long overdue because it should have been brought here earlier than this time. I am saying this due to the importance of petroleum. In his concluding statement, the Leader of the Opposition emphasised the importance of energy. I am sure energy cannot go without petroleum except solar energy. However, solar functions for only few hours when there is sunlight, petroleum can continue to function for days and months. Energy can break or make a government. When there is power outage, people shout everywhere. If there is no energy supply, we cannot preserve our foods in our freezers for the next day. Therefore, energy is very important. This document is important and we are the beneficiaries because we will benefit from it.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, PRA is the regulatory Agency and it sees the oil that come into this country. Sometimes if the oil is not good, it destroys our vehicles. I am here as a result of energy; it is as a result of the fuel in the generator that is why we are here. If the oil is not good, there will be a problem. So, the justifications given by the Minister are in place. I say kudos to him for ensuring that we did experience shortage of petroleum products. We have enough fuel in the country. This shows that you are working. So, you have the justification to move from Agency to Authority and it is just a matter of looking at this Bill. It is not a controversial Bill. It is just a matter of crossing the 't's' and dotting the 'i's.' We have heard the good things that PRA has done in terms of the tons of fuel that have come into the country and the number fuel tanks we have in the country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the first language I heard from the fuel stations is calibration. Sometimes if they do not have representatives from PRA to monitor some of these things, then it will be an issue. This is because when you go to these fuel stations and pay for twenty litres, they will pump fifteen litres in your tank. However, the PRA has put things in place to protect the consumers. They have also opened offices in all the regions. You can attest to the fact that people are enjoying the fuel they are paying for.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, PRA was established in 2014 to regulate storage, importation and distribution of petroleum products in Sierra Leone. This is their duty and I believe they are performing these functions effectively. That is why we are not finding any problems with the fuel. PRA should be in the same page with the oil marketing companies. You have to have a good working relationship with the oil companies; if not, it will not work well with you. I just want to draw your attention to Clauses 27, 38 and 51 that talk about good working relationship. Maybe there are few things we need to correct when we go to the third reading or Committee stage. There are other things that are very important that we need to add.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, changing the PRA to an Authority is to align with international best practice and to address the evolving challenges in the petroleum sector. I think this is a laudable venture because we can see what the other countries are doing. They have been going to other countries to understudy what

others are doing. I think one of them went to other country to understudy the importance and how to regulate petroleum products in this country. In addition, it will give the new Authority a greater independence and regulatory powers, enabling it to oversee not only the existing downstream activities, but to facilitate infrastructural development, such as the resuscitation of oil refineries and the construction of tank farms across the region. This is what we want to see, Mr Speaker. It is not supposed to be only in Freetown, but we want to see it be implemented in other regions of the country. This is important because we do not want to see everybody coming to Freetown to buy fuel. You can have your tank in your region or your district. We want to make sure that Joe Vamboi in the village also benefits from these oil companies.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, changing from Agency to an Authority means that the Government intends to strengthen the regulatory frameworks, promote investments and to ensure sustainable development of Sierra Leone's petroleum resources. This move is expected to enhance public trust, improve stakeholders' engagement, ensure compliance with petroleum laws and ultimately contributing to the country's economic growth and energy security. You have heard from the Minister and I know they will be working in consultation with the parliamentary oversight Committees. I am urging all my colleagues to support this Bill because it is non-controversial. Let us look at it critically because it is beneficial to all of us. It will benefit us because we are buying fuel every day.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I mentioned Clause 51 earlier that you should have a good working relationship with the oil companies. You have to work together even as we pass the Bill into law. You have to call them together and tell them the importance of this Bill. This is because if you do not tell them now, there is tendency for people to say 'it is a one man show.' This Parliament is not a 'one man show' and that is why it is opened to everyone. If you go out, they will say, go back to Parliament. So, that is why we are asking for a good working relationship with the oil companies. We want you to ensure fair play with these companies. Today, we are seeing so many companies with different names such as Aminata, Comex, NP, Malador, etc. We have to encourage these companies though fair play. Let us make

sure we encourage them, so that we will not experience shortage of petroleum products. We are happy now because as soon as we start experiencing fuel shortage, you are there to remind them because you are always in touch with them. You will be informed that the fuel is coming. There will be no shortage of fuel. I want to thank you and God for this move. The justification for changing from Agency to Authority is to give you more power, so that you will be able to do more work.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the change from Petroleum Regulatory Agency to a National Petroleum Authority reflects a shift in scope, power and organisational structure. This can change the dynamics and make us look like other countries. Nigerians are talking about crude oil, but I am not seeing it because they are always queuing for fuel. I want to thank God that Sierra Leone is not like Nigeria. This is due to the good work of the Minister and the good working relationship with the PRA team and the oil marketing companies. I can foresee a situation where we will be exporting or supplying fuel to other countries. In fact, we have been supplying fuel to Liberia. I want to say kudos to us because we have enough to even supply to other countries. That is why we have ECOWAS, which is there to ensure free trade in the region. This is very important because if a country experiences shortage of fuel, another country should be there to assist the neighbouring countries. That is what ECOWAS is doing and it is good.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to first of all inform the present National Petroleum Authority that the Committee on Trade will be there to monitor your activities. We will be looking at the implementation of all what you have mentioned today in order to ascertain whether you are encouraging the marketers or not. This is because if you do not have marketers, you will not be talking about supplying petroleum products; you will be there to only regulate. Mr Speaker, I am sure the suggestions and recommendations are in the interest of our electorate. I am not talking on behalf of myself, but for Sierra Leonean. This is Sierra Leone and we are coming from different districts. I am not talking on behalf of the Moyamba District, but on behalf of the entire country and the entire country is here.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank the Minister and team for this Bill and we are expecting much from them. There are things that we need to include in

the Bill. That is why I have stated the necessary clauses that we need to correct. However, the Bill is not controversial because we are all beneficiaries. With these few words, I want to implore the entire Membership of this Parliament to support this Bill. Thank you very much.

**HON. ABDUL K. KAMARA:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this is 2025 and we all pray for prosperous year. We hope our contributions in this well will benefit this nation. We have listened from the Minister of Trade and from his submission, the reasons for a vibrant Petroleum Regulatory Authority was underscored. I am sure such an authority is very important in a country like Sierra Leone, where we do not produce crude oil neither do we have enough places to find our oil. The price determinants in Sierra Leone have many factors, such as the availability of fuel, the storage capacity, the world market and many more. Therefore, having an Authority that will look into some of these factors and ensuring the availability of fuel and petroleum products is very important for us. Now they are telling us that we have branches in different parts of the country; they have opened new offices almost every part of the country. This is important for us as a nation, but we should do more than just what is written; we should do more than just implementing the laws. As a nation, we must understand the factors and ensure the factors that are manmade and are very much inimical to the progress of this nation are addressed in this Bill. If you go to certain fuel stations, especially when there is fuel shortage, you will see vehicles parking and they will tell you that there is no fuel, but after a certain period, they will start selling fuel. We need laws that can address these problems. We need this Bill to regulate some of these issues in order to stop the deliberate actions of the dealers.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, unlike other commodities, petroleum products are political commodities and they determine market prices across the country. You can say that a bag of rice costs **Le 600,000**, but if the transportation to take a bag of rice to Krubola costs over **Le 150**, the price will go to **700** or **800 Leones**. I am sure that no matter the cost you attach to a commodity in Sierra Leone, the price of fuel increases the price of commodity due to the distance and time. Therefore, it is important that as an Authority, we should have a price formula that differentiates



those who sell in the capital city from those who sell to our people in the remote areas.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I do not know if you are a dealer, but if I am supplying fuel to Masomgbala, which is a far distance, I would rather prefer to supply it in Freetown. I am saying this because there must be incentives for companies that are willing to supply fuel in the provincial areas. If we do this, we will make the market equitable and this will ensure healthy competition. We have many companies in this country that are oil marketing companies. How do we encourage them to open up? I want to see in this Bill that if you have at least five fuel stations, two should be in the provinces. Most of the oil companies are located in Freetown and that is not helping the market.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is not gainsay that if what the Minister of Trade has said about this Bill is true, it means we must also commend those who are working with the PRA. This is because if they have offices across the country today, I am sure when we look at the budget allocated to them, it is a good work of those who are working there. However, we must face the reality. I am sure in the last Parliament, we said that when a President appoints people, their term limit should be tied to that of the President's term limit. This means that if you are appointed in the first year of the President, you will be there for five years. Nevertheless, if you are removed or sacked and somebody takes your place during the third year of the President's term of office, that person is going for only two years. So, we have to stop saying that this person has been fired. If you look at the good work of staff of the PRA, you will not have cause to fire them. I am sure their term limit is two terms, three years each. They are having problems in terms of management. We can pass this law, but if they keep firing people who are knowledgeable, the institution will not work well. The good intention of this Bill is the promotion of the institution for national development. It is highly vested on who leads the institution to ensure that we have the goodies that are in this Bill.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we must look at what I have mentioned when we go to the Committee Stage. We have to scrutinise this Bill line by line in order to ensure that the right thing is done. Are we going to tie this to the five years

mandate of the presidency instead of three years? I think that will not be a crime. I am saying this because we have good Sierra Leoneans who are willing to contribute to the progress of this nation. It is important to have young people in offices, but let me emphasise that it is important to have young people who are respectful and knowledgeable in what they do. We need young people who believe that even if they are being criticised, they remained focus and those who criticised them are not unprogressive. I do not know why people are laughing. I am only saying that the person who is in this office is someone who is opened to criticisms. He has accepted it in good faith and that is why he has brought a good Bill to us. It is important for the peace of this nation that when people are in office, they should listen to other people. I am sure respect is part of politics and that is what the head of this institution has been doing over the years.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we want to see the good intentions in this Bill are put into action. If we mess up with this Regulating Agency, it means we are also accepting the fact that the fuel crisis we are almost going through will resurface. Therefore, we must do everything within our powers as Members of Parliament to have a very strong Bill. When this Bills is eventually passed into law, we should know what we have done; something that will stand the test of time. The Agency is almost eleven years in existence, we have been able to see some of the lapses and those are the lapses this Bill is going to address. This is a new year and time is of essence. We will contribute immensely to have this Bill be into law. I thank you very much.

**HON. IBRAHIM T. CONTEH:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, sometimes I like words that are synonymous to this Parliament and I have just heard one. I heard about un-progressive, but I know that this Parliament is a progressive Parliament and that is what we have done over the years. You would agree with me that for those of those of us who were fortunate to be in the Fifth Parliament, we know we are confident and we can beat our chest in public that we have shown progressiveness and we have shown that we are ready for reforms. We have passed many laws in the Fifth Parliament, particularly the repeal of the Seditious Libel Law and the Criminal Procedure Act. These are all parts of the progressive reforms.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, permit me to remind the House and the public that in Section 108, there are clauses in the Constitution that are deemed to be entrenched Clauses and two of those Clauses are Section 73 and Section 105. So law making is principally in the hands of Members of Parliament. Whatever proposal that comes to us, it is our responsibility to determine the outcome of that proposal and whatever proposal we determine in this Chamber, we believe it reflects the will and aspirations of the people we represent. So, whatever that comes to us, we take few things into consideration. You would agree with me that this House is the gatekeeper of the Constitution. Section 106[1] gives us the power to make laws and these laws are called as Acts of Parliament principally because the primary legislation is a creature of the Constitution and it should not in any way be inconsistent with the Constitution. The Constitution is the grundnorm as Kelsen put it in his Theory of Grundnorm. The Constitution is indeed a collection of norms. The laws that are put together form the grundnorm. So, whatever that is in contravention with Kelsen's grundnorm is void ab initio. Section 46[1] of the 1991 Constitution gives the President, which is the highest office, the power to serve for just two terms. Like the leader said, sometimes when you make laws or when you introduce things in Parliament, you do so for the good of the nation.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is not every time you initiate things and benefit from them. It is a natural principle. Some MPs who were here when we passed the GEWE Act, were expected to come back under that banner, but most of them did not come. However, their names are written in the annals of this Parliament that they were part of the Parliament that passed the GEWE Bill. It is part of the principle of law making. In this Act, the first thing to debate on is the long title. The Long title is saying that this Act is a continuation of the Act in 2014 and if it is a continuation of that Act, it means it is protecting the documentary work done by the then PRA and all those who have worked at the PRA. I am sure their work will be kept in the archives. This means it does not nullify the role played by other people. If you have served, it means you have served. If you have concluded your period of service, it means you have concluded your period of service.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to refer the House to Section 61 of the 1991 Constitution. The President is not only the fountain of honour in the early phases of the Constitution, it is the President that has the power to create offices. The Constitution further states that he can appoint persons into those offices. Mr Speaker, the President is to appoint the Deputy Executive Chairman for the PRA, but that is not captured in this Bill. It is not only an affront to Parliament, but it is an affront to the dignity of the presidency. Section 73[1] says the composition of this Parliament starts with the President and if someone affronts the dignity of President, you are affronting the dignity of Parliament as well. You cannot bring a Bill to us when the President has created an office, appointed somebody in that office and that person is systematically eliminated in the Bill. If you go to the extant law of 2014, you will realise that the Board and the Executive Chairman should serve for three years and are eligible for reappointment only once. This provision is not in this new Bill and this is not only proposing what is against the norms in this Parliament, but it is also separating the connection between the Board and the Executive Chairman which is to be metamorphosed to Director General. This is something we should look at carefully.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in a haste to put this Bill together, there is going to be no qualification for Director General's position. I have not seen anything regarding that and we have to do something. Mr Speaker, what I have seen is the attempt by the drafters of this Bill not only to affront the presidency, but to challenge the entrenched Clause in the Constitution. So, if we pass this Bill into law, we do so in the spirit and intent of the Constitution, otherwise if we fail to keep the dictate of the Constitution in its primary product, it means we are at fault and we will be found culpable of Section 108[8], which makes any alteration of the Constitution a crime and it is treasonable. On that note, Mr Speaker, I thank you.

*[Suspension of S.O. 5[2] being 12:00 noon]*

**HON. OSMAN C. ABDULLAH:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me join the previous speakers who have contributed to this Bill. I am a Member of the Committee on Trade. One of the limitations during our oversight activities is limited powers of the Agency, but if this Bill is passed into

law, I think those limitations are going to be addressed in this Bill. I want to thank the Minister and the Chairman of PRA. Despite what the Deputy Speaker was saying by mentioning the constitutional provisions, we will come to that during the Committee Stage. However, the intents and the objectives of the Bill are very clear and are beneficial to this nation. I do not want to go into the importance of the petroleum products to us. We are a country that is solely dependent on thermal production of energy of which petroleum products are the major sole provider of that energy. I pray that as we have started as a government, we fall back heavily on the renewable energy that will save us from the quagmire of the petroleum production shortage in this country. Of course, a lot of speakers have mentioned the efficiency of the regulatory aspect of the Authority of the Bill. We have had lots of problems in terms of regulating the petroleum products with regard to sales, individuals, companies, producers, wholesalers, and the retailers, but this Bill makes provisions for the deployment of staff all over this country to monitor the efficiency of the sales and the distribution of the petroleum products. This Bill, when passed into law, the powers of the Authority to enforce licenses is going to be addressed. This has a major aspect of the limitations of Agency for the past years. This has been a challenge of the Agency. I thank the proactive Minister who is known for his hard work.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, petroleum products are very important to us as a nation. However, the distribution process has to be robust and it has to be efficient if we want to make headway in terms of energy and transportation. As the Leader on the other side said, when there is a problem with petroleum shortage or increment of price of petroleum products, it affects all aspects of other commodities. This is because if you ask the retailers or the suppliers, they will tell you that there is increment of price in petroleum products. So, if we have an efficient management or regulation of the petroleum products in this country, I think it will be a good thing. A lot have been mentioned about the importance of the petroleum product. I want to remind the Chairman of PRA and the Minister that when this Bill will be committed to the Committee Stage, we expect those limitations to be addressed. The Authority makes provision for the establishment of offices all over the country and that will ensure efficiency and effectiveness. On that note, I thank you very much.

**HON. UNPHA S. G. KOROMA:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I think we want to appreciate this Bill that has come before us. As Parliament being a microcosm of this country, we are all consumers of petroleum products. Petroleum products are drivers of inflation, especially when there is an increment in the pump price. It will definitely affect the prices of basic commodities in the country. We know a petroleum product is one that will support the energy sector and one that will facilitate manufacturing activities in this country. As the declaration of the Sierra Leone industrial zone and with the establishment of factories or industries across the country, we take particular notes of the essence and importance of this Bill. The essence of this Bill is to transform this Agency to an Authority, which this Parliament should support the Ministry, so that they achieve this aim.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Agency has worked diligently to put this Bill together. Over the years, we have seen transformation in the energy sector in terms of the level of activities taking place in petroleum sector. We have seen the construction of more gas stations across the Western Area in particular and across the entire country. We take note that the Western Area is more populated than the other parts of this country and that is why the demand is high in the Western Area. This is why the business people prefer to have their gas stations in Freetown. When the Minister was making his presentation, he talked about the increase in the storage facility. You would agree with me that we have suffered because of the lack of storage facility. We have suffered because sometimes the amount of fuel in stock is not enough to support the high demand. So, we want to believe that the increase in storage facility will definitely benefit us. The Minister stated that their hands are tied due to absence of an Authority that will empower them to undertake rigorous enforcements. They are working very hard to secure our interest as consumers of the petroleum products.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is incumbent on us as a Parliament to ensure that we meet the growing needs and meet the tide of the time. I also want to take note of the fact that we have seen an increase in sales and an increase in revenue. However, we want to know how the government will benefit from the tax... - *[Inaudible]*. How government will benefit in terms of the revenue in this industry is

very important. We also want to note that fuel is essential to our economy. Fuel affects every aspect of what we do, such as cooking and transportation. Members of Parliament who have contributed to this debate stated that the Agency, which is going to be transformed into an Authority after the passage of this Bill, would ensure a positive change in the petroleum sector. As the Deputy Speaker stated, we should ensure that even those who are working in the Agency, will be a continuation of the trajectory that the Agency has seen over the years. So, we want to believe that the country depends highly on energy and we should do something that will benefit this Sierra Leone when it comes to petroleum products. With regard to the economy, we want to see an increase in revenue collection from this sector. How do we ensure that prices are maintained or how do we ensure that the harmonisation of prices do not indiscriminately affect the other products within this sector?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we know that kerosene that was used to be so popular is not seen at fuel stations these days. How do we ensure that when this Bill is passed, kerosene will be accessible? I want you to know that some people are still using kerosene, but when you go to some gas stations, you will not even see a pump for kerosene. How do we also ensure that the prices in the world market will be pretty much transformed directly to the prices on ground? Of recent, we have seen changes in the prices of fuel. For the past one year or two now, we have not seen an increment in prices of fuel, but we have seen a decrease. We want to take note of that adjustment and we want to appreciate the Minister for his continuous effort to ensure that we as a people benefit from those decreases. I believe we want to continue to see such good things. As I stated earlier, Parliament here is a microcosm of this country and petroleum is a product that all of us consume. Petroleum is very essential in the industrial sector or manufacturing industries. I believe it is incumbent on us to support this Minister and his Ministry; it is also incumbent on us to support the Agency. I want to call on all colleagues to join me in supporting the transformation of this Agency to an Authority. We also have to support the Chairman of that Authority. He is somebody I have seen from afar and I admired the way he has transformed that Agency and we want to see a continuation in that trajectory. I thank you, Mr Speaker for giving me this opportunity to contribute to this debate.

**HON. MOHAMED BANGURA:** Mr Speaker, I want to appreciate the Minister and the Agency for bringing this important Bill. I want to urge Members to look at this Bill critically and point out some of the shortcomings, so that at the end of the day, this Bill will be a better one for all of us. We all know that the Minister is one of the few working Ministers in this government. The young man over there is doing a laudable job and we are commending him for that. Having gone through this Bill, Mr Speaker, one will see a limited emphasis on renewable energy. In as much as we solely focus on petroleum, I did not see the transition to renewable energy in this Bill and that will be a big mistake to us as a country. This is because we will be left out of this important opportunity if we do not address it now. There is ambiguity in the price formula in this Bill. While the Act established a formula under Section 60, it does not provide specific mechanism for arbitrary adjustments and manipulation of prices. I am sure that has to be taken into account. The lack of comprehensive stakeholders' involvements, such as civil society had to be considered as well. We want to see the civil society involvement and their role has to be made very clear in this Bill. This Bill is good, but as I said earlier, we must look at the grey areas, especially those that have been highlighted. When we come to the Committee Stage, I will talk more on that.

**HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker Honourable Members, I want to begin by thanking the Minister for presenting this Bill to us. As provided by Section 105, we are the only body that is charged with the responsibility of making laws. I heard the Deputy Speaker saying that it is an assault to this House and to the President. I believe what they have done as an executive Arm is to present to us a draft in the form of this Bill. It is only this House that makes the laws. So, whatever proposal they bring to us, the onus is on us as lawmakers to do due diligence by ensuring that the laws we make stand the test of time. I am sure that is what they have done and all the grey areas will be corrected in this document. We have seen the proliferation of gas stations around the country. We have gas stations in every corner of this country. One thing that pleases me is that I have not seen the extant law. The extant law is extremely important and it should have presented to this House before amending or repealing it. This will enable us to ascertain the changes that are done in that law. I am saying this



because some Members of Parliament were not here in 2014, when the law was enacted. So, in order for us to have an insight of what the Honourable Members did in 2014, we should also be presented with the extant law.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I have not seen the extant law, but what I have seen in this Bill is that Section 29[2] states: in order for license to be granted, you need to have certificate or clarification from EPA. If you look at Section 29[2d], you will also need clearance from the Ministry of Works. Mr Minister, what is happening currently is that gas stations are all over the country and it is only after the construction they start to negotiate with the Ministry of Works and SLRA. For instance, around the hillside by pass road towards Upgun, where you have the traffic lights, it was only after the construction they started engaging the Ministry of Works. I am sure that should have been done before the license is issued to them. Mr Speaker, go to the various communities in the country. This is the first time in our history that gas stations are built in communities where people are residing. This is extremely bad and some of the gas stations have bars, where people smoke cigarettes and take other drugs.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if PRA and the Ministry of Transport consult EPA, I believe EPA will not give licenses to people to construct gas stations within the communities that people are residing. So, we want to build that synergy between the PRA, the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Works so as to save lives. You should not just grant licenses before you go to SLRA or the Chairman of the Works Committee. We encountered situations where petrol stations have been constructed and they are about to start operation, that will be time they go to SLRA to give them access to use the place. So, we want that synergy to be in existence.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, like what the Honourable Member from the Western Area said, we created the office of Director General, but we know that His Excellency has appointed the Deputy Director General and we also know that the Deputy Director General is the principal assistance to the Director General. If we have an Executive Chairman today and that position is going to be metamorphosed into a Director General, we should also create a room for the Deputy Director General. This will ensure that in the absence of the Director General, there should be

somebody who will step in his or her behalf. This document is now our property. If you read Section 30[2], the PRA has said any other document that is required, which is a recipe to disadvantage anybody. We should make it extremely clear about the determinations or the requirements needed. We should not leave any room for mischiefs. Let us assume that today I am a good friend of the Executive Chairman, Mr Brima Baluwa Koroma, he will give me the requirements. However, if a new Director General, who is not my friend, takes over and I need to get a certificate from him, but gives requirements that are not within the law, this will disqualify me from having a gas station. Therefore, we should be clear when it comes to the requirements, so that when you read the Act, even if you do not have a station in Sierra Leone, the Act will inform you about the criteria to be considered when opening a gas station.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have said in this Parliament that we cannot create offices of state and tie them to the presidency or this Parliament. This is because we want a situation wherein future presidents will have a say on those who will help in achieving his agenda. If we create provisions for people to occupy positions for a period of five years and all of the sudden we conduct new elections, the new President will not have the confidence to work those individuals. The new President will want to get those that he trust. So, we should reduce the time to three years, in order to ensure that in future, the new President will have the opportunity to appoint new people. If we tie it to five years, it means we have tied it to the Presidency. I am saying that we should not tie down offices to the tenure of the President or to the tenure of this Parliament. The Bill is saying that the Director General shall hold office for five years. They are trying to tie his office to the tenure of Presidency or to the tenure of this Parliament.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we are going to tidy up this document during the Committee Stage. This document is now before us, Mr Minister. I know you have been complaining that when documents are brought here, Parliament does not approve them, but we have the powers to make laws. You have to bring your proposals here. This document is now our baby because you have done your part and we are going to do ours as representatives of the people. As experienced law

makers, we are going to make sure that we tidy up this document, so that it can stand the test of time. Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

**HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, as I stand before you, I am the least worried about the issues contained in this Bill. In the first place, the Minister who is in charge of this Bill is known to be an effective and efficient Minister. I have known him for years now and I know he is up to the task. He is trying to have progressive reforms in the petroleum sector; and at least, it is a plus and minus based on my personal assessment. You would agree with me that for past three, four to five months now, I can state here that petroleum supply has been fairly stable. We used to have fuel shortages some months ago, but fuel supply has been improved. Apart from the pricing, there are available petroleum products in the country. For the past four to five months now, it has been fairly good. I want to use this opportunity to commend the Minister and his team for their good work. As I speak, the surname of the institution is the National Petroleum Regulatory Agency. The Agency is your surname. You are here for us to give you a new surname by moving from Agency to Authority. I am sure based on the efficiency of the Minister and his team, I believe our concerns will be addressed.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, from what I have been hearing from my constituents and even the general public, one of the key solutions for a stable supply of petroleum products is adequate storage facility. It is not only about adequate storage, but the adequate use of that storage. We need to have enough storage facility and we need to fill those spaces to make sure that even if there is no importation of petroleum products for the next three months, we still have enough in stock. Also, if there is fuel crisis globally, we are safe for the next six months. I want the Minister, in his response, to address the issue regarding the storage facility and the use of those facilities for a stable supply of petroleum products for a certain period of time. Let him assure us that based on my policies, if I am giving a new surname from Agency to Authority, I will ensure that we have enough petroleum products that can serve us for six months without new supplies, even in the event of fuel crisis. If you work towards this, I think it would be better for the country. Sometimes I practice a specific standard when driving my vehicle. I was unable to

continue, but I believe it is the best way if only I had to continue with that. The standard is, I always consider half tank as empty tank. I did that for three months. I was unable to continue with the standard, but I disciplined myself and say from now on, I will consider half tank as empty tank. I always consider half tank as empty, so that I buy more fuel. By doing so, even in the event of emergency, there will be no issue at all.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to suggest that the Minister adopts that system by considering half consignment petroleum products in Sierra Leone as empty or almost having nothing in stock. I am talking to the Minister and not the Director General because he is the one piloting the Bill. The Minister is the one implementing and supervising the entity. Can we adopt that system by considering half consignment of petroleum supply in this country as having nothing, so that you work harder to ensure that we have more than half? This will serve us for the next six months in the event there is an international emergency. However, if you continue to consider below quarter tank, in the event of emergency, it will be difficult. You need to respond to this concern, Mr Minister.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I have read through the Bill and I suspect an ambush by the Ministry. Do you want to ambush Parliament? No, we will not allow that to happen. In fact, as a result of that ambush, the point that would have been raised earlier is almost belated. You have partially succeeded in your ambush, but we will correct it because it is unacceptable. This Bill intends to undo our baby, the Parent Act. In order words, it intends to repeal the current Act. If you want to repeal an Act of Parliament, it must be stated in your long title and it is a matter of must. It must be stated in your long title of the Bill and by the time we start reading the Bill, we will straight off know that you intend to undo what we have previously done. That will give us the opportunity to agree or disagree because it seems as if you want to slaughter our baby. You should give us opportunity to decide whether we will allow you or not. You have ignored that aspect by not including it in the long title.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, at the extreme corner of Clause 66 is the area they intend to repeal our baby and they thought that Members of Parliament will not

read. In this Parliament, we are not dropout Members of Parliament. We have professionals here. It will interest you to know it is not stated in the Memorandum and the Object of reasons. He intends to kill our baby or repeal the Parent Act. It is only in Clause 66 you intend to repeal it. If you had told us earlier, we would have asked you to come with the Parent Act and based on the standards of this current Parliament, either you provide us with hard copies or electronic copies. I have gone through my tablet and the Parent Act is not there. I went to my pigeon hole for the hard copy of the Parent Act, but it is not there as well. If the hard copies of the Parent Act you want to repeal is with us, it would enable us to help you get something better. This is a government Bill and our role as Members of Parliament is to provide better alternative solutions to make this Bill a better one. We are not here to sabotage and we are not here to undo what you intend to do, because we have no doubt in your capacity, but the proper thing was not done correctly. I want to know if a Member of Parliament has the hard copy of the Parent Act, which is to be repealed. Do you think we should continue? That will be the discretion of Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me talk about the Composition of the Board. Do we have a Board without a Secretary? As far as this Bill is concerned, the Board has no secretary. The Bill specifies nobody to serve as a Secretary. All the people stated there are being mentioned as Board Members and none of them is identified to serve as Secretary to the Board. That is against our standards. Thankfully, the Bill is now our property. However, taking one of the members to serve as Secretary will definitely alter the number of membership of the Board and also the quorum. We need to consider the voting pattern during Board meetings. We always encourage odd numbers and not even numbers. This is important because in the event the votes are equal votes, the Chairman would have a casting vote, but this is not the case here. There is no provision for Board Secretary. Maybe the one that is supposed to be the Secretary is portraying himself as Member of the Board. A Secretary cannot be a Member of the Board. We need to take note of that, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, another area of ambush that we should look at is the financial provisions. This Bill is trying to allow over expenditure of what has been allocated and approved by Parliament. In Clause 23[2], the Bill is allowing PRA to spend above what has been approved by Parliament. The Bill gives the Board the power to approve expenditure. So, by interpreting it this way, over expenditure will be legalised and because it is only the Board can approve over expenditure. As far as I know and Section 105 is concerned, Parliament has power over the Board and only Parliament can approve over expenditure through supplementary budget. Any other entity that is not Parliament is illegal and it is unacceptable. So, I am drawing the attention of Honourable Members to that provision. It is another ambush that wants to take away our powers of approving over expenditure through supplementary budget. If there is a need for over expenditure, we can do so through supplementary budget and not by the Board of PRA. We cannot accept that at all, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we went through the daughter of Justice, who was known as Glenna Thompson. Under her leadership, when you copy and paste, you are in trouble and if you plagiarised, you would be in jeopardy. You have to state your own understanding on a particular issue. You do not have to imitate or copy other people's work verbatim. Mr Speaker, I suspect that Clause 24[4] is a copy and paste Clause. If that is proven, it would have serious consequences. This is not a copy and paste Parliament. That is why I said 'I suspect' and my suspicion may be wrong or right... - *[Undertones]*. It may be proven or disproven, but it seems to be a copy and paste Clause. Nevertheless, we can rephrase it. We can expunge certain areas of the Clause and make it better. That is our role as Members of Parliament. I believe before this Bill leaves here, it is going to be a better one. Our responsibility here is to make sure that the Minister of Trade succeeds, PRA succeeds and our people succeed by getting access to petroleum products on demand as and when it is available. It should be there; it should be affordable; and it should be accessible. We should be able to get it on demand at any time we wish to do so.

On that note Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there are so many issues that can be addressed properly at the Committee Stage. At that Stage, we will minimise and give them better understanding in order to ensure that the Ministry succeeds. Until we reach that Stage, I encourage Honourable Members to support this Bill in order to make it better for the interest of this country. Thank you very much and God bless.

**HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Colleagues, I thank you very much for your contributions towards this important Bill that we have in front of us. I want to start by commending the Minister for bringing us to speed by trying to sanitise the sector. Those who are producing good oils have decided to make petroleum products political products. What they have done was to encourage the private sector to be fully involved in terms of the production of petroleum and its constituents. Mr Speaker, there is no perfect proposal. This is why we call it a Bill. You mentioned Section 105, which gives Parliament superior authority to make laws. The issues or concerns you have raised geared towards making sure that this Bill is perfected. The bills that are brought to Parliament are mere proposals and the onus is on Parliament as a supreme authority to make laws.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there is a spirit behind this Bill, which we need to follow. There are mistakes, but let me draw your attention to the spirit of this Bill. I am not going to the long title because I know that the essence is to repeal the Agency and replace it with an Authority that has broader functions. The intent of this Bill is the memorandum of objects and reasons. The purpose is to provide continuity in the existing National Petroleum Regulatory Agency and to provide for regulation of the petroleum sector. I want you to note that there are two types of petroleum systems: the **upstream** and **downstream**. The upstream has to do with the Petroleum Directorate and the downstream deals with the petroleum products. We have those who are in charge of selling the petroleum products and we also have the agents. This is why you are specific in dealing with the downstream industry, including the licenses. Mr Speaker, this is the area we should pay attention to. They are talking about downstream and I will tell you why we should pay attention to the upstream for proper harmony in terms of legislations. The Bill talks about licensing,

monitoring and supervision of refineries, transportation, marketing and retail activities in the petroleum downstream industry and to provide for other related matters. There are different variables responsible for the increase in pump prices. First, there are generalisations and second, we are not the primary producers of petroleum products. We are talking about importation.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in the late 80s and early 90s, before the interregnum, we had the refineries where our petroleum products were processed, but because of mismanagement and bad governance, that sector is no longer functioning. Therefore, our focus is purely on the products that we import into the country. We have the refined products and we also have agents or companies that deal with aspect. These are the effects of downstream. We have enacted regulations on how to deal with the Petroleum Directorate. So, what we need to do now is that we have to take that regulation and compare whether it is in conflict with laws that we have passed in this House. This is to ensure that the Petroleum Directorate reviews the things they are doing. I know they have something that has to do with storage facility. If you read this Bill, you will find the provision which talks about storage facility. Mr Minister, the storage facility has been giving us lots of challenges. You are now opening up the space for storage facilities. First, if you have enough storage, you will not experience scarcity. People will not create artificial scarcities.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Ministry has introduced the pricing formula, but because the variables are not under their purview, most of them are not within the jurisdiction of Sierra Leone. You have done what is known as the pricing formula, but for our edification and clarification, let me read the meaning of pricing formula in this Bill. We have said the petroleum service that has to do with the refinery. I said the refinery purely deals with the license and to refine crude oil into the petroleum products. It goes further to state that by formulating the pricing formula to take care of all the factors and the variables that keep on changing the pump price that affect all of us. If this is the case, we are charged with the responsibility of having a pricing formula that will always affect us. The Bill states that the prescribed petroleum formula means, the formula which equates the export price to the aggregate of an extra-refinery price. In the pricing formula, they



mentioned taxes, levies and distribution margins. Mr Minister, what you have done was that you reduced pump prices twice in less than four months. You reduced it from **NLe 30** to **NLe 27**.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, people did not take notes when the Minister said there are different prices in diesel and petroleum products. He said **NLe 27.4** for a liter diesel and **NLe 27.3** for petroleum products. Why are we not afraid? We are not afraid because we have the formula we are dealing with. We want people to understand why we have the pricing formula. Sierra Leoneans have said that there are two types of political commodities; vis-à-vis rice and the petroleum products. These are essential commodities. It is the same formula they are using, so that the end users benefit. There must not be any increment in the price of petroleum products. The same price we have in Freetown must be the same price in Bo or Koidu. You cannot just get up one morning and decide to increase the pump price. So, before you do any increment, you should come back to the formula. That is why I read the provision about the prescribed pricing formula that levy taxes.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if you sit down with the Minister, you will understand the meaning of levy of taxes. These are words that you play with, but the essential thing has to do with the issue of transportation. We have to deal with the essential commodities like rice and petroleum products. I do not doubt your leadership skills because you have been able to stabilise the price of petroleum products. In fact, we have seen a decrease in petroleum products on several occasions. Mr Minister, do not be afraid to say it. There are times when there are increments in pump prices and they will never take a reverse action. They will say, no, S.O[2] kip am na di escrow account and when you do that it stays there permanently. However, we should reduce it for the benefit of our people. We are now saying that if you want to increase the pump price, you have to come back to the table and look at the pricing formula.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to respond to my colleague, the Acting Leader of the Opposition. They have not committed any crime as far as Section 23[2] is concerned. That provision is in tandem with the Constitution. The Financial Secretary is part of the Board. Let us go back to the composition of the Board. If you

go to page six, under the side notes, Board of Authority, you Financial Secretary, Minister of Finance or his representative. If you go back to 23[2], it says that the Authority shall not incur any expenditure exceeding its budget. They have established that one and that is the first port of call. It goes further to state that unless it obtains the written approval of the Board. In law making, you have to create the framework and leave the other constitutional provisions and statutes to work by themselves. Nobody will ask for extra budget without the consent of the Minister of Finance.

*[The House stood down at 1:00 and resumed at 1:10 p.m.]*

**HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA:** I am sure we should not do every little bit of the enactment of the law by going through the full administration of the law. We believe people should know their responsibilities in the different capacity they are serving, especially when you are representing an entity. For instance, when you are representing an institution, such as the Financial Secretary, if there is any constitutional violation, you should be able to detect that because you are the principal adviser to the Minister in terms of finances. You should know when and how the laws work in the institution you are representing. That is why we have the Financial Secretary who advises the Minister on financial disbursements and the steps the Minister should follow when it comes to procedural matters. So, the first phase was stated clearly that you should go to the Board for approval. I am sure the Financial Secretary will look into the procedure and ensure that an extra budget is provided. We know the procedure that you take to have an extra budgetary support. You do not just go and say S.O[2] gi mi money ehn den gi u. It does not work that way, Mr Speaker. There are principles and procedures you need to follow while you also look at the essence of what you need to get.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me draw your attention to the powers of the Authority because it is good for all of us to know them. Let me read few provisions. Part III talks about the functions and powers of the Authority. Mr Speaker, since we have said by our acclamations that petroleum products are now being considered as political commodities by our nomenclature, let us look at what the Minister is proposing to us. The Minister said that this Bill protects the interest of consumers

and petroleum service providers. The Minister was very clear on this and he also stated the pricing formula because he wanted us to look at these issues mentioned in the Bill. If the consumers are not satisfied, the formula is not even important to them. Nevertheless, when we talk about taxes and levy as stated in the formula, it captures the minds of the consumers and petroleum dealers. Mr Speaker, Clause 12, Sub-clause 2[1a] talks about monitor the procurement, importation, refinery, exporting and supplying of petroleum, so as to guarantee efficient retail price. We are asking for the protection of the people and consumers and that is captured in this Bill. I am sure even if you change from Agency to Authority, if you fail to do what you are supposed to do, there is no way you are going to regulate the sector properly. Therefore, you must make sure that these things are enshrined in the law which gives the power to the Authority.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Clause 1[b] talks about monitoring the ceilings and prices of petroleum products, including gasoline, diesel, kerosene and fuel, and oil in accordance with the prescribed petroleum pricing formula. That is why I read the formula of the petroleum price. Somebody mentioned the unavailability of kerosene. We know that many people do not use kerosene these days because of the existence of certain technologies. However, there are people who are still using kerosene in other places. So, the producer, the agents and consumers should be taken that into consideration. You cannot force the people to sell products like kerosene on a huge demand. I am glad you said you have not eliminated it, but you are putting it in pricing formula. The demand for a product gives you the urge to go for that particular commodity. We know the demand for kerosene is low, but you need to put it because there are people who still use kerosene. I am sure all of these things are captured in this Bill. The one I may want to ask is that what do you do to make sure people survive? If I buy 20 liters of kerosene, I will keep it for the next three months? I am not doing business, Mr Minister. In this Bill, you spoke about liberalisation and fighting the cartelisation of the petroleum industry. Inasmuch as you want to ensure that there is no monopoly, there is no cartelisation and there is liberalisation, I want you to be mindful of the fact that you are dealing with the private sector, and in dealing with the private sector, you have to play around in

order to satisfy the dealers and the consumers. I want my colleagues to understand that kerosene is not ignored at all.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, you would agree with me that we have oversight responsibilities. If we do not give them the powers to enforce this Authority, it means we have not done much for them. I have concerns regarding penalties, but that will be addressed at the Committee Stage. This is because we do not make laws that lack punishable provision. The issue relating to oil marketing companies will be addressed at the Committee Stage. However, let me tell you the things that are important here. One of them is regular publication of the computed pump prices based on the pricing formula of the National Petroleum Authority. Previously, people would have to go to the filling station before you see the different prices. What we are now doing is part of modernisation. The Minister said that the pricing formula will not only be seen at the gas stations, but also on the Authority's Website. This means even if you are far away from the gas station, you can just log in and get the pricing formula.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Minister needs to assure us because I heard him talking about the storage fees. Let me draw your attention to Page 11, Clause 12[2[n] which states: 'promote and ensure open and non-discriminatory access to third party users and also provide a framework for the determination and approval of the storage fees to the third party storage users. This is very important, Mr Speaker. We do not want shortage of fuel any more. That is why I said that the only way you can manage pricing formula is when there is no shortage and you must have an organised way of doing it. There is no increase in the fees of oil companies. There are third parties and these third parties to storage should not be discouraged. This was what I wanted to draw your attention to, Mr Minister. You mentioned the tenure of the Board, which is three years. I am sure the Board exists for three years before renewal. The Bill makes provision for the Director General to be appointed for five years. There is a bit of inconsistency, but we shall deal with that when we get to the Committee Stage. We have to be consistent with Boards we approved here. It is time for us to harmonise them. For instance, if the duration at NaTCA is three or

four years, the same duration must not change in other institutions. There must be consistency in law making. So, this one is questionable.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Deputy Speaker mentioned Section 61 of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone, which has to do with the powers of the President to create offices and the number of years given to such offices. We already have appointees for the deputy position, but in this Bill, you did not make provision. That could be an oversight, but we will deal with it at the Committee Stage.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me take you to the concept of monopoly. The Minister has prescribed levies on agents who would want to monopolise the industry. Part nine talks about Monopoly and Cartelisation. Clause 54[1[a] reads: "A person or an agent of that person shall not form cartel petroleum downstream. You are bringing mitigating clauses because you cannot use your influence to monopolise the industry. We have companies that have been in existence since 1960s and 1970s, but most of them have been transformed from one name to another, the status quo however remains the same. So, what you should do now is to look into those issues. At first, you stated that the agent or the person shall not form cartel petroleum downstream. Of course, if you form a cartel, there is going to be a problem. People are going to control or even ignore the pricing formula. This is why you have to discourage people from forming cartels. From the look of things, the other companies that have been in existence are financially strong than the new companies. There is inconsistency in terms of petroleum products supply. We are trying to mitigate some of these issues. That was why I said you are taking mitigating measures to make sure things are put in place.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Minister also spoke about securing the monopoly of a business or commercial activities within the petroleum downstream industry. We are having problems in terms of storage facility and that is causing a lot of crisis. Sometimes it is not OPEC. You can see the price of petroleum per barrel which is 50 dollars. The price in Sierra Leone is still increasing. It is not only the price that is determined by OPEC, but because of our own making that cause the fuel price to increase. You have explained to us the different types of storage facility and the pump price. What we are saying is that if you have a storage facility and

you deliberately monopolise, definitely there is going to be fuel crisis and when there is fuel crisis, you will see long queues around the streets.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to commend the Minister for his hard work. I do not know if you have observed that we used to experience fuel crisis, especially during Decembers, but there is nothing like such this year. We need to give you accolades for taking care of that aspect. We all know that things are not done magically, but what is necessary is perseverance and monitoring. You have to adopt policies that work in Sierra Leone. There are policies in Guinea that cannot work in Sierra Leone as well as those in Sierra Leone cannot work in Guinea. The policies you have rolled out are working perfectly. You have taken consultation to the higher peak. We should sit down and talk and you have given us assurance and we need to thank you. Mr Speaker, how do we mitigate the effects of cartelisation? You have gone further to address complaints and settlements. Complaints are different, but you have created a unit under the Authority. Of course, business entity S.O 2, na money entity. The Authority cannot have the financial muscle to control them, but the only thing that we can give to the Authority is a law that will give them the strength and authority to enforce adequately.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Minister suggested the formation of Complaints Board to settle disputes, so as to ensure a level playing field and those who are coming to this industry for the first time will have a place where to report or drop their complaints. How can you settle disputes? I do not want to go into the details, but you have already highlighted similar things we have been doing in other laws. You always highlight the issue of liberalisation. We are talking about the downstream and the MARPOL Convention. They are aware of the fact that fire accidents are bound to occur, like what happened months ago in the sea, where we have minor spillage. So, you need to take care of the pollution and the only way you can do that is through the MARPOL convention which is talking about pollution. If you allow spillage to take a different dimension, it will affect the species in terms of breathing. Even though you did not explain to us in detail, but you need to take care of pollution in the sea.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if you go to Google, the MARPOL Convention gives detailed analysis of how to handle pollution considering the downstream effects. If you are talking about upstream, there are many things you should take cognizance of. In the case of the downstream, you spoke about crude oil and how does the petroleum products come, which focuses more on the MARPOL Convention in the area of pollution? Mr Speaker, I think we have extensively dealt with the pricing formula, storage facility, etc. They have also looked at the mechanism to be put in place for the private sector. We have talked about the Complaints Board, monopolisation and cartelisation. In the miscellaneous provision, they have given the fact that they are dealing with a dynamic institution and it is a money making institution. No matter what you say, oil industry is a money making industry. They stated that they will be bringing regulations. Clause 65 states that the Authority may by statutory instrument make such regulations as may be considered necessary or expedient to give effect to this Act. They have highlighted some of the things we should discuss at the Committee Stage, but there are mechanisms that will give effect to this Act.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, like what the Honourable Member said about the absence of the long title it should be captured here. You should not tell us at the end that you are repealing or replacing the Parents Act when it is not clearly stated in the Bill. That is not the proper way of doing it at all. You need to tell us from the introduction of the Bill that you want to repeal and replace the Parent Act. I perfectly agree with Hon Daniel B. Koroma. However, we will handle that at the Committee Stage. We need to know because the long title gives an insight into the Bill. You cannot tell us at the end that you are going to repeal our own baby. It should be at the beginning of the Bill, Mr Minister. When we come to the Committee Stage, we will adequately deal with that.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I appreciate your contributions and comments. Like I said, i want you to feel comfortable because Bills are not always perfect when they are being brought to Parliament. They are just proposals and sometimes there are many typographical errors. In fact, Hon. Daniel Koroma spoke about the copy and paste and I want to I agree with him. I know that you have the data, but

because most of the provisions are the same as the other ones we have passed here. This creates bad impression for the drafters. However, you have done your part and it is left with us to rephrase some of the Clauses. As human beings, we are liable to mistakes. I want to assure that these mistakes will be taken care of when we go to the Committee Stage.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I think we have to commit this Bill to the Legislative Committee, so as to make sure that we do a proper job. We want to make a law that everyone will be comfortable with. Like I said, the Petroleum Directorate is also doing something that has to do with their storage facility. They are dealing with upstream and downstream and that is why we need to incorporate them to ensure that they are not in conflict with the law. The issue relating to the position of Deputy Director General was not mentioned, but that will also be taken care of. We will consult the Chairman of that Committee before the Bill is committed to the Committee Stage, so that all grey areas are properly addressed. You have done a very good job by maintaining price stability in petroleum products. What you are looking forward to now is how we make sure that we are consistent in terms of encouraging the private sector. There is no politician in that sector. That sector is completely a private sector. So, we do not make laws to discomfort them. We should make laws to make sure that they are comfortable. Mr Speaker, even if we enact this Bill into law, you have to bring them on board and let them understand what is enshrined in the laws. We want them to appreciate the laws we make here. I am sure everybody appreciates what we are doing here. I thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** To you, Mr Minister.

**MR IBRAHIM ALPHA SESAY:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me take this opportunity to thank you all for your critical comments and invaluable recommendations. This will definitely add value to the product we expect to have at the end of this discussion. We want a law that will stand the test of time. I fully appreciate all the comments and the recommendations. I also want to take this opportunity to thank the Chairman of the Committee on Trade and Industry, Hon. Veronica K. Sesay, for her support and for some of the comments she made. The



Key one related to oversight. I want to appeal to the Committee that we will work closely with the Committee on Trade and Industry to be able to facilitate oversight activities. So, this was done orderly and in a very respectable manner.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Honourable Abdul K. Kamara made an interesting comment, especially the one related to man-made factors. In the past, we used to have artificial shortages, but you now notice that for the past one year, it has changed. We were able to address and make adequate provisions for the market. I am sure the shortages we have are experiencing now are due to technical reasons and not as a result of fuel shortage. Well, fuel shortage is now a thing of the past. I also note your question concerning on how we should have equity within the fuel shortage period? This is well noted and I think that is a welcome idea. Also, as far as price equity is concern, I can tell you that this is the only product that we have in this country that has price equity across the country. The only places where we do not have price equity are places that are hard to reach areas due to bad roads. They are very difficult to access. Again, that is a benefit of the pricing formula. What we did in the pricing formula is to identify all the cost drivers or components that are involved in the petroleum industry. We identified them line by line, costed and transformed same into a policy.

**THE SPEAKER:** Mr Minister, please one minute. At this stage Honourable Members, I wish to draw your attention to the presence of certain eminent personalities we have here this morning: Mrs Jamiliatu Sawyer, Madam Haja Swaray, Mrs Lucia Falah, Madam Maria Yeanni. They are all from the USA and they are here to visit us. You are welcome to the House of Parliament.

**MR IBRAHIM ALPHA SESAY:** As I was saying, the only areas where we have uncontrolled prices are areas that are difficult to reach. The advantage of price equity is the fact that prices are captured in the pricing formula and all these tanker drivers have an excluded amount. We pay them directly. We only have to improve on the quality of roads. Again, for the petrol stations, I am working hard to construct one in Gbinti, one in Kamakwie and one in Bathkanu, but the roads are not good at all.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I had discussions with the manager of the National Petroleum [NP] to find possible ways of assessing some of these areas, such as Koindu. We discussed and they sent out a team to carry out some preliminary studies on how to do this. Most of the other areas depend on the population or chiefdom headquarters. This is because one of the conditions I discussed particularly with the head of NP is to make sure that we have a gas station irrespective of the condition of any chiefdom or headquarter town. I will continue to pursue that. I also noted the comment made by the Deputy Speaker. You made a very critical observation and I strongly support it. We will address it at the Committee Stage. This clearly explains how critical Parliament is as the last gatekeeper, representing the people's interest. I appreciate it and that will be fully addressed.

The Honourable Charles Abdullah made a comment regarding license processes and that is fully noted and is captured in this Bill. They will be reviewed and monitored. Again, the Honourable Unpha made a comment on the multiplier effects of petroleum products. This is also noted because in this part of the world, petroleum products have major impacts on inflation and that is the fact. An increase in the petroleum products affects every other commodity in this country. When you reduce the pump price, it becomes difficult for it to be reflected on the price of other commodities; but when there is price increase, there is tendency for the increase to affect the price of other goods. These are the things I captured in the pricing formula. This will ensure that no individual or entity will get up one day and decide to increase the price of petroleum products without referring to the government.

The Honourable Mohammed Bangura and the Leader of Government Business have already addressed the issues relating to renewable energy. I want to assure the House that ambiguity in the pricing formula will be made transparent. If you go to the Ministry of Trade or the PRA's Website, it is very clear on that and it was done in collaboration with all the stakeholders. We did not just sit down and identify the cost alone. We sat together with all key stakeholders to identify and agree on the cost to be charged on every variable. That is how we arrived at what we have now, but until there is a major change in any of those variables, no one stakeholder has the power

to determine the price of the petroleum products and that has to be approved by the Minister of Trade and Industry.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the issue relating to the extant law came up succinctly and it is a legal issue for Parliament. I cannot make any comment on it, but the issue regarding the construction of gas stations in the residential areas and erection of bars around gas stations is well noted. Immediately I became Minister of Trade and Industry, I worked closely with the Chief Executive Officer to develop a document and we did it. What this Act will do is to empower us to enforce the criteria. The criteria state clearly what to do and what not do. However, this Act is going to enforce it for whatever reasons. We cannot be present everywhere, especially in the remote areas and by the time you pick up, there are gas stations all over. So, the Act will give us the power to be able to knock out all gas stations that will not meet the requirements that are captured in this Act. We will also monitor how bars are constructed around gas stations and making sure that the necessary safety standards are provided in order to protect lives and property.

Hon Daniel Koroma, I want to thank you very much for your comments on fuel availability. I also noted all your comments on the ambushes, but let me highlight the specific ones. On the storage facility, I am making sure that we have minimum stocks and this is captured in Section 45[b] on Page 27 of this Bill. If the Bill is eventually enacted into law, it will empower us to make sure that all old marketing companies have minimum stocks. It is clearly written here. In the case of the typographical errors and the issue relating to the Board Secretary, I have noted those concerns and we will address all these concerns at the Committee Stage.

The Leader of Government Business spoke extensively on the pricing formula. Again, it follows one of the meetings that we had few days ago, trying to develop the pricing formula for rice. I also want to thank you for raising the issue of Kerosene and the implications for those who are importing it. We noted during the holidays that we had enough petroleum products at every point across the entire country. As I indicated earlier, it is largely due to the fact that, as a Ministry and as a Government, we created the enabling business environment for the industry. During my opening statements, I did mention that if we look at the storage capacity in

2018, we had 135,404 metric tons capacity; but today, we have 237,904 metric tons and that is **75%** increment in the storage capacity. If you look at the retailing gas stations in 2028, we had 171; but today, we have 483 gas stations across the country. We also created the enabling environment to attract other players by expanding the storage facility and by increasing the petroleum jetties. We used to have one in 2018; but today, we have three petroleum jetties across the country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I move that the Bill entitled, the National Petroleum Regulatory Authority Act, 2024, be read the second time.

*[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]*

*[The Bill entitled, The National Petroleum Regulatory Authority Act, 2024, being an Act to provide for the continuation of the Petroleum Regulatory Agency, which shall be known as the National Petroleum Regulatory Authority and shall Continue to Provide for the Regulation of the Petroleum Downstream Industry, including the License, Monitoring and Supervisions of Refineries, Transportation, Marketing and Retail Activities and to Provide for other related Matters, has been read the second time.]*

**HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have heard from those who have contributed to the debate and also raised concerns about sanitising the Bill. The proposal is good, but we do not have the extant law that is about to be repealed. Well, my colleague said that it is an ambush, but I want to humbly ask the Legislative Committee to upload the extant law for us. Also, the concerns raised about the issue of the Deputy position and Board Secretary are very important. These are issues that we are going to look at critically at the Committee Stage. Owing to these concerns, I stand on S.O.[51] to move that this Bill be committed to the Legislative Committee for proper scrutiny and report to the House accordingly.

**THE SPEAKER:** Any seconder?

**HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA:** I so second, Mr Speaker.

*[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed To]*

*[Motion by the Leader of Government Business has been carried]*

**HON. FALLAH K. TENGBEH:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise on S.O. 23 to share two vital information with this Honourable House and the Nation. Mr Speaker, few days into the new year of 2025, Guineans crossed the Makona River to Sierra Leone collecting data, using drones and tablets, possibly conducting cartographic mapping meant to be added into the Guinean map. I am reporting this for it to be taken very seriously. This is not good for the people living around that region. Moreover, the prices of food items and other commodities around the Kissy Kingdom are exponentially doubling on three weekly basis due to bad road conditions. As we speak, there is almost a cut of point with limited vehicles entering Koindu. On that note, the people and I are kindly asking the SLRA to make our roads, so that those prices can return to normalcy as we have them in Freetown, Kenema and Kailahun. Thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Member, I urge you to write a letter to the Chairman of the Committee on Defence and the Chairman of the Committee on Works.

**HON. ALHAJI SHEIK SANTIGIE I. KARGBO:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I rise on S.O 23 to relay very important information raised by the people of Kafu Bullon, the owners of the land where the airport is located. These people are being maltreated by the airport owners. The airport has been there for the past four years without paying their lease rents. Therefore, they came to me as their representative to raise this concern to this House, so that the House can look into their concern. It is time for a security to be given to the people of Kafu Bullon.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Member, inform your people to write a public petition concerning the issue to Parliament with their signatures on it.

**HON.ALHAJI SHEIK SANTIGIE I. KARGBO:** Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**HON. MOHAMED BANGURA:** Thank you very much Mr Speaker. The issue of Yenga has become a threat to the security of this nation. I am sure Honourable Members have been raising this concern, but I have not seen action taken. I would love to recommend that the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Defence are summoned here to come and update us on Yenga.

**THE SPEAKER:** I agree with you, Honourable Mohamed Bangura. Can you do that through question time? Please contact the consultant, Mr Cyril F. King, to work on the question time for those Ministers concerning the issue. They will appear in Parliament to be questioned by Members of Parliament regarding Yenga. Please work on that please. Honourable Members, I gave a ruling on a particular individual that the said individual should not have accessed to precincts of Parliament until on such time when we shall decide. He should be out of this Parliament. I have instructed the Clerk of Parliament to write to the Inspector General of Police, copy the LUC at Parliament Branch and the Leaders to ensure that he does not have access to this Parliament until such time when we will allow him. That is a sanction for reckless journalism. Thank you very much.

### ***ADJOURNMENT***

*[The House rose at 1:32 p.m., and was adjourned to Tuesday, 14<sup>th</sup> January, 2025 at 10:00 a.m.]*