



*'OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN*

# **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**

**[HANSARD]**

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**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT**

**FOURTH SESSION –FIRST MEETING**

**THURSDAY, 13<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY, 2022**

*SESSION – 2021/2022*



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# **PARLIAMEN TARY DEBATES**

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**VOLUME: I**

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

Proceedings of the Sitting of the House  
Held Thursday, 13<sup>th</sup> January, 2022.

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## **CONTENTS**

### **I. PRAYERS**

### **II. RECORD OF VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS FOR THE PARLIAMENTARY SITTING HELD ON TUESDAY 21<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER, 2021**

### **III. ANNOUNCEMENT BY MR SPEAKER:**

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

PROPOSER: HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE

SECONDER: HON. HASSAN A. SESAY

BE IT RESOLVED:

THAT THE FOURTH REPORT OF THE FOURTH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON APPOINTMENTS AND THE PUBLIC SERVICE BE ADOPTED BY THE HOUSE AND THAT THE RECOMMENDATION CONTAINED THEREIN BE APPROVED



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

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

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

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**Thursday, 13<sup>th</sup> January, 2022.**

#### **I. PRAYERS**

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

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

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

The House was called to Order

*COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR*

**II. CORRECTION OF VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS FOR THE PARLIAMENTARY SITTING HELD ON TUESDAY 21<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER, 2021.**

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, welcome back from the Christmas break; we shall now consider our records of Votes and Proceedings for Tuesday 21st, December 2021. We shall skip pages one through to four and start from page 5; any amendments on page 5? Page 6? Page 7? Page 8? Page 9? Page 10? Page 11? Last page, 12? Can someone please move for the adoption of the Record of Votes and Proceedings for the Parliamentary Sitting held on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> December, 2021.

**HON SAHR CHARLES:** I so move.

**THE SPEAKER:** Any Seconder?

**HON MOSES A. EDWIN:** Mr Speaker, I so second.

*[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed To]*

*[Record of Votes and Proceedings for the Parliamentary Sitting held on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> December 2021, has been adopted.]*

**III ANNOUNCEMENT BY MR SPEAKER**

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, it is with great sadness that I have the unpleasant duty of announcing the demise of two of our sitting colleagues; and this happened during the period when the rest of us were engaged in the Christmas festivities and they are: the Honourable Aloysius Bockarie Ansumana, representing Constituency 005, Kailahun District and the second Member was, the Honourable Ahmed Samba Turay, representing Constituency 073, Port Loko District. In addition to these two, it has been brought to my notice that one former Member of this House, the former Paramount Chief of Kono District, is terminally ill in a hospital in Ghana. Another colleague of ours; former Member of Parliament, Honourable Ansu Kaikai, is also being taken away from us, by the Angel of death. His remains would be laid in State, later this

afternoon. May I now request all of us, to rise and observe a minute silence in memory of the faithful departed? May Allah Almighty forgive them for any mistakes they may have committed while on planet earth, and accept their souls; and grant them eternal rest in His heavenly Kingdom, Amen. All Members of Parliament are expected to be at the Laying-out Ceremony for the Late Honourable Ansumana Kaikai, which event is scheduled to take place at 3:00 PM at the State Hall, today.

The last announcement I have is that; this is 2022, and I hope we will not carry over into 2022, the bad habits of 2021; let us push them away, and bury them in the archives of history; the history of 2021, never to resurface in 2022. But I regret, here we are starting our proceedings after 10:10a.m, well after 10:00a.m; so that particular bad habit seems to be rearing its ugly head again into 2022. But I will continue to pray, and those of you who are men of Pastors and Imams please join me, so that God Almighty will answer our prayers; for all of us to start recognizing our responsibility to be here on time, at 10:00 a.m. prompt. I did not hear the Pastors saying anything, and I know there are fantastic Sheiks on that side of the House [*Undertone*]; very well. Let us get on with today's business.

#### **IV MOTION OF THE COMMITTEE ON APPOINTMENTS AND THE PUBLIC SERVICE**

PROPOSER: HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE

SECONDER: HON. HASSAN A. SESAY

BE IT RESOLVED:

THAT THE FOURTH REPORT OF THE FOURTH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON APPOINTMENTS AND THE PUBLIC SERVICE BE ADOPTED BY THE HOUSE AND THAT THE RECOMMENDATION CONTAINED THEREIN BE APPROVED

**HON BASHIRU SILIKIE:** Good morning Honourable Members, and happy New Year to all; we hope 2022 will be the best year for us [*Undertone*]. Honourable Lahai Marah, we are hoping for the best.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, First Report of the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service, on Parliamentary vetting of Presidential Nominations.

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **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, in tandem with its constitutional obligations met on Tuesday, 11th January, 2022 and interviewed **two** Presidential nominees for the following positions: two Members, Board of Directors for the Environment Protection Agency [EPA] and the Bank of Sierra Leone [BSL], respectively.

#### *2. Procedure*

The Committee maintained as usual, strict consistency with its usual established procedure and interviewed the nominees on issues pertaining to their educational background to ensure that they have the relevant education and necessary backup experience to hold such important offices of State. Several probing questions especially put to the nominees, covered wide ranging issues relating to their track records in pertinent work situations, declared assets, tax obligations and their visions for a nationally productive tenure. Issues of unsuitability or otherwise, were strictly looked into by the Committee.

### **3 Fourth Sitting of the Committee on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> January, 2022.**

The Committee interviewed the following nominees:

- i. Paramount Chief Dr Michael Shamsu Mustapha - Proposed Member, Board of Directors - Bank of Sierra Leone [BSL]*

Paramount Chief **Dr Michael Shamsu Mustapha Ngebeh III** is a traditional ruler, an acclaimed Economist, an Educationist and a reputable World Bank Consultant with an adept knowledge in advising Governments on economic policy formulation and reforms for sustainable economic growth in developing countries. Prior to his ascendancy to the throne as Paramount Chief in the Kpejei West Chiefdom, Kailahun District last year, PC Mustapha served Sierra Leone as Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance, Development and Economic Planning from 1982 to 1986, Technical Coordinator for the World Bank Transport Sector Reform Project in the Ministry of Transport and Aviation (MTA), 1994 - 2004, Lecturer in Economics, Fourah Bay College, 1972 - 1982 amongst others.

Responding to questions on reforms currently unfolding at the Bank of Sierra Leone, the nominee said: "I am aware of the role dichotomy between the Ministry of Finance and the BSL, and the monetary reforms - especially the currency redenomination, now on course. If approved, I promise to work closely with the Bank Governor and the BSL Board of Directors to improve the monetary policies and programmes desired for the growth of the country. I know the redenomination is always controversial and has failed in some countries but as a team, we will look at the issues, modify and restructure them, for smooth implementation".

The nominee, concluded by commending the BSL for its resilience policies that sailed the country throughout the different dreadful waves of the Covid-19 pandemic, when most economic activities in the country collapsed.



*ii. Dr Alfred Morie Saffa - Proposed Member, Board of Directors, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)*

Dr Alfred Morie Saffa is a seasoned academic and a Researcher, with prolific publications to his credit. He had served as a Lecturer, at the Concordia University of Edmonton (USA) 1997 -2019; Njala University College, University of Sierra Leone, 1993-1995.

Responding to questions relating to what he would be taking to the EPA especially in the advent of the Global Climate Change phenomenon, the nominee said: "the recently concluded COP-26 Glasgow platform dished out to our country especially developing countries, as to how they can mitigate the emerging trend of Climate Change. With my scientific background on the Board, we would work collaboratively to support the administration of EPA in robust policy formulation, restructuring and programme implementations"

The nominee promised to link his long-standing scientific research affiliations, to our Institutions of higher learning, as part of his further national contributions.

#### *4 Recommendations*

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

- i. PC Dr Michael Shamsu Mustapha Ngebeh V - Proposed Member, Board of Directors, Bank of Sierra Leone;
- ii. Dr Alfred Morie Saffa - Proposed Member, Board of Directors, Environmental Protection Agency(EPA)

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, based on the aforesaid, I therefore move that the **Fourth Report** of the **Fourth Session** of the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service be adopted by the House and that the recommendations contained therein be approved.

Hon. Bashiru Silikie,

Deputy Chairman and Leader of Government Business.

**THE SPEAKER:** Any seconder?

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

*[Question Proposed]*

**THE SPEAKER:** We have time constraints today; some of us have been asked to appear at State House by 1:00 O'clock this afternoon, and we also have the laying out at 3:00p.m. In light of that I hope Honourable Members will understand if I allow only one speaker from each side of the aisles and then wind up the debate on this particular item in the interest of time. With that, I will give the floor to the seconder of the motion.

**HON HASSAN A SESAY:** Thank you Mr Speaker. I want to wish colleagues all, a prosperous New Year and hope like Mr Speaker said, old habits will be relinquished...

**THE SPEAKER:** the bad ones.

**HON HASSAN A SESAY:** Old habits.

**THE SPEAKER:** The bad ones...

**HON HASSAN A SESAY:** Mr Speaker, let me land; this is my turn to talk.

**THE SPEAKER:** No, but you are quoting me.

**HON HASSAN A SESAY:** No, I did not quote you.

**THE SPEAKER:** So quote me correctly, I said the 'bad habits'.

**HON HASSAN A SESAY:** The bad habits; but also Mr Speaker, we should ensure that it is holistic; my take. However Mr Speaker, Honourable Members; today again, we are in the process of approving nominees given to us by the President, to serve in sensitive Institutions, they are non-controversial. For that reason, like I or we always say; we will always support that which is progressive and question that which is not progressive. In this case, these are progressive nominees. *[Applause]*

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me first of all address the issue of the Environmental Protection Agency, to which somebody has been nominated to serve in the board coming just after COP 26. We are all aware of the deforestation that is

affecting our country now, it is no secret that our forest are being ravaged; that climate change is indeed a reality not a hoax, and having a Minister in that Ministry, should be one who is respectful, one who has his wits about him; so we expect people coming in to proffer relevant advise in order to ensure that the level at which we are ravaging our forests, is curtailed. Not just for us, but for the future of this country; so that whoever comes there is expected to be very professional, in order to ensure that the pieces of advise needed are used, for us to stop ravaging our forests with massive logging, to discontinued; because, we want to preserve the climate. We also expect somebody of this pedigree coming in; to provide the necessary support to ensure that we achieve that goal.

Having said that, the other nominee that we have with us is the Paramount Chief, Dr Shamsu Mustapha; is somebody that we know, somebody who went to London School of Economics and had a Bachelor's degree there, went to Saudi University got a Master's degree and then, went to Warwick and got a Doctorate degree. He was one of the brilliant and brightest in the days when we were in College; he is a seasoned monetary economist. Knowing that fully well, if you nominate somebody of that nature to go to the Bank of Sierra Leone I have no iota of doubt that Paramount Chief, Dr Shamsu Mustapha will be a very relevant addition to that Institution; particularly so, under the current circumstances that we are going through. Let me tell you why? PC Dr Shamsu Mustapha, when he was in College we used to admire him because of his brilliance, because of his position when it comes to issues of a radical nature, he was always on the side of students; we always think alike with him.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the PC Dr Shamsu Mustapha is coming to the Bank of Sierra Leone at a period which is very crucial, why? Because we have the issue of re-denomination which is now an issue that needs to be addressed adequately. When the Bank Governor came to this House in Committee Room 1, he made a fundamental error; what is that error? He said in 1964, there was a re-denomination but let me set the records straight; there is a difference between delinking a currency and re-denomination. In 1964, we delinked our currency from the Pounds, Shillings and Pence

to Leones and Cents but not re-denomination; let us get that straight. We recommended to the Bank Governor that for such a policy to be implemented, we need to have a constructive nationwide engagement including Members of Parliament, he agreed with us. Mr Speaker indeed, such an engagement did not happen, but the document came to this House. Mr Speaker, we can never, never say you did not do the right thing; but what was supposed to have happened that the Governor did not do before that came into effect was that, he accepted to us in Room One that it was going to happen, but it never happened. We very well know that the issue of re-denomination was implemented in States like: Zimbabwe, in Italy, in Argentina, in Ghana it happened; what happened in Zimbabwe? The zeroes came bouncing back in multiple numbers.

**HON DICKSON M. ROGERS:** Mr Speaker, I am rising on the Point of Order [34]. Mr Speaker, I am sure we are not debating the re-domination.

**HON HASSAN A. SESAY:** Mr Speaker, we are talking about the Bank of Sierra Leone and this issue is related to the Bank of Sierra Leone; let my Opposite Member accept it and let me land.

**HON DICKSON M. ROGERS:** Honourable Member I agree, but I am standing on a Point of Order. Mr Speaker, we are not debating the re-denomination Bill but we are rather, approving Nominees; can we concentrate on that? Mr Speaker, you have spoken about time, and we have time constraints. I am not sure we need to re-open the debate on re-denomination please; we are approving nominees so let us concentrate on that.

**HON HASSAN A. SESAY:** Mr Speaker, my colleague on the other side will agree with me that, our essence in this House is to disagree to agree; so pleased.

**THE SPEAKER:** Now, if you disagree in order to agree, do so within the confines of this Standing Orders; and I want to draw your attention to SO 32[5].

**HON HASSAN A. SESAY:** I know you Mr Speaker; I know you will draw my attention to SO [32] I knew. But Mr Speaker, if you can recall when we heard that issue here we raised a Motion on this side.

**THE SPEAKER:** That issue has not disappeared.

**HON HASSAN A. SESAY:** It has not disappeared?

**THE SPEAKER:** no, it has not disappeared and it is still current; and maybe sometimes in the Session, the Governor who is in charge of the re-denomination will be brought back to this House for him to explain; so let us restrict our present comments to what is now relevant before this House namely; the approval of the Nominees.

**HON HASSAN A. SESAY:** Okay. Mr Speaker, you will agree with me that if we are going to approve a nominee; somebody who is a Consummate Professional and acclaimed Economist, going to the Bank of Sierra Leone let us give him what our views are, so that he will go with an advice to the Governor *[Applause]*. Mr Speaker, the man that we are supposed to approve; the Doctor, the Paramount Chief, Dr Shamsu Mustapha, is not just an Economist he is an acclaimed Economist, a Monetary Specialist and I know he is not a textbook Economist.

**THE SPEAKER:** I knew him before you.

**HON HASSAN A. SESAY:** I understand because, he is of your generation; but what I knew of him, is what I am now saying about him and I think I deserve that right to say what I do know about Dr Shamsu Mustapha. We respect you, that was why in the APC, we choose the brilliant and the brightest to serve and that was why he served; yes the brilliant and the brightest we chose them, and that was why he served in the APC, he served in the APC just like Salia Jusu Sheriff, just as Sama S. Banya did and just like Mr Speaker did *[Laughter]*; we picked the best and the brightest, we did that and we are still doing it *[Listen and learn, you were not available then now is a living history]*.

**HON DICKSON M. ROGERS:** Mr Speaker, I agree with my opponent, I just hope he will say the same thing when Alpha Khan will come here for approval.

**HON HASSAN A. SESAY:** Yes, we have a package for him do not get worried about that; let him come we have a package for him.

**THE SPEAKER:** I was just...

**HON HASSAN A. SESAY:** Alpha Khan, we will welcome him; let him just come.

**THE SPEAKER:** I was just about to acknowledge the validity of the speakers by referring to the fact that, between the two aisles, there is going to be cross-fertilization of ideas; so I am listening.

**HON HASSAN A. SESAY:** Mr Speaker, just leave that to us so we can debate.

**THE SPEAKER:** Yes, but time constraints; I have already appealed to you.

**HON HASSAN A. SESAY:** Okay, alright! Anyways, having raised that Mr Speaker, you also brought up an issue that the Governor, will be coming to this House; something I had asked for times without number.

**THE SPEAKER:** but I said, if need be.

**HON HASSAN A. SESAY:** No Mr Speaker, you had just said that in 2022; so what I am saying here is that, my colleague had cautioned that we are not here to debate the issue of re-denomination, but to approve Dr Shamsu Mustapha. Having heard all that I have said about Dr Samsun Mustapha, we expect you to go to the bank with that wisdom of your speciality in monetary economy, we expected you to take your Speciality, rather than textbook economies approach; that is why we will say all the good things that we want to say about you, and expect you to infuse sanity into decisions taken by the Bank as a member of the Board; I thank you very much Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** I want to thank the Honourable Member for his brilliant contribution but also to remind him about the role of textbooks; they do constitute the foundation upon which knowledge is based. Yes,

**HON HINDOLO M. GEVAO:** Mr Speaker, I will be very brief because of time constraints. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, permit me to say a very big 'thank you' to His Excellency the President, for choosing fine Sierra Leoneans who have been carefully educated, with a good track records behind them to serve: as a Member, Board of Directors of the Environmental Protection Agency [EPA] and the other one on the Board of Bank of Sierra Leone [BSL]. Both Institutions, being very crucial to the sustenance and survival of a nation I would start with the nominee for the Environmental Protection Agency.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I had known this nominee since I was a boy; Dr Alfred Morrie Saffa, is one of those fine Sierra Leoneans who in his own teenage days, inspired so many Sierra Leoneans who endeavoured for academic excellence. Having gone through the Holy Ghost Secondary School in Sebwema, he passed his O' Level

with a distinction, and was enrolled at N'jala University. Whilst at Njala, he started performing his own national service by lecturing, before he went abroad to study for his Doctorate Degree in Philosophy [PHD]. After his qualification, he came back to continue to serve this nation; his personal profile is not what I am actually concerned about, but the importance of both his position and that of the Institution, in which he is being nominated to go and serve. Dr Saffa if you are approved by this Honourable House, I want you together with the other Board Members, to particularly start paying attention to the environmental hazards around us, even in Freetown; you do not need to go to the Provinces for you to understand that we are heading for problems in Sierra Leone. I will give you just one example; going towards Kent for the longest of time this nation has protected a density forest on the right-hand side of the street.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in the past two to three years, that forest has been mutilated in the quest of Land-grabbers, to build houses there. The beauty of that forest is so great that, it can attract Investors and we can make so much money out of it than people going in there to hastily grab those lands. I want to crave the indulgence of the Institution and that of the Ministry, to speedily move in to save that forest; the Minister is here, for him to move speedily to save that eco-system because it is of a serious concern. When we heard of Motormeh, we thought it was an incident that just took place over night; it did not take place over night because we all saw when people were going under that hill to construct houses so much so that, they cut off the soil underneath the hill in such a manner, that the weight of the soil could no longer be held firmly together; so as a result of that, we had that calamity. As a nation, we should put all hands on deck; and together, seeing our brothers from the other aisle raising issues as we also do because, that is what we are in this House for; we are the auditors of the nation, we want to crave your indulgence to actually work assiduously together with the Ministry, to ensure that within the perimeters of the city, people can stop desecrating and destroying the environment. Some of us are in our middle ages, so let us start thinking about our children and those yet unborn; if we destroy the environment, which type of country or nation will we be

leaving for our kids.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the issue of the environment is very serious; I was born in Daru close to the river - the Moa River. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members when I was a child even in March, one could hardly cross that river from the barracks end to the Daru end. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if you go there now the sea level or the sea bed has gone so low so much so that, you can walk through that river and cross to Daru because of the deforestation going on. If all the trees around the water catchment area are cut down and it rains, the very hills that are to hold unto the rain that drops into the water at the end of the rain, the trees will no longer hold those waters together and it falls on the ground so erosion takes place, and the sea bed loses in; so if we continue that way, we might as well continue having rivers in the form of history that there was once a river, but it is no longer a river.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members also, let me come to the area of deforestation of timber for construction purposes. I come from one of the areas with very dense forest and ecosystem that is, Kailahun, Nyandehun Mamba Gboboyi; that is why, if you study the rainy system very well in Kailahun, we only have two months of dries in twelve months; that is because, Kailahun has a very good ecosystem that attracts rain. Mr Speaker this December that has just past, I went to my Constituency, the space of deforestation for timber purposes is on the high side and that is discouraging; almost every piece of tree that has been kept over the years, we are now cutting down. There is very little regulation in those parts of the area, as to how they could cut down those trees for timber purposes, and how they could replant it; and the Ministry has done so well, in introducing a system as to how those trees could be planted or re-planted.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to crave the indulgence of the Environmental Protection Agency the Ministry of Environment; because Mr Speaker, I see them working assiduously but there is also a problem of manpower. Mr Speaker, I am recommending Forest Guards all over the country, if we want this problem to be solved. Mr Speaker, if we do not protect especially the areas where we have this forest belt, in the next ten years or so, we would definitely have serious problems at hand. Because of



time constraints, I will shortly talk on Dr Shamsu Mustapha; some of us came into politics because of the names that we used to admire: Dr Shamsu Mustapha got - 2,180 votes; Joe Amara Bangali - your name has been a household name, and the level of education that you had, has made Sierra Leoneans to be full of hope, and you have now been appointed to the Bank of Sierra Leone. Sir, we know the supply chain of goods and services is contributing to the inflationary sphere in Sierra Leone, I know with proper economic policies and agreements within Institutions, we will be able not only to stop inflation, but to be able to put it under control a bit.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I do normally say when petrol is Le5,000 that, every Member of Parliament across the aisle buy that product; so let us put our hearts and hands together, to be able to control prices in such a way that, even though Covid is impacting us exponentially in such a manner that our Constituents, whom they themselves cannot earn Le5,000,000 a year, could be able to afford the basic commodities that they need. The problem is that for example, the other day I went to kroo Town road to buy vegetable oil at the shop of PC & Sons, it was going for Le900,000; and if you go across the other shop, it was going for Le1,300,000; the oil is being produced by PC & Sons that is why, their shop sells it at Le900,000 but the other shops on the other hand, is selling it for Le1,300,000 just within that same vicinity; so can you imagine that by the time it gets to Kailahun, it will be going for Le2,000,000 so if we are able to tackle the supply chain, then we will be able to determine how much a gallon of oil will cost in Kailahun; I am of the opinion that, it will help if not, that will be a burden on us, as Members of Parliament. A bag of cement is going for Le110,000 here in Freetown but when it gets to Kailahun, it will be going for Le150,000 the price difference is so huge; so let us put hands together, and with your economic knowledge and experience in those offices being held, we would be able to control some of these prices. I wish you well, and I know you people are going to do us proud and when you see us come to your offices, know that we are bringing up these issues being raised in such a way that it will impact our Constituents, and the nation as a whole; thank you very much *[Applause]*.

**THE SPEAKER:** I thank the Honourable Member for his contribution. As I indicated earlier, I shall now wind up the debate starting with the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

**HON IBRAHIM B. KARGBO:** Mr Speaker, it will be out of courtesy if I were to sit here whilst Dr Shamsu Mustapha is being discussed without me saying a word or two. Mr Speaker, Dr Samsun Mustapha now Paramount Chief, was one of the famous Member of Parliament in this House including you Mr Speaker; when we spoke about important people in this House.

**THE SPEAKER:** Old editions are always the best *[Laughter]*.

**HON IBRAHIM BEN KARGBO:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, people who made a name in this House, cannot exclude Dr Shamsu Mustapha, now Paramount Chief. Mr Speaker, Paramount Chief Shamsu Mustapha is a household name in the sense that, not only did he serve this Parliament, he was also the Minister of Development in this country; he was also a highly respected Minister apart from the fact that, he served the University of Sierra Leone and touched many Sierra Leoneans for which, he deserved some praises. If we see him here today asking us to approve him, I will do so with no grudge because he deserves to be approved to be a Member of the Board of Directors, of the Bank of Sierra Leone.

Mr Speaker, we need not overstate the history about the Bank of Sierra Leone any more, but we should remind ourselves that when the Bank of Sierra Leone was established, it was for good reasons; we on this side, have now heard that Mr Bank Governor wants to come with new innovations *[but we would leave that discussion for the appropriate time]*. I am very certain Mr Speaker, that when Chief Shamsu Mustapha goes to that bank, he will come with innovations that will introduce the thinking of the people in the Bank of Sierra Leone, to us, it is important that we take all of those things into consideration. Mr Speaker, anybody who went to school with 'Yakubu guy', like Shamsu Mustapha did anybody and went to the famous University of the world like Shamsu Mustapha did, must be a very important person in society.

Mr Speaker, without wasting any more time, I want to state the fact that, we have a candidate before us here who is not only famous, but has also been very useful to this society; I am therefore, pleading with my colleagues both on this side and the other side, to ensure that we approve Dr Shamsu Mustapha to become a member of the Board of Directors of the Bank of Sierra Leone, thank you Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** I cannot thank the Honourable Member enough; he has complied with my admonition that: 'Brevity is the soul of wit'. You do not need to elaborate things beyond imagination to make your point, thank you very much; over to you Acting Leader.

**HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE:** Thank you very much Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to begin by thanking Members of Parliament who have contributed to this debate. Mr Speaker, I want to make it very clear to the Secunder of this Motion that the Bank of Sierra Leone has promised this Parliament that they will do thorough engagement for the redenomination and the policy has not been effected as of yet. What has happened is that, Parliament has just approved that the Bank of Sierra Leone should go ahead and do the redenomination; the process is still on-going and that policy will not be effected until thorough engagement is done, and the Bank Governor has promised us that, he would have to engage all Paramount Chiefs, all major stakeholders in Sierra Leone and Members of Parliament; so I want to assure you to have that confident in the Bank Governor for such an engagement.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank His Excellency the President, for presenting to us two fine Nominees; coincidentally, I was the Chairman for the Appointments Committee. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to assure this House that I was extremely very, very impressed with the interview I conducted together with my colleagues on the Appointments Committee. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, to the Nominees; you have been selected from the numerous Sierra Leoneans to serve in that capacity, please do His Excellency proud, please do not disappoint the Appointments Committee and by extension this Parliament, you are wished well; we hope that you would work collaboratively with the other Board

Members so that we all achieve the agenda for the 'New Direction' *[Applause]*; thank you very much Mr Speaker *[Applause]*.

**THE SPEAKER:** I thank the Deputy Leader of Government Business.

*[Question Proposed Put and Agreed To]*

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

**THE SPEAKER:** It is now my pleasant duty to add my own voice of congratulations and felicitations to the two Nominees who have just been approved. I must confess that one of them, was a contemporary in the UK as a student; and I have told you, for you people who like to talk about old editions *[Laughter]* old editions are always the best, so remember that *[Applause]* and old editions do not expire *[Laughter]*. Against this backdrop, I have no doubt in my mind that all of you know especially the expertise and by the way I must take this opportunity while I have the Floor, to congratulate Paramount Chief Dr Shamsu Mustapha; this is the first time I am seeing him since he was given this new title. I hope one day I will find time to visit you in your Chieftdom and make our re-acquaintance - you as Paramount Chief and I, as Speaker *[Laughter]*. I have no doubt that they will acquit themselves in their new capacities and also, in a way that would make His Excellency proud, as well as this House. In light of the antecedence with which they come to the offices, we know they will do very well in the interest of our country so we wish you well; congratulations once again. You are now free to take leave of us.

**HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE:** Mr Speaker,

**THE SPEAKER:** Yes.

**HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, item [V] on the Order Paper; unfortunately, we have not seen the Minister nor his Deputy; so I want to move that item [v] be expunged from the Order Paper.

**THE SPEAKER:** Any seconder?

**HON. DR. MARK MAMOUD KALOKOH:** I so second.

*[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed To]*

*[Item on the Order Paper is expunged]*

## **BILL**

The Forestry Amended Act 2021, the Minister of Environment

*Introduction and first reading.*

**THE MINISTER** *[Professor Foday M. Jaward]:* Mr Speaker Honourable Members happy New Year to you all. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I move that the Bill entitled: The Forestry Amended Act 2021, be read the first time.

*Question Proposed Put and Agreed To*

*[The Bill: The Forestry Amendment Act 2021 has been read the first time].*

Second Reading.

**THE MINISTER:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I move that the Bill entitled The Forestry Amendment Act 2021 be read the second time.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, of this noble House good morning. The Forestry Act was enacted in 1988 and it has never been amended. It is 33years old, it preceded the development of the Strategic Goals [SDGs] [13] and [15] and the [Africa Union] [AU] Agenda 2063 [**Africa's development blueprint to achieve inclusive and sustainable socio-economic development over a 50-year period**] and please note that these three amendments or SDGs provides concrete management and regulatory framework for sustainable management of the environment.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, climate change is affecting us in so many ways but in Sierra Leone deforestation is the major cause. We are ranked as one of the most vulnerable countries globally to respond to impact of changing climate. Climate change is affecting our economy and society, bio-diversity lost poses severe threats to the resources that supports our economy including our fisheries, forest, agriculture and

water. As a nation we must take urgent actions to preserve, protect and sustainably use these resources.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, one of the ways we can do this is to review and develop our legal and institutional frameworks to meet the current global and national environmental challenges. According to the FAO 2010, 38.1% or about 2,726,000 hectares of Sierra Leone is forested and of this, 4.1% that is about 113,000 hectares is classified as primary forest. Available statistics on the level of deforestation in the country indicate that between 2002 and 2018; 22,970 hectares of primary forest cover and 1,358,252 hectares of tree covered were depleted. Also, a study conducted by Njala University indicates that about 100,000 hectares of the country's forest resources are cleared every year mainly through: timber and harvesting, charcoal production, harvesting of sticks for scarf holding, shifting cultivation, illegal mining, bush fires etc.

In addition to these activities, forests have been cleared for infrastructural development in many parts of the country without reference to the Forestry Division. These activities have resulted in deforestation, land degradation, destruction of water ways, extension of indigenous trees species, destruction of wildlife habitats, and loss of bio-diversity. Mr Speaker, we are now experiencing high degree of climate variability throughout the country and that includes; erratic rainfall and temperature patterns. The flash floods in Freetown and flooding in other parts of the country as well as the August 14, 2017 mudslide; are amongst the most recent example of disasters experienced as a result of deforestation.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, these environmental challenges have directly impacted farmers that depends on the rainy season for the sustainability of their agricultural pursuit. Mr Speaker, the negative effects of deforestation, land degradation and other adverse activities of man to the environment are impediment to the achievements of the targets in SDGs [13] and [15] and Cluster [7] of the medium term National Development Plan of Sierra Leone and the AU Agenda of 2063.

In our efforts to tackle these numerous challenges engulfing our Forestry Sector, it has become very clear that the out-dated Forestry Act of 1988 is a major limitation.

Currently, the Forestry Act of 1988 is the primary Legislation guiding the efficient management and regulation of forestry and classified forests in Sierra Leone and the establishment of re-forestation funds but lacks, the required measures to address the emerging issues; such as climate change, Community-based forest management, adequate revenue generation, commensurate fines for offences, promoting the use of non-timber forest product, forest investment plan etc.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the process to amend the out-dated Forestry Act of 1988 started with nation-wide Stakeholders consultation held in all the Provincial District Headquarter Towns. The meetings were well attended with representatives from MDAs, Local Authorities, CSOs, CBOs, NGOs and Community Members across the country. During these findings, it was unanimously agreed that the Forestry Act must be reviewed to address present day challenges, enhance enforcement and compliance and upgrade to international best practices and standards.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members of this noble House; it is now clear that we urgently need a holistic review of the Forestry Act of 1988 to make it more responsive, to current day challenges and emerging issues for sustainable forest management specifically; and to sustainable environmental management in general. When this Act is reviewed and approved, it will reflect the new change of pervasive responsibility for the first division from the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry to the Ministry of the Environment as outlined in Annex One: gazette [24] of 171<sup>st</sup>, bearing the responsibilities of Ministers.

Two; it will ensure the sustainable management of our forest resources in Sierra Leone taking into consideration the economic benefit, environmental protection and enhance local community participation.

Three; it will address the alarming rate of deforestation, land degradation and other environmental challenges.

Four; it will address present day challenges, emerging issues, enhance enforcement and compliance and upgrade to international best practices and standards and.....

Five; it will increase the forest cover and as a result, boost our carbon stock for trading.

I thank you all for your attention.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I move that the Bill entitled: The Forestry Amendment Act 2021, be read the second time.

**THE SPEAKER:** I want to thank the Minister.

*Question Proposed*

**HON. YUSUF MACKERY:** Thank you Mr Minister and team. As you rightly said Mr Speaker, this is a non-controversial Bill and as a Parliament, deforestation has been a topic for this morning; so this is an opportunity for all of us to make sure we stand with the Ministry to approve this Bill. First of all, the purpose of this Bill is to amend the Forestry Act of 1988, to reflect the present Institutional and Ministerial changes and to make provision for the increase of fines and also sentences. Our forests of course, and the Government has been blamed by Sierra Leoneans, but our forests have been attacked, have been rampaged by Sierra Leoneans, and also some foreign nationals; but with this Bill, I think it will also help the Government and other stakeholders to make sure we control our forest reserves so that it can also be there for our own uses. This particular Bill is also an action to a global call to make sure we alleviate or minimize the adverse effect of Climate Change.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the forest covers about one-third of the earth-land area and it is essential to health particularly, to the environment; and also, it is contributing to climate change. We have all heard from different speakers, that deforestation is a concern and indeed, it is a concern; which is really disturbing Sierra Leoneans. Forests are owned to about 80% of the remaining terrestrial bio-diversity, so most of the pegs, most of those animals which can also be used for tourist purposes have fade away because of deforestation; because of time, I want to adhere to the Speaker's appeal, I am urging all Parliamentarians for us to approve this Bill so that all of us will join the Ministry to work in collaboration so that we will be able to prevent deforestation; thank you all.



**THE SPEAKER:** I thank the Honourable Member for his consideration, but I just want to re-echo what the Minister has asked the House to do, he is focusing on only two provisions of the Forestry Act of 1988 and that is: the very first Section which is the definition Section, and Section [28]. He has already told us that a more comprehensive Bill is under preparation and it will soon be brought to the House, that will address many of the issues of concern to Honourable Members; so let us just focus on this narrow aspect we intend to cover on this Bill today, the bigger one is on its way. Yes, I will now give you the Floor.

**HON SAHR CHARLES:** Thank you very much Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, of course the Bill in front of us this morning, is not too controversial; but I believe there are issues of worth consideration, as Members of Parliament for us to look into. I will go through the brief statistics being given to us by the Minister, and it is very alarming and of course, our concern; he said that over one hundred thousand hectares of our forest as nation is cleared annually, this is alarming. I believe it is a cause for concern for all of us, and to treat the issue of our climate change with all the seriousness it deserves.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Climate change is not something that we should procrastinate; but as a matter of urgency. We need to put measures in place as a nation, to ensure that we are up to standard in terms of conserving our environment. The 1988 Forestry Act is almost thirty-four years old, and the Minister described it as being out-dated. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, but from the presentation of the Minister, he said he heard, while doing the consultation across the country; that we are expecting to have a document that will look into most of these areas, even though you are advising that we wait for a bigger version of the amendment to come. We know the work of the Ministries in terms of legislation, in terms of policies, how difficult and cumbersome it is. So to me, we are expecting that in as much as the issue of our environment is a matter of urgency, we believe that the Ministry should have done much more, before coming with these amendments.

When you look at the Act, it seems the Minister is only concerned more about mandates as in Section [1] of the 1988 Forestry Act, and that of the 'Fines' in Section [28] of the Act. Yes, the mandate and the fines are important; but there is a whole set of administrative gap in moving this Act, now that we have the Forestry Section in the Agriculture Ministry now going to Environment. All of these concerns and administrative structures I believe, are important in terms of ensuring that even the fines and authority being talked about is adhered to. So we were expecting that some of these crucial elements would have been looked into in this amendment, but with the assurance that in not too distance future, we would have a better document that will encompass all of these issues, for us to have sanity in the area of managing our forestry; we awaits that. By the time we gets to the Committee Stage, those other areas that we think in terms of fines, that affects our people as Members of Parliament, coming from the Provincial areas, will be looked into for discussions in details. Thank you.

**HON DR MARK M. KALOKOH:** Thank you Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, by the presentation of the Minister, we know that the Bill, though not controversial, but it is very very important; and if it is important, as he had cited in the 1988 Act. Sometimes, it will be prudent for us as Members of Parliament, to be given copies of those Parents' Act, so that we will be able to draw references and to guide us in the process of making our laws. The Minister, earlier on stated that there is need for a thorough review of the whole Forestry Act of 1988; and if that is so Mr Speaker, we want to ask this Honourable House, as you rightly mentioned earlier this morning, that some of the bad habits are left behind this new year - 2022; but this is not a bad habit but rather, would want to see the way forward collectively during the processes of Parliament.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members on that note, I was going to ask that we commit this Bill to the Legislative Committee, for them to look at it even though, it only corrodes two Sections. We would also want to further look at it critically from that level, and report to this House for further deliberations; that is my position. When you look at S.O

[51], it is clear Mr Speaker that even though we are saying that, the Bill is none-controversial, it is of importance because it talks about the environment.

**THE SPEAKER:** Can we reserve that for the more comprehensive Bill that has been promised this House?

**HON. DR MARK M. KALOKOH:** where then is the Parent Act, so that we can draw up references? We will not just come here to look at this Bill based on explanations without having the parent act for us to make references of Sections maybe, they have been fished out from the 1988 Act; that is my submission, Mr Speaker *[Applause]*.

**HON IBRAHIM T. CONTEH:** Mr Speaker at the back Sir.

**THE SPEAKER:** Yes.

**HON IBRAHIM T. CONTEH:** Thank you Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Are you about to help us make progress?

**HON IBRAHIM T. CONTEH.:** Yes Sir.

**THE SPEAKER:** good.

**HON. IBRAHIM T. CONTEH:** Thank you Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members having been the former and first Chairman for the Committee on Environment, I think we have done extensive consultations on the Forestry Act of 1988, the Wild Life and Conservation Act of 1972, the Environmental Protection Agency Act both of 2008 and 2010. I have seen and heard colleagues showing concerns as to why, is the Ministry pushing for an amendment in this form? It is because; the Act in its entirety is a good Act - the 1988 Forestry Act regardless of the fact that, it is 33 years old. In as much as it is a good Act yet, the Minister had stated that the fundamental variance in the Act stands with the fact that, His Excellency the President, has created the Ministry of Environment and has deemed it proper that all environmental-related Agencies falls within that Ministry for direct supervision; whilst the Forestry Department since the creation of this Act, has been under the Ministry of Agriculture, for the effective management of the forest, to be passed to the National Protected Area

Authority [NPAA], it is but prudent that the Ministry of Environment takes responsibility for both the NPAA and the Forestry Department that was under the Ministry of Agriculture because, it is the Forestry Department that conserves and protects the forest before it becomes a protected area and passed it on to the NPAA; so for that particular purpose, it is but prudent that we look at these amendments. Additionally, if you look at the 1988 Forestry Act, you will realize that some of the obsolete areas, the grey areas and the fines. You would see a fine of ten thousand Leones, two thousand Leones; so what this amendment is doing is to ensure that, the fines in the 1988 Forestry Act is amended so as to give it efficacy and make it very risky in order to prevent somebody from doing anything in the forest.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members more or less, I want to encourage colleagues for them to understand that as the Minister has promised, he would bring a comprehensive review; but it is exigent and very important that we have responsibility to supervise the forestry department to go directly under the Ministry because, they are the ones developing and conserving the forest before it becomes a protected area. I heard my colleague making a submission just now, regarding deforestation - cutting down of timber; the Ministry of Environment, does not have the mandate as it is now to control deforestation in any of the protected areas neither, do they have control over the NPAA as an Authority, nor do they have control over the protection of the forest itself. First, let us start with the protection of the forest so that they can have control over its protection, whilst we continue to work as a Parliament, and with the Ministry to ensure that all environmental related agencies within the government are passed directly under the supervision of the Ministry of Environment *[Applause]*; that is my submission, Sir.

**THE SPEAKER:** I hope with that explanation, my good friend will agree with me that the point he has made is noted, but they are more appropriate when the comprehensive Bill comes to the House; so we can proceed with this one for the meantime.

**HON. DR. MARK M. KALOKOH:** Mr Speaker, I still maintain my previous posture; thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Let me give the floor to the Leader of the Opposition.

**HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH:** Thank you very much Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, to a large extent, I am in support of this amendment *[Applause]*. I want to get my colleague from Bombali, and I hope the Leader will do likewise because his tone just now, was not a friendly one. I am in support of the passage of this Bill, but one of the points he raised was a practise of this House which we have not complied with; so I am asking that he closes his eyes for us to get that through, and that is what I expect the Leader to do as well.

**THE SPEAKER:** That was what I was appealing to him for.

**HON CHERNOR R.M. BAH:** Yes, but he did not understand the details; but I expect the Leader to have done likewise, because what he was asking for, are the excerpts of the Parent Act which we are going to tamper with and that had been the practice. I will kindly plead with him, since the purport of this Bill itself is not substantive, for him to understand.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will go to the Memorandum of Object and Reasons of the Bill; this is very simple because the Member Parliament from Lumley, started from Waterloo, went round the peninsula just to come to parliament, why I do not know. It is within the President's authority to create departments and ministries and that is the only thing this Bill is doing except for the amendments that has to do with fines. Mr Speaker, if you read through it says: 'the object of the Bill is to amend the Forestry Act 1988, to reflects the present Institutional and Ministerial changes; that is the purport of the Bill. [Somebody is interfering with the Minister; oh sorry, it is okay I thought it's one of the staff] I had wanted to ask Mr Speaker's permission for the Minister to leave us but it is rather unfortunate. Mr Speaker, I just want to encourage the Minister that when he receives the authority to control the Forestry Department, that he goes into details in ensuring that all issues bordering on the forest and the environment, and other related areas are addressed speedily. I lived at Sugarloaf, people are building houses now to places where, I want to thank the Minister even though he was not in charge of the Forestry Department; but about a year ago, people

were just cutting down trees and I called him and the current Minister of Lands and they were proactive in moving to the area. Mr Minister, they stopped, but it seems as if some activities are still going on around how major they are? I cannot tell. There must be sufficient penalties and people should pay if not, the messages we send will deter others, but doing A today and B tomorrow; the Honourable Member from Kailahun, Daru to be specific, knows exactly what I am talking about. We have traversed part of that forest, because it is a tourist attraction area; and most of our local tourists do venture up to the Sugarloaf and the Takogoma area, these are areas they must protect. The Honourable Member from Daru, in one of his debates in this House also mentioned the challenges along the Regent/Grafton road; it used to be a very beautiful scene. Mr Minister, I called you at once but unfortunately, you were also out of town. People are now running garage businesses along that road, and nobody is talking to them.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I wonder whether you have used the road; they have established garages along the Regent/Grafton road, that area must be protected. They are building houses on the main road, and are turning the right-hand side to dumping sites; we cannot protect the environment or the forest haphazardly. Mr Minister, we are here to support you to bring strict laws, when we pass them implement them *[Applause]*; because if we pass them and you do not implement them, we will be wasting our time. Mr Minister, if you may want to take a ride by the Regent/Grafton road, do it slowly and you will realise that the area must be protected; it has beautiful forests. We have finished the Hill Cut road at Gbagba Yilla completely, so are we going to finish that one again until you go to Waterloo? No, Mr Minister we would support you; but as I said, I will plead with my colleague from Bombali, to show understanding so as to allow the Minister uses his authority to manage the forest in ensuring that the environment is protected, time is of the essence. Mr Speaker, I wanted to redo my roof, but even in January I am afraid because, I have a friend of mine who lives at Adonkia, he tried towards the end of January to redo his roof; the day he unroofed, it rained imagine in January. So we must address these issues.

**THE SPEAKER:** It rained a week ago.

**HON CHERNOR R.M BAH:** Yes Mr Speaker, that is what I am saying, so it is good that I advise myself; otherwise, the Deputy Speaker would have lost some money, because he would have replaced my roof [*Laughing*]. So Mr Speaker, I support this Bill and I want to plead with my colleagues, that because we want to protect the environment, not using the Lumley route, we want to do it speedily. So we support the passage of this Bill and if the areas where the fines which my colleague is interested in are challenged, when we get the substantive act we would revisit them again Mr Speaker. I thank you very much.

**THE SPEAKER:** I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his contribution. Deputy Leader.

**HON BASHIRU SILIKIE:** Thank you very much Mr Speaker, Honourable members. I understand exactly the point the Honourable from Bombali is coming from; it has always been a practice especially when we have a turnover of eighty per cent members. When we bring new statutes, we have to see the existing ones so we can be guided and understand exactly; that is the normal practice. As have been said by the Leader of the Opposition, we crave your indulgence that we go through this because, it is purely administrative. Before now, the Forestry Department was within the purview of the Ministry of Agriculture now, the Cabinet has deemed it fit through His Excellency, that the Forestry Division should go under the Ministry of Environment; a new ministry that was created. Mr Minister of course, you are going to be faced with huge challenges, very huge challenges. As have been said by the Leader of the Opposition, when you drive by the Regent/Grafton road, you can see it; for some of us who were here when that road was constructed. I was a member of the Works Committee, and we were told on the right-hand side that nobody was going to build a structure there, that was what we were told. But if you travel on that road today, you can now observe that the entire right-hand side is almost completed but there are structures on it; so you need to look into that. We should reserve the green scenery; it used to be a very beautiful axis to travel. Before now, when traveling and you look at the far left, you used to see the green scenery which was very beautiful; today, all of those areas -

either there are fences on those lands or being brushed, or people are building structures so these are challenges you are going to be faced with. I also want to appeal to you again, that with even heavy vehicles plying on those roads, we were assured in this Parliament that we would not allow heavy vehicles to ply that route. Today, the entire right-hand has gone; so we should try to repossess those lands again, these are government properties and nobody should build houses on the right-of-ways.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if you travel through Adonkia to number two River Mr Minister, you would see people brushing on top of the forest and they call it 'new communities'; they have not started building houses, but they are brushing the land to kick-start or even selling them right on top of the hills. When you go to those areas, you would see people who are not doing any business for their living except selling in the Western Area. You will see somebody say; I have hundred acres of land how they get it is the big question. They are now galvanising themselves, and they are doing it with the support of Stakeholders and also with the support of some Lawyers. They are brushing these lands and protecting them as well, without any document. So Mr Minister, you need to look at that very seriously; these are protected areas on top of the hills, you should make sure that they stop brushing those areas but you also need to have more staff on board because without such capacity maybe, they would have built houses before you get there.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I understand exactly all what this document is about; it is just moving the Forestry Sector from the Ministry of Agriculture to your Ministry administratively, and His Excellency the President, was deliberate when he created the Ministry of Environment because he knows the challenges the environment is faced with. As he has given you more responsibilities, he expects that you would concentrate on these areas for you to make this country environmentally friendly. We have seen the fines since 1998 they are now very obsolete; and we understand exactly why they are brought here in Parliament, but we advised that whenever they are bringing a Bill that is governing the Forestry Department, you are supposed to bring



along the Instance Law so that we can look at what was in the 1988 Act and do some comparisons.

Honourable Members, I want to thank all Members of Parliament who have contributed to this and please Honourable Members, I will assure you that in doing the comprehensive document that will be brought by the Minister; he will bring the Instance Law of 1988 Act, that will guide all of us in doing a new Bill. Thank you very much Honourable Members, and thank you for your contributions.

*Suspension of SO 5[2]*

**THE SPEAKER:** Mr Minister, you may wish to just take note of all that has been said.

**THE MINISTER:** Thank you very much Mr Speaker, thank you Honourable Members. I do appreciate your comments, and I must say that if you do not have authority over something, then you cannot implement anything; that is the hard fact. What I want to say is that, I know the challenges in this job, I knew it before I took it; if you could remember, I was the head of EPA and now being elevated to be a Minister. It is a herculean task, though not insurmountable; we can succeed with your support. Let me just address one or two issues raised; Honourable Member, I think you raised a very good point and reiterated what I said about 100,000 acres of Land cleared annually and you are just supporting my point. That is more the reason why this Bill has this urgency, so I am pleading to you all to pass it smoothly; because if we continue holding on to it for another one month or two months, the forest is going so please think about that. I had given a presentation during a pre-legislative hearing on this particular Bill about what entails in the old Act, why are we changing it, and why? I gave a presentation, so it is not that we are just bringing in this amended Bill. No, the 1988 Bill, was there and it was scrutinized; we saw what was at stake, what is to be changed; why are we changing it and the justification? So that was presented at the pre-legislative hearing extensively. We were there for a whole day and people who were there can attest to that. But what I want to say is, consultations were done all over the country and people really appreciated that. So, as the Speaker said, we are looking at key main issues here: One of them is changing the mandate, the supervisory

role from agriculture to environment and that gives us the power to be able to control these guys and the other one is of course, the fines. But let me just add one or two things; within a short period of time, the MCCU Score Card came out and for the first time, we have passed the Natural Resource Restoration [NRR], on the Score Card; why? Because of the creation of this Ministry and by then, I have not even taken over the Forestry Division as yet. The other thing is that; even the staff of the Forestry Division, though they have been transferred as approved by Cabinet, are in limbo and even at times, I do not know where some of them are. So, if this Bill is approved, that will put all those issues to rest.

**THE SPEAKER:** And with that,

**THE MINISTER:** And with that, this is the first time Honourable Speaker, we are embarking on a massive tree planting for the first time; and that has been more or less a success. So with that Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I move that the Bill entitled: the Forestry Amendment Act 2021, be read the second time.

*Question Proposed, Put and Agreed To*

*The Bill: `The Forestry Amendment Act, has been read the Second time*

### **COMMITTEE STAGE**

*The House revert to Committee*

**HON BASHIRU SILIKIE:** Mr Chairman, the Forestry Amendment Act 2021, this is 2022; so can we say the Forestry Amendment Act 2022?

**THE CHAIRMAN:** Noted.

**HON DICKSON M. REGERS:** Mr Chairman, Clause Two?

**THE CHAIRMAN:** Yes.

**HON DICKSON M. ROGERS:** I want to request that we add Commercial Forest, because what we have in this Clause is that, we should consider National or Community Forest. But we all know that there are investors coming now to invest into Commercial Forest like MIRO Forestry, so I think that we should add say like: `National, Commercial

and Community Forest', so we do not just have it as National and Community Forest, more so, when we now have Community Forest because, communities are really destroying their plantations; so they have to see some protective mechanisms in place from government.

**THE CHAIRMAN:** Very well, that is on page 2; we insert `Commercial` after National. Page 3?

**HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS:** Mr Chairman, before you go to page 3, under Chief Conservator or Conservation, it should be appointment but I am seeing APP-OINCE. I do not know what that means, because the appointment is separated by a hyphen.

**THE CHAIRMAN:** It is a typographical error, it is a typo. Page 3?

**HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS:** On page 3 Mr Chairman; I am looking at a fine of **5Mln** to be very small. Mr Chairman as of today, a trip of a timber will cost you nothing less than **\$2 or 3,000**, so to ask someone to pay **5Mln**, he will go and cut down the trees and at the end of the day, he/she knows that he will pay only **5Mln**. So, I am suggesting that the **5Mln** be increased to **10Mln** and the Imprisonment be increased to one year instead of six Months.

**HON. IBRAHIM T. CONTEH:** Mr Chairman, in the 1988 Act, it was **LE5**, I am sure they are just replicating it by adding zeros. In the 1988 Act, it was **LE5** and Six Months Imprisonment; so what they are doing is, moving it from **LE5** to **5Mln** and maintains the Six Months Imprisonment.

**THE CHAIRMAN:** Are you referring to Paragraph 2?

**HON IBRAHIM T. CONTEH:** Yes Sir, Paragraph 2 on Page 3.

**THE CHAIRMAN:** **5Mln**.

**HON IBRAHIM T. CONTEH:** Yes, **5Mln**; in the 1988 Act, it was **LE5**.

**THE CHAIRMAN:** So what are you suggesting now?

**HON IBRAHIM T. CONTEH:** I suggest that we retain the **5Mln**.

**THE CHAIRMAN:** Very well.

**HON ABDUL KARGBO:** Mr Chairman, it is not so. By 1988 I am sure, the worth of timber now in Sierra Leone was not the same and what we have now is having a situation wherein we want to put an end to the illegal logging. So, I go with the view of the other side that we increase from **5Mln** to something more deterrent, so that somebody would not even venture into it; at least **10Mln**.

**THE CHAIRMAN:** Mr Minister, what do you say?

**HON DANIEL B. KOROMA:** Before Mr Minister comes in...

**THE CHAIRMAN:** Yes.

**HON DANIEL B. KOROMA:** I think during our legislative processes, we usually save the situation; it was just a matter of wording to cater for: grassroot offenders, middle income offenders and commercial offenders. So usually, we precede the fines with the word: `not less than` and then the figure now is `low` to provide for grassroot offenders; but as long as there is a word there `not less than`, depending now on the nature of your offence, the Court has the authority to levy fines based on the gravity of the offence. If it is a Commercial Offence, then the law says; `not less than`, so the Court can now have that leverage to ensure that the fine is proportional to the magnitude of your offence.

**THE CHAIRMAN:** Are you suggesting that for the entire Bill?

**HON DANIEL B. KOROMA:** Yes sir, `not less than` and then; so we can cater for grass-root offenders after the word `not less than`. But the word `not less than` now provides room for Commercial Offenders, middle Income Offenders.

**THE CHAIRMAN:** What I meant is: everywhere you find the word `**not exceeding**`, it should now be `**not less than**`.

**HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA:** Not less than.

**THE CHAIRMAN SPEAKER:** Are we ok with that Mr Minister?

**THE MINISTER:** Yes, I think my brother here was part of the Committee and we discussed it a lot during the EPA Bill and that was what we agreed on. But I also want to agree with the technical team, to increase to **10Mln** ..., not less than **10Mln**.

**THE CHAIRMAN:** That is for Clause II; Clause II Mr Minister, on page 3. Mr Minister, are you referring to Clause II, Sub-clause II?

**THE MINISTER:** Yes, Clause II; because the others are already **10Mln**.

**THE CHAIRMAN:** Fine, what about Sub-clause I, are you leaving that as it is?

**THE MINISTER:** **10Mln**?

**THE CHAIRMAN:** Yes. Or you want us to increase that?

**THE MINISTER:** Mr Speaker, we had a lot of debates during our consultation and we are trying to put the fines based on the severity of the crime. So if we are increasing this from **5Mln** to **10Mln**, I would also want to suggest that we increase the **10Mln** to **15Mln**, because it makes a lot of sense *[Interruption]*.

**HON DANIEL B. KOROMA:** I know, not less than but the change in the figure, can you convince us that the offence created by Sub-clause III is more serious than that of Sub-clause II?

**THE MINISTER:** Yes, that was advanced by the Technical Team; yes, it is correct.

**THE CHAIRMAN:** What about Sub-clause III, are you giving it as Sub-clause III?

**HON. DR. MARK M. KALOKOH:** Mr Chairman page 3, these exceptional Clauses that I am seeing, are we saying; when somebody is given the authority to cut like in Clause II, it is stated that: 'a person who without lawful authority'; are we making any exceptional cases? If we are, then let it be clearly stated; if we are referring to farming, then let us have it interpreted but this is just saying 'lawful authority'; so I want us to be clearer here.

**THE CHAIRMAN:** But not every forest we are referring to here.

**HON. DR. MARK M. KALOKOH:** Then, it is not stated.

**THE CHAIRMAN:** It is stated; because we are dealing with both National or Community Forest is stated.

**HON SAHR CHARLES:** Mr Chairman then, I think we need to define 'lawful authority'.

*[Interruption]*

**THE CHAIRMAN:** No, no; I am

**HON MUSTAPHA M. SELLU:** we do not need to define it because it is stated there; Community and National, so that is the definition. Any other forest is not under this law, they said community or national forest, those are *[Interruption]*...

**THE CHAIRMAN:** Hold on, hold on; I know we do not have the benefit of having copies of the 1988 Legislation, but it is quite possible that those fines are defined in that Act.

**HON. DR MARK M. KALOKOH:** And Mr Chairman, what is wrong if we define it here, and in the event they are not being defined in the 1988 then, *[interruption]*

**HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA:** What is wrong if we define it here?

**THE CHAIRMAN:** No, no, no, they are already defined.

**HON DANIEL B. KOROMA:** Mr Chairman, may I be heard Sir? Of course, I see where he is coming from; he is talking of the exceptional, like when you say without 'lawful authority', it implies that there are cases wherein under lawful authority, you can do it.

**THE CHAIRMAN:** Of course,

**HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA:** The Lawful Authority will be circumstantial okay, even if it is a protected area; there may be a particular circumstance that requires the cutting of a particular tree, but with lawful authority.

**THE CHAIRMAN:** And that lawful authority usually is the Ministry

**HON DANIEL B. KOROMA:** it is by the Ministry, a lawful authority.

**THE CHAIRMAN:** represented by a licence.

**HON DANIEL B. KOROMA:** Of course! So, it will not be a totally 'no-go area'; under the circumstances as may be required, you get lawful authority by way of written licences, and then you can do so; but outside the lawful authority, it is an offence.

**HON IBRAHIM T. CONTEH:** Mr Chairman, sorry Mr Chairman. Mr Chairman, I think as we go about the process of finishing the Forestry Act, it is but very important that we look and urge the Minister to bring the National Protected Area and Conservation Trust Act [NPACT] because the challenge is that, they are altering the boundaries in the protected areas currently without due reference to the Act passed in 2012; and what we are doing now is to protect those protected areas but however, those protected areas are being altered daily like the Deputy Leader and Leader of the Opposition said, considering that of Grafton. They are all part of the protected area boundaries, that was gazetted in 2012 and they are constantly being altered. So as we do this, we need to also urge the Minister to quickly and speedily bring the National Protection Area Authority's [NPAA] Act; so that we can gazette a proper boundary of the protected area.

**THE CHAIRMAN:** Fine, point taken.

**HON CHERNOR R.M BAH:** Yes, it makes sense; but I just want to add to it because, the Honourable Member from Koinadugu was very explicit. The word 'Lawful' is lawful, following legal procedures; that is what makes it lawful. Probably, as the other two speakers have said, when you work on the next Bill fortunately, you have worked in the west; there are certain jurisdictions Mr Speaker, the cutting down of any tree is illegal.

**THE CHAIRMAN:** Kenya

**HON CHERNOR R.M BAH:** You must follow procedures in cutting down trees, so whether it is protected or not protected, for us to avoid in future those inconsistencies where somebody will sit down and make laws in their offices. Before you cut any tree, if it is in the Chiefdoms or in the protected areas, you have the procedures to follow; but we must protect the trees. Because people will just come today SO [2] 'Ar don buy dis land' and then cut down all the trees without being aware of the dangers thereafter.

So basically, we are making progress but you should look at the broader picture otherwise, when you leave these gaps and loopholes, people will still use them to manipulate.

**THE CHAIRMAN:** If I may buttress your point Mr Minister, I think there are lessons we can learn from Kenya; I visited Kenya recently and I was told; even if it is you who planted the trees, you are not allowed to cut it.

**HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS:** Mr Chairman quite apart from that, I think even in our houses, in our compounds, let the Minister make sure that people start planting trees. Mr Chairman, you know what happened to us in Rwanda? Had it not been for the fact that it is a law in Rwanda that people should plant trees even in your own compound, it should have been very fatal.

**THE CHAIRMAN:** Mr Minister, I want to come back to you because time is really against us. If you look at page 3 and over to page 4, can you just look through the fines and give us a broad indication of what you want? Because, we cannot just be increasing one area, leaving the others as they are.

**THE MINISTER:** Thank you very much Mr Speaker. These fines were all debated through consultations and we looked at the severity of the crime; so that was how they were done. If we decide for example, as the Honourable Ibrahim T. Conteh was saying; that in 1988, there was a fine and it was **LE5**, so can we just multiply it to be **5Mln**? But if this House agrees for it to be increased to **10Mln** then, all the other fines will also be increased proportionately across the board.

**THE CHAIRMAN:** No Mr Minister, the House has agreed on one thing; that there should be a deterrent

**THE MINISTER:** Yes, I agree and...

**THE CHAIRMAN:** and this is why we have given you the option now, so please take us through;



**THE MINISTER:** where you see five it is ten, where we see ten it is fifteen, where we see fifteen it is twenty, let us increase it by five; thank you.

**HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE:** Mr Chairman, as Members of Parliament, we should not forget the fact that, we are representing our people in the villages. Mr Chairman increasing the fines to **5Mln** for somebody who goes and cut a tree in my village will be very difficult for him or her to pay so I will advise we say a minimum of **3Mln**, and it would be determined by the Court or Authority that has to determine these fines. But let us say for instance, somebody who goes and cut a tree for farming purpose and cannot afford **5Mln** [*Undertones*].

**HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA:** Mr Chairman, this is talking about protected areas. Mr Chairman, as the Leader of the Opposition has said that in other jurisdictions whether protected or not, it is blanketed; but for Sierra Leone Chapter, we are limited to protected areas at least, for now. Imagine the peninsular forest, housing Guma Valley Water Company,...

**THE CHAIRMAN:** Honourable Members, what is the objective? Do we want to protect our forest or not?

**HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA:** No, we should protect it.

**THE CHAIRMAN:** Exactly!

**HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA:** We should protect it; and worst of all now, the forest is already protected as captured by this Bill, so if it is protected you can burn your charcoal outside the protected area, but we will come to that later as the Leader has recommended; but for now, areas protected should be protected, how can you burn charcoal in a protected area?

**THE MINISTER:** Mr Speaker, can I come in please?

**THE CHAIRMAN:** By all means.

**THE MINISTER:** Thank you very much again; I have a comprehensive list of the fines here

**THE CHAIRMAN:** Well, give us please.

**THE MINISTER:** Yes, I have it here.

**THE CHAIRMAN:** No, read it.

**THE MINISTER:** The community forest is from:

1. **10Mln to 15Mln.**

2. **5Mln to 10Mln,**

3. **10Mln to 15Mln,**

4. **5Mln to 10Mln,**

5 **25Mln to 30Mln,**

6. **10Mln to 15Mln,**

7. **25Mln to 30Mln**

**THE CHAIRMAN:** Hold on! Hold on! 6 is what?

**THE MINISTER:** 10 to 15, from **10Mln to 15Mln**

**THE CHAIRMAN:** Yes!

**THE MINISTER:** Number 7, is from **25Mln to 30Mln**, then number 8 is from **5Mln to 10Mln**, number 9 is from **5Mln to 10Mln.**

**THE CHAIRMAN:** Fine, thank you!

**THE MINISTER:** You are welcome

**THE CHAIRMAN:** I supposed that is the consensus of the House, I do not want to put it into a debate; is that the consensus of the House? [*Undertones*] thank you!

**HON. HINDOLO M. GEVAO:** Mr Chairman, just a concern on Clause [3]; is there any definition of a 'protected tree'? Because it reads: 'a person who without lawful authority cut, burnt, uproot, damage, or destroy a protected tree in a National or community forest.

**THE CHAIRMAN:** Yes, there are protected trees.

**HON. HINDOLO M. GEVAO:** But is there a protected tree?

**THE CHAIRMAN:** No, not... *[Interruption]*

**HON. HINDOLO M. GEVAO:** So let us clarify it, because as it is in the Bill, when you say who cuts a protected tree, is as though there are specific trees that are protected trees; so is as if, any tree in the protected area is different from a protected tree. So let us say: cut, burn, uproot, damage or destroy a tree in a protected area in a national or community forest.

**THE CHAIRMAN:** Honourable Member, how would you describe a tree in a protected forest? It is a protected tree; so I do not know why you are belabouring this point for, once you say an area, it is a protected forest because everything in that forest is protected.

**HON. CHERNOR R.M BAH:** Yes, but Mr Chairman, the point the Honourable Member is making also makes sense; the point he is making is that, the protected area might have protected trees within but there might be trees that are not protected so the point he is making also makes sense *[Undertones]* yes I know, that is why he is suggesting that we open it up.

**HON. ABDUL K. KAMARA:** Mr Chairman, the essence is not just the 'Tree' but also protecting the area; so every tree that is within that catchment, is a protected tree. Except we define a 'protected tree' as: even when not within the catchment or protected area, they are also protected wherever they are; and for that purpose, we may want to define what a protected tree is *[Undertones]*. To protect them when they are not in protected areas *[Undertones]* no, there are certain trees that are fine in other areas, so they are also protected trees *[Undertones]* well, that is where the problem is.

**THE CHAIRMAN:** Hold on! Let us not get ourselves confused. Mr Minister, is it your objective that, once an area is a protected area everything within that area is protected?

**THE MINISTER:** Yes! But the definition of a protected tree..

**THE CHAIRMAN:** Then, do not use the word 'protected tree', just say: a tree, in a protected area; it covers that.

**THE MINISTER:** Because a protected tree, is a tree that is being endangered or that is moving to extinction; that is a protected tree, so I get your point.

**HON. ABDUL K. KARGBO:** Necessarily, they are not only in protected areas; so wherever they are, they must be protected or else, they will run out of extinction; and that is exactly what we are trying to get.

**THE MINISTER:** So that is what we mean by 'protected tree'.

**HON. ABDUL K. KAMARA:** So that is why we need to define them, that wherever they are found, they should not be cut down.

**HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS:** Mr Chairman if that is the case then, we are getting the whole thing wrong. That is why I want to agree with my colleague; say for example, we have a tree in a protected area and we also have similar tree in areas that are not protected, but people are planting trees. What if somebody wants to do farming in their own bush land, or they want to plant [*Undertones*] exactly, but that is not a protected area but the same specie is in that area?

**THE CHAIRMAN:** I know we do not have enough time now; but Mr Minister, I know you are getting a feeling of what is happening in the House.

**THE MINISTER:** Yes!

**THE CHAIRMAN:** So the sooner you complete your comprehensive Bill, the better for you and us.

**THE MINISTER:** Okay

**THE CHAIRMAN:** In the meantime, let us not go into all of these 'nitty gritty' for the purposes of this Bill [*Interruptions*].

**THE MINISTER:** So we say, 'trees in the protected areas'.

**HON. IBRAHIM T. CONTEH:** We cannot, because we are amending the Act; and Section [21] of the Act, already defines what a protected tree is; Section [21] of the Act gives the Minister the power to publish in a gazette what protected trees are; so that power is still in the Act, we are just amending portions of the Act [*Undertones*] yes, I am sure it is there.

**HON. HINDOLO M. GEVAO:** Mr Chairman, I think the mischief behind the provision is to protect protected trees, and like my colleague was saying; protected trees are being identified with the rationale for those species, not to be extinct then, protected trees have to be forbidden from being cut off [*Undertones*], whether in a community or a protected area.

**HON. IBRAHIM T. CONTEH:** But the existing Legislation has protected that, and let us not forget that, we are just making few amendments.

**HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE:** Exactly! With the existing Act, the Minister will make regulations in which he will tell us what 'protected trees' are. So for the purposes of this one, let us just come to conclusion.

**HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH:** Deputy Leader of Government business, considering what I have just heard from the Honourable Member from Lumley, since it is defined in the Parent Act and this is just an amendment to that Act, they are going to be working together so there is already a definition. We would be looking forward to the Gazette, which will be brought out so I think we should not alter it [*Interruption*].

**HON. HINDOLO M. GEVAO:** So, can we just remove the word community forest?

**THE CHAIRMAN:** No! No! No!

**HON. IBRAHIM T. CONTEH:** It is in the existing legislation; Mr Chairman, what we should urge the Minister to do is, for him to go back and revisit the Lease Agreement in both the community and commercial forests.

**THE CHAIRMAN:** That is agreeable; so let us move on. Page 4? Any other comment on page 4, apart from what the Minister has suggested? [*Undertone*] fine, none; shall we proceed please? Mr Minister!

**THE MINISTER:** Mr Chairman, Honourable Members, I move that Clauses 1 and 2 stand part of the Bill as amended.

**THE CHAIRMAN:** Honourable Members, the question is: that Clauses 1 and 2 stand part of the Bill as amended.

*Question Proposed, Put and Agreed To*

*[That Clauses 1 and 2 form part of the Bill]*

The House resumes

Third Reading

**THE MINISTER:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I report that the Bill entitled: the Forestry Amendment Act 2022, having gone through the Committee of the Whole House with amendments, I now move that the Bill be read the third time and passed in to Law.

*Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to.*

The Bill entitled: The Forestry Amendment Act 2022, has been read the Third time and passed into Law.

**THE CHAIRMAN:** Mr Minister, thank you very much; you are at liberty now to leave us.

**HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS:** Mr Speaker, I want to draw the attention of the House that under the budget that we have just passed, the Department of Forestry was under Agriculture [*Undertone*] okay, it has been transferred to you before the passing of this Bill [*Undertones*] okay; thank you, that was what I wanted to know.

**THE CHAIRMAN:** Can we move? Mr Minister, please let us get the first one.

## **BILL**

The Local Government Amendment Act 2021

Introduction and First Reading

The Minister of Local Government and Rural Development

**THE DEPUTY MINISTER** *[Madam Melseose Kargbo]*: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, please excuse my voice; a happy new year to all of you.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I move that the Bill entitled the Local Government Amendment Act 2021, be read the first time.

*[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]*

The Bill entitled the Local Government Amendment Act 2021, has been read the First time.

Mr Speaker stood down the House at 12:40p.m.

The House resumed at 3:27p.m.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

*[The House rose at 3:29 p.m. and was adjourned to Thursday, 20<sup>th</sup> January, 2022 at 10:00 a.m.]*