

OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

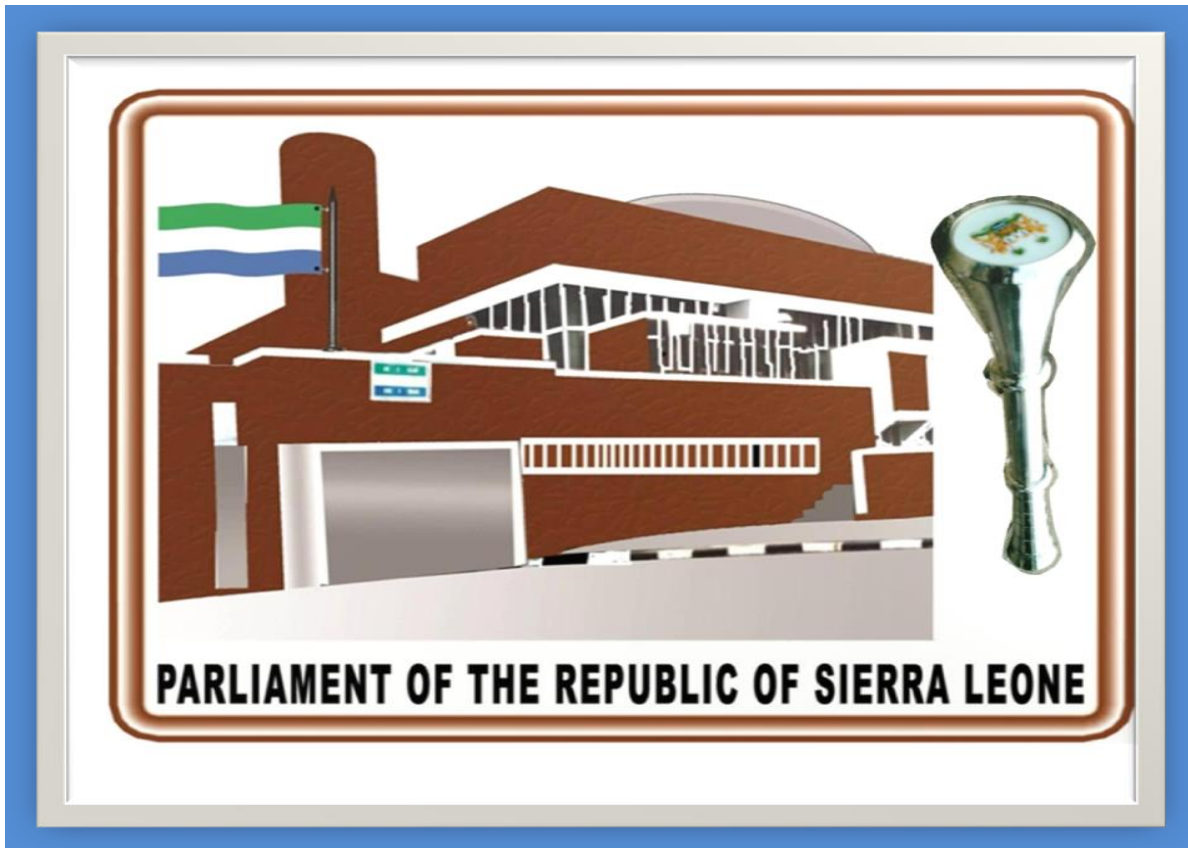
[HANSARD]

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

FIFTH SESSION –FIRST MEETING

FRIDAY, 13TH JANUARY 2023

SESSION – 2022/2023



OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMEN TARY DEBATES

[HANSARD]

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

VOLUME: 1

NUMBER: 63

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

Proceedings of the Sitting of the House
Held Friday, 13th January 2023

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THE CHAMBER OF PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE

Official Hansard Report of the Proceedings of the House

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

FRIDAY 13TH JANUARY 2023

I. PRAYERS

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

[The House met at 10:51 a.m. in Parliament Building, Tower Hill, Freetown]

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

The House was called to Order

Suspension of S.O. 5[2]

II. CORRECTION OF VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS FOR THE PARLIAMENTARY SITTING HELD ON THURSDAY 12TH JANUARY 2023

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, we go through the record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting held on Thursday, 12th January, 2023. As usual, we will skip pages 1 to 4 and start with Page 5. Page 5? Page 6? Page 7? Page 8? Page 9? Page 10? Page 11? If there is no amendment or correction can someone move for the adoption of the record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting held on Thursday, 12th January, 2023 as presented?

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

THE SPEAKER: Any Seconder?

HON. TENNYSON H. SANDY: Mr Speaker, I so second.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[Record of Votes and Proceedings for parliamentary sitting held on Thursday 12th January, 2023 has been adopted as presented]

III. ANNOUNCEMENT BY MR SPEAKER

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, I have no substantive announcement to make except to welcome the visitors in the galleries. I would like to evoke S. O. [2] once again. [*Wuna welcome. On behalf of Parliament, especially we fambul dem wae don commot far, frm Kambia District; some of wuna don travel all the way from Kukuna, wuna welcome. Wuna cam for support wuna pikin, wuna brother, wuna daddy, wuna do well.wae wuna cam with well body nar the road leh God ker wuna go back with well body. Nar so for do; wae wan of wuna pikin or daddy excel in life, e get big big post lekeh dis, wuna get right for cam for cam gee am support, en we hope say dar support dae nor to yar nor more e dae tap o. wae you see wuna start so now, nar for ker the support go tae go, nor to so? Ar say, den dae support den brother. When you start for*]

support you brother, you daddy, you pikin, nor for tap dae o, you for go right through. So nar th word dat. Leh ar advise wuna, we get some rules dem nar yar nar dis House. Wuna wae dae up yanda, we call wuna visitors; wuna nor get right for take part pan watin dae happin nar ya o. wuna for follow the Proceedings, wuna enjoy the Proceedings, aw wuna cam insai saful, ar bi dae yeri some noises but anyway we tolerate the noises, we go tolerate the same decorum silent wae wuna do move go back. Wuna nor broke nartin up dae o. enti you know say wae you go nar you neighbour in hose e gee you chair for sidom, nor to for broke the chair nar for sidom panam, nor to so? good; en lef the char aw you meet am. So once more ar welcome wuna yar. Thank you.]

IV. 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, Honourable Members, I present to you the Eight Report of the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service on Parliamentary vetting on Presidential nomination.

1. Introduction

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service, in tandem with its constitutional obligations, met on Thursday, 12th January, 2023 and interviewed four presidential nominees for the positions of Minister of Finance, Deputy Director, Sierra Leone Roads Authority [SLRA]; Member, Board of Directors of Sierra Leone Roads Maintenance Funds Administration [RMFA]; and a Member of the Independent Peace Commission [IPC].

2. Procedure

The Committee maintained, as usual, strict consistency with its established procedures and interviewed the nominees on issues pertaining to their educational background to ensure that they have the relevant education and necessary backup experiences to hold

such offices of State. Several probing questions, including queries from the public put to nominees covered wide ranging issues relating to their track records in pertinent work situations, the declared assets, tax obligations, and their vision for a nationally productive tenure. Issues of unsuitability or otherwise were strictly looked into by the Committee.

3. Eighth sitting of the Committee on Thursday 12th January 2023

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, based on the aforesaid, the Committee interviewed the following nominees as listed below:

- i. Engineer Alfred Jalil Momodu, proposed Deputy Director General, Sierra Leone Roads Authority [SLRA].*

Engineer Alfred Jalil Momodu is a seasoned Civil Engineer with adept knowledge in Road Management, from January 2020 to date. Engineer served as Director in the Operations Management, SLRA. His key responsibilities included determining the resources needs in terms of internal equipment and labour required to undertake the short, medium and long terms trunk and township road development.

Responding to the Committee on what he would bring to the SLRA, Engineer Alfred said his spanning years of technical and administrative acumen in roads project executions would help him support the Director to prioritise and plan projects relating to Roads Maintenance Funds and Donor Supports. He concluded thus: **“Much investment has been made on our roads and bridges, but much still remained, especially the feeder roads linking the agriculturally viable areas. The collective hands on deck, government agenda on roads accessibility would be vigorously pursued.”** He concluded on the emphatic note that timely budget provisions was necessary for effective road project implementation and expressed hope that these challenge would be improved in the immediate future.

ii. Engineer Jacob Lahai Taluwor, proposed member, Board of Directors, Roads Maintenance Fund Administration [RMFA].

Engineer Jacob Taluwor is a Mechanical Engineer with expert knowledge in Petroleum and Natural Gas Management. He served as Road Consultant and Sales Engineer for Safety Facility Management, Fleet Management, Construction, installation, commissioning and served equipment in reputable oil companies at both home and abroad. He holds an advanced degree in Petroleum and Natural Resource Management from Amity University, New Delhi, India.

Answering on how he would ensure that RMFA collaborates with the SLRA in meeting the latter's fund demands for roads works, the nominee said: **"The Act, in collaboration of the bodies concerned with roads, SLRA, RMFA, and the SLRSA, and therefore what is required is imminence and patriotism. I will imbibe the spirit of working together with other Boards to address daily emerging issues that will make RMFA achieve its objectives."** He promised that his long term experience as an engineer representing Sierra Leone Institute of Engineers would guide the RMFA Board in the monitoring and funding.

iii. Mr Sheku Ahmed Fantamadi Bangura, proposed Minister, Ministry of Finance

Mr Bangura is a Public Financial Management Expert with over a decade experience on financial instruments, operational politics, and procedures dealing with both local and international financial bodies. He possesses expert professional advisory knowledge on financial oversight relating to multilateral financial executive board set as World Bank group of boards for International Bank for Reconstruction and Development [IBRD], International Development Association [IDA], Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency [MIGA], etc.

From 2019 to date, he has served as Deputy Minister of Finance of the Government of Sierra Leone. He holds a double master degree in Public Policy with speciality in Public Finance Management from the American University in Washington DC from

2012 to 2014 on one hand and the other, in Economic Policy Management from McGill University, Montreal, Canada.

Responding to the Committee on the current state of the economy, the erudite economist said, the economic policy he would proffer, if approved, will cater for building a robust economy through improved tax review to serve the needs of Sierra Leone. He promised to harness the State resources with stringent policies that will lead all productive sectors that will limit extra budget spending. He was praised across party line for being a decent young professional delivering remarkable expertise on pro-for economic programme, especially in the poorest circumstances of global economic malaise.

iv. Mr Edward M. Kpakra, proposed member, Independence Peace Commission, Southern Region.

Mr Kpakra is a seasoned educationist with more than two decades of teaching and delivering research in the fields of English and Applied Linguistics at tertiary institutions in the United Kingdom, Saudi Arabia, The Gambia and Sierra Leone. He holds double master degrees in English and Applied Linguistics and the other in Education from the King's College and Greenwich University in the United Kingdom respectively. He poised to contribute to the national human capital development. The current government made him to return home from the UK and is currently the Principal of the Bo Government Secondary School whilst selflessly offering consultancy to the tertiary education sector.

Responding to the need for peace as a fundamental pillar for development, the nominee said: **"The divisiveness of our nation, especially along party lines, requires such a Commission to address national issues. It is crucial, as a member, to collaborate with colleagues to work with all stakeholders to foster cohesion as we enter the forth coming election period."** His humane attribute and dedication to national service astounded members across party lines.

4. Recommendations

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Committee has judged the following presidential nominees as adequately qualified for their proposed appointments and are unanimously recommended to the House for approval:

- i. Engineer Alfred Jalil Momodu, proposed Deputy Director General, Sierra Leone Roads Authority [SLRA]
- ii. Engineer Jacob Lahai Taluwor, proposed Member, Board of Directors, Road Maintenance Funds Administration [RMFA]
- iii. Mr Sheku Ahmed Fantamadi Bangura, proposed Minister, Ministry of Finance
- iv. Mr Edward M. Kpakra, proposed member, Independence Peace Commission, Southern Region [IPC].

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, based on the aforesaid, I therefore move that the 84th of the 6th Session of the Committee on Appointments and Public Service be adopted by the House and that the recommendations contained therein be approved.

I thank you.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Leader of Government Business for his presentation. Is there any seconder to the Motion?

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Speaker, I second the Motion.

[Question Proposed]

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, today we have nominees recommended to this House by his Excellency the President. The President has done his constitutional responsibilities by nominating to this House people who will help him achieve his agenda. As a Parliament, it is our responsibility to help His Excellency the President by doing due diligence and making sure that those appointed by His Excellency the President are fit for purpose.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I can see our constituents here to support the nominees before us. I am always obliged to explain to our constituents the

responsibilities of Members of Parliament. You would recall that there was huge turnover in last two Parliaments. The turnovers were huge for the wrong reasons.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, after appointments and approval is done, these people, our constituents, are of the strong conviction that we are supposed to do primary development rather than the executive. Mr Speaker, for the edification of our constituents who are here today, I want to state here that before the enactment of 2004 Local Government Act, Members of Parliament were responsible for primary development, such as constructing roads, bridges, PHU's and schools, etc. However, after the war, a TRC Report was presented and the issue of over centralisation was flagged up in that report as one of the causes of the war. Thus, the Report recommended to the Central Government that the issue of development should be devolved to Local Councils. The 2004 Local Government Act thus established Local Councils and issues relating to primary developments were removed from Members of Parliament and transferred to Local Councils.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, because of lack of education, the people have been judging us for the wrong reasons and have been voting us out for responsibilities that should be done by the Local Councils [*Applause*]. I am taking my time to explain because we have appointees here who are charged with the responsibility of taking development to our people. Few months from now our faces will be on the ballot papers and the people will have to judge us based on our performances. The people will definitely have to vote us in or out based on our performances. This is because if these appointees perform, we are very sure of coming back to this House; but if they do not perform, we will suffer for the things they are doing.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, whenever our constituents come here, we should tell them that Members of Parliament are no longer responsible for development, but they are using this development to judge us. I want to admonish nominees that our success and our return to this Parliament depend on you. If you fail us, we will have to defend what you are doing and if we explain to the people your activities, they will vote

us out because of what you have done. Mr Speaker, most of the things the people vote us out are not our doings and they are not our responsibilities.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to remind the appointees that they were not nominated by the President because they are handsome, but to help him achieve his dreams. Among millions of Sierra Leoneans, you were selected not because you are the best, but because the President believes in you. We hope you will perform for His Excellency the President; and we hope you will perform for the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service. The Committee has recommended you to this House and we hope you will perform for this House and by extension for the people of Sierra Leone. If you fail, you are not just failing yourself, but you are failing this Parliament and the people of Sierra Leone.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will start with the Principal from Bo School. I went to Bo School. If there has been no Bo School, there will have been no Leader of Government or Deputy Leader of Government Business. You would agree with me that Bo School trains leaders. In Fact, the President of this Republic was a student of Bo School. Mr Speaker, this Parliament being is led by Bo School Members of Parliament. Mr Principal, I have no iota of doubt that you will perform. You have made Bo School proud and I know you will do it again.

HON. SEGEPOH S. THOMAS: Mr Speaker, Point of Order.

THE SPEAKER: I will certainly allow that Point of Order *[Laughter]*. There seems to be a semblance of usurpation of authority.

HON. SEGEPOH S. THOMAS: Mr Speaker, as far as I know, you are the Speaker of this Parliament from UCC and I am the Deputy Speaker from CKC *[Applause]*.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the fact of the matter is that the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker are coming from Bo and they attended both schools from Bo Catechist. They are members of Bo School.

THE SPEAKER: I think we are all from Bo city.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Exactly, Mr Speaker. I am from schools in Bo. So, the Bo School Principal has already changed the face of the school. We hope when he occupies this office as Commissioner representing the South, he will definitely take his skills to this institution in making sure that Sierra Leone enjoys permanent peace.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will now go to the proposed Minister of Finance. He has been undergoing training for this position since we took over governance. I can say this is the best appointment His Excellency the President has made *[Applause]*. This is because this man has mustered lots of experiences. He was first nominated to this House as a Deputy Minister 2 and also Deputy Minister 1. The President was preparing him for this position and today he will be made substantive Minister of the Ministry of Finance. He has seen the weaknesses and the challenges his predecessors faced in that Ministry. In his capacity as deputy, he used to come to this House and I am sure he knows the challenges; he has also seen the mistakes of those who occupied that post before him. He had the knowhow before now, but did not have the power to change things.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to inform the nominee that he must have seen the challenges his processors faced and what his colleague ministers have not done that should have been done. The nominee now has the opportunity to correct those mistakes and move forward. Mr Minister, if you fail, it means you have failed yourself because you have seen all the challenges and now you have the chance to deal with same. You were part of major decisions that were taken wrongly. When you were coming to Parliament, we were raising issues with you, but you did not have the powers to change things. Today, the buck stops with you. If you fail to correct those wrong decisions, it means you have disappointed us. You now have a unique opportunity to effect the changes that you have always prayed for.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to inform the proposed Minister that there are lots of people in the galleries who came to support you. He has an overwhelming support from the people of Sierra Leone and this is why he has to work harder, so that these people are not disappointed. We know the economic situation of this country. We

know the cost of living and inflation is extremely high. The proposed Minister should introduce new ideas, the ideas you had before this time, but you were unable to use them. You have barely four, five, six months and by the grace of God when we win the 2023 elections, you will become the Minister if you succeed. So, you have no excuse and I can assure you that you will enjoy the greatest support of Parliament.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the proposed Minister of Finance has been a friend of this Parliament and this why we are supporting you. You have been able to meander yourself between the ruling party and the Opposition. Your relationship with Members of Parliament is superb and I want you to continue to be humble. We know you will be under pressure because the Ministry of Finance is key to the governance of Sierra Leone. People want to benefit and institutions want to perform through the financial support your office provides. You have our support and we are going to assure you as a Parliament that we will give you the fullest of support. I believe when the Opposition Members of Parliament speak, they will also acknowledge your work.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when I see young people nominated to serve in various positions, I doff my hat for His Excellency the President. When the President took over, he brought a lot of young people and I am of the strong conviction that most of us have not disappointed His Excellency the President. If you look at this other side of the ruling party, the average age of our leadership is around 45 or 43. That is the confidence His Excellency the President has in the young people. A whole Arm of Government is in the hands of young people to manage. I am also sure due to the performance of young people, His Excellency the President has nominated more young people to serve the people of this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the position of Deputy Director General is a huge responsibility and Engineer Alfred Jalil Momodu, a young man, has been nominated to serve as Deputy Director General of the Sierra Leone Roads Authority [SLRA] *[Applause]*. Engineer Momodu is a young man and I think he is going to be the youngest person ever to occupy that position. I hope he will perform because after him we want more young people to occupy top positions.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, His Excellency the President is using us as the Guinea Pig and if we succeed, we will have more young people that will join; us but if we fail, we have not only failed ourselves, but we have failed the young people of this country. I want the Engineer to know that he has been called to join us as leaders of this country. This is a training ground for you and if you and your colleagues deliver, by the grace of God you will head that institution. As Chairman of the Committee on Works, let me use this unique opportunity to welcome the Director General. I want to state here that elections are around the corner and this country needs more good roads. You would agree with me that there is no way we can develop if we do not have good roads because even our agricultural products have to be transported on roads. The mining sector and other sectors depend on good roads. The proposed Director General and his Deputy have to work very hard. We already know the challenges and thankfully we will have a new Minister of Finance and I want to appeal to him to ensure that the road sector will be given the priority its deserves because there is no way we can have quality roads without adequate funding. The contractors want to perform, but they cannot perform because of funding. We give contract as a Government, but because of inflation, some of these contractors are not able to perform. As Chairman of the Works Committee, I want to inform the proposed Director General the Deputy that we will be knocking at your doors frequently. We have few months left and I hope the Minister will support the road sector. We have a lot of unfinished projects that should be completed before the elections and we hope you will give us the utmost support to complete some of these projects.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to briefly talk about Engineer Jacob Lahai Tarlowoh, proposed Member, Board of Directors, Road Maintenance Funds Administration [RMFA] He will be under my supervision as Chairman of the Committee on Works. So, we are going to work collectively for the development of this nation. If you fail, it means you have failed Sierra Leone. I want to urge all appointees to make sure they work as a team.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I also want to encourage the proposed Deputy Director General to work with other young people who have also applied for this job. They are all members of the SLRA and that is why I want you to work with them. You can only succeed if you work as a team. You cannot succeed if you work in isolation. Work with those who contested for the position and bring them closer. They have ideas that could be of assistance towards the success of the institution. They are not losers at all. Today, you are the fortunate one, but please work with them. If you work as a team, all of you will succeed. I know the troubles you went through for you to be where you are today, but please forget all odds and lead a productive team. Please make sure that the SLRSA performs. I thank you very much, Honourable Members and I wish you all well in your new offices.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Deputy Leader of Government Business for his contribution to the debate. I will now give the Floor to the Honourable Member from Bombali.

HON. DR MARK .M. KALOKOH: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker for giving me this opportunity to be part of this deliberation. When the nominees were interviewed yesterday, we went there to observe the process and on that note I will not talk much maybe for just 30 minutes.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am sure Engineer Alfred Momodu, Engineer Jacob Lahai and the Mr Edward Kpaka possessed the requisite educational qualifications, experiences and competences to run the offices they have been nominated to serve. Therefore, I want to entreat them that while in office, let them try to implement what they stated yesterday during their interviews. Sometimes when nominees are approved in this House, they usually go and disappoint Parliament. I hope these three [3] I have mentioned will not disappoint this Parliament at all. I want to urge this House to approve these three nominees I have mentioned, Mr Alfred Momodu, Mr Jacob Lahai and Mr Edward Sam Kpaka.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me zoom in the proposed Minister of Finance, Mr Sheku Ahmed Fantamadi Bangura. I would limit my debate to asking, who is Fantamadi? Well, I will attempt to answer the question. If you look at the galleries, you

will accept what I am going to say that Mr Fantamadi is a friend of the grassroots and a lover of mankind. Fantamadi is a decent young professional who believes in delivery. I am sure he will put in place policies that will move this nation forward. We on this side are always ready to support anything that is good that is why I am here particularly to pay tribute to a good friend of Parliament.

THE SPEAKER: I want to thank you for endorsing my observation earlier when I admonished them that the support they demonstrated by coming should not stop here, it should go all the way.

HON. DR MARK M. KALOKOH: Mr Speaker, I will not allow you to put word into my mouth. I will continue to describe Fantamadi as someone who is ready to build a strong and robust economy through improved taxation. He is a listening Minister and he is someone who respects the rule of law and he has respect across the aisles because he exhibited himself to a manner every one of us appreciates. I want to join colleagues to extend my profound appreciation to His Excellency President Bio for giving this nation a fine gentleman, hardworking gentlemen and a decent gentleman that will move the economy of this country to its expectation.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to refer the proposed Minister to a policy statement that was made here by his predecessor. I will not read it I will only refer you to the relevant page and paragraph. The Speaker knows that I always advocate for the welfare of this House. Thus, I now refer the proposed Minister to Paragraph 74 on Page 23, Statement of the Economic and Financial Activities 2023 and with specific reference to Roman Number VI. That is the reference I will have to remind you again when you get to your office. Please go and look at that policy statement and we will work on it. We are going to observe and evaluate you on that issue.

Having said that Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I now urge this Honourable House to approve the proposed Minister of Finance and the three other nominees. I thank you.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member for his contribution to the debate. I was waiting for a list to be presented to me, but I do not know how far they have gone

in preparing the list. I will try to accommodate as many people as possible, but I will limit Honourable Members to five minutes, but if we agree on three minutes, I will accommodate as many speakers as possible. My ruling is three minutes and let me start with the lady.

HON. EMILIA L. TONGI: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I want to thank His Excellency for giving us these handsome nominees. There is no doubt about their educational backgrounds. They are over qualified. I am sure the President would have just nominated and tell them to go to their different offices and start work, but the law is the law we have to go through the normal procedures that is why we are here.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, since we have only three minutes, I would therefore want to talk about two nominees; i.e., Engineer Alfred J. Momodu and the proposed Minister of Finance. Mr Speaker, I am the happiest woman today and I would like all of you to appreciate my happiness.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Parent Act is over 60 years, since Independence. I have been waiting for all those years for my road to be tarred, but that did not happen until His Excellency President Bio came to power. He had made it possible for that to happen. I would like the whole world to know that we appreciate him a lot. My father, PC Kai Tongi brought the first electricity before Kenema did and today his intention was to ensure that that road was properly tarred, but unfortunately he is late now. I am however sure that when I shall eventually meet him, I will tell him that it has happened in his absence. Mr Momodu is going to be my first best friend for this year. I hope and believe that Kissy Tongi in turn will appreciate and give back what His Excellency has given us. We will do everything within our powers to ensure that it happens.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to talk about the proposed Minister of Finance. He has been here with us for quite some time now and I am sure His Excellency has been monitoring his steps. The President took over this country with lots of challenges on the Economy. You have been working endlessly to ensure that civil

servants get their pay at the end of every month. I thank you so much and I thank this government for having such hardworking young man.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Member. I am sure all of you would have noticed over the last five years that I have a very soft spot for ladies. So, the next speaker on my list is the Mama of the House.

HON. VERONICAL K. SESAY: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank His Excellency the President for nominating these people before us. I have no doubt in their ability. They are over qualified and people should know about these people.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the President made no mistake to choose these people. If you look at the galleries, you can see lots of people to support the nominees. This shows the importance of these particular nominees and they are all qualified. I want to assure them of our supports and blessings as Parliament because the President has done his and it is left with us to give you the go ahead or our blessings and you are blessed today go and serve the people.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will talk about the proposed Minister of Finance and the Deputy Director General of SLRSA. As the saying goes, 'it is not the coat that matters, but the man in the coat. In Themne, S.O. [2] ጋጋጋ ኣዩዩ ጋጋጋ. This means they appear small, but they possess what it takes to execute their jobs. I made this particular quotation because we have our sisters or brothers who are here today to listen to the good things we are going to say about the proposed Minister of Finance.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the proposed Minister of Finance is a friend of Parliament. I do not envy you at all, but that particular Ministry is very central to this nation. You have to make sure you work in the interest of the people you are representing. It is very difficult as at now when talking about the economy. That Ministry is the backbone of this country's development. This is because it can make and break a whole nation if those that are in charge are not strong or tactical enough to introduce prudent fiscal policies. I am sure you will be able to carry that mantle with the

support of Parliament and your team. You should have a team that you can consult and work together. This will make it easier to handle issues relating to that Ministry. Thus, we rely on your expertise. It is a very enviable Ministry, but your appointment shows the level of your honesty, dedication and love for all of us.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Honourable Member who spoke before me talked briefly about the proposed Deputy Director General of SLRSA. He is a small gentleman. He is a very young man, but has the necessary experience and I am happy for him because he is the foot soldier of his boss. I am sure they will work together. I vividly remembered that whenever I went to SLRA for specific issue, the first person the DG would contact is Mr Momodu. This means they have a cordial relationship and I want to encourage them to keep it up. I know him to be very humble. I have known him for the past years. In fact, we came from the same region. I want to encourage him to keep it up and to make sure that he works with his boss. You have to be lukewarm because that enviable seat is not an easy seat. All of us here are coming from different districts and we need good roads, but roads cannot be constructed without adequate funding.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank the nominee for Peace Commission, who is also the Principal of Bo School. I know Bo School to be very peaceful and we want you to make sure that you continue to do the good things. We want more people from Bo School and also those from Mathora School. We have not seen any nominee from Mathora Secondary School here, but I hope and believe that one day we will get them here.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank you and to also urge all my colleagues not to waste time, but to speedily approve these nominees. I thank you and congratulations in advance.

Suspension of S.O 5[2]

THE SPEAKER: I now give the Floor to the Honourable Member from Karene District.

HON. DR ROLAND F. KARGBO: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to add my voice to the issue on Floor and to thank His Excellency the President for the nominations presented to this Honourable House. There are four nominees before us. Though it is not mandatory, but the nominations this time did not include the **30%** quota for women. I would want the President to take note of this, so that it is taken care of in the next nominations.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank once again His Excellency for the nominations. The nominees are all qualified and they went through the Appointments Committee. We feel they have all the necessary qualifications and experiences like all other nominees we had before. We have approved many nominees here who were highly qualified and I want to state here that His Excellency is a very good observer. He chooses well and that is why we have never rejected any nomination in this House. So, the nominees must have done good jobs because nominees are selected on the basis of their educational backgrounds and performance in their previous jobs with the hope that they will also perform in future appointments. Therefore, there are great expectations from the public.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am sure we have no problem with the qualifications and track records, but we have a problem with the output of appointees. This is because there are global problems everywhere, but each government deals with its own challenges in its own way to help the people of their country. So, when people say it is a global problem, yes it is all over the World and every country is affected, but it is incumbent on our appointees to make sure that they add value to this country. I think a lot more needs to be done in that direction.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to take a diversion here. We have two important areas in these appointments; i.e., the roads and finances of this country. These are central to the development of this country. In the narrative given to us by the Minister in his Budget Speech, there was a mention of the road in Karene District between Makeni and Kamakwie. The Tompara Bridge was also mentioned to the list of what should be constructed, but nothing was allocated in the budget. I am concerned

and I hope the Ministry of Finance and other related institutions must take note of this because it was mentioned by his Excellency in his Address and that Address was delivered here by the Minister of Finance.

On that note, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank His Excellency the President, for making sure that we properly scrutinise these nominees. We have the power to either approve or disapprove, but Parliament has the authority to call on underperforming officials and question them why they are not delivering. I thank you

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member for his contribution. I now give the Floor to the Honourable Member from the Western Area, Brookfields to be specific, to be followed by the Honourable Member from Kono.

HON. IBRAHIM T. CONTEH: Thank you, Mr Speaker for this opportunity. We have three nominees and I would like to start by thanking Engineer Alfred J. Momodu. Mr Speaker, as you can see, this necktie you are seeing was given to me fifteen years ago by Engineer J. Alfred Momodu *[Applause]*. This was my first necktie when I got my first job. I could not afford a tie, but Engineer J. Momodu gave me my first tie. He did not only give me a necktie; he paid fees for me while I was in college. He is a magnanimous man.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Engineer Alfred J. Momodu is also my in-law and I want to remind him about what he has done for my sister. He sponsored my sister through her university and today she is a full fledge lawyer. I hope you will use the same generosity to transform lots of Sierra Leoneans *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I go to the proposed Minister of Finance. I am sure he is the first Minister of Finance from Kambia District *[Applause]*. President Bio has consistently been making history. If you look at the Western Area, you would realise that my regional Chairman and Deputy are from Kambia. So, this appointment means a lot to us in the Western Area and Kambia District. The people of these areas would want to congratulate the proposed Minister of Finance. We all know that he is a friend of Parliament. I am sure he understands the meaning of Ides of March and that is why

you should be very careful. You have our support and you will always be with us. However, the tasks ahead are very challenging. Your Secretary has been addressing you as Acting Minister, but today and in a short while, you will no longer be addressed as Acting Minister. You will be made substantive Minister today, but the Secretary was continuously addressing you as Acting because you have not been made full Minister.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the proposed Minister looks good and energetic today, but when the stress starts, you will begin to feel the pinch. However, we want to assure you that the tasks ahead are bigger than what you have done in the last three years. We know you are going to deliver and we are sure that you will not let Kambia District down because this is our first appointment and we are going to deliver for President Bio. In fact, the Speaker has said that we would deliver right through on to the end. The statement from one of the Opposition Members during your interview said you would present your next budget in October and that shows that we are going to win and Kambia will give us the number. I thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member for his kind sentiments.

HON. MUSA FOFANAH: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I bring you salutations from the Kambia, Kono, Kambia and Karene families. They promised to thank the President later, but want to appreciate this House if we approve their son, brother and uncle, Mr Momodu Fantamadi Bangura. Mr Speaker, even the two rivers in Kono; Tompara Ferry River and Kabba Ferry River, also sent their salutations to this House for the proposed Finance Minister. I am sure this House will approve the proposed Minister with no hesitation because he is qualified.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to talk about Engineer Alfred Jalil Momodu, proposed Deputy Director General, Sierra Leone Roads Authority. When we went there in 2020 on an oversight visit, the then Director General of SLRA assigned Eng. Momodu to lead the process. I want to assure this House that I have no doubt in his nomination by the President. He has nominated young man to take over the leadership as deputy to the Director General. Mr Speaker, Eng. Momodu and team are very professional. When we went to see the Mabang Bridge [by then only giant pillars were erected], the

Rogbere Bridge [by then only pillars were erected] and the Liberia High Way [by then it was just completed], and many other places, such as Gendema and the Moyamba Junction or Moyamba Road.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Eng. Momodu was so professional and he was informing CSC constructor that this is the House of laws with oversight responsibility and they should listen to what they need from us. He said this is what we from the SLRA are also doing. I want to inform this House that the SLRA plays a very important role for the completion of those roads, under the leadership of President Julius Maada Bio. I am confident that we are approving a professional who will carry out professional jobs for the progress of this nation. I am sure he will do more and I want to assure him that Parliament will support him.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, for the nominee from Bo School and the other for RMFA will be under the leadership of Honourable Saa Emerson Lamina, charged with responsibility to guide the national medium term plan of the government of this country. Mr Speaker, we continue to support them, so that they succeed in their activities. I thank you, Mr Speaker.

HON. DR SHEKU M. SANDY: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I will begin my debate by borrowing a phrase from one of our senior Members of this Parliament who always say: "Today again has a lot of meaning attached to it; today again I will thank his excellency for appointing good personalities in Sierra Leone; today again I want to thank Parliament for continuously approving presidential nominees; and today again is relevant for us to be able to link performance to output at the end of their tenure.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, is there any significant relationship between the processes of appointing people and performance of those going to the MDAs? I think there should be a way of tracking performance of presidential appointees, so that at the end of the day, we will be able to recognise them. If we are not appraising them in a form of money or retaining them in their positions, we can recognise their performance in a best way possible, such as issuance of certificates. This will serve as a very good motivator for those who might not be working with Parliament.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we can trace the performance of people to their qualifications. In most of the reports presented to this House by the Appointments Committee, all the nominees had academic experiences and professional experiences to enable them deliver very well, but we have not put mechanisms in place to track their performance alongside their functions.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to limit my contribution on the proposed Minister of Finance. I want to admonish him, if approved by this House, to look at the policy processes leading to the implementation of programmes. He should also consider the issue of fiscal programmes and fight very hard to detect the leakages. You should also examine the SOEs, their performance and governance issues. If this is done, it will help to reduce or avoid the leakages. We have been losing lots of moneys and that is why you should not toy with it.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the nominee for the RMFA has a lot of administrative policy issues. I would want him to internalise the policy relationship between workers and the administrators; and also the RMFA and the Ministry of Works. If this is done, I am sure you will be able to do very well. We should try to make a document that will track performance in terms of the good things we say about these Ministers or MDAs. I thank you very much *[Applause]*.

HON. NENEH LEBBIE: Thank you, Mr Speaker, for giving me the Floor. I will finish my contribution before the allotted three minutes. I would start by congratulating the nominees before us this afternoon. I congratulate them in advance for the offices they going to manage. I want to inform them that there is no space for failure and that is why we are sometimes seen replacing your predecessors. This goes for all of you that are here because the President wants to achieve what he has told the people of this country in 2018. We have our manifesto that we presented to the people of country and the President wants to achieve what he said in this manifesto. This is why he has decided to replace most of them and to bring you up to these positions.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to talk about three nominees present before us this afternoon. I would start with Eng. Momodu, whom I commonly called my

son. He has been very receptive and a young man, though he is now a grown up individual. Some of us that have been in the game of politics and in development programmes have known him to be someone who listens to us and is always ready to work with politicians, not only SLPP politicians, but different political parties and his reception has always been good. Please continue the good work, so that more praises would be showered on you. There are some people as soon as they achieve higher positions, they make themselves proud than what we expect them to be. Sometimes they even ignore to answer their phone calls. We do not have beggars in Parliament, but we work for the people we are representing. We speak on their behalf because not everybody can come to Parliament at the same time. I am sure you should have time to listen to us because when you do that, it means you are doing what the President wants since we are his foot soldiers.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would want the Minister of Finance to consider this Ministry as the lifeblood of this country and it is pivotal to the development of this country. So, it is an enviable position. I am sure you being the friend of Parliament also means that you are the friend of Sierra Leone. Please work very hard for this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to inform Mr Kpakra that peace is very important for this country and you have been given the assignment to make sure that you work towards it. We want peace to be maintained in this country because peace will achieve a lot of other developments. I thank you, Mr Speaker

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, I think we have reached a convenient point for me to recognise some distinguished personalities. The first recognition will go to Mr Amara Jabai Kanneh, Director General of SLRA and he is going to have a Deputy with whom cordial working relation and want to congratulate the Deputy in advance. We will also have a new Minister of Finance that can be no better time for me to remind them of the road from Kabatha to Bathkanu than now. That road is the first trunk road in the North, but like our tradition, when we have a new dress, we tend to forget the old one. Since the Road from Lunsar to Makeni was constructed, that trunk road fell into oblivion

to this date. So, on behalf of the people of that part of the country, I want to plead that the said road is made active.

Honourable Members, let me also recognise, of course in the same vain, the one and only distinguished Financial Secretary, Mr Sahr Jusu; Mr Bockarie Kalokoh, Deputy Minister of Finance; Dr Ibrahim Steven, Deputy Governor; Monetary Stability of the Bank of Sierra Leone, Mr Sam Aruna; Ministry of Finance Deputy Financial Secretary; Dr Samuel Jibao, NRA; Madam Fatmata Sawaneh; Mr Solomon Jarimu, Deputy Minister of Information, Mr Batilo J. Songa. When we talk about Paopa may I take this opportunity to remind all of us that there is a man called Foday Rado Yokie, Mr Maxwell Massaquoi of NATCOM; former DG, Mr David Borbor FIU; Mrs Yakama Manty Jones; Dr Alhassan Mansaray; and Sahr Fatorma, former Honourable Member.

Honourable Members, if anyone is left out, please forgive us, but we recognise your importance and your contribution to this country.

HON. HINDOLO M. GEVAO: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am happy because President Bio knows no colour, region or age. President Bio has brought people of high calibre to handle the finances of Sierra Leone. If you look at the people in charge of the finances of Sierra Leone, like Deputy Governor, the Financial Secretary and the Minister of Finance designate, all of them fall within the same age bracket. This shows that he has trust in young people because young people have been performing.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to inform the Minister of Finance that I have been following him very carefully and it seems as if anytime the President thinks there is a crisis in the institution, he brings him on-board. He brought him on-board during the COVID crisis in Sierra Leone and he proved his mettle or performed exceptionally well. Today again, he has brought him on-board as the Minister of Finance. You have been the Deputy Minister of Finance 1 and later rose to Deputy Minister of Finance 2; and if this House approves, he is going to be the substantive Minister of Finance *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, like my colleague said, promotion comes with extra responsibility. When you are promoted from Class 1 to Class 2, it means you have to work from hard to harder. If you have been sleeping for three hours, you now have to reduce it to two hours. Although it is not the fault of this Administration, but the global economy is challenged and I would want you to pay attention to the exchange rate in Sierra Leone. The exchange rate is galloping by the hour. If you go to the market today and buy a bag of rice at NLe820, you will buy the same commodity at NLe 850 after few hours *[Applause]*. There is very little or no price control. You have to work with the Ministry of Agriculture because most of the things have to do with what we export. If we do not export, definitely we will not have foreign exchange in our economy. I am sure if you work with all these Ministries, we will be able to control this foreign exchange crisis in Sierra Leone *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I also want to look at the cash flow. For some of us that go to the bank, there are times the cash flow is somehow limited. Sometimes you have to bring your economic theory for customers to actually access their finances at the bank. I want to look at that area from the perspective of importation of already manufactured cash with regard what is dished out to commercial institutions and how it is been streamlined. We know that we are gradually going to a cashless economy. Nowadays, we use more of our phones for financial transaction. I can carry **Le20mln** on my phone. Maybe if we gravitate faster towards that area like the United Kingdom, it will help us.

On that note, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Engineer was my college mate and I am quite sure he will make us proud I thank you very much *[Applause]*.

HON. FESTUS M. LANSANA: Thank you very Much, Mr Speaker for giving me this opportunity. I will start by thanking the President for giving us these fine nominees, especially Elder. Those who went to Njala know that 'elder' is the 'comrade elder' and he has been a peace ambassador when we were in college. He was our senior in college, but anytime we had problem, Eddie Parker will be called upon to mediate between the student and the principal at that time. He has been given a bigger

opportunity to now mediate or serve as the Peace Ambassador nationally. I am sure he will perform very well.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the proposed Minister of Finance is also a colleague. I do not want to say much because I know he can deliver with the galaxy of professional economists and accountants around him. I am sure he will deliver. He recalled in our budget discussions, several issues were brought forward and he promised, as if he knew he will be given the opportunity, to see how he could work with the other teams to change the dynamics of this Economy.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, for Eng. Momodu, I am very happy today because he was one of the pioneers that started the Mano Junction to Kono, grinding and widening that road. I am sure this time he will also continue to put heads together with the Director so that, the road which is the economic basket of this country is paved. I thank you very much.

HON. FRANCIS A. KAISAMBA: The nominees are qualified as presented by the Deputy Leader of Government Business and Acting Chairman of the Appointments Committee. I want to briefly talk about the nominee for the Peace Commission. I am sure we have relative peace, but that peace must be consolidated because without peace there will be no development. You would agree with me that during the political interregnum in this country, there were no development. So, we hope that upon his approval, he will work alongside the Chairman of that Committee and other Commissioners to ensure that we have cohesion and to consolidate peace in this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am sure institutions such as RMFA and SLRA are supposed to be working together. You must agree that there are still jobs to be done on our roads.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to remind the proposed Minister of Finance to provide the policy guidelines and must be at the helm of affairs. I think we cannot be comfortable with any vacuum in that particular Ministry and that is why the President

has thought it fit to appoint you. Mr Fantamadi Bangura and Parliament have been working together for all this while and parliamentarians are giving you all the accolades this morning. We are pretty sure that he is equal to the task and he can fly the flag of this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to quickly respond to the Honourable Member from the Western Area. He did say that Mr A.F Bangura of course is from Kambia. I must state here that he has a very strong route from Kenema District because he was born and bred in Kenema. He should bear in mind that he comes from both Kambia and Kenema. I thank you very much.

HON. EMERSON S. LAMINA: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker Honourable Members, His Excellency the President Retired Brigadier is demonstrating to the people of Sierra Leone on a daily basis that this nation is never in drought of good people. What we saw yesterday at the vetting process satisfied Members of the Committee. The nominees should be congratulated in advance because I have no iota of doubt that they will see the blessings of this House. What a privileged for them to be nominated among almost eight million Sierra Leoneans. I am sure they will make us proud. President Bio has done his by nominating them for Parliamentary approval.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, for the Hansard, the Fifth Parliament is on records that we have repealed and replaced sixty-nine [69] new laws, seventy Constitutional and Statutory Instruments, three hundred and fifty [350] Conventions, Treaties, Agreements [*Applause*]. We have done our part in terms of oversight activities; representation, promoting the peace and national cohesion, and also approved the 2023 Budget. The ball is now in their court and if that is the case, we are here to admonish you today to ensure that you reciprocate by making this nation proud.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will start with Fantamadi Ahmed Sheku Bangura, proposed Minister of Finance. He is a fine gentleman, but I want to implore or encourage him to take a page from his predecessors; and this is found in Paragraph 22 of 2023 Budget. He did promise that he would not add any new tax and everything that has to do with taxation until the end of 2023. Therefore, take a page from Page 52 of

the 2023 Budget, except one has to downplay it, but the economy globally is challenged. In fact, the four biggest economies in the world, including China, USA, UK and Japan are challenged. Again, the projections by the biggest economies in Africa, Egypt, Kenya, South Africa and Nigeria dropped abysmally. I am sure Sierra Leone is no exception. We are trying with proper policy implementation, we have been doing well.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I was going through Google and I discovered that the inflation rate in Rwanda is now **40%** increase, Ghana is **54.1%**, Sudan is **88%**, Zimbabwe is **244.1%**, Sierra Leone is **29%**. This tells you that the economic policy of this nation have been very great *[Applause]*. We must commend the proposed Minister. With the short time we had interaction with him during the interview, he demonstrated that he had vast knowledge in terms of policy interpretation for the vulnerable and the youth etc. Please make us proud and you can be assured of Parliament's support. We will continue to give you the requisite support and you in turn should continue to make us proud.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to talk about the two Engineers; Eng. Momodu and Eng. Lahai. They have been very great. I must confess that these people approved **Le3bln** project on feeder roads for Koidu District Council, where I was a Mayor. Today, I am on records that Koindu District Council was allocated **Le20bln** *[Applause]*. This tells you the vision President Bio has for that district. You have been doing very well and I believe you will follow the same trend. Eng. Momodu will do us well if he takes note of the agricultural potentiality in Kailahun, Kenema and Kono districts. This has to do with roads because if the roads are good, it will increase agricultural productivity. We are very proud in Kono District because in less than six months, when you were working as operation personnel, you ensured that the road along the Guinea border is graded. That road has so many socio-economic importance. That road is between Koindu City and Guinea; it connects land towns in Guinea and by extension to Ivory Coast, Mali and very soon Kono will become an international trade centre *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will end my contribution with the Bo School Principal, Mr Edward Kpakra. I took my son for admission at the Bo Government Secondary School. As soon as we entered his office, this man started interacting with my son by asking some questions. He asked for the name of my son and my son said: "I am Gospel Lamina." The Principal said: "**Gospel Lamina, tell us who are you and who is your father.**" They conversed for few minutes and I was satisfied [*Applause*]. Mr Speaker, this nation needs peace experts who are pragmatic, like Mr Kpakra. We have suffered so much from the theories of Andrew Jackson. If you have been following the America history of 1827, we were told about democratic President called Andrew Jackson, a tailor by profession. He was the initiator of winner takes all and we have seen the danger behind that arrangement. The toxic politics, ethnicity they are three things that this man has created. I am sure Mr Kpakra's pragmatic role will help to bring peace. However, few of the elites are engaged in toxic politics to the poor illiterates in the villages. These elites will send and nurse identity information by saying that certain sets of people do not love you; therefore you have to destabilise them. I am sure the school you are superintending brings people from across the country; i.e., East, West, North, South.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, appointing Mr Kpakra to serve in the Independent Commission for Peace and National Cohesion is just like you are a tailor-made over Bo School and tailor-made in the nation. You are going to bring every Sierra Leonean on board, so that they will see this nation together rather than division [*Applause*]. We do not need it and there is always one President at a time. I am sure the nominee will preach peace across all the regions in this country. There should be continuous engagement on radios and televisions, so that people understand that this nation is a lovely nation.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we had similar situations with Rwanda in terms of civil war experiences, but Rwanda is far advanced as compared to Sierra Leone. There should be lots of radio talk shows for our people to believe in Sierra Leone and to have peace and to believe in President Bio and his appointees.

On that note, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I urge all Honourable Members to give the fullest support to the approval of these fine nominees. I thank you very much *[Applause]*.

HON. FODAY M. KAMARA: Thank you very, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am indeed a happy man today. I am happy because I have always said in this Parliament that I will never tell a lie and I have always said here that whatever I say will come to pass *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in one of my interventions in the recent past, I said in this Well that His Excellency the President has to sack many more people if he wanted a second term. I think that prediction is coming to pass because we have just approved to replace those who have been serving in those positions. Today again, we are approving other set of nominees. I am glad the President is a President who listens and reacts to what people are saying.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, during the budget debates, I said Mr Fantamadi presented a budget that he did not author. The writer and the presenter were different individuals. I said why do we continue policies that are failing this nation? It was unfortunate he had to continue though it was not his own. I am glad the President has decided to listen that the financial policies we had were failed policies and that is why some changes are needed now to salvage the economy of this country. I want to welcome Mr Fantamadi on board. I want to ask my colleagues to speedily approve him *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if we talk about the economic problems being global, then we should start looking at our sister countries. You would agree with me that the Leone is far behind the Guinean Franc. We should not begin to talk about global when our next door neighbours are making a difference. I am sure Mr Fantamadi is here to address this problem as soon as possible. I really want to see the Leone chasing the Guinean Franc and perhaps before the end of our term of office. In fact, I want to see the Leone better than the Guinean Frank and only that will make me proud because my people are suffering.

On that note, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am asking my colleagues to speedily approve the nominations and ensure that these people go to their office and work well *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member for his contribution. I think I have done well because I have covered almost everybody. For those of you who missed out this time, better luck next time *[Applause]*. I now give the Floor to the Acting Leader of the Opposition to round up the debate.

HON. AMADU KANU: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me start by thanking and also commending the previous speakers that subscribed to the Motion before us this afternoon. I also feel obliged to state, among other things, that the Leader of the main Opposition Party, Honourable Chernor R.M Bah is unavoidably not in our midst this afternoon for very obvious reasons. However, as a Member of the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service that took part in the preliminary vetting and screening of our distinguished nominees, let me confirm to the people of this country that I am of the strong conviction that under the watch of our dynamic Leader of Government Business and also Chairman of the Committee on Appointments must have done justice to the people of this country for thoroughly screening and in fact clinically vetted our distinguished nominees. They put the interest of this country above every other reasons *[Applause]*. It is against this backdrop that I will attest to the fact I called it an undeniable fact as reported by the Leader that the nominees are found to be adequately qualified and suitable for the positions for which they were all nominated to serve. It is therefore the business of this plenary not to be labour on this issue, but to speedily approve these nominees.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, you told us yesterday that this sitting is going to be short and swift; and consistent with that pronouncement, I want to just proffer a piece of advice to the nominees. We know that they are all qualified and capable of delivering, but time is of essence. I want to draw your attention to the fact that His Excellency the President must have a very good reason to take this critical decision at the eleventh hour. You have to be mindful of the fact that the 2023 elections will not be

subject to explanations. Sierra Leoneans have always supported and voted for us in various elective positions for diverse reasons. This new direction is having problems with the people and it is these nominees that should work in the interest of the State and the people of this country. I have listened to what have been said by various speakers about you. I will therefore not delve into the merits of your capacity, but will rather advise you to go there and perform; go and serve Sierra Leone. I want to solicit the general Membership of this House to speedily approve these nominees.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member, especially for acknowledging that the New Direction is the right direction. I now give the Floor to the Leader of Government Business.

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I want to thank Honourable colleagues for your various contributions to what we have done at the Committee stage for the nominees we have in front us. I thank His Excellency the President for giving us these fine Sierra Leoneans. These are professionals with expert knowledge in their various fields. A barrage of praises are being showered on the nominees and that is an extension of the work of the Committee to the plenary. We have done no mistake to bring them here for plenary approval. I will not waste much time in describing them or go over what I have done before.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to state here that policies are geared towards ensuring a better nation, but implementation serves us best to turn things around as we are called the New Direction as the Right Direction. How do we change policies, especially when we have challenges with the economy? I am sure good policies will always change our economy for the better. Therefore, we are advising the proposed Minister to look at the policies that are not working. You have been part of these policies that are working; for example, the introduction of the Quick Action Economic Recovery Programme [QAERP] during the COVID 19 and when they envisaged that there would be a downward trend in the economy, they brought the QAERP with that of the Central Bank. That is very good idea for this country. We still have food stuffs in the markets.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the proposed Minister of Finance has always been with us and people usually call him the negotiator. He is a negotiator. We had difficulties in ratifying the budget because Members of Parliament presented stories relating to late presentation of budgets to Parliament and he negotiated with us and we agreed. When there are problems in Parliament in terms of finances, he will come and negotiate with us. He is a man with humility; a man who believes that talking and listening to people is the best way of achieving results. We also believe that cooperation is the best way to work as a Minister or for any office holder.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if you look at what is happening in the United Kingdom and America, you will find out that their growth in the GDP; but few months down the line, inflation struck very high. However, between October and November, there was a growth again in the GDP to **0.1%** due to good policies. America's inflation rate went down to **6.5%** due to good policies. So, as I said earlier, the proposed Minister of Finance was part of the QAERP and the MUNAFA projects. So, you have to use good policies, policies you can rely on at any time. As my colleague on the other side said, the economy is challenged and we have two currencies running concurrently. If the global trend is not working, then let us try internalities that we can use to ensure that the economy bounce back.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, taxation is key, but how do you prioritise it? That was very clear in your statement. You have countries talking about stagflation, while we are talking about inflation. I believe stagflation in economist that's the most difficult point we are talking about when our economy is in disordered. So, we are talking about high rate of inflation we have not described yet. I want to know if you are in a better position to tell us. Somebody was telling me through undertone that Lebanon is suffering from stagflation. We do not want to go that line, but I believe with your policies, you will change the narratives. It is only good policies and not praises, that will turn things around. This will help to ensure that you perform exceptionally well.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I have given a lot of explanatory note about your presentation, but we have challenges and that is why if you want to link the rural areas

with agriculturally viable areas, you should also have to look out for good road network, which we did explain in the committee. I want the proposed Minister of Finance to know that we want to see how best we can continue the married at higher level of collaboration between the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Works through SLRA. If all these entities work together, it is a very good platform to ensure that the job is done at the end of the day. If you fail to work together, we will not achieve anything. So, working with the Ministry of Finance and SLRA in terms of disbursement of funds is critical. Timely released of funds is essential for road construction in the rural areas.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the road network should be very good, especially in the agricultural productive areas; so as to enable us feed our people. This will also help in nation building. Peace and national cohesion is good for us and we do not need to shy away from what is affecting us. The proposed Commissioner said our divisive nature, especially politics, is going too far to divide us. As Sierra Leoneans, we believe our similarities are greater than our differences. So, let us believe in the things that bring us together. Politics is just for a moment, but we continue to live as Sierra Leoneans for a very long time. I have said in this House that it is only when you have a mixture of different political parties that will be interesting.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if we put Sierra Leone first, this Parliament will be a very good Parliament and we are a very good Parliament. We have passed progressive laws, despite being a hung Parliament. This is why we are very proud to be parliamentarians. I want to remind the Minister about our welfare. Honourable colleagues, please listen to me. This is very important to us. One Country One People, Osai Owai. The reason I sounded our different mottos and slogans is because I want Members to understand that we are very proud. I stand tall in this Chamber because this Parliament is a very transparent Parliament. We have passed progressive laws and this Parliament seeks to support women in politics. This Parliament supported the abolition of death penalty.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, freedom of expression is not a crime and we have created a conducive platform for the members of the Fourth Estate. I want the

proposed Minister to note that this Parliament will continue to ask for our remunerations or welfare for Members of Parliament. Members of Parliament need to be upgraded. Whenever we request for our welfare, people make certain comments that are against us. This is very unfair to us. People go all over the country, lambasting us as if we are not human beings. These are the same people that usually come to Parliament to ask for favour.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am sure we are doing our best to satisfy our consciences and God. We are under oath. I want the proposed Minister to know that we will discuss about our welfare very soon. It is not a hidden secret that our lives should be improved and made better. Please change the life of this Parliament and transform the lives of Members of Parliament. Please be informed that we shall table our Welfare Bill and it will be discussed in this Chamber *[Applause]*. I am sending notice to the public now. What is good for the goose is good for the gander. We are praising you, but we cannot praise ourselves.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the first law of nature is 'self.' we have delivered and nobody needs to praise us. Please go to the archives and check for what we have done for this nation as Members of Parliament what we have done to change the narratives irrespective of political lines. We are doing it for the interest of Sierra Leone under the Unity, Freedom and Justice. The APC may not like this, but it is a slogan they have to accept, which is 'One Country, one People.' Sierra Leoneans must love themselves. Of course, we have our differences in this House, but what brings us together is what matters to us all.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am proud of these nominees because they are not only powerful, but are qualified. As a Committee, we did our best and that is why they are here for plenary approval. It pleases the President who has the Executive Powers to appoint people to various positions of trust. This is why you should not annoy the President after being hired by him because you can be fired. That is the Executive Powers of the President. Those who have served, but being fired should be given praises for what they have done for this nation. Members of Parliament cannot be fired,

we are going together with the President [*Applause*]. That is why we have our connectivity to the presidency. This is like the tap root system because we are deeply rooted. We are all given a five year mandate and I will not think about being fired. You can be fired even if we approve you today. Section 61 of the 1991 Constitution gives enormous Executive Powers to the President. It is good to have people to serve, but it is also good for you to deliver.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I enjoyed the Deputy Director of SLRA and the Director SLRA. They are perfect combination with institutional memory. These people have shown commitments, trust and sincerity. You do not need to fight for position before you can succeed. You only need to fight for good polices to change the face of this nation for the better. This is not about your CVs, it is how you can deliver. My colleague on the other side said that the New Direction is the wrong direction, but I want to state here that the New Direction is in the right place. When you assume full responsibilities, I want you to note that Members of Parliament will not be going to your offices to be ignored or rejected. We have enormous powers to bring people here. We are magnanimous to accommodate all shades of opinion. We have our oversight responsibilities. Fortunately, the seconder to this Motion is the Chairman of the Committee on Works and we expect much from him.

Honourable Members, I want to thank the Honourable Speaker for presiding over us. We have been enjoying his use of the English Language and the way he talks to us. We do accept the way he presides over us and we will continue to always appreciate him for what he has been doing for Members of Parliament. He has demonstrated lots of courage to administer difficult Members of Parliament. Amidst lots of challenges, he has managed to administer the Fifth Parliament with carefulness. Some of us have been very difficult to handle because of the way we perceive things. Our political differences cannot divide us at all. Please go and deliver, so that the people of this country can repose more confidence in you. Continue to be professional and work harder for the good of this nation. I thank President Bio for appointing people of such calibre.

Having said that, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I therefore move that the 8th Report of the Fifth Session of the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service be approved. I thank you.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

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

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Leader of Government Business and all Honourable Members who have taken the Floor on this important matter. Let me be the last speaker on this matter. I will start with a very simple quotation that says, 'nothing succeeds like success, nothing succeeds in life like success itself.' The nominees that have just been approved by this Honourable House have succeeded in their individual vocations; in their previous individual jobs, and that has earned them recognition, respect and the accolades for them to now be elevated to higher heights. On behalf of this House, we say to all of them hearty congratulations. I want to thank Honourable Members for unanimously endorsing the nominees. The President reposed lots of confidence in the nominees.

Honourable Members, we have no doubt judging by the performance we saw here of the former Deputy Minister of Finance, when he piloted the 2023 Appropriation Bill through the processes in this House that he has indeed carved for himself humble as he is. He is a notch in this government and indeed he has a place in the history of our country. We wish him well and we have no doubt he will continue to excel in his new position as the substantive Minister of Finance in the Republic of Sierra Leone. On behalf of this House, we congratulate all of you and well done *[Applause]*.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Honourable Members, I want to inform all of you that there will be a pre-legislative hearing on Monday, 16th January, 2023 in Committee Room 1, Parliament building at 10:00 a.m. on the [a] Work Permit Act 2023. [2] The Employment Act 2023. [3] Overseas Employment and Migrant Workers 2023.

ADJOURNMENT

*[The House rose at 1:15 p.m. and was adjourned to Tuesday, 17th January, at 2023 at
10:00 a.m.]*