



OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

[HANSARD]

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

SECOND SESSION -SECOND MEETING

THURSDAY, 14TH NOVEMBER, 2019.

SESSION – 2019/2020



OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMETARY DEBATES

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OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

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

Proceedings of the Sitting of the House
Held Thursday, 14TH November, 2019.

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THE CHAMBER OF PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE

Official Hansard Report of the Proceedings of the House

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

Thursday, 14 November, 2019.

I. PRAYERS

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

[The House met at 10:00a.m. in Parliament Building, Tower Hill, Freetown]

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

The House was called to Order

Suspension of S. O. 5[2]

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: Nothing can go on planet earth without due consideration to timing. Even in the Quran and the Bible, the creation of the world was based on timing and on the seventh day God rested. In the absence of a proper timing and compliance to timing it will not be good and as I said earlier, we are representatives of the people and Sierra Leone Parliament is **100%** Sierra Leone. We are supposed to be role models in this country. As humans, we are not an exception to disciplinary actions in the event of excess. We have constitutional disciplinary actions for absenteeism and you do not need to warn anybody on that, but for lateness, the S.Os give absolute powers to Mr Speaker which is the governing document for the Administration of this Parliament. Mr Speaker, there is also a Committee responsible for that as well. I advise that you sermon that Committee to further confirm with each other as to which measures to be taken. I insist that the timing must continue and the S.Os did not say Mr Speaker shall sit at 10:00a.m, but Parliament should start at 10:00a.m and if Mr Speaker sit, but Parliament cannot commence at 10:00a.m as stipulated then there must be a reason and that reason must be address.

HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I wish to amend the Order Paper to add item number 5 which is announcement of additional membership of Sessional Select Committees.

THE SPEAKER: We have a new item 5 added. Did I here you move? Any seconder?

HON. JOSEPH WILLIAMS-LAMIN: I so second Mr Speaker.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed To]

THE SPEAKER: Let us proceed.

II. CORRECTION OF VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS FOR THE PARLIAMENTARY SITTING HELD ON TUESDAY, 12TH NOVEMBER, 2019.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, we go through the Records of Votes and Proceedings for the Parliamentary Sitting held on Tuesday, 12th November 2019. We shall skip from Pages 1 through to Page 4. We start from Page 5. Any amendment or observations? Page 5? Page 6? Page 7? Page 8? Can someone please move?

HON. P.C ALHAJI KANDEH PARIKAWALLEH II: Mr Speaker, Point of Order. On Page 2, my name is Honourable P.C Alhaji Kande Parikawalleh II. Kande is not spelt as K-n-d-e-h, but K-a-n-d-e-h.

THE SPEAKER: Clerks, please take note and I hope this is the first and the last time that the Chief will be correcting his name. Chief, normally we do not do so, but I will entertain this particular correction because you are rising on it for the first time, but we expect the Clerks to ensure that the proper and correct names are recorded.

HON. BRIMA MANSARAY: Mr Speaker, I so move.

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON. NENNEH LEBBIE: I second the Motion.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed To]

[Record of Votes and Proceedings for the Parliamentary Sitting Held on Tuesday, 12th November, 2019 has been adopted as amended]

III. PAPER LAID

[i] HON. FRANCIS A. KAISAMBA- CHAIRMAN FINANCE COMMITTEE

HON. FRANCIS A. KAISAMBA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to lay on the Table of this noble House two reports:

First Report of the Finance Committee on its activities for the First Session of the Fifth Parliament 2018 to 2019; and

Second Report of the Committee on the request for waiver of customs and taxes for the procurement of medals for Insignia Awards and Uniformed Services by the Office of the President. [Applause]

[ii] HON. ALIMANY O KAMARA - CHAIRMAN COMMUNITY ON TECHNICAL AND HIGHER EDUCATION

[iii] HON. ALUSINE K. ALU-CONTEH - CHAIRMAN PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE ON SPORT

HON. ALUSINE K. ALU-CONTEH: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, with reference to Section 93 Sub-Section 3 of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone, the Parliamentary Committee on Sport inquired into the impasse in the Sierra Leone Boxing Association, activities of the Sierra Leone Football Association and the Sierra Leone Premier League. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as required by Section 73[3] of the Standing Order of Sierra Leone Parliament, I present the First Report of the First Session of the Fifth Parliament of the Second Republic of the Committee on Sport, dated July 2019 to this House. [Applause]

IV. BILL

THE ELECTRONIC TRANSACTIONS ACT, 2019.

INTRODUCTION AND FIRST READING

THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

MISS MAMADI GOBBEH KAMARA [*Deputy Minister of Information and Communication*]: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I move that the Bill entitled the Electronic Transactions Act, 2019 be read for the first time.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed To]

[The Bill entitled the Electronic Transactions Act 2019 has been read the first time]

SECOND READING

THE MINISTER: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I move that the Bill entitled the Electronic Transactions Act, 2019 be read for the second time. The electronic transaction law is to provide for the formal recognition of the legal effect of electronic transactions including electronic signature to provide for the admissibility of the electronic messages, in evidence to provide for the validity or enforceability of contact executed in electronic form and to provide for other related matters. At the moment, Sierra Leone has no consolidated laws that could be used in court for victims of electronic transactions to seek redress or for perpetrators of crimes committed electronically to be prosecuted. The Bench and Bar rely on other related legislation such as the Public Order Act which itself is out-dated and some aspect of the Sierra Leone Constitution to arbitrate or arraign matters requiring admissibility of electronics evidences. As a country migrate from or transition from analogue which deals mainly with paper trails to digital which requires technology there is need to have in place appropriate legislations to serve the purpose. This law when enacted will provide the remedy for non-admissibility of electronic evidences in our court which is what obtain right now. The law is divided into six parts and each of them dealing with the following thematic issues. Part one interprets various clauses of the Bill dealing with specific subject matters and it also provides for the application of the law, part two describe the legal effect of the electronic information and electronic transactions, part three provides for validity of electronic transactions which describes the time and place where the transaction occurs, part four makes provision for consumer protection, part five describe the liability of service providers and part six makes provision for the enactment of secondary or subsidiary legislation. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I move that the Bill entitled the electronic transactions Act be read for the second time.

[Question Proposed]

HON. SHEKU M. TURAY: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this Bill provide the bases for protection of customers/consumers involved in the electronic transactions, although it has not got some element of other aspect like cyber and hiking or what we

call computer or electronic crimes, but it provides the bases in which those elements could be captured within the Act itself like the electronic signatory which will provide the bases for identification and the execution of transaction. Mr Speaker, the Bill is not a controversial one, it is a new Bill that if acted upon will provide for all of us, will protect customers/consumers and also improve the effect of our electronic transaction in this country. What I will like to say is that as we discuss this the last time some colleagues raised some issues around which we were able to address and that could be done much more in the Committee stage, but I want to say that all of us in that meeting agreed that it is relevant at this moment to have this kind of Act so that our customers/consumers and those who provide services and goods through electronics means to be legalized and to be effective. I will not say much at this stage, but perhaps to respond to some of the issues that may come up with those who may want to strategically provide some elements of controversy within the Act itself, but I want to say to all of us especially the Government that it is very important for us to enact this Act so that it will be beneficial for the Government, the private sector, the customers/consumer themselves and everybody involved in the electronic transaction. It could be a new paradigm for us here, but like some countries such as Nepal, Tanzania and Uganda, we have seen a lot of programmes and analysis from those laws, the progress they have made in terms of electronic dealings. So, I want to make it brief that colleagues try as much as possible to enact this law so that our electronic system will become effective, relevant and approach the legal procedure. With that Mr Speaker, I thank you.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member for his contribution.

HON. HINDOLO M. GEVAO: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I consider this Bill a very good Bill for the justice system of electronic transaction and cyber offences or crimes. I feel very proud as a Sierra Leonean that for the first time Sierra Leone will be having something though not called an electronic evidence Act, but something that will permit Lawyers or prosecutors to use electronic evidence and tender them in court. There is nothing like an electronic evidence Act in Sierra Leone, this Act in Section 8 provides for the admissibility and evidential way of electronic information. What this Act is actually

going to do is, if you write something defamatory about me on Facebook or WhatsApp, this Act is not going to be limited to electronic commercial transaction, this Act will now make room for that Facebook information to be printed or presented before court in an electronic form. Before now, if you go to court they will ask you for the evidence, this is just an email, this is just a Facebook post, this is just a WhatsApp post, but with this Act if there is an evidence on social media, lawyer or prosecutor will be at liberty to tender it in court as evidence hence it passes the test of an electronic evidence Act and provide an information for electronic evidence purposes. It is also not just geared towards the transaction itself, it is also protecting us the customers. If colleagues tend to *[Undertone]* there is more protection for customers; I think it is in part four Section 13[A] which is *saying "the names of a natural person or the component name of the legal entity"* Section 13[1] says; *"a person engage in electronic commercial activity for the sale of goods or services shall enable the recipient of the goods or services to have easy and direct access in open standards to the following information [a] name [b] address [c] registration [d] tax [e] authorisation [f] professional regulation [g] self-regulated organisation"*. This is actually a very rich Act as far as commercial transactions are required. Most often and again, there have been instances where I will want to send **Le2mln** to Honourable Abdul Latif Sesay and the person who is actually sending the money mistakenly send it to Honourable Maada Hafiju Kanja, by this Act, you are able to trace the person to whom it was send because all the information are going to be recorded electronically and other means. For us to understanding this Act, we were actually able to have a Session in order to have an in-depth analysis and presentation of same. I know it is a very busy day colleagues but it will be a new dawn for Sierra Leone if this House passes this Bill into an Act. It will help the justices system, it will help the persecution of offences that are committed even beyond our borders because being a lawyer most often and again we have offences committed outside the jurisdiction of Sierra Leone. So, if we have such an Act, all the communications and the transactions between those investors, those Sierra Leoneans that are pertaining to those transactions could be tendered in court and you cannot say because I am a Sierra Leonean and the transaction took place in Guinea you cannot prosecute me in Sierra

Leone. With those evidences, those communication between that local investor and that international investor you can safely prosecute that person in the Sierra Leone jurisdiction and you can create investor confidence for them to know that their investment is protected by legal instrument. I beseech all of us to look at it and pass it as it will add value to our justice system and to the protection of customers/consumers in the electronic cash transfer. Thank you very much Mr Speaker for catching my eyes.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Hindolo Moiwo Gevao for his contribution. Yes! You have the Floor Honourable.

HON. JOSEPH WILLIAMS-LAMIN: Thank you Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Abdul Karim Kamara will follow. Are you asking for the Floor?

THE SPEAKER: Okay. The present Member speaking, after him Honourable Abdul Karim Kamara and then you in that order.

HON. JOSEPH WILLIAMS-LAMIN: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we are indeed in the 21st century and this electronic Bill that is in the House today is a timely one if we want to be part of the global family and also to make use of our effective facilities that are available in our society. It is so important that we have this Bill deliberated upon and possibly to pass into law by this Honourable House of Parliament in Sierra Leone. This has been the burning issue for our constituents on a daily bases that they are always putting their requests to us to make this facility available in our constituencies. I remember several of us have applied in this House to various institutions and service providers, but little did we have any protection in using the facility. Part five of this Bill is the liability of the service provider. For you to create any facility for an institution where people are very poor with mega resources, there must be a liability upon that service provider, but on many occasions especially the introduction of the electronic transfer money into our various places which has been the very perfect position because of our remote areas and because there is no banking system across the nation, it was a very timely intervention by many of these institutions, but I am sad to report to this House that many of the transactions have ended up in shambles, have ended up in the situation where by the sender of those mega resources could not reach to the

desired position and if we have such a Bill today in our possession and hopefully we will digest it and pass it into law, it will make a very huge difference in our society and will make an effective use of the transaction. But again, the service providers should take full responsibility because they are being paid for the services that they are providing in our communities. They cannot only provide the service and say that is the end of it, but they should have a full compensation scheme. I remembered a situation where the money was illegally dupe from my personal assistance and we try to trace that money, but all the service providers said that the money has been collected and in some part of the world, to be specific the United Kingdom [UK] they can trace the person, the outlet of where that money was received and the individual that received the money, but when you ask the service provider in our communities, they will say that sim card is out of order and that is it. They have gone out with many resources of our constituents and on that note, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will therefore call upon my colleagues to do all we could as Members of Parliament to pass this non-controversial Bill into an Act. I thank you Mr Speaker and Honourable Members.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member for his contribution. I think I have given an order of speakers? Honourable Abdul Karim, you have the Floor.

HON. ABDUL KARIM KAMARA: Yes Sir. Thank you very much Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Is it Kamara or Koroma?

HON. ABDUL KARIM KAMARA: Kamara. We are two of the same name.

THE SPEAKER: Who is the first and who is the second?

HON. ABDUL KARIM KAMARA: Well the one born on the 6th March is the first and I am born on the 7th March, but I am 059 and he is 069.

THE SPEAKER: Was it a coincident?

HON. ABDUL KARIM KAMARA: A very positive one Sir. Well, we look alike. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, indeed I will take the queue from where my colleague ended. This is not a controversial Bill, but we must signal the Bills that are necessary for

our stakeholders in the communication sector not to disclose because we are passing a Bill today into a law at the end of this deliberation, but in a country where sim card could be purchased at **Le500** around P-Z and crimes being perpetrated, I think this law need more to it than passing it now. We needed some stiff regulations in which National Telecommunications Commission [NATCOM] and the Ministry of Information will take into consideration. A sim card is necessary to have, but selling it along the streets as if somebody is buying pure water to drink is a threat to our very security as a nation and before we start to talk about some of these things, these are some of the things we would have first of all ratified and the stakeholders would have put strict measures in place. If you go to certain countries, to even ask for a sim card, they will ask you for your passport, valid ID cards etc but in Sierra Leone, a foreigner could jump Gbalamuya today to Kambia and buy a sim card without registering and may start making calls. You do not know the security implications and now we are passing a Bill in which we are talking about so many things. All these are fine ideas, but what is the security of our people who stand the risk to be duped when sim cards are not even registered.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, few days ago having used my Airtel Sim Cards for over five years, my sim card was blocked and they said the sim card is not registered but when I sent Airtel money, you can see my name. So even the mobile companies' data systems are not accurate and yet still we are passing a law today that talks about electronic transfer and we are talking about using or tendering some of these evidences in court. What is the risk level? I think we must start to address some of these issues. Again, we are also saying this will also help the judicial system in terms of tendering evidences, messages sent on WhatsApp etc. I hope that this is not a swift way politicians will use to suppress people who are powerless because today people complain all over the place and on social media that somebody has sent a wrong message about them. I hope this will not be a means by which we will get up in the morning and we hear ten or twenty people have been arrested for using social media. The security of the nation is very paramount Mr Speaker and some of these laws will help us attract not

just investors, but also build the investors' confidence in our country. There are certain times we enact laws in this Parliament, they are not just for us as Sierra Leoneans, but they also create an enabling platform by which we compete internationally and this is why most times when international ratings are out and Sierra Leone is always down, people think it is just the governance aspect, but it has to do with our laws and that is why we need to upgrade laws to meet with international bench marks. So a law like this we would not go against, but we are just saying to the service providers, the mobile companies that we still have places in Sierra Leone where we do not have network. Mr Speaker, I keep telling this House if I move now to my village, it take three months nobody will get me, my entire constituency is without mobile network. So, some of these laws are only meant for very few areas. You still go to places in Sierra Leone and interestingly I am at the centre of Kambia District. If you leave my constituency to Magbema, you go to Tonko that is far away have no network. I am not lobbying for NATCOM or the Ministry of Information to help me, but I am saying some of these laws will not solely affect my people directly, but what I am saying here Mr Speaker, let us put strict regulations in purchasing sim cards. Sim cards should not be sold at every corner of Sierra Leone as if it is a pure drinking water you will just buy, drink and go away. I can leave this Well now and buy a sim card call somebody and I cause problems and throw away the phone and the sim card, nobody can identify who is calling. So, if we are saying mobile companies want to sell sim cards, we are not interested in the cost, but we are saying that let there be an outlet where the person will register and the registration process is thorough to a point that you can trace the person at any time. I hope that this Bill will not be used to supress the poor and vulnerable young people who are social media users. Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member for his contribution. I really want to take special cognisance of what the Honourable Member have said and drawn our attention to. I myself read this Bill early this morning and I was not so convinced about the penalties for various scams that could easily take place in this country, I do not see penalties been provided for scammers whom might want to take advantage of the

situation, but I do hope that the Honourable Minister is taking note and she will address some of these issues in her responses. I now take the next speaker.

HON. REV. HORACE E. VINCENT: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am Honourable Rev. Horace Vincent of Constituency 111, Western Area Rural.

THE SPEAKER: Wonderful! Congratulations, you are about to make your maiden speech *[Laughter]*.

HON. REV. HORACE E. VINCENT: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am of the opinion that this Bill is timely as we live in a global world, everything is going digital. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, over the years, we have been having huge amount of cyber and electronics crimes. We are faced with situations where the hands of the Judiciary have been tied behind their back and they could not take necessary or appropriate actions. Mr Speaker, as you said earlier, I have the same observation while I was going through this Bill that the Bill has not make provision as to the penalties which I believe the Honourable Minister and the drafters will take note of. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this Bill will give a way wherein people that have been using the social media to defame the characters of noble men and women in society, this Bill will salvage that situation. Mr Speaker, you will observe that over time the social media have been misused and abused because people do it with impunity and I believe this Bill will salvage that impunity. Mr Speaker, we can see around these days that even the commercial markets are going electronic or digital. Most of the banking transactions and business transactions are done electronically and we are having a lot of crimes going on within the business world. This Bill needs a little bit of amendment as to its penalties, if that is done Mr Speaker, then the Judiciary will be able to handle and tackle the issue of crime; both nationally and internationally. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to urge Honourable Members of this House to enact this Bill. I thank you very much Mr Speaker *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: Again, I want to take the opportunity to thank the Honourable Member for his contribution and more particularly for the observation that there seems to be several provisions relating to penalties in this Bill and we must as a House take note of

the fact that all around the world, scammers now seem to dominate the cyber space. Before now, you never heard of scammers in the cyber space, now they are almost in control and we really want the Minister who is piloting this Bill through to pay due regard to the comments that are so far being made. I see a porosity of provision relating to the kind of penalties that scammers should be subjected to. Other countries are already ahead in that area, so I hope when we come to Committee Stage some attention will be paid to this. I will give you preference as Whip of the opposition. You were not around your seat was empty.

HON. HASSAN A. SESAY: But I am Acting Leader right now Sir *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: Let us acknowledge his new title.

HON. HASSAN A. SESAY: Thank you Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: But it carries responsibility.

HON. HASSAN A. SESAY: Very much so Mr Speaker, I was going to stand on the issue you just raised.

THE SPEAKER: I will not want to see empty seats on your side of the aisle at all.

HON. HASSAN A. SESAY: Thank you Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Now that you combine the two offices; you are the Chief Whip and Acting Leader of the Opposition.

HON. HASSAN A. SESAY: Thank you. Mr Speaker, let me first of all address the issue you just raised about the empty seats across the aisle, not only on one side.

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: Yes Mr Speaker, just an observation based on what you have ruled. As Acting Leader of the Opposition now and the procedure is they wrap up the debate, but with your permission he can speak in both capacities twice, but that is with your permission. On that note, he can continue now, but if you may not allow him to wrap up then I am worried if he starts now, but you have all the powers to allow him speak twice.

THE SPEAKER: I am just worried because frankly let us look at what S.O [32]12 says, "*no Member shall speak more than once on any question except...*" of course and I do not think he can speak twice.

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: Except with your leave which you have?

THE SPEAKER: Do not tempt me [*Laughter*], I do not like to abuse power, I like to use it to good effect and not to abuse it. For that reason I will ask the Acting Leader of the Opposition to give up his right to be called upon later.

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: Accepted Sir.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. So you have the Floor.

HON. ABDUL L. SESAY: Thank you very much Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker of course we already know that technology is taking over the World reason being that we cannot dwell in the past or the dark ages, we have to move forward as a country and therefore this Bill is very important because it is not only talking about electronic transaction, it is also talking about information transactions. It means that as a country, we have to ensure that we rise up for such a change. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this Bill is a very important, one reason being that we have seen several instances wherein people have to travel from afar to come and pen down their signatures on a document, but for us having this Bill, I believe you can be in America and still be able to use the electronics means to pen your signature on any document which is a very good move. But again, when I think about it rationally, do we have the required security to secure those regulations? We have lot of scammers all over the place, we have people trying to beat the system at any giving time. Do we have the required Security? A person's signature is just like a person's life and if somebody access that signature, the person is finish because he can access your account and he can also access a lot of information that he wants to access. Do we have the required security apparatus in place? Do we have the system to detect whether the signature a person sent is the right signature? Do we have those detectors? We cannot just be following the trend, but we have to look back to know if it is safe for our people, if it is time for our people, do we have the

requisite knowledge? Do we have the expertise, do we have the professionals to do the job? Most of us have heard about instances where people pen down their signatures, other people forge it and most times they succeed in doing it. I have a colleague here whose daughter forge his signature and she succeeded in withdrawing his salary. So, having it electronically stored, it could be very dangerous if we cannot control it, but again we cannot be looking at the bad aspect while we overlook the realities. For far too long we have tagged on paper and it is good we go digital. It is fine, it is great, but again let us look at the internet connectivity because there are times you have communicated with your counterpart that I will send my signature soon in the next ten minutes, but because of the poor connectivity, you cannot send that signature on time. I think we need to empowered Sierra Leone Cable Limited [SALCAB] to ensure that their services are been used not only by service providers, but us the final consumers should be able to access high internet connectivity because to be honest with you, you cannot use it if you do not have proper connectivity because by the time you finish, you upload and transmit, the time the recipients download and received the document, it has past the stipulated time. So, it is good for the Ministry to look into it again, and then also while transmitting these electronic signatures to computer service providers. When you transmit information by a service provider, most times those service providers have a copy of your message, how are you going to tackle that? We have seen several instances wherein the Government or an individual will request for certain information from a service provider and they do provide such information, so it means somebody can as well purport to be whom he opt to be, request for certain information like my signature and the service provider will definitely provide that signature and at the end of the day we do not know what that person is going to use my signature for. I am sure that NATCOM do have a key role to play in this situation and again I think they have to look at ways to prompt those service providers that if such happens there is punishment that you should face.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me zoom in to the Banks. Banks are supposed to be protecting clients' information. We have seen situations wherein institutions or

individuals request for certain information from Banks without any due diligence followed, they just disclose that information to that individual and we have seen such. People request for bank statements from past Government Officials, and they gave those information to the people that requested for them. You have to look into it again Madam Minister because this is a very critical thing we are playing with.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let us go into another aspect of electronic information. We have seen several instances wherein you sent in an order, for instance let us say Sierra Leone Stamp to be honest with you, the products that you order for is not what they will sent to you. We have to put in security measures because no sooner this thing come to effect, definitely we will be having shops wherein if I have my grapefruit and mangoes to sell, I will post that information on website or any other platform so that people can access those information, but if I fail to give the correct product to customer what is going to happen? How are you going to register those virtual shops? It is very key because we cannot be just following the trend just because America is doing it so Sierra Leone should be part of it. We have to ensure that we protect our people because things are very difficult for somebody to send one thousand Leones to an individual and nothing comes out of it. Most of the Honourable Members here are victims of scammers. We have seen wherein somebody will call another person and say this is the Clerk of Parliament, Honourable Paran Umar Tarawally, I am having a break down please send me **Le1mln** and maybe because you do not have the number of Honourable Paran Umar Tarawally, you will tend to send the money. How are you going to detect the individual who scam the person? Madam Minister, I think you have a very big task ahead of you. I will encourage colleagues to pass this into law, but again you have to do your own home work, we are ready to help you as Honourable Members of Parliament, we will come to the Committee Stage and we will see what will happen. I thank you very much Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member. Again, the more I listen, the more concern I am. He has raised a very salient points. Not too long ago we all heard about what was alleged in America relating to the Presidential Elections there, that hackers

where able to alter, to hack and change election results that benefited a particular individual who is now in power there and that controversy has lingered on ever since. We do not know what kind of safeguards this Bill has introduced to protect the system here against hackers, but assuming there are inadequacies in this Bill, Madam Minister, you can take it that this Parliament is the possibility of your Ministry coming back before too long with an amendment to this Bill. But we need to move on with the rest of the world we all agreed, on that but what we have captured here, the good aspect, but not enough safeguards against the bad aspect, I do not see them. If we are not able to resolve that at Committee Stage today, then take it is not an objection to what you have done. But our eyes should be open to possibilities of an early amendment to this Bill or to this Act when it is passed. Yes the Honourable Member in the bowtie.

HON. SAHR CHARLES: Thank you very much Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, *[Interruption]*

THE SPEAKER: A man, who seem to be the embodiment of sartorial elegance *[Laughter]*.

HON. SAHR CHARLES: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the electronic transaction Bill that we are about to enact today is very important and as previous speakers have said, the nature of this Bill or the nature of electronic transaction itself is critical and is something that requires keen attention. In the area of Section 8 of this particular Bill which talks about the admissibility and evidential weight of electronic information is very key. In other words, when this Bill is enacted today into law, whatever information or transaction that occurs electronically has the effect of any information; that is written or oral. Therefore, I believe most of us have become victims of electronics scams. Sometimes you will just sit and receive calls that are deviated without any control. This is keen and we have to be mindful of that. So, in light of that, I want to still queue with my colleagues that are asking in as much as we do not want to delay the passage of this Bill, but it is necessary that we unearth some of the underlining and critical issues like the use of electronic transaction as evidence in the court of law is a strong concern. I will also go to the area or the validity of electronic transaction. The identification of

the sender is key. So many people out there will create various accounts in prominent individuals name and at the end when once this Bill is pass into law, those information can be used as coming from those individuals. So, I ask that the Ministry put more mechanism in place and come back to this House to help guide the system, for the system itself to have effect. If measures are not put in place to curb some of these things that we are raising it will be very difficult in as much as we want to be in line with international best practices that is happening almost everywhere across the globe.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there is another issue I want to bring to the attention of the Minister which talks about the time and place of the message. Sometimes you send messages, they do not reach at the time you send them and if for instance I send a message from the House of Parliament and it does not reach the recipient until the time I get from here to probably Kailahun or to Kono, then you start to question and that is why the service providers also have a key role to play in the receipt of such messages which talks about the acknowledgement of receipt of information that has been transacted. In the situation where the recipient failed to acknowledge the receipt of the information according to this Bill within seven [7] days then it has effect. In the case wherein the recipient is out of coverage for a month, what effect would this have? So, these are some of the things I will want to bring to the attention of the Minister for consideration, but by the time we come to the Committee Stage as Mr Speaker rightly said we will bring out some of these issues and see how we can move forward, but I believe this is a non-controversial Bill and I believe this Bill will protect all of us especially we the politicians. So many people out there are using information to smear our images, I believe with this Bill been enacted into law it will help us, but again I must caution that as politicians, we must also not take advantage of it. Recently, we heard of an electronic transaction of an SMS that led to an incarceration of a journalist so, I just want to see that *[Interruption]*.

HON. JOSEPH WILLAMS-LAMIN: Point of Order Sir? I stand on Standing Order 32[6]

THE SPEAKER: 32[6]

HON. JOSEPH WILLAMS-LAMIN: Yes sir, the point he is referencing.

THE SPEAKER: Have your seat, Honourable Member, please continue.

HON. SAHR CHARLES: Thank you very much Mr Speaker. I am aware of Standing Order 32[6] very well and I am very much aware of what I say. What we are saying here is just a matter of caution on both the masses out there, those who some people might tend to use to damage our image and us as political figures must make sure we make use of this opportunity in the right way and it will serve us as well. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I implore all colleagues Members of Parliament here present that we take our time devoid of all political interest and see how we can scrutinise this Bill thoroughly and unearth some of these issues because we all know the use of electronic communication, how it has led to so many things in the country. So, we must be careful how we bring out the issues and see how we can address them. I thank you
[Applause].

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member for his very valuable contribution. Before I call on any other speaker, I think certain point need to be underscored. All the concerns expressed thus far are very legitimate, but I do not know whether this is the right place, I do not mean Parliament; I do not know whether this Bill is the right place to address some of the concerns that have been expressed. If you look at the Bill, the main essence is to address certain lacunas in the law of evidence that presently exist in the court system. It seeks to fill gaps in the area of electronic information, maybe you should let that go for now, but simultaneously, the Ministry should be working on coming back to this House with another Bill to address cyber security and the kind of safeguards that this country will need in that realm, but for what this Bill seeks to address it is good in my opinion and I think we should let it go. I will like to hear what the Minister has to say, provided that we are assured that some work is been done currently in the area of cyber security.

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: Before that Mr Speaker, can I be heard?

THE SPEAKER: With that, maybe I will try to wind-up this debate because frankly the Bill is not a controversial one and we should try and pass it as expeditiously as possible. So, I will take Honourable Daniel Brima Koroma and then we wind-up the debate.

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: No, I do not intend to debate.

THE SPEAKER: Okay.

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: It was just in response to your concerns raised, but we have conferred the Leader of Government Business. That issue of court system that this Bill is trying to address in fact is the most critical because once the wrong information from a wrong source is tendered in court, the court has no option, that makes it more critical and the justice service in this country even if it is not done properly we have got so many experiences even from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission [TRC] reports that those are some of the reasons for our eleven [11] years of senseless war, for me personally it is that court system that requires better attention in this Bill and we did it in consultation because we believe this is Parliament, is it not political party affairs. So, on that note, we conferred with Leader of Government Business and we agreed that we are to work better to do more justice to this Bill when we reach to that stage. I do not want to put the cart before the horse because he warned me yesterday, but it may not be concluded today, but that has been negotiated by consultation it is not a-one-man business, not what I feel or what he feels; is what we feel that is better. So, please Mr Speaker, on the concluding note, there is an issue and we want to give room to better justice to this Bill otherwise the court system, I am sorry the Honourable Hindolo Moiwo Gevao is not here, he is my senior in court system that makes it even more critical. Judges are not cyber experts, they deal with what is before them, but how the things go around until it reaches the bench for his or her decision, you cannot tell and if you say you make it contingent on another Bill, we do not know how soon that Bill will come. So it is better *[Interruption]*.

THE SPEAKER: No, I am not saying it is contingent; this addresses a particular set of issues where there is a serious gap as you rightly say, in the court system. So, this Bill seeks to fill those gaps for now, but this does not mean that the other issues which are

in fact the other side of the coin so to speak because this addresses only one aspect. The evidence aspect that is so necessary in the court system, but then the safeguards of the individual. Maybe that should come in another Bill instead of this one. If you want to lump the two together, you either delay it or you get it mixed up.

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: No, we cannot put it together.

THE SPEAKER: We cannot, well I am glad you acknowledge that.

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: Definitely we cannot put it together.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you.

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: Mr Speaker, one question that we may ask as Members of Parliament *[Interruption]*.

THE SPEAKER: But you said you are not debating.

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: No! I said I would be responding to your concerns not by way of that normal debating; I was responding to your concerns, as to whether this Bill must be concluded today, you have the final say.

THE SPEAKER: I want us to wear two different lenses here; one lens is to look at the law of evidence and the gaps that this Bill seeks to fill, the other lens will look at cyber security and the very serious lacunas that either exist, that should be address by another Bill entirely, and the sooner it is brought to this House the better. That is what I am saying.

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: That is obvious. The question here is, are we convince that by doing further justice to this Bill by way of committal will make it better? If we are really convinced that in any case committal of this Bill will make the Bill better then why not go in that direction? If we believe that committal will make the Bill better and as a responsible Parliament, we always intend to make our work better that is why there is provision for that and we consulted each other.

HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS: Mr Speaker, I have no intention of disrupting the Honourable Member, but please let us just focus on the debate, when we get to that stage we would handle it. Thank you.

HON. ALUSINE KANNEH: Thank you Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, the day before yesterday you raised a concern in this Well concerning the two television stations operating in Freetown or nationwide. One of the television stations that operate under the Government is the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Cooperation [SLBC] and I believe the Ministry of Information supervise them. We used to have a live broadcast in Parliament when proceedings are going on, but we find out that as you raised that, the day before yesterday, that is not happening at all these days. So, since the Minister is now before us, and even though the Africa Young Voices Television [AYV] is a private television station, but the SLBC is Government owned, we are also craving the indulgence of the Minister to please put mechanisms in place because that is the concern of Parliament and we want them to broadcast our proceedings live. I thank you.

THE SPEAKER: I am sure the Minister will respond when the time comes. Let us wind up the debate. Acting Leader of the Opposition, you have the Floor.

HON. HASSAN A. SESAY: Thank you Mr Speaker, the Bill like almost every colleague has said is a non-controversial one. Of course, we are now graduating from analogue to digital which makes it very relevant that we move with time. It is long overdue, but I also believe that there are other stakeholders who must be key in this exercise. We talked about the area of privacy wherein peoples' private information might be compromised by people who are more electronically knowledgeable. You have professional hackers who hack into computers, phones, to get certain relevant information that might not be or supposed to be compromised, people who are masters of dealing with this issue because they know computers more than other people do. Now if that is the case, like I said earlier on, is not a controversial Bill, we will support the Ministry of Information to make Sierra Leone better in terms of the information systems because when you travel to other countries you find out that they are more and well advanced in these areas, of course, like moving from analogue to digital is long overdue with the

SLBC and other institutions. But we also need institutions like NATCOM to be key in terms of monitoring and let us empowered NATCOM. In fact, that brings me to another issue. There was a company called TELTAC that was contracted to provide data system and they were paid huge sums of money, but that is something the Committee on Information will address because we started talking to NATCOM about that and that data centre would have helped this process tremendously and that was going to create the platform or the environment that is now needed by the Ministry to ensure that this Bill is in place because if that data centre have been made available to NATCOM, probably the Minister would have been getting a smoother ride than they are now getting.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, talking about the banking system, I know of a situation wherein an individual account was accessed and he lost **24 thousand Euros** through Ecobank because people were able to access the information through computer banking or internet banking. Now, all of those things must be taking care of, that is why I agreed that another Bill might be on the way coming that will address the cyber security areas, but also before that Bill comes, we know how long it takes for a Bill to go through the Attorney General's office, the Draftsman coming to this House etc. we agreed, but before that Mr Speaker, we agreed that, that gap might be exploited by those people who know very well that if we are not smart, they are going to pull the rug under us. Mr Speaker, that is why I agreed with everything that have been said about a Bill that would be coming after this one but I want to move that we commit this Bill to the Legislative Committee so that we 'dot the I's and 'cross the Ts' to ensure that before it comes back to this Well, everything has been done before even getting the other Bill that we are expecting to protect individuals. We agreed and we are not going to stop this Bill because it is one way through which we are going to improve overall performance, and try to make our country more paperless because through electronics transactions, we will not need too much stationary like we need now. We also must be aware that we have issues between Sierratel and SALCAB. Sierratel is claiming that SALCAB is doing some of the job that they are supposed to be doing all those things

because it will be highly dependent on internet connectivity and if that happens, we need to strengthen all those institutions that work around that particular environment. Of course, the Ministry is right in bringing such a Bill, it is long overdue, but now that is here, you cannot say yesterday was better than today, but let us have it now, rather than delaying it any further. But I also want to say let us commit it to the Legislative Committee so that more work will be done to ensure that the Minister get what she deserves from this House Mr Speaker. I thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you Acting Chief Whip of the Opposition who combines with the role of Acting Leader. Leader of Government Business, you have the Floor.

HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank my colleagues for a very brilliant debate. As most of our colleagues have just said this Bill is a non-controversial Bill, even though lot of our colleagues tend to mix this Bill with the Cyber Security Bill that will be coming to this House. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this Bill according to the memorandum of objects and reasons with your permission I read *"the object of this Bill is to provide for the formal recognition of the legal effect of the electronic transaction including electronic signatures to provide for the admissibility of electronic messages in evidence to provide for the validity or enforceability of contracts executed in electronic form and to provide for other related matters."* Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, a lot of electronic transactions are already taking place in this country, and I am sure even some Honourable Members are involved in electronics transactions, but as we sit in this House now, there is no law covering those transactions. So, if anything goes wrong S.O 2 "nar buf case" because there is no law. This particular Bill is simply trying to give legal effect to those transactions that most of us are already involved with. I therefore will call my Honourable colleagues to please move on with it and I can assure you Honourable Members, and Honourable Leader of Opposition that we do not need to commit this Bill to the Legislative Committee, we can do all necessary corrections right now at the Committee stage, and ensure that we come out with a very strong legal instrument. My only appeal and I believe the Honourable Speaker will also make similar appeal is for the Minister to ensure that the

concerns that have been raised by the Honourable Members are taken into consideration as soon as possible for the Cyber-crimes Bill to be presented to this House because I believe once we have that Bill, that is definitely going to take care of all the concerns that have been raised by Honourable Members and like a colleague of mine was just chatting with me not too long ago saying “yes the Cyber Security Bill is coming but when?” Mr Speaker, I want us to ensure and to make it mandatory for the Ministry of Information to present that Bill to this House in the next three months. With that Mr Speaker, I will call on Honourable Members to support this Bill and to move to the Committee stage. I thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Leader of Government Business. Madam Minister, a lot has been said, favour this House now with your responses.

THE MINISTER: Thank you very much Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me just add a word or two to what the Leader of Government Business just mentioned about the Bill. The world is a global market and I am sure a good number of us seated here, Honourable Members have been engaged one way or the other in doing business electronically and as the Leader of Government Business rightly mentioned, there is no law covering those transactions, anything might go wrong and should anything go wrong, you have to leave with the consequences because as it is, there is no law that covers those transactions. So, what this Bill seeks to address like he rightly mentioned is to be able to bring forward whatever evidence you may have in doing those transactions and they can be admissible in the court of law. Now I will speak to the issue of security, but before I do let me just mention also that the Bill is also one of several others that relates to electronic evidences. The law on cyber security is on its way Mr Leader of Government Business, it will not take up to three months as you suggested, we are about wrapping up that one and we will definitely bring it to this Honourable House. The Cyber-crime law will make provision for the establishment of computer intelligence response teams for various sectors such as banking, security etc. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Government is collaborating with the Council of Europe to build internal capacities on Cyber Security, this include training of personnel

across the ICT Governance sector. Under the global initiative against Cyber-crimes, a dedicated laboratory will also be establish to analyse electronic records so this should be able to speak to the issue of security raised by some Members of this Honourable House.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, someone ask a question about or made a point about having poor internet connectivity and therefore I would like to quickly say that this Honourable House has approved a loan agreement from the Exim-Bank from China for the second face of the fibre infrastructure that will enhance nationwide connectivity including last mile solutions; meaning that wherever the fibre cable passes will be able to connect internet to that particular area. The UADF regulation is already in this House which will provide infrastructure to certain areas.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, one Honourable Member also was asking about the issue of Sim registration. I want to quickly add that this is on-going, nowadays I am sure a good number of us in this Honourable House would have received text messages from mobile network operators asking you to register your sim so that is on-going and these days you cannot walk into a shop to buy a sim card without having an ID card to be registered so that you may be able to get a sim card. So all of these are things that we are doing in collaboration with our partners to ensure that these issues raised in this Honourable House are really addressed. So we are ahead in some of these issues and we take note of all the points that have been raised by all of you and we appreciate all of them, but let me just add that we are on top of it as a Ministry. We are working with our partners to ensure that we provide the necessary and conducive atmosphere for all of us to be able to benefit from what we do as Ministry of Information and Communications. Mr Speaker, most of the questions actually hinges on security and in that particular aspect, I want to allay the fears of this Honourable House that the issue of security is something we consider and ever since steps had been taken by the Ministry to address it. So on that note Mr Speaker, I want to move that the Bill entitled electronic transaction Act, 2019 be read the second time.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much Madam Minister.

HON. HASSAN A. SESAY: Mr Speaker,

THE SPEAKER: I am sure it is a matter of great moment that must have prompted the Acting Leader of the Opposition to stop me mid-flight. Be that as it may, let me continue.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed To]

[The Bill entitled, the Electronic Transaction Act, 2019 being an Act to provide for the formal recognition for the legal effect of electronic transactions including electronic signatures to provide for the admissibility of electronic messages in evidence to provide for the validity and enforceability of contracts executed in electronic form and to provide for other related matters has been read the second time.]

HON. HASSAN A. SESAY: Mr Speaker, I stand on S.O 51[1]. Mr Speaker, I move that the Bill entitled the Electronic Transaction Act, 2019, be committed to the Legislative Committee.

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON. AMADU KANU: Mr Speaker, I so second

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed To]

HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS: Mr Speaker, our colleagues since they have insisted that we go to the Legislative Committee, we will *[Interruption]*.

THE SPEAKER: Let me hear, I really want to hear both sides on this. This Bill is urgent, no question about that, it is non-controversial, and it addresses certain gaps in a law of evidence in court at the present time. As we have heard from most of the speakers, the Cyber Security aspect is being currently addressed by the Ministry and they have assured us that within the next three months a Bill will be brought to this House to deal with that issue, that being the case and now that I know Members to my left want to go to Legislative Committee stage, I was just wondering how long you need for that.

HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS: Mr Speaker, like the Honourable Member Daniel Koroma said earlier, they had spoken to me about this and I explained to them the urgency of this particular Bill, so I will suggest that the Committee meet immediately after this sitting and the Report to be ready at our next adjourned date.

THE SPEAKER: Before I rule on that, Leader please come let us consult about the next adjourned date. Honourable Acting Leader please come. In keeping with both the letter and spirit of the Bo Declaration which as you know is under-pined by the need for regular consultations, I have just complied by inviting both the Leader of Government Business and the Acting Leader of the Opposition. Now, we have come to certain understandings, we will commit the Bill to the Legislative Committee, but then by failing to proceed with it today is going to crowd our time table, our agenda for next week, but we have been able to compromise normally, the debate on the Budget requires a five days period, that will be shorten now, we are thinking of shortening that to maybe three days and then that will give us room to manoeuvre, and in those three days, what it means please do not come here with long speeches for those three days. Try and look over your contributions over the weekend. I think Honourable Abdul Kargbo is smiling, I can see him smiling and the Sheik too is smiling. Sheik will spare us quoting from the Bible, the Quran, the Torah and whatever in those three days, so that we will be able to sit complete within the time that is available to the House right now. So on that understanding, this Bill stands committed to the Legislative Committee, we shall take it on Tuesday when we will take it to finality.

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: Yes Mr Speaker, May I be heard?

THE SPEAKER: Yes.

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: On that note, we are all aware that it is the responsibility of the Committees; both Legislative and Information Communications.

THE SPEAKER: Yes, of course.

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: I am not Chairman on either of them, so I am constrain to announce.

HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS: You are Acting Chairman.

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: Okay. Thank you very much Sir. On that note, I suggest that both Committees; Members of Information Committee and Members of Legislative Committee to meet tomorrow Friday, 15th November, 2019 at 11:00a.m, this is services to Sierra Leone, a service to this country. Of course NATCOM, your attendance is a must.

HON. HASSAN A. SESAY: NATCOM?

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: Yes, is a must. Information Ministry, the attendance of the technical expert is a must and we take attendance especially for the Ministry Department and Agencies [MDAs]. SALCAB, the attendance of the technical expert is a must and we will take attendance please [*Undertone*] I am suggesting, subject to the approval of Mr Speaker that SALCAB, please be present and the technical staff at NATCOM please be present. Ministry of Information and Communication technical expert please be present.

THE SPEAKER: Very well.

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: Tomorrow at 11:00a.m.

THE SPEAKER: Okay. Announcement, Leader of Government Business. Thank you very much Madam Minister and well done. Hope to see you next week.

ANNOUNCEMENT

[Announcement of Additional Members to Sessional Select Committees]

HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I move that this Honourable House approve the following Members to various Committees.

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Ibrahim Tawa Conteh

Chairman

Hon. Alpha Amadu Bah

Deputy Chairman

Hon. Abu Kemokai

Member

Hon. Momoh Bockarie	Member
Hon. Samuel G. Panda	Member
Hon. Veronica K. Sesay	Member
Hon. Yusuf Mackery	Member
Hon. Edward George	Member
Hon. Abdul Kargbo	Member
Hon. Kusan Sesay	Member
Hon. Abdul Karim Kamara	Member
Hon. Hajaratu F. Samura	Member
Hon. Abdul T. Kamara	Member
Hon. David Aiah S. Kassegbama	Member
Hon. P.C Sahr Y Konlandary Mbriwa II	Member
Hon. Hassan Sankoh	Member
Hon. Alusine Kanneh	Member

THE SPEAKER: Mr Leader, you meant Honourable Abdul Karim the younger brother of [059]?

HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS: The Opposition Chief Whip and Acting Leader will address that.

COMMITTEE ON GENDER AND CHILDREN'S AFFAIRS

Hon. Zainab Catherine Tarawally	Chairman
Hon. Alice J. Kumabeh	Deputy Chairman
Hon. Alimamy O. Kamara	Member
Hon. Dominic J. Lavalie-Tshombe	Member
Hon. Haja Miatta Amara	Member

Hon. Alusine Marrah	Member
Hon. Cecilia M. Bangura	Member
Hon. John Charles Conteh	Member
Hon. James Ozan Tholley	Member
Hon. Ibrahim Tawa Conteh	Member
Hon. Josephine Mackieu	Member
Hon. Bernadette Wuyatta Sandy	Member
Hon. Dickson M. Rogers	Member
Hon. Emmanuel Sahr Gbekie	Member
Hon. Paul Saa Sam	Member
Hon. P.C Haja Bintu Fatmata Meama Kajue Koroma	Member

COMMITTEE ON WORKS

Hon. Alex Rogers	Deputy Chairman
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COMMITTEE ON LANDS

Hon. Paul S. Sam	Deputy Chairman II
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COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

Hon. Ibrahim Tawa Conteh	Member
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COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Hon. Lahai Marah	Member
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COMMITTEE ON APPOINTMENTS AND PUBLIC SERVICE

Hon. Moses B Jorkie	Member
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COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Hon. Alie Ibrahim Kamara

Member

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, I said it clearly that the Abdul Karim Kamara mentioned is Abdul Karim Kamara the younger one of [059].

HON. ABDUL KARIM KAMARA: Mr Speaker S.O 23 Sir,

THE SPEAKER: Yes

HON. ABDUL KARIM KAMARA: For most of us living in the East, water situation in Freetown is becoming very disturbing *[Interruption]*.

THE SPEAKER: No, we have not reach that stage yet. I thought that you wanted to say something in relation to your name. Any seconder?

HON. VERONICA K. SESAY: I so second Mr Speaker.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed To]

[Additional Membership to Sessional Select Committees as announced by the Leader of Government Business have been Approved]

THE SPEAKER: Do you have any further announcement?

HON. VERONICA K. SESAY: Yes Mr Speaker, S.O 23.

THE SPEAKER: Okay.

HON. VERONICA K. SESAY: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we all know that all work and no play make us dull so therefore, as women in this noble House, we have decided to get a fundraising luncheon sale tomorrow at 1:00a.m. Please make it a point of duty to go and enjoy the natural food from this country. If you want European dishes, they are available, if you want African dishes, they are also available. If Members are interested, please meet us in Room 104 of the New Building for further information. Thank you very much.

HON. ABDUL KARIM KAMARA: Mr Speaker, S.O 23 Sir.

THE SPEAKER: Yes.

HON. ABDUL KARIM KAMARA: Mr Speaker, I want to draw the attention of this House to the current situation of water shortage in the city. Mr Speaker, in the east end of Freetown, the crisis is becoming so worrisome and this is not just because water is not available, but if you go to some parts in the west of Freetown you will see pipes being destroyed during road construction, they are still not repaired and it is causing so much problems for Guma Valley. Mr Speaker, through this House, I want to call on the attention of the Committee of Water Resources with the new vibrant Chairman being appointed to have a meeting with Guma Valley and to see how best these problems could be solved within the shortest possible time. Thank you very much.

HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to call on Members of the Committee on Appointments and Public Service to please attend a very important meeting tomorrow at 11:00a.m to interview the new nominees of His Excellency the President. Thank you.

HON. SAHR CHARLES: Mr Speaker,

THE SPEAKER: Yes Honourable.

HON. SAHR CHARLES: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to bring to the attention of this House the *[Interruption]*.

THE SPEAKER: No, it is not you that I called.

HON. SAHR CHARLES: Okay.

HON. ABDULAI D. SESAY: Mr Speaker, I stand with a heavy heart over an incident which happened in Parliament on Thursday, 7th November, 2019. We had a very long day and then my colleague and I went up to the Administrative Building to one office. After we left the office, I was with my colleague and I asked him to look after my bag then I went to the rest room, I came back and took the bag home. In the evening I had some visitors that I wanted to help with some money as transport fare, just to open my bag and realised **Le8mIn** and **\$8,000** was stolen from my bag and the money was to purchase some drugs. I contacted Mr Speaker and my colleague that I was with, unfortunately, the time I left my bag with him, he went to his office without taking the

bag and somebody came in and took the money. This is very unfortunate because this is an Honourable institution and unfortunately we do not have any cameras in the New Building that we could use to trace the perpetrator and I think this is very crucial for this House of Parliament to see that security measures are put in place because we are no longer safe. This **\$8,000** was meant to procure drugs, medical supplies for the clinic and it has deprived thousands of patients that were supposed to benefit from those drugs. Mr Speaker, this is the reason why I was not here on Friday during the Budget Speech because I felt very devastated and I never expected such to happen in this noble House. Thank you Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member. This is a matter that I am sure the entire membership of this House deeply regrets that something of that nature should happen in this House. You have our sympathy for what has happened to you and I will consult with the Clerk going forward to see what measures we can put in place to prevent such nefarious activity taking place again, but you have the sympathy of this House certainly for the great loss you have suffered.

HON. REV. HORACE E. VINCENT: Mr Speaker, I rise on S.O 23 Sir.

THE SPEAKER: Yes.

HON. REV. HORACE E. VINCENT: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to bring to the attention of this Honourable House an unfortunate incident happening within my constituency, which is Constituency 111 with specific reference to a community called Hasting Wharf. About three months ago, officials from the Ministry of Lands went to that community under the pretext of repossessing Government land. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, they further went with military personnel to that community, a citizen and an owner of a house was forcefully taken out of his house and the military officers occupied the said house. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members to the extent that, two weeks ago, seven gunshots were heard within that community. According to the Military, they were repossessing the land. But what is interesting Mr Speaker, is the way that they are repossessing the land. They will take a land from Mr 'A' today and tomorrow morning they will come with somebody else as the new owner of the land

and I consider that as a recipe for chaos. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want you also to know that these military officers to which I have evidences are really causing mayhem within that community. Civilians are being beaten, their materials, tools are destroyed by these military officers within that community. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I have made a written report to the Minister of Lands to which I had sent copies to the Committees in Parliament and I want this issue in the interest of peace and citizens living within that community to be properly addressed sir. Thank you very much Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: On behalf of this House, I will refer this particular matter to the Select Committee on Lands and Housing and also to the Committee on Defence. The Chairman is not here, where is he? I will want him to be informed please. I will want this issue to be dealt with, with the utmost urgency, not later than tomorrow.

HON. SAHR CHARLES: Mr Speaker, the issue raised by my colleague Honourable Rev. Horace Vincent is very serious as I stand here I am a victim of that particular incident. My younger sister's husband was incarcerated, he was even banned from entering his residence, and they said the military officers that were there where sent from State House. They kept attaching their actions to State House. I went to the Minister and all he could tell me was that those lands are Government lands. But the problem is, even if they are Government lands, you do not repossess lands and immediately give it to another occupant.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to bring to the attention of this House the increasing number of checkpoints along the highways. This is something serious. After every major town you must come across a checkpoint and most times these checkpoints are not situated at strategic points. This is a concern and the issue that also has to do with Road Maintenance Fund Administration. Each year huge fund is allocated to this particular institution, but it is unfortunate that most of our major roads are allowed to dilapidate without any repairs. This is something that is very serious and you said the last time that some of these issues should not be brought up under S.O 23 continuously, but we should put them in a form of questions and bring them forward

under Question Time. Since you made this announcement up to this moment no session has been provided for our questions to be addressed. This is very serious Mr Speaker. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Your written questions are on my desk. I am sorry things got overtaken by the Budget Session, but I am going to look at your questions now with a view to be giving the green light to be dealt with at our next adjourned date or at least next week. The two Chairpersons of the two Select Committees; Defence and Lands. Who is the Chairman for Lands Committee? Is Honourable Quintin Salia-Konneh here?

HON. SAHR CHARLES: The new Deputy two is here.

THE SPEAKER: Where are the deputies? I really want the two Committees to meet on this particular issue and to report to me latest by Tuesday. I do not want to pre-empt your conclusions, but if your findings lead to the point where we need to summon the authorities to the Well of this House, be rest assured that would be done. We cannot allow people to usurp the jurisdiction of the courts and take the law into their own hands. You know something, I do not want to pre-empt your conclusions, I would await your recommendations before we know what to do.

HON. IBRAHIM T. CONTEH: Sorry Mr Speaker, there has been slight change. The Leader of the Opposition is here, can we announce that the Honourable Hassan Sesay is now the new *[Interruption]*.

THE SPEAKER: It is an internal matter *[Laughter]*.

HON. ABUBAKARR FOFANAH: Yes Mr Speaker, may I *[Interruption]*.

THE SPEAKER: Sheik, is it on this same issue?

HON. ABUBAKARR FOFANAH: May I lend my voice on this very matter and certainly to inform this House how serious the matter is. The Chairman of Defence had got complaints from my Constituency where crops of military men invaded a whole land of 98 acres using the name of State House. I will end on that note. Thank you sir.

THE SPEAKER: Refer the matter to the sitting of the Joint Committees please. It is very important.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Mr Speaker another matter sir.

THE SPEAKER: Yes.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Mr Speaker, it will interest the entire House to note that this Parliament does not have a camera to cover our programmes by ourselves. The programmes are only covered when the SLBC and AYV are here. So, I was going to suggest like other Parliaments in the 21st century that we capacitate this House with recent modern technological cameras *[Applause]*. So that it would be covering our programmes. Mr Speaker, unlike this Parliament, the Nigerian Parliament is on Digital Satellite Television [DSTV], they watch their proceedings, and I also follow their proceedings on DSTV. So, I was going to suggest that we have several cameras that will help this House *[Interruption]*.

THE SPEAKER: I want to refer this matter to the Information and Communication Select Committee working jointly with Foreign Affairs. If it means we may have to go clapping hands begging for the logistical equipment to make that possible then so be it. I do not want to rely all together on the allocations that we are going to get under the Budget. We may have to go outside of the Budget to find sympathetic donors to come to our aids and that is why I am involving the two Committees; Information and Communication working with Foreign Affairs. There may be a Good Samaritan waiting for a request to come to our assistance. I am very pleased to welcome the Leader of the Opposition *[Undertone]* no, I am not.

HON. CHERNOR R. M. BAH: Honourable Hassan Sesay is crying Sir.

THE SPEAKER: Hassan is not, after all it was not a coup d'état at all by any means.

HON. CHERNOR R. M. BAH: Mr Speaker, in addition to that *[Interruption]*.

THE SPEAKER: S.O 2 'one dae king sef na king.'

HON. CHERNOR R. M. BAH: Mr Speaker, the mother of the House knows it very well that by Monday, Honourable Hassan Sesay will be substantively acting as Leader of the Opposition [*Applause*]. Mr Speaker I normally do not stand on S.O 23, but today I am forced to. I am sure those who have been with me in this House for the last ten or more years knows that I have never stood on S.O 23. I always consult with the relevant Committees or individuals involved, but there is a continuous call from parents that the universities and I hope the Chairman of Tertiary Education Committee is here. Normally Mr Speaker, we know that the universities are facing challenges in raising revenue, but we should also not forget that parents whose kids are at the universities are also finding it challenging in paying fees, most times politicians more so Members of Parliament are under pressure to subsidise student fees in the universities. What we have been hearing this year is that the universities; the constituent colleges of the University of Sierra Leone and the N'jala University are insisting that the student should pay their one year fees in full before they are registered. That is what we have been hearing, we know as I said it has been very challenging for them to collect their arrears, but in most parts of the world, fees are paid by semesters, even the most sophisticated of societies. So, I am calling on the Chairman to see whether he would hang heads with the universities to see whether they would find other mechanisms to ensuring that students do not go away without paying fees, but at the same time they do not insist on collecting one year fees in advance and if they do many students will not register because if I am assisting ten students, it is easier for me to pay for them whatever I get by term, it will be easy going forward, but if I have to pay a full year fees for ten students, I will reduce to two or three students and that in itself would be a challenge. I am kindly pleading with you Mr Speaker, because eventually you will be involved because of the level to which it is. I was a member of the University Court for some time and I know that these has been a problem, but please we also have to encourage them to look at other surrounding circumstances. So, that is why I have decided to make this statement today so that the burden on the pockets of Members of Parliament will be minimized. I thank you very much Sir.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for bringing this to our attention and this matter is also referred to the Select Committee on Tertiary Education, and I will like to add to the list that is mentioned, the Law School. The fees that are being charged by the Law School should also be looked at. By the way, all of these decisions I will like to see comprehensively recorded in the Votes and Proceedings, so Clerks take notes. Something is happening, but I do not want to bring it to the House yet, but I am beginning to experience something that is very worrisome, it reminds me of my early days in Economic Community of West African State [ECOWAS] when I inherited a very inefficient and incompetent regional organisation and I had to work double time. But one thing I am very proud of, by the time I left; I left a very effective and efficient organisation to this day and I am going to transport that same zeal to this House *[Applause]*. The administration of this House must be efficient and effective. I do not want to know whether we are related or you are my friend, when it comes to my work I do not compromise that, that is what I was known for in the Commonwealth Secretariat and in ECOWAS and throughout my life but, I am beginning to have a very bad experience with competence and efficiency in the administration of this House, but it will be address. Any other? Do you have an announcement?

HON. HASSAN SANKOH: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it has come to the notice of parents and the country at large that the scratch cards which is very important for the submission of applications to institutions have skyrocketed. Today, people are buying scratch card to present their applications at a cost of **Le75,000** which means we have to take action on that *[Interruption]*.

THE SPEAKER: That also related to tertiary education.

HON. HASSAN SANKOH: Yes Sir, it cuts across. This is a concern that I will like to bring to this House.

THE SPEAKER: Again, that concern is referring to the Education Committee.

HON. ABDUL L. SESAY: Mr Speaker, I have a concern as well. Mr Speaker, last night I went to Goderich to send OrangeMoney and I noticed that when sending **Le500,000**

the normal rate is **11,000**. Yesterday I was charged **Le13, 000** to send **Le500,000**. When I interviewed the sender, he said that there is a change of tariff, in fact they are not using the old tariff anymore he said that there is a change of tariff sent to them by Orange Mobile Company. Mr Speaker, I want the Committee on Information and Communications to look into that because there is no way Orange can change their tariffs without notifying us the citizens *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: No hold on, I do not want the public to get the wrong impression. That maybe an isolated instance, but I think with a 146 Members of this House, let us give ourselves the next two weeks to see what kind of experience all of you will gather. If it is consistent with what the Honourable Member just stated then we shall do something about it.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: While we await the two weeks, I want to support because I experienced the same thing Sir.

THE SPEAKER: Fine. So let there be a multiplication of experiences then we shall take the appropriate action. Then we know it is not an isolated instance.

HON. DOMINIC J. LAVALIE-TSHOMBE: Mr Speaker, in relation to the scratch cards situation. As a Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee of Basic and Senior Secondary Education, the Ministry only published restrictions on the sales of scratch cards with regards students admission into the WAEC registrations because before this time, Heads of Schools or Principals were requesting scratch cards from pupils or parents for processing their WAEC registrations. Like my colleague was saying, I was even called upon this morning by almost all recruiting institutions for application or for recruitment and of course, the issue of the recruitment into the Military is in progress. The publication made by the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary School do not covers employment institutions. We only handle the situation of scratch cards being demanded from pupils or parents with regards registration form for WAEC examination. Thank you very much *[Undertone]* for referring the situation of scratch cards to the Committee by employing institutions. Whenever people advertise for them to authenticate the genuineness of the result, they request for scratch cards. I believe it is beyond the

purview of the Committee because we cover up to the Senior Secondary Schools, and we allow the Ministry to cover up to the Senior Secondary Schools, but we cannot prohibit institutions. We as a Ministry, as a Committee cannot suggest to prohibit institutions that are doing recruitment for their staff not to require scratch cards. As a House, we can take a decision, but not necessarily as a Committee *[Interruption]*.

THE SPEAKER: No, let the Committee go and look at that issue, take evidence, let us know that whatever we do, let it be evidence based. Let us not be seen to be irrational, let us take decision that are evidence based, when we get that kind of decision, then of course the public will take us seriously. Once we were able to gather sufficient evidences, we will know what to do.

HON. DOMINIC J. LAVALIE-TSHOMBE: Mr Speaker, the scratch cards was initially sold by WAEC *[Interruption]*.

THE SPEAKER: We have already referred that matter to the Education Committee, you do not need to bother yourself on it over and over. Yes Madam Clerk.

ADJOURNMENT

*[The House rose at: 12:40 p.m. and was adjourned to Tuesday, 19th November, 2019,
at 10:00 a.m.]*