

OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

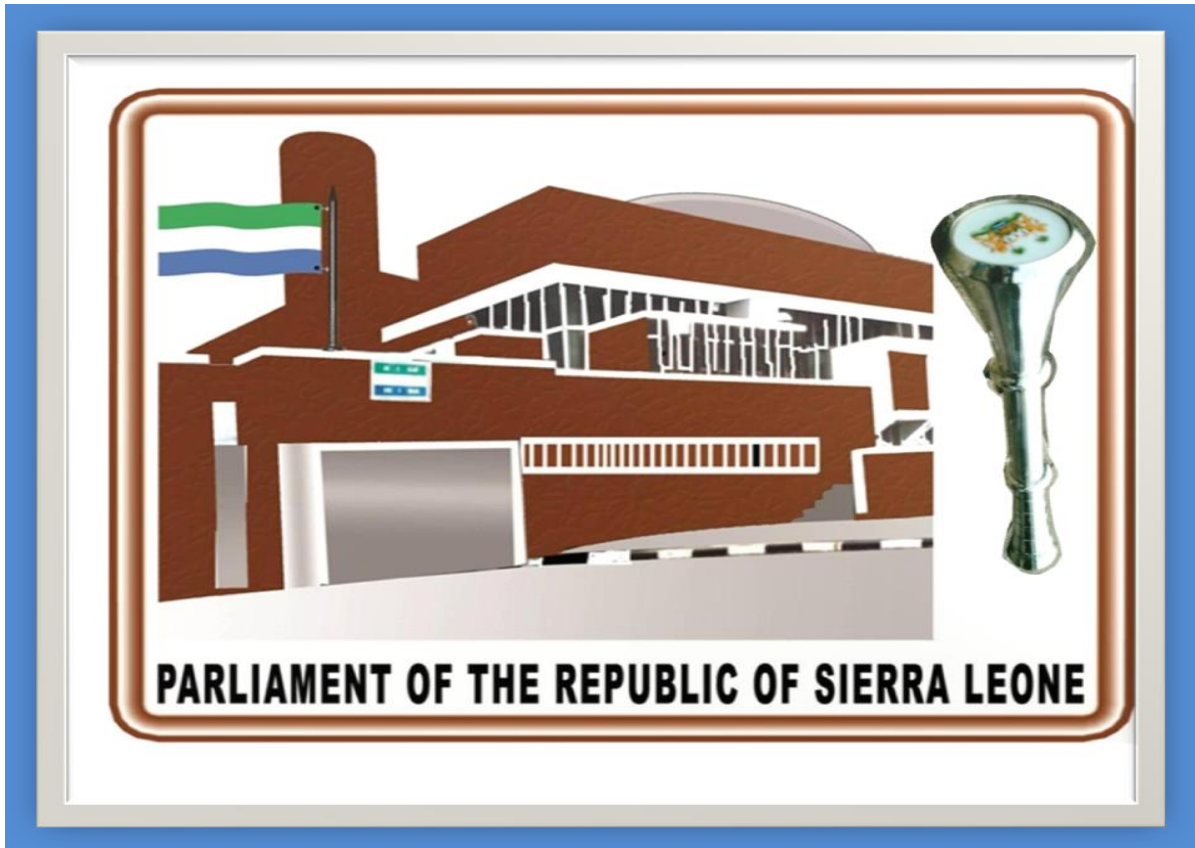
[HANSARD]

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

SECOND SESSION -SECOND MEETING

MONDAY, 16th DECEMBER, 2019.

SESSION – 2019/2020



OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

[HANSARD]

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 Monday, 16th December, 2019.

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BEING AN ACT TO AUTHORISE EXPENDITURE FROM THE CONSOLIDATED FUND FOR THE SERVICES OF SIERRA LEONE FOR THE YEAR 2020 AND FOR OTHER RELATED MATTERS.

[FIRST ALLOTTED DAY]



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

Monday, 16th December, 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 Chernor Abass Bundu in the Chair]

The House was called to Order

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

II. RECORD OF VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS FOR THE PARLIAMENTARY SITTING HELD ON FRIDAY 13TH DECEMBER, 2019.

THE SPEAKER: We shall now deal with the Votes and Proceedings for the 29th Sitting of Parliament on Friday the 13th of December, 2019. Skipping pages 1 through to four and starting from page 5. Any comment, amendment? Page 6? Page 7? Page 8? Page 9? Page 10? Can someone please move?

HON. ALUSINE KANNEH: I so move Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON. NENNEH LEBBIE: I second the Motion.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[Corrections of Votes and Proceedings for Parliamentary Sitting Held on Friday 13th December, 2019 has been adopted]

III. BILL

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

THE APPROPRIATION ACT, 2020.

Being an Act to authorise expenditure from the Consolidated Fund for the service of Sierra Leone for the Year 2020 and for other related matters.

[FIRST ALLOTTED DAY]

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE

THE SPEAKER: I don't know whether we are quite ready as yet, I have only just received my copy...

HON. FRANCIS A. KAISAMBA: Mr Speaker, as at now we only have report for Committee one, the other reports are not ready and they are not here yet.

THE SPEAKER: So, can we think of standing down the House for an hour to allow everybody to read that report?

HON. FRANCIS A. KAISAMBA: Yes Sir!

THE SPEAKER: Hopefully, let's achieved two things whilst you are reading Committee One's report for one hour. I repeat, whilst you are engaged in reading the report of Committee one, hopefully by the time we finish considering that report, the report of Committee two would be ready because as you know time is now of the essence. We need to take at least four or five of those Committees' reports today and hopefully finish tomorrow. We have to finish tomorrow in good time to allow all of us to grace an occasion that we as Parliament would be hosting the Inaugural and memorial lecture of Salia Jusu Sheriff. So, on that understanding it's now 10: 6 am and we shall resume here at half past 11:000 am.

One hour is enough for us to go through the report of Committee one, but once we come, we would sit right through, so take an early lunch that is my advice. We had passed here a ruling that if the Vote Controllers are not here, we are going to skip their own votes and deal with only those whose Vote Controllers are present in Parliament. I take it that that represents the consciencious of the entire House. Honourable Members, I overheard a debate as to whether they were informed or not. I mean quite frankly, do they need to be informed about something which is your primary responsibility? When something is your responsibility to do, do they need to be informed about it? That is how we encourage lethagy. I would pretend I never heard that comment. Honourable Members, the House would now stand down until half past eleven.

THE HOUSE STOOD DOWN AT 10:35 AM AND RESUMED AT 11:57 AM

THE SPEAKER: Do we have a quorum? Very well.

THE HOUSE RESOLVES INTO COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Votes 106-00, vote 106-01, vote 106-02, vote 110-09, vote 116-00, vote 121-00, vote 124-06, vote 128-00, vote 129-00, vote 130-00, vote 133-00, vote 137-00, vote 138-00, vote 144-00, vote 210-00, vote 403-05, vote 403-00, vote 424-00, vote 415-00, vote 424-00, vote 425-00, vote 707-01, vote 708-01, vote 720-01 to stand part of the scheduled.

MS PATRICIA N. LAVERLEY [*The Deputy Minister of Finance*]: Honourable Chairman, Honourable Members, I move that the following votes stand part of the Schedule:

Vote Controller 106-00, Office of the Chief Minister, **Le 8,666,335,900.**

Vote controller 10601, Office of the Presidential Infrastructural Initiative **Le 1,054,712,500.**

Vote Controller 10602, Directorate of Science, Technology and Innovation, **Le 3,727,126,800**

Vote Controller 11009, Independent Media Commission, **Le 1,406,324,4000.**

Vote Controller 11600, Sierra Leone House of Parliament, **Le 37,236,850,900.**

Vote Controller 12100, Audit Services Sierra Leone **Le7, 242,187,400.**

Vote Controller 12406, Sierra Leone Law School, **Le 616,347,300.**

Vote Controller 12800, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Co-operation **Le 55,410,347,900.**

Vote Controller 12900, Ministry of Finance **Le 82,952,318, 600.**

Vote Controller **13000** Nation Revenue Authority, **Le 193,860,828,200.**

Vote Controller **13300**, Ministry of Information and Communication **Le 4,272,754,100.**

Vote Controller **13700**, National Commission for Democracy, **Le 1,098,316,500**

Vote Controller **13800**, Statistics Sierra Leone **Le 5,641,335,800**

Vote Controller **14400**, National Commission for Human Right, **Le 1,578,652,000.**

Vote Controller **21000**, Office of National Security, **Le 6,598,154,200**

Vote Controller **40300**, Ministry of Mines and Mineral Resources, **Le 1,598,893,300.**

Vote Controller **40305**, National Mineral Agency, **Le 1, 773,357,900**

Vote Controller **41500**, Sierra Leone Marinetime Administration, **Le 33,872,000,000.**

Vote Controller **42400**, Sierra Leone Petroleum Directorate **Le 6000,000,000**

Vote Controller **42500**, Sierra Leone Road Safety Authority, **Le 41,243,850,000.**

Vote Controller **70701**, for Makeni City Council, **Le 794,631,869**.

Vote Controller **70801**, Bombali District Council, **Le 1,398,363,759**.

Vote Controller **72001**, for Freetown City Council, **Le 5,881,094,044**.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I move that the vote mention above to stand part of this schedule.

Suspension of S.O 5[2]

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[The Votes pronounced by the Deputy Minister of Finance to stand part of the schedule].

[Table Clerk]: I now call on sub appropriation Committee one to present the report.

THE CHAIRMAN: Where is he? The report as you all know has been distributed and I presumed that you all have copies of the report of Committee one. I have my own copy it runs into 30 pages. You can well imagine the amount of time it will take if the Chairman were to read each and every word or each and every page of that report. So let's deal with the essential and stick to it.

Since we all have an opportunity to browse through the report, is no harm whatsoever if you are still reading continue to read but try and shorten your presentation. Go to the main essential point that you wish to draw to the attention of the House. And then as you know, you are not the only Committee to present, there are six or seven more Committees to present their report.

HON. DOMINIC T. LAVALIE: Thank you very much Mr Chairman, Honourable Members. Committee one, we did our work in accordance with Section [111] 3 and 4, Section [112] of the Constitution of Sierra Leone Act No. 6 of 1991 and S.O [64] 3 and [66] 1 of the revised Standing order of the Parliament of Sierra Leone. The examination of this 23 under mention Budgeting vote heads and divisions of the 2020 financial year was committed to the sub-section appropriation Committee one, the vote and amount as stated in the document.

Mr Chairman, Honourable Members, the Committee adheres to the relevant provisions contained in Section [93] and Section [112]6 of 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone and S.O

[66]1 of Parliament of Sierra Leone. In carrying out its proceedings, the Committee used its mandate as stated in the document.

Mr Chairman, Honourable Members, Committee one which is the lead Committee I am proud of, we had a very good team, with the leave of the Speaker, I want to make known to plenary the Committee Members.

THE CHAIRMAN: I will not allow you, we can read ourselves.

HON. DOMINIC T. LAVALIE: Okay as stated. But Honourable Members, of this Committee we please want you to raise up your hands so that people will identify you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Let us do away with theatrics please.

HON. DOMINIC T. LAVALIE: Okay. Mr Chairman, Honourable Members, on page five the Committee took note of key observations and recommendations that cut across for most of the MDAs. I had to pick on few of them;

1. Quarterly allocation of MDAs were hardly received on time and when paid such transfer does not agree with the approved amount of payment for the financial year 2019. Most MDAs reported to have received transfers for only three quarters. The Committee cited this as the contributing factor for poor service delivery by many MDAs and therefore recommends that the Government should ensure adequate timely and predictable release of fund for infective project implementation.

2. The Committee note with concerns that must MDAs failed to provide supporting documents on expenditure breakdown. Lack of sufficient documentation and breakdown increase in risk of potential errors in misstatement in the statement provided by the MDAs. The Committee retreats its previous recommendation by insisting that all supporting documents including breakdown of expenditure should be accompanying the MDAs questioner return to Parliament before Budget hearing.

3. The Committee discovers variances in MDAs closing and opening balances. Mr Chairman, with this one maybe for the understanding of some Accountants the closing balance for instance; the financial year 2018 is supposed to be exactly equal to the opening balance of the financial year 2019. But the Committee realised that for most MDAs there were discrepancies and they were not able to justify that.

4. Mr Chairman, Honourable Members, the Committee express concerns of low old source revenue mobilization which is a big challenge to most revenue generating MDAs and local councils in particulars. In this regard, most MDAs and local Councils with the exception of NRA reported on not meeting revenue target for the period under review. Therefore, the Committee recommends that the capacity of revenue generating entities should be strengthened in order to be able effectively mobilize older source revenue.

5. Majority of the MDAs interviewed made little or no effort to furnish the Committee with their proposed action plans for 2020. The Committee therefore wishes to draw the attention of the Honourable House by way of urging Parliamentary oversight Committees to monitor the implementation of work plans of MDAs there by evaluating the progress of the implementation of the proposed activities.

6. The examination of expenditure breakdown of most MDAs reveals duplication of Budget line items such as office and general, stationery, computer operating cost. They serve as overlap, refreshment and entertainment appear as different Budget line. The MDAs were unable to give clear demarcation between these Budget lines; computer running cost, information and communication. The Committee therefore recommends that the Ministry of Finance should ensure that the Budget lines are classified correctly for MDAs in order to avoid duplications of funds.

Mr Chairman, Honourable Members, the Committee also observed with utter dismay that most MDAs including Ministry of Finance interviewed could not properly account for colossal sums of monies allocated as 2020 financial year expenditure estimate for other allowances and also late allowances.

Mr Chairman, Honourable Members, for most MDAs, most institutions, therefore the Committee urges MDAs to provide well-define breakdown of Budget lines and to explain other allowances and late allowances as expenditure estimate for 2020.

Mr Chairman, Honourable Members, all the other votes are as stated for Parliament which is on Page 24. The financial year 2020, the PSC has been allocated with the Budget to the tune of **Le 37,236,850,900** mainly for Legislative Services, Parliamentary oversight, office of the Speaker, office of the Clerk and Parliamentary female Caucus.

The current personnel strength has increased from the initial 124 in 2018 to 316 in 2019 financial year. Therefore, registering the total of 192 new staff employed by the Commission to fill the existing vacancies, the Budgeted wages and salaries bill for the financial year 2020 submitted by the Commission amounted to **Le31, 768,997,587**. In pursuing the recurrent and development expenditure estimate for the financial year 2020-2022 submission, the Committee could not trace expenditure estimate for the 192 newly recruited staff which account for the amount of about **Le17, 617,417,598**.

THE CHAIRMAN: Where exactly are you in your report?

HON. DOMINIC T. LAVALIE: Page 24 under Parliament the third Paragraph.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay.

HON. DOMINIC T. LAVALIE: Mr Chairman, Honourable Members the Committee therefore recommend that the **Le31, 768,997,585** wages and salaries bill submitted by the Parliamentary Services Commission be fully factored in the recurrent and development expenditure estimate for the financial year 2020-2022 to accommodate estimate for the 192 new staff and other staff promotions with the fore going in view the Committee recommends approval of the **Le 37,236,850,900** for the financial year 2020 allocation for the Parliamentary Services Commission and also requests timely release of funds by the Ministry of Finance.

Mr Chairman, Honourable Members, in conclusion on page 31, the Chairman, and Honourable Members, hereby recommends that the reports of the appropriation sub Committee one be adopted by this Honourable House and that the Budget heads included in the subheads of the MDAs listed below stand part of the scheduled in respect of the Budgetary provisions of the financial year 2020 as stated.

THE CHAIRMAN: Before you take your seat and before I invite discussion of this report I want to take you right back to the Paragraph you drew attention to on page 24.

HON. DOMINIC T. LAVALIE: Yes Mr Chairman.

THE CHAIRMAN: The bottom of that Paragraph where it is highlighted, the last sentence would you mind reading it again please?

HON. DOMINIC T. LAVALIE: Starting with the fore going in view?

THE CHAIRMAN: That is correct.

HON. DOMINIC T. LAVALIE: Mr Chairman, Honourable Members, with the fore going in view the Committee recommends the approval of the **Le 37,236,850,900** for the financial year 2020 allocation for the Parliamentary Services Commission and also request timely release of funds by the Ministry of Finance.

THE CHAIRMAN: We should be very careful with our records keeping, that allocation is not for the Parliamentary Service Commission, it is for Parliament. The operation of Parliament as a whole, the Parliamentary service Commission is only an element, a segment of Parliament. Let that be clearly understood.

HON. DOMINIC T. LAVALIE: Noted Sir.

THE CHAIRMAN: For the records please. That the allocation is for Parliament as a whole not for PSC alone. PSC is just a subset of Parliament. Thank you. It seems everybody is happy with this report except one. My only worry about Lahai Marah is his preambles that never seem to come to an end. So you will speak last, let me take the Honourable behind you.

HON. SAHR CHARLES: Thank you very much Mr Chairman, Honourable Members.

HON. IBRAHIM T. CONTEH: Mr Chairman, can I observe something? He is a Member of the Committee. I think he should give chance to those of us who are not Members of the Committee so as to make our input because the report is emanating from them.

HON. SAHR CHARLES: Well it up to the Chairman but I believe...

THE CHAIRMAN: Go ahead.

HON. SAHR CHARLES: Thank you very much Mr Chairman. The report as clearly read by the Deputy Chairman, sub appropriation Committee one is clear. I wouldn't have stood if there are issues that are of essence that are not highlighted.

Mr Chairman, Honourable Members, In the first place, the area of timely release of funds is very key because most times the performance of MDAs are limited, are hinder as result of the late or irregular release of funds is one cut across. Also the area of the Budget headings that the Ministry of Finance generate for those MDAs is a concern. You see office and general and you will see stationery running cost, you also see computer running cost,

and you see ICT running cost. What is happening? We saw it clearly that officials from the Ministry of Finance that appear to our Committee they were not able to properly defend these various Budget heads that they gave to their own Budget.

When we asked them what late allowance is, they were not able to explain it to us clearly and mind you whatever comes from this Well as long as you are a Member of Parliament, we cannot exclude ourselves from it, so it is very important that some of these issues we address them once and for all and then we move forward.

If there should be a template let there be a template for reporting format, if the Ministry can go back and redefine the various Budget heads, because most times when the MDAs appear to the Committee in their reports they will tell us that this is what has been generated by the system from the Ministry of Finance and the Accountant General Department. This is what is being generated and that is what they go by right, so is a key concern. Like you heard from the Chairman, the opening and closing balances of most of the MDAs didn't match, and that was a strong concern especially for our Committee. You find out that some MDAs were not able to give the correct open balances in line with their closing balance for the previous year.

Mr Chairman, Honourable Members, to bring to this House the expenditure undertaking by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, when it comes to our Embassy in US, New York State, for the previous year 2018, we found out that the expenditure was less than **Le 700MIn** and for 2019, it goes up to over **Le 2BIn**. We ask that the Ministry further supply document that will show how indeed they went about this procurement, and when you look at it, it was just for rehabilitation of new embassy we have in Ethiopia. For the construction of new embassy is not even up to a Billion Leones. The other issue is that the visa on arrival also came up in our Committee report, that is a big problem for the foreign Embassy's in overseas and we want the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation to give consideration to it thoroughly, it will strangulate in some extent the Foreign mission out there.

Mr Chairman, Honourable Members, these are concerns, and for the area of the National Mineral Agency, is also a big concern.

THE CHAIRMAN: That is very blank statement it will strangulate our missions abroad. How?

HON. SAHR CHARLES: We have concern Mr Chairman.

THE CHAIRMAN: Wait a minute. I want you to weigh that disadvantage against the disadvantage of visa on landing that provides to the tourism business and the promotion of tourism in the country as a whole. Obviously, if we do not have Embassies everywhere in the world, our embassies are in the limited Countries.

Let's assume you have a country in Europe, in which we have no embassy, whose citizens see Sierra Leone as a tourism destination a good one for that matter. It helps them to come by encouraging them and advertising Sierra Leonean that this country offers a visa on arrival. Is that not a great advantage?

HON. SAHR CHARLES: It's an advantage Mr Chairman. But I believe it also has a disadvantage. I was trying to bring up concern that some of us had from the foreign mission out of this Country. That is something we advise the Ministry to see how best they can allay the fears of these foreign Embassies that are raising these concerns.

Mr Chairman, Honourable Members, haven said that, I believe the National Mineral Agency is one of the main Agency in this country that regulate our Mineral Sectors. The Committee further recommend that Government should add supplementary Budget to beef up their Budget so that they can continue their activities. The problem we notice must of these MDAs that should report to our Committees did not give us a clear map of their activities, because whatever Budget you are sending for approval, I believe it must be tie to an activity. Under their recurrent expenditure, most of them did not point out the activities they intend to undertake and the time line, and this key to guide Parliamentary oversight.

On that note Mr Chairman, Honourable Members, I believe this is just the beginning, and in terms of seeing the viability of Parliament and in terms of adhering to our responsibilities as enshrine in the 1991 Constitution Section [111] and [112] "It is clear that it's only Parliament that has power to give mandate to the Government to go ahead in terms of raising these Finances and how to expend them". In line with that, I would like to thank the MDAs that showed up, of course their cooperation was up to **90%**, and for

those that did not show up, and we know what to do next time. So in line with that, on behalf of the Committee I would want to say a big bravo to the Ministry. Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: I thank the Honourable Member, for his contribution. Before I call on any other Member, let me draw your attention to the fact that there is a very important recommendation contained in this report that concerns all of us in Parliament, and that recommendation is contained in the last paragraph on page 24 which the Chairman drew specific attention to. The inadequacy of the Budget allocation for Parliament, and I know that Members will be very quick to demand which is their right to do oversight responsibilities.

Well, make sure that this is the seize opportunity now to make adequacy provision in the Budget for Parliament to ensure that activity is undertaking properly and fully on time. This is your opportunity now, not to wait on till the Budget is passed and then you beginning to cry foul. I know one particular Member, he knows himself, I wouldn't call his name, but this is the opportunity Parliament has now to make a proper allocation. I now recognise Honourable Lahai Marah. I hope you are going to deal with this particular issue because I know you have a passion and extraordinary passion for oversight responsibilities.

HON. LAHAI MARAH: You are right Mr Speaker. Thank you very much for given me the opportunity this afternoon. I want to thank Committee one for this report and special thanks to the Clerk of Committee one, Augustine Sesay. He has always been doing well. I want to use this opportunity to recommend him for a very good report and nicely put.

Mr Speaker, if you go to observation two, the Committee notes with concerns that most MDAs failed to provide supporting documents on expenditure break down, and we demand for supporting documents with regards to certain expenditures which we were unsatisfied with. But for us to demand for supporting document in relation to all expenditures, one week is not enough. When you are doing a proper auditing for a particular MDA, you need to sit in that MDA for nearly 3 months, but what we are doing here is that we only spend one week to go through those documents and we ask them to explain to us how they intend to use the 2020 Budget allocated to them, and how they have utilised the previous money.

Let me join my colleague, the Honourable Member, from Kono with regards to paragraph 6 that examinations of expenditure break down of most MDAs revealed duplications. The Accountant General needs to take a look again with regards to the vote head of expenditure lines, for example; office and general, stationery. Most MDAs were not being able to clearly explain the differences between office and general and that of stationeries. And most of the times you have huge sum of money that are expended under this separate headings; you also have refreshment with other separate Budget line and them entertainment. This is very serious. We need to look at those various expenditure lines, and see if possible for us to merge them. I think that is the role of the Accountant General.

Mr Speaker, go to observation seven, page six, the Ministry of Finance was seriously indicted. The Committee also observed with utter dismay that most interviewed MDAs including the Ministry of Finance could not properly account for colossal sum of money allocated. This is very much important, if we have a Ministry that is responsible to see that the Finances of various MDAs is properly managed, and we are saying in this report that Ministry could not be able to account for a colossal sum, it is very serious indictment and I think we need to further look into the activities of the Ministry.

Mr Chairman, if you go to page seven, under vote 129, which is the Ministry of Finance. I will read the last paragraph; I hope you are with me? I want you to read with me.

THE CHAIRMAN: Page 7?

HON. LAHAI MARAH: Yes. The last paragraph.

THE CHAIRMAN: Let me read and then I will also make a reference to the Constitution of Sierra Leone. "Say the Ministry reported to have expended in excess of its allocation to the tune of **Le13Bln.**"

Mr Speaker, when you have MDA's been allocated certain amount of money, that money again is being placed into the Budget for the approval of Parliament and that is the monies that we approved. But what happened in this case, the monies that Parliament approved, the Ministry went ahead and expended beyond what was given to them by this very House of **Le 13Bln.**

THE CHAIRMAN: You mean without coming to Parliament for a supplementary?

HON. DOMINIC T. LAVALIE: Mr Chairman, Point of observation. At the plenary during the Committee stage, we realized that the money that was approved for the current financial year they have used in excess. But the money they claimed to have received is not that they have used in excess of what was approved for this financial year.

THE CHAIRMAN: Read it carefully. Mr Chairman, what you are saying is totally different from what is recorded here, what is written down is as follows:

The Ministry of Finance reported to have expended in excess of its allocation to the tune of **Le13Bln** in 2019, that is the Ministry speaking to the Committee that they over spent their Budgetary allocation. The question is did they come to Parliament for a supplementary or not?

HON. LAHAI MARAH: Mr Chairman, they did not and let me read the Constitution of Sierra Leone Section [111] 3bi "No money shall be withdrawn from the consolidated fund except where the issue of those monies has been authorized by an Appropriation Act or by supplementary estimate approved by a resolution of Parliament passed in that behalf."

Mr Chairman, I want to submit in this regard that the Ministry of Finance is in violation of the Constitution of Sierra Leone, because they have expended monies that were not approved by this House and therefore that particular money should be refunded back to the consolidated fund.

THE CHAIRMAN: Your point is well made. I am a bit nervous about the conclusion you have arrived at. It better to flag the fact that both the statement made in the report and the provisions you read don't seat comfortably well together, I agree but not necessarily the conclusion that you want us to arrive at since the Deputy Minister is here she is taking note, she will respond please.

HON. LAHAI MARAH: Mr Speaker, in fact it is contempt to Parliament.

THE CHAIRMAN: Again, Honourable Lahai Marah, you know we are good friends, but sometimes you tend to go too fast, you are ahead of us, point the things out without necessarily telling us what your own personal conclusions are, not at this point.

HON. LAHAI MARAH: Thank you Mr Chairman. I want to maintain the friendship Mr Chairman. If you read further in that paragraph, it says “The Committee recommend that Ministry of Finance will provide further explanation on the **Le13Bln** spending excess of it allocation.” Mr Chairman, are you with me? I need your attention.

THE CHAIRMAN: I am trying to anticipate you.

HON. LAHAI MARAH: Don't Mr Chairman.

THE CHAIRMAN: I am trying to anticipate you by consulting with the Chairman of the Finance Committee, I myself becoming a bit nervous here and I know you are not the Chairman of Committee [1], you are the Deputy Chairman, where is your Chairman by the way?

HON. DOMINIC T. LAVALIE: He communicated with me on Friday evening that he will not be present for today sessions, so I should step in.

THE CHAIRMAN: But this is a very important session of Parliament you know. I am becoming nervous because the more I listen to this Debate, I don't know what the generality of opinion is going to be at the end considering our consideration of the report of Committee [1]. I don't want to pre-empt anything, but I am getting a bit nervous that the Chairman himself of that Committee is not here to answer to some of the concerns that are being raised. Deputy Chairman, I am afraid you may not be able to answer some of these questions. Any way Honourable Lahai Marah, you carry on.

HON. LAHAI MARAH: Thank you very much Sir.

THE CHAIRMAN: But I have already consulted with the overall Chairman of the Finance Committee. I will not tell you what he and I have agreed on, I will just sit and listen to the Debate and see where you will lead us to.

HON. LAHAI MARAH: Thank you very much Mr Chairman. If you read the tail end of that paragraph, the one that is written in bold. “The Committee recommends that the Ministry of Finance should provide further explanation on the **Le 13Bln** spend in excess of it allocation for 2019 Financial year”. I think we should note that very well, it is much important.

Mr Chairman, if you read the 2020 Budget re-estimate for the Ministry of finance, you may read just the first two lines, on page 8 under budgetary estimate for 2020, the Ministry of Finance they made an initial submission of **Le58Bln**. But the Ministry of Finance, being the very Ministry that is allocating monies to various MDA's ended up with approving **Le 82Bln**. Is not against any law, but what I am trying to state is that not because you have the power or you are playing with the monies, you should make sure you satisfy yourself than the other MDA's that are so deprived to the extent that even to get what they have been allocated to they are not receiving it.

So, if you prepare a Budget of saying **Le 58Bln** this is our Budget that we have prepared and during the stage of defending that Budget, you ended up saying no; **Le 58Bln** is too small let us make it to **Le 82Bln** that is what happened.

Mr Chairman, an excess of **Le24bln** according to my Honourable Leader of the NGC and that is more than the budgetary allocation to Social Welfare is unfair.

Mr Chairman, Honourable Members, let me take you again to the Ministry of Finance on the same page, which is page 8. The Ministry of Finance is a very lucky Ministry because in 2018 and 2019 they were very much lucky to receive all the monies that were allocated to them. I want to say kudos to them, because they are one of the few that would be receiving monies in total or entitled that being allocated to you say **Le2.6bln** and **Le2.5bln** respectively in 2019 they received all of it that is a very good one. But what is not encouraging here is about that particular money we have spent mainly on workshops, travelling, I am concerned with workshops, under Ministry of Finance you go to the 2018, and 2019 financial years retrospect. On page 8 Mr Chairman, the Ministry of Information and Communication.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well you said Ministry of Finance now is Information.

HON. LAHAI MARAH: No I am done with Ministry of Finance; I have submitted what I have with the Ministry of Finance, I am now with the Ministry of Information, and I said they were very lucky to have received all the monies that are being allocated to them. But again they ended up spending those monies on workshops and travelling. But I am concerned with workshops.

Mr Chairman, I think it is now time for us to move away from paper base activities to reality, let me give an example here; the Ministry of Social Welfare ended up spending **Le7.8bln** on policy design with respect for supporting the women, and I told them you cannot spend **Le7.8bln** on policy design. What is the impact? What is the outcome? Go to kubolar construct facility that would train women that are been deprived, that they don't even know what you people are doing here, they want "50/50 side by side" to help few educated women and you spent **Le7.8bln** is a huge sum. You can put on facility to train those women for them to learn some skills that could be one way of helping them if we are really serious.

Mr Chairman, Honourable Members, each and every year we have those workshops and trainings that we spent a lot of money on and they are not taking the country anywhere.

Mr Chairman, if you go to Page 9, the first 2 lines. The Ministry of Information and Communication ended up spending **Le174mln** on designing His Excellency, the President's Portrait. Maybe we are trying to design a portrait that would cost in the market a billion of Leones. But for us to spend **Le174mln** on just the portrait of the President is very alarming and that is above **\$10,000**. I hope the Deputy Chairman, is listening because this is very much alarming, we want further explanation on this.

Mr Chairman, the Ministry expended to the tune of **Le51.6mln** on rehabilitating of 4 offices and then **Le58mln** on rehabilitation of its office. What the writer is doing in this case; is comparing the sum of **Le58mln** that was used to rehabilitate the entire office of the Ministry of Information, and then **Le51.6mln** to rehabilitate four offices, it is very much alarming and that is why this country is stagnated because of monies are being used not in the right way.

Mr Chairman, let me go to Parliament, I think Parliament is on page 24, the issue I have with Parliament is that we have the powers, and we are making the Laws, but sometimes we do pass Laws in this Well that are against us. It is very much frustrating for us to say Parliament is a sub vented agency, and when you go and meet the Ministry of Finance they will say you are a sub vented agency we treat you like that. All over the world Sierra Leone is the only country wherein Parliament is a sub vented agency. As an organ of Government, we are not a separate entity like the Executive, and the Judiciary. Parliament

is just an organ; we should be treated by the Ministry of Finance as an organ of Government not like MDAs and Department.

THE CHAIRMAN: No, let's call things by their proper names. I think there is a lot of confusion here. Two words seem to appear all the time as if there are synonymous, and there are not. Parliament on the one hand and Parliamentary Service Commission on the other, and they treat the two as if they are one and the same. One is the Commission; the other is Parliament an organ of the Government. The two are totally different things, so you are right in the way but there lies the confusion. The source of the confusion lies in the failure to distinguish those two. I hope you understand what I am saying?

HON. LAHAI MARAH: I do Mr Chairman, and it is more confusing when...

THE CHAIRMAN: We are not a Commission, and we should not be seeing from that perspective when the Ministry is wearing those lenses they get things wrong. They should be wearing different lenses, bigger lenses to see Parliament as an Organ of Government.

HON. LAHAI MARAH: Mr Chairman, it's not the Ministry of Finance I want to state here, is the laws that we passed and maybe it's within the PMF Act that we are sub vented agency, that is why we are being treated. We passed the PMF Act in this Parliament "that we are sub vented agency" and that is how they are treating us.

Mr Chairman, we want to see under your watch for us to move from that direction. We can come with the PMF Act here and amend it; we have the powers. We just need the free will of the Speaker.

Mr Chairman, under page 24 I am concerned with a particular sentence, mind you I have the document submitted by Parliament and yesterday I was reading it. It's not encouraging at all, but that is for another discussion. Under page 24 there is a particular sentence here that says; "The Committee could not trace expenditure estimates for 192 newly recruited staff which account for an amount totalling **Le15 bln.**" I don't understand what you are trying to put here.

HON. KANDEH K. YUMKELLAH: Mr Chairman, Point of Order 34, if my colleague would yield. I wanted my colleague to go back to the point where he started; page 8, I am still troubled. Maybe you know better; you are an Accountant, we don't know. I am still

looking at this number from page 8; the Budget estimate for the Ministry of Finance **Le58 bln** is what they submitted initially, but there is an increase of **Le82 bln**. If my maths is correct, that is **Le24bln** more; that is almost 40% of the original submission. I am confused with that kind of budgeting. What kind of budgeting is that? You requested money and then you go to the process, they give you half more. Please can you help me? Thanks for yielding.

HON. LAHAI MARAH: You are right my Honourable Leader of the NGC. But what happened is within the law; they are not against any law, they are still in the allocation and approval stage. The danger part of it is that **Le13bln** was spent out of the law; but what happened is like they made a submission to the Budgetary Committee within the Ministry of Finance **Le 58bln** and they said themselves "No, **Le58 bln** is small, before we go to Parliament let us increase it to **Le82bln**." they are still within the law. The danger part of it is **Le13bln** they spent out of the law that we did not approve and that is why at the end of my debate I will be calling for them to refund that money into the consolidated fund. So Mr Chairman we go to...

THE CHAIRMAN: No, before you do, I know Honourable Dr Kandeh Yumkellah referred the matter to you. I want to draw your attention to a very serious gap here. We established a Sub Committee of the Committee on supply to go and examine this thing. What this report is telling us and what the Honourable Member, is drawing attention to, is that even though the Ministry of Finance came with a specific proposal for their own Budget to the tune of **Le58bln**, they ended up getting **Le 82bln**. So, the people who should be explaining to us how that came about in Committee [1] and the Chairman of Committee [1] for some inexplicable reasons is not here; instead we have the Deputy Chairman to answer and he cannot adequately answer any of these points. So, I really don't know where this is going to get us to. Chairman, can you really help us?

HON.DOMINIC T. LAVALIE: Yes Sir! With regards to the proposed increase, I think there is a justification here with the procurement of Electronic Cash Machines.

Mr Chairman, Honourable Members, the Committee further observed that the Ministry proffered justification for the proposed increase from **Le 58bln** to **Le 82bln**.

HON. IBRAHIM B. KARGBO: To the extent that I am almost convinced the Deputy of the Committee is unable to help us. Therefore, we perhaps should continue to listen to Honourable Lahai Marah, but definitely it's a pity that a Deputy of a whole Committee that is as important as this Committee cannot help us. I am unable to understand what he wants to tell us. Could you please stand up and tell us properly what you want to tell us?

HON. DOMINIC T. LAVALIE: Mr Chairman, Honourable Members, like I said, the proposed increase in the Budget allocation for the Ministry of Finance from **Le58 bln** to **Le82 bln** as read from the report. When we asked about the increase of the Ministry's appropriated Financial Year for 2020 Budget, the Vote Controller responded that it is budgeted for the procurement of Electronic Cash Machines.

THE CHAIRMAN: I would ask you another question; did that happen suddenly; that there is a need to procure those Machines?

HON. DOMINIC T. LAVALIE: No. The increase is not for this 2019 Financial Year; the proposed increase is for 2020 Financial Year.

THE CHAIRMAN: That is what I am saying. They initially prepared the Budget for **Le58bln**; one would have expected them to have incorporated that item. How come they came to the Committee with **Le58bln** and ended up leaving the Committee with **Le82bln**? That is the concern Members are raising.

HON. IBRAHIM T. CONTEH: Point of observation Mr Chairman. I think the explanation the Chairman, is putting forward to the House is not completely different from what the Budget provides because the Budget has components and in the components of the Budget, there are other charges and there are domestic Budget that is mostly referred to as Public Investment programmes for every Ministries, Department and Agencies. Therefore, if the justification is for the purchase of Electronic Cash Machines, which means it was factored under the Ministry of Finance Budget in 2019, which provided for **Le62.3bln** to be spent on their domestic Budget; that is their Public Investment Programmes of which the procurement of Electronic Cash Machines is part of... because the NRA report directly to the Ministry of Finance. Maybe the report did not show it and that was my observation initially. We were looking at the supply stage for the Budget allocated for the year 2019.

Therefore, my expectation is the report we are to review at the plenary on how monies allocated for 2019 were expended and at the end of this report recommendation be made for the approval of the new Budget because they cannot explain the new Budget that they have requested for, if we don't know how they have spent the initial amount approved in 2019. So, what Honourable Lahai Marah is saying is not too far from what was budgeted.

However, the **Le 58bln** referred to by Honourable Dr Kandeh Kolleh Yumkellah is the monies allocated to the Ministry for their other charges. That is their non-salary and non-recurrent expenditure for the year 2019.

THE CHAIRMAN: I know you are a powerful advocate. The last time I remember you rising up, you were doing the opposite. You are now advocating for the Ministry; I am still at a lost. I will allow Honourable Lahai Marah to conclude but again, the Acting Leader of the Opposition has made a very important comment although he stopped short of making a specific proposal to the House. But maybe he is waiting for Lahai Marah to land; he is still in mid-flight. So Honourable Lahai, today you have a field day, try and land. Clear the airfield for the man to land now.

HON. LAHAI MARAH: I will. I am in page 24 Mr Chairman. That is under Parliament Mr Chairman, and I was reading a particular sentence within page 24; before you reached the bold area that is the recommended area. It reads: "*The Committee could not trace expenditure estimate for the 192 newly recruited staff which account for an amount totalling to **Le15bln.***" And I want further explanation on this. Is it that Parliament is unable to account for **Le15bln** for the 192 staff?

THE CHAIRMAN: Let us admit that portion of the report. If I understand it correctly and as Head of this Institution is very poorly written. For quite some time, the staffs being referred to were not being paid.

HON. LAHAI MARAH: You are right Mr Chairman. If that is so ...

HON. MUSTAPHA M. SELLU: Mr Chairman, observation Sir.

THE CHAIRMAN: Observation on what?

HON. MUSTAPHA M. SELLU: Concerning this report Sir.

THE CHAIRMAN: Are you a Member of this Committee?

HON. MUSTAPHA M. SELLU: I am not Mr Chairman. But I have a point to make Sir.

THE CHAIRMAN: Will it help us move forward?

HON. MUSTAPHA M. SELLU: It will, Mr Chairman.

THE CHAIRMAN: I will listen to you.

HON. MUSTAPHA M. SELLU: Thank you very much. I think with regards to this particular report, I want to suggest that during the report writing it was the Clerk and the substantive Chairman of this Committee that were really in control of this Report. I am suggesting that we wait for the substantive Chairman to come and respond otherwise we would not be having sufficient clarification.

This is the more reason why these reports are written on time; they should be distributed to Members for them to au fait with the issues so they can be able to argue out points. But at this point, we are moving in a direction where questions are generating from the report and we don't have the substantive Chairman here to probably respond because he knows better, I assume. So, I am suggesting that we wait for him since we have two or three more days.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: I want to believe the Committee constitutes Members of Parliament and as per Committee procedures, the majority of the Committee should carry the day even when a question is put to the Chairman.

The Chairman is not the solitary Member of the Committee; he is not the ultimate Member of the Committee. If Members of Parliament, participated in Committee proceedings and are very incapable to present or to defend what they deliberated on, then I am afraid because, the Chairman was only part of the Committee; he did not take any decision solitarily. All what happened in the Committee was conscientiously agreed upon. So, I believe every Member of the Committee must be capacitated to stand in the stead of the Chairman. The Deputy also was there; nothing was done in secret that the Chairman knows that other Members of the Committee don't know.

THE CHAIRMAN: Did you speak as one?

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: I am a Member of the Committee Sir.

THE CHAIRMAN: Did you meet to adopt this report before bringing it to Plenary?

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: We didn't Sir.

THE CHAIRMAN: Who else is here that is a Member of Committee [1]?

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Mr Chairman, I wasn't.

THE CHAIRMAN: Wait a minute. You have answered my question. Honourable Member, did you hear Honourable Kargbo's answer?

HON. BOCKARIE MOMOH: Very well Mr Chairman.

THE CHAIRMAN: Can you collaborate that answer or not?

HON. BOCKARIE MOMOH: Very well Mr Chairman, I do.

THE CHAIRMAN: You collaborate that?

HON. BOCKARIE MOMOH: Yes Mr Chairman.

THE CHAIRMAN: The report was not adopted?

HON. BOCKARIE MOMOH: Yes Mr Chairman.

THE CHAIRMAN: And yet is appearing in Plenary here?

HON. BOCKARIE MOMOH: We are only preview to it this morning in the Well.

THE CHAIRMAN: Let me confer with the.....

HON. DOMINIC T. LAVALIE: I want to agree with my colleague. I believe this problem cuts across the other Committees.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay fine. You have answered the point. Thank you. All the other Committee Members, is that reflective of what happened?

HON. DOMINIC T. LAVALIE: Exactly so Mr Chairman. Of course that is my submission.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay fine. Let me draw attention to the likely implications of what you are saying. I would like to confer with the Leaders of the Political Parties together with the Chairman of the Finance Committee. Leaders please come forward. Honourable Members, please take your seats. It's becoming very clear that there have been certain short comings in the work of the Sub Committees of the Committee of Supply and those short comings need to be revisited and remedies found before coming to plenary. The implication is that the time we have slated for an adjournment might have to be shifted.

So for those who are planning to quit the city early, please go and reconsider your plans. We may be staying here longer than anticipated but having said that, I now entertain Dr Kandeh Yumkellah.

HON. KANDEH K. YUMKELLAH: Based on our Leadership consultations, I wish to move that we adjourn this session to tomorrow and that all Committees continue to meet, read their reports and adopt their report and it also gives us time to study our reports. That is my Motion and I am looking for a seconder.

Mr Chairman, but it also implies that we have to add one day before we adjourn. I move a Motion that we adjourn this sitting for today and we resume again tomorrow morning.

HON. IBRAHIM T. CONTEH: Mr Chairman, sorry because I don't know whether we have received the seconder, but I am in a lost as to why are we asking for an adjournment. Is it because we doubt the credibility of the report or whether the report is too open? For me, it would be nice that when we adopt his Motion, we understand the reasons for adjournment. If we are adjourning because the report is incorrect, then that is fine, but if we are adjourning to revisit and maybe review some of the facts in the report then there is a problem.

HON. ABDUL K. KAMARA: Mr Chairman, I think the purpose for adjourning is double folds:

Firstly, the fact that Committee Members in their own Committee cannot defend their own report, it shows there is negligence on the job being done by the very Committee Members and Members of Parliament.

Secondly, there is not enough Leadership by the Chairman and for a Deputy Chairman not to defend his report it shows the looseness of these Committees. So, we have time now to go work together as Committees and ensure we do the needful for the public to understand what we are doing or else, what we have done injustice to the people of Sierra Leone. So, let's go back and do our assignment well and come to this Well and do our people proud.

THE CHAIRMAN: I have a Motion before the House; any Seconder?

HON. ABDUL K. KAMARA: I second the Motion Sir.

HON. DOMINIC T. LAVALIE: We have just listened to one aspect of the report I want to plead with the House that we listen to the second report if there are discrepancies...

THE CHAIRMAN: No. let me deal with the Motion before us first.

HON. DOMINIC T. LAVALIE: okay!

HON. JOSEPH W. LAMIN: Mr Speaker, I want to move a counter motion.

THE CHAIRMAN: You want to move a counter motion?

HON. JOSEPH W. LAMIN: Yes Mr Speaker.

THE CHAIRMAN: You confidently want to do so?

HON. JOSEPH W. LAMIN: Yes Mr Speaker.

THE CHAIRMAN: Honourable please take your sit. I am going to entertain your counter Motion if you have a seconder. Oh you have withdrawn.

HON. JOSEPH W. LAMIN: No. I am not.

THE CHAIRMAN: I am getting conflicting things now. Have you withdrawn or not? What is your counter motion?

HON. JOSEPH W. LAMIN: Mr Chairman, I want to say those Committee that are here whose Members consulted among themselves and their report are ready will go ahead with the report. Like my Committee, we met and we adopted our report.

HON. ABDUL K. KOROMA: The question is how many Committees are we talking about and what is the percentage? If it is just **5%** of all Committees, we are still not doing justice to the people of Sierra Leone. Withdraw, and do the needful.

HON. MOMOH BOCKARIE: Honourable Member can you withdraw your Motion?

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes Honourable Member, you are the last before I make my ruling.

HON. MAHMOUD M. KALOKO: Mr Chairman, before you make your ruling the very first day of laying the Budget in Parliament, we were supplied with a Bill entitled; the Appropriation Act 2020. I am specifically singling out vote 116 which is Parliament. The first document supply to us was vote 116 over **Le42bln** and that document was withdrawn from us, and the other document that was given to us shows **Le37bln**, so

whiles you are giving your ruling and why the various Committee is going to adopt the constitution let us take note of over **Le42bln** was earlier on allocated for Parliament.

THE CHAIRMAN: That matter is bit extraneous to what we are considering. Honourable Members, a Motion has been moved and seconded. Let me draw attention to the implication; you may have noticed that Madam Minister has been coming and going several times conferring with me, obviously there are concerns.

There legitimate concerns on the part of the Ministry and Government, but equally importantly, there are legitimate concerns on the part of Parliament, and I am here to see how best we can balance the two. The appropriation Act has to be passed before we rise; I am sure we all agreed to that. The implications of what we are about to do are: that maybe extra days will be added to our work more than we anticipated.

Secondly, we may have to sit for longer hours than we anticipated, so those are the two serious implications, but since we are hear as servant of the people to do the work the people have sent us to do, then so be it.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[Motion move by Honourable Member has been carried]

THE CHAIRMAN: Now we shall organise our work as follows:

The rest of today would be spent by the respective Committees to meet and adopt their report and that adoption must be done today. If it means you have to meet in midnight so be it, and tomorrow we shall commence considerations of the result of your deliberations. Once we start to continue deliberating until we finish and pass the Appropriation Bill that is before us. Those are just the implications of the decision that you have just made in the service of the people that you all represent, and I am going to ask the Clerk to be very strict about time keeping and attendance to make sure everybody is here. It is everybody's business to make sure we are here, and if the MDAs think they can take an early holiday Parliament is saying definitely not. We expect full representation and now the high level required of all MDAs to be here, because if you are not here we are not going to consider and pass the Budget that you have submitted to Parliament.

THE HOUSE RESUMES FROM COMMITTEE STAGE

HON. IBRAHIM B. KARGBO: Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Yes!

HON. IBRAHIM B. KARGBO: To those people who have been given the responsibility of chairing the various Committees to make themselves available whenever we discuss the content of their Committees, because I must say that today was an embarrassment, when we suddenly discover that one Committee did not have their own Chairperson here, and what was worst is that his Deputy could not explain himself.

Mr Speaker, perhaps you will help us in this regards. We agreed that the adjournment is in place, but may we also state that we want to avoid this kind of embarrassment in the future. Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: I will refer that matter to the Chairman of the Finance Committee, to make sure that the Chairmen of the sub Committees of your Committee are in full attendance, reconsidering their submission and also to be in plenary when their report had been considered.

MS PATRICIA N. LERVERLY [*The Deputy Minister of Finance*]: Mr Speaker, good practice in Budget governance requires that we secure the Appropriation Act for 2020 before the end of this year meaning that we are making an appeal as the Ministry of Finance to this Honourable House to work with us and ensure that we do securing the Appropriation Act before December 31st of this year. So, we hope that as you are going back to the different Committees that you continue your deliberation and secure the adoption of the report, and when we do come back tomorrow, we will quickly go through the different Committees' reports. Thank you.

HON. FRANCIS A. KAISAMBA: Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Let me hear from the Chairman of the Finance Committee.

HON. FRANCIS A. KAISAMBA: Yes. I have listened to the caution given by the Deputy Minister, but we have basically just asked for one day that we look at the report today and we resume tomorrow. I am sure by Wednesday we shall have completed and pass this appropriation Bill into Act of 2020. So, on behalf of this Parliament I am sure we will allay

your fears. We have been working with the Minister of Finance as representative of the people and we will continue to do just that because it's our job. Thank you so much.

THE SPEAKER: Yes Honourable Kandeh Yumkella.

HON. KANDEH YUMKELLA: To add to what the Chairman of the Finance Committee has said, I just want to say to Madam Minister of Finance, some of us are looking at the report and there are number of places where you will see the Committee says "They have asked for more information" so there are some areas that inconclusive. For example, so and so should provide further explanation for X, Y, Z.

Madam Minister, even in the United States sometime Budgets are delayed just for the sake of thoroughness. I am not trying to say we will delay but if Parliament so wishes that we need more information to approve the appropriation. I think whoever will bear with us to do our job thoroughly so we may try to finish by 31st of December, but it could very well be January 15th.

Mr Speaker, what I am saying here is that as independent entity expediency cannot prevent efficiency and thoroughness, so we understand the time table of Finance, but we are also trying to collect information and understand the Budget properly.

THE SPEAKER: Well, it's always avowed objective and aim of the Government to be efficient and effective and we are part and parcel of that mission as an organ of Government. So, I am sure the Minister will agree that we shall endeavour to rise and produce an outcome that is efficient and effective and in consonance with avowed aims of Government of which we are a part. So, we do take cognisance of the need for us to meet the target date, and we shall work towards it, but we shall not sacrifice efficiency and effectiveness. On that note, stand adjourned...

HON. ABDUL K. KAMARA: Mr Speaker, S O [23] Sir and this is also important.

THE SPEAKER: Okay. Let me entertain your S O [23].

HON. ABDUL K. KAMARA: Thank you Mr Speaker. There is a letter from the Bank Governor of Sierra Leone titled; "Multiple withdrawals of foreign currency notes."

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this letters send to Banks not allowing business people and individuals to withdraw multiple from their foreign account is one that has the

tendency of disrupting business people in Sierra Leone and also people are running foreign account within the banking system. This has the tendency for people who have foreign currencies to withdraw and does banking transaction outside Sierra Leone depriving our Local Banks, and this also has the tendency of busting the black market. So, all I am saying Mr Speaker, with regards to this...

HON. FRANCIS A. KAISAMBA: Mr Speaker, Point of Order. The Honourable Member, from Kambia stood on S O [23] and the explanation he is profiling will generate a lot of controversy. I am not sure he has stood on the proper S.O to proffer all the impression he is giving. That is my point. Standing Order [23] is personal explanation and is devoid from controversy.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Mr Speaker, I can confirm to you that he is dealing in dollars and that is affecting him personally and that is why he is bringing it up [*Applause*].

HON. ABDUL K. KAMARA: Is there a better explanation than that.

THE SPEAKER: As an ex- banker can you endorse that?

HON. IBRAHIM T. CONTEH: What I would want to say is, if we are going to entertain the content of what he wants to bring to the House, let us have him and go through the letter so we will go exactly what the catch is because as an ex-banker what I know this is not a new regulation before now we have a regulation that says we should not withdraw more than **\$10,000** a day in an account. Whether you hold **\$10,000Mln** or hold **\$5Mln** or **\$20Mln** except Mining companies with valid mining licences that can show that the revenues that they want to withdraw is as a result of monies gain from there mining activities. Therefore, I do not know the content of what he has, but it will be good that he read the content so that will understand whether this is violation or the Bank Governor is only revisiting an old regulation and enforce that regulation, so as to ensure the circulation of foreign currency over our local currency does not take precedence.

THE SPEAKER: Well, I do not know whether that answers the S.O [23] issue? I do not know whether is still within the ambit of S.O [23]? They said you were in mid-flight so try and land.

HON. ABDUL K. KAMARA: My position in this Mr Speaker, as the Honourable Members of Parliament, I think we only have one duty. I want us to uphold in this, call the Bank Governor to this House to explain to the people of Sierra Leone. You do not dictate what I do; you also have the responsibility...

THE SPEAKER: We have an outstanding Motion on that issue?

HON. ABDUL K. KAMARA: Thank you Sir.

THE SPEAKER: But that still does not tell the House the content.

HON. ABDUL K. KAMARA: Well, Mr Speaker, again sometimes it is good that you encourage Members of Parliament, to do proper research, let them do not depend on what people bring to the House. They also have the tendency to go out and do more research. For that reason, I will not read this letter deliberately Mr Speaker.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Mr Speaker, interestingly those who are requesting that this letter is read are the very people who never wanted him to talk.

HON. IBRAHIM T. CONTEH: Mr Speaker, taking into cognisance from what the Honourable colleague has said, it is but wise that if we do not understand the content that we do not bring it to the plenary because we cannot discuss what we do not understand. The essence of research is that, all of us can research on various frequencies at the same time

THE SPEAKER: If the content of the letter is not disclosed, then I will give a ruling that whatever he has said in relation to that letter be struck out of the record.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Mr Speaker, he will read it.

HON. IBRAHIM B. KARGBO: We already gave notification some time ago that taking the deterioration of the exchange rate system in the country into consideration and because we are concerned about the need for us to see an improvement in the state of our economy could we please invite the Bank Governor and the Minister of Finance to this Well to respond to certain questions? But the important thing is that, the aspect of it is still hanging and we wait the day when they will be invited here.

Mr Speaker, I think the business of the economy is very important. It's a pity that my young friend did not continue with his presentation, if he had continued with his

presentation then we would have seen the great need for us to look at the very important of what he was going to say. But all I can say is that the state of the economy has to be looked into and the Bank Governor has to come up with better suggestions than telling us that he has due rules which are not very clear at all. Also very clear that Member of the Public and the private sectors are complaining about the rule. This is why I thought that the Member of Parliament should have continued with his presentation, because a good number of people are complaining about the presentation of the Governor.

Thank you Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Well, frankly Acting Leader of Opposition, since a Member of your own side came up with this, you should have advised him to continue and to read it.

HON. IBRAHIM T. CONTEH: Mr Speaker, before he read the content of the letter can I state that...

THE SPEAKER: Let me remind the House that there is an outstanding Motion that we passed here to invite the Governor of the Central Bank to come and answer to certain questions. I now direct that a letter is issued to the Governor inviting him to come here on an appropriate date and that date should be settled in consultations with me. I release the Honourable Deputy Minister let her take leave of us.

HON. IBRAHIM T. CONTEH: Mr Speaker, can I state that with regards to the matter mentioned by the Honourable Acting Leader of the Opposition that currently the issue is a turning issue to business people, it does not however state that there is no law binding business people from making transfers from their account.

THE SPEAKER: No. We cannot go into the substantive discussion of the Motion; the letter was not read out.

HON. IBRAHIM T. CONTEH: Mr Speaker, is not the Motion is the letter.

THE SPEAKER: The letter was not read out maybe the Honourable Member needs to go and prepare himself properly before raising the content of the letter with us.

ANNOUNCEMENT

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, one of our own had sadly lost his other half, the Honourable Bai Sama Kamara; I am saddened to announce the loss of his wife. Members

of Parliament of Constituency 060 which sad event took place a little while ago and the fortieth day is slated for the 7th February, 2020 in Kambia. May I ask all of us to rise and observe a minute silence in honour in memory of Mrs Kamara.

May Allah forgive her mistakes on earth and grant her soul eternal rest in His Heavenly kingdom, Amen. We shall meet for the first segment of tomorrow and then tomorrow afternoon by mid-day we shall all retire to the State Hall for a short ceremony in honour of the Late Honourable Dr Salia Jusu Sheriff.

[The House Rose at 1: 55 p.m. and was adjourned to 17th December, 2020 10:00 a.m.]