



OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

[HANSARD]

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

THIRD SESSION –SECOND MEETING

TUESDAY, 16TH FEBRUARY, 2021

SESSION – 2020/2021



OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMETARY DEBATES

[HANSARD]

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

VOLUME:

NUMBER:

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

Proceedings of the Sitting of the House
Held on Tuesday, 16th February, 2021.

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THE LEADER OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 118, SUB-SECTION 7 OF THE CONSTITUTION OF SIERRA LEONE ACT NO. 6 OF 1991

GIFT FROM THE CHINESE EMBASSY FOR THE USE OF THE MINISTRY OF YOUTH AFFAIRS AS MENTIONED BELOW:

[I] ONE REAPING MACHINE

[II] TWO MINI TILLERS

[III] ONE MOTOR TRICYCLE

[IV] ONE LAPTOP COMPUTER

[V] ONE PRINTER

[VI] ONE CARTRIDGE

[VII] TEN SOLAR LIGHTS

[VIII] TEN SOLAR POWER BANKS

[IX] FIVE ELECTRIC FANS

[X] ONE SEVENTY INCHES TV

[XI] ONE PROJECTOR

[XII] ONE PROJECTOR SCREEN

V. BILL

HON. ABDUL S. MARRAY CONTEH

CHAIRMAN, LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

[I] REPORT ON THE BILL ENTITLED THE MEDICAL EXAMINERS ACT, 2020

THE MEDICAL EXAMINERS ACT, 2020

COMMITTEE STAGE AND THIRD READING
THE MINISTER OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS



THE CHAMBER OF PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE

Official Hansard Report of the Proceedings of the House

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

Tuesday, 16th February, 2021.

I. PRAYERS

[The Table Clerk, Mr Ishmaila Kabba, Read the Prayers]

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

[The Deputy Speaker, Hon. Segepoh Solomon Thomas in the Chair]

The House was called to Order

Suspension of S.O 5[2]

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

THE SPEAKER: Let me at this point inform Members of Parliament that we are going to be extremely brief because we all know that the air conditioners are not working and I want to believe that we are all uncomfortable. Therefore, do not surprise if I decide to call two speakers from all sides of the Isles to speak for five minutes.

II. CORRECTION OF VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS FOR THE PARLIAMENTARY SITTING HELD ON TUESDAY, 9TH FEBRUARY, 2021.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, we go through the record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting, held on Tuesday, 9th February, 2021. As usual, we shall skip pages 1 to 4. We start with Page 5. Page 5? Page 6? Page 7? Page 8? Page 9? Page 10? And Page 11? And Page 12? If there is no correction or comment, can someone move for the adoption of the record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting, held on Tuesday, 9th February, 2021 as presented?

HON. SIMEON FEFEGULA: I so move, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON. MASSAY N. ARUNA: I so second.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed To]

[Record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting held on Tuesday, 9th February, 2021 has been adopted as presented]

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: Mr Speaker, I have an observation to make.

THE SPEAKER: Please go ahead, Honourable Daniel B. Koroma.

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I noted your opening statement regarding the state and condition of this Well and your plan to make sure that this sitting will not take longer time than expected. I am sure it is not procedural for a Bill to be presented today by the Chairman of the Legislative Committee and is discussed the same day. You will also agree with me that passing Bills into law is one of

our principal responsibilities of Members of Parliament. With the permission of the Speaker, therefore, I suggest that after the presentation of the report, we defer the discussions of the said Bill to the next adjourned date, otherwise brevity is not **100%** assured. In other words, the Chairman can present his report today, but we discuss the Second Reading and the Committee Stage at a later date, so that due diligence is done to the Bill. This is a Government Bill and must be discussed thoroughly or giving it the due diligence it deserves rather than just rush through and pass it into law. It is just a suggestion, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Daniel B. Koroma being very brief is subjective. It depends on how we look at it. That does not mean we will do injustice to the Bill. We will do justice to the Bill. We will only have to reduce the number of speakers, so that we do not waste unnecessary time that was what I meant. Of course, we will do justice to the Bill because it is very important. Mr Leader, you have just heard Honourable Daniel B. Koroma, what have you got to say?

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA [*Leader of Government Business*]: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I think he has proposed something based on the atmosphere. We can start, but if we realise that the atmosphere is not good for us, then we can adjourn at that moment. The Honourable Member was saying that when you arrive at the Committee Stage, it would be a clause by clause situation. Therefore, the Committee Stage is critical and Members would want to propose certain amendments. The Bill itself is not controversial, but Members maybe come up with issues that are controversial during Committee Stage. So, what I will suggest to the House is that we continue the proceedings and when we reach at a point wherein we think the atmosphere is not conducive for us, we can adjourn the sitting.

THE SPEAKER: Certainly, Mr Leader.

III. PAPER LAID

THE LEADER OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

HON MATHEW S. NYUMA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to lay the following gifts from the Chinese Embassy to the Ministry of Youth Affairs in accordance with Section 118 Sub-Section 7 of the Constitution of Sierra Leone Act No.6 of 1991:

- [i] One [1] Reaping Machine;
- [ii] Two [2] Mini Tillers;
- [iii] One [1] Motor Tricycle;
- [iv] One [1] Laptop Computer;
- [v] One [1] Printer;
- [vi] One [1] Cartridge;
- [vii] Ten [10] Solar Lights;
- [viii] Ten [10] Solar Power Banks;
- [ix] Five [5] Electric Fans;
- [x] One [1] Seventy Inches TV;
- [xi] One [1] Projector; and
- [xii] One [1] Projector Screen.

HON. HASSAN A. SESAY: Mr Speaker, Point of Order. I want to say something on the gifts just presented to the House. I am sure whenever a good deed is done, those who provided the gesture must be appreciated. I think it is inherent upon us, as Members of Parliament and as a Parliament of Sierra Leone, to always appreciate the good things that the Chinese are doing for us. Many a time they have done it and this is not the first time to give gifts to the youths. They have provided gifts to the Youth Commission and we commended them for that gesture. I think we must continue to appreciate them for what they are doing in terms of helping with the governance process. Section 118[7] that was referred to by the Leader of Government Business stipulates that these things must not be discriminatory. I am sure when people give you gifts, they want to be appreciated, whether big or small. I want to however state here that what we normally receive here are the smaller gifts, but Section 118[7] did not discriminate the kind of gifts that must come to Parliament. I am sure every gift that is for and on behalf of the people of Sierra Leone must be presented to Parliament.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, a fleet of vehicles was donated to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, but we never knew about it or we were not informed as a Parliament. Again, tons of rice was donated, but this Parliament was not informed. We are the people's representatives and the rice that was given was to help the school feeding programme *[Applause]*. If a gift of this nature was given on behalf of our school children, Parliament should be informed accordingly. I raised this issue here the last time and the Speaker promised to get an explanation that befits the question I raised, but we have not got any explanation. The Chinese want to be commended for doing big things for the people of Sierra Leone, but we have not had the chance to do that because I will not commend people when I have not seen what they have done for us. Therefore, I call on you to ensure that we get an explanation, particularly so because the Minister in charge had been exonerated and there was no misappropriation.

THE SPEAKER: Mr Leader of Government Business, have you got anything to say?

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: Mr Speaker, I was here when he started, but I think there are procedures to the rules of the House. If he wants us to commend the Chinese, I have laid the document on the Table and he should move a Motion to debate whatever item presented. These items are not for us and I think we have done the needful. I was not here when he said it, but I think we have done what he is talking about before. We have invited the Chinese Ambassador and his team, and we showered praises on them for what they have been doing for us, especially the assistance relating to COVID-19. The Speaker gave a statement on behalf of Parliament. Mr Speaker, if they want us to debate every gift we receive here, we will do that.

HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS: Mr Speaker, the Honourable Member from Tonkolili made reference to the vehicles that were donated to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. I think he is right because we were expecting the Ministry to present those gifts to Parliament in line with the relevant Section just referenced *[Applause]*. We are not going to ask them to bring the vehicles to Parliament, but let us

follow the procedure and I am sure that was what the Honourable Member was trying to say.

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: I am sure Section 118[7] has not been respected at all, but after the Speaker made a pronouncement in this House that every gifts given to MDAs should be brought to Parliament, MDAs have been following that order because have been bringing the documents and I have been laying them on the Table. It is however wrong for failing to present gifts to this House and that is in violation of Section 118[7].

THE SPEAKER: Mr Leader, what the Honourable Hassan Sesay was trying to say is that gifts are brought, but the MDAs seem to be determining which set of gifts to be brought to Parliament. He is saying that the State was given fleet of vehicles and the State was also given rice, but those gifts were not brought to Parliament, it was only some sets of gifts that are brought to Parliament. I am sure this is what the Honourable Member was trying to say and I totally agree with him. The vehicles donated to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation should have been brought to this House and confirm them as a Parliament *[Applause]*.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Section 118[7] is very clear. In line with that, I want to move that the Clerk of this Parliament inform through a Memo to all MDAs that going forward, all gifts be brought to this House for confirmation. Section 118[7] is very clear and it reads: **"Parliament shall be notified by the appropriate Minister or authority of all gifts donations, grants and pledges made to the State of Sierra Leone."** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we should do a Memo informing the Executive that whatever gifts or grants they receive on behalf of the people of this country, should be laid in this Parliament.

THE SPEAKER: Is it a Motion, Honourable Member?

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: Point of Order, Mr Speaker. I have talked to him and we should not be at par with this process. Mr Speaker, there was a memo to the effect.

THE SPEAKER: There is a memo already?

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: There is memo already and we agreed that any MDA that violates Section 118[7] is contempt of Parliament. In that case, let us refer to the memo if an MDA violates that order and will be treated as contempt of Parliament and we do not need to worry about that. We are now waiting to see if you receive what my colleague on the other side of the aisle was talking about. If you have received gifts and you failed to bring it to Parliament, we will take actions for contempt. We have been doing it and we have done series of laying of papers in line with Section 118. I have done that on several occasions, but what is now needed is enforcing the relevant provision. We should monitor it and if somebody violates the provision, the issue will be treated as contempt.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you, Honourable Member.

IV. BILL

THE MEDICAL EXAMINERS ACT, 2020

COMMITTEE STAGE AND THIRD READING

THE MINISTER OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS

THE CHAIRMAN LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE, REPORT ON THE BILL ENTITLED: THE MEDICAL EXAMINERS ACT, 2020

HON. ABDUL S. MARRAY-CONTEH: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I present to you the Fifth Report of the Legislative Committee, Third Session of the Fifth Parliament of the Second Republic of Sierra Leone, entitled, "The Medical Examiners Act, 2020" presented to Parliament on Tuesday, 16th February, 2021.

1. INTRODUCTION

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to present the Fifth Report of the Legislative Committee, Third Session of the Fifth Parliament of the Second Republic of Sierra Leone, on the Bill Entitled, 'The Medical Examiners Act, 2020 being an Act to repeal and replace the Coroners Act, 1907 [Cap 9] to establish the Office of Medical Examiner, to provide for the appointment of the Chief Medical Examiner and other staff, to require the reporting of reportable deaths, to establish the procedures for investigation into and

reporting of reportable deaths, matters related to public health or safety and the administration of justice and to provide for other related matters.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Bill, having gone through the Second Reading, was committed to the Legislative Committee for scrutiny pursuant to Standing Orders 51[1]. Subsequently, the Committee met on Wednesday, 10th February, 2021 in Committee Room 1 of Parliament Building, with the following objectives:

- To scrutinise in detail the principles and provisions of the Bill and to make amendments where necessary.
- To ascertain the constitutional and legal implications contained therein; and
- To report to the Plenary for consideration by the Committee of the Whole House in line with S.Os. 53.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in attendance were the Chairman Legislative Committee, the Chairman Internal Affairs Committee, Members of the Legislative Committee, the Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs, the Government Consultant Forensic Pathologist, Director Crime Services [Sierra Leone Police], Parliamentary Counsel, the Permanent Secretary and a representative from the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The list of Members of the Committees present is also attached to the report.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Legislative Committee, having scrutinised the Bill line by line and Clause by Clause, recommended the following amendments to the House for approval:

[a] The Long Title of the Bill be approved.

[b] Part I; Preliminary:

[i] Clause One

Interpretations

The Committee had a unanimous decision that the definition of the phrase, 'Office of the Chief Medical Examiner' be amended to add the phrase '**or his designate**' after the word 'Examiner' and before the word 'established.' It now reads as '**Office of the Chief Medical Examiner or his designate**' established under Section 2.

[ii] That the word 'Rescuer' be defined as "someone authorised by the Chief Medical Examiner to assist with the retrieval and preservation of bodies' be inserted immediately after the definition 'reportable death.'

PART II – ESTABLISHMENT OF THE OFFICE OF THE MEDICAL EXAMINER

Clause Two - Establishment of the Office of Medical Examiner be approved.

Clause Three- Appointment and qualification of Chief Medical Examiner be approved.

Clause Four- Tenure of Office of Chief Medical Examiner be approved.

Clause Five-Remuneration of Chief Medical Examiner be approved.

Clause 6 Sub-Clause 1 be amended by replacing 'Chief Medical Examiner with the word 'Minister' after 'the' and replacing the word 'Minister' with the word 'Chief Medical Examiner' after the word 'the' by inserting the following 'or a medical care practitioner' after the word 'Physician' and before the word 'experienced.' It now reads as, **'The Minister shall, after consultation with the Chief Medical Examiner, appoint a qualified physician or a medical care practitioner experienced in the field of forensic pathology and licensed to practice in Sierra Leone to serve as Deputy Chief Medical Examiner.'**

Clause 7, Sub-Clause 1 be amended by replacing the word 'any' with the word '**all**' and delete the word 'of' and the phrase 'as he may consider necessary' after the word 'Sierra Leone' and before the word 'for.' It now reads as **'The Chief Medical Examiner may, after consultation with the Minister, establish offices in all the administrative regions of Sierra Leone for the effective performance of the functions of the Office of the Medical Examiner.'**

PART III - REPORTING THE DEATHS AND PRESERVING RECORDS

Clause 8 - Reportable deaths be approved.

Clause 9 - that the side notes be amended to add after 'death' a phrase 'in custody or care.' The side note now reads, **'Obligation to report death in custody or care.'**

Clause 9, Sub-Clause 1b[2] be amended by replacing the word 'custody' with the word 'care' after the word 'official' and before the word 'the' to now read as **'Outside a place of custody, it shall be the duty of the person in whose official care the deceased was at the time of his death to prepare and submit a report of the**

death to a police officer within twenty-four [24] hours upon becoming aware of the death.'

Clause 10 - Police officer to report to Chief Medical Examiner be approved.

Clause 11 - Viewing of body by Chief Medical Examiner be approved.

Clause 12 be amended by inserting a new Sub-Clause 2 to read as **'the Chief Medical Examiner may, in the performance of his duty of retrieval and preservation of bodies, recruit rescuers to assist with this duty, especially in remote, riverine and hard to access areas.'** The current Sub-Clause 2 now becomes Sub-Clause 3.

Clause 13 - Duty to preserve medical records be approved.

Clause 14 - Certification and completion of report of death be approved.

Clause 15 - Certificate as evidence be approved.

Clause 16 - is amended by replacing the word 'identity' with the word 'identify' after the word 'shall' before the word 'the' by also deleting one of the 'and' after the word 'deceased' and before the word 'shall' to now read as **'the findings of the Chief Medical Examiner shall identify the cause, manner, date, time and place of death of the deceased and shall be made with reasonable care based on a preponderance of the evidence.'**

Clause 17- Custodian of records be approved.

Clause 18 Sub-Clause 2a [ii] be amended to correct the spelling 'diseased' to 'deceased'

PART IV - FUNCTIONS AND POWERS OF THE CHIEF MEDICAL EXAMINER

Clause 19[b] is amended by replacing the word 'assigning' after the word 'certificate' and before the word 'the' with the word 'stating' to now read; **'issues death certificate, stating the cause of death.'**

Clause 20 Sub-Clause 2[b] is amended by rearranging the numbering. There are two Roman numbers, the second one changes to 'iii' and Roman number 'iii' now becomes Roman number 'iv.'

[iii]. Clause 21 be amended to insert a Sub-Clause 3 to read' **"A post-mortem examination that is caused to be conducted under the hand or directives of**

the Chief Medical Examiner shall be at the cost of the State except in an instance where such examination is privately requested.”

Clause 22- Purpose of investigation be approved.

Clause 23- Post-mortem examination report be approved.

Clause 24- Power to order exhumation be approved.

Clause 25 Sub-Clause 1 is amended by inserting immediately after the word 'body' at the end of the sentence. 'For such release of the body, it shall not bear any cost on the beavered family, except where such order and additional services are required' to now read; **“Where a death, which is or appears to be a reportable death has been reported to the Chief Medical Examiner and the bodies in Sierra Leone, the Chief Medical Examiner shall have control of the body until such time as he issues a certificate ordering the release of the body. For such release of the body it shall not bear any cost on the beavered family except where such other additional services are required.’**

PART V - FUNDS AND ACCOUNTS OF THE OFFICE OF THE MEDICAL EXAMINER

Clause 26 - Funds of Office of Medical Examiner be approved.

Clause 27 - Account and audit of Office of Medical Examiner be approved.

Clause 28 - Internal Audit be approved.

Clause 29 - Financial year of the office of the Medical Examiner be approved.

Clause 30 Sub-Clause 3 is amended by deleting all the words after 'Parliament' and replacing them with the following phrase, 'not after three months of the following financial year' to now read; **'The Minister shall lay copies of the annual report before Parliament not after three months of the following financial year.'**

PART VI - MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS:

Clause 31- Repeal of Cap 9 be approved.

Clause 32- is amended by deleting the word 'may' after the word 'Minister' and before the word 'make' and adding the following words 'shall in consultation with the Chief Medical Examiner' to now read **'The Minister shall in consultation with the Chief Medical Examiner make such regulations, orders and rules as may be**

considered necessary or expedient to give effect to and for the better carrying out the objective and purposes of this Act.'

3. CONCLUSION

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Legislative Committee, having scrutinised the Bill entitled 'The Medical Examiners Act, 2020 recommended these proposals to the House for approval. The Report reflects the consensus of the Honourable Members of the Committee present. I therefore move that the House pass the Bill entitled 'The Medical Examiners Act, 2020' through Committee Stage, Third Reading and into law.

I thank you for your attention.

Signed:

Hon. Abdul S. Marray Conteh
Chairman, Legislative Committee

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much, Mr Chairman. Unfortunately, we cannot proceed because Members of Parliament deserve better. We are going to adjourn this particular sitting to next week Tuesday and we urge the administration of Parliament to ensure that this Well is comfortable for Members of Parliament *[Applause]*.

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: I want to remind the Leader of Government Business and the entire the leadership of this House about the standard we used to maintain regarding COVID-19. Parliament was very proactive in terms of summoning the Ministers of Internal Affairs, and Health and Sanitation to this House. We have been inviting them to come and tell us, and by extension the people of this country the status of the pandemic in the country. This is the best platform to explain to the people's representatives their state of preparedness. We have heard recently the resurgence of the Ebola virus in a neighbouring country. I therefore suggest that Parliament continues to summon the authorities concerned to tell us their state of preparedness. They have to inform the people of this country through their elected

representative preparedness. Maybe a vaccine to combat the Ebola virus has been developed. We want to know MDAs level of communication with the World Health Organisation [WHO]. If they take information for granted, the disease may spill over. I want Parliament to keep to that standard that we have set under the leadership of Leader of Government Business and the respective leaders. We should not relax this time and we should keep up to our standard. We should not take things for granted. That is just my suggestion, Mr Speaker.

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: Thank you very much, Honourable Daniel B. Koroma. I think we have standards. The Speaker is not around because they went to Guinea on this same Yenga and the Ebola crises. We have just approved the Minister of Health and Sanitation last week. When the Speaker returns from Guinea, we will follow on what you have said and also get briefing from Mr Speaker, so that we can get a thorough update. That will also enable Members of Parliament ask relevant questions and get factual information from Member of Parliament living around the border areas, such as Kambia, Kailahun and Koidu. They will tell us exactly what is happening. I do not know about the vaccine, but the Minister is before us.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Minister will explain to us what they discussed in Guinea. Mr Speaker, we have to work towards this, so that we can ensure that our people are safe. This is a compounded problem because COVID-19 is still with us. Whilst we are finding ways of dealing with COVID-19, the Ebola Virus has reappeared in other countries. Mr Speaker, we should not take anything for granted at this time. We conquered the Ebola disease, but it has reappeared and we have to be vigilant. My colleague raised a very good point and we need to take it into serious consideration. We also need to call on the COVID-19 team to come and explain to us about the variant and the vaccine. I heard that we have the vaccine and we need to know something about it. The Honourable Member raised a very good point and I want to thank him.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, since we intend to adjourn to Tuesday next week, we should get the key operatives, like the Minister of Health and Sanitation, the

Minister of Internal Affairs and maybe NaCOVERC Coordinator to come and explain to Members of Parliament the state of their preparedness.

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: I think we have to do what you have just said without further delay. We have to get the Speaker informed when he comes back. We can send letters to the relevant officials to come and explain their state of preparedness. With your ruling, we will summon them next week.

THE SPEAKER: Table Clerks, please ensure that this information is passed on to the Clerk of Parliament, so that the NaCOVERC Coordinator, the Minister of Health and Sanitation, and the Minister of Internal Affairs appear before Parliament next week Tuesday to explain to Members of Parliament their state of preparedness.

HON. DR KANDEH K. YUMKELLA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to support what the Leader of Government Business has just said. Some of us come from the border areas and we need to know what to tell our people. We have one of the most porous borders in the country and we do not want to cause any trouble for this country. Secondly, we have a major fire disaster in Yeliboya in my constituency and this has been happening almost in every two years. This one seems very serious and I will be going there shortly. I have been trying to call the Minister of Political and Public Affairs since ONS is being supervised by that Ministry. So, I just wanted to inform this House that it is a serious fire incident.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I was not here when the Honourable Abdul Karim Kamara raised the issue of the major bashing we are getting from media about this alleged allocations of funds to different Institutions in the Office of the President.' I know my colleagues had raised it here and I am just wondering where we stand. I know that Section 93, Sub-Sections 2, 3 and 6 gives this Parliament the opportunity, the responsibility and powers to conduct its own investigations. We have the Finance and Transparency Committees in this House and they will help the process. The Government will come up with their own facts and figures, but people are asking what Parliament is doing. I think the least we can do is to provide an opportunity for hearings to be done by this Parliament, so that the facts come out. This Parliament has the

power to ask for documents regarding the allegations. I wanted to raise this issue with Mr Speaker and I will follow it up formally. We need to do something which is part of our oath of office and our responsibility. Thank you.

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: Mr Speaker, the Honourable Leader of the NGC just raised an interesting point. We are talking about allegations and you want Parliament to act on allegations? Parliament deals with facts and not allegations. I do not want to go into the intricacies of the allegation, but we do not deal with allegations. We are a credible body and not a social media Parliament; we are a Parliament representing our people *[Applause]*. As Members of Parliament, we follow procedures, and the Constitution and Standing Orders are our guiding documents. These two documents help us to do the right thing. We should be seen doing the right thing instead of reacting to social media information. Thank you.

HON. ALICE J. KUMABEH: Mr Speaker, I stand on S.Os 23.

HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS: Thank you madam.

THE SPEAKER: It is said that the essence of communication is to understand *[Laughter]*. You may proceed.

HON. ALICE J. KUMABEH: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am here to present a very serious incident that occurred in my constituency and that had made my people very disturbed. My people are now suffering. You will agree with me that some of us reside along the river side at the Teaya River. The water is contaminated and the people are not using it any longer. This is due to the mining activities taking place at unknown locations. I have not been able to locate them and huge toxic wastes are deposited in the Teaya River. The impact of water pollution is felt by my constituents, Constituency 092. The water is contaminated and people are no longer using it for domestic purposes. The fishes are being killed and the bigger ones have disappeared. This is sad because fishing is one of the main subsistence activities of the people living along the river. The people are unhappy and

we must do something about it. As we speak, diarrhoea and other water borne diseases are on the rampage.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me share a data with you to show the seriousness of this menace my people are going through. Mr Speaker, twenty five villages are affected in my constituency with a population of eight thousand, seven hundred and seventy-seven [8,777]; four hundred and ninety nine [499] are adults and one thousand two hundred and seventy one are under five children. Total number of diarrhoea cases in 2020 are; fifty three [53] are adults, seventy five [75] are under five children and the total number of deaths as a result of the contaminated water stands at three [3] adults and seven [7] under-five children.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, my people will not continue to die while the mining companies get richer *[Applause]*. At this juncture, I want to crave the indulgence of this House, especially the Speaker to ensure a speedy intervention into this matter. First, we want to know the companies that are involved in this wicked act. This is wickedness and we must find immediate solution *[Applause]*. Second, they should know the damages they have caused to the people and pay reparation *[Applause]*. Third, I suggest that they stop polluting the Teaya River with immediate effect, otherwise I am envisaging a bigger disaster on my constituents. I am not wishing for that, but we should prepare for the worse if we fail to stop them at this point. Mr Speaker, you are a good man and I know you are going to act. I count on you to treat this matter very seriously, so that this menace discontinues. Mr Speaker, this is my humble submission and I thank you very much *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much, Honourable Alice Jebbeh Kumabeh. I am particularly moved by your submission *[Applause]*. Mr Chairman of the Mines Committee, have you got anything to say on this matter?

HON. EMERSON S. LAMINA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am in empathy with the Honourable Member concerning the ordeals her constituents are currently going through. She has personally engaged me on this issue and I have also asked her to find out the mining companies that are operating around Teaya River; and when that

is done, we will summon them here. Sometimes we grant companies permission to mine, but most of them are 419ners or fly by night mining companies and that is why we are having these issues. This also goes to the MDAs that are still contesting that the submission of the agreement is not necessary. Mr Speaker, you can be assured that an action will be taken as soon as the official report from the Honourable Member is received. I want her to submit a comprehensive list of all mining companies operating in her constituency and we will summon them here. I thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Alice Jebbeh Kumabeh, what have you done to towards getting the names of the mining companies along the Teaya River?

HON. ALICE J. KUMABEH: Mr Speaker, I think they are the best people to give us the list of mining companies.

THE SPEAKER: Who is the Chairman of the Committee on Environment?

HON. ALICE J. KUMABEH: I will not be able to trace them in all the districts.

HON. P. C. ALIE BADARA SHERIFF: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am sure the pollution she talked about is not only limited to her constituency, but had gone beyond Constituency 092. When I was coming, I saw the Teaya River at Tayama very dirty and I am sure the people can longer drink from that water. The Teaya River shares boundary with the sea. I got a phone call from somebody who told me that the Company responsible for the pollution of the water in question is the Gold Mining Company in Mogoray Valuya. I do not think Honourable Alice Jebbeh Kumabeh should be the one to conduct the research. Mr Speaker, I am sure we should be each other's keeper. What affect one area may also affect the other. Everybody is running away from COVID-19 and if we have a contagious disease, it will spread. Therefore, I want to crave the indulgence of this House to do something fast. The pollution is coming directly from Mogoray and there should be no compromise as far as matter is concerned. I want this House to take active role on this matter.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, I am sure the National Minerals Agency [NMA] is expected to have full records of the companies mining along the Teaya River. They

should have records of the companies they have given licenses to mine along the Teaya River.

HON. MATTEW S. NYUMA: I think it is crystal clear that when you pass through the Teaya Bridge, you will notice that the colour of the water has changed and that tells you that the water is polluted. So, what I believe we can do through your good office is to have the Committees to meet immediately after sitting, so that they can plan or decide the next line of action. Our first step is to get in touch with the mining companies, so that they tell us the type of contaminants in the river and why that is happening. Secondly, the mining lease agreement will be brought to this House and I do not want the Honourable Member to worry about that at all. This is why we are asking for the mining lease agreement to come to Parliament.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am sure those affected are mainly from Bonthe, Tayama and Kenema District. Members of Parliament who know these mining companies should not hesitate to forward them to us for further action or recommend for their licenses to be suspended. We need an inclusive investigation into this matter by the Committee. I think we have to move a Motion, so that the Committees commence work immediately and present their report. That report is going to inform this House the next line of action.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you, Honourable Member. I want to hear the Motion. I think the Mines Committee, the Committee on Defence and the Committee on Environment should work together and address this particular malaise.

HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS: Mr Speaker, it is only after the submissions of Honourable Alice Jebbeh Kumabeh and the Paramount Chief I came to the realisation that SOCFIN is free of all the allegations levelled against them. In other words, it has been rumoured by the local inhabitants that the chemical used by SOCFIN had been killing the fishes and contaminating the water. We never knew that the mining companies were responsible. You will agree with me that Pujehun District shares boundary with Bonthe District and whatever happens in Bonthe affects us in Pujehun District. As the Leader of Government Business said, we have to make sure that we

address this issue as soon as possible because it is also affecting us in Pujehun District. So, I move that a Committee is set up to investigate this matter. We have to invite the relevant MDAs, so that we get the full details on this issue. I also suggest that the parliamentary Committees visit the Teaya River, so as to ascertain the type of chemical they are using and the company that is using the chemical.

THE SPEAKER: Mr Leader, I wish to suggest that these three Committees go on oversight in that particular area. They should go and obtain first-hand information or ascertain the level of disaster or the effects of what this mining has caused. Of course this Parliament can fund these three Committees.

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: It worth it, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: This has to do with our people and they are the reason we are here. We ensure that these three Committees go on oversight and present a report at the end of their oversight.

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: Mr Speaker, we need time limit.

THE SPEAKER: Certainly, Honourable Member.

THE SPEAKER: The three Committees that should embark on this exercise are the Committee on Mines, Committee on Defence and Committee on the Environment. These Committees should meet and give us the details of their plan. I am sure not everybody from these three Committees will take part. The Chairmen of those Committees would have to nominate representatives, maybe five from each Committee.

HON. REBECCA Y. KAMARA: Mr Speaker, I also suggest that the Committee on Water Resources join the other Committees since this issue relates to water.

THE SPEAKER: I certainly agree with you, Honourable Member.

HON. CHERNOR R. M. BAH: On that note, Mr Speaker, I want to suggest to the Leader of Government Business that we set up a special Committee to carry out this exercise.

THE SPEAKER: I agree with you. We should constitute a special Committee involving these three four Committees: Committee on Water Resources, Committee on Mines and Mineral Resources, Committee on Defence and Committee on the Environment.

HON. P.C. BADARA ALIE SHERIFF: Mr Speaker, I want to make some clarifications. I want Honourable Members to understand that constituency far away from the Teaya River.

HON. CHERNOR R. M. BAH: Mr Speaker, let us conclude this issue before introducing another matter.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, what we are saying is that we are not apportioning blame to your constituency. We are just trying to put team together.

HON. P.C. BADARA ALIE SHERIFF: I only wanted to give my experience regarding the issue on the Floor.

THE SPEAKER: Let us have the Motion first.

HON. CHERNOR R. M. BAH: Mr Speaker, based on your directives, I want to join Honourable Dickson Rogers to move a Motion for the formation of a Special Select Committee involving the relevant Committees of this House to be appointed by your good self and the leadership, so that they conduct an investigation.

THE SPEAKER: I suggest that you indicate the specific Committees in your Motion, such as Mines and Mineral Committee, Defence Committee, Committee on the Environment and Water Resources Committee.

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: Point of Order. With your leave, Mr Speaker, I would like the Honourable Member who started this deliberation to move this Motion and is going to be seconded by another Member.

HON. ALICE J. KUMABEH: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I move that a Special Select Committee, comprising Members of the parliamentary Committees on Mines and Mineral Resources, Environment, Defence and Water Resources is set up to conduct an investigation pollution of Teaya River and report to this House.

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON. P.C. ALIE BADARA SHERIFF: My Speaker, I so second.

THE SPEAKER: Any counter motion?

HON. CHERNOR R. M. BAH: Mr Speaker, this is not a counter Motion. I discussed with the Director of Legislative Services before he forwarded the paper. The Motion is fantastic, but what is difficult is when you restrict the issue of a Special Select Committee because maybe by the time the Leader goes to his office, he would have remembered something else. So, please give him the latitude to think outside the the four Committees mentioned.

THE SPEAKER: Certainly, Honourable Member. Any seconder?

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed To]

THE SPEAKER: With the amendment proposed by the Opposition Leader.

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: Mr Speaker, I think what we can do in the area of amendment is to co-opt where necessary. We will start with the substantive Committee and then co-opt as we move along.

THE SPEAKER: I will specifically crave your indulgence to include the Chairmen and deputies of those Committees. The funds are going to be charged on the parliamentary purse and I am sure we can afford it.

HON. NENNEH LEBBIE: I am not a Member of these Committees that have been mentioned, but I suggest that the host Members of Parliament are involved.

THE SPEAKER: Certainly, Honourable Member.

HON. NENNEH LEBBIE: I am sure some of us were encountering some of these problems in our constituencies. I thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Certainly, Honourable Member.

HON. ABDUL KARIM KAMARA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, some years ago, under the leadership of President Ahmed Tejan Kabba, we had the Sierra Leone Police

being reformed. You will agree with me that experts were brought to this country and part of the reforms was the 'promotion policy' within the police force. This even resulted eliminating certain ranks within the force and that encouraged graduates. As we speak, lawyers, medical doctors, engineers, etc. joining the police force. This is because when you join the force with a first degree, you automatically become an Inspector. However, there was a memorandum from the Inspector General of Police, informing the public of their intention to bring back all old corporals and other ranks into the police force. Through this Parliament, we want to know the rational for bringing the old corporals into the police force. This action will demotivate police officers across the country and it will make police as an institution less attractive for graduates and other specialists who would want to join the force. We have people with Master degrees who are desiring to join the force because the new ranking system is encouraging. The reintroduction of the old ranking system will demotivate them.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have Covid-19 in our midst and we know that Covid-19 is real. We expect people to respect the measures put in place regarding this pandemic, but restriction, but the time stated for curfew is not favourable at all. People are running helter-skelter to go home and we all know that the transportation system in the country is nothing to write home about. You will agree with me that there are overcrowding in the busses and other commercial vehicles. I want to use your kind office to ask that during the evening hours, government busses are utilised to transport people from one point to the other. Those buses should not be parking there doing nothing. They should be on the streets to take people home in a decent and conducive manner or else we would be wasting our time in terms of containing the virus. People rush into those vehicles without facemasks. What is the importance of the curfew when people choked in the commercial vehicles?

THE SPEAKER: Who is the Chairman of the Committee on Transport? I think the Transport Committee can handle this matter.

HON. MOHAMED B. SHAW: Mr Speaker, I want to add my voice to what the Honourable Member has just said.

THE SPEAKER: Are you saying exactly the something that he has just said?

HON. MOHAMED B. SHAW: Not exactly Sir, but as a representative of the people of Sierra Leone and as a Member of Parliament, I want to plead with the National Covid-19 Emergency Response Centre [NaCOVERC] to shift the curfew time to at least 12:00 a.m. I once stated here that S. Os. 2 'some people dem na lek fol dem, den dae eat waetin den dae pick for the day. I used to eat 'fry fry' in school and you will agree with me that majority of our single parents or women in this country are in the 'fry fry business.' They only sell when shop owners close their shops, so that those business women can occupy the front areas of their shops to sell. Mr Speaker, if you go to Up-Gun, Cline Town and Bombay Street, you will find out that people travelling from Freetown to Waterloo are challenged in terms of transportation. Transportation is a problem to in this country. Mr Speaker, I am kindly asking that you use your good office to plead with NaCOVERC to shift the curfew time.

THE SPEAKER: Let me make two orders. I hereby ordered that the Committee on Transport look into this issue of transportation and the SLRTC should be involved. Let the Ministry of Transport takes care of that and as for NaCOVERC team, I do not know what the Leader of Government Business has to say.

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: Mr Speaker, thank you very much for the first order and it is in place. They need to talk to the drivers' union through the Committee on Transport and Aviation. They should be told that this is a very serious issue they have raised and we need to look for solution. They are making money out of this curfew time, but we have to be responsible citizens. Mr Speaker, I have my reservations toward the curfew. We are currently dealing with Covid-19 and we have just heard about the Ebola in Guinea and I want to state here that our lives are precious than curfew time. We have to treat issues that affect us very seriously by enforcing the laws. We know it is a high restriction, but if we are only talking about Covid-19, it is unfortunate because Ebola is around. We should exercise some amount of patience and see the report that we can get from the Executive, especially when they will be invited here next week Tuesday to answer certain questions. I am sure the Minister of Health

and Sanitation, and the NaCOVERC team will tell us about the state of their preparedness in case there is an outbreak of Ebola that is already in a neighbouring country. They will also update us on the latest trend of Covid-19 that is already with us. I want us to look at the situation and suggest ways of addressing the issues after the meeting on Tuesday. I thank you.

HON. CHERNOR R. M. BAH: I want to thank the Leader of Government Business for bringing me to speed because I was not here. Next week Tuesday I presume is going to be the next adjourned date; and on that day, we would be dealing with the Medical Examiners Bill. Therefore, I am sure having the Minister of Health and team in this House on that very important issue needs a special day. The power to adjourn is left with the Speaker and not Members of Parliament. If you adjourn to Tuesday, I am sure the Medical Examiners Bill will not be discussed on that day because Covid-19 and Ebola are two important issues that need sufficient time to address.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I had an informal discussion with the Leader of Government Business yesterday that the Appointments Committee would meet on Monday and Tuesday has been set aside for the Medical Examiners' Bill. We need to do justice to the discussions with the Minister of Health and Sanitation. I am sure the Minister of Mines and Mineral Resources is also on his way to this House based on the Orders of the Speaker in our last sittings. It was unfortunate that the Committee was unable to lay its report today. I want to plead that we get two separate days for those meetings. The Leader of Government Business will make the necessary arrangements towards that.

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: Thank you very much, Honourable Leader of the Opposition. I think we should agree tentatively and informally on certain issues, but I want to emphasise that the Bill is very important to us, especially when it is not controversial. I am sure after discussing the Bill, we will decide on the other issue to be discussed. I really want us to finish this Bill before any other issue. Thank you very much, Leader of the Opposition.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, let me suggest that the Minister of Mines should come with the head of NMA. I listened keenly with consternation when he was talking on radio and I realised that some heads of MDAs do not really understand how governance works. A lot of assumptions about state governance were made. I could not imagine somebody say the kind of things he said on radio. So, I suggest that the Minister of Mines and Mineral Resources comes with the NMA Director, so that Members of Parliament explain to him his role as head of NMA. In fact, such submission should not come from him at all. This is the House of Parliament and when it comes to issues bordering on revenue, Parliament is the keeper of state purse. I wish to state here that this House cannot accept what is being said on *[Applause]*. So, the Minister should come with the head of NMA, so that he listens to Members of Parliament. Mr Leader, please get the head of NMA to be here, together with the Minister of Mines and Minerals Resources.

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: Mr Speaker, I said in my opening statement that the Constitution is the grundnorm and this means that it is above all subsidiary laws, including Acts of Parliament. As Chairman of the Committee, Section 40 of the Constitution is very clear. Secondly, it was a Motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition and we have to go by that Motion. Thirdly, I have spoken to the Minister and he has promised to bring the Agreement to this House. As a Parliament, we are not interested in whatever misunderstanding they have in the Ministry; we are only interested what the Constitution says and that is why we are summoning the Minister and I am sure he will bring his subordinate along.

THE SPEAKER: We insist that he comes with the Minister.

HON MATHEW S. NYUMA: Certainly, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: He was ranting on radio and that is why he should be here. We will address him through his boss.

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: Mr Speaker, the Honourable Dr Kandeh Kolleh Yumkella and other Members spoke about the fire and other disasters. First, I was excepting you

to sympathise and give orders because it is a very serious situation and it is happening every year.

THE SPEAKER: I am sure he has taken the necessary steps already.

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: Well, he said he was about to contact the ONS officials.

THE SPEAKER: I think he has contacted the ONS already.

HON. DR KANDEH K. YUMKELLA: I was about to land, but I was ignored.

THE SPEAKER: I am sorry about that, Honourable Member. Do you want to say something?

HON. FODAY M. KAMARA: Mr Speaker, I want us to go back to the issue of the curfew and look at it from another angle. The essence is to save lives, but when you look at what is happening in Kambia District, you will find out that any time there is a curfew in this country, there are lots of armed robberies and burglaries. I wonder how important the curfew is when some citizens get wounded and their properties being carted away during curfew hours. Somebody stated that we shift the curfew time to midnight, but I still have misgivings about the curfew. Mr Speaker, I want us to assess the curfew whether it is necessary. Our people are not safe under this curfew at all. I thank you.

HON. OSMAN C. ABDULAI: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, on behalf of the people of Constituency 079, I want to report to this House that my Paramount Chief felt sick on the 5th February, 2021. We sought medical attention, but we have been mandated to seek alternative medical attention and we have planned to do that on the 14th March, 2021. It is going to be an ancestral journey. So, on behalf of the chieftdom and in my capacity as a high profile member of the Poroh Society, I want to inform this House and the general public that we would be taking an ancestral journey of our sick colleague to seek medical attention here and beyond *[Laughter]*. I thank you.

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: Mr Speaker, I have the Internal Notice Paper with me.

1. PAPERS LAID:

THE MINISTER OF LANDS, HOUSING AND COUNTRY PLANNING

THE GOVERNMENT OF SIERRA LEONE AND LANDREG SIERRA LEONE LIMITED
GOVERNMENT SUPPORT AGREEMENT RELATING TO THE PROCUREMENT OF
BIOMETRIC PROPERTY REGISTRATION PROJECT ON A BUILD, OPERATE AND
TRANSFER, DATED 1ST MARCH, 2018.

2. GOVERNMENT MOTION

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE

BE IT RESOLVED THAT THIS HONOURABLE HOUSE RATIFY THE FOLLOWING
AGREEMENTS WHICH WERE LAID ON THE TABLE OF THE HOUSE ON TUESDAY, 2ND
FEBRUARY, 2021:

- LOAN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE ECOWAS BANK FOR INVESTMENT AND DEVELOPMENT [EBID] AND THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE FOR THE PARTIAL FINANCING OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AT KOIDU TOWN, KONO DISTRICT IN THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE;
- LOAN NUMBER 147/AP/LA/PIDC/EBID/OS 2020. THE LOAN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE AND THE ISLAMIC DEVELOPMENT BANK REGARDING THE MATERNAL NEW-NATAL AND CHILD HEALTH STRENGTHENING PROJECT IN SIERRA LEONE DATED 26TH JUNE, 2020 [NECESSARY LOANS].

BILLS:

- THE CYBERCRIME ACT 2020;
- THE ALLIED LIFE HEALTH PROFESSION ACT, 2020;
- THE WAGES AND COMPENSATION COMMISSION ACT 2020; AND
- OTHER FINANCIAL SERVICES [AMENDED] ACT 2021. THANK YOU MR SPEAKER.

ADJOURNMENT

*[The House rose at 11:50 a.m., and was adjourned to Tuesday, 23^d February, 2021 at
10:00 a.m.]*