

OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

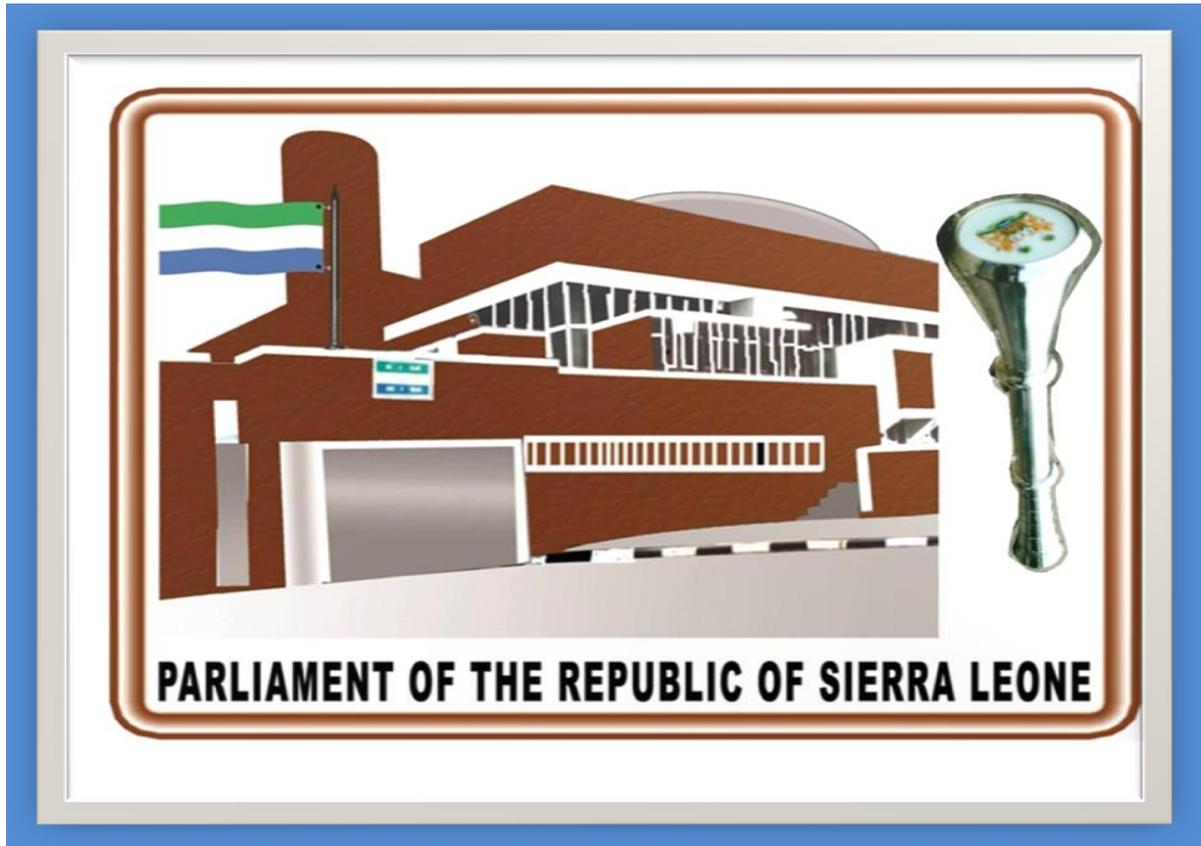
[HANSARD]

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

FIFTH SESSION - FIRST MEETING

TUESDAY, 18TH JULY, 2017

SESSION – 2016/2017



OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

[HANSARD]

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

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

Proceedings of the Sitting of the House
Held Tuesday, 18th July, 2017.

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THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

BE IT RESOLVED:

THAT THIS HONOURABLE HOUSE RATIFY THE FOLLOWING AGREEMENT WHICH WAS LAID ON THE TABLE OF THIS HONOURABLE HOUSE ON THURSDAY 13TH JULY 2017.

FINANCING AGREEMENT (PRODUCTIVITY AND TRANSPARENCY SUPPORT CREDIT) BETWEEN THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

V. MOTION OF THE COMMITTEE ON APPOINTMENTS AND THE PUBLIC SERVICE

PROPOSER: HON. HASSAN B. SHERIFF

SECONDER: HON. KOMBA E. KOEODOYOMA



THE CHAMBER OF PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE

Official Hansard Report of the Proceedings of the House

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

Tuesday, 18th July, 2017.

I. PRAYERS

[The Clerk of Parliament, Mr Ibrahim S. Sesay, Read the Prayers].

[The House met at 10:30 a.m. in Parliament Building, Tower Hill, Freetown].

[The Deputy Speaker, Hon. Sheku Badara Basiru Dumbuya, in the Chair].

The House was called to Order

Suspension of S.O 5[2]

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

II. CORRECTION OF VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS FOR THE PARLIAMENTARY SITTING HELD ON THURSDAY, 13TH JULY, 2017

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, we go through the record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting held on Thursday, 13th July, 2017. Page 1? Page 2? Page 3? page 4? Page 5? Page 6? There being no amendments or corrections, could somebody move for the adoption of the record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting held on Thursday, 13th July, 2017.

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

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON. BOCKARIE N. SALAMY: I so second, Mr Speaker.

[Record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting, held on Thursday, 13th July, 2017 has been adopted as presented]

II. PAPERS LAID

[A] THE MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

MR HADIRU KALOKOH [*Deputy Minister of Local Government and Rural Development*]: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to lay on the Table of this Honourable House the following documents:

[I] THE TONKOLILI DISTRICT COUNCIL [ESTABLISHMENT] ORDER, 2017
THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 2004
STATUTORY INSTRUMENT NO. 63 OF 2017

[II] THE PORT LOKO CITY COUNCIL [ESTABLISHMENT] ORDER, 2017
THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 2004
STATUTORY INSTRUMENT NO. 64 OF 2017

[III] THE PUJEHUN DISTRICT COUNCIL [ESTABLISHMENT] ORDER, 2017
THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 2004
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[IV] THE PORT LOKO DISTRICT COUNCIL [ESTABLISHMENT] ORDER, 2017
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THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 2004

STATUTORY INSTRUMENT NO. 73 OF 2017

[B] THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

MR FODAY B. L. MANSARAY [*Minister of State, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development*]: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to lay on the

Table of this Honourable House the following agreements:

[I] SUPPLEMENTARY PROTOCOL OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE AND THE AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT FUND [SUPPLEMENTARY GRANT FOR THE THREE TOWNS WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION PROJECT].

[II] SUPPLEMENTARY PROTOCOL OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE AND THE AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK AND THE AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT FUND [ON BEHALF OF THE TRANSITION SUPPORT FACILITY] [SUPPLEMENTARY GRANT FOR THE THREE TOWNS WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION PROJECT].

[C] THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL AND MINISTER OF JUSTICE

MR AROW BOCKARIE [*Deputy Attorney-General and Minister of Justice*]:

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to lay on the Table the following Annual Reports:

[I] NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SOCIAL ACTION (NaCSA) ANNUAL REPORT 2016

[II] NATIONAL ELECTORAL COMMISSION (NEC) SIERRA LEONE ANNUAL REPORT 2016

IV. GOVERNMENT MOTION

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

MR FODAY B. L. MANSARAY [*Minister of State, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development*]:

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, be it resolved that this Honourable House ratify the following agreement which was laid on the Table of this Honourable House on Thursday, 13th July, 2017:

Financing Agreement [Productivity and Transparency Support Credit] between the Republic of Sierra Leone and International Development Association.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, you may wish to know that this operation is the first of a programmatic series of three development policy financing which will support the implementation of the country's Third Poverty Reduction Strategy; i.e., the 'Agenda for Prosperity' and the President's Ebola recovery priorities. The programme will cover 6 policy areas; vis-à-vis, Agriculture and Land, Fisheries, Energy, Education, Procurement and Asset Disclosure. The programme will focus on a limited number of transformational structural reforms included in the Agenda for Prosperity and geared to unlocking inclusive growth. The series shifts focus from traditional Public Financial Management type of reforms which are already supported by donors such as the European Union, DFID, the African Development Bank Group, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, some of the expected benefits of this operation are increased productivity in selected economic sectors and improved transparency and accountability in selected government decision making processes. Of course the targeted beneficiaries are the people of Sierra Leone. You may wish to recall that the implementation of the Agenda for Prosperity was disrupted by the Ebola outbreak

that temporarily shifted the country's priority towards health and social protection. Therefore, there is a need for this operation to refocus on inclusive growth.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the principal of the credit would be repaid in equal semi-annual instalments over a period of 32 years after a grace period of 6 years, commencing from the date of this Agreement. The service charge on the other hand payable by government is on the withdrawn credit balance and shall be equal to $\frac{3}{4}$ of **1%** per annum. Equally so, the maximum commitment charge payable by the government on the un-withdrawn financing balance shall be one half of **1%** per annum.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in view of the fact that this financing Agreement will support the national budget, I entreat you Honourable Members, to ratify the Financing Agreement between the Republic of Sierra Leone and International Development Association [IDA], dated July 7, 2017 that was laid on the Table of this Honourable House on the 13th July, 2017. In this connection, be it resolved that this Honourable House ratify the following Agreement which was laid on the Table of the House on Thursday, 13th July, 2017:

Financing Agreement [Productivity and Transparency Support Credit] Between the Republic of Sierra Leone and International Development Association.

[Question Proposed]

HON. IBRAHIM BEN KARGBO: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have before us another Agreement for the purposes of ensuring that we address issues relating to the economy of this country. We are aware of the fact that because the Ministry of Finance and indeed the Government of Sierra Leone has continued to address those issues that are consistent with proper management of resources, this could only be the reason why international organisations like the IDA continue to give support to this country. We agree that for the recent past, we were been hit by the Ebola Virus and other factors relating to the economy. We need not overstate the point that this Agreement is useful, not only because we put all the points together relating to beefing up our national economy, but because we took into consideration and we will continue to take into consideration the fact that even the collapse of the cost of iron ore, which was

helping us in managing the economy also went down dramatically. Today, we have this Agreement and I want to believe that it is non-controversial. It is very clear that we need the resources and the Agreement itself is timely.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, what is also important is the fact that the Ministry of Finance has continued to address those issues that have to do with an economy that was going through austerity. I am saying this because we are going through austerity and it makes great sense for us to continue to address those issues. We have to be partners of international organisations, so that we can address issues that are ought to be addressed. We have to also ensure that we beef up the economy. I have no doubt that the Dr Ernest Bai Koroma's led Government is very determined to ensuring a buoyant economy. However, we also know that partnership these international organisations must be seen as very important components in beefing up the economy of this country. This explains why I agree with the Minister that this agreement itself makes great sense to ensure that we continue to beef up the economy. He has said it loud and clear that we are going to pay back in a manner that is acceptable. This is a credit that is acceptable and I do not see any controversy in this Agreement.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this Agreement, like I have already said, is not controversial at all. It makes lots of sense and it is coming at a time when we need to beef up the national economy. Therefore, I also would say that the Ministry of Finance made no mistake in ensuring that they signed this Agreement. The ratification of this Agreement must be seen as one more step in ensuring that we continue to beef up our income and also make sure that the economy is brought back to an 'even keel.' This is very important to us.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, without wasting more time, this Agreement is very necessary and I want to plead with colleagues Honourable Members to speedily ratify this Agreement because it makes great sense and it is in the interest of beefing up the national economy of this country. Thank you very much, Mr Speaker
[Applause].

HON. FODAY RADO YOKIE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will queue after the last speaker. He has said that this Agreement is non-

controversial. I like the Agreement and I have always paid attention to the conditionality of paying back these loans. We are going to pay three fourth of **1%** minimal. It is a fine Agreement and we are going to pay half of **1%** on the principal amount that we have withdrawn. It is a fine Agreement, but concern has always been in this House that we need to reverse the trend. What do I mean by that? Many a time, and this Agreement is no exception, Members of Parliament are usually involved in the ratification of Agreements. They are not involved in crossing the 'Ts' and dotting the 'Is.' I am saying when the idea of going to negotiate for these loans are conceived, Members of Parliament should be part of that negotiations. It is during the negotiation stage that Members of Parliament are opportune to cross the 'Ts' and dot the 'Is.'

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, a month or two ago, an Agreement was ratified in this House and I decided not to say a word in the ratification of that Agreement because I was confused. The Government of Sierra Leone went for a loan. That means we are going to repay the loan over a period of time. They came home and they were going to give out that loan as guarantee to Multi-National Companies. I was confused, Mr Speaker. For instance, we have multi-national Companies like ADDAX. The Government contracted loans on behalf of the people of Sierra Leone and gave gratis with that portion of the loan. The question is who is going to pay that loan for a multi-national? It is in part 2 of the Agreement that was ratified in this House. The Government also contracted the same loan for the Small and Medium Enterprises [SMEs].

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if Government was very serious about that loan, I thought the authorities of the SMEs who were doing business should have been the ones to be given gratis and not Multi-National Companies. Giving gratis to multi-national companies is a complete aberration from the normal practice. At that material point in time, Parliament could not have done anything otherwise. It is either you wholesomely agree or you reject. It was a fine loan in theory, but when you look at the rationale behind it, it was a mess. When it came to develop the small holders, you said it was a loan. I was completely confused.

Therefore, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is against that backdrop that I am saying that in future, you should give Parliament the opportunity to be part of that negotiation, so that we can cross the 'Ts' and dot the 'Is.' I am saying this because when loans come to this Parliament, you can either accept wholesomely or you reject them. Like I said earlier, this particular loan is good and let me state here that the economy is sick and need more support to revamp it.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the more reason I am very happy today is the fact that we are going to approve a gentleman as Bank Governor who has what it takes to move the economy of this country. I am here to give my support because I am looking at brains that can move the economy of Sierra Leone. We are looking for partnership, individuals and institutions that can move the economy of Sierra Leone.

On that note, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am asking my colleagues Honourable Members to ratify the Agreement because it is non-controversial. I thank you very much.

HON. ALHASSAN KAMARA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have before us a very fine Agreement and as stated earlier by the Honourable Member from Bombali that this Agreement will strengthen the micro-economic policy frameworks of this country. It is an Agreement that will help mobilise resources and support some very key sectors of the government.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if there has ever been a time that the Small and Medium Enterprises have been supported in this country, I think this is the best of all those times. The establishment of the SMEs and the Act that has been legislated in this Parliament is a testament that this Government is serious in supporting the least Sierra Leonean. As the Honourable Member from Bo stated, the SMEs should be given gratis and that has been the pattern of this Government in the past. If you go down the streets of Freetown; vis-a-vis, Abacha Street and Malama Thomas Street, most of these business women and groups have been financed by this Government and have given them loans and grants by this Government. For us, as a Government, we have at the very heart of our effort the least of all people that voted for this APC Government and Dr Ernest Bai Koroma, and we shall continue to do so.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me come to this Agreement itself. Schedule 1 talks about project and action. It states that the Ministries that are going to benefit. This is on Page 5, under actions taken. The Agreement talks about Agriculture, Fisheries, Lands, Energy, and Education. These are the things that strengthen and move our country to the positive direction that we all desire. So, this Agreement is coming to this House at the right time. The people of this country need more amenities from Government. Therefore, by us having a very generous Agreement as this one, we should all be happy.

With those few words, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to urge colleagues to ratify this Agreement. I thank you.

HON. AARON A. KOROMA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to support this very fine Agreement that is here before us for ratification. This Agreement is indeed unprecedented in the history of this country. This means that at a time like this in the history of our country, it is hard to see the international community bestowing confidence in a Government when it is barely less than a year to general elections. Government has been putting so much pressure on NRA or NASSIT to help cushion the already battered economy. However, seeing an Agreement that is going to support this Government is a clear manifestation that the economy of this country is going to be revived again.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the main areas that this Agreement seeks to address is pivotal to the development of this country. I am very concerned with agriculture. We all know that there is rarely a country that can easily stimulate growth when it is unable to increase on its exports. Agriculture has that potential to ensure that we produce what we eat; and if possible, the excesses are exported to earn us some reserve which will help to reduce the pressure from foreign exchange.

So, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, having an Agreement that is geared towards supporting Agricultural, a sector that has the potential to stimulate growth in other sectors within the economy. I am sure it is imperative on all of us here, as Members of Parliament, owing to the fact that **70%** of our constituents are in the Agricultural sector, to support the ratification of this Agreement.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this Agreement should serve as a clear message to all of us here that Dr Ernest Bai Koroma has handled this country with care and diligence to a way that he continues to earn the respect of the international community. I am sure our colleagues from the other side should be worried because they thought at a time like this we would have lost the confidence of international community.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, that is most unnecessary.

HON. AARON A. KOROMA: I withdraw it, Mr Speaker. My colleague from Bo said the economy is sick. We are happy that when something is sick it has the potential for it to be cured and that is what this Agreement is going to ensure. I would want to state here that before 2007, our economy was dead. It had no potential for it to be cured. All we had was to bury it and give birth to a new economy which is always sick but do not have the potential to die.

Having said that, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am imploring colleagues Members to speedily ratify this Agreement for the continued support of the programmes of this country. I thank you very much.

MR FODAY B. L. MANSARAY: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank this House for this rousing endorsement of this Agreement. One issue was raised by Honourable Foday Rado Yokie; i.e., inclusion of Members of Parliament in the negotiation process. I want to firstly remind Members that the total value of this Agreement is **\$30mln**, of which **\$22mln** is in the form of grants and the balance **\$8mln** is a credit. So, the conditions you see in this document are standard conditions of the World Bank. They are highly concessional and the Ministry of Finance is always guided by these conditions whenever we go to negotiate bi-lateral loans. Such loans should fall within the concessional conditions of the IMF and the World Bank.

In response to the point raised by Honourable Foday Rado Yokie, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to remind this Honourable House that there are certain conditions for the effectiveness of either a loan or Agreements which have to be adhered to. One of these conditions is the ratification of the grant or the loan. So, by bringing this document to Parliament is more or less tantamount to having the views

of Parliament on the grants or the loan. This grant or loan can never become effective without having the endorsement of Parliament.

Again, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have another procedure for submitting it to Cabinet and even seeking legal opinion on the matter. So, we do not see it too necessary to have in the delegation of Government representation from Parliament because we know that at the end of the day, you will have to endorse the Agreement.

With that explanation, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, be it resolved that this Honourable House ratify the following Agreement which was laid on the Table of the House on Thursday, 13 July, 2017:

Financing Agreement productivity and transparency Support Credit between the Republic of Sierra Leone and the International Development Association. I thank you!

THE SPEAKER: Mr Minister, with respect to you, I am not comfortable with the reply you have given to the concern raised by Honourable Foday Rado Yokie. I am sure you did understand what he was trying to say. He said that it will be necessary for Parliament to involve in the negotiation of these Agreements. It may not be all the time, but at some times. If you want to stand by what you have said, then Parliament reserves the right to reject any Agreement here. Parliament does reserve the right to reject any of such agreement. Members would simply say, we were not involved, but I will let you off simply because of one very important consideration and am sure Mr Minister you know it.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

Government Motion by the Minister of Finance and Economic Development Has Been Ratified

V. MOTION OF THE COMMITTEE ON APPOINTMENT AND THE PUBLIC SERVICE

PROPOSER: HON. HASSAN B. SHERIFF

SECONDER: HON. KOMBA E. KOEDYOYOMA

HON. HASSAN B. SHERIFF: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I present to you the Eighth Report of the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service on parliamentary vetting of presidential nominations:

1. Introduction

Mr Ambassador and the Rt Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members, the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service met on Wednesday 5th July, 2017 and interviewed one Presidential nominee for appointment as Governor, Bank of Sierra Leone.

2. Procedure

The Committee conducted the hearing within its set framework of procedures. The nominee was interviewed on issues pertaining to his educational background to ensure that he has the relevant education and necessary backup experience to man the position of Governor, Bank of Sierra Leone. Further probing questions put to the nominee covered wide ranging issues relating to his track records in the banking, financial sector and other pertinent work situations as the case may be, declared assets, tax obligations and his visions for a nationally productive tenure as Governor, Bank of Sierra Leone. Issues of unsuitability or otherwise were also closely looked into.

3. Tenth Sitting of The Committee on Wednesday, 5th July, 2017

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the following nominee was interviewed on oath:

Dr Patrick Saidu Conteh, Proposed Governor, Bank of Sierra Leone.

Dr Patrick Saidu Conteh has a wealth of experience for over 20 years in finance covering both the private and public sectors. He has an intricate knowledge of financial systems at local, regional and international levels. Dr Patrick Saidu Conteh is currently the Minister of State for Fiscal Affairs in the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development. He was recently part of a Government Team that negotiated the latest IMF Extended Credit Facility Program for Sierra Leone.

Dr Patrick Saidu Conteh also doubles as the alternate Executive Director at the African Development Bank representing Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ghana, Sudan and the Gambia. He had previously served as a banking official at the Sierra Commercial

Bank Limited from 1996 to April, 2014 where he attained the position of Deputy Managing Director.

Reacting to the assertion that he would be a 'home-grown' Governor of the Bank of Sierra Leone if approved by the House, Dr Patrick Conteh admitted that he was indeed 'home grown' because he had essentially come into banking as his first job after graduating from university in 1996. **"I have been in banking for almost eighteen years, during the course of which I obtained local, regional and international experiences. I am home-grown with exposure and experience that transcends Sierra Leone,"** he said.

Responding to further probing questions about his knowledge of the economy of Sierra Leone, Dr Conteh said, **"I do have knowledge and understanding of how the economy of Sierra Leone works and by extension, the regional economies and the world economy, but the fact of the matter at this level is an entirely different ball-game. Being a Commercial Banker, your understanding of the economy is quite different from what is required of a Governor of the Bank of Sierra Leone. The knowledge and experience I have gathered in the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development for the last eighteen months has assured me that knowledge of commercial banking only constitute about a third of what a Bank Governor needs to do his work. The knowledge required of a Central Bank Governor is far beyond Commercial Banking. I believe it entails other things that include economic policies, fiscal issues, monetary issues and management of foreign reserves of which, I am not in short supply."**

Dr Patrick Conteh viewed his nomination as a blessing. **"I am blessed that God has moved His Excellency, the President, to call me for national service. I feel blessed because there are many qualified people out there praying for such an opportunity. I also viewed my nomination as a challenge that I am prepared to face head-on. I came from the Commercial Bank Sector with a fair level of experience. I have been in the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development for almost eighteen months as Minister of State in charge of Fiscal Operations, which put me at the centre of Government**

economic management. So, if I obtain the blessing of approval of this Honourable House, I will be taking up office as Governor, Bank of Sierra Leone with the knowledge of what the issues are and the challenges thereto. The fact of the matter is that for the economy of this country to make progress, very tough decisions will have to be made in addition to those already taken in the last eighteen months," he said.

Outlining his strategies for reducing the foreign exchange rate and the high bank rates, Dr Patrick Conteh said, **"A few more tough decisions would have to be taken. The fact of the matter is that we have to start building on businesses locally. We have to grow the economy of this country internally. Sierra Leone is mainly import driven. This means that all the revenue collected goes to pay for imported goods. What we need is the reverse."** Dr Conteh opined that Sierra Leone must invest in agricultural and marine exports to bring in the much needed foreign exchange earnings required to achieve a balance of payment, pay our external debts and create stability of the local currency. Stability in the local currency, he said, would mean that more businesses are thriving and government could collect more tax revenue. **"What we have witnessed in the last eighteen months is an upsurge in interest rates. So, until we reach a point where government can generate adequate revenue to sustain and support its operations and perhaps, drastically cut down on borrowing, interest rates will remain a challenge,"** he said.

Dr Conteh went on to say that Sierra Leone has had the opportunity of an **"Extended Credit Facility programme with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank that would drive the economy of this country for the next three years."** **"The programme,"** he went on, **"has defined policies, criteria, bench marks and structural reforms which are being gauged for the next three years. My first task would be to ensure that the monetary responsibilities of the programme are adhered to. We must be seen to complying with the bench marks because that will become the engine of growth for this economy. The programme is laying emphasis on the growth sector, the agriculture and fisheries sectors to be enhanced in**

terms of value addition export that would bring in the necessary foreign exchange earning to Government. One of the innovations I have been thinking of since my nomination is the policy initiatives on how the Bank of Sierra Leone, for all practical purposes, could encourage Commercial Banks to give loans to farmers.”

4. Recommendation

Mr Ambassador and the Rt Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members, the Committee adjudged the following Presidential nominee to be adequately qualified for his proposed appointment as Governor, Bank of Sierra Leone and he is accordingly recommended to the House for approval:

Dr Patrick Saidu Conteh, Governor, Bank of Sierra Leone.

Mr Ambassador and the Rt Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members, the Ninth Report is the unanimous decision of the Committee. I therefore move that the Ninth Report of the Fifth Session of the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service be adopted by the House and that the recommendation contained therein be approved. Presented by Honourable Commissioner Hassan B. Sheriff, Acting Chairman. **THE SPEAKER:** Any seconder?

HON. KOMBA E. KODOYOMA: Well let me take the queue from the Commissioner *[Applause]*. Mr Ambassador the Rt Honourable Speaker, I rise to send the motion as proposed by the Commissioner Hassan B. Sheriff *[Laughter]*.

THE SPEAKER: Mr Commissioner, I noticed that the report is too verbose. Perhaps it is because it just one person that the report covers today. Now, Honourable Foday Rado Yokie, we have resolved in this House when I was in the opposition that reports must not be as long as this and the resolution of Parliament is law. Precisely Honourable Veronica that was exactly what was agreed upon and the motion was moved by the late A. O. D. George.

[Question Proposed]

HON. KOMBA E. KOEDOYAMA: Thank you Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Sierra Leonean we have before us for approval to serve as Bank Governor did acquit himself in the course of the interview. The Committee found him

more than adequately qualified to occupy that position as the report itself states. I was part of the Committee that interviewed Dr Patrick Saidu Conteh and of all the candidates that I have interviewed as a Committee member, I have found Dr Patrick Saidu Conteh to be very confident as a former teacher. If I were to grade him, he would be above an A+. The few comments I would make here, as an old teacher like the Ambassador Rt Honourable Speaker, would not serve any further purpose because Dr Conteh really suits the position he had been nominated to serve.

On that note, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would only appeal to this House to speedily give him the support, so that he can go and start the work. I thank you, Mr Speaker.

HON. DIXON M. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me take the queue from the last speaker. Dr Patrick Saidu Conteh seated before us here is not only suitable, but this is the first time since I entered Parliament that I have been so enthusiastic to praise a nominee from His Excellency the President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma. Let me say this in Krio; S.O. 2 Mr Speaker, **"Anytin wae abi no matter how u eba e go make sound."** I know the Commissioner tried to adjust this document, but because it concerns Dr Patrick Saidu Conteh, there was no way he could have adjusted it better than what he has done. I want to believe that Sierra Leone is about to take its rightful position in the economy of West Africa. I am saying this because we have somebody in front of us here this morning who doubles as an alternate Executive Director of no less a bank, but the Africa Development Bank. That tells you that the nominee before us this morning is far more capable to handle the economy of this country. Since the advent of the likes of Dr J.D. Rogers and few others I think this is one of the best Bank Governors we are going to have in this country.

Therefore, Mr Speaker, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am sure that after March 2018, when Brigadier Julius Maada becomes President of this nation, he would retain this gentleman as Bank Governor because he can serve the purpose of this country. I hope that tells this nation that Dr Patrick Saidu Conteh cuts across party lines. He is one of the few Ministers of this Government that parades the

streets of Freetown that is the reason why I am standing here this morning. I know a lot of people are perturbed to see me praising a nominee of the President.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Dixon Rogers, you are an Honourable Member of Parliament. I want you to stop saying that. When something is good, it is good and that is incontrovertibly true.

HON. DIXON ROGERS: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Let me rest my case by calling on my colleagues not to waste the time of Dr Patrick Saidu Conteh but to approve him as the next Bank Governor of Sierra Leone. Thank you very much.

HON. BENNEH BANGURA: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me start by thanking His Excellency the President for presenting to this noble House such a fine gentleman. Dr Patrick Conteh is indeed a fine gentleman. He is a man I admired over the years because his interest is geared towards the development of this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am forced again to say he has characteristics that I do admire; i.e., honesty, sobriety and integrity. When we were interviewing this gentleman, every Member of the Appointments Committee admired Dr Patrick Saidu Conteh. In fact, that is why we have a lengthy report about the nominee. We had not wanted him to stop at all. We wanted him to continue, but because time was of essence, we had to stop him.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, a lot has been said about Dr Patrick Saidu Conteh. I want to state here that Dr Patrick Saidu Conteh should consider himself very lucky because he has been chosen amongst a population of more than seven million people. It is indeed a blessing and I consider him to be a lucky man

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I have a piece of advice for Dr Patrick Saidu Conteh. When I was leaving this country for the United States in 1974, the exchange rate was one Dollar to one Leone. Today, you can see how far the Dollar has skyrocketed. I want to crave the indulgence of Dr Patrick Saidu Conteh to do everything humanly possible to bring the Dollar or the foreign exchange down. Our people are really suffering.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Benneh Bangura, in those days, it was one Dollar to one Leone, but the economy was still strong. That was over fifty years ago and there is nothing personally Dr Patrick Saidu Conteh can do to bring it down. It is the forces of demand and supply. However, he mentioned something relating to that.

HON. FODAY RADO YOKIE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker I am glad today because we have seen both the SLPP and the APC or either side lavishing praises on this nominee. On a more serious note, there is this common saying in our local parlance. Mr Speaker, S.O. 2 'good player nor dae fet for jersey.' When you are good, it means you are good. Today, we have seen a complete manifestation of that, even the opposition is praising this nominee. It is telling you that he is good. I am a father of four children. I have two boys and two girls, but I am very fond of two. The reason is because they are intelligent. I like intelligent people.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me start with the Speaker of this House. I met him when he was not even the Majority Leader of this House. Judging from his first debate in this House, I said 'this old man is very intelligent and I like him.' I like Honourable Alhassan Kamara on that other side and I have been making reference to him because he is very intelligent. For the Deputy Speaker and somebody we usually called Alpha Wet, I was on my way out of Fourah Bay College when they gained admission to the University. I met him and I decided to like him because he was intelligent.

In this House, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I was the person who commented that the Honourable Chernor R. M. Bah is fit for the position of Deputy Speaker. Again, you can prove me right or wrong that whether he was a good man or a bad person, he is intelligent and he is very good. I like intelligent people and I am committing another very intelligent person to you. I am one person who is not bothered about SLPP or APC. I am talking about Sierra Leone and I tell you for free that this nominee's resume speaks volume.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when you interview somebody who is intelligent, you have no option but to present a bulky report like what Honourable Commissioner Hassan B. Sheriff has done. We have read reports here that are five lines because there was nothing to write. If you were to give him the opportunity,

you can write hundreds of pages on about this nominee. He can respond appropriately and I have no doubt in him. However, let me state here that this is a herculean task. The Economy is in a bad shape and we want to tap from his expertise. I know you have performed very well at the Sierra Leone Commercial Bank before you came to the Ministry of Finance. That is why His Excellency, the President thought it fit to promote you to this position. The President thought that you are very hardworking and when you take that hot seat, I would want you to work with your colleagues. We want to see this Economy back to its feet.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I have always said here and I will continue to say it that when the Economy is good, it is not going to be good for APC alone; it is going to be good for all of us. A bag of rice is now **Le250, 000**. When the Deputy Speaker goes there to buy, he will pay the same amount I will be paying for a bag of rice. We have very good people in this country who can hang heads to put their ideas together, so that we can revamp the economy. When economy shrinks, every Sierra Leonean suffers. There is no SLPP or APC here. So, let us look at Sierra Leone when we are nominating people to these positions. Let us also look at Sierra Leone when debating in this House. When somebody is good, he is good.

Therefore, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I have no doubt in the nominee's ability to perform. I want you to understand that you will be faced with some challenges. Those challenges could be surmounted if you listen to what people are saying. I am praising you today because I know you can do it. However, if you do not perform, I will oppose you again. That is Honourable Foday Rado Yokie. I have no friend when it comes to Sierra Leone.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the nominee said that we have witnessed, in the past few months, an upsurge in interest rate. I am a Business man, in spite of being a politician. That has hit me so much. I remember two months ago when I was transacting a business. It was **Le7, 500** and when I went to repay that Loan, I was asked to pay **Le7, 650**. Mr Speaker, **Le250** is a big loss. That is why we have small business people having difficulties to grow. If we have very good macro-economic policies, stringent macro-economic policies, some of these challenges would not have affected this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, one of the major problems we have as a nation and as a country is fiscal indiscipline. There are lots of seepages within the system and I have always said that we have to look at a bigger picture. You have to stop those seepages and look for more flexible exchange and interest rates; and look for existing theories that can positively impact this Economy. As long as the Economy can move from here to some other level, we would wait for 2018 elections. By January, 2018 we shall start talking about politics; but for now, we should be talking Sierra Leone.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I have no doubt that Dr Patrick Saidu Conteh will perform exceptionally well. Let us see how all of us, as a nation, can help to move this Economy forward. I want you to move yourself from the outbreak of the Ebola Virus or the fell in the price of Iron Ore'. Mr Speaker, S.O. 2 'wata wey don trowa e don trowae.' We should be thinking about how to revamp this Economy and stop blaming the past. If this House approves your nomination, please do your work and stop blaming the Ebola outbreak. If you do that, it means you will be shooting yourself in the leg. Think about how you can introduce new policies that can move this nation forward.

Having said that, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the nominee before us is a fine gentleman and he is a non-controversial nominee. I thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

HON. JUSUFU B. MANSARAY [Acting Minority Leader of the House]: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I honestly have no difficulty in adding my voice to the nomination of Dr Patrick Saidu Conteh. He has been my good friend since 2005. He started proving himself when he was the Risk Manager at the Sierra Leone Commercial Bank. I am saying this not because I was going there for loans, but because every top Management of Commercial Bank believed that he was going to manage that Bank when he was a Risk Manager. My brother, you are a fine Sierra Leonean and the good thing about you is that you are indeed a 'home breed' individual. Once you are home grown, you will feel and sympathise with the people of Sierra Leone. I am glad that you here and I am glad that every member of this House is ready to support your approval.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am a member of the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service and I took part in interviewing the nominee before us. During the course of the interview, the nominee told the Committee that he is happy to celebrate Sierra Leone. He said what he would celebrate is how to prudently manage the Economy of this country. Today, if this House approves your nomination, you will be privileged to go and sit there. My brother, I want to state here that I trust you and my constituents also trust you. In fact, many Sierra Leoneans trust you and believe that you are going to do it.

Again, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the other good thing I learnt about Dr Patrick Saidu Conteh is the fact that he has a home. This means that every sober-minded Sierra Leonean who has a very perfect home will always perform well. If you have been able to manage your home well, I believe that you will equally help this Economy to grow.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, my colleague on the other side was saying that during SLPP regime, support was not given when the elections were around the corner. Well, I want to remind this House that anytime the international community provides more loans to the country when that country is on the verge to elections, it is not because they like that country or believe in the performance of that Government, but because they want to carry the pains of the people of that country. The nominee has called on us to put every effort in place to make sure that this country moves forward. Let us give loans to farmers. We should also learn to manage any loan or grant given to this country. He has started thinking of ways to move this nation.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Dr Patrick Saidu Conteh told us about the innovations he would introduce if this House approves his nomination. Please, I want you to think very seriously about how to move this country forward. Learn to listen to people and work with the Ministry of Finance. Again, work with every other department that can help you move Sierra Leone in the positive direction. The issue of dollar is not helping this country. If you have any other way to help this country move forward, please do that, but the issue of Dollar is not helping this nation. If possible, go to the IMF or any other institution for this country to move on.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this is not about SLPP or APC, but it is about Sierra Leone. We are not looking at the nominee on party line, but a fine Sierra Leonean who has started from nowhere to somewhere. If that is the case, I doff my hat to you.

On that note, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to crave the indulgence of this House to speedily ratify Dr Patrick Saidu Conteh. I thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Jusufu B. Mansaray, if you look at the Report, it states that Sierra Leone is mainly import driven. That statement has implications for the Dollar being where it is. It means that the Dollar can only come down if we try to export. Market forces determine the price and availability of a commodity or product in a free market. This is simply Economics. And by the way whenever the Honourable Foday Rado Yokie speaks Economics, the Financial Secretary, Edmond Koroma, is always proud of him because he taught him at Fourah Bay College *[Laughter]*.

HON. [COM.] HASSAN SHERRIFF *[Acting Majority Leader of the House]*: Thank you, Mr Ambassador Rt Honourable Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to start by thanking all those who contributed to this confirmation hearing. I also want to thank His Excellency the President for nominating Dr Patrick Saidu Conteh to the office of the Bank Governor. One of the important offices in this country is that of the Governor of the Bank of Sierra Leone. He is coming to this office to work with the Deputy Governor, who is a seasoned Governor. This is somebody who has served the Bank of Sierra Leone for quite some time. Therefore, Dr Patrick Saidu Conteh is blessed to work with somebody who is comfortable with the issues at the Bank of Sierra Leone.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Honourable Speaker made mention of the Report. When the Report was forwarded to me by the Director of Committees, I reduced it by two pages. I had to reduce the Report because time is of the essence.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to remind the nominee that if this House approves his nomination, he will be facing a lot of challenges as Bank Governor. Failure is not an option and I would ask him to do his best. He has to prove that he is qualified and fit to serve as Bank Governor. Please try to open up to your Deputy

Bank Governor, who is a seasoned banker at the Bank of Sierra Leone. I should also remind you that the Committee on Finance, which I chaired, is also responsible to oversee the activities of the Bank of Sierra Leone and will hardly compromise my position if a report is submitted to me. I will look at it very carefully, together with my colleagues Committee members. I hope you will open up and try to work as a team with the sitting Deputy Bank Governor to improve the Economy. If I should rate you after this hearing, I will rate you 9.9 out of 10 *[Applause]*.

With those few words, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to call on my colleagues to please approve our friend, our brother and nationally productive man to serve as Bank Governor of the Bank of Sierra Leone . I thank you very much.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

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

THE SPEAKER: Dr Patrick Saidu Conteh, after being extolled in such superlative terms by Members of Parliament, all I am left to say is to wish you well. I congratulate you. However, I want to remind you that the expectations of the people are high. Members do admire you not necessarily because you have a Ph.D. but because you have been applying yourself well. So, when you occupy that office, please be reminded that you are a Ph.D. holder and you have to apply yourself in such a way that it could impress everybody that indeed you are a Ph.D. holder. Application is education and that is what is important.

ADJOURNMENT

[The House rose at 12:00 noon and was adjourned to Thursday, 20th July, 2017]