

*OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN*

# **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**

**(HANSARD)**

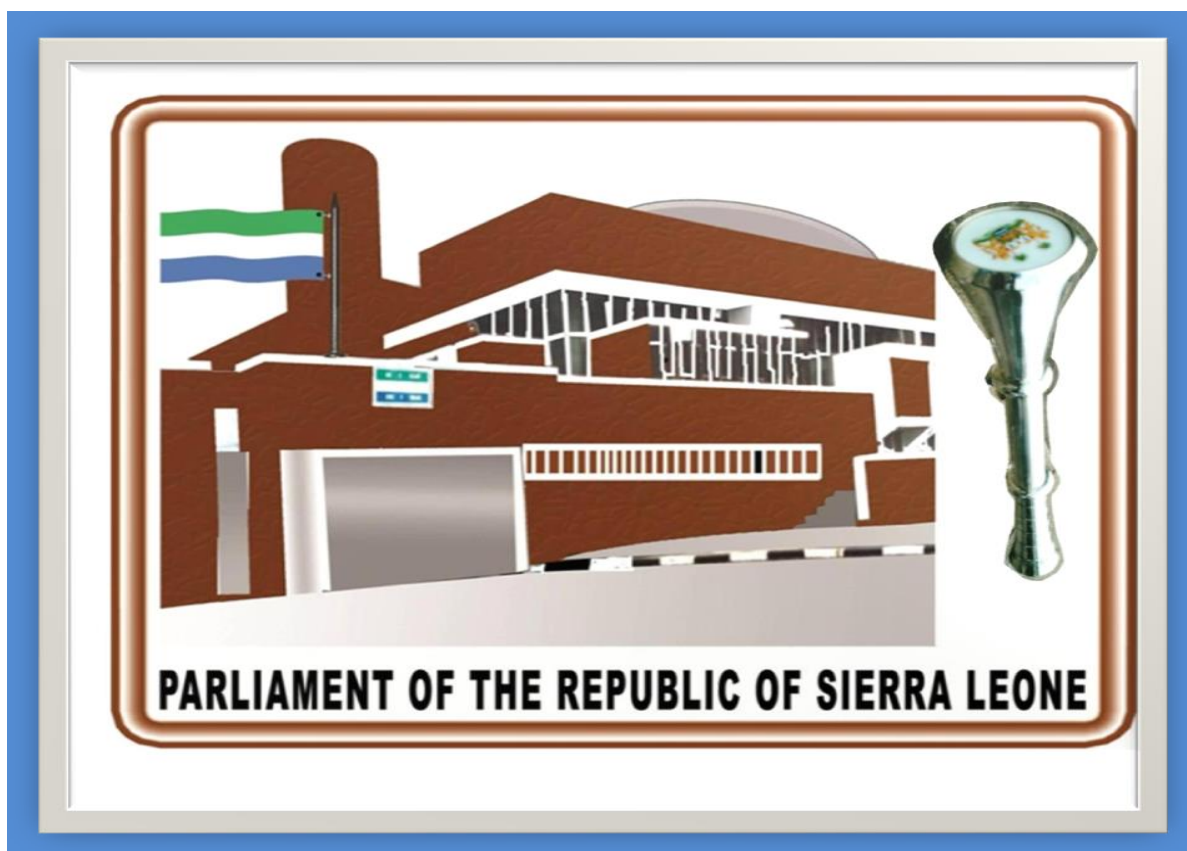
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**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT**

**SECOND SESSION-SECOND MEETING**

**TUESDAY, 21<sup>ST</sup> JANUARY, 2014**

*SESSION – 2013/2014*



*OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN*

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**VOLUME: II**

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Second Meeting of the Second Session of the Fourth Parliament  
Of the Second Republic of Sierra Leone.

Proceedings of the Sitting of the House  
Held on Tuesday, 21<sup>st</sup> January, 2014.

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*THE CHAMBER OF PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE*

## **Official Hansard Report of the Proceedings of the House**

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### **SECOND SESSION-SECOND MEETING OF THE FOURTH PARLIAMENT OF THE SECOND REPUBLIC**

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**Tuesday, 21<sup>st</sup> January, 2014.**

*The House met at 10:15 a.m. in Parliament Building, Tower Hill, Freetown.*

#### **I. PRAYERS**

*[The Clerk of Parliament, Hon. Ibrahim Sulaiman Sesay, Read the Prayers].*

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

The House was called to Order

**HONOURABLE IBRAHIM S. SESAY (Clerk of Parliament):** Honourable Members, I will start by welcoming you all from the holiday. Today is a very important day and I'm happy that we have the full membership of the House this morning. We may now start with the proceedings for today.

## **II. ELECTION OF THE SPEAKER OF PARLIAMENT, SECTION 79 OF THE CONSTITUTION OF SIERRA LEONE, (ACT NO. 6 OF 1991) AND STANDING ORDERS 8.**

**HONOURABLE IBRAHIM S. SESAY:** Honourable Members, the Act entitled: the Constitution of Sierra Leone (Amendment) Act, 2013, passed in Parliament on the 19<sup>th</sup> November, 2013 provides in Section 79, Sub-section 1 states that the Speaker of Parliament shall be elected by Members of Parliament from among persons who are:

- Members of Parliament and who had served as such for not less than 5 years;
- or qualified to be Members of Parliament and who had served as such for not less than 10 years and who are not less than 40 years.

Honourable Members, Consequent upon the Constitution of Sierra Leone (Amendment) Act, 2013 that is referred above and pursuant to Section 79, Subsection 4(b) of the Constitution of Sierra Leone, Act No. 6 of 1991, it says: *"The Speaker shall vacate his office if any circumstances arise that if he were not the Speaker would disqualify him from election as Speaker"*

Subsequent upon the above, Honourable Justice Abel N. B. Stronge stated in his letter to the Clerk of Parliament, dated 15<sup>th</sup> January, 2014 that pursuant to the Constitution of Sierra Leone (Amendment) Act 2013 referred to earlier: *"I am obliged by law to vacate the office of the Speaker."* Therefore, the office of the Speaker has become vacant. However, pursuant to Section 79, Subsection 5 of the Constitution of Sierra Leone, Act No. 6 of 1991, no business shall be transacted in Parliament order than an election to the office of Speaker at any time if the office of Speaker becomes vacant.

Honourable Members, according to Standing Order 8(1), whenever the House desires to elect a person to be the Speaker, whether after a general election or when a vacancy in the office of Speaker has occurred in any other way, the procedure for the election shall be as provided in this Order.

According to S. O. 8(2), any Member having first ascertained that the Member or other person to be proposed is qualified under Subsection (1) of Section 79 of the Constitution of Sierra Leone, (Amendment) Act, 2013. Section 79(1) states that: *"The Speaker of Parliament shall be elected by the Members of Parliament from among persons who are:*

- *Members of Parliament and who had served as such for not less than 5 years or;*
- *qualified to be Members of Parliament and who had served as such for not less than 10 years; and who are not less than 40 years of age."*

Honourable Members, the proposer for the nomination of anybody who is qualified shall require a seconder. According to S. O. 8(3), *"if only one person is so proposed, the Clerk shall propose the question that the person does take the Chair of the House as Speaker."* In S. O. 8 (5b), *"every Member who wishes to vote in the ballot shall write upon a ballot paper to be supplied by the Clerk either 'aye' or 'nay.'"*

Honourable Members, S. O. 8(6) states: *"if the votes of not less than  $\frac{2}{3}$  of all the Members of the House are cast in favour of any question put to the House under this Order, the Clerk shall declare the person named in the question to have been elected Speaker by resolution of the House."* In S. O. 8(7), *"if three successive resolutions, proposing the election of a Speaker fail to receive the votes of  $\frac{2}{3}$  of all Members of Parliament, the Speaker shall be elected by a resolution passed by a simple majority."*

Honourable Members, Section 79(6) of the Constitution of Sierra Leone, Act No. 6 of 1991 states: *"any person elected to the Office of Speaker, who is not a Member of Parliament shall before entering upon the duties of his office take and subscribe before Parliament the oath as set out in the Third Schedule in this Constitution."*

Honourable Members, I have taken my time to read out these provisions and I am sure Members were able to look into the relevant provisions of the Act so that we will be able to follow what is happening. Now, I am sure all of us have signed the attendance list. We have two political parties and the third part of this composition is the Paramount Chiefs. The All Peoples Congress has 70 Members of Parliament, SLPP 42 and 12 Paramount Chiefs. In totality, we have 124 Members of Parliament and 2/3 of these is 83 members. Nominations are now open.

**HON. IBRAHIM R. BUNDU** (*Deputy Majority Leader of the House*): Mr Clerk, Honorable Members, on this history making day, which is the 21<sup>st</sup> January, 2014, I, Honourable Ibrahim Rashi Bundu, representing Constituency 52, Port Loko District and Deputy Leader of this House hereby nominate Honourable Sheku Badara Basiru Dumbuya to be the Speaker of the House of Sierra Leone Parliament. Thank you very much.

**HON. IBRAHIM S. SESAY:** Any seconder?

**HON. DR BERNADETTE LAHAI** (*Minority Leader of the House*): I, Honourable Dr Bernadette Lahai, Minority Leader of the Sierra Leone Peoples Party (SLPP) and Minority Leader of this Honourable House do hereby humbly second the nomination of Honourable Sheku Badara Basiru Dumbuya for the position of Speaker of the Sierra Leone House of Parliament. I thank you (*Applause*).

**HON. IBRAHIM S. SESAY:** Honourable Members, any other nominations?

**HON. UMAR PARAN TARAWALLY:** I, Honourable Umar Paran Tarawally of Constituency 069, Bo City hereby nominate the Honourable Dr Bu-Buakei Jabbie for the position of Speaker of this Honourable House.

**HON. IBRAHIM S. SESAY:** Any seconder?

**HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE:** I, Honourable Bashiru Silikie of Constituency 072, Bo District, hereby second the nomination of Honourable Dr Bu-Buakei Jabbi... - *(Applause)*.

**HON. IBRAHIM S. SESAY:** Are there any other nominations? If there are no more nominations, could somebody move that nominations be closed?

**HON. CLAUDE D. M. KAMANDA:** Mr Clerk, I so move.

**THE CLERK:** Any seconder?

**HON. IBRAHIM MARTIN BANGURA:** I so second Mr Clerk.

**HON. IBRAHIM S. SESAY:** Honourable Members, we have Honourable Sheku Badara Basiru Dumbuya and the Honourable Bu-Buakei Jabbi being nominated and their nominations were seconded for the position of Speaker. We will now distribute the ballot papers for the elections. We will first of all vote for the person that has been nominated first, the Honourable Sheku Badara Basiru Dumbuya before we vote for the second nominee. You will vote on the ballot paper by either indicating 'aye' or 'nay.' If you write any other word on the ballot paper, your vote will be discarded or nullify as invalid. You can as well indicate on the ballot paper by writing 'yes' for 'aye' or 'no' for 'nay.'

**HON. PARAN:** Mr Clerk, I want you to go over the process again.

**HON. IBRAHIM S. SESAY:** The process is that we are going to vote for one person for now, Honourable Sheku Badara Basiru Dumbuya. And if the first nominee does not have  $\frac{2}{3}$  majority, we are going to vote for the second nominee. If we do not have  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the votes cast, we go a second ballot. And if that fails again, we go for a simple majority wherein whoever gets a simple majority of votes cast becomes the Speaker of this Honourable House. What I have said is contained in the Standing Orders of this House.



Honourable Members, all those in favour of the candidature of Honourable Sheku Badara Basiru Dumbuya for position of Speaker of this House will indicate that by writing 'yes' or 'aye' on the ballot paper. But if you are against his candidature, you write 'no' or 'nay.'

**HON. P.C. BAI KURR KANAGBARU SANKA III:** Mr Clerk, point of order. I think the role has to be known. We have to know how many people are present.

**HON. IBRAHIM S. SESAY:** We have the register here.

**HON. PC KEBBIE:** Mr Clerk, we have to know if these two candidates are qualified.

**HON. IBRAHIM S. SESAY:** I have read the qualification clauses and I am sure we all understand. Do you want me to read that again (*Interruption*)? Honourable Members, a question has just been posed. Two Honourable Members have been nominated for the position of Speaker of this House. Some Honourable Members will like to know if these two nominated candidates are qualified. Well, the qualification criteria are:

- Members of Parliament who had served as such for not less than 5 years; or
- are qualified to be Members of Parliament and who have served as such for not less than 10 years and who are not less than 40 years of age.

Honourable Members, I am of the opinion that these two Honourable Members of Parliament are qualified under these provisions.

**HON. FODAY RADO YOKIE:** Mr Clerk, just for some clarifications sake, are we saying  $\frac{2}{3}$  of Members of Parliament that are present for today's proceeding?

**HON. IBRAHIM S. SESAY:** The Constitution and the Standing Orders say all Members of Parliament. And we have 124 Members of Parliament. This means that if you divide  $\frac{2}{3}$  by 124 is 83 Members of Parliament. So, whosoever has 83 votes means he has got  $\frac{2}{3}$  majority. Honourable Members, I now start with the roll call:

1. HON. ALIE JAMES N. D.
2. HON. BAH CHERNOR M.

3. HON. BANGURA BENNEH
4. HON. BANGURA IBRAHIM MARTIN
5. HON. BANGURA MABINTY H.
6. HON. BANYA IV P.C. MOHAMED SAMA KAILONDO
7. HON. BOIMA IV P.C. PRINCE LAPPYA (ABSENT)
8. HON. BOYA KOMBA E.S.
9. HON. BRAIMA MUSTAPHA M.
10. HON. BRAIMA SAMUEL M.
11. HON. BROWN PATRICIA
12. HON. BUNDU IBRAHIM RASSIN
13. HON. BUNDU SONGOWA (MRS) H.
14. HON. CONTEH BRIMA
15. HON. CONTEH KARIFALA SHEKU
16. HON. CONTEH KEMOKOH
17. HON. DABUNDEH AIAH DR.
18. HON. DUMBUYA ALHAJI SERRAY
19. HON. DUMBUYA S.B.B.
20. HON. EBBA TAMBA ENTOCHEMA
21. HON. FATORMA SAHR
22. HON. FAWUDU SENESIE
23. HON. FAWUNDU DAUDA D.
24. HON. FOFANA AMADU (ABSENT)
25. HON. FORNAH MABINTY
26. HON. FOYAH PATRICK
27. HON. GBAPPY-BRIMA GLADYS GBAMOH
28. HON. HASSAN SHERIFF B.
29. HON. JABBI DR. BU-BUAKEI
30. HON. JAJUA ABU
31. HON. JENGO EDWARD S.
32. HON. JOHNSON DAVID

33. HON. JORKIE MOSES B.
34. HON. KABIA ISATA
35. HON. KABOMBOR II P.C. MANSA PAKI
36. HON. KAIKAI ANSUMANA J.
37. HON. KAINPUMU II P.C. ALEX M.J.J (ABSENT)
38. HON. KAISAMBA FRANCIS AMARA
39. HON. KALLON DAUDA J. B.
40. HON. KALOKO ABI
41. HON. KALOKO ALIE
42. HON. KALOKO BAI
43. HON. KAMANDA CLAUDE DANIEL MELVILLE
44. HON. KAMARA ALBERT DEEN
45. HON. KAMARA ALHASSAN
46. HON. KAMARA ALHASSAN JERO
47. HON. SESAY SALLIEU OSMAN
48. HON. KAMARA IBRAHIM
49. HON. KAMARA KOMBOH
50. HON. KAMARA MOHAMED
51. HON. KAMARA NICOLAS
52. HON. KAMARA SAIDU BABAH
53. HON. KANNEH ALUSINE
54. HON. KANU ABDUL SALAAM
55. HON. KANU AMADU MOHAMED
56. HON. KARGBO ALIMAMY G.
57. HON. KARGBO PATRICK LAHAI M.
58. HON. KARGBO DR. ROLAND FODAY
59. HON. KATTA ALFRED BRIMA
60. HON. KEBBIE P.C. VICTOR BRIMA SIDI
61. HON. KEMOKAI LANSANA IBRAHIM
62. HON. KOEDYOYOMA ERIC KOMBA

63. HON. KONGOMOH II P.C. JOSEPH ALIE KAVURA
64. HON. KONUWA FRANCIS AMARA
65. HON. KOROMA ABU BAKARR
66. HON. KOROMA DANIEL B.
67. HON. KOROMA SUALIHO MONYABA
68. HON. KOWA EMMA JOSEPHINE
69. HON. KPOSOWA FRANK
70. HON. KUYEMBEH HELEN
71. HON. LAHAI DR. BERNADETTE
72. HON. LEWALLY ALPHA B
73. HON. LUNGAY ANDREW VICTOR
74. HON. MANLEY-SPAIN AJIBOLA E.
75. HON. MANSARAY JUSUFU BARRY
76. HON. MANSARAY MOHAMED LAMIN
77. HON. MANSARAY SAIDU
78. HON. MARAH III P.C. ALIE BALANSAMA (ABSENT)
79. HON. MARAH ALUSINE
80. HON. MARAH LAHAI
81. HON. MBAYO ROSKY MOMOKANI
82. HON. MOMOH MOIWAI
83. HON. MUNDA HABIB BAKARR
84. HON. MUNU ALIEU BADDARA K.
85. HON. OSHO-WILLIAMS BLISS EUGENE
86. HON. PEWA P.C. PRINCE MAMBU (ABSENT)
87. HON. RADDER HENNEH
88. HON. ROGERS DICKSON M.
89. HON. SALAMY BOCKARIE NOMOLIE (ABSENT)
90. HON. SALLU-LUGBU II P.C. BAI BUREH
91. HON. SANGBAH SAAH
92. HON. SANKA III P.C. BAI KURR KANAGBARO

93. HON. SANKOH IBRAHIM NOX
94. HON. SESAY HASSAN ABDOL
95. HON. SESAY ABDULAI
96. HON. SANNOH SHEKU
97. HON. SESAY DAN Y.
98. HON. SESAY KUSAN
99. HON. SESAY VERONICA KADIE
100. HON. SHO-SAWYER DR. MICHAEL
101. HON. SILIKIE BASHIRU
102. HON. SILLAH MABINTY KADIJA
103. HON. SISAY SULAIMAN MULUKU
104. HON. SMITH ROSALINE J.
105. HON. SONSIAMA III P.C. SHEKU A. T. FASULUKU
106. HON. SOURIE FREDERICK SANDY
107. HON. SOBBA-STEPHENS MIMA YEMA MIMI
108. HON. SUMAH DR FODAY I.
109. HON. SWARAY MOSES ALLIEU
110. HON. TARA-KOROMA TAWORO
111. HON. TARAWALLY UMAR PARAN
112. HON. KOROMA AARON ARUNA
113. HON. TENGBEH SAHR
114. HON. THOLLEY MOHAMED K. (ABSENT)
115. HON. THOMAS SEGPOH SOLOMON (ABSENT)
116. HON. TORTO AUGUSTINE BOCKARIE
117. HON. TUNIS SIDIE MOHAMED
118. HON. TURAY THOMAS DR. MARK
119. HON. TURAY THOMUS B.
120. HON. HON. YEK II P.C. ALHAJI BAI SHEBORA
121. HON. YOKIE FODAY RADO
122. HON. BAH IBRAHIM PARTEH

123. HON. FOFANAH LEONARD S.

124. HON. MARAH REGINA

According to the roll call, 115 Honourable Members are present and 9 Honourable Members are absent from today's sitting. I now call on the two nominees, Honourable Sheku Badara Basiru Dumbuya and Honourable Dr Bu-Buakei Jabbi to come forward and witness the counting process.

Honourable Members, may I have your attention? First of all I want to thank you very much for the large turnout and the successful voting exercise. The results are as follows:

The Honourable Dr Bu-Buakei Jabbi scored 15 votes; and Honourable Sheku Badara Basiru Dumbuya of Constituency 100 scored 100 votes.

Honourable Members, this means that Honourable Sheku Badara Basiru Dumbuya of Constituency 100 has more than  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the votes cast; and  $\frac{2}{3}$  of all Honourable Members is equivalent to 83. With the powers vested in me by the Standing Orders of the Sierra Leone Parliament and the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone, it is my pleasure to declare Honourable Sheku Badara Basiru Dumbuya of Constituency 100 (having scored more  $\frac{2}{3}$  majority of the votes cast) Speaker of the Sierra Leone House of Parliament... - *(Applause)*.

Honourable Members, whilst I take the newly elected Honourable Member as Speaker of this House to the Speaker's Office to dress and later present him to this Honourable House as the Honourable Speaker of this House, I will ask your indulgence to remain seated.

Honourable Members, according to today's Order Paper, the next item is the election of the Deputy Speaker of Parliament. This is in conformity with Section 80 of the Constitution of Sierra Leone, Act No. 6 of 1991 and Standing Orders 9. The election of the Deputy Speaker is the first function of the newly elected Speaker of this House.

*(The newly elected Speaker, Honourable Sheku Badara Basiru Dumbuya, in the Chair)*

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, as it has been clearly read out by the Clerk of Parliament, we shall now proceed with the election of the Deputy Speaker, which is my very first official duty as Speaker of this Parliament... - *(Applause)*. With regard to the election of the Deputy Speaker of this House, I will refer Honourable Members to S. O. 9, Sub-section 2. It says: *"The election of a Deputy Speaker shall be conducted in a similar manner to the election of a Speaker same that Mr Speaker shall preside and that any motion for the election of the Deputy Speaker shall be declared to have been agreed to if it is supported by the majority of Members present and voting so that is a much simpler method."* It is in this vein that I now ask for nominations for the position of Deputy Speaker of this Honourable House.

**HON. KOMBA E. KOEDOYOMA:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Deputy Majority Leader did say that this is a history making event and I also want to contribute to that history making by rising on Section 80 of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone and Standing Orders 9. Therefore, I, Honourable Komba Eric Koedoyoma of Constituency 027, Kono District, rise to nominate Honourable Chernor R. M. Bah to the position of Deputy Speaker of this Honourable House... - *(Applause)*.

**THE SPEAKER:** Any seconder to that nomination?

**HON. CLAUDE D. M. KAMANDA:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I, Honourable Claude D. M. Kamanda of Constituency 95, Western Rural and Chief Whip of this Parliament, do hereby second the motion.

**THE SPEAKER:** Any other nomination? In the absence of any other nomination can somebody move that nomination be closed?

**HON. FODAY RADO YOKIE:** Mr Speaker, I move that nomination be closed.

**HON. DIXON ROGERS:** I second the motion Mr Speaker.

*(Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to)*

*(Honourable Chernor Ramadan Maju Bah was elected Deputy Speaker of the House unopposed; and subscribed to the oath of office as Deputy Speaker of the House)*

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, a Member of Parliament has raised an issue bordering on a technicality. He asked why the present Speaker did not subscribe to the oath and why has the Deputy Speaker subscribed to the oath of office. There is a constitutional provision to that effect and I will ask the Clerk of Parliament to read the relevant provision of the Constitution.

*(Suspension of S. O. 5(2) being 12:00 noon)*

**HON. IBRAHIM S. SESAY:** With your leave, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I read Section 79, Subsection 6 of the Constitution of Sierra Leone, Act No.6 of 1991: *"Any person elected to the Office of Speaker, who is not a Member of Parliament, shall, before entering upon the duties of his office take and subscribe before Parliament the Oath as set out in the Third Schedule in this Constitution."* Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, that is what the Constitution says. In this case, a Member of Parliament has been elected; and therefore, he does not need to subscribe to the oath... - *(Interruption)*.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much Mr Clerk. Honourable Foday Rado Yokie, I hope that is clear.

**HON. FODAY RADO YOKIE:** Mr Speaker, I thank you for the education. But I want us to look at the difference between the Deputy Speaker and the Speaker. I am saying this because the Deputy Speaker is a Member of Parliament; and what has been applied to the current Speaker should have been applied to the Deputy Speaker because both are Members of Parliament.

**THE SPEAKER:** Mr Clerk, let us go to the next item on the Order Paper.

### **III. FELICITATIONS**



**HON. PC BAI KURR KANAGBARO SANKA III:** Thank you Mr Speaker. I rise to congratulate this Parliament, the Government of Sierra Leone and the people of Sierra Leone. This is a very unique position in this country. If you go through today's dailies, different papers have called this event as a history making day in the House of Parliament.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, all of us are happy because we do accept the fact that this will bring more respect to this Parliament. The old Parliament that we know before the coup used to have Members of Parliament that were Ministers and Directors of different Boards. But the new 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone made it impossible for Members of Parliament to occupy any other position. If you do, you have to resign from being a Member of Parliament. I am sure there are people who have been Members of Parliament but they had to resign when they were appointed as Ministers. For us to be given the opportunity to elect one of us as Speaker of this House means a lot to me.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am sure the word Speaker should have been changed to the word Listener because if 124 Members of Parliament speak, even for one minute, it means the Speaker will have to sit and listen for two hours. That means the Speaker is somebody who listens. He is somebody who allows all views to be heard in the Well of Parliament. I want to congratulate the new Speaker of this House for scoring more than the required number of votes cast. Mr Speaker, 115 Members of Parliament were present; and out of that number, 100 Members of Parliament voted for you. This means that everybody in this Well voted for you, the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP), the All People's Congress (APC) and the Paramount Chiefs. You have to be the Speaker of Parliament. We congratulate you and we hope you will carry the patience that you have carried for the past years as a Member of this Parliament. You have been in this Parliament for the third time and God made it possible for you to be the first elected Member of Parliament to be Speaker of the House under the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone. The 1991 Constitution was amended specifically to give Members of Parliament the opportunity to elect their own Speaker from among

Members of Parliament. This is a welcome initiative because it will enable the leadership of the parties in Parliament to carry themselves well. It also means that any party that wants to lead this nation must bring a leader who is capable to manage the affairs of Parliament... - *(Applause)*.

Mr Speaker, honourable members, the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone is framed by incorporating parts of the United States of American Constitution and that of the British. In those two countries, the party that commands majority in the House of Representatives as in the case of America or House of Commons as in the case of Britain, the Leader of that party automatically becomes the Speaker of the House of Representatives or House of Commons. In the United States, when you lose, they will either rush you out or bring in somebody from the Opposition whom they called Ranking Member. Therefore, in this case, it is good that we have elected somebody who has enormous experience in parliamentary procedures and practices. He has served as Member of this Honourable House for 11 years. On behalf of the Paramount Chiefs, I want to appeal to you to continue to be patient with us. Some of us may say things you don't want to hear because of your party affiliation. But you have to listen to each and every Member of Parliament, including the parliamentary staff.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, you being the Speaker of this Parliament, I am of the opinion that you have to speak for us more outside this Parliament *(Applause)*. Please, Mr Speaker, allow us to speak in this Well as you speak for us outside. Mr Speaker, I want you to look at the Chairs we are sitting on. They are very old and dilapidated. Our toilet facilities are very poor. In fact, I don't allow visitors to come and visit me in this House because if they want to use the toilet, I cannot take them there because of it poor condition.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, some of us are very enthusiastic to have you as Speaker of this Honourable House. We are convinced that your leadership will bring good things for this Parliament. We thank you very much for your past service to this nation as a Member of Parliament. I also want to thank those who came to support

you. I am sure you will continue to work with your constituents. I know that you are going to play a vital role in terms of bringing somebody who will take over your seat. I congratulate you once more and I wish you all the best. We will miss you in the Pan-African Parliament. Honourable Members, anytime Honourable S. B. B. Dumbuya stood up to speak at the Pan-African Parliament, people admired him. We are going to miss a great debater, an orator, a lecturer and an arguer. We are very proud of having somebody like him from Sierra Leone. I thank you.

**HON. BRIMAH CONTEH:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as the most senior old Edwardian in this House, let me take this opportunity to say in Edwardian language, 'expectatan des adaeraz.' This means that the 'expected day has come.'

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when the Bill for the amendment of the Constitution came to this House, we were of the view, as a party that this is not the time for such amendments. But this Honourable House, in its wisdom agreed and passed into law the Bill that brought Honourable S. B. B. Dumbuya to the Speakership position. The President of this nation, a former Member of this Honourable House assented the Bill. I congratulate you and I congratulate the Deputy Speaker. Both of you are eminent old Edwardians that would be managing the affairs of this House. As the sages used say, 'the height of great men reached and kept were not attained by sudden flight today while others slept, we are toiling upwards in the night'.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Honourable S. B. B. Dumbuya has worked very hard. He has been a senior teacher at the St Edwards Secondary School. The Deputy also attended that great school and most colleagues in this Well. The public is with the view that the time has come for us to manage our own affairs without any outside influence. I congratulate you and I congratulate the Deputy Speaker. Honourable Members, some are born great and some achieve greatness. Both the Speaker and Deputy Speaker of this House have achieved greatness.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, you are all aware that the position of Speaker carries in the order of precedence the third stardom in the governance structure of this

country. Whenever the Speaker is not around because of certain reasons beyond human control, the Deputy Speaker takes over the management of the affairs of this House.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, questions will be asked about impartiality and neutrality of your Speakership. I want to refer them to the motto of that great school 'Derege in nos verita'. Edwardians who went through the St Edwards Secondary School are taught right from the very beginning to be evenhanded. And I have no doubt that Honourable S. B. B. Dumbuya will lead us in truth.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I do not want to say much; but to just congratulate. Congratulations, thou good and faithful servants. We are quite sure that you will show your leadership qualities. Please, be a good Ambassador of this House. I am sure you will achieve your good aims and objectives. I thank you very much.

**HON. MABINTY K. SILLAH:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is indeed a great pleasure for me to stand here this afternoon to congratulate Honourable S. B. B. Dumbuya for being elected as Speaker of this noble House. He was the Majority Leader and Leader of Government Business. He has worked very hard to move this nation forward. I have no doubt that he is going to work very hard in his new position.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Honourable S. B. B. Dumbuya is not only hardworking but reliable, trustworthy and impartial. His office is always open to everybody, even my colleagues on the other side could testify to that fact. I am really surprised to see 15 Members of Parliament voted against him.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I also want to take this opportunity to congratulate our Deputy Speaker. It is not a surprise to see him reelected to that position. He is a man of the people. He is not a Member of Parliament for his constituency alone, but a Member of Parliament for the country as a whole. He is a problem solver. Mr Deputy Speaker, I salute you and I congratulate you once more. With these few words, I want to say thank you.

**HON. SUALIHO M. KOROMA:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, before I congratulate the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker, I will like to take this opportunity to congratulate every Member of Parliament for the consensus we took to amend the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone. I will also like to take this opportunity to admonish the Press. They actually gave bad publicity about this amendment and I will like them to know today that these amendments have given the opportunity to every Member of Parliament, whether you are an SLPP or APC to elect a Speaker from among Honourable Members. Therefore, I will like to congratulate all Members of Parliament for their courage. Special thanks go to Honourable Ibrahim R. Bundu for taking the bold step in facing the critics of these amendments. He was very robust in countering the perceptions of those who were in doubt. He used the media to educate the public on the need to have an Honourable Member as Speaker of this Honourable House.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as you used to say, I have no scintilla of doubt that you and your Deputy Speaker will perform to expectations. I believe the time has come for Parliamentarians to know that Parliament, as an institution, is meant for Members of Parliament and should not be allowed to be regulated by neither the Executive nor the Judiciary. I think we have just claimed that autonomy when we passed that Bill into law. Mr Speaker, when I went to Ghana to attend the Democratic Union of Africa Conference, I was involved in a discussion with other delegates. I was asked why the President of Sierra Leone appoints the Speaker of Parliament. I told them that the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone gives the President the power to appoint a Speaker of Parliament. Mr Speaker, I am happy today because Sierra Leone has joined the global village in ensuring international best practice. Sierra Leone has also made history to elect a Member of Parliament to head the position of the Speakership of this House.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to congratulate the Deputy Speaker for his reelection. Our Deputy Speaker is a young Member of Parliament and I can say without any iota of doubt that he is part of the young people of this country. I want him to be initiating programmes for the young people of this country. He has to ensure that the young people of this country benefit from his leadership skills. I am of the opinion that

the young people of this country are seeing you as their role model. Please, do not disappoint them. You are not just a politician; but an icon for the young people of this country. I want you to start putting plans and programmes together for the young people of this country. The Honourable Members of this Parliament are looking up to you. With those few words, I thank you and congratulations (*Applause*).

**HON. BLISS OSHO-WILLIAMS:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, today is a memorable day for this Parliament. I am a Regentonian and an Edwardian of the highest caliber. When I entered Parliament this morning, I met four people sitting at the Members Lounge and one of them walked towards me and said, do you remember the quotation you cited sometimes back; *"Mohamu who mohamu Kongor."* I asked him what that meant and he said: *"those who are in the known of everything, are better."* For the first time in the history of this country, people are saying that we have now got a Speaker who will advance the interests of Members of Parliament and the nation as a whole. He is one of the wisest debaters this Parliament ever had. He is honest, sincere, genuine and impartial. He was the Chairman of the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service and I was a member of that Committee.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Psalm 75, verses 5 and 6 of the Holy Bible says: *"Promotion cometh not from the East; not from the West; not from the South; not from the North, but from above. The Lord puteth one down and taketh another up."* Today, Honourable S. B. B. Dumbuya is been promoted. The last Speaker of this House has given way to the rightful owner to that seat. We have to be realistic and call things by their names. Honourable S. B. B. has been in politics longer than most of us here. He served this country with dignity, conviction and fairness. He has served as an Ambassador to China because his ambassadorial qualities.

He is a student of grammar; and he knows the English Language more than anybody else in this House. In fact, he knows the Latin Language like any other local language in this country. And for you to speak good English, you have to know a bit of Latin because most of these English words are borrowed from Latin.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Deputy Speaker of this House, Honourable Chernor M. Bah is my son. He gets on well with everybody in this country. He is intelligent and above all, he will continue to do well in his capacity as Deputy Speaker. I will wrap up by saying, if you think you are successful, you have to think high in order to rise. You have to be sure of yourself. Life is a battle, at the end of the day the man who wins is the man who thinks he can. Honourable S. B. B. Dumbuya was sure he was going to win and today, he is there as the winner and Head of this House. I thank you very much... - *(Applause)*.

**HON. ANSUMANA J. KAIKAI:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when Honourable S. B. B. Dumbuya became a Member of Parliament in 2002, I realised that the APC was going to have somebody in this House who was ready to work hard on behalf of his party. I knew he was going to excel to the uttermost position available in this House. In 2007, the only senior member of the APC who was above Honourable S. B. B. Dumbuya in this House as far as parliamentary practices and procedures are concerned, was Honourable Edie Turay. He is also a former student of St Edward Secondary School. When Honourable Edie Turay was appointed High Commissioner, I told Honourable S. B. B. Dumbuya that he was going to become the Majority Leader and Leader of Government Business of this House. Therefore, when the issue of Speakership of this Parliament started surfacing, I knew he was going to become Speaker of this Honourable House. This is a man I have known since 1965 at the St Edwards Secondary School.

Honourable Members, Honourable S. B. B. Dumbuya was not only my head boy, he was also my Senior Prefect. I also realised that he was destined to become a great leader in this country. In our school days, we had respect for Honourable S. B. B. Dumbuya more than the Principal of the School. He has all what it takes to make this House achieve the respect it supposed to have. But I want to urge him to be evenhanded. I want him to be kind to each and every one of us. I am saying this because he is sometimes carried away by emotions.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to remind you that this House is administered on precedence, practices and procedures. Mr Speaker has a copy of a book that the Honourable from Lunsar bought in Nigeria. It is a book every Constitutional Lawyer had read. It is specifically written on parliamentary practices and procedures. Therefore, I want that book to be your Bible or Quran. Make sure you read thoroughly. It should be a reference material for all of us because it guides every Member of Parliament in making sure that you carry out your duties effectively and efficient.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I knew this was going to happen. Mr Speaker, I want to remind you to be kind and gentle to us on this side. You have always been there for us; and I know you will continue to be there for us.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to say thanks to all Honourable Members for their patience and courage. History is being made here today. In most countries in Africa and the world over, parliamentarians elect their own Speakers; and that is what we have just done. We don't need a Legal Adviser as Speaker of this Honourable House. We only need somebody who is familiar with parliamentary procedures and practices. And Mr Speaker, nobody is more qualified for the Speakership position of this House than an Honourable Member who has served in that capacity for five or more years.

Honourable Members, the current Speaker has read a lot of books, including those written by William Shakespeare, Richard the II etc. Mr Speaker, on your immediate right is seated the National Chairman and Leader of SLPP, who shared those classrooms with you. On that note, I congratulate you and I want you to know that we are all under your tutelage. I thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** I respectfully ask Honourable Members to be brief if we want as many people to contribute.

**HON. SONGOWA BUNDU:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as we you have heard from the tribute made by Honourable Bliss Osho-Williams that history has been made today as far as this Honourable House is concerned. I want to congratulate the new



Speaker for assuming this position and the leadership of this House. I thank His Excellency the President of the Republic of Sierra Leone for assenting the Bill that brought you to power. You are not from the Diaspora but a veteran Member of Parliament. I say congratulations to you and I thank everybody in this noble House *(Applause)*.

**HON. PATRICK FOYAH:** Mr Speaker, we have joined the rest of the world to make in terms of having an Honourable Member as Speaker of this Parliament. For 10 years and above, you have been a colleague in this noble House. You know all the problems and difficulties that Members of Parliament are facing in the course of discharging their functions. We have challenges which you are very much aware of and I think it was partly based on that you were voted as Speaker of this House prodigiously. This is because we are very optimistic that you will help us to perform our functions effectively.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I also want to take this opportunity to thank the House for the re-election of a younger brother, Honourable Chernor R. M. Bah. I have only been a Member of Parliament for three months, but before I came here as Honourable Member of Parliament, I have known and worked with the two Speakers in different capacities. My late wife of blessed memory, Honourable Alice Foyah, worked with both of you effectively and in a professional manner. I wish to say that I will continue where she stopped. Prosperity is what we are working to achieve. But this achievement will not be achieved if we fail to work as a team. We have to work collectively in order to ensure progress, development and prosperity in this country. I want to congratulate you for being made the Speaker of this Honourable House and I also want to congratulate Honourable Chernor R. M. Bah whom I have found to be a worthy gentleman. Indeed, as a young man, he has learnt very fast over the years. He has a very bright future ahead of him. Be assured that we will support you on this side as well. Please, make sure you continue to create a level playing field for us to work as Members of Parliament. I thank you very much.

**HON. UMAR PARAN TARAWALLY:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is exactly one month two weeks when this House vowed never to return until one of us is made

Speaker of this House. And today marks a very important milestone in the history of the Parliament of the Republic of Sierra Leone. Mr Speaker, a popular reggae musician, Nassio, in one of his tracks said: *"He who feels it knows."*

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, six weeks ago, the debate about amending Section 79 and Section 80 of the 1991 Constitution was tense and the journalists where, trying to get our views on the issue. I told those who were fortunate to interview me said what I have just quoted above. Similarly, another musician, Burning Spear, in one of his tracks, said: *"You can't be on the outside and know what is going on in the inside."* Today, we have had one of us as Speaker of this Honourable House. Mr Speaker, the only challenge I am throwing is that by the end of 2017, if Members of Parliament express some dissatisfaction, we will not give you the award. Today, I call the seat of Parliament as the seat of the Edwardians. This is because the Speaker of this House is an Edwardian and the Deputy Speaker is also an Edwardian. I have not been privileged to share in the grooming of Edwards. But thank God, I was privileged to have been cultured with both of you at Fourah Bay College at different times... - *(Interruption)*.

**THE SPEAKER:** Very different indeed Honourable Member.

**HON. UMAR PARAN TARAWALLY:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, at Fourah Bay College we were taught to show concern 'not for self, but for others.' I just want to entreat you all to know that you are serving this Parliament. You are not Soldiers of Fortune. You are not leading a battalion that is in doubt. You are leading a battalion that has confidence in your leadership. This battalion will help you to achieve your aims and objectives. Make sure you try by all means to sustain and maintain it.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, today the evidence of the result of the votes cast demonstrates that the Speaker is a democratically elected Speaker. Only 15 Members voted against him; which to me, is a minute number. I see the Speaker as a man with great personal charm; and the Deputy Speaker as a man with acute intelligence. On this note, I want to say congratulations to the Speaker and his Deputy. I thank you.

**HON. AUGUSTINE B. TORTO:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me take this opportunity to congratulate Honourable S. B. B. Dumbuya for being elected Speaker of this Parliament. When I was in the House of Commons few months ago as a delegate, I received a call from an Honourable Member that the Bill had gone through. When I came back, the Speaker was very upset. He said Honourable Augustine Torto, S.O. 2 Mr Speaker, *"usay u bi go?"* I said, *"a bi go na di awos of Kɔmɔns to rapriɛnt u."* I have known Honourable S. B. B. Dumbuya since 2002, while he served on the Opposition bench and I served on the Government bench. Even when I served on the Government bench, I always respected him. Sometimes, when I get hot-headed he will say Chief Torto 'dis no to England.' He has been advising me on important issues and that is why I am here today. I am very pleased with his election to the position of Speaker of this Honourable House. But I don't want him to forget that we all started this journey together in 2002.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to take this opportunity to also congratulate the Deputy Speaker, who is also a Member of the ECOWAS Parliament for his re-election. He is a young man but he is very intelligent. I thank you.

**HON. MUSTAPHA M. BRAIMA:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, before I congratulate you for your election as Speaker of this House, I would like to make my position very clear. You have had many praises showered on you. Professor Steward has taught me in Sociology in his case study of the African Social System, focussing on West Africa that a lone child, who is going out to leave his or her parents, the Africans will fear to open largess of praises because they fear that the gods may not be happy. I want to be very philosophical in my approach. I am a typical African from Kailahun District, who has read some Sociology and the African Social Systems. I will not want to extend another largess of praise on you. I want to be very critical and philosophical. I will begin from the position of negative to stress on the positive strides you should take in life. This is because I fear that the gods may not be happy. You are my lone child; and you have been exposed to the world.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me start from the negative perspective. Mr Speaker, I want to tell you that you are not hard working at all. In the African Social Systems, people do not like to put largess of praises on a child that is leaving them. You are leaving us now in this Well and you are now the Speaker of this House. I want to reiterate that you are not hard working. Therefore, when you take the Chair as Speaker of this House, try to work hard. I want to encourage you to work hard Mr Speaker for the progress of not only this House but this nation as a whole. I also want to inform you that you are not only working for yourself or for this Parliament; but you are working for the people of this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Honourable S. B. B. Dumbuya has not been just to people. But now that you are the Speaker of this House, we want you to inject justice in this House. You have to be impartial in dealing with all Members of Parliament. You have to be forthright and plainspoken.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Honourable S. B. B. Dumbuya has been a wicked man. You have to be a kind man to all of us, irrespective of party affiliation. You have been a wicked man to all of us. I am not talking about Honourable Mustapha Braima alone, but all the parliamentarians. Now that you are Speaker of this noble House, I believe you are going to be impartial and generous to the people of this nation. You should have what we call in Geography, the 'carrying capacity.' You need to have that carrying capacity to get all of us on board. Be a good shepherd. You can leave 99 political parties behind and come to the SLPP because you are a good Shepherd. The good Shepherd left 99 of his sheep and went in search of the missing one.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as I said earlier, I am going to be very philosophical. The new Speaker has not been lovely. He has never been caring. We have surrendered ourselves to you. Everybody is claiming that this is an epoch making event in Sierra Leone because one of us has become the Speaker of this House. You have to live up to the praises that have been showered on you. Be a loving and caring father; a father that knows what the children want to have or what the children like.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the reason why I have taken this philosophical approach is to enable you to take over the responsibilities you have got today. This is because we have seen in this country that when leaders are appointed or leaders are elected, they become the gods and the goddesses of the earth. People fear to say the truth to them and that is what we call sycophancy. It is an offence to the highest level. It is repugnant to human justice. Don't listen to them at all. They are flatterers. Listen carefully to those who are very critical of your leadership styles. Don't make enemies of those who are bold to come out to tell you the truth. Make them your good friends.

Mr Speaker, there are those who will come with broad smiles. As a leader who has read various leadership theories, you need to examine the inward appearance of human beings. You need to know their inner self and inner spirit. Even to those who smile to you, but are not happy with you. Some people may not smile to you but within themselves, they are happy for you. From that philosophical analogy, I want to now congratulate both the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker of this House for their elections to these offices. I wish I was one of you. Please do your best to save the name of this Parliament. The World is watching you. Your children and Sierra Leoneans, as a whole, are watching you. Congratulations once more

**HON. ROSALINE J. SMITH:** Thank you very much Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to first of all thank God for this day, because he made it possible for me to be here and partake in this history making event. At least, I was able to vote. However, I am not a Philosopher like the previous Speaker.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, last week, we had a funeral service for two former Members of Parliament. I believe it was the Honourable Paramount Chief who made a statement during the funeral that it is good to talk about people when they are alive, rather than after they have died. It is good to say good things about them when they are hearing you. And this has been demonstrated here today. Honourable S. B. B. Dumbuya, we will miss you as the Majority Leader of this House and Leader of Government Business. We will miss you because whenever you rise to close a debate, I get excited because of your choice of vocabularies, terminologies and expressions. We

have been always learning from you. In fact, my phone has a dictionary where I often search for most of your jargons. Personally, I will miss you. I am sure that the Deputy Speaker of this House has had a wealth of tutorial and knowledge from you.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if we all decide to talk about the good qualities of Honourable S. B. B. Dumbuya, we will spend the rest of this day. One thing everybody would say about Honourable S. B. B. Dumbuya is that he likes to read and he encourages every Member of Parliament to read books. As he is seated on that Chair, I am sure some of the doctrines he has taught us, especially new Members of Parliament, we will not forget them. Thank God for this historic day in this House. I will also like to thank Honourable Members who are part of this history making event.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Deputy Speaker is a very young man. He is everybody's brother and son. He is the most likeable young man in this Parliament. I don't think any one of us in this House will stand here and say anything negative about Honourable Chernor Maju Bah. He is always there for every Member of Parliament, regardless of the constituency you represent. The Honourable Chernor Bah is there to come to your aid and to give you meaningful advice. I am sure he will continue to be tolerance and hardworking. We ask God for continued guidance, protection, wisdom, knowledge and understanding for him. It is no surprise that he was elected unopposed. We thank God for his life. We ask God to continue to bless both of them. In the book of Mathew Chapter 7, verse 7, it says: *"Ask and it shall be given unto you; seek and you shall find; knock and it shall be opened."*

Mr Speaker, Honourable members, I believe we have asked, as Members of Parliament, we have sought, and now the door has been opened to us. The door has been opened and I believe by the Grace of God we will make good use of it. I thank you Mr Speaker.

**HON. IBRAHIM R. BUNDU (*Deputy Majority Leader of the House*):** Mr Speaker Honourable Members, I want to join my Colleagues in congratulating both of you. Mr Speaker, on the 27<sup>th</sup> April, 1961, Sierra Leone became an independent nation. On the 19<sup>th</sup> April, 1971, Sierra Leone became a Republic. On the 21<sup>st</sup> January, 2014, Sierra Leone Parliament has become a Member of the Global Legislative Assembly. This is

indeed, a day history making day. Today, this Parliament has put a stop to the long existing auditing from the Judiciary. We are now part of the global Parliament.

Mr Speaker Honourable Members, there has been a popular question. The question is which country whose Speaker of Parliament is appointed by the President from the Judiciary? The answer was simple, Sierra Leone. Today, we have put a stop to that tradition. We all watched the process and we heard the results announced. The results spoke volumes. The results and the process have spoken. When we talk of transparency, we saw it this morning. Acceptability of the process, we saw it this morning. We saw Honourable Dr Bu-Buakei Jabbi crossing the Floor to the other side to meet with the winner of the election. In fact, that was in contravention to Standing Orders 35 (2). For the education of our spectators and with the leave of Mr Speaker, I read: *"Members shall not cross the Floor of the House unnecessarily, nor speak from a place allotted to another Member."*

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Honourable Dr Bu-Buakei Jabbie infringed S. O. 35(2) so that he could register his acceptance of what transpired in this Well. I want to thank him for his courage. Well, for this Parliament, there are no losers. All of us, as Members of Parliament have emerged victorious. Electing a Speaker from amongst Members of Parliament means that all of us are part of this history making event. The Spectators are part of this history. We thank you for your support. We thank those who have been very critical about these amendments. That is the essence of democracy. In fact, we should bear in mind that some criticise to draw the attention of the public and to make the process more popular. That was why I took this Parliament to members of the public, through the Media, both electronic and other channels, to educate our people and we are not going to stop. We will continue to educate the public about how Parliament works.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the responses we had when we started this campaign convinced us greatly that the public needs a lot of education. This Parliament is yours. You are our employers. If you wouldn't have employed us, through the ballot box, we won't be here. If we are here today because of you, I think we owe the

responsibility to tell you what obtains in Parliament. It is our duty to educate you on the procedures and practices of Parliament. We will continue to do so for the benefit of our people. We thank you for your support you have shown us. Without your support, we would not have had one of us as a Speaker of this Parliament.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to join other colleagues to say congratulations and to thank them in ensuring the successful completion of this exercise. We have succeeded in building a strong and dynamic team that will transform this House for the better. We have men with impeccable character. We are proud to present you to the world as our Speaker. Once more, I want to say congratulations.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as I speak, the seat on my left is empty. Procedurally, I cannot move over to occupy it. I am particularly pointing at this seat because I am losing a Mentor. See how high he has climbed. We both entered this Parliament in 2002. I was seated right at the back, where Honourable Fawundu is seated; and Honourable S. B. B. Dumbuya seated in the second row. That was in 2002 to 2007. In 2007, my brother became the Deputy Leader of this House. I was appointed the Chief Whip of this House. Look how far we have gone. That is not all. In 2012, when he was appointed Leader of this House, I became Deputy Leader, a position I still occupy as I speak.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I cannot stop congratulating you. I believe if you have another higher appointment, the trend continues. It has started long ago and I hope it is going to continue. Mr Speaker, Mr Deputy Speaker I congratulate you all. Thank you very much.

**HON. DR BERNADETTE LAHAI (*Minority Leader of the House*):** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it gives me the greatest pleasure to speak and be part of this epoch making in the House of Parliament. Mr Speaker, let me explain why I did second the Motion for the nomination of the Speaker. We came to Parliament in 2002. I was on the governing side and he was on the Opposition bench. We have sat in this House and debated with very good memories. When the debate started for us to amend the Constitution so that one of us could be the Speaker of this House, I had no doubt in my



mind that it would go through. I could see no one else seated on that Chair other than Honourable Sheku Badara Basiru Dumbuya. I have faith and great respect for him. We should start this new Parliament by extending the Olive Branch in the sense that we are going to live and work with each other. We cannot start on a note of antagonism. We cannot start on a note of pessimism. This is a Parliament of hope under his dispensation.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I therefore seconded the nomination of Honourable Sheku Badara Basiru Dumbuya because we are a Parliament that is made up of the government and the Opposition. We will be working together for the good of this country, despite our different political beliefs. We will be working together to uplift the masses of this country. In working together, we may disagree to agree; we may negotiate; and it should be a matter of give and take. If I have a second and a third chance, I will do exactly what I have done today. Honourable Sheku Badara Basiru Dumbuya always says: *"be true to thyself;"* and that is exactly what I have done and I will do it again if I have the opportunity.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I did not attend the St Edwards Secondary School but I did attend a school that St Edwards gave birth to. That is Christ the King College. In fact, I can say biologically that St Edwards and Christ the King College are one and the same. Being a product of Christ the King College also means I am indirectly a product of St Edwards Secondary School. God will bless you and will continue to protect you in your new position.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this Parliament must make a difference under your new Leadership. There is no option but to make positive difference. I say this because when we started the amendment, there are a lot of pessimists out there and even now, who want to see this Parliament falls. They want to see the negative fulfilment and achievement of what they are already prophesying. They are prophesying that we have done the wrong thing. You just sit and wait and see they will start fighting themselves. We on this side will give you our support. We will give you our collaboration; and work with you because Parliament is made up of the Opposition and Government. This is

what constitutes Parliament. The Opposition is part of the governance of this country. We are part of the governance process because the government comprise of the Executive, the Legislature (which is currently made up of the Sierra Leone Peoples Party and the All Peoples Congress Party) and the Judiciary. So, we cannot exonerate ourselves from not being part of the government. Therefore, we will work together to make a difference.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when I was searching through the internet about the role of the Speaker in modern Democracy, this was what I discovered: "*A Speaker in a parliamentary democracy does not necessarily have to have rare qualities, but he should be a man of experience, long standing tenure in Parliament in a rare circumstances and time.*" What does that mean? This means that you don't have to have a legal background. What you should have is experiences in parliamentary procedures, principles and practices. And that is exactly what we have seen in you. That has given us the courage to take a step forward and to elect you as Speaker of this Honourable House.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Parliament comes from the Latin word 'parler,' which means to talk. Under your leadership, I know that you will promote the freedom of speech of Honourable Members in this Parliament. I have no reason to doubt that you will ensure a level playing field for us to debate freely. You have to make sure that Members of Parliament are given the freedom to share their opinions. Every Member of Parliament should be given the opportunity to express his/her opinion. This is why we are here.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, you are from the governing party, but I know that you will ensure impartiality, independence and fairness. Parliament is built upon principles, processes, precedence and procedures. I know that despite the fact that you are coming from the governing party, you will be consistent in the application of the rules and procedures of Parliament, irrespective of who falls foul of breaking those rules and procedures. I know that you will be consistent and you will reprimand where there

is need to reprimand and you will praise where there is need to praise without fear or favour.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, you provided good leadership for us in the Pan-African Parliament as Leader of the Delegation. We are going to be saddened but I have hopes that this time round, as and when you go to the Pan African Parliament, you will go not as a delegate but as a Speaker of the Sierra Leone Parliament. We are aware that there are Speakers' Meetings and Conferences in the Pan African Parliament and I am sure you will even have more admiration and accolade from the many colleague parliamentarians who are members of the Pan-African Parliament. I am sure that your colleagues in the Pan-African Parliament will be sending you many congratulatory messages. You have worked hard and you were admired by many. Mr Speaker, under your leadership, we want to see more disciplined in this Parliament. We want to see more programmes on human resource capability and development for both parliamentarians and our staff. Under your leadership, we want to see Institutional Capacity Building in this House. We want this Parliament to move from where it is to where it is supposed to be.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank all of you today for giving the support to the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker. The Deputy Speaker of course is my adopted son. The Deputy Speaker, in whom I am well pleased, has been given the onerous position to continue. Reward for hard work is more work. That is what has been demonstrated here. I have no doubt that he will work together with the Speaker and the other leaders to move this Parliament from where it is now to where it is supposed to be in the modern dispensation of parliamentary practice. God bless you and we look forward to a good working relationship between us and the Speaker. I thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, I want to take this opportunity to recognise the presence of two very important people: Mr Mohamed Bangura, Leader of the United Democratic Movement (UDM) and Leader and Chairman of the Sierra Leone's People Party (SLPP), Honourable Chief Sumanoh Kapen. Honourable Chief Sumanoh Kapen

was once a Member of this House. But what is important for me and what I want you to note in particular is that Chief Sumanoh Kapen, whom we popularly call as DQB was my senior at the St Edwards Secondary School. As I have always said in this House, seniority in those days meant a lot. Juniors were bound to learn from their seniors. We admired them greatly. They were an exemplar to us in every respect. When he went to Fourah Bay College, he came back to teach and he did teach me in the sixth form. Chief Sumanoh Kapen then was my teacher and I am very proud of him.

Honourable Members, most of you have known me over the years for speaking extemporaneously. I always speak impromptu; but only on some very formal occasion, for the records, I try to deliver something in black and white. Today, because I know that there are many people that have a penchant for quoting me, I will also have to deliver something that I humbly put together if not for anything but for the records. But before then, let me hasten to give one assurance. Those of you who were here in 2007, when the Honourable Justice Abel Nathaniel Stronge became the Speaker of this House, I did give a congratulatory message and I will urge you to go into the Hansard and you will find in the pages what I said then in my congratulatory message. Mercifully, we have somebody with us, Honourable Minkailu Mansaray, Minister of Mines, who was my senior then in this Parliament. After I had made my congratulatory statement, he said, Honourable S. B. B. Dumbuya, you almost spoke as somebody from the Opposition by the many pieces of advice you gave to Honourable Abel Stronge on how to administer Parliament as a Speaker. Go to the Hansard and you will find what I said. Let me assure you all that I will be impartial. I have always said it here and it is my principle in life. *"To thyself be true."* And I have been brought up in a tradition which told us that in whatever you do, you should seek for the truth. I will not say much, but after sometime, you will prove me right or wrong.

Honourable Members, I have been palpably moved by the effusion of praise that has been heaped on me by many and beautiful words of congratulations on my assumption of the Office of Speaker of Parliament. I thank you all most sincerely for your kind words and good wishes. By way of reciprocating such scintillating sentiments, so openly

expressed in my favour, I promise to do everything in my power so as not to misplace the confidence that has been reposed in me by electing me so overwhelmingly as your Speaker.

Honourable Members, for quite some time and indeed for years, we have been yearning and waiting eagerly for this day. The moment of a long felt dream has finally arrived. This day marks the crystallisation of an idea that had been conceived for long. It marks the rectification of a situation which too many had considered most preposterous and unattainable. Also, considered diametrically at variance with what obtains in other jurisdictions and what has been patently incompatible with the now much talked about concept of international best practice. This day, ultimately marks a most cherished fulfilment of an ardent desire so often expressed and a successful culmination of a long drawn out campaign.

Honourable Members, I was impressed with the recent vigorous interest of some opinion leaders in the business of Parliament. Actually, some of their opinions on our constitutional amendment were absolutely out of tangent with a reality of our internal dynamics. Others were simply amusing. They imputed fanciful and improper motives. All this indicate a pressing need for various forms of public relations exercise. However, their basic abstract framework of engagement is fine, even though our noble pursuit was misunderstood. They are vociferously on the wrong side of history. For in the aspersions, they are unconscious that Parliament, has for a long time being, overripe of it full independence. The evolutionary drive of Parliament for productive Professionalism and independence has to be appreciated.

Summarily, Honourable Members, the Constitution of Sierra Leone, Act No. 6 of 1991 separated Parliament from the Executive and strengthens our good governance functions to hold the Executive to account, then followed two recent historical milestones of parliamentary autonomy. The Parliamentary Service Act of 2007, Act No. 23 of 2007, builds on the said separation of powers and among other provisions of autonomy, set up the Parliamentary Service Commission, replacing the Public Service Commission. For its part, the Constitutional (Amendment) Act, 2013, Act No. 4 of 2013

ends over four decades of the Speakership of Parliament by very eminent caretakers from the Judiciary. We acclaim them all as the '*salt of the earth*' that has made their people proud. And indeed, these dark days, when the fight for political power was very literal, they stood out conspicuously as brilliant stars shining in this Honourable House with their nobility of spirit. We thank them for their sterling service but we have to evolve as a separate institution. We have to move on and claim our own destiny.

Honourable Members, Act No. 23 of 2007 was piloted by the present President, when he was Leader of the Opposition and unanimously passed across party lines. The Constitutional (Amendment) Act, 2013, in response to the patterns of Parliament for a new order in the Speakership, comes from the Government of the present President, and again very significantly was passed unanimously by both parties in the House. These are two instances where two different Parliaments, the Second and the Fourth with a great majority of different Members transcend the party lines and act non-partisan in the national interest. We possess that proven capacity to objectively and impartially judge and act upon matters of great national importance. The entire Parliament is on the right side of history. So, in the just concluded exercise for an acceptable constitution of Parliament, are we not professionally fit as Members of Parliament to conduct our parliamentary proceedings independently? I say emphatically that we are fit to do so. Everyone must clearly understand that at the end of any possible pre-legislative process, bringing in the wealth of research and consultations in draft proposals, Parliament remains the Supreme Legislative Authority in our service to the nation.

Honourable Members, the question of timing and why amending the Constitution at this time, that question is answered by the Principle of the Primacy of Parliamentary Privilege. It means that a matter of Privilege is in fact conceived to take precedence over any other business of the House. Simply put, in the specialist arrangement regarding its privileges, Parliament is meant to serve the nation and wait for no man in the enactment of its laws. Honourable Members, we wait for nobody. I need not advert to very obvious professionalism and specialisation from other institutions. Now, our own

practices and procedures, customs and traditions are unique in Parliament. No one can authentically and excellently fulfil the responsibility of being the custodian and the Presiding Officer as much as the current Speaker contemplated in Act No. 5 of 2013, one now honourably elected by you in flesh and blood; one fully grounded for many years in their latent rationale and dramatic purport.

And so far from the unfortunate mystification, the canal of our laws is simply our decisions for good governance and with the aid of advice on draft Legislations. The Legal Draftsman translates these into his specialist language which may appear mystifying to the impatient. All things considered, our policy has been to extend to their limits and liberate as a separate autonomous power our institutional capacity for good governance. Today, our independence as an Arm of State governance has become unequivocally meaningful. Now that we have become an independent entity, it behoves on all of us to be more responsible than before. We are Honourable Members of Parliament and that is what we have always been.

Honourable Members, from this very instance, let us be more Honourable than hitherto. From this very moment, let us, by what we say, by what we do, and by any act of ours, leave no one in doubt that we are truly and unmistakably the Honourable people whom our constituents have made us by electing us to serve them... - (*Applause*).

Honourable Members, the function for which we are more generally and conventionally known is that of legislation. We also represent the people that elected us. But what I know to be a crucially important responsibility on our part is that of Oversight. If the Executive and related Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) as is generally felt and desired are to be effectively held to account, which I am sure is the fervent wish of His Excellency the President, we must carry out our Oversight functions vigorously, fearlessly, relentlessly and indeed most honourably. All we wanted was to be a fully independent Legislature. By this Constitution (Amendment) Act, No. 5 of 2013, this has now happened.

Incidentally, Honourable Members, the present Clerk of Parliament was a former Member of Parliament who served in this House from 1996 to 2007. It is now

Parliament for the Parliamentarians. Now that we have had this in place, let us demonstrate it to all that we are more than fit and capable to govern ourselves. We do not claim to know everything and nobody is, and can never be omniscient. We do not profess to be perfect. Perfection belongs to the realm of illusion or fantasy. He who claims to be perfect is only being shamelessly presumptuous. As human beings, we are all subject to normal human limitations. But we believe and firmly so, that with the considerable concentration of brain-power and the great fond of expertise and experience within the clustered walls of this Chamber, we will forge ahead. And with the support and cooperation of all without exception and with the good will and assistance with the international community, nothing will be insurmountable and I can say it without any equivocation that we will surely make difference.

Honourable Dr Bernadette Lahai, we will surely make a difference. Thank you all for your patience. And as I speak, I must pay homage to my senior and teacher, Chief Sumanoh Kapen. Honourable Ibrahim R. Bundu did quote S. O. 35, relating to the behaviour of Honourable Bu-Buakei Jabbi. I must, at this juncture, pay tribute to him for graciously coming over to congratulate me on my victory. This is the spirit and that is what is expected of us as Honourable Members of Parliament.

### ***ADJOURNMENT***

*(The House rose at 1.08 p. m. and was adjourned until Thursday, 23<sup>rd</sup>  
January, 2014, at 10.00 a.m.)*