



OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

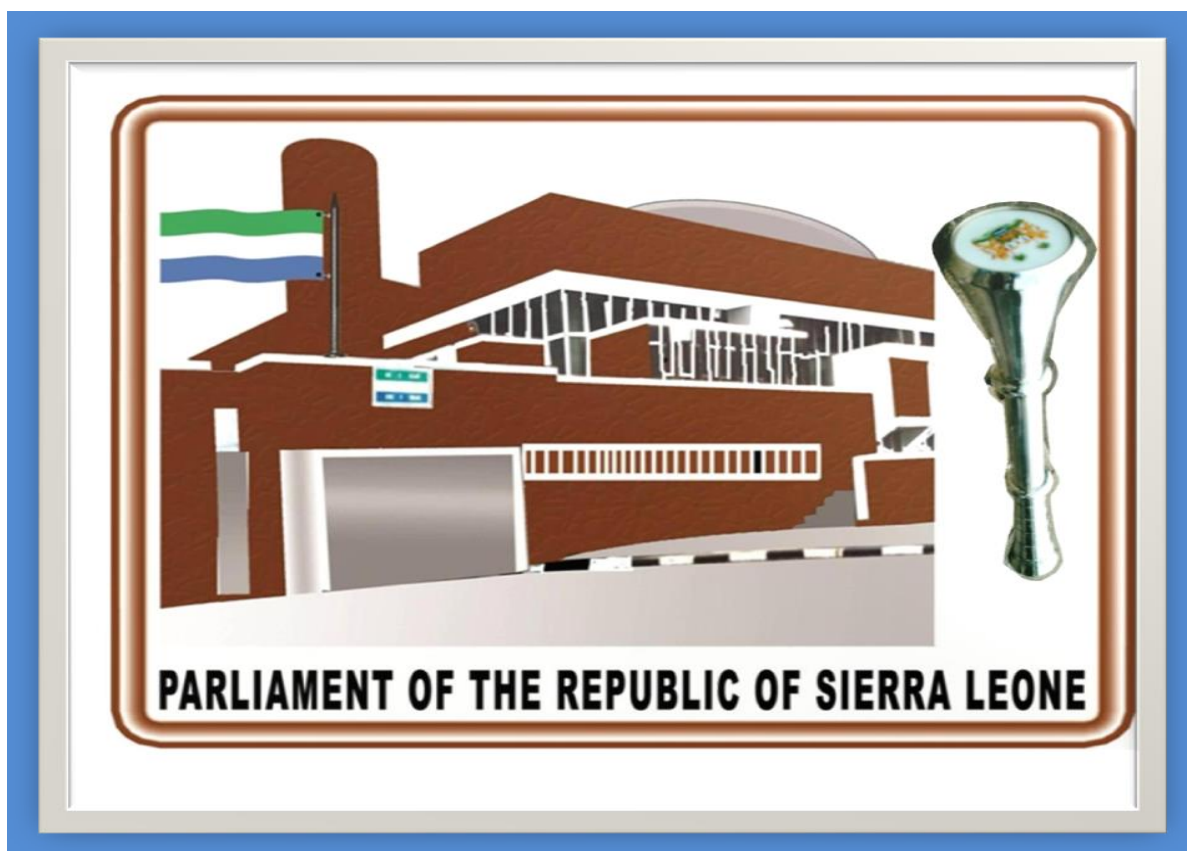
[HANSARD]

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

FIRST SESSION –FIRST MEETING

WEDNESDAY, 22nd NOVEMBER, 2023

SESSION – 2023/2024



OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

[HANSARD]

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First Meeting of the First Session of the Sixth Parliament
of the Second Republic of Sierra Leone.

Proceedings of the Sitting of the House
Held Wednesday, 22nd November, 2023.

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SECOND READING

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE

[SECOND ALLOTTED DAY]



THE CHAMBER OF PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE

Official Hansard Report of the Proceedings of the House

FIRST SESSION – FIRST MEETING OF THE SIXTH PARLIAMENT OF THE SECOND REPUBLIC

Wednesday, 22nd November, 2023.

I. PRAYERS

[The Table Clerk, Mr Alimamy Lincoln-Bangura, Read the Prayers]

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

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

The House was called to Order

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

II CORRECTION OF VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS FOR TUESDAY 21ST NOVEMBER 2023

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, we go to the Records of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting held on Tuesday, 21st November, 2023 starting from Page 5. Any comment or amendment on Page 5 and 6?

Honourable Member, The middle paragraph attributed to me, the penultimate line, starting with the sentence he stated that the House could not debate. There is no uncertainty about it, no speculation about it, the 'could,' should be replaced with the word 'would.' The House would not debate and that is the matter we shall consider in a short while. I hope the clerks are already registering the number of MDAs that are in attendance. Page 7? Page 8? Yes!

HON. DANIEL B KOROMA: The debate contributor Honourable John Charles Conteh [APC] is from Bombali, not Portloko.

THE SPEAKER: Okay, thank you. Page 9? Can someone please move for the adoption of the Record of Votes and Proceedings for Tuesday, 21 November, 2023 be adopted by the Office...*[interruption]*

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

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON. ALICE KORNIA SANDY: I so second Mr Speaker.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed To]

[Record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting held on Tuesday, 21st November, 2023 has been adopted as amended]

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, before we move to the next item, I want to give the Floor to the acting Leader of Government Business in consonant with Page 8; the undertaking that he gave to the House, to bring us up to speed with regard to the attendance of MDAs.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE (*Deputy Leader of Government*): Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I made two undertakings yesterday. First of all, we talked about the MDAs that were not present and we expected them to be here before 10:00am. I have noticed, Mr Speaker that we have a huge number of MDAs who were not present. We should do a roll call to know the MDAs that are present. For the budget estimates the Ministry of Finance is working as you have noticed that the Minister is not here. They are seriously working on it and I would still continue to ask for the indulgence of my colleagues to show understanding. The Ministry is seriously working and they are waiting on the Government Printer. Each of these estimates Mr Speaker, it is more than 120 pages and we would have to print for all 149 Members of Parliament.

THE SPEAKER: Are you lamenting that or just stating the obvious?

HON.BASHIRU SILIKIE: Based on the commitment I made yesterday...*[interruption]*

THE SPEAKER: Parliament is composed of how many Members?

HON.BASHIRUSILIKIE:149

THE SPEAKER: So let us now lament on it.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: So we would continue the debate, we are hoping that Government Printer be able to conclude the estimates before the debate ends. If they are not able we would communicate to the Ministry of Finance as it is seriously working with the Government Printer. For the MDAs that are not here, Mr Speaker, I want us to do a roll call and we would give them 30 minutes to present themselves or we instruct that if they are not here, we seize their budget and we ask the various Committees that will be charged with the responsibility of looking at those budgets to recommend to this House.

THE SPEAKER: So, with the understanding of the House, I will say we allow 30 minutes to give them enough scope and space to make on time before we start our deliberations in earnest. So, you have half an hour to ensure that they are here.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Mr Speaker, quite apart from the MDAs, even the Minister of Finance is not here and we cannot debate in the absence of the Minister.

THE SPEAKER: I take note of that, but when we get to that point, I would know what to do. So half an hour is the latitude we are going to allow.

III ANNOUNCEMENT BY MR SPEAKER:

THE SPEAKER: I will never get tired of reminding all of us of our sacred obligations to this nation. Nobody else will come to develop this nation for us. They can come and empathise with our state of affairs that is the most we can get from outsiders. The primary responsibility is borne by us as Sierra Leoneans to develop ourselves and our country. I want to thank all of you who for the last day and today have demonstrated quite uniquely a sense of leadership by example. It is no good telling another person what to do that is proper and right whilst you refrain from doing it. So as Members of Parliament demonstrating the value of respecting time and respecting the dictate of our Standing Order to start at no later than 10:00am. I therefore commend all Members so that we can approve these fine nominees [*Applause*]. Please do not disappoint the nation and yourselves by deviating from the purpose you are appointed. Let us make sure we continue to demonstrate leadership by example; forget about what other people do, they can go to their offices at whatever time they like, but for this Parliament, let us show the nation that we do things properly and differently from others.

Honourable Members, my announcement for today is just to say thank you to the whole House. With that, I stand the House down for half an hour.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Speaker, sorry, before you stand the House down. This is a message to all MDAs. The Speaker is standing the House down for 30 minutes and it is expected that within this 30 minutes, we see all MDAs to have a representative in

this Parliament. We cannot be discussing the budget of the state that has to be executed by the MDAs and they are not here to listen to the voices of the representatives of the people. So, we expect all MDAs to be represented in the next 30 minutes. Mr Speaker, I want to make one thing clear, the position that should be represented by each MDA should not be below the rank of a Director or a Deputy Permanent Secretary. If they are not here, then Parliament will be left with no option but to recommend, before we can get to the Committee of Supply. I thank you.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Mr Speaker, if I could add to the voice of the Deputy Leader...*[interruption]*

THE SPEAKER: By all means.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Yes Mr Speaker, it is very clear that previous debates were treated with adequate attention more than this. This debate is not live, no SLBC, no AYV, so most of what we are saying is just on the parliamentary facebook page! SLBC is here, but the debate is not live, AYV were here yesterday, but it was not live as well. So Mr Speaker, we want to make it very clear that the importance we have always attached to this debate we should continue to attach it to this debate. This debate is not live and that is one of the contributing factors why the MDAs are not here.

THE SPEAKER: Leader of Government Business, can you help with an advice? As far as I am concern, we obviously do not have any jurisdiction over AYV or any other media house. The only medium we have jurisdiction over is the SLBC, because they are paid by public funds and it was voted for by Parliament.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Speaker, you had wanted to adjourn for 30 minutes and fortunately the Minister of Finance is here.

THE SPEAKER: I stated two reasons why I was going to adjourn the House: Firstly, the absence of the Minister to allow him to come; secondly, to allow the MDAs representatives to come which you yourself have reaffirmed.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Yes, within the 30 minutes, we will try to contact SLBC.

THE SPEAKER: So we still stand the House down for 30 minutes.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Thank you Mr Speaker.

[The House stood down for 30 minutes]

[House resumes at 11:04 a.m.]

IV BILL

THE APPROPRIATION ACT, 2024

SECOND READING

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE

[SECOND ALLOTTED DAY]

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, before we start the debate proper, I stood the House down for a reason and I would like to find out whether the purpose for which we took that unprecedented action has been fulfilled, namely, whether we have a sufficient number of MDAs present in the House, for us to be reasonably satisfied that we can proceed with the proceedings today. So I would ask the Leader of Government Business and the clerks jointly to bring us up to speed.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Thank you Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, you stood down the House for about 30 minutes base on three reasons, but we now have the Minister of Finance in our midst. We have SLBC doing live a broadcast and we continue to encourage AYV to do the same and all other television and radio stations to do likewise. but because SLBC is a state owned broadcaster, they have been able to broadcast the deliberations of this Parliament live.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, for the MDAs, well we have to do a roll call looking at various ministries before we go for lunch. We are no trying to sort out, we have the names of MDAs that are here, we sort to sort them out by ministries and departments before we go for lunch we would announce the names of MDAs that are here and we

would communicate same to the various line committees that would be formed before the start of the Committee on Supplies. I thank you all for your attention.

THE SPEAKER: I presume that imbedded in that statement is the fact that at some point before the end of today's proceedings, we will get from you the actual list of the MDAs that are represented.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Yes sir, it is a promise.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member for his contribution Very well then, let us proceed with the day's work. For those Members of Parliament who were not present at the start of this debate yesterday, let me take the opportunity to reiterate a few ground rules most of which are actually contained in our Standing Orders. I want to make particular reference to Standing Order 63. I believe it is 63[3], 63[3] is most pertinent to our proceedings for today and the next few days and also the whole of S.O 32 but more specifically, sub-Section 5[a 9, 13] of 32 and also 38[3].

Mr Speaker, Honour Members, So, I would like to with draw the attention of those of you who were not present yesterday to those S.Os, read them quietly in your own good time to familiarise yourselves with the provisions because they are the ones which are most pertinent and most applicable to the debate that is on-going.

Honourable Members, I also indicated yesterday, that we would not shorten this debate for reasons that are explained, the rules provide for five days of debate of the second reading of the Appropriation Bill and so it shall be. Today is the second and we will continue till Friday and ends on Monday that will give us the full five days.

Honourable Members, I also directed yesterday that no speaker shall make a contribution for more than 10 minutes, ten minutes is more than enough. Why ten minutes, because I want to be able to accommodate as many of you as possible and that you will see yourselves in the various Standing Orders because as best as possible I should give everyone a chance who wants to say something to be able to do so. Therefore, those are the ground rules and on that basis, I now give the Floor to

Honourable Habib Fabbah, you have 10 minutes and you would be followed by the Honourable Abdel Timbo.

HON. HABIB FABBABH: Thank you Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me start my debates by appreciating His Excellency the President for giving us the Minister and by extension his team for putting together this fine document which I describe as the hope for all Sierra Leoneans.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is fascinating to learn that this budget will not only liberate Sierra Leoneans or remove us from the quagmire of poverty and other attributed conditionality's but it has provided meaningful solutions to see Sierra Leone in another level. Basically I cannot say like Singapore but I am sure we are moving now in the right trajectory to make sure the poverty level of Sierra Leone changes especially with the five game changers. Mr Speaker, I will just relate that to our basic life; any family head who cannot feed his family will always be problem in that home. Prioritising agriculture in this budget, I see light at the end of the tunnel. Let me draw your attention to paragraph 78. Mr Speaker, my background is civil engineering, with your leave I read: Mr Speaker, government recognises the need to invest in critical infrastructure including digital technologies which remains a significant enabler to economic growth, development and poverty reduction. Scaling up these investments is consistent with three specific Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), water sanitation and hygiene SDG 6, Energy SDG 7 and Infrastructure and Industrialisation SDG 9. In this context, government will undertake the following: in the road sector the government will complete the Bo-Matema-Tikonko road, the Tagrin-Lungi Conakry D, this is in addition to the recently completed Hillside Bypass road. Complete the on-going construction of township roads in Freetown, Bo, Kenema and Waterloo, accelerate construction of Tikonko, Petema, Matru Jong road, with support from BADEA.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to allay our fears to rest that all these projects we see are tangible and they are on-going as the Deputy Chair for the Committee on Works and Public Assets did say. Mr Speaker, couple of weeks ago we

were there to look at the Tikonko road. Of course, plans are under way to expedite this project; all forces are now on the contractor to make sure this road is completed within the scheduled period.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, for the energy we are all aware of what is happening in the energy sector, 20 communities are on the line and seven chieftdom headquarters were also alighted for electrification. You see the strategies government has put in place to make sure that job creation is prioritised, now for the youths and other sectors. I think we may look at this document as very much fruitful, it is an issue we should depend on and therefore I call on all stakeholders even Members of Parliament cut across the aisles to make sure we put all effort to support this document. We should not always be criticising, I know that is one of the function of the opposition to make sure e critic with justification but our interest I must request that we prioritise Sierra Leone. Sierra Leone must be put above all else, if Sierra Leone is good everybody enjoys whatever comes out of it irrespective of colour. Therefore, I must request that across party lines w support this document and to make sure we give all our support to it.

On that note Mr Speaker, I want to thank you again for this opportunity given to me to lend my voice on these fine nominees. I thank you.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member for his contribution. He spoke like a true Engineer, dead on time and I hope his fine example is going to be emulated by all other speakers after him. Lawyers can be even more precise [*Undertone*]. You will be disappointed, because I know the Honourable Timbo is going to comply with the injunction that has been observed by his Honourable colleagues, ten minutes and not a minute more, not a minute less. So you have the Floor.

HON. OSMAN ABDEL TIMBO: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, a few days ago when this Appropriation Bill was laid before this House, I told the Opposition Whip that I am not inclined to debate. However Mr Speaker, in the succeeding days, two things changed that position.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, last Monday, I had cause to visit Connaught Hospital where certain disabled members of our party, who were involved in road accident were admitted, that was Ward 3 of Connaught Hospital- accident and emergencies. Mr Speaker, I could not hold back my tears when I got back into my vehicle because I saw lives being wasted just because patients could not afford formalin for 15 to 25,000 Leones. Mr Speaker, the last sitting last week of this Parliament, I also visited the family house of a deceased councillor of the APC who passed away in the United States, while we were converging a woman passed by selling plantain chips and it was in this big carton, then I asked the question S.O 2 “na you fry ol dis, n aim e say no oh, e sy dis na import den import am.” Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this is not about being in opposition and it is not about condemnation...*[interruption]*

THE SPEAKER: Shall we have one meeting please!

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we are doing disservice to this nation

THE SPEAKER: Heckling is not part of our proceedings.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Thank you.

HON. OSMAN ABDEL TIMBO: Mr Speaker, the unfortunate thing about this, is that we thinking of Feed Salone is a laudable project, it is a laudable initiative, but Mr Speaker, if the basic plantain chips we have to import from another country that is a dangerous trend *[Applause]*. For the records this is not the fault of the SLPP government, it is not the fault of the SLPP government. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, year in, year out, this Well of Parliament receives Appropriation Bills, Finance Acts and Budget Statements. Fast forward through those years and may be June of those years and you ask even the first quarter allocation for those years have not been disbursed, this is not an SLPP problem, it has been perennial even when the APC was in power.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I refer this House to the Appropriation Bill and the amount of money which has been budgeted for 2024. Mr Speaker, that amount is

2.4Bln new Leones. When you convert that money to US Dollars and that is about \$1Bln for a whole year. This is the money that we will be using to pay salaries. This is the money that we will be using for Feed Salone and this is the money that we will be using for education. This is the money that we will be using for energy, infrastructure, job creation etc. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let us pause and think about this. Mr Speaker, our yearly money is less than the budget for high school in New York, one year budget. It shows the poor state of our nation S.O 5 [2] "Salone na po contry." It is not an SLPP problem, it is our problem, and so, together we will fix this problem.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I refer you to Paragraph 98, Page 28 of the Budget Speech in that particular Paragraph, Bln14.9, which is about Mln\$648 and we would get that from taxes. If we move on to Page 36, Paragraph 143, there is a budget deficit. so Bln14.9 from taxes, if you go to Paragraph 99 it says, grants and loans would fund the rest, but there would still be a deficit as referred to in paragraph 143. Mr Speaker, it says, "we will service that deficit by borrowing from banks" Mr Speaker, this is a sad situation. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if Sierra Leone is to develop, is this amount enough for this nation to move to the next level. How can we use this amount that is not even enough to pay salaries for development projects?

Mr Speaker, the Honourable Chairman for the Finance Committee made mention of car Wash Projects at Mile 91 as part of the job creation. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when I listened to the comments made from the Honourable Member from that side, I cried. Is that the job we should be creating for our young people? This is not an SLPP problem Mr Speaker, our young generation is being wasted. Today, it is SLPP in power, the next elections it could be APC, but Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, sitting on the left side of the Isle, is easy to be an opposition Member of Parliament. You know why? Because it is easy to pick holes in other persons work, but it is only when the shoes are on your feet that you will know it is not an easy task. Kudos to the opposition Members of Parliament for picking out those holes and please take note, people in government that we are not doing this just because we want to oppose. We have a sacred

responsibility by the oath we subscribed to, put Sierra Leone first and for that reason we have a responsibility to provide alternative solutions to the problems of this nation.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, considering the History of Sierra Leone, started for me at the end of the war in 2001. Mr Speaker, since the war ended, this Country has been going round in circles. We are always down the ladder in the development index. As a people, we have to think about how to move this nation forward, otherwise posterity will judge all of us in this Parliament; 22 years after the war, we are still in the same place. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me hasten to say that no nation can tax its way out of poverty, absolutely no nation can tax its way out of poverty. Similarly, any nation where the government is the largest employer is bound not to succeed and that is the case in Sierra Leone. Mr Speaker, when we took the oath of office, you made a very brilliant statement alluding to the Singapore story. Mr Speaker, in my life there are few leaders whom I have admired and who I tried to emulate. Lin Qua Yu of Singapore, Thomas Sankara of Upper Volta and now Burkina Faso, Captain Valentine Strasser of Sierra Leone, Madiba Mandela for his spirit of forgiveness only and President Barak Obama for breaking the racial ceiling. Mr Speaker, those are the leaders I have admired and when you made mention to Singapore...*[interruption]*

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, you know I keep repeating this, I suppose it is an incident of this job that I should keep reminding you. Just imagine if you were the one speaking and the other side is constantly heckling and interrupting, would you be happy? No, I could recognise an undertone when I hear one *[Undertone]*. By the way, I can identify that voice, he is seldom here.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Honourable Members, we should bear in mind of S.O 35 (4), it reads: "*during a sitting, all Members shall be silent or shall confer only in undertones*"

THE SPEAKER: Thank you Mr Leader and take that advice, especially that voice. I can recognise it, I would have gone further, but I would heed to the advice of the acting leader. Carry on!

HON. OSMAN ABDEL TIMBO: Mr Speaker, the Singapore story, when Singapore formerly left Malaysia, the statement made by Prime Minister Lin Qua Yu then was a tearing statement. He cried, because there was no hope, but after the tears, he said that together they will transform Singapore and today Singapore is one of the most developed nations in the World. For people who do not know, Singapore has almost no natural resource. They have a population of about 5million if we are complaining that our market is small but today Singapore, even in Tourism they receive 10 million tourist yearly. Mr Speaker, how did they do this, at the time of independence, two thirds of that population were living in slums. Today, Singapore is the envy of the South-East Asia. Mr Speaker, they embarked on comprehensive programme of industrialisation. In my first contribution in the Appointments Committee, I had chance to ask the presumptive Bank Governor then one question. I said you have been in the Central Bank since 2014, what singular lesson have you learnt that will transform Sierra Leone? He said industrialisation, when he said that I did not ask any further question, because I know and believe that it is the way to go. Mr Speaker, if we do not make a way for investors to come to this Country, spend their money and develop this country Sierra Leone will always be going round in circles.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Singapore embarked on a policy of globalisation and lowering of taxes and it worked very well. This leader was an authoritarian and a disciplinarian many people condemned his authoritarianism but it was necessary at the time to instil discipline for the country to move forward and thank you very much Mr Speaker, for starting sittings at 10:00a.m every day. There was political stability, corrupt free, they had investor friendly laws and they focused on technical education to build the skill set of their people. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Lin qua Yu was 31 years old in 1959 when he became the Prime Minister, Thomas Sankara was 34 years old when started revolutionary movements in Upper Volta the same could be said of Captain Strasser. The same could be said of President Bio, the same could be said of Barak Obama, the same could be said of Madiba Mandela when he started revolutionary movement in South Africa. Mr Speaker, this is visionary leadership and it shows the

strength in youth. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if I were the President of this country Sierra Leone, I would it a tax free country for investors depending on the quantum of investment they are bringing.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have an airport where the airfare is more expensive than our neighbouring countries. Who will come here, take off the taxes? Like I said earlier, you cannot tax your way out of poverty, but let me tell you how you can solve this. If these investors come and they employ our people for example, I have never received 1Mln Leones in my life, you start paying me 1Mln Leones, of that one the government takes 45% tax which is 450 Trillion Leones, Mr Speaker, S.O2 “ar go gladly for go na ose wit 550 Trilion Leones.” It is an opportunity to create investment, it is an opportunity to build this economy and it is an opportunity to create jobs for the ordinary man out there *[Applause]*. Mr Speaker, Rwanda, South Africa and other countries, have visa exemptions. Why do we have to pay for visas to come to our nation? With heavy tax, people will not come. So, Let us think about this Mr Speaker, Honourable Members in order to make Sierra Leone a tax free country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, permit me to end with a quotation from the same Lin Qua Yu of Singapore, he said: *to the young people and not so old, I say look at the horizon follow that rainbow, go ride it.* Permit me to send time, this is the time of the young people we can no longer sit and allow this country the message to Dr Sengeh, the Chief Minister, permit me to send the message to all the young ministers and ambassadors. Permit me to send the message to all young people in this Well and across the nation, public and civil servants that this is our time to decay. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we cannot blame our parents any more for the decadence of this nation, it is now our responsibility. I thank His Excellency the President for giving the highest ministerial position to a young man. I thank the SLPP and APC for giving symbols to young people in order for them to come to Parliament. As a Member of Parliament, it comes with responsibility and like our leader said the other day, positions come with blessing and they come with curse. If we do not do right, posterity will judge us all to have failed our kids.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, may God bless us all and our beloved nation, Sierra Leone. May God bless all of us. May God get rid of corrupt politicians in this nation, may God get rid of selfish politicians in this nation. God bless Sierra Leone.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, I want to take the opportunity to thank Honourable Abdel Timbo for his contribution. Listening to him, I see a mirror of myself in the 80s in the Well of this House. I am grateful to you that you and I share our belief in the same mentor Lin Qua Yu, he is worth emulating. He has set an example by taking his country from a third world to a first world, Sierra Leone can do it likewise. I now give the Floor to Honourable Alpha Jabbie.

HON. ALPHA JABBIE: Thank you Mr Speaker for giving me this opportunity to add my voice to the debate on this budget. First of all, I want to join you Mr Speaker, to thank my colleague on the other side for his brilliant contribution. This is about the first time since I came in the fifth Parliament this is about the first time, I see an opposition making a constructive criticism and a constructive contribution to the debate in this Well for the benefit of the nation. I want to give him a pat on the back and say kudos to him. I hope he has set the queue for all of us, especially those of us on the other side to follow. Pull him down syndrome will not take us forward. Now, I want to respond to certain things that were brought up yesterday by colleagues on the other side.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, my colleague from Mile 91 talked about the Car Wash Project; there being turned into a Kushi centre and he was joking about it. Unfortunately, that should be an indictment on the Honourable himself and the stakeholders in Mile 91, because the government made that car wash to benefit the youths positively. So, if you as a major stakeholder in that community see that centre being misused, you should be in the position to guide them and not to just turn a blind eye only to come here in the Well and make a joke about it.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, many people mentioned and talked about the 5 per cent tax on rice. This 5% tax on rice was meted in 2018 when we attained governance. We removed it, because of the Covid 19 in order to cushion the effect of the Covid on our people. During the course of the last Parliament, many Honourable Members from

the other side criticised it and they denounced it as not creating the necessary effect as planned. Mr Speaker, we had got several consultative meetings at Committee Room One and they raised the same issue that this 5% removal of tax on rice is not making any positive effect on the people of this country. So we listened, the government listened and now government has decided to put back the 5% tax so that we can benefit from the tax revenues that we have been losing. Also, the removal of that 5% tax created a cheaper market for rice in this country. Our neighbouring countries like Guinea and Liberia have been coming to Sierra Leone here to buy rice and take it over to their countries. The rice is relatively cheaper in Sierra Leone compare to our neighbouring countries. Mr Speaker, the removal of the 5 per cent tax was challenged, but we continue to spend our hard earned foreign currency to import rice. So the imposition of the 5% tax is in place, so that we can be able to save foreign currency.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, also, somebody mentioned about Singapore model, Indian model, Rwanda model etc, and also expressed doubt and apprehension whether our Feed Salone is going to be implemented successfully. I want to assure you that Feed Salone, like the Free Quality School Education will be implemented successfully with no iota of doubt. The President is a talk and do President, he has demonstrated that times without number. So the Feed Salone project is going to be implemented successfully. Another colleague there mentioned Lin Qua Yu, a leader we all admire. We admire him, because he succeeded and he had meaningful programmes for his countries and he followed those programmes systematically without distractions. The people rallied behind him and that was why he succeeded. So, let us rally behind President Bio and his programmes, so that we can also emerge one day as a middle income country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Honourable from Bombali mentioned yesterday that the government is not able to execute the feeding programme in this country. Mr Speaker, I want to say it here very clear that that is not true. There is no point in time that President Bio and his government said they were going to feed all the children in this country simultaneously. The programme is meant to be systematic, gradual and it

started with Falaba and Koinadugu district in 2018 when it was launched with 50,000 pupils benefiting from the School Feeding Programme. Today, you have about 735,000 children benefitting from the school feeding programme, covering 113 chiefdoms in 15 districts. So it is a gradual process, not all the chiefdoms will benefit at the same time. This budget made provision for 800,000 school children to benefit from school feeding programme, by the end of 2024, with an additional 100,000 every year, for the next subsequent years. The World Bank has also come into support with 114,000 children as beneficiaries. So, if you add the total of all of this by the end of the next five years, we are going to have 1,314,000 school children benefitting from the school feeding programme. So, it is not automatic but a gradual process.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Point of order Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, for the edification of the House, in the State Opening Address of 2018, the President did promise that the school feeding will be introduced in all public supported school.

HON. DICKSON M ROGERS: Point of order Mr Speaker! Mr Speaker, we are living in a very gullible society. Mr Speaker, the President did not say he was going to introduce the school feeding programme in January, February or March, but he said, he would introduce it and he is doing just that. It is a roll out process Mr Speaker, so let us bear in mind that development is not a destination, but a journey. I thank you all for attention.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, we would all agree that that is a programme that we rolled out incrementally in this country.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Reacting to the leader. I did not misinform the House. I said exactly what was in the statement. So for you to say, I misinformed the House, it is not correct.

[Suspension of S.O 5[2]]

HON. ALPHA JABBIE: Thank you Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we must be grateful to this government for being steadfast with the free quality school education. In spite of all the achievements in the past five years, it still has decided to continue supporting the free quality education with the payment of school fees for all

the school going children, the payment of examination fees for all public exams, NPSE, BECE and WASCE in all government and government assisted schools. It is also recruiting more teachers, in this budget. It is about 2.000 teachers that will be recruited in 2024. That is in addition to 28.122 teachers that have already been recruited by this government since it came to power in 2018.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you have done very well, but your time is not unlimited. I give you half a minute to conclude.

HON. ALPHA JABBIE: Thank you Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, now, let me turn to Feed Salone briefly. Feed Salone is like the Lin Qua Yu we admire. President Maada Bio is also going systematically, coming from free quality education, now it is going to be followed by the agricultural development, so that we have sufficient food to feed ourselves in this country. It is a shame for us to be going to Mali to buy pepper and groundnut when Mali is a desert country and we have here almost throughout the year and we should be able to grow those things rather than depending on a desert country. So that is the trajectory that His Excellency the President Julius Maada Bio and his government wants to take Sierra Leone to another level.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, somebody mentioned about the frequent travelling of the President Maada Bio. Yes, he is travelling every now and then S.O[2] "if you di combra you cam na house you meet den don clear everything, watin you go do? Na for sidon dae mourn to you sef, you get for go out n fen am for them." So that is exactly what the President Maada Bio is being doing. When he came in 2018, the state coffers were almost empty, everything was almost looted, so he has to be moving out to go and fend for us. He has been going out there to lobby and that is why we have been able to make so many achievements in the last five years.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank you and I want to urge all colleagues on both sides of the isles to approve this budget. This budget is a progressive one and it will help to take Sierra Leone to the next level where we are aiming at Lin Qua Yu's achievements in Singapore. These are the first few steps that we need to take. This budget is one such step.

THE SPEAKER: I would now give the Floor to Honourable Mamoud Kamara.

HON. MAMOUD KAMARA: I thank you Mr Speaker. I am Honourable Mahmoud Kamara also known as Mr Nice Guy, the right guy, representing the Western Area Urban. I humbly rise to make my submission on the 2024 budget debate.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, honestly, through the theme of this year's budget, "Restoring Macro-economic Stability while Protecting the Poor," this Budget speaks volume. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the theme of this year's budget caught my attention to the fullest. So, I decided to do justice to the entire budget document, paragraph by paragraph and page by page. However, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, to my dismay, this entire budget document is only over crowded with embellished assurances, why building castle in the air. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, false hope gives false comfort. How are you going to protect the poor and the vulnerable by adding a 5% tax increment in 2024 and 10% increment in 2025 on rice? Mr Speaker, S.O 2 "na borma we dae tok but na ya o." What of the 10% increment on iron rod and cooking gas respectfully?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, today marks exactly my 6th sitting in this Well, but I have been friend to this Chamber for the past five years. From the gallery, I have followed through budgets, year in, year out and I can tell this Honourable House that implementation of each of those budgets has each fell below the belt of my expectations and the expectations of the vast majority of Sierra Leoneans. I do not wish to see that in 2024.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me take the House to Page 17, Paragraph 60, Roman 5. Mr Speaker with your leave, I read...*[interruption]*

THE SPEAKER: Paragraph what?

HON. MAMOUD KAMARA: Page 17, Paragraph 60, Roman 5. Mr Speaker, with your leave I read: *Complete the construction and operationalize the Lumley Paediatric hospital.* Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I commend the Minister of Finance and the entire drafters of this budget for singling out the Lumley Paediatric Hospital. Me being

the new political king of Lumley, I consider this that a certain level of seriousness has now been placed to address the shamble and disgraceful health care situation for the thousands of inhabitants in Lumley and the Peninsular. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is dishearten for me to inform this Honourable House that since 2019, the people of Lumley had had no proper address to seek medication. There is a One Hundred beds hospital which was at the completion stage, it only needs windows and furniture for it to kick start operation, but it was immediately put to halt when the SLPP "Paopa" took governance in 2018. They put to ground the only health care facility that was salvaging the people, which resorted for the people to renting three rooms and parlour as hospital to service the over 70,000 people there. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, for the past five years, the health centre at Lumley has operated at four different addresses, which made it almost impossible for people to know exactly where to seek medication when the situation arises. Firstly, it was operating at Maffa Regent Road, Lumley; they later moved to Beach Road, Lumley, where they operated for just a year and move it again to Black Tank, Regent Road, Lumley and operated there again for just a year. Now, they have moved the health centre again to 6 Malamah Road, Lumley, where lower vehicles cannot access as a result of the deplorable road condition leading to the facility. Mr Speaker, the people are going through all these difficulties when the government is presented with the opportunity to set up one or two floors of the four storey building of the 100 beds general hospital project. Mr Speaker, the people of Lumley have gone through a lot difficulty and they are still faced with such difficulties to access health care facility. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, since this document has now pinpoint the completion of the paediatric hospital in 2024, I hereby, crave the indulgence of this Honourable House for the adjustment of this budget for the inclusion of the 100 bed hospital project to be well completed in 2024 in consonance with the paediatric hospital.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I cannot over emphasise the health benefit, if this 100 bed hospital is completed in consonance with the paediatric hospital in 2024. I

hereby implore the higher sense of reasoning of this Honourable House for this needful adjustment.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, away from the health sector, let me as well draw the attention of the House to Page 2 of this document, Paragraph 4 to 5 where it is pointed out that the depreciation of our currency is as a result of the Russian-Ukraine war. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am extremely confused, especially so when I look at our closest neighbours, Guinea and Liberia that beg to mind the question, if we are actually sharing the globe with these countries. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we could all recall in 2018 when a caring and a sympathetic leader, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma handed over the mantle of leadership to His Excellency President Julius Maada Bio. As at that time, the Leones was better appreciated to the Guinea Franc. In fact, Le7,000 was equivalent to 10,000 Guinea Franc. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, few months into the leadership of the Paopa New Direction, things took to the reverse. Painfully, as at this very moment 3.500 Guinea Franc is now equivalent to Le10.000. So I am extremely constrained to accept the Russia-Ukraine war as the cause for the depreciation of our currency. Or is it that the Russia-Ukraine war only came to affect Sierra Leone? Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the exchange rate is the crux of the economy, so I ask that the Paopa government is serious about addressing the depreciation of our currency. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the depreciation of our currency should be addressed starting with summoning of the Bank Governor to this Well, so that he can explain to us the exact amount of new currency that was printed and why the depreciation of our currency.

HON. FRANSIS A KAISAMBA: Point of order Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, the Honourable Member referred us to Page 2, Paragraph 4 and 5 of the Report, I stand to be corrected...*[interruption]*

HON. MAMOU D KAMARA: 5 and 6? Sorry no!

HON. FRANSIS A KAISAMBA: Yes, you said on Page 4 and 5. I have not seen where exchange rate was mentioned specifically.

HON. MAMOUD KAMARA: 5 and 6?

HON. FRANSIS A KAISAMBA: 5 and 6.

HON. MAMOUD KAMARA: Yes sir, sharp depreciation of the Leones

HON. FRANSIS A KAISAMBA: Okay

HON. MAMOUD KAMARA: It is clearly there sir.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this is what our problem is mostly. Sitting here as the Leader of the Opposition, I am flabbergasted and mesmerized by the exposé of Honourable Members. Please Honourable Members, you can agree with me that he is convincing, he is appealing and he is very instructing. So let us allow him to continue the debate. I thank you.

HON. MAMOUD KAMARA: Thank you my leader.

HON. FRANSIS A KAISAMBA: Just 1 Minute please Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: No! Sadly, the Leader of the Opposition, I disagree. The rules are sacred. I give you 15 seconds, because you have more than exhausted your time.

HON. MAMOUD KAMARA: Thank you Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, like I said, the depreciation of our currency should be addressed starting with summoning of the Bank Governor to explain to this Honourable House, the exact amount of the new Leones that was printed. The Bank Governor should as well tell us of the total amount that is currently in circulation...*[Interruption]*

THE SPEAKER: And with that.

HON. MAMOUD KAMARA: With that Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I hereby ask that in addressing the depreciation of our currency, the government is serious when they enter into contract. Let the Government change its approach to the business people. Let the Government be making economic decision rooted from a nationalistic perspective and not on party lines. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, lapses in addressing these things are the reasons of the depreciation of our currency and not the

Russia-Ukraine war. Painfully, they have even added the one month old Palestine and Israeli war.

On that note, I thank you Mr Speaker for giving me the opportunity to have my say on this debates.

THE SPEAKER: I thank all Honourable Members who have taken the Floor this morning. I just wonder for the first time in the history of this Parliament, I should say, in fact, for the first time in the history of this country, we have a 30% quota of Members of Parliament who are women, but I am yet to hear the voice of a woman. Honourable Members, just two days ago, at your invitation, I urged you to take advantage of the new situation in this new Parliament, so I am waiting.

HON. NENNEH LEBBIE: Thank you Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is not a debate, I just want to quickly allay the fear of Mr Speaker, because I have spoken to them already and most of them are like new Members. I know they have taken the Floor before this time, but they want to learn, because this one is a new process. From tomorrow, I can assure the Honourable Speaker that he will start to hear our voices in this well.

THE SPEAKER: I now give the Floor to the Honourable Abdul Karim Bangura.

HON. ABDUL KARIM BANGURA: I thank you Mr Speaker for giving me the Floor. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am Honourable Abdul Karim Bangura from Karene District, the home district of former flag-bearer and leader of the APC, Dr Samura Mathew Wilson Kamara and also the legislative home district of the current Speaker of Parliament. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, they say when you want to go fast, you go alone, but when you want to go far, you must go together. On that note, I want to welcome my brothers, especially those from Karene district, the three Honourable Members who are just coming from their self-imposed political exile barely four month after the people of Karene voted them as Members of Parliament...*[interruption]*

THE SPEAKER: Hold on! There is a point of order from the Leader of the Opposition.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Mr Speaker, I stand on S.O 34! Please kindly advise the Honourable Member.

THE SPEAKER: I have been asked by the Leader of the Opposition to advise you and I will advise you that like it or hate it, facts are fact. I do not know about the self-imposed, but I know about their absent. So carry on!

HON. ABDUL KARIM BANGURA: I thank you Mr Speaker for defending me. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I did not know that you told us yesterday about our brothers from Liberia. I did not know, if they are around. I will also want to welcome them in absentia.

HON. ABDUL KARIM KAMARA: Mr Speaker, he is not speaking to the debate and he is going far away from it. Honourable Member wait, some of the things he is introducing today, if we put them to be part of this debate, you will not like this debate. So advise him. I thank you.

THE SPEAKER: No, I know we would like everything about this debate and I would particularly like everything that is new of the new AKK. So carry on!

HON. ABDUL KARIM BANGURA: Thank you Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to commend the Minister and team for their courage in putting together a very ambitious, sincere, and honest budget for the 2024 financial year. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, courage cannot give you immediate success, but courage would empower you to face your challenges. The current economic situation since the days of Former President Ernest Bai Koroma to date, this country has been operating in budgeting policy, which I will want to refer to as S.O 2 "dig hole cover hole." Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, a senior Member from Bombali refers to this budget as an old monger and another Member from Pujehun refers to this budget as resuscitative budget, the other one from Kono, my brother refers to the budget as redemptive budget, I Honourable Abdul Karim Bangura want to refer to this budget as the solution to our problem, the solution budget.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Financial Act 2024 was debated and approved by this House, so when I had Honourable Members discussing negatively about the 5% re-instatement tax, on import duties of rice, I found it very misleading and insincere. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members...*[interruption]*

THE SPEAKER: No, you are getting it wrong Honourable Member. I know you are a new Member, but do you know what the Finance Act does?

HON. ABDUL KARIM BANGURA: Yes sir.

THE SPEAKER: It put in one document for the approval of Parliament and the sources of income for the Government. Sources of income, the money that the Government hopes to bring into the coffers. It coffers the consolidated revenue to spend on the items listed in the Appropriation Bill, so the two are interconnected. carry on!

HON. ABDUL KARIM BANGURA: Mr Speaker, people were discussing that the tax imposition of the 5% is a deliberate act by the government to bring suffering to the people and that is exactly what I want to defend, because it was unanimously agreed here by all of us. So we cannot blame it on the Government alone.

HON. ARUNA AARON KOROMA: Mr Speaker point of order! Mr Speaker, on the issue of rice, there was a motion on the Floor and on this side we voted against that so on the issue of the imposition of the 5% it was not unanimous. The motion was put on the Floor and we voted against it.

THE SPEAKER: We cannot dissect the Finance Act.

HON. ARUNA AARON KOROMA: Bill yes, but on that particular position, we voted against that.

THE SPEAKER: Hold on, Honourable Member, you may say that as an appeal to the gallery for the people to understand that the records can show, but holistically, the Act was passed. Let us stop dissecting that which had already happened in the matter. Carry on please!

HON. ABDUL KARIM BANGURA: Thank you Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the 2024 Financial Act and the 2024 budget is in concert with the pledge of His Excellency the President which he made on his big 5 manifesto promise to the people of this country which elect him for the second term and give his party the majority in this Parliament that is to say that manifesto promise is approved by the people of this country and what the Minister the finance Minister and his team are doing is to make sure the use the money to make sure the fulfil the promise of His Excellency. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members I was so moved when my Honourable brother was talking on the other side Honourable Timbo I see passion in you and I want to agree with you we need to come together as Members of Parliament to make sure we do our job we monitor the 5% that was added reinstated to the budget so that we monitor so that we will be able to make sure it is use for the right purpose. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members the journey of a thousand miles starts with a step this is a President who is on record to have make a lot of sacrifice for this country. He did it when he has the choice to go to university or to join the military to defend his country, he take the choice to defend his country today he is called, he is one of the people representing the world in terms of education. Mr Speaker, Honourable members when he was a military officer he choose the road for peace than to fight like the war today he is presiding over the third peaceful country in the world in the sub-region . Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when he was a military leader he choose democracy than the military rule today he is President of the Republic of Sierra Leone. When he was a politician he chooses the rule of Law than to boycott. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this budget as I said earlier is the solution to the many problems this country has encounter since the days of Former President Ernest Bai Koroma...*[interruption]*

THE SPEAKER: And with that.

HON. ABDUL KARIM BANGURA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is good to be in the House full of opportunity. Today, I am here representing the people of Karene, I want to commend the President for the electricity project he brought to Kamakuyei. Mr Speaker, the bridge project is on in that part of the Country. The

President is also working tirelessly to solve the water problem in that part of the Country; what I want to bring to the attention of the minister is that, during the election, we had a famous song that talked about the Kamakuyei Road construction. The song was very famous, but unfortunately, today I stand here to inform you that that road is not finish and it is not even budgeted for in this Budget...*[interruption]*

THE SPEAKER: And with that.

HON. ABDUL KARIM BANGURA: That the Kamakayaa Road and Speaker was talking about the Kamakoyaa Gbintie road that also is not in this budget I would want to join the Speaker even though he is a Legislative Member of Karene but I want to join him so that, that road will be included it is not in this budget.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, with that note, I want to thank the Minister and this Government that we the Members on this side and I believe the Honourable Members from the other side of the Aisle will also join us in to make sure this country is redeem once and for all. I thank you.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member for his contribution. I now give the Floor to Honourable Mabinty Forna.

HON. MABINTY FORNA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me first of all congratulate the Minister of Finance and his team for presenting this budget to us. It is a timely venture and the activities outline in this budget is very clear. Mr Speaker I want to refer you to Page 29, Paragraph 2 of the budget. The Minister informed us that the Government wage bill is projected to rise to 6.5 billion in 2024, from 3 to 5billion in 2023. The Minister has clearly stated the reasons of the increment which is due to the recruitment of employees in various MDA's. Mr Speaker, the justification provided in Paragraph 102, the budget must be supported with a detail man power plan that will give us a comprehensive understanding of the workforce in various MDA's. Mr Minister, if you are requested to produce to us a detail man power plan, I hope you will be in a position to do so!

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in Page 32, Paragraph 120 of this budget, 8.6 million Leones is allocated to NacSa for social safety net to enhance the quality of life of our vulnerable groups and also to address the high cost of living. Mr Minister, base on your professional competence, I am fully convinced that you are aware of the present financial predicament in this country. The people of Sierra Leone are struggling and hardship is the order of the day in our beautiful country. people cannot afford to meet their daily needs, so we need your urgent intervention. Our situation is so deplorable to handle as a nation. Mr Speaker, with your leave, I want to quote a document from the World Bank that, Sierra Leone inflation rise from 12%...*[interruption]*

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Point of Order Mr Speaker the Honourable Member is a very senior Member she is back in this Parliament in 2007 through 2012 and she is here again. This is her third term when you are making references to this Honourable House take us to the specific details on that detail on that reference and you present, Hold on, hold on Honourable Members and you present that reference to the Speaker so that we can ascertain that, the fact that, that reference is not within the premises of this Parliament you present it to the Speaker for us to verify that what you are reading is through of what is been said but you cannot be quoting and reading without giving us reference and say world bank.

THE SPEAKER: Very well the point is made can you give us the reference please.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Mr Speaker the mere fact that she said World Bank and World Bank has a website the Honourable Member has every right to consult with website of World Bank.

THE SPEAKER: I am sorry I am sorry Leader of the Opposition I cannot agree with you she must be referring to a specific publication and that is what I want. Otherwise, I will rule that it been expunge from the record from the records, oh yes if you are quoting from a world bank report if it is not available give us the precise citation.

HON. MABINTY FORNA: Mr Speaker the World Bank do have a website and this report is coming from the world bank review on Sierra Leone.

THE SPEAKER: What year.

HON. MABINTY FORNA: 2023 Mr Speaker.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Do you want to tender it to the Speaker.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: You are delaying this debate. Mr Speaker you requested for ladies to speak you need to protect her.

THE SPEAKER: I will protect her let me take a middle position. Is the publication available right now?

HON. MABINTY FORNA: Mr Speaker the publication is available online.

THE SPEAKER: No I am coming, if you do not have the publication with you for me to cite ok then a middle position is give me the precise citation I will make a note of it and later on I will check.

HON. MABINTY FORNA: Mr Speaker the precise citation is the World Bank economic review 2023.

THE SPEAKER: What page?

HON. MABINTY FORNA: Mr Speaker it is a website.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Mr Speaker you are making things difficult.

THE SPEAKER: She wants to quote.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: No Mr Speaker you are making things difficult.

THE SPEAKER: I am not making any thing difficult for her.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: She is the first woman we have had here today and she is just been interjected, she is losing her thought Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: No she is not; if I want to quote anything from this document I can refer you to either the paragraph or the page, so you do not have it.

HON. DANIEL KOROMA: You are setting bad precedent for the rest of the debate, bad precedent and we will come up.

THE SPEAKER: That is your own opinion sir carry on madam.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Speaker sorry, Mr Speaker for the edification of this House I have goggled the World Bank economic review 2023 and if you go through that page.

THE SPEAKER: No, she has not given me the precise page yet. You are out of order Honourable Member, so please wait. Honourable Member are you able to give me the precise page?

HON. MABINTY FORNA: Mr Speaker, I will provide you with the precise page later.

THE SPEAKER: Go ahead!

HON. MABINTY FORNA: Mr Speaker, Honourable members Sierra Leone inflation rise from 12% in 2021 to 27% in 2022. By August 2022 81% of households found themselves unable to cater to their fundamental food and nutrition necessities. Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Have you finished quoting? I will allow you. Wait a minute! What you said is one thing; you preface your statement by saying that you are going to refer us to a document published by the World Bank. Have you finished the quotation?

HON. MABINTY FORNA: Yes Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, he is afraid of me. Mr Speaker, life expectancy in Sierra Leone is low. It is just below 56 years. This is very disappointing Mr Speaker. This is as a result of bad governance, high level of corruption and slow economic growth. Honourable Members, Sierra Leone has one of the highest child mortality rate in the world. Our women and children continue to face serious challenges because of the poor health care system in this country. Yeah I am being honest allow me to carry on I am being honest.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, Honourable Member what I will advise you to do make your point do not get distracted go on with the debate, no, no.

HON. FRANCIS AMARA KAISAMBA: Mr Speaker, if the Point of Order is legitimate you have to allow them.

THE SPEAKER: What was your Point of Order?

HON. AFRANCIS AMARA KAISAMBA: Thank you Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, the Honourable Member is quoting for example she said life expectancy is below.

THE SPEAKER: She was not quoting oh.

HON. FRANCIS AMARA KAISAMBA: Mr Speaker, I am not saying she quoted me, but these are things you have to refer to some publication that have been made. There must be some statistics in the World. There must be some data that you are quoting from; she spoke of child mortality, from what publication you need to tell the House?

THE SPEAKER: I am sorry when she was quoting from the World Bank record or publication, she made specific reference to the World Bank when she talked about child mortality. She was just expressing her own view and as an Honourable Member of Parliament, she is entitled to express her own opinion and opinions are free.

HON. FRANCIS AMARA KAISAMBA: You do not just express views on such delicate issues that is what I am saying.

THE SPEAKER: Challenging the ones that are opinion is wrong.

HON. FRANCIS AMARA KAISAMBA: Yes Mr Speaker that is what I am saying.

THE SPEKAER: You can do so when she finishes, You can challenge whatever opinion she has expressed.

HON. MABINTY FORNA: Thank you Mr Speaker for your protection. Honourable Members, my colleague from the other side Honourable Nenneh poverty has become a co-tenant dwelling with our people the people who voted for us. Mr Speaker.

HON. NENNEH LEBBIE: Mr Speaker please allow to tell you know she is my sister I am going to allow her to call my name but it is actually out of order she should not call my name at all. she needed not to mention my name.

HON. MABINTY FORNA: My apology my sister. Mr Speaker on a more serious note, we need urgent and comprehensive re-assessment of the nation's economic policies or else this nation will become a death trap, I want to emphasize that Mr Speaker . Mr

Speaker, I emphasise, we need urgent and comprehensive re-assessment of the national economic policies or else Sierra Leone will become a death trap.

HON. HINDOLO MOIWO GEVAO: Thank you Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I stand on S.O 32[3]. Mr Speaker, I have every reason to believe that my colleague is reading from a paper verbatim. Mr Speaker, under rules of debate, you cannot read verbatim from a note. You can make reference to extract or papers to support your debate. that is one of the rules of debating Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Okay, you have made your point and you want my ruling. As far as I can observe, the Honourable lady quoted from a document and made reference to a specify document. She was expressing her own opinion and she is free to do so. Let us be clear about one thing, facts are sacred when you want to give fact to this House from any source you have to give the reference from which you are quoting. Fact are sacred, opinions are free that is why anything you say here in this Well is protected by Law. It cannot be challenge anywhere. The only thing one has to do is use your discretion. When you are expressing your opinion, sometimes it can be challenged.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Mr Speaker, let me make this point very clear, you know she has been interrupted and it is deliberate from Honourable Members from that side of the well.

THE SPEAKER: I will not say it is deliberate, it is part of the debate.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: It is, but I will tell you the reason. When she stated the life expectancy everybody knew she was right and if you to know more on that go to the Sierra Leone life expectancy from 1960 to 2023, you will see the micro trend. Do not let me tell you that when you want to challenge an Honourable Member of Parliament whilst debating, you should come with alternative facts. You can tell me that the life age that she said is not correct and quote from your source. You knew she is correct and still you want to interrupt her. Please, let the House be a House of learning. Let us allow the Member of Parliament to land on her contribution to this debate.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Speaker, on a sincere front, we do not have all of the fact in this House, so when you are referring us and you are telling us they are fact, we ask you for you to give us your reference point, if you cannot give us reference point, if you do not have evidence of the fact you want to present, please do not present them. Nobody is forcing you, you cannot tell us life expectancy is 56, 57 what is 56, 57 she has said is 56, 57 she is struggling to say 56, 57 let her give us fact if she cannot give us the fact, then, let her continue with the debate.

THE SPEAKER: It is okay Honourable Member, so you may go ahead.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Mr Leader when she said that statement, being an inquisitive person, I immediately consulted the internet and I was able to see the reference all of us could do that Mr speaker. Members of Parliament should not be this lazy we must be able to do our research she created the platform we should have capitalize on her platform.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, let me state it very clear that one thing which is free to any individual is your opinion. What is secret is when you state fact. If you want to give us facts, make sure you give us the source and if you want to express an opinion, you are free to do so as well. If I want to challenge your opinion, I will come up with mine. So carry on.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Speaker, let me for the edification of this House, life expectancy publish by Aaron O'Neil in October, 26, 2023. The statistics show that the average life expectancy in Sierra Leone from 2011-2021 by gender in 2021, the life expectancy at birth for women in Sierra Leone was about 61.35 years, whilst the life expectancy at birth for men was about 58.76 years. You cannot have an average 55 or 56 as she was struggling to say.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Mr Leader of Government's Business, I refer you to the Sierra Leone life expectancy 1950-2023; she was referring to 2023, so go and check for the micro trend. Mr Leader, please go and check for the micro trend. It is very clear about life expectancy in Sierra Leone.

THE SPEAKER: I thank both of you for your edification. Allow the Honourable lady to continue and end her contribution.

HON. MABINTY FORNA: Thank you Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to commend the Minister of Finance for being very honest with this budget. This budget, the honest part of this budget was the display in Page 37 of Paragraph 144. Mr Speaker, the Minister stated several factors that could possibly derailed the implementation of this budget and achievement. He even went further to provide the safe guides in Paragraph 147 and Paragraph 149. Paragraph 149, the Honourable Member measured that the Ministry of Finance will not entertain any expenditure outside the agreed budget to avoid overruns accumulation of arrears and wage bill. So, I say kudos to the Mr Minister and his team for brining such a good budget. I hope that your words will not return void to the people of Sierra Leone.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have the constitutional mandate to monitor the adequate implementation of all the activities outlined in this budget during our oversight function. I truly believe that this budget will not bring any solution to the people of Sierra Leone. I thank you Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member for her contribution to this debate. I now give the Floor to my last speaker who is no less a person, but the Honourable Alex Mattia Rogers.

HON. ALEX MATTIA ROGERS: Thank you Mr Speaker for given me the Floor. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, on behalf of the people of Pujehun district, I rise to add my voice to the debate on the 2024 Budget, permit me Mr Speaker to first of all express thanks and appreciation to the Ministry of Finance the Minister alongside his team for the very good work they have done by putting together a very comprehensive document that will serve as an economic life wire of this nation permit me also for the purpose of this particular budget to adopt the different approach in advancing my debate as justly. Firstly to attempt to describe this budget an objective description of the 2024 budget firstly.

Mr Speaker, secondly, to attend to ask very relevant questions on the essence of budgeting in a bill to justify or to lay a premise to the agreement we will be adverse with to justify the 2024 budget. And thirdly to attempt also to make a critic on the risk associated that they have already highlighted that will bring about a derail in the implementation of the 2024 budget. So you will take note of those few issues that I have highlighted. Now I am compelled very much to be very much responsive to those issues raised by the previous speakers I want to use this opportunity to address them. You will agree with me that the Members of Parliament from Western Region particularly raise some issues on car wash project are not been viable, I want to use this opportunity to enlighten my colleagues on the other side of the eye that indeed the car wash project for those of us who have been involve in development work is just a quick win project, you will agree with me that we have levels of implementing project, we have short-term project we have medium project and we have long term. What this responsible Government has done is to create within the stream of reducing poverty particularly within the circle of the youthful age and they have articulated and design what we call the quick win project i.e. the car wash project so you cannot describe it as not being viable. It is viable anywhere in the country. So let then take note and appreciate this responsible Government for doing that. Also, the issue of poverty our country being associated with your government is not fair by Members of the other side of the Isle. Honestly speaking, as social scientist you do not need to do history when you make reference you trace the origin of backwardness under development of Sierra Leone, you will trace during the APC under Siaka Steven regime.

HON. ABDUL KARIM KAMARA: Honourable Member, please, you have sent us back to the era of Siaka Steven of which the Speaker was a Minister; can you confirm Mr Speaker!

HON. ALEX MATTIA ROGERS: Whether he was a Minister or not, that is the fact.

THE SPEAKER: You know Honourable Abdul Karrim Kamara, I have given you a new title, the new AKK the AKK of the 6th Parliament very peaceful and respectful, so I want you to maintain that.

HON. ABDUL KARIM KAMARA: I will Mr Speaker..

HON. ALEX MATTIA KAMARA: Thank you Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, also, there was a statement made on the absent of formalin in the centre hospital of this country, Connaught Hospital precisely. I want to challenge my colleague on the other side of the Isle that that is not correct, formalin is available even in my village. Those clinics in my village do have formalin in their operations. Mr speaker, I made contact with senior doctors from Connaught Hospital and they assured me that there is formalin in the Hospital.

HON. OSMAN ADAL TIMBO: Mr Speaker, I stand on S.O 34. Mr Speaker, I never said formalin is not available, I said formalin is about Nle 15.00 to 25,00 and people were dying because they could not afford it.

THE SPEAKER: That was what I heard you say.

HON. ALEX MATTIA ROGERS: Noted Mr Speaker! There was another Honourable Member who describes the budget as being a budget with false promise.

THE SPEAKER: Well simple, you describe it otherwise that is the debate.

HON. ALEX MATTIA ROGERS: Mr Speaker, this budget encapsulates...*[interruption]*

THE SPEAKER: That is an opinion, so express yours.

HON. ALEX MATTIA ROGERS: Well this budget encapsulates a very progressive spirit of progress honestly speaking it is ambitious progressively ambitious and it is within this budget that we see well define programs and project with the sustainability of this country that is the description of the budget. Now I may also want to embark on then again another issue I may want to embark on or I may want to enlighten on has to do with at least highlighting some of the development in one or two of the sectors i.e. the energy sectors and I will do that with record and with statistics. Now you will agree with me on the energy sector, you remember on the last Parliament I was a Deputy Chairman on energy so I am speaking with authority and I will be in the position to submit records to substantiate my argument. The solar mini-grid for some who are

member of the energy committee who are no more in the energy committee I am no more in the energy committee but for the solar mini-grid the two packages I am advancing argument on the two packages to give gains to what this responsible Government has done in the area of energy now there are two component you will agree with me you have the work pack one and of course the work pack two. For work pack one you will agree with me that about 54 sites were covered during the APC regime 54 for eleven good years take note of that and out of that 54 what is more important you should take note of has to do with installed capacity the 54 sites covered carry along 1.32 megawatt peak I have added peak for you will only understand it as megawatt you will only understand it you will only limit it there but I have added peak because it is an engineer, he is an engineer, now district by district, of course for Kono 10 megawatt with capacity of 290...*[Interruption]*

HON. ABDUL KARIM KAMARA: Mr Speaker, the Honourable Member is reading from a note we do not have. Let me set the rule as it is! So can you give us...*[interruption]*

HON. ALEX MATTIA ROGERS: Mr Speaker, I earlier told you that I am equipped for this debate, so I will substantiate my points.

HON. ABDUL KARIM KAMARA: He is reading what was tabled in this House, let set the records straight.

HON. ALEX MATTIA ROGERS: No, I will do just that Honourable Member.

HON. ABDUL KARIM KAMARA: No, we do not have it.

THE SPEAKER: Give the reference.

HON. ALEX MATTIA ROGERS: UNUCESS Report on energy, I have it.

HON. MOMOH HINDOLO NGEVAO: 32[4] says, you can read from extract and papers, but no such rules you should tender it to colleagues.

HON. ABDUL KARIM KAMARA: Honourable Ngevoa,

HON. MOMOH HINDOLO NGEVAO: Mr Speaker, the Honourable is speaking from an informed background. The record he has here is a record of UNOPS, Ministry of Education and UNDP; it is here if you want it he can submit that one for you.

HON: Point of Order Mr Speaker. I rise to confirm that what my Honourable Member has submitted is correct. I have worked there, so I know Mr Speaker.

HON. ALEX MATTIA ROGERS: Mr Speaker, I think this is being harmonized now he deliberately stood to confirm. The reason for such is because he manage this project I was making reference to the Honourable Member of Parliament the engineer he manage the project and let me continue I am making comparison I just started making comparison on the mini-grid.

THE SPEAKER: Ok do you still want this document? Everything is in your head.

HON. ALEX MATTIA ROGERS: Yes sir I have the summary but what is more important that you should take note of I am trying to provoke your sensibility within the context of making comparison. Comparing the two regimes, the SLPP Government and that of the APC Government is good for the development of this nation. Mr Speaker, I want to draw your attention to something that has to do with simple mathematics; Leader of the Opposition, please help me to do the mathematics. Now calculate the difference and see what you can have. I am not too good at calculation, but I am sure you know the figures.

HON. MOMOH DICKSON ROGERS: Point of order Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, when a Member of Parliament was debating from that other side the Leaders stood on S.O 35 and he made an interjection. The overtone there is too much and I am sure they are disturbing my colleague debating. I mean, let us keep the undertone very low.

THE SPEAKER: Carry on!

HON. ALEX MATTIA ROGERS: Mr Speaker, am I still protected? I earlier promise that you dilate on one another factor which has to do with the risk to the implementation of the 2024 Budget. I will make a reference to Page 37 wherein the Minister highlighted

those risks, but I want to critique the risk, but very objectively. I do not need to read through again, they are all here you can read and understand.

THE SPEAKER: But I am sure, you have exceeded your time.

HON. ALEX MATTIA ROGERS: Yes sir! I am rounding up now.

THE SPEAKER: I will allow you for a minute.

HON. ALEX MATTIA ROGERS: I am rounding up Mr Speaker. On those risks that the Minister of Finance cleverly highlighted, I sense the absence of one very important factor which I may want them to take note of which has to do with the social phenomenon or social phenomenon...*[interruption]*

THE SPEAKER: And with that!

HON. ALEX MATTIA ROGERS: And with that, I now want to call upon my colleagues to expedite the passing of this Bill. I thank you all.

THE SPEAKER: I want to thank all Honourable Members who have taken the Floor from morning unto this afternoon. We will take a break for lunch. I prefer the roll call to be made after lunch, so a roll call of MDA's will be made when we resume after lunch. We will see those who came and spend some time with us and departed. We will also be able to decide for those who are the new arrivals. So, we shall resume at 2:30 PM we adjourned till 2:30pm. Mr Minister, you are in liberty to leave the House for now..

HON. MOHAMED ALPHA JALLOH: Thank you Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: you have 10 minutes Honourable Member.

HON. MOHAMED ALPHA JALLOH: Thank you for catching my eyes Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I begin in the name of Allah the most gracious the most merciful. I am the Honourable Mohamed Alpha Jalloh of falaba Districtm the land of milk and honey. Mr Speaker, I intend to be very brief on this debate. Therefore, I am going to speak on just three points. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, they say charity begins at home. Therefore, the first point is I am going to talk about issues that relate to my district.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, on the 10th November, 2023, the Minister stood before this noble House and made a declaration. Mr Speaker in Paragraph 125 of the Budget, the Minister said, the allocation for roads include the reconstruction of Kabala, Falaba and the Krubola roads. Mr Speaker sitting here on that day, I jumped for joy thinking that the days of struggle are over in my district. Mr Speaker, little did I know that it was a scam. it was a scam because when I zoomed in, when I zoomed into the Sierra Leone public investment program under annex 5[A] I realised that the money allocated for that road is a mere 35,000,000 new Leones. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, an allocation of 35,000,000 new Leones which is equivalent to 1.2million dollars for 73kilometer roads is tantamount to mockery, deception and insult to the people of Falaba district. So today Mr Speaker I stand before this noble House to make a declaration that the people of Falaba district have been deceived by this Government. They have been deceived by this Government, because to allocate....*[Interruption]*

THE SPEAKER: I have a Point of Order that can be entertained.

HON. ALPHA FODIE MADIE JABBIE: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, that road construction is supposed to be by phases and I suppose that the allocation given is not for the completion of the entire road it is part of the second phase so to say that the money allocated is for the entire road is misinforming the public that is what I am saying.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Member for your contribution. This is now one Member from Falaba against another Member. You would not dare go between them. All that we would say, we have heard your accusation and have heard his response.

HON. MOHAMED ALPHA JALLOH: Thank you Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I also want to thank my colleague, Honourable Jabbie, for his contribution in this debate.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Sorry Honourable Member. Mr Speaker point of order! For the edification of the Public, I want to correct the Honourable Member that the Honourable Member said 186.7 million instead of 1-2 million Leones.

HON. MOHAMED ALPHA JALLOH: Excuse me Honourable Member I did not say.

THE SPEAKER: Wait let him finish, let me tell you, you are not at school anymore; this is Parliament and I challenge you to watch Parliamentary proceedings all over the world. You are entitled to refute, you are entitled to challenge a statement made by your fellow Member of Parliament, but wait until they have finish making their points.

HON. MOHAMED ALPHA JALLOH: Thank you Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Carry on!

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Speaker, the Honourable Member said, if you read 125 as per his presentation which talked about roads, he said that SLRA was given 156.7million it was not 37million.

THE SPEAKER: No, if I understood him correctly, he was referring to another document or the Annex another source where he was able to discover the amount of monies allocated for the road.

HON. MOHAMED ALPHA JALLOH: Yes Mr Speaker.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: No, he was referring to the document.

HON. MOHAMED ALPHA JALLOH: I referred to the annex.

THE SPEAKER: To the annex 5.

HON. MOHAMED ALPHA JALLOH: Annex 5[A] thank you Mr Speaker. Honourable Member from Falaba, I want to bring to your notice that an allocation of 1.2million dollars for that road will take that road over 70years to get it completed and that will not be in your lifetime, so that is deception.

HON. MUSTAPHA M. SELLU: Point of order Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, for clarification, we are live on air; 35million new Leones is not 1.2 million dollars, the exchange rate as per this document is 18.92 Leones. So if you divide that by \$35.000 is 1.8.49 Billion Dollars. I thank you.

HON. MOHAMED ALPHA JALLOH: That is not true Honourable Member. The exchange rate is \$28,000 according to the main budget. Let me refer you to the document, the exchange rate as per this document, we are using 35million new Leones as per document we have before us....*[Interruption]*

HON. MUSTAPHA M. SELLU: I refer you to the document.

THE SPEAKER: Take your seat, Honourable Member.

HON. MOHAMED ALPHA JALLOH: Yes Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: I have seen the substantive paragraph in the budget statement.

HON. MOHAMED ALPHA JALLOH: That is right.

THE SPEAKER: Now is the annex that I want you to refer me to.

HON. MOHAMED ALPHA JALLOH: Annex 5[A] the Sierra Leone Public Investment Programme.

THE SPEAKER: Carry on!

HON. MOHAMED ALPHA JALLOH: Mr Speaker, using the conversion rate which is 28,945 Leones for the 2024 budget, that is exactly the 1.2million Dollars. So I challenge you Honourable Members.

HON. MUSTAPHA M. SELLU: Mr Speaker, we are live and we are talking about figures here, so let us not cook figures just like that. This is the document we have as per exchange rate for this year it is 18,292.

HON. MOHAMED ALPHA JALLOH: It is 2024 Budget, so we are debating 2024 Budget, nothing other than that.

HON. MUSTAPHA M. SELLU: No 2024, it is for 2024, that is the rate per Dollar. For Euro, Dollar and Pounds, it is stated clearly that Mr Speaker as per what he is quoting, the money he is quoting in Leones should be 1.845 when you convert that to the nearest 10 is 1.85 dollars no, it is 18,292. It is here, go to the last page.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I am still at lost, I have seen annex 5[B], is it Page 5[A]? And what roman number?

HON. MOHAMED ALPHA JALLOH: Roman 31, reconstruction of kabala, Falaba, and Krubola road.

THE SPEAKER: I have seen the page and I have seen the roads, the figure is what?

HON. MOHAMED ALPHA JALLOH: Is the road 35.000 Million Dollars?

THE SPEAKER: And that is for?

HON. MOHAMED ALPHA JALLOH: Kabala Krubola road.

THE SPEAKER: That is for financial year 2024.

HON. MOHAMED ALPHA JALLOH: That is right.

THE SPEAKER: And then there is also an indicative figure for 2025 and 2026?

HON. MOHAMED ALPHA JALLOH: Yes Mr Speaker, it is indicative.

THE SPEAKER: For the same road?

HON. MOHAMED ALPHA JALLOH: So it is 1 mile per year Sir? One mile per year that is deception. I thank you Mr Speaker. So with that being said Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, allow me to move to my second point, which has to do with inflation in Paragraph 14 of the Budget. The Minister said inflationary pressures persisted throughout 2023 reflecting imported inflation, i.e domestic food shocks, adjustment in fuel prices and continuous depreciation of the exchange rate. Inflation surged to 54.5% in September 2023, from 37.1% in December 2022.

THE SPEAKER: What paragraph is that?

HON. MOHAMED ALPHA JALLOH: Paragraph 14 Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Go on!

HON. MOHAMED ALPHA JALLOH: Mr Speaker the Honourable Minister suggests that geo-political tensions including the war in Ukraine and Palestine are responsible for the menace we are facing in this country. Mr Speaker whilst we grapple with inflation

uncontrolled inflation in Sierra Leone, our neighbouring Liberia inflation sits at 7.6% and whiles food prices decreased by 1.6% in 2022 and neighbouring Guinea inflation sits at 10.46%. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the obvious question to the Minister and the Government by extension S. O 2, "how we connect with Ukraine and Palestine war is Guinea and Liberia not connected Mr Speaker, how do we connect. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the truth about inflation in economics, the main causes of inflation is increased money supply in circulation and the devaluation of the currency. Mr Speaker as we speak the debt the domestic debt sits at over 18 Trillion Leones.

THE SPEAKER: Hold on, Honourable Members, by all means applauds gently. If in applauding by knocking the desk what if it breaks? I am sure the Clerk of Parliament will have something to say to you. Go on!

HON. FRANCIS AMARA KAISAMBA: Mr Speaker point of order.

THE SPEAKER: Yes.

HON. FRANCIS AMARA KAISAMBA: I am sure the Honourable Member is probably from Falaba. He did say inflation in Liberia is 6 Million.

THE SPEAKER: No 54.

HON. FRANCIS AMARA KAISAMBA: So by my own figures is 11.7, Guinea is 15.2. We agreed yes Liberia is 11.7, Guinea is 15.2 so let put out the correct figures. It does not matter that is the point we are saying, do not cook up the figures. We agreed we have inflation.

HON. DICKSON MOMOH ROGERS: Mr Speaker, the Honourable Member is addressing you not the Bench over there.

THE SPEAKER: Since you are addressing me, can you please explain? I do not want to say anything to the Well, but I heard him refer to Paragraph 14 of the Budget Statement. I will draw your attention to that.

HON. FRANCIS AMARA KAISAMBA: Okay Mr Speaker, I am listening.

THE SPEAKER: I will draw your attention.

HON. FRANCIS AMARA KAISAMBA: No, the comparison made on inflation is 6% in Liberia.

THE SPEAKER: No, but then, he talked about inflation in Sierra Leone.

HON. FRANCIS AMARA KAISAMBA: After he mentioned figures in Sierra Leone, Liberia is 6%. So, I am just correcting him. By my own figures, Liberia is 11.7 and Guinea is 15.2. So let us put out the correct figures.

THE SPEAKER: Fine, you have corrected him.

HON. MOHAMED ALPHA JALLOH: Mr Speaker, these figures are figures that they play with. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as we speak, the current domestic debt of this country sits at over 18 Trillion Leones which is 13.4% of our GDP.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when you talk about trillion you are talking about the old Leones Mr Speaker one country two money S.O2 this is as a result of increased borrowing from our central bank. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members economics 101 tells us that inflation is Government own way to take pupils money without them realizing it. You may be tempted to ask how because if for instance inflation sits at 54.5% and in realistic terms you have hundred thousand Leones. it means the value of that 100,000 Leones is 40 thousand Leones. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members you may ask why the Government keep asking the central bank for more money and the ask for more money and where do you expect the central bank to get more money from of course money in circulation and hence the de-valuation of our currency. Let us be honest and tell our people the truth, because we owe it to them it may interest you to know Mr Speaker that whilst the Minister told us that inflation is expected to go down yet in the 2024 budget the expected exchange rate is 28,945 Leones this is almost 29,000 Leones and in 2025 the projection is 30 thousand Leones to a dollar. Mr Speaker it is a contradiction, if the Minister is telling us that we expect the exchange rate to go down. I expect the proposed exchange rate in the Budget for 2024 and 2025 to go down. Let us be honest Mr Speaker, Honourable Members and let us face the reality, this Government has lost the war on fiscal management. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members

permit me to go on my third point. Mr Speaker, it has to do with the killer budget deficit. I call it the killer budget, because the Finance Act proposed for 5% increment on our staple food to support the Feed Salon Project. Mr Speaker we want to kill the people, before we feed them. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the killer budget estimate is 21.5 Trillion Leones and the projected revenue for 2024 is 14.9 Trillion Leones. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members when you put together the revenue and the amount for 2024, you will get an aggregate of 20.9 Trillion Leones. My question to the Minister is, why do you spend more than what you have?

THE SPEAKER: Yes, I will entertain your point of order.

HON. FRANCIS AMARA KAISAMBA: The Honourable from Falaba is currently referring to trillions. As far as I know, this Budget is in the new Leones and the total money in this Budget does not amount to trillion, the total amount is 21 Billion New Leones 21462.

THE SPEAKER: You are both right.

HON. FRANCIS AMARA KAISAMBA: No, but Mr Speaker, we have to quote in the figures in which it is being captured in the estimate.

THE SPEAKER: I agree with you both. Let us get it right, the figures in the Appropriation Act are in New Leones and he has been quoting the Old Leones. For the records, the two currencies, the Old Leones and the New Leones are running concurrently until the end of December.

HON. DICKSON MOMOH ROGERS: Sorry Mr Speaker, point of order.

THE SPEAKER: What is your point of order?

HON. DICKSON MOMOH ROGERS: Thank you Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, first of all, I move that S.O 5[2] be suspended so that the Business of the House will continue

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON. CHRISTOPHER K. VANDY: I so second the motion Mr Speaker.

QUESTION PROPOSED, PUT AND AGREED TO

S.O 5{2} is being suspended to continue the Business of the House.

THE SPEAKER: Yes, what is your second point of order?

HON. DICKSON MOMOH ROGERS: Thank you Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, we are living in a very vulnerable society and most times when our colleagues on that side are misinforming people, you do not do the corrections, but when once someday from our side is making an intervention you would not allow the individual to intervene. The reason I am saying this is because, even in the Well here we have a very gullible Press. Mr Speaker, I can tell you that for every time we have a debate, the Press would only bash on Government when the Opposition make bad statements of the Government. Mr Speaker, we have been watching news, we have been reading newspapers, must times the Government good side is not published. Mr Speaker, let me say this that it is the reason why sometimes when we are debating you need to have equal intervention particularly when the other side is quoting a very wrong figure.

THE SPEAKER: Well, listen to me carefully!

HON. DICKSON MOMOH ROGERS: Mr Speaker, I thought you were going to allow me to finish!

THE SPEAKER: No! did you listen to me when I interjected and try to put things in perspective?

HON. DICKSON MOMOH ROGERS: Mr Speaker, what I am saying is that the Budget here is quoted in New Leones.

THE SPEAKER: Yes

HON. DICKSON MOMOH ROGERS: He was quoting in Old Leones and we are talking to the Budget.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me hastily make this point very clear.

THE SPEAKER: I cannot wait for 31 of December to come.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Yes Mr Speaker, let me hastily make this point very clear; initially, we were trivializing the point made by the Honourable Member from Mile91, Tonkolili when he said in no uncertain term a country should use two currencies and this is where we are getting to and whenever you see the quote in New Leones in the Budget, it is only when they quote in the Old Leones, then you will see exorbitant. So Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this is the beginning, we are seizing this opportunity to unveil our debaters. You have just seen the tip of the eyes bug, we did not just award symbols, but they were tested and tried before ever they were awarded with the symbols to represent their people as Members of Parliament. You are going to see more!

THE SPEAKER: Okay, well thank you for revealing what I thought would have remain secret. Now that it is out in the Public domain, we will take note, but having said that, it is inevitable that in the circumstances we find ourselves that reference will be continued to be made to both the Old Leones and the New Leones until the 31 of December. We will have to contend with that, so let it not delay us further. Are you through now? I know you were interrupted, but I will give you a minute more.

HON. MOHAMED ALPHA JALLOH: Five minutes Sir Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: No way Honourable Member!

HON. MOHAMED ALPHA JALLOH: Okay Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, so my question to the Minister and by extension to the Government is, why do we budget to spend more than what we have? Mr Speaker you can imagine with all the irregularities, we still get the audacity to talk about fiscal discipline. Mr Speaker, this is simple economics...*[interruption]*

HON. ALPHA FODIE MADIE JABBIE: Point of Order Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Yes, what is your Point of Order?

HON. ALPHA FODIE MADIE JABBIE: Mr Speaker, I stand on S.O 34.

THE SPEAKER: Yes.....

HON. ALPHA FODIE MADIE JABBIE: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is not anything strange for economies to have budget deficit; budget deficit are deliberately done.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you!

HON. ALPHA FODIE MADIE JABBIE: Mr Speaker, in a situation where you have two equilibrium, there can never be a budget surplus.

THE SPEAKER: Okay, you have made your point. Honourable Members Order! With the little experience I have, am not an economist, but my economics education was just form 6 at St Edwards, but my father taught me economics well that I got an "A" in the 'O' Level examination. Now, deficit budgeting is not strange to me. It is part of economics. So, carry on!

HON. DANIEL KOROMA: Is it a plus to any Government?

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: No, the deficit is not strange, but the margin is not good Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Deficit budgeting is not strange.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: I agree with you Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, when one hares interruptions that individual would be in a state of panic. Mr Speaker, our Honourable Members from this side of the Isle do not comment and when we want to defend them you comment. Allow us, let us have the laxity to defend them. Mr Speaker, the deficit is so huge unprecedented, we have never had this kind of deficit that is what the Honourable Member was trying to say...*[Interruption]*

THE SPEAKER: I have not given the Floor to either of you, so take your seats. Carry on Honourable Member!

HON. MOHAMED ALPHA JALLOH: Thank you Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker this is my question and it says; why do we budget to spend more than what we have? I ask again. So Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this is simple economics, imagine you give your wife Le 200,000 to go to the market and prepare you a basic meal and she went

to the market, Mr Speaker S.O 2 “En e go spend Le 250,000” and you are here talking about progress; this is not progress. This is so far from the truth Mr Speaker, what we expect is for a good housewife to save at least Le 30,000 from that Le 200,000.

THE SPEAKER: I know you have been interrupted quite a bit but you’ve exhausted your time. I will allow the latitude of 30seconds.

HON. MOHAMED ALPHA JALLOH: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in conclusion, this Government do not need economic theories or space engineering, what we want is to be able to feed our kids three square meals a day. We want to send them to good school and be able to send them to hospitals when they are sick. Mr Speaker is that too much to ask for? Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, having that I want to thank you all for your attention. I rest my case *[Applause]*.

HON. ABDUL KARIM KOROMA: Mr Speaker, I want to draw your attend to what my the Chief Whip of this House said concerning the media. We depend on the media as a Parliament to tell our story; we depend on the media to cascade the message. If we start to attack the media *[Interruption]*

HON. DICKSON M ROGERS: Mr Speaker point of order.

HON. ABDUL KARIM KARGBO: Honourable Member, you have to wait on your colleague. When he finishes, you will raise your point of order.

HON. DICKSON M ROGERS: Mr Speaker point of order. The Honourable Member was misquoting me and I will not allow him to misquote me.

HON. ABDUL KARIM KARGBO: I am not misquoting you.

THE SPEAKER: The Honourable Member from Pujehun, do you know what you should do? Please be calm. When he finishes, I will allow you to raise your point of order.

HON ABDUL KARIM KARGBO: Mr Speaker when you say the media is gullible and the public is gullible, having being a media practitioner before...*[interruption]*

THE SPEAKER: Are you?

HON. ABDUL KARIM KARGBO: Honourable Member, statement is an attack to the Press of Parliament.

HON. DICKSON M ROGERS: Mr Speaker, in the first place, I do not want the Honourable from that end to make nuance of what I said. There is no way he can set me against the Press. We have had instances in this Well of what I said. As I speak, when ones you are at a meeting, the Press will always use the oppositions' debate against the government. So, I still stand on that. Mr Speaker, you were saying that when once a leader is speaking on that side, we should not interrupt. Can you please control your Members of Parliament?

THE SPEAKER: Okay, carry on! I am a very designing reader.

HON. DICKSON M ROGERS: When he talks about being a professional in the Press, I want the Honourable Member from that side to know that I have a radio station and two newspapers operating. I even have an online television. So you do not know about journalism more than I do [*undertones*]. That is to tell you that, I have invested more in the Press more than you can imagine.

THE SPEAKER: Okay, I thank you for your contribution. You have made your response. I am calling on the Leader of Government Business come forward!

THE SPEAKER: No, the banter should end now. Honourable Members, can you please take your seat? I will now give the Floor to the Honourable Edward George.

HON. EDWARD GEORGE: Thank you Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to start my debate by thanking the Mr Minister and his Team for a job well done. Mr Speaker, there is no constituency that has benefited more from this budget than my constituency. I am actually governing two mining companies, as far as my constituency is concerned. Mr Minister, we have the budget in front of us [*interruption*]

HON. ABDUL KARIM KARGBO: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, can you please wait for us? Mr Speaker, the Honourable Member is still referring to himself as owning a constituency, by personalising the constituency. As I stated earlier, there are two

mining companies in that area. We do not have constituencies again. He is representing Moyamba, so let him know that.

THE SPEAKER: It is an elliptical expression that will continue to ling up. Take your seat.

HON. EDWARD GEORGE: Mr Speaker, I want the Whip of the Opposition to know that I am coming from a district, but I have localities that am representing. Mr Minister in this Budget, we have seen so many roads that have been approved for construction, my constituency or district has made so much contribution in the area of road construction in this nation and they do not benefit from this Budget as far as road construction is concern. We are kindly asking on behalf of the people of Moyamba District to be considered. So I am calling on the Minister of Finance and the entire nation as a whole to construct the Moyamba road, Mokanji, Sierra Rutile, and Moisenesis Junction roads. Mr Minister, we are pleading that our contribution to this nation is very great. So we are actually asking for the Njagba Junction and the Sierra Rutile roads, especially Imperi Chieftdom to be constructed. We are really contributing a lot to this nation. Mr Speaker, for the past 50 years, the people of Moyamba District have been contributing to the growth of this nation and we are absolutely not enjoying anything as far as the mining companies are concerned. So this time around, we are pleading that if you have any other way with your team to actually involve the Njagba, Mokanji and Rutile roads to be factored for construction. We would be happy and we are pleading for that Mr Speaker. We are not just acting, because we have mining companies and that particular road is leading to Bo. Mr Speaker, we are asking for Njala, Tiama, Mano, Bumpe's roads to be constructed as well. As I stand here, am actually suffering, because of that road. Mr Speaker, can you remember when there was a cut off to Bo? Mr Speaker, the diversion of that particular road was Mano, Dasey, Njala, Bumpe, then right to Bo. In this entire Budget, there is nothing that absolutely captured Njagba, Monkanji, Sierra Rutile, Bumpe and Rutile roads. So we are pleading to the Minister so that he can involve those roads in this Budget.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, today, I am here representing the people of Moyamba District. Mr Speaker as far as this nation is concerned, my learned colleague over there, the Honourable Timbo spoke about development in this country, but Mr Speaker, if we could take ourselves back in the days of Saika Steven to now, the days of the One Party System, the days of the 1991 constitution, whatever ran on the corridors of those days is still affecting this nation. Mr Speaker, we cannot develop this nation, if we cannot change our attitude towards issues that have to do with development in this nation. Mr Speaker, today we are here as Members of Parliament to represent the people of this nation, so let us do so very well. Mr Speaker, may I draw your attention to the toll gates that we have now which people are paying for, Mr Speaker that particular road was paid with our tax money. Mr Speaker the Toll gates that we are paying for now was done by tax payer's money. The construction of that Toll road is a broad day robbery [Undertones]. Mr Speaker, there was no money kept for the construction of that road. The people of this nation paid to construct it and we are still paying for that road. Mr Speaker, that contract was signed during the APC regime.

THE SPEAKER: Will you allow the Honourable Member? You see, you are distracting him deliberately.

HON. ABDUL KARIM KARGBO: Just because he quoted APC. That is the only reason, apart from that, I would not have stood here to disrupt you whilst debating.

HON. EDWARD GEORGE: Mr Speaker, people are paying for Toll gate which they are using tax payer's money to construct and we are still paying for it. Mr Speaker that particular contract was not legitimate; it was a day broad robbery contract Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, let me draw your attention as far as the development of this nation is concerned. Mr Speaker, presently Sierra Leoneans are paying Two Million, Three Thousand Leones for passport. Mr Speaker, the former Government of the APC signed a contract for Sierra Leoneans to take their passports in Dollar and this nation is not using Dollar. Presently, the Dollars is 2.3 Million and Mr Speaker, I can tell you vividly that the people of this nation cannot afford to take their passports because of the dollar rate.

That contract was signed during the APC regime and there are still former Members of Parliament that are here.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Point of order Mr Speaker. S.O 32(5). Of course every government has the opportunity to bring their Budget here and the Budget is being debated. I am of the firmest conviction that when APC was in governance, they brought in their Budget here and it was debated vehemently. So we will be wasting time to debate what has already being debated upon.

HON. DICKSON M ROGERS: Mr Leader, please check what S.O 32(5) says. You are misquoting the Standing Order.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Do not worry, after I finish, you will have the Floor but I will not allow you to interrupt me. This is very unprofessional.

HON. DICKSON M ROGERS: You have been very unprofessional because you are misquoting the Standing order.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: This is a House of Parliament. Whilst I am talking, you should allow me. For Christ sake, I am the leader from this side. Allow me to talk. Some of you have been doing this for a long time. It is unprofessional. What you are doing is unparliamentary. Allow me to talk and you later raise your point of order. I will not stop you from raising your point of order. Mr Leader, you should be talking to your Whip.

HON. DICKSON M ROGERS: No. He is misinforming the House.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: What he is doing is unparliamentary. It is unprofessional and I will not allow any of my Members of Parliament to interrupt you whilst you are making your point.

HON. DICKSON M ROGERS: I think we have new Members of Parliament here.

HON ABDUL KARGBO: When I am done making my point, you will make yours.

HON: DICKSON M ROGERS: This is not a market place.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: As I was saying, I felt it so much that the Speaker did not protect me.

HON. DICKSON M ROGERS: Sorry Mr Leader, you should not debate.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: I am not debating.

HON. DICKSON M ROGERS: Exactly.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: I am raising a point of order. As a parliamentarian, I have the right to raise a point of order.

HON. DICKSON M ROGERS: You are correct. You raised a point of order but you are not supposed debate.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: I know, so let me learn. I am not debating. You have raised several point of orders more than I have done in this House.

HON. DICKSON M ROGERS: But I do not have time to debate...*[interruption]*

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: What is good for the goose must be good for the gander. Simple.

THE SPEAKER: Yes, I agree. This is a debating chamber, not a chamber for anyone to expatiate. I have had enough of this. You do not behave like civilized debaters. I have warned you time and time again, when any member stands, allow that member to complete his or her statement before interjection. Few of you are still not learned that simple message. Carry on Honourable Edward.

HON. EDWARD GEORGE: Thank you Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, few days ago, one of the senior Members of Parliament called the Budget S.O 2 "old monga Budget." Mr Speaker, the meaning of "old monga" is very clear. Mr Speaker, S.O 2, it means "Na we yu tek debt, yu nor gri pay." Mr Speaker that was exactly what APC was doing in this country. Mr Speaker, you can agree with me that... *[interruption]*

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Mr Speaker point of order. I think the Honourable Member should focus on the budget instead of attacking APC. Please focus on the Budget at Honourable.

[Undertones]

THE SPEAKER: No, are you objecting to the word he has used? I do not want to repeat it. I do not want anybody to attribute that word to me. I know the Honourable Member from Bombali used the word.

HON. EDWARD GEORGE: Exactly Mr Speaker!

THE SPEAKER: So he is responding to it. Since you do not like the word, come and put your own.

HON. EDWARD GEORGE: Mr Speaker, the word was used, so I just want to define it. It is a very simple word to define. Mr Speaker S.O 2, “na we yu tek moni yu nor pay na in den call Old Monga.

THE SPEAKER: Fine.

HON. EDWARD GEORGE: Mr Speaker that was exactly what the APC was doing in this country. Mr Speaker, let me give you a clear example. Mr Speaker, we have been in this country when our government was rejected in a hotel in Russia. Why? Because some APC officials failed to pay the Hotel bills when they went there. We were refused to lodge in that hotel because of the ugly incident the APC did there. The Government of President Bio had to pay that money before we were let into the Hotel. Mr Speaker S.O 2 “we yu yeri pikin tok something, na wetin den don tok na den os. Na wetin e leader them den don bi de du, na in e kan tok na yah.” Mr Speaker that was exactly what some APC officials did when they travelled to Russia.

Mr Speaker, an Honourable Member from that side of the well spoke about the frequent travelling of President Bio. We agree Mr Speaker, but there is a justification to his traveling. As far as the UN is concerned, when the former President was going to the United Nations general Assembly, he would normally go along with Two Hundred and Fifty people with a chartered flight. Honourable Members, do not worry, we have the justification. It was not less than Two Hundred and Fifty people from Sierra Leone. Mr Speaker, you will agree with me that most of the guys that are misbehaving on Social media today, as far as the government is concerned were the people that the former

President carried to the United Nations. Mr Speaker, when we talk about the frequent travelling of the current President, I want you to know that this was exactly what the former President Ernest Bai Koroma was doing. The former President even used a chartered flight to travel Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker we have never used a chartered flight to do what they were doing. So, this is just a clarification to what their boys are doing here. We are talking about Feed Sierra Leone Mr Speaker. It is obvious that we have been in this Parliament when an individual Member of Parliament went and signed for fertilizers for Members of Parliament here.

HON. ABDUL KARIM KAMARA: Point of order Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Alright, there is a point of order.

HON. ABDUL KARIM KAMARA: Mr Speaker, the Honourable Member is making a silly point and he is making specific allegations of travelling with Two Hundred and Fifty Sierra Leoneans. This is a House of records and rules. Mr Speaker, you rule out today that, whatever somebody is saying, there must be a proof to it. If there is no supporting evidence, can you withdraw what he is saying now? Because it makes no sense. Mr Speaker, that is all what I am asking for.

THE SPEAKER: Are you telling the House that the figure he quoted is false?

HON. ABDUL KARIM KAMARA: No, I am not saying that. What I am saying is that let him provide evidence to what he is saying. That is all what I am asking for. Please Mr Speaker, because that alone is a huge sum of money he is talking about. This is a House of records and there must be a transitional report to show us. Let him give us evidence.

THE SPEAKER: Are you challenging the veracity of his statements?

HON. ABDUL KARIM KAMARA: Yes, and I am asking him to provide evidence to the House

THE SPEAKER: Fine, if you are challenging the veracity, then you tell him how wrong he is by producing the correct figure?

HON. ABDUL KARIM KAMARA: Mr Speaker, the Honourable Member alleged, so the burden is on him to prove us wrong or right. So, I see no reason why you are turning it to me.

THE SPEAKER: I agree!

HON. ABDUL KARIM KAMARA:: Let him prove it to us. That is what you have told the whole House today. You always ask people who have made statements to prove or else they withdraw. That is the grand norm here.

THE SPEAKER: So you are asking him to provide evidence?

HON. ABDUL KARIM KAMARA: Yes Mr Speaker! Otherwise, let him withdraws his statement. Two Hundred and Fifty as he says, so let him provide us with evidence.

HON. FRANCIS KAISAMBA: Point of order Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I do not want you to ask the Honourable Member to withdraw, because he will not withdraw it. I am promising the Honourable Member from that side that, by tomorrow, I will ask the Minister of Finance to give us the data. I can remember in 2016 when the former President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma was going to the UN and we got the list from Finance. In fact, that number was even more than two hundred and fifty. I will give you the number from the Minister of Finance tomorrow. Thank you.

HON. FRANCIS KAISAMBA: Mr Speaker just to add to what he has said.

THE SPEAKER: Do you want to add to that as well?

HON. EDWARD GEORGE: Mr Speaker let me just conclude.

THE SPEAKER: Hold on Honourable Member! There is an allegation of Two Hundred and Fifty New Leones. Was it endorsed by you?

HON. EDWARD GEORGE: No! I heard the whip from the opposition saying, the Member of Parliament should withdraw. But just now probably *[interruption]*

THE SPEAKER: No. it will only be withdrawn if it cannot be substantiated.

HON. ALPHA F. M. JABBIE: That is what I am saying.

THE SPEAKER: No, his colleague has said that, he will be able against tomorrow morning to substantiate the statement. So we shall wait.

HON. ABDUL KARRIM KARGBO: Okay.

HON. FRANCIS KAISAMBA: Mr Speaker as we are waiting, I will want you to make a final ruling on this issue. When it comes to debate and Honourable Members cannot quote correctly and substantiate their argument, we would give them 24 hours to provide us with concrete evidence. If that is the final decision, then it is okay.

THE SPEAKER: When they fail to prove or substantiate, I will order that the statement to be expunged from the records.

HON. ABDUL KARIM KARGBO: And that is what exactly he has done. According to my senior, he stated that we should wait until tomorrow. So if it is a rule, we should adopt it in this House and it becomes a precedent. But let me clear on this, when it comes to travelling, you see I have been asked to confine this debate to the budget. That we should limit it to the budget that is before us. Do not forget as he is sitting before the audit service when the auditor general was suspended, there was a direct allegation on the office of the president. We do not want to go that way talking about forging receipt on travels. I do not want us to have issues that will create confusions in this House. Let us do not go that way, let us stick to the Budget. If my colleague has not read the Budget, let him say so in peace and sit down.

HON EDWARD GEORGE: Thank you very much Mr Speaker. That is their opinion. Mr Speaker I know that the former president Ernest Bai Koroma has been travelling out of this country with over two hundred and fifty delegations.

THE SPEAKER: You are repeating it.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Mr Speaker, I will not allow him to rest without a proof. Where is the evidence? Mr Speaker, please make a rule on this.

HON: EDWARD GEORGE: Mr Speaker, let me go to the car wash.

THE SPEAKER: No!

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Before the car wash, rule on this point sir. We are waiting.

HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS: Mr Speaker, let us do not thread on the dangerous ground. If you ask the Honourable Member to withdraw, there will come a statement from that other side and it will stand to create argument and can easily be withdrawn without proving. When the Honourable Member from Falaba was debating, he did say that the government is taking loan from the Bank. If I ask him to bring a proof now, he will not do it. So, let us do not go that way. I just want to ask the minister of Finance that after here, he should go to our records and give us that particular record of 2016 presidential visit to the UN by the former President Ernest Bai Koroma. By tomorrow, we would give you the list. We will get that list from Finance, but he will not withdraw.

HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS: What we are saying is simple Mr Speaker. I accept what you said that by tomorrow the fact will be brought to this House. I am also saying that if it is a new rule Mr Speaker, so be it and if it is not a new rule, let the Honourable Member who has not read this Budget withdraws the statement.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, it is not a new rule. There is another way and this is the way that I am looking at it. He has made an allegation and likely enough, the onus is on him to prove it [Undertones]. He, who alleges, must prove their allegation. Wait a minute, the other side is asking for proof, are you able to prove it? You the maker of that statement, are you able to prove it?

HON. EDWARD GEORGE: Mr Speaker, I join my leader that by tomorrow morning, we will give them proof of what I am saying.

THE SPEAKER: If you fail to prove it, I will make a ruling on it.

HON. EDWARD GEORGE: As it pleases Mr Speaker!

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable Member, quite frankly, you have exceeded your time. So I take note of the fact that you have been interjected quite a bit.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Let me make this last statement.

THE SPEAKER: Which one again?

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Mr Speaker, now that you have accepted to bring the proof tomorrow, we will learn from this and make it a precedent that when somebody makes a statement that requires a proof, you will give that person 24hours to bring the statement to this House.

THE SPEAKER: I have not said that.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: that is it Mr Speaker, otherwise, let him withdraw.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I stand on S.O 32(5). We are Members of Parliament and we are law makers. Therefore, S.O 32 (5) is clear. I now want to appeal to my colleague Honourable Members to concentrate on S.O 32(5). S.O 32(5) reads Mr Speaker with your leave.

THE SPEAKER: I know what it says.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: No, for the clarification of others, S.O 32(5) reads, a member must confine his observations to the subject under discussion and may not introduce matter irrelevant thereto.

THE SPEAKER: Alright nice.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Speaker, I advise all Members to confine themselves to S.O 32(5).

THE SPEAKER: Thank you Mr Deputy Leader. Honourable Members, before you take your seat, maybe we will be able to resolve it right now. In light of S.O 32(5) what it says, how would you advise your Member on what to do?

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: I advise him to stick to S.O 32(5).

HON. EDWARD GEORGE: Mr Speaker in this House of Parliament, our brothers from the other side were saying that the car wash of the minister of youth is not making any use in this nation. Mr Speaker sometimes, we need to appreciate and praise when people do good jobs especially working very hard to promote this nation. Mr Speaker if we go back to the former ministers as far as the youth ministry is concerned.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, your leader has just reminded you to stick to S.O 32(5).

HON. EDWARD GEORGE: Mr Speaker, the Car Wash Project is also part of the Budget.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Point of order Mr Speaker. We are debating the Budget. So we need to do comparative analysis. We cannot stop the Honourable Member from comparing to what that happened in 2007 to 2017. We have different budgets that we need to compare to see which government implemented their budgets properly. So I think he needs to compare the two. He has to make reference.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Mr Speaker, I am not against the Honourable Member making references or comparing the two Budgets, but make sure that when you are comparing the two budgets, you have the 2007 Budget in your possession.

HON. EDWARD GEORGE: As it pleases my Leader!

HON. ALPHA F. M. JABBIE: Mr Speaker, I beg to differ. You do not need to tell us which Budget we should compare.

HON. ABDUL KARIM KAMARA: When he is making a reference, he should tell us the part he is quoting from.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Speaker, we have the right to compare any budget that is between 2017 to 2018.

THE SPEAKER: I know you are the chief whip but you seem to be standing without even waiting for Mr Speaker. Is that the way you want to continue?

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Speaker, I am sorry but they are doing the same thing.

HON. EDWARD GEORGE: Mr Speaker, may I continue my debate?

THE SPEAKER: You cannot Honourable Member, because you have exhausted your time.

HON. EDWARD GEORGE: Please Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I am the Deputy Chairman for the Local government. I have something to deliver to this House as far as local government is concerned. So Mr Speaker, can I have just a second? I am actually the Deputy Chairman for the Local Government Mr Speaker and this is a debate we have the Minister in front of us. So I want to bring issues of challenge to him

THE SPEAKER: Thirty seconds.

HON. EDWARD GEORGE: Thank you Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we are actually asking the Minister of Finance to disburse the money that is allocated to Local Government ministries. Mr Speaker you know Members of Parliament are no more part of the development in this country. The local councils are taking developments in our various areas Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, we have engaged local councils and we know exactly what they are facing Mr Speaker. We want the Minister of Finance to be responding to the local government ministry as quickly as the need arises to help them to do their jobs Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker the devolved sectors working with the local ministries are not doing their jobs. Mr Speaker they are not doing what they are being sent to do....*[interruption]*

THE SPEAKER: And with that?

HON. EDWARD GEORGE: With that, I want to ask the Minister to pay attention to the local municipality and also, we are asking the devolved sectors under the local government ministry to be doing their jobs and to pay attention to the job that they sent them to do. With that Mr Speaker, I am asking all Members of Parliament to join us to approve the 2024 Budget in peaceful manner. Thank you very much Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, this is a convenient point for us to do a roll call of the MDAs. Let us ascertain those who are here. The Clerk at the table should work with the Leader of Government Business.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Leader of the Opposition can we have one Parliament please!

THE SPEAKER: You may take the Ministry of Finance as represented. Because the minister is here and of course they are responsible for the Budget.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Leader, can we have one Parliament please! The Minister of Finance is represented and National Revenue Authority is also represented,

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: No, they are represented.

THE SPEAKER: No, you cannot just say they are represented, we want to see them.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Speaker, if we are going that way, then we have sub departments that are represented by four or five people.

THE SPEAKER: Then you will only read them once.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Speaker, the following are here to represent their various MDAs. They include the following:

Kofi F.D Addai: Senior Director of National Social Commission of Action NaSCA.

Koroma Ibrahim: Office of the Attorney General and Minister of Justice.

THE SPEAKER: Did you call the office of the Attorney General?

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Yes.

THE SPEAKER: Where is he?

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: He is at the gallery.

THE SPEAKER: Oh, okay.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Brima **Kadrie** Kamara: Principal Accountant, Ministry of Defense. Has he gone?

J.C Jones: Permanent Secretary Ministry of Force and Public Asset.

J.J Foday: Deputy Secretary of Ministry of Defense.

Denise S. James: Bio FCS ONS. Director of Finance of ONS. Is he around?

John J. Lahai: Central Intelligent and Security Unit.

Tucker Emmanuel: Ministry of Finance.

THE SPEAKER: You can skip the Ministry of Finance.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Dija: SLSCA. Which one is SLSCA?

Sierra Leone Seed Certification Agency.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Soriba okay.

Mr Rogers: Office of MDNA DGD.

Alie Kabba: Guma Valley.

Victoria C.S Bockarie: D.S Office.

THE SPEAKER: Is she here? Which office is that?

HON. BASIRU SILIKIE: Mohammed A. Kabba: Ministry of Mines.

Aminata Y. Sannoh: Deputy Secretary of Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary School.

THE SPEAKER: Yes, she is here.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Yah Edwin Mbawah: Acting Director General of Foreign Affairs.

Nathaniel S. Nicole: Senior Auditor of Foreign Affairs.

Marrah M. Tucker. They are all in Foreign Affairs. Artinal Kollosah.

Andrew Abubakkar Kamara: Deputy for Gender Affairs

Hilda B. Forde: Local Government.

Andrew S. Kabba: Ministry of Finance. Lansana Fofannah: Ministry of Finance. Sheku P. Conteh : Ministry of Finance.

Mohammed Jalloh: Ministry of Issues.

Leonard Monseray: National Investment Board.

Yei Kumba Momoh: Deputy Development Secretary.

THE SPEAKER: Is he here? Okay, thank you.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Alfred Mannah: Head of Finance PMD.

Gassimu Koroma: Project Manager. Which one is that? Project Manager Where?

THE SPEAKER: National Investment Board

HON. BASHIR S. SILIKIE: Okay Project Manager for National Investment Board.

Tasima A. Jah, Victoria A. Sandy: Ministry of Communication.

Charles Kamanda: Minister of Transport and Aviation. Charles Kamanda is he around?
He has left.

Is it Ansumana Kamara: Minister of Employment Labour Associational Security is he around?

Uriah K. Kargbo: Ministry of Mines.

Nancy K. S. Tengbeh, Tamba Sam: Deputy Secretary Ministry of Public Admin).

Sam Philip Monseray: Ministry of Tourism and Culture. Sahr Philip Monseray? He has left.

Solomon S. Thomas: Cabinet Secretariat.

Richard M Bangura: Ministry of Labour. Has he gone?

Abdul Karim Kamara: Ministry of Labour. I think all them in the Ministry of Labour.

Aruna D kamara: Ministry of Agriculture.

Gilbert H Cooper (Ministry of Cash and Cooper is not around.

Brima M. Sowa: Ministry of Water Resources.

Jangah Muana: Deputy Director of PRA. Is he around? I think he is not around. They plan this one.

THE SPEAKER: Are you done?

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: No, I am not. He is Alusine A Conteh: Ministry of Youth Affairs.

THE SPEAKER: Youth Affairs Ministry, is he here?

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Alfred Monseray, Ministry of Trade. Is he around?

Lamin A. K Dumbuya: Ministry of Technical and Higher Education. Is he around?

Umaru G. Unisa: Ministry of Tourism.

Lansana Shaw: Ministry of Labour.

Bashiru Kumba: Ministry of Information.

THE SPEAKER: Is he here? Okay behind you.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Rashin Fornah, Sheku B. Samai: Office of the Vice President.

Waykei Gbindi Hindowa: Ministry of Gender.

Desmond Banya: Ministry of Finance.

Doc. Kadijatu Grace Kamara: Ministry of Tourism.

Kenneh Lamin: Office of the Chief Minister. Is he around?

Patrick Gibrilla: Ministry of Youth Affairs.

Samuel O. G Koker: H.R.M.O.

Lorde Aro. Yomi. Druge: Ministry of Agriculture.

John Bosco Momoh: Ministry of Internal Affairs. Is he around?

Binneh Gonde Conteh: S.L.C.A.A Commissioner. Small arms, is he around?

Mabinty Gbindi, Cyrus Ngegba: Ministry of Youth.

Abubackarr **Magid** Sesay, Yakuba Ahmed Sesay: Local Government.

Abdul R. Conteh: National Commission for Democracy.

Mariama Tucker: Environment Protection Agency.

Sahr Kpulum: Civil Service Training College.

Mr Speaker so far, these are the people who are being presented.

THE SPEAKER: Okay, is there any representative from MDAs whose name has not been called?

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Which MDA?

THE SPEAKER: Any other? Yes. Western Region Permanent Secretary. Yes.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, these are the representatives for this debate. We will forward the names of the absentees to the Chairmen of the various Committees that will be responsible for supplies and we want to urge all chairmen and all members that the names that will be supplied to these committees, please critically look at their budget and recommend to this House the decision that will be done. Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: We shall continue the debate for another half hour. I now give the Floor to Honourable Mohammed Papa Bangura.

HON. MOHAMMED PAPA BANGURA: Thank you Mr Speaker. I am Hon. Mohammed Papa Bangura from Bombali District....*[interruption]*

THE SPEAKER: You will be followed by the Honourable Charles Abdulai.

HON. MOHAMMED PAPA BANGURA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to urge the Honourable Members from the other side to depoliticize this debate and this Budget. They should be depoliticised. The reason being is because, a cup of rice in Giehu Kojo in Malegohun Chiefdom in Kenema District is more expensive than a cup of rice and some communities in Bombali District. Mr Speaker, they should depoliticize this debate because a cup of rice in Nomo Fiamma Chiefdom in Kenema district is more expensive than a cup of rice in Kafu Bullon. Mr Speaker, the Honourable Members from the other side should depoliticize this debate because, a cup of rice in Lei Chiefdom in Kono district is more expensive than a cup of rice in Binkolo in Safoko Limba Chiefdom. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want the Honourable from the other side to please depoliticize this because, if I use a car to travel from Freetown to my people in Bombali on fifty liters and the Honourable Quintin Salia Batilo Konneh uses the same car to drive from Freetown to Kailahun unlike me, he will be using hundred and fifty liters. Mr

Speaker, Honourable Members, this is so because of the proximity to the capital city. This is why the Honourable Members from the other side should be sincere in debating this Budget. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to speak on three key issues. I am from Bombali. This is a document that should be celebrated by Sierra Leoneans f across the country. Unfortunately Mr Speaker, from **Njedenma** to **Kinchur**, the people are not happy. Mr Speaker, Honourable Member, I want to speak on the three issues.

Mr Speaker, firstly, the people of Bombali where I am coming from are left with no hope in this Budget. They are being mentioned in this Budget but it is actually not affecting the people of Bombali district. Let me start with infrastructure Mr Speaker, Honourable Members. If you go to Page 33, Paragraph 125 where road constructions are mentioned, you will agree with me that there was a massive road construction within the municipality of Makeni, that only stopped because of the change of government in 2018. Mr Speaker, you will also agree with me that the road construction between Bombali to Karene district was ongoing; it only stopped because of the change in government in 2018. What crime has Bombali district committed? Is Bombali district not part of Sierra Leone? The only crime Bombali district committed Honourable Members, is to produce Dr Ernest Bai Koroma, the former president of the Republic of Sierra Leone, a the President who has served this country without tribal consideration and regional consideration. Today, his people have been marginalised, because of him. The Honourable Speaker has done so much for this country. Mr Speaker, you are from Kerene District. You have done so much for this country. When I read some books, the name Dr Abass Bundu is a household name in Sierra Leone and in the sub region. If a Ghanaian stands in front of me and tell me about Kofi Annan, I will proudly say I have Abass Bundu. What the Honourable Abass Bundu has done for this country, he deserves an accolade. Mr Speaker for not considering the road leading from Bombali to Karene districts is a set up for you and your people of Kerene district. You do not deserve this Mr Speaker. If Sierra Leone did not recognise you, ECOWAS will recognise you for the good work that you have done. A man who has done so much for his country and who has made a name for himself and Sierra Leone, does not deserve to

drive on a dusted road from Freetown to his village Gbinti. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am going to repeat this. Mr Speaker, we want to remember you for the good works you have done. Mr Speaker this is a set up by the Minister of Finance for you and your people.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member for his very kind contribution. Not only for me, but for the people of Gbinti and Karene district.

HON. MOHAMMED PAPA BANGURA: Absolutely Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Let me assure you that I have received assurances that the roads will be duly considered.

HON. MOHAMMED PAPA BANGURA: Mr Speaker, the Sierra Leone Peoples Party Government is finding it very difficult to implement even things that are on paper. So how can they assure you without including in this Budget Mr Speaker? Mr Speaker if you are depending on that assurance, the people of Bombali district cannot depend on that assurance. We cannot. We deserve more. This is Sierra Leone and if you are saying that you are preparing a Budget for Sierra Leoneans, it must cut across. Mr Speaker, the reason why I am urging the Members of Parliament from the other side to depoliticize this statement, when I listened to the Minister of Finance, the argument put forward for the taxation on importation of rice, is a very weak and premature argument. Absolutely, there are regulatory bodies that will see how best they can regulate prizes. But you cannot tax the importation of rice in a moment like this when the prize of the rice is escalating. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, before I end on this infrastructure, let me also advocate to the Honourable Members from the other side who are here playing politics, forgetting the interest of their people. Let me advocate for the people of Mologohun Chiefdom, Lower Bambara chiefdom, Gurama chiefdom, Njiama Nimikoro and Bumpeh Chiefdoms. Mr Speaker, there is an easy way to connect to the Eastern region. The road from Kono and Kenema district is one of the shortest roads and is one of the roads that is connected to the Eastern Region. Unfortunately Mr Speaker, Members of Parliament from the other side are here playing politics. They have forgotten about the interest of their people for which they are here for. As I conclude

on the roads, like I said earlier on, I am here to advocate especially for the people of Bombali. Mr Speaker, several districts were mentioned but Bombali district is not mentioned.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, again on social security, let me also talk about cash transfer. I want to refer you to Page 18, Paragraph 63, on cash transfer. Eleven districts were mentioned excluding Bombali district. What has Bombali done to deserve this? What have we done? Mr Speaker, the only time since 2018 to date, this Government only consider Bombali, is to respond when there is a small disagreements and they will respond very harsh on the people of Bombali. The Generator Saga is a clear testament which left the death of a young teacher Augustine who has worked for fifteen years without approval. On that faithful morning, Augustine was coming from school to pick his wife from the market. On his way going to pick his wife, Augustine was shot and up to this moment Mr Speaker as I speak, the poor teacher Augustine has not been given justice. Mr Speaker for us sitting here and I also want to raise this concern Mr Speaker. You were in charge of allocating seat, we did not commit any crime to be at the back but most of these laptops are not working. You need to fix them Mr Speaker.

HON. ALPHA F. M. JABBIE: Point of order Mr Speaker. Through your speakership please, I want you to urge Member of Parliament to confine himself to this discussion on this document. Firstly, he is talking about the Generator Saga, people that had been shot, I am not sure those are contained here. Secondly, SO 32(9); improper motive should not be directed at your colleagues. We are very sensitive to that. We are here to represent our people and talk about their welfare. He is saying Members from the other side are not representing their people, they are insensitive.

HON. MOHAMMED PAPA BANGURA: I did not say so Mr Speaker.

HON. ALPHA F. M. JABBIE: Honourable Members, Please, I am talking to the Speaker. He said that we the Members from this Side do not care about the people's welfare and so far and so on. There are rules on how to debate in this House. We should keep those rules. Thank you.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Mr Speaker I have notice that when a brilliant debate has taken the floor from our own side, it is being interrupted constantly and at the end of the day, it affects the time of the debater. Please Mr Speaker take note of the time that he has just taken from the debater.

HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS: Mr Speaker I stand on S O 32(6). The Honourable Member is making an allegation about somebody was shot during the Generation Saga and I believe that, that matter is under judicial pending. We as nation, we are responsible people. As a matter of fact we should respect ourselves. We are Members of Parliament and we do respect other arms of Government. If this matter is under judicial pending, it should not be stated in this debate. So please let the Member advice himself.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Mr Speaker on a more serious note, the Honourable Member is reviving that matter. I will tell you, it is a painful matter and that matter was investigated in this Well and the report was never tabled. Now that we have not said anything on this matter. The Honourable Member is referring. He is only saying that the only time the Bombali people can be remembered by this government is when there is a disagreement. Let us go quietly with this debate and allow our colleague to debate. Please.

HON. MOHAMED PAPA BANGURA: Thank you very much Mr Speaker. Now let me go to sport. Mr Speaker, sport is a very key component in national development. It is one of the areas that has provided job opportunity for young people in this country. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have over nineteen sport disciplines in Sierra Leone. But let me use football as a case study. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, even in the football sector, I will only use one league that is the Sierra Leone premier league. The unfortunate part Mr Speaker, this league is struggling with finances. We want to thank Leone rock for sponsoring the 2023 Sierra Leone premier league. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as I stand here, I am the Secretary-General of one football club. I know what I am saying. Mr Speaker if we are talking about employment now, under the Sierra Leone premier league, we have about eighteen clubs and the eighteen clubs

have forty plays per club which will give seven hundred and twenty players and Ninety coaches. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, you will have one thousand five hundred and fifty employees beside other staff, just for the Football premier league and these are all young people. Mr Speaker sadly enough, when you look at the Appropriation Act, 2024, the amount that is located to the Ministry of sport and the Office of the Chief Minister. Mr Speaker, you will realize that this Budget is a disservice to Sierra Leoneans. Just the office of the Chief Minister Mr Speaker, the sum of twenty four Billion, one hundred and fifteen million, seven hundred new Leones is allocated to the office of the chief Minister and now when you also look at the Ministry of Sports, a ministry that has provided employment for young people in this country. You have five million, five hundred and twenty six Leones and five billion, five hundred and twenty six thousand, five hundred Leones was allocated to the Ministry of Sport a very massive disparity. This is a deception. This is completely unbelievable. Mr Speaker, why is it so? The office of the Chief Minister that is supposed to be a supervisory office, you are allocating twenty four billion Mr Speaker to a ministry that is providing employment. And the sad reality of it Mr Speaker, coming up as a young boy in this country, I used be the fastest runner in Gbinti when it comes to athletes Football is only striving because of the support they are receiving from FIFA.

THE SPEAKER: And on that note?

HON. MOHAMED PAPA BANGURA: On that note Mr Speaker, I will end again by urging the Honourable Members from the other side to depoliticize this debate. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have to be careful as Members of Parliament to approve those budgets. Let us take into consideration the areas that I have highlighted especially road construction I have highlighted. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank you and may God bless you all.

THE SPEAKER: I will now give the floor to the Honourable Charles Abdulai.

HON. CHARLES O. ABDULAI: Thank you Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, having listened to the various Speakers for the previous days, I have categorised the debate into two sets. The colleagues on my right brought out key

topical issues and they have debated on them. If you look at the inflationary side of it, they said the 5% increase on the importation of rice in this country and the economy because those were the key topical issues they mentioned in almost all their debate. On my left of course they have been on the defensive side supporting this document, this strategic statement to support the Minister and his team, to relief this nation of the predicament of the past few years base on the external factor. Mr Speaker before going to the Budget proper, let me just rephrase one or two things the last speaker said in relation to the increase of prize in the cost of rice, in the far East and the Western area of Port Loko. This is a simple analogy. You cannot expect the prize of rice per cup or bag in the East to that of Freetown and Port Loko to be the same. The transportation causes certain cost to be cured by that marketer and that trader. You cannot expect the prize to be equal. My colleagues on the other side there have lost the debate because when the Member of Parliament from Kailahun spoke on the 5% yesterday, they considered and accepted the position of the 5% tax on rice importation. Because it was real, defended and it was made very clear here yesterday. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members.

HON: Mr Speaker we are before the camera and he is inviting different process.

HON. CHARLES ABDULAI: Mr Speaker if I could go through this Budget, the minister and his team recognized the realization that all policy maker all over the world do.

HON: Point of order Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Hold on, let me hear his point of order.

HON: Thank you very much Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, when an issue is debated and the vote is passed, all Members of Parliament in the Well accept the decision to be a parliamentary decision. Thank you very much. When the Hon Member from Kailahun was debating yesterday, it was just a debate. And Hon Charles Abdulai stated that we accepted on this side that the 5% increment was justified by us. It was never so. There was no decision meted on that debate.

HON. CHARLES ABDULAI: I will rephrase that one again. They did not accept it.

HON: Thank you.

HON. CHARLES ABDULAI: But they understood. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the minister highlighted that for the past two years [interruption].

HON: Mr Speaker, I wanted to rise on a point of order but because of your advice, I need help. Let me do some corrections on what the Honourable from Bombali said. He said the chief minister alone is allocated twenty seven billion.

THE SPEAKER: He did not say that. that was not what I heard.

HON: What did you hear?

THE SPEAKER: I heard 24.

HON: Okay, fine twenty four. Mr Speaker let make some clarifications. It is 17(b) and not 24. Also Mr Speaker let me tell my colleague to look at the agency under the office of the Chief Minister that includes the presidential infrastructural initiative. I am just making a correction. That money was for nine agencies under the Office of the Chief Minister. I thank you.

HON: Yes Mr Speaker, the document he has and the Appropriation Act that we have here, are two different things. On this document, it is twenty four and this document was brought in by the Ministry of Finance in Parliament. So the Honourable Member of Parliament was quite right. The Honourable Member was referring to the Budget not the Finance Act. Mr Speaker, I want to remind this House that we have nine agencies under the office of the Chief Minister. That money is allocated to all of the nine agencies under the office of the Chief Minister. Thank you.

HON: And the money allocated to sport is almost for thirty nine discipline sports. Compare the two, it makes no sense. Mr Speaker you see, this is the reason why the estimate should have been brought to this House because, it would have explained in detail all of what we are arguing now. Of course we are here to debate the Appropriation Act. The figure the Honourable Member quoted is directly from the Appropriation Act and it is twenty four. Secondly Mr Speaker, the Member has already

spoken and what is the most unfortunate thing about the point of order, the Chief Whip did not raise the point of order at the time the Member of Parliament was debating. We have gone to another debater. What if another person from our side raises a point of order on somebody who has debated long ago since this morning. It is against the procedure Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: I will like to hear you speak on that point.

HON: Yes Mr Speaker, I only needed an advice because you say [Interruption]

THE SPEAKER: No, speak to this point.

HON: That is the point that I am making Mr Speaker. You advise us that when a Member of Parliament is saying something, we should not interrupt. That was your advice and that was why I kept quiet. But when the Hon. Charles was debating, Hon: AKK interrupted and that was why I brought up my point of order.

HON: I wanted to observe Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: No, wait a minute before you observe. Chief Whip, do you have any intention to participate in this debate?

HON. CHIEF WHIP: Yes.

THE SPEAKER: You do?

HON. CHIEF WHIP: I do.

THE SPEAKER: May I then advise you?

HON. CHIEF WHIP: And the Honourable AKK also has the intention to debate.

THE SPEAKER: May I advise you and that advice is going for everyone.

HON. CHIEF WHIP: Thank you sir.

THE SPEAKER: Take note as your colleagues are debating. If there are points that you disagree with, make a note of them and then when your time comes, you will debunk whatever you wish to debunk. It is more decent that way, than waiting for the member to complete his presentation. And when another Member is in need flight, you bring in

your point of order. Not related to what the current Member was saying but what the Member has already finished saying.

HON. CHIEF WHIP: Mr Speaker, I agree to what you said. I said that I needed your advice because I never wanted to interrupt that was your advice. But because he did when Honourable Charles was speaking, so I had to come up and say my point of order. I hope that advice is going for all of us. I thank you.

HON: I want to observe Mr Speaker on something very substantial for the progress of the House.

THE SPEAKER: I came to this House with a silver hair but I know I am going to leave with grey hair. Go on please.

HON: Mr Speaker for the purpose of efficient management of time, it is actually effective on our side as Members of Parliament for us to ensure we work within the time as provided. By the way, the Honourable AKK has been rising several times especially when issues are on the floor without citation of the relevant provision within the Standing Order. I want to call your attention that when a Honourable Member wants to rise, he or she has to quote the relevant provision within the Standing Order or else everybody will be rising. Please Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you for that observation. I hope it will be well heeded. Hon. Charles Abdulai, carry on.

HON. CHARLES ABDULAI: Thank you again Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I still want to rephrase what the Honourable from Bombali said. Let me just say this, for the benefit of everybody, our listeners and for us as Members of Parliament, except we are not honest with ourselves and except if we are not aware of the situations that happened in the country during the eleven years of the APC rule. We all can attest to it that they prioritise road construction, but they did not do the roads in Makeni or Bombali. This is just a mare fallacy, but I will leave that to the judgment of everybody. Let me go to the estimate and the presentation of the Minister and his team. The minister was so blunt to have realized the external factors that have caused

all policy makers all over the world for the past two years. Most companies have been affected and so in line just an exception, we cannot play magic to fix when our economics are imparted by larger economics that are affected and it spills over to us as a country. So in the argument there, the minister accepted. But this Budget is going to answer all those questions and all these debate that we are doing. The estimates or projections that he has made will allay your fears and they will answer your questions as Members of Parliament. I want to commend my Chairman of the Finance committee who said "our people depend on us as Members of Parliament to do the magic, to do everything." It is very necessary that we support this Budget so that those questions that our constituents will ask us will be answered by the ministries and MBAs using the provisions that are embedded in this Budget. So please, let us support this Budget, the projections, so that, we as Members of Parliament, 80% will come to this parliament again. I urge my colleagues to support this Budget. having said that Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the provisions on page one, please allow me Mr Speaker to just mention some few areas in this Budget. The minister stated in the Economic Outlook Projections. From the presentation, he said that; the external environment has not been favourable as a recovery of the global economy; it is losing momentum due to the slowdown of Chinese economy destruction of the energy and food market cause by Russia and Ukraine war. These are things that we have saying over and over and again. We cannot be repeating ourselves to hide the fact that our economies have direct bearings with the larger economies. Again, we look at paragraph 98 and 99 of the Domestic Revenue and Grants and the extension pirates and Budget allocations. Of course my colleague was struggling with the Revenue and Grants equated to Budget expenditures. It is not a strange thing to have a 2.6% difference between the Revenue and Grants and that of expenditure. We can resort to borrowing from Banks to take away the Budget deficit. I think that one is quite clear rather than we keep on laboring on that. The expenditure is more than the revenue in the Budget. Of course we accept, but if we can resort that 2.6% to borrowing from Banks and other resources. So the minister and his team are very wise and very intelligent. These are things we do not have to labour ourselves to mention in serious debate like this. When we want to

defend a very good budget statement like this one for 2024 wherein, your constituents will be satisfied with what actually we have planned as a government for 2024. One of the things that the Member of Parliament cited was the risk as an issue but as a program to me and any other serious programmer. When you make proposals, you must make provisions for risks and their mitigating factors and that was exactly the minister and his team has done here. We are not angels and we do not want to create skyscrapers in the air. We are very sure of the risks and that is why we have stated them and how we can mitigate them whilst implementing this Budget for 2024. Also Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, inflation of course was mentioned many times. The minister mentioned that. This inflation has created increase in prizes of commodities. Mr Speaker, it will shock you to know that even in our local commodities, there is a high price of fuel. But the projection that he has made, there will be a reduction base on the trends he has projected for this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, one of the key topical issues, is the Feed Salon which I want to comment on before my time expires. If you can go to the annex of Feed Salone 5.1 the annex 5.1, 401 code and Roman Figure 35, which the ministry has estimated, you can see the projections in the various areas. One thing I want to bring to the attention of the minister and his team is in agriculture and the food security programs. We do not lose sight of financing the agriculture areas along the chain in the preparation for our activities. The issue why I am bringing it is because I did not see it and it is not clearly stated. Maybe, it is in the form of inputs like seeds or seedlings. Mr Speaker, when we wanted to finance the Ministry of Agriculture, we needed specialised financial institutions, because not every institution that is specialising in financing Agriculture activities. Financing the value chain in Agriculture requires professional skills. The design, even the long product for agriculture activities requires skills. So therefore, do not lose sight of that and take that into cognizance and see which institutions or financial institutions with those skills that will support the Feed Salon program so that at least, we can have this one coming into fusion since this is our hope and we have intended to achieve this one base on the projections here and the

intention of this government. That is why; a special team has been created to support the Feed Salone program including the climate change, resilience and other key issues around that.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you and well-done. On that note?

HON CHARLES ABDULAI: Mr Speaker on that note let our colleagues and all Members of Parliament to be hopeful. I want to thank the speaker on other side, the Honourable Member from Western area who was very nationalistic and very plain and blunt to the issues surrounding us as a nation. He did not politicize his debate. He was actually a very nationalistic debater because, the facts and the realities of this country and how we can mitigate or move from that area depends on this estimate or the budget, the ministry has presented. So on that note, I want to thank Mr Speaker and all colleagues and then the future debaters, I thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member and the compliment goes to all Members of Parliament who were fortunate to catch my eye today. Any announcement?

TABLE CLERK: Honourable Members are informed that the book title: All Protocols Observed by hand book on Protocol Practices and Procedures by Solay B. Daramy is available for sale. Honourable Members can purchase the aforementioned book by contacting Zainab Tholley at the Protocol Office, Parliament building. The initiative Incapacity building Association International through the Clerk of Parliament is encouraging Members of Parliament and MDAs to note that all donations towards spelling Bills trip to Ethiopia must be factored by the director general of Parliament or to the founder Dr Isatu Musu Harding. Through Mr C.F. King, education Consultant of Parliament, the children are prepared and determined to fly the Green White and Blue flag higher. Please join us compliment the efforts of Government to achieve quality and sustainable education, gender equality, mitigate all forms of violence and living no one behind in Sierra Leone and to promote the G.E Act. Spelling Bill globally recognised as the best speaking programme here in Sierra Leone.

THE SPEAKER: With that? [interruption]

HON: Mr Speaker before you adjourn the sitting, we want to thank all the MDAs that are present and we are encouraging all of them to be here again tomorrow. Those that are not here, we are encouraging them to be here. This debate is going to take five days. So we are encouraging all MDAs to be here throughout the session of this debate. I thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: Tomorrow is day three of the debate.

ADJOURNMENT

[The House rose at 4:31 and was adjourned to Thursday 23rd November, 2023 at 10:00a.m]