



OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

[HANSARD]

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

SECOND SESSION -THIRD MEETING

FRIDAY, 22nd NOVEMBER, 2019

SESSION – 2019/2020



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PARLIAMETARY DEBATES

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VOLUME: I

NUMBER: 20

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

Proceedings of the Sitting of the House
Held Friday, 22nd November, 2019.

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Proposed: Honourable Dickson M. Rogers

Seconded: Honourable Bashiru Silikie



THE CHAMBER OF PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE

Official Hansard Report of the Proceedings of the House

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

Friday, 22nd November, 2019.

I. PRAYERS

[The Table Clerk, Mrs Bintu Weston, Read the Prayers]

[The House met at 10:12 a.m. in Parliament Building, Tower Hill, Freetown]

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

The House was called to Order

Suspension of S. O. 5[2]

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

II. MOTION TO AMEND THE ORDER PAPER

THE SPEAKER: Mr Acting Leader, do you have anything to say?

HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS [*Acting Leader of Government Business*]: Yes Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to crave the indulgence of this House for us to suspend S.O 63[3] in tandem with 82, so that we can approve again one of the nominees this morning. If this House can recall when I was reading my report for approval, I did say that one of the nominees travelled and because of that for us to maintain the integrity of Parliament; we would not approve that particular Minister in his absence. So this morning he is here, that is the reason why, Honourable Members I want to suspend S.O 63[3] in tandem with 82, so that we can just finish with that nomination. It is just one person, then we come to the business of the House. Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: Acting Leader of the Opposition is that okay with you?

HON. HASSAN A. SESAY: I think I can accommodate my opposite Member.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. I am sure you speak for Lahai Marah as well. Honourable Lahai Marah, today is Friday it is a very good day for all of us. It is a day that we should dispel from this House any evil spirit.

HON. LAHAI MARAH: Mr Speaker, I just don't have a choice, my leader has spoken.

THE SPEAKER: The choice you have is to say yes.

HON. LAHAI MARAH: I just don't have a choice.

THE SPEAKER: So you are proposing an Amendment to the Order Paper?

HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS: Yes Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: And what does it say?

HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS: I want item 3.

THE SPEAKER: A new item 3?

HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS: A new item 3 to be added to the Order Paper. Insert a new item to read [3].

THE SPEAKER: Appointments Committee, do you have your report ready?

HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS: Yes sir.

THE SPEAKER: Very well! Any seconder?

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: I so second Mr Speaker.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[Motion to Amend the Order Paper has been carried]

HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS: Thank you Mr Speaker and Honourable Members, for accepting the Amendment.

III. CORRECTION OF VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS FOR PARLIAMENTARY SITTING HELD ON THURSDAY 21ST NOVEMBER, 2019

THE SPEAKER: Let me give Honourable Members 5 minutes to read through the Votes and Proceedings.

HON. DANIEL KOROMA: Mr Speaker, I just want to observe, we have conferred on this side, and we don't have the last report, it should have been done separately. Even a page is enough, because that report is dated and it cannot have the same date. The Proceedings cannot have the same date, I am not saying we stop it because of that, but I am saying what is supposed to be done. It should have been done separately even if you just photocopied that excerpts but re-date it. It should have been done separately, that document is different from this document. I am not saying that should be an impediment to the Proceedings now, but as you see, we don't have it and we cannot make reference to that one that has been disposed with.

THE SPEAKER: He has a point, let us not debate that issue.

Let the relevant page of the previous report be photocopied and distributed very quickly. And when we get to that item, we would skip it until the document is available. Order! Order!

Honourable Members, our usual practice would be followed in this case by skipping pages 1 through to 4 and we would start the consideration of the Votes and Proceedings from page 5. Any comments on Page 5? Page 6? Page 7? Last page, Page 8? Can someone please move for the Adoption of the Record of Votes and Proceedings for the Parliamentary sitting held on Thursday 21st November, 2019?

HON. MOSES B. JORKIE: I so move Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON. SIMEON FEFEGULA: I so second, Mr Speaker

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[Record of Votes and Proceedings for the Parliamentary Sitting held on Thursday 21st November, 2019 has been Adopted]

IV. BILL

THE APPROPRIATION ACT, 2020

Being an Act to authorise expenditure from the Consolidated Fund for the services of Sierra Leone for the year 2020, and for other related matters

SECOND READING

DR PATRICIA N. LAVERLLEY *[Deputy Minister of Finance]*

THIRD AND FINAL ALLOTTED DAY

[CONTINUED WITH DEBATE]

THE SPEAKER: Is Madam Minister here please? I would recognise the Honourable Saa Francis Bhendu, Acting Leader of C4C. Let me just remind all contributors, that

pursuant to what I said yesterday, we shall observe very strictly the time limitation of 5 minutes. Today is the third and last allotted day and we needed to accommodate as many speakers as possible. And let me in addition remind the House that I proposed to rise latest by 2:00p.m, because we have other things to do.

On that understanding, we shall proceed with the debate. Honourable Saa F. Bhendu, you have the Floor.

HON. SAA F. BHENDU: Thank you Mr Speaker. I am an exception for the time limit sir, because I am the Acting Leader. I hope, I am protected Mr Speaker!

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the budget as presented by the Minister last, seems very ambitious. We know it is a proposal that if achieved, will take this country to another stage. However, we looked at the budget in details and we were able to outline a lot of good things out the budget. Few among those could be the increase in Teacher's salary by 30% in the next five months that could be a very good initiative. It is fine as promised by His Excellency the last time. The concern we have with that is also during the State Opening, His Excellency, did make promise that he would give support to Teachers especially those that would be serving in remote areas, by giving them Remote Allowances especially, for the Sciences, Mathematics and English Teachers. But as I go through this budget document before me now, I am not sure there is any provision being created, for which I want to ask Madam Minister to take note of in her responses.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the job creation initiatives for Youths and Women is a laudable venture, more especially the one that supports small scale enterprises. If we go to page 29, paragraph 146, 147 and 148, the concern we have with that is the strategy they intend to use in reaching out to the Most Deprived Communities. Already we have issues with the Banks and Financial Institutions when it comes to Micro-Credit Scheme. The interest rate is very high, the collateral condition attached to those Banking institutions are very difficult and challenging for the remote people staying in the remote villages. So if we are talking about these opportunities being provided for Sierra Leoneans, I believe somebody coming from my constituency deep down in

Kamiador should be part of this scheme; and if that person would have to be a benefactor, how does the Minister intend to make this scheme flexible to be able to accommodate those that cannot meet the criteria set by those Banking institutions? Having gone through this document, you will realise that the Minister intend to use NGOs, existing Banking institutions and financial institutions. These institutions have a tradition in this country as I have highlighted. So Madam Minister, please take note! The Chiefdom Youths and Military farms that is in page 30, paragraph 156, is also a very good initiative, the concern we have is the fear of the process been politicised, because as it stands if you go down to my constituency, very recently, they selected few youths that are SLPP, leaving out the others. And if you do so there is no equity, I am sure I have evidences to prove Honourable Member [*Undertone*]. In doing that, you are marginalising the other sectors. You are serving the nation, whatever cake you have should be shared equitably for the benefit of all. I want to talk to Madam Minister, to step up and do more and talk to those that are responsible to at least accommodate others, irrespective of your party affiliation and geographical background. For the fact that you are a Sierra Leonean, you should benefit from whatever that comes in to Sierra Leone.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is also a very good initiative for the Military to establish farms. My concern with that also is that, are we just going to limit our Military to the work of farmers? Yes of course, that could be one option because I want to believe as a Military when there is no war; they have limited things to do. I have suggestions that I will make, and one of those suggestions could be, they have engineering component in the Military, the Government can empower them, give them the free will to operate, allocate to them feudal roads to work on them, by so doing, they will generate income to support the Military.

I was also of the opinion that in this budget, there will be provision to buy some equipment that is limiting our Military to partake in the Peace Missions. That also could be income generating activity for the Military, because when they go out on these Missions, they get money and build houses to take care of their family members and also to accommodate them when they are retired. As it is, if you look at their salary

structures, some will not be able to take care of their families and build a home to prepare for his retirements, but with those opportunities being given to them will at least give them some space to operate.

Mr Speaker, Honorable Members, I realised that in page 40, paragraph 217, in addressing women, children and disabilities, when you read further, you will find out that no funds was allocated to the Disability Commission as per this document. Can Madam Minister tell us if it is an oversight? Is it a typographical error or is it deliberate? We want to know.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Micro Credit Scheme prepared in this document for people living with disability has highlighted concerns regarding the condition attached to Micro Credits. If you give people living with Disability Micro Credit Scheme, it is more harm than good; to start with, they will not be able to meet the criteria set by banking institutions. What will happen at the end of the day is, other people that are not supposed to be beneficiaries will have to gain the opportunities that are on paper to support people living with disabilities.

The area that has to do with Skills Training is a very good one and a laudable venture. I remembered the previous Government provided opportunity for people living with disabilities when they go to Universities for free. I want to know whether those opportunities are ceased from operating. There is no record in the entire book about disabilities. These are some of the challenges that I saw after going through this document.

Mr Speaker, Honorable Members, I believe in 2012, this House passed into Law the Act to establish Sierra Leone Red Cross, the same Act provides that money should be allocated to support them *[Applause]*. I want to believe since the beginning of this budgetary period, they were in attendance and participated very well. I also believed that they submitted their Budget requirement for the year to come, but having gone through this document, I didn't see allocation for them. We are asking Madam Minister, to please tell this House whether this people are eligible or not? Whether these people are serving the Nation or not? We should not forget the fact that Donors will not continue to support this Nation; we should be building institutions that will take over

from Donors that are coming in to support us. We need to empower our domestic institutions and organisations, give them the will power to perform, to live if funds are not provided for them, how do we expect them to move? So Madam Minister I want you to take note and look at this.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, having gone through the document for Health, the provision for the Health Sector is also fine, some of us are coming from deprived communities, if you go to my Constituency, to access health facilities, you have to travel 15 miles on terrible roads and pregnant women use motor bikes to move from one village to another. I was of the opinion that this Budget will provide additional PHU's at least to rebuild in between those that have longer distance to help our people, but that also is not provided. Is it going to be in the supplementary Budget? Or is it somewhere I cannot find? Give us information on that Madam.

Mr Speaker, Honorable Members, we have Teachers that are serving our Communities and our children. Recently, the Government provided a bus facility for those that are within the city, but the villages are not benefiting from those Buses. We were of the opinion that the provisions that will encourage Teachers to go the villages and serve our people are the remote allowances that the President promised. I don't know whether you have plans to incorporate it also into the next Budget that will be coming.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I also want to talk about the Local Court. I remember there was an Act passed in this Parliament usually, we used to have the Local Government under the Paramount Chiefs, the Chiefdom Administration, but there was an Act passed, that disallowed them to operate under the powers of the Paramount Chiefs or the Chiefdom Administration. They now brought them under the Judiciary, but from then till date, they have not been paid and nobody is saying anything concerning them, what is their faith? I mean the Court Clerks, the Local Court Chairmen in the villages? Very recently, I overheard when the Minister was presenting, he did say they are going to increase the salaries of Paramount Chiefs plus twelve [12] functionaries. I don't know whether those twelve functionaries the Court Clerks will also be part of.

THE SPEAKER: I have been over indulgent.

HON. SAA F. BHENDU: Yes Mr Speaker, I am rounding up.

THE SPEAKER: No! I will give you only 30 seconds.

HON. SAA F. BHENDU: Mr Speaker, 5 minutes please!

THE SPEAKER: 30 seconds!

HON. SAA F. BHENDU: Alright, noted sir!

THE SPEAKER: If you want to know, you have taken exactly, 13minutes.

HON. SAA F. BHENDU: Thank you Mr Speaker. I am rounding up now. But please, I don't know whether among the functionaries that the Minister was saying, the Court Chairmen are included. If they are not, then you need to tell us also in your response what plan do you have for them, because they are also serving the Nation and they should be part of us.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, because of time constraints, I will like to stop here with my debate. Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member for his contribution. I will now recognise the Honourable Lahai Marah.

HON. LAHAI MARAH: Thank you very much Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we are debating a Budget that is not sincere with the people of this Country. A Budget that is not honest. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, sometimes when we talk, let it be realistic, this Budget is not realistic. Each and every year Mr Speaker, we talk about things which we don't do, we talked about Corruption, of course, Corruption is everywhere. The unfortunate part of it Members of Parliament, is I do know we are operating in Committees, and we also stand in this Well to talk about Corruption. Let us be realistic in our presentations and also in our deliberations. The "New Direction" Government should be very serious with us.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in paragraph 22, of the 2020 Budget, I will be using two [2] Budgets here, the 2020 Budget and 2019 Budget. The reason why "Dea gron dry" is, S.O. [2], the report says, is because of the huge stock of arrears to domestic suppliers accumulated by the past Government, they are not sincere! If you are blaming past Government that they are taking huge stock of domestic arrears or huge stock of loans what should you do? You should not be involved in that process.

Mr Speaker, in paragraph 38 of the 2020 Budget, it is clearly stated in that paragraph that by the end of December 2018, our external debt was 2.5% and you are saying that due to the huge arrears, that is why "Dea gron dry" S.O [2], but you are accumulating more and more debts. Is this "New Direction" Government sincere with the people of Sierra Leone?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, use your pens to follow my Debate [*Undertone*]. The end of June 2019, the external debt is **\$1.64Bln**. Let me take you to paragraph 25 of the 2019, Budget. By the end of June, 2018, Mr Speaker, the external debt stood at **\$1.53Bln** in just one year, and our external debt stock is **\$101Mln** by the "New Direction" in just one year [*interruption*].

HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS: Point of Order sir, Mr Speaker, like you said yesterday, we are talking to the people of this Nation and by extension the International Committee. When my colleague is saying that by the end of 2018, the "New Direction" approved **\$ 100Mln** or more, I want you to know that, that was a debt that we met in the system, it was there already, there is no way any Government in Four [4] Months can approve **\$1Mln**, so I want you to know that let him tell the Nation, that it was debt that we inherited. Thank you very much.

HON. LAHAI MARAH: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, that is exactly what I am trying to clear here, yes, in fact by the end of 2017, December, January, February, March, we went into Elections. So the actual fact is you inherited the debt standing by the end of 2017, I want you to know that [*interruption*].

HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS: That is not correct.

THE SPEAKER: Allow him, because he has already exhausted his 5 minutes.

HON. LAHAI MARAH: In paragraph 25, 2019 budget, by the end of 2017, you met a debt load of **\$1.51Bln** and also **\$101Bln**.

Mr Speaker, in June 2018, we also increased loan to **\$1.53Bln**. So in just one year, six Months, the "New Direction" Government accumulated a debt loan of **\$103Mln**, so what are you talking? Are you really sincere with the people of this country?

Mr Speaker, let me take you to paragraph 96, of the 2020 Budget. In paragraph 96, the Minister said, the total debt is 62.8% of GDP, he continued saying; making Sierra Leone

one of the highest indebted countries, he said due to aggressive borrowing by the past Government. Let me also challenge the Minister in this that the Minister is not honest
[interruption].

HON. DANIEL KOROMA: Mr Speaker, the Honourable Member from Bo will have his own turn to respond. He is here to make his speech, during your time you will respond
[interruption].

THE SPEAKER: Hold on! Hold on! Order! Order! Order!

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Speaker, Point of Order!

THE SPEAKER: Hold on! What is your Point of Order?

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Speaker, the Honourable Member, referred us to Paragraph 96, and he was saying something else. Mr Speaker, he was telling us something else and he was referring to another.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, if you are quoting from the Budget speech, please quote correctly what is written there.

HON. LAHAI MARAH: I thank you very much Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, in the Budget, the Minister said total debt. Mr Speaker, that cannot be correct!

THE SPEAKER: No! No! I am sorry.

HON. LAHAI MARAH: The Minister said 62.8% of GDP, making Sierra Leone one of the highly indebted countries in the world, due to Aggressive borrowing by the past Government; I want to challenge the Minister in this. When you go to paragraph 91 of the 2019 Budget, the Minister clearly stated in that paragraph that fifteen *[15]* Sub-Saharan African Countries had been classified as Debt Distressed Countries and Sierra Leone is not among.

THE SPEAKER: What paragraph is that?

HON. LAHAI MARAH: Paragraph 91 of the 2019 Budget. The Minister said...

THE SPEAKER: Are you quoting him again?

HON. LAHAI MARAH: Yes! The Minister said in that paragraph 91, of the 2019 Budget, that fifteen *[15]* Sub-Saharan African Countries have been classified as Debt Distressed Countries, but Sierra Leone was not among. And if this very Minister is here telling us, that because of Aggressive borrowing by the past Government, Sierra Leone

is now one of the highest indebted countries. The Minister is not sincere to the people of this country *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Minister is also not honest, I we want to see a situation wherein you are been honest and sincere to practicalise your statements. We cannot say we are fighting Corruption at the end of the day, we declare our Assets secretly.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you may accuse me of anything as you like, you have only a minute to go now. I have been over indulgent; you have spoken for over ten minutes.

HON. LAHAI MARAH: Mr Speaker, the Honourable from kono talked about the 30% increment of Teacher's salaries, to me Mr Speaker, we are provoking our Teachers in this country, among all the Civil Servants we have in Sierra Leone, Teachers are the least paid, and if this "New Direction" is talking about Human Capital Development, we should try to improve the living conditions of Teachers, because they are the Agents of Human Capital Development *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me take you to annex 6, page Roman no. 42 of this present Budget. In that particular Annex, you have the number of work force and the total amount, out of 675,000 and above Teachers, at the end of the year, they will be getting **Le 34.6 Billion**, note this Sierra Leoneans, 675,584 Teachers annual salary for 2020, is **Le 34.6 Billion**, and go through that Annex again, for just 34 Judges, their annual Salary is just the same like that of 675,000 Teachers, are we really sincere to the people of this country? The Minister is smiling Mr Speaker, she knows what I am analysing *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: Have you finished?

HON. LAHAI MARAH: Mr Speaker, my time! Allow me to conclude it for Falaba District.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable, I am sorry, I will not. You have spoken for 15 minutes.

HON. LAHAI MARAH: Mr Speaker I was interrupted, the Honourable Bashiru was interrupting me.

THE SPEAKER: I took all of that into account.

HON. LAHAI MARAH: Mr Speaker, this is a Budget.

THE SPEAKER: I am sorry it is a Budget, I am aware; I have placed a time limit you must respect.

HON. LAHAI MARAH: Let me conclude please for Falaba District.

THE SPEAKER: No! You spoke for **15** minutes. I give the floor to the Honourable Kekurah Vandii.

HON. DANIEL KOROMA: Mr Speaker, before Honourable Kekurah Vandii, I just have an observation sir. I am pleading with you; you may rule against me, you have the power to do so.

THE SPEAKER: You know I will.

HON. DANIEL KOROMA: Yes, I know you do.

THE SPEAKER: So let us not waste time. Time is in short supply today.

HON. DANIEL KOROMA: Can we do it stricto sensu **10** minutes, which will allow every Speaker to be composed. But 5 minutes, they will not be composed definitely.

THE SPEAKER: No! I want to accommodate as many Speakers as possible.

HON. DANIEL KOROMA: I want to say that, implied and in practise they have exceeded even 10 minutes.

THE SPEAKER: No! Lahai Marah spoke more, I noted it down, he started at 10:45 a.m. and he finished at 11:00a.m.

HON. DANIEL KOROMA: I am not saying Honourable Lahai Marah should come again; I am just pleading for subsequence Speakers, we should allow 10 minutes.

THE SPEAKER: You have taken enough time, no I over rule you.

HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS: Mr Speaker, can I stand on S.O 42?

THE SPEAKER: Yes! I know S.O.42.

HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS: Thank you

THE SPEAKER: Go ahead Kekurah Vandii, please!

HON. KEKURAH VANDI: Thank you very much Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: And you are starting at 1minute after 11:00 am.

HON. KEKURAH VANDI: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank you very much for given me this opportunity to participate in this year's Budget. Last year when we were discussing 2019 Budget, I made mentioned of certain things in this Well, that some of us are here to impress our constituents, for them to know that we are speaking whether is a beautiful thing or nonsense, but we want our constituent to know that we are speaking, or we are representing them.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in discussing the debate, you need people of high calibres, not half bait Economics; we need knowledgeable Economics, Managerial Accountants, not village Teacher Economics.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there are key things I have learnt from the other side, I want to start with my brother-in-law, Honourable Dr Kandeh K. Yumkella, yesterday he had some fears, I want to allay his fears, thank God his Deputy is here, he will let him know.

THE SPEAKER: Okay whilst you are thinking about doing that let me give out this notice now. Next Speaker on my list is Honourable Abdul Kargbo, followed by the Honourable Dominic Tshombe.

HON. KEKURAH VANDI: Thank you very much Mr Speaker. Teachers' recruitment was 5,000 last year, he was a bit frightened or he was timid, he wanted to know how this distribution was done, and for the benefit of this House, Mr Speaker, with your leave, I will want you to allow me to explain to this House and the General Public how that distribution was equitably done. I will defend it at all quarters. For the 5,000 Teachers, Western Urban had 343 Teachers, Western Rural had 307 Teachers, Bo

District had 342 Teachers, Moyamba had 205 Teachers, Pujehun 160, Bonth 165, Kenema 335, Kono 794, Kailahun 345, Koinadugu 189, Falaba 264, Bombali 359, Port Loko 308, Kambia 328, Karene 302 and Tonkolili 254.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this tells you that this is a responsible Government. We believe in social contract, the people gave us the responsibility to rule, that is why when we were ready to distribute the resources of this nation, they were equitably distributed. Otherwise, if it were previous times, we were going to have more recruitments in Bo and Kenema, but as I speak to you, Makeni in the Bombali District, gained more employment than even Bo District, but we are not worried about it, because it is their right.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to throw light on the Energy Sector. Of course, that is my domain and I am the Chairman, we saw well some of money was directed in that direction last year, and even this year. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to inform this House and the Public that the electricity thing is a capital intensive, we really need huge sum in that direction, but we have tremendously done well. When this Government took over, they installed capacity and the available capacity has increased. The number of customers have increased tremendously, that is why we are even working on modality to have a sustainable light. We don't want to embark on emergency light system in this country any longer; no matter how it is going to cost us, we would withstand it.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, you can attest the other time when we were at Bank Complex for the Car-Power Agreement, we saved Sierra Leone **\$18 Million**, the previous regime negotiated 19.56 cent kilowatts per hour, we had to bring that down to 16.4 kilowatts per hour, we have to save Sierra Leone **\$19 Million** for two years. Now there is Abu-Dhabi, the World Bank and DFID are coming in, because they are seeing this Government as a responsible Government, they want to help us to capacitate the electricity system in this country *[Applause]*. As I speak to you in this year's Budget, Government is going to spend **\$10.2bln** at a counterpart funding to all this International Funding, to make sure that every little part of this country enjoy electricity.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Member, it is in the Budget that Six Districts Head Quarter Towns are going to be electrified, I had from my colleague on the other side yesterday, pleading with us, to think about kabala, don't worry, kabala is surely going to be electrified, we are not electrifying kabala, because we want their votes, we are electrifying kabala because we think that they are Sierra Leoneans and they are supposed to benefit from the national basket. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, another thing people are worried of, is the talk about blotted Wage Bill. If you go through this Budget, and do your calculations very well for the Primary school pupils, you will know that there is no blotted Wage Bill.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I can understand, what the opposition is always interested in, is condemning the Ruling Government. When we don't create employment, they are the same people that would say look; you supported those people now they cannot provide for you.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me just play with figures a little here, in 2019, the salaries were **Le2.59 Tln**, this year is **Le 3.17 Tln**, the difference between last year budget Wage Bill and this year is **Le 586.6 Bln**.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let us now look at the 30% increment of Teachers that will be coming into effect in April. The 30% increment is going to cost **Le 107,141,646 Tln**, so we will see how the blotted Wage Bill people are saying is going.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I do not have time; I want you to please spare me time in addressing the economy of this country. It has to be a Triple Track Approach or Multiple Track Approach. I want to grave the indulgence of the Bank of Sierra Leone to double up their effort in taking care of the repatriation.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when we talk of repatriation, it is a situation where 15% of the proceeds of all Mining Companies come back to the Bank of sierra Leone in the form of a Foreign Exchange. When they bring that money, the Bank of Sierra Leone will give them the local currency, then the Foreign Exchange will remain with the Bank of Sierra Leone. Mr Speaker, if the Bank of Sierra Leone will deal with that particular issue quickly, I assure you that after four or five years, we would maximise huge

foreign money reserved at the Bank of Sierra Leone. I want to thank you very much Mr Speaker, for given me this opportunity.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member, for his contribution. Yes, the Honourable Abdul Kargbo.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, whenever I have the opportunity to debate national issues, a special feeling comes on me, I feel elated, I feel ecstatic and I feel euphoric. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am not here to castigate SLPP or to praise APC, I am here to take an introspective look at this document that determines how Sierra Leone will be run 2020.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I began to lose interest in reading the Budget when I noticed that the paragraphs in the budget are utmostly inconsistent. Let me prove this to the House Mr Speaker, I first read paragraph 21. Furthermore, the Mining list agreement inherited have not improved our earnings from the Mining Sectors. It has adversely affected our export performance causing the Leones to depreciate, so meaning this paragraph is alluding to the fact that the depreciation of the Leones is as a result of the reduction in exports.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let us go again to paragraph 33 and see what it says. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the value of export is more than double to **\$ 556.6 Mln** during January to June 2019, from **\$ 234.6 Mln** during the same period in 2018, the sharp increase is accounted for mainly by re-export which decrease to **270.7 Mln** from **13 Mln** over the corresponding period. Another paragraph is saying there was reduction and this paragraph is saying it is double, but let me don't stop there; let me refer you to paragraph 37. The more you listen the more you learn, it says the official exchange rate of the Leones to major international currencies came under pressure during the year, why Listen the reason, this reflects the low level of domestic export as well as speculative behaviour of local market which one of the three paragraph am i to believe, one is saying there is a low level of export, the order one is saying the export double, and the order one is saying other whiles, it is conflicting. Let me tell you what is happening in the budget, when they want information, they go to

different institutions, like NRA, Bank of Sierra Leone and the Ministry of Finance. The three information put together, will be quite different. They should have a proof-reader that ensures that there is Consistency in this very debate. They will say, today is this, tomorrow is that, there is nobody that will read through and agree that the information here is the same. So I felt bad when I read that the budget is not consistent *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me take this House to paragraph 40, for the sake of time I will not read the entire paragraph, let me just read sentences in the paragraph, it says, "The implementation of 2019 budget was however challenged by the need to pay some of the inherited domestic arrears to ensure continuous service delivery in the Strategic Sector. Let me tell you Mr speaker, and Honourable Members, there is no transparency in this payment of Domestic Arrears, nothing was stated in this entire Budget as to how much they have paid Domestic arrears, and let me tell you the reason why they always go to pay domestic arrears, some people will arrange with this Domestic Creditors that, "we are going to pay you, but what is our commission"? They receive kickbacks from it that is why they pay Domestic arrears, to the extent of strangulating the timely payment of salaries. They don't pay salaries on time, but they pay Domestic arrears.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, you would be shocked to know the amount they have paid for Domestic arrears; because they are having their kickbacks, to the extent that those who have been dismissed from work have not been paid *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: Shock me. Shock me now!

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: yes that is it, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: No! I am not shocked by the statement, you said I will be shocked if I knew the figures, so what are the figures?

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: If you what to know the figures, that is why I want the Ministry of Finance to state the figures, they should not be hidden, for transparency and accountability, they should be published. Let them tell us how much they have paid Domestic Creditors, the money is so huge because that is where they will have

kickbacks. It will interest you to note that the vulnerable workers that were sacked not only in Statistics, NATCOM and all other Institutions have not been paid, because there is no kickback in that [*Applause*]. Even the former Government officials up till now, 50% of their benefit have not been paid because there is no kickback in that. They delay salaries and pay Domestic Creditors, because in salaries you don't have kickbacks, but in paying Domestic Creditors, you have kickbacks, why is the revenue so great and still the Government is struggling to pay salaries?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me go to paragraph 1. It is clearly stated, that out of 216 commitments that were made in 2019, 86% of these promises have either been completed or are on the verge of being completed. When I read this, I smiled. I smile because for you to have been able to complete 86% of 216 commitments which is synonymous to 186 commitments, you must have been able to provide the MDAs with the required funds they needed.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, most of the Heads of MDAs are here, ask them if they received their complete Budget allocation for this year, they didn't and how will somebody would be able to complete his or her work when the available funds are not there. They did not fund the MDAs, but they were paying arrears, because it is out of the arrears that they are making money and they are strangulating the progress of Government by stifling the work of the MDAs which is very negative [*Applause*]. Today, everybody is astonished in the sense that, this Government is very braggadocious of the fact that they have made so much money. Yes! It is true they have collected so much money, but where are those monies going? Is it reflective on the salaries? Most of those monies are going on kickbacks Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is also stated that there have been reduction in the importation of rice, it is correct indeed. The importation has reduced drastically, but Mr Speaker, are we bothered to know the reason why? The reason was not stated, but I will tell you.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is extremely exorbitant and extremely expensive to clear one container at Water Quay as I speak. Most of those who have their rice

don't import it again to Sierra Leone; they find neighbouring countries like Guinea and Liberia, which have Free Ports. So, they will say, why not import our rice in those countries and smuggle them to Sierra Leone, instead of importing them to Sierra Leone. That is one of the reasons; some said it is because people don't consume rice again. The consumption of rice cannot change, the consumption of rice remains the same, but what is happening now is the smuggling of rice, because it is too expensive here and Business people would not make profit when they use our Quay to import rice, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: I know I will be very unpopular, but you have already taken 10 minutes.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Let me roundup Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, some of what we are saying if the Government is patriotic enough, are meant to jealously guide the Government to take Sierra Leone from where it is to where it should be. It is clearly stated and we all saw it in the recent Finance Bill we approved here, that certain people out of personal aggrandisement want to enrich themselves at the expense of the public and the general masses. That is why we are looking at some of these lacunars, and illuminate on them, so that the public knows the best interest for this country.

Mr Speaker, I have said it time without number, if NPPA has made so much gains because of what they are doing, remember I told you here Mr Speaker, that the Ministry of Transport approved **\$7.5 Mlns** for the purchase of fifty buses, and those buses were to be bought in China, and when the procurement was sent to NPPA, they reviewed it and awarded it to Abess who offered **\$4 Mln** and the buses were purchased in Germany. So tell me Mr Speaker, why did the Ministry officials leave the **\$ 4 Mln** and awarded the contract to the **\$ 7.5 Mln?** it is because of kickbacks, and we are saying "Dea gron dry" people are benefiting people are enriching themselves, and that is the more reason why they came with a law in this Parliament. The law is NPPA should not put their hand on any procurement, because they still want the loop holes to be awarding exorbitant contracts to very poor quality. Mr Speaker, I round up.

THE SPEAKER: No! You more than did that, you have made your points and you have eaten into the time allocated to other people, but I know. I now give the Floor to the Honourable Dominic Tshombe.

HON. DOMINIC TSHOMBE: Thank you very much Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am grateful to lend my voice to this great Debate. I want to start by extending my appreciation to His Excellency, through the Ministry of Finance for presenting this 2020 financial year, problem solving budget for Sierra Leone.

THE SPEAKER: After Honourable Tshombe, it is going to be the Honourable Abdul Latif.

HON. DOMINIC TSHOMBE: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this budget is divided into seven clusters and it is a problem solving budget. It encompasses all the concerns of the nation, and therefore, it is responsive and also reflective. Cluster one has to do with Human Capital Development; Cluster two has to do with Diversifying the Economy, cluster three, managing the natural resources; cluster four, has to do with Governance and Accountability, cluster five, Infrastructural Development and Economic Competitiveness, cluster six has to do with Women, Children disability issues, and cluster seven has to do with Vulnerability Building Resilience Environmental and climate management.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to digress a little to respond to some concerns raised by my colleagues on the other side of the aisle. My English Economist mentioned the "Cobb-Douglas production function", it majorly has to do with Labour and Capital, and if we are talking of Economic Growth and by extension Economic Development, then you cannot do that without expanding on the capital and the labour, and particularly the quality of labour in the Economy and all these have budgetary implications. We heard people raising concern on blotted budget.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if we have to talk of Economic growth, it is just like a House, there is no way you compare five rooms and a parlour with the same design or cost with that of two rooms and a parlour. If the Economy have to grow, we need to employ more people, we need to employ more capital, we need to give capacity

building, we need to bring innovation and Technology, but then it has cost implications *[Applause]*. This one has cost implication, that is why the budget is been increased annually, because we want to reach there and we cannot reach there by magic, we have to take into consideration these factors.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, to the area of External Debts, it is just like a household when any investment institutions want to acquire loan facility from either a Commercial Bank, they will ask for your business proposal, in that business proposal, they may want to see the viability of the investment. Therefore, there is nothing wrong in acquiring loan, but the problem in Economics with the acquisition of loan is the purpose for which the loan intends to be used. In our Government, most of the loans are not used for infrastructural development in terms of building, they are directed towards Agriculture, and they are directed towards improving road infrastructure, electricity and water supply. These create viable investment environment that will boost Economic Growth and also Economic Development *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I know when I contribute, Economists do support, because I talk from a rational point of view. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we cannot mention battered Economy in this budget, because at the time Austerity was declared when you look at business circle, we were at the trough. But when we came in robustly, within one year we had to move and we are at recovery stage, so we cannot mention battered Economy. We have already recovered the battered situation of the Economy, and we are now building on it. Now if you can go to paragraph *[31]*, it can tell you that in 2017, the GDP growth rate was 3.8%, 2018, because of the situation within the first quarter, it sharply dropped to 3.7%, but in 2019, it increased to 4.5%, we are at recovery stage projecting for above 5% and therefore, we cannot mention battered Economy in this budget.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when we look at the Global Economic analysis, considering the Sub Saharan, their growth rate is 3.2%, whereas Sierra Leone is 4.5% projected. And in 2020, Sierra Leone have projected to 5.1%, Sub Saharan 3.6% and global 3.4% which is to say by projection, we are even moving at an increase rate compared to that of the Global growth rate and that of the Sub Saharan growth rate.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, cluster [2] it is very important, based on His Excellency's, campaign message and presentation in the Well of Parliament, which have to do with Economic Diversification. We don't want to have a Government that could have an Economic shock whether natural or otherwise. We don't want a Government wherein when one aspect is been short, it leads to austerity. We don't want when they ask the Minister of Agriculture, what have you presented? He will say we have Free Education. We don't want when they ask the Minister of Fisheries, what have you done? He will say there is Free Education. We have tried to expand the Economy. We are not concentrating the sources of finance to our Economy or to only one source, that is why His Excellency, has laid emphasise on the Ministry of Agriculture. The Ministry of Fisheries, that of Tourism and Trade and Services, so that we can use this different Ministries to generate income, such that even if there is natural shock at the Mining area, we can still recover and not resort to Austerity.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, cluster [5] is talking of infrastructural development, which is electricity, water supply and improved roads. These are the fundamental requirements for Economic rebound, because if you want to establish any investment industry, you need electricity, you need good road network and you need water. We are laying the bases so that we can attract foreign investors.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, before I conclude, I want to justify in summary how does this budget respond really to the needs of the people, it is creating jobs whether you say it is mania or not, it is creating jobs so that we have many people who will be able to feed themselves, not that they will be in luxuries, but they will be able to meet the basic necessities of their lives. We will get there, but it has to do with a process, it involves Human Capital Development, which results like somebody said yesterday, is the medium of future term, it has to improve the standard of living.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me look at the Economy now from Economic lens. Madam Minister, our economy is the concern of the nation; it is hinge on three major variables, which has to do with Inflation, the Exchange Rate and the Huge Wage Bill. Madam Minister, the inflation that is eating us up is that of imported and cost push inflation. This is because the resources they use for production even including our

consumables are been imported, and we know that these tariffs are what we call indirect cost. When the investors import these products at increase tariff rates, they will transfer this cost burden to the final consumers in the form of increase prices and therefore, we need to work on it. In Economics, we have what we call sterilisation method. It is a quick fixed method which we can use to reduce the price of even that of the basic commodities in the Economy; we need to go further, we don't want to continue giving excuses to people onto 2023. We need to go to our drawing table to find a quick fix sterilisation method to find solution to the bread and butter issue.

Next is the Exchange Rate, my brother mentioned of one aspect, and I have to talk of the capital flight. Mr Speaker, I want to draw your attention that we have people working in this country who are using foreign currencies for domestic services abroad, and if you are exporting foreign currencies abroad not on investment, but on consumption, it is negative to our currency exchange, and finally on the Wage Bill.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, like somebody mentioned, there is a very large income inequality in this country, and last year we were talking of wage harmonisation. Mr Speaker, like somebody correctly mentioned, I want to bring to your attention the average salary of a worker under Government is below **Le2.2 Mln**, but we have huge number of people working under Government, their salaries are below **Le1.5 Mln** per month, and we have few others like somebody mentioned, whose salaries are above **Le 45 Mln**. So it will be difficult to deal with Wage Bill even in the area of creating unemployment, we must go back to look into Wages harmonisation. On that note, as I conclude Mr Speaker and Honourable Members, I want to join the Minister, referring to paragraph 221 to describe this budget as been Deliberate, Specific and Targeted, which is sufficient in impacting Incomes, Human Development and Social Security. Thank you very much sir.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member. I was really tempted to praise him at one point when he was just about six minutes; he gave me the impression that he was going to conclude. I now call on the Honourable Abdul Latif, and he will be followed by Honourable Musa Moigua, who in turn will be followed by the Honourable Cathrine Tarawally.

HON. ABDUL L. SESAY: Thank you very much Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is our duty as Members of Parliament to look through the document that is presented to us by the Minister of Finance. Mr Speaker, having gone through the budget, I found out that it is a bogus one, because when you take into consideration the current inflation rate Mr Speaker, that will tell you that our money is not of value anymore.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I just want to draw the minds of Honourable colleagues to the area of the aged. Mr Speaker, having gone through the document, I noticed that in Sierra Leone we are all focusing on youths, but we don't consider the aged and I believe one way or the other, most of us will have to graduate to that level. When you look at what we have here, they are only talking about pension, how about Pa Santigue who is at Romankneh, he never worked for Government, never worked for any institution, how is that man going to live the rest of his life Mr Speaker? I believe there should be schemes, there should be programmes to enrol elders into, so that come tomorrow they will continue surviving.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we are always talking about Youth and Military farms, we should as well be thinking of having farms for the aged. In Sierra Leone, at 65 years of age you are retired, so meaning, you would have to continue the rest of your life doing nothing absolutely, and to be honest with you Mr Speaker, I believe that one we need to look into it because they can contribute again even after retirement, we can invest into mechanise farming, they could as well contribute immensely to the development of our economy Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when you look at the way our population is growing, sooner or later; we will start experiencing aging population not for anything, because our young people nowadays don't want to produce more people. They can produce three maximum. Whilst in those days, one chief will produce thirty, forty kids, so it means Mr Speaker; we have to focus on having a very good platform for the aged.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me go to the Treasury Single Account [TSA]. It is very good to have a Treasury Single Account, meaning you will have institutions depositing their monies into that account. Mr Speaker, looking at the document, they

said they want to expand it to other areas. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, already institutions that are part of the TSA are experiencing difficulties, most times when you go to these Ministries Departments and Agencies [MDAs], they will tell you, we are in third quarter, and we have only received money for the first quarter and extending it again to other institutions sooner or later, we would be having empty institutions doing nothing absolutely. Mr Speaker, we have to look at the problems first, try to rectify those problems, before bringing in more institutions, or else we will have starving institutions in this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank the President for the 30% increment for the Teachers and Nurses, though the money is meagre, I mean it is almost insignificant, because someone receiving Le 1,000,000 will now be receiving Le 1,300,000. When you look at the current situation in the country Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, that amount increased to Teachers honestly Mr Speaker is not even enough to pay their transportations.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, looking at the Minimum Wage Bill, there is an increase from Le 500,000 to Le 600,000 [*five hundred thousand to six hundred thousand Leones*] Mr Speaker. I was expecting Government or the Ministry Finance to peg the Wage Bill on the dollar. It means, the minimum wage should be one Million Leones at least. We are having majority of our citizens under this bracket, we have Low income earners, Medium income earners and the higher earners. When you compare them, you will know that we have low income earners compared to the other bracket. Mr Speaker, I believe the Le 100,000 is very small, and in fact most people look at the way other Private Institutions are misusing them, like the Chinese, the construction Companies, they work till night without receiving any additional money as overtime, they are paid just a single amount. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am urging the Ministry to look at this Minimum wage; Le 600,000 is not enough Mr Speaker, and Honourable Members.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I think the Ministry of Agriculture should try to partner with Parliament, to ensure that we all succeed in this food Self-Sufficiency.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we are 146, but for now, we are 145 Members of Parliament, all of us are from constituencies, that means if only the Ministry of Agriculture is very serious, they can provide Machines for us and give us targets. Let us say three hundred acres, per a Member of Parliament, that means we are going to have 43,000,800 hectare. 43,000, 800 acres worth of farm rice means, one or two years is enough for us to drive away hunger. MPs are underutilised, and we have three main functions. That is to make Law, represent our people and perform oversights. Liberia and other countries have Agricultural breaks, they give some amount of money to the MPs to go to their constituencies and farm.

Mr Speaker, I think it is high time we started thinking in that direction. I thank you very much Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Abdul Latif Sesay; he came very close to respecting the time. My next speaker is Honourable Musa P. Moigua, followed by Honourable Catherine Zainab Tarawally.

HON. MUSA P. MOIGUA: Thank you Mr Speaker, for given me the opportunity to add my voice to the 2020 budget. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when Government and the people of this country elect people to positions of trust, I think the President and the party have the responsibility to cater for the citizens of this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, When you look at the manifesto of the SLPP and the President, Julius Maada Bio, it has five pillars. The five pillars are directly in contact with the budget speech of the Minister of Finance. The Minister of Finance has nine clusters. When you look at those clusters comparing to the manifesto, you will find out that this Government is consistent of what they have promised this nation. I want to thank the team at the Ministry of Finance, the Minister and all the members of the Ministry that they have done a very good job in bringing to us a Budget that speaks for the citizens of this country, and a budget that caters for the grass root.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I think that is the right thing they have done and from what they have done, looking at the trend or the Strategy paper they have presented to us for 2018 to 2022, you will find out that this nation will be moving up to

other nations that have developed. Mr Speaker, I will not be talking on the narrative of the 2020 budget. I will go straight to the actual budget profile, because when you want to analysis budget, it is not just about talking or people making political statements. I am giving my own presentation in a very professional way; I will go straight to the budget profile. When you go to the annexes of the budget profile, in any budgets of a nation when you look at the PFM Act 23 [1C], you will find out that the structure of the budget is the revenue, the expenditure, the depth and the deficit. And this is excitedly what this Government is addressing. When you look at the 2020 budget, you will find out that the fifth pillar in our Manifesto is Financing in the "New Direction". It is well said in that manifesto, that we will give reliability to the revenue and increase the revenue of this nation. We also control and reduce expenditure and try to reduce the deficit of our nation, which is excitedly what this budget is addressing. The Domestic Revenue GDP is in a progressive straight line up words movement, when you look at the projection, it moves form 13.7% in 2018, by the time we reach at the strategy paper 2022, it will be 15.9% and that shows we are in line with the ECOWAS Protocol of Revenue GDP. The expenditure document before us is saying that from 2018, the expenditure was 14.7% and by the time we reach 2022, you will find out that the expenditure range will go down to 13.8%, which shows this Government is responsible and is trying to reduce the expenditure. When you go to the total deficit, the total deficit excludes grants, if you want verification, just go to the annexes of the budget profile; you will see the analyses there. In 2018, we have a minus of 7.4% and by the time we will reach 2022, we have a minus of 4.3%, this one is a deficit excluding grants, but including grants you will find out that you will have 5.3% and by the time we will reach 2022, it will reduce to 2.1% of the GDP, that shows that this Government is working towards his Manifesto. I am stressing on the manifestos, because this was the document we used for people to Vote for us and any deviation from it, I think the people will hold us accountable. So if you have a team that has a vision relating or translating their Manifesto into physical policy, I think that Government is a very good Government. Look at the total Financing, it will reduce from 5.9% 2018, to 3.1% in 2022, and it is interesting to know that the Foreign and Domestic Financing is taking

the same strength, instead of given us an upward slop, it is coming down, because when a Government is responsible, it cannot continue to rely on grants and other things, it raise its own revenue and that is exactly what this Government is doing.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, to show the justification that indeed this budget is bread and butter budget; there are certain issues that the budget document has clearly stated, looking at page 33, 173 to 178 of the Strategy Paper. You will find out that on page 33, the analysis here clearly shows that this budget is a bread and butter budget, looking at the Wage Bill. I am not over emphasising on what they have said, but the reason behind the Wage Bill is good, so we do not need to have people with only head knowledge who claim to be educated, but we need to have people with heart knowledge, ready to work for this country; people who will give all their vagues in moving this nation for the best. When people were analysing the Wage Bill, they were not taking to the fact that there were other issues that have been included in this Wage Bill.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if the Wage Bill has increased, go also to the other budgets in 2018 and 2019, you will find out that the subvention for this year is reduced, because this Government has taken care of the payment of Tertiary Institutions. So you cannot expect the Wage Bill to be down, it is not the quantum of money you need to look at the GDP contribution to the budget, there is slight movement of the GDP in the Wage Bill. The Government is not doing badly at all; because Government has reduced the Corporation Tax from 30% to 25%, reduced the unemployment rate, encourage investors, so people will work and when people work, that is a burden that is not only benefiting those who are directly involved in the job. But you also need to look at the indirect beneficiaries. The Minimum Wage is another very sensible wage.

THE SPEAKER: Wind up please! Wind up please!

HON. MOIGUA P. MUSA: Okay, if I am winding up Mr Speaker, I will leave all of these areas that are talking about bread and butter business, but more specifically to the Local Councils. We are addressing the preventive areas of the ACC, because if ACC wants to be serious in fighting corruption, then we need to address the area of Local

Councils. It is the first time in this country that this Government is taking care of the Salaries of Mayors and Chairmen. If these people are not on salaries and they are giving Billions of Leones to manage, then we are encouraging corruption. But the preventive ways of that is what this Government has done by increasing the chancellors' Allowances and Transportations. I will go straight to my own constituency on Water and Sanitation. When you look at the budget for Sierra Leone Water Company [SALWACO], I want to advice that SALWACO's budget is not enough for the issues that they have to address. I have a burning issue in my constituency about SALWACO investing over **\$3 Mln** into a water project and this project has been there for the past 6 six years. The Machines are still there, and the project's name is "Blama Bandawa" Water Project. I want to appeal to the Minister of Finance, that there is a Motion in the House that the Ministry of Finance should try to pay the arrears of the contractor, so that over 28 thousand people who voted for this Government will benefit from that water project.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, because of time constrains, I will stop here with my contribution, but more emphasis will be laid, because in 2019, I saw nothing about this Water Project, and for 2020, I have not seen anything about it and Government has invested so much, over **\$3 Mln** and the work is about 80% complete. So the Minister of Finance by the time the Bill or the Motion that is in this House reaches you. I would have written a document to you, to please pay this amount so that these people would benefit from this Water Project. Thank you!

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member for his contribution; I will now call on the Honourable Catherine Z. Tarawally.

HON. CATHERINE Z. TARAWALLY: Thank you very much Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: After her contribution, we will begin the process of winding up the debate.

HON. CATHERINE Z. TARAWALLY: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, thank you for allowing me to send my voice into the 2020 budget. I want to say a very big thanks you

to all Staffs of the Ministry of Finance and the Budget Bureau for putting together this budget that we are here talking about and looking into.

Mr Speaker, I want to start with the Ministry of Health, early on my colleague made mention of the Red Cross Society. I want to pay more attention into the Red Cross Society, because it is a turning issue for us law makers. Mr Speaker, please lend me your ears. In 2012, Mr Speaker, we passed a law in this House, Section 5 of the Law, Mr Speaker, please listen, because I will send a Motion at the end of my debate, for us to take this budget back to the Ministry of Finance.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Madam, go ahead!

HON. CATHERINE Z. TARAWALLY: Thank you Mr Speaker. The reason why I am calling on your attention is, because you are the Speaker and you are a learned man. In the House of Law, we make the Law, we protect the Law, we guide the Law and should make sure the Law works. In 2012, we passed a Law called, the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society Act, of 2012. In the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society Act, of 2012, Section 5, 1 and 2, I want you to please pay attention to it. It says, "The Society shall continue with your permission, to be recognised by the Government of Sierra Leone as a Voluntary Aid Society, Auxiliary to the Public Authorities, for the purpose of the convention and the additional protocols", and Section 2 says, "the Government shall provide subvention to the Society".

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, are we really serious as a Parliament, and if we are not serious, I am putting a question to Madam Minister.

Madam Minister, I want to know if there is any provision for the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society, and can you please tell us the Section, the Paragraph, and even the breakdown of the budget and estimate for us to know? Because if we don't know, it makes no sense for us to sit here and discuss this Budget, it is because we are not serious, if we are serious when we make a Law we are making Law not just for us. It is for the good of our children's children. We are making Laws for people outside Sierra Leone to see us as people that are very serious. And it seems we are not serious as a Parliament and for that reason Mr Speaker, I am sending a Motion, it is my intent for us to take it back

to the Finance, they should capture something. Whether we go to the review, or we take this Budget back to the Ministry of Finance. We should be a serious Parliament, we are not here just to make Laws, but to make Laws that are very important and we are here to protect the Laws. I want you to have that in your white and black paper, so that you will consider or do something relevant for the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am moving to paragraph 45.

Suspension of S. O. 5[2]

HON. CATHERINE Z. TARAWALLY: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in paragraph 45 the Minister says, "let me read the overall deficit including grants for January to September estimated **Le 1.6 Tln** deficits". We have Accountants and Economics here, the word deficit, in my own sense and in my own knowing, is the difference between Revenue and Expenditure that is what I know. If you say it is the difference between Revenue and Expenditure, if we go down again, the Minister says, **Le 1.6Tln**, which is 4.2% of the GDP, and again including grants Mr Speaker. Madam Minister, please my question now is, go down and see if I am wrong or I am correct. What should be the correct word? "including or excluding", what will be the correct word? I want to know. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, that is my question to Madam Minister, because the reason is, if they are saying including again, my question now is we have **Le 756.8Bln** where are we expecting to get that money?

HON. LAHAI MARAH: Point of Order Mr Speaker! Point of order! I stand on S.O.34. The Honourable from Bombali just sited an error within the budget, we have including grants and excluding grants again. That particular sentence needs to be corrected; it is very serious Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Do you need to amplify it?

HON. LAHAI MARAH: Yes sir, I need to, because we want to correct it before we proceed.

THE SPEAKER: No! The Honourable Minister will have the occasion to respond to all the concerns and questions raised. No Sir! Please don't delay the debate, if you don't mind, allow the Lady to continue.

HON. LAHAI MARAH: Okay Mr Speaker, is it true that there is an error within the budget?

THE SPEAKER: It does not need amplification, the Lady has pointed out what she needed to point out and is been taken note of, you don't need to point it out again. Honourable Lahai Marah, please take your sit! Madam Tarawally, continue!

HON. CATHERINE Z. TARAWALLY: Are we discussing 2017, or we are discussing the 2020 budget? No! Honourable Bashiru Silikie, don't take us back, we are not here to discuss 2017, but 2020. Are we accepting or are we denying our own work? No! It is wrong. You can't do that Honourable Bashiru Silikie, it is wrong.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: That is the same sentence Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Do you want me to send both of you out? You are disturbing the debate, both of you. Madam, continue.

HON. CATHERINE Z. TARAWALLY: Thank you very much Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: And please, Madam Tarawally does not need an amplifier.

HON. CATHERINE Z. TARAWALLY: please leave me in peace, and that is it. Mr Speaker, this is a very big error and I want the Minister in her response to clearly tell this particular House what should be the wording in that particular paragraph. And my question for that particular one Mr Speaker, I read with your leave, I am asking Madam Minister, we have **Le756.8Bln**, where are we expecting to either articulate or to get this money form, for us to give other MDAs? Are we still expecting to get more loans or are we making it from our GDP?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, paragraph 27 of the 2019 budget, talks about what we call Revenue Projected of **Le 4.45Tln** from the Minister. And at the end of the day in paragraph 21, of the 2020 budget, Mr Jacob J. Saffa, Minister of Finance told us, that

we have **4.1** as of that date, so where are we expecting to have the remaining Madam Minister? We are talking about 2018, and now we are in the 2019/ 2020 budget revenue, so where are we expecting to get that? And my brother Honourable Hindolo M. Gevao made mention of the water system.

Madam Minister, we are all Sierra Leoneans, and we are based in Freetown, we visit our constituencies maybe on weekly bases or weekends. Our people are dying for water. In Freetown, for the past four days, we in Goodrich, Funkia, don't have water and we are projecting here in the 2020 budget, paragraph 213, where the Minister is saying, we are expecting **Le6.0 Bln** in addition **Le 3 Bln** to SALWACO and Guma Valley. Are we really serious to have water? Are we serious to help our people with Water, Which is one major source for them? Most of our people live on Water. We are suffering as Sierra Leoneans, the Tree City Project in Makeni, Bo and Kenema is dying out as we speak, we are still experiencing some rains, but most of the pumps are locked in the regions. Are we really serious as a Government? I am not seeing the seriousness of the Ministry of Finance of paying key attention. In the 2019 budget, you made mention of an estimated budget of **Le76.9Bln**, but now, you have drastically reduced that one, are we serious? And if we are serious, Let us put more emphasis on what is the living condition of our people. Thank you very much Mr Speaker, because of time *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member and I thank her most especially, for sticking into the time, thank you; I hope others will copy her fine example. I will now give the floor to Honourable Foday M. kamara!

HON. FODAY M. KAMARA: Thank you Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am glad to have be given this opportunity which I narrowly missed to participate in this Budget debate. Mr Speaker, our job is a very argues one as Members of Parliament, it is very difficult. That is why for a debate of this nature, some people are forced to praise whiles others are obliged to reject. But on the whole, I want to appreciate the work of the Ministry of Finance, I want to say that this literature, the Budget, for me I call it a piece of literature, is very laudable, it is commendable. I wonder what the people who wrote this Budget are thinking now, would there be problems? Would it be accepted? Would our inadequacies, be seen by these

Parliamentarians? Yes Mr Speaker, for me, I have a very different view from what most of the Honourable members have said, since the beginning of this debate. Yesterday the Honourable Member, from Kono suggested that normally, it is befitting that we have the Committees on Supplies before the Budget. People didn't even know why he said so; I picked it up, and to me it is very reasonable that we see what was allocated for last year, what was disbursed and what actually happened before approving a new budget. Because what I see is, we have people who are intelligent who can write, but all the figures I see here Mr Speaker, are nothing, as far as I am concern. I will give you just one example; if we have done our Jobs as Members of Parliament, correct oversight before this Budget, we would not have been here today. I will take just the Ministry of Agriculture, last year 2019; I have the document here Mr Speaker. He said, "Reflecting the Commitment to reduce our dependences on food import especially for rice". Government is allocating **Le 294.1 Bln**, which is just part of it. You have a lot of other amount stated in this document for 2019. Now when you come to think of it, Billions are allocated to the Ministry of Agriculture.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, you would be surprise to know that by October 2019, the Ministry of Agriculture has just receive a projection of 10% of all that was allocated last year to them. 10% is a very big fail mark, whether projection, estimate or whatever. Now that is why, the Ministry of Agriculture has not been able to do anything. And that frightens me, Madam Minister. I am very much afraid, because for the 2020 Budget, in the diversification of the Economy, the first point they took here is Agriculture. Now if we take Agriculture to diversify the Economy, but we are not serious about Agriculture, so I don't know where the Country is going. The country will be like the "trendy in the Grapy songs catching the sheep is sinking". When you have Billions and you approve a small amount of 10% in October, where are we going?

Mr Speaker, what I have seen in this 2 years is that we have people who can write, who can give figures that are not checked, just to impress the public and the International Community. So all these amounts we have here I not true, they are fake amounts. Now in this 2019 budget, Mr Speaker, there were allocations for Tractors, but not a single Tractor has come to this Country to date. It is possible, it is possible; The

Government brings in Tractors later after this speech perhaps today. But take the time of the budget from January 2019 to date, this is November, not a single Tractor, as I speak, not a single Tractor has come into the country. Mr Speaker, the same thing happened for the Buses *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: Are you really sure about that?

HON. FODAY M. KAMARA: Mr Speaker, you want me to lose part of my time. Mr Speaker, I have been doing my work probably as Deputy Chairman for Agriculture, I have followed that Department *[Applause]*. I see that Government is strangulating that Ministry. When you take into consideration what has been allocated this year to that Ministry, they say it is the priority, the number one for the diversification of the Economy; I see that our Economy is zero. This Year we have **Le348.8 Bln.** Now this Government is crying laud for Human Capital Deployment, where will the money come from? Look at the Ministry of Agriculture for example, their own policy, what did they do for the whole of 2018 and 2019? They centralised fertilizer in Freetown, centralised food for work in Freetown. How can the Freetown people know who has a farm and who does not have a farm in the provinces Mr Speaker?

THE SPEAKER: You were actually not on my list.

HON. FODAY M. KAMARA: I know Mr Speaker; I beg for that, but please for that matter, please give me more time. Now what we are here to sanitise the Economy, we know that already for Agriculture, we have 2 years deficit; for 2 years, we don't have fertilizer, we don't have Tractors and we say it is the key activity in the diversification, where do we think we are going Mr Speaker?

THE SPEAKER: Will you wind up please? Wind up now!

HON. FODAY M. KAMARA: Ok, to wind up Mr Speaker, I want to advice this Government, because what they expect to get from Agriculture they will not get, so let us do the following things:

i. Let us reduce reckless spending Mr Speaker. The number of people we send on delegations are too much. We have large number going out of this country, whether

delegations are National or International; let us reduce on the number of people we send to represent us Mr Speaker;

ii. Mr Speaker, I know it is necessary to go along with Private Sectors and now we are conducting almost all our workshops in Hostels, it is true. Let us reduce on the number of workshops we conduct in Hostels. There are Ministries that have conference rooms, like the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; we have been there, so let us use some of these rooms. It is not all the workshops will go to Hotels;

iii. Mr Speaker, let us Nationalise the Youth Service. Mr Speaker, for Kambia District, it is just a single person that was selected for the youth Leadership. I don't know where we are going, single handily he appointed all. Let me shock you Mr Speaker, what they did was to come together to say, this people want to bring us down let us come together, so the youths now decided to come together. His whole intention will not work in our district.

THE SPEAKER: And with that, Honourable Mario, and with that!

HON. FODAY M. KAMARA: Mr Speaker, Yes I am rounding up, most importantly, this Government should stop bursting for what Government is doing, the money is ours, and it is Sierra Leonean money. They are not taking this money from elsewhere, it is our money, whatever we doing, it is our business, let us don't say we can do this, when we cannot. We have seen it even with the Free Education. We say we can feed the children, in the end, we use other institutions. Thank you Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: I will now recognise Honourable Paramount Chief, Sahr Y. k. Mbriwa II

HON. P.C. SAHR YOUNGAI K. BRIWA II: Thank you Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is a big pleasure and opportunity for me, to have the opportunity to contribute to this debate. In spite of all apprehensions put against us, but we are here, representing our people as well. We are not representing any political party. So you should not expect me to represent your interest. I am representing the people of Sierra Leone.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I like to begin my debate by thanking the Ministry of Finance, for putting together this comprehensive document in the form of Budget for 2020. What I discovered in the document reflects the view and aspirations of the people of Sierra Leone. So, we want to thank the Minister for that. We also want to thank the Government for the effort it has made on some of the promises the President, made in this Well. We discovered that out of the 216 commitments the Government made to the People of this country; they have delivered 86% of it, which is very significant *[Applause]*. In all these activities, what is important more is not always the success, but the effort. We should learn to reward efforts. We also appreciate in good faith the Commitment the Government has undertaken again, to sustain the positive gains they have made for the past year and they are also commitment to making stability in our Economy, restore physical discipline and to create enabling Environment for suitable growth of our Economy. All of these we are looking forward to keenly, because it is our concern and it will make impact on lives of our people. We will like to take special note on some significant achievements the Government has achieved:

i. They told us from the Budget that some programs before they came to power, in this Country have been derailed, but now they have been restored, that one is significant for the people of Sierra Leone, they have done that by implementing tough policies of which we are all witnesses *[Applause]*.

ii. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, they have also informed us that, they have at least implemented the performance criteria established and they are also implementing some of the structural benchmarks by wish this Country and the Government is going to be accessed by our donors and other interested parties, all of these things are very important and they are very significant.

iii. We also learnt from the Budget speech, that they have been able to mobilise **\$613Mln** from external sources, what does that indicate? It means, confidence is slowly being restored in our Governance and in our Leadership; this is very significant for the Country.

iv. They also reported that the Domestic Revenue collection has improved as well, from **12.2%** in 2016, to **13.7%** in 2018, that one is very significant as well.

v. The new development they have also introduced in the budget is the Medium Term National Development Plan, which also according to them, all you will find in that reflects the views and the aspirations of the people of this Country. Our concern about this particular Development [*the Medium Term National Plan*], as Chiefs, is the strategy. We are not totally clear and satisfied about the strategy they will use to implement the Medium Term National Plan. The plan is not coming with any new strategy; instead we have discovered that it is the same old traditional strategy they are using to develop our country. Meaning, like the Budget we are looking at, it is centred and focused on MDAs, Sectors and institutions, instead of the people. We are advocating that the Budget should be for the development of this country. We will like the Minister to take note of this! Our development should be Community Centred, because the impact of that is very significant and it will be clear for everybody to see, like the model, the previous Administration used. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, you can criticize the past Administration for what they did, but the development model they applied or introduced, I think it was sustainable and the impact was very great. For example, if you go down to Makeni, you will discover that the people of Makeni have owned up the development of their community simply, because development was centred on the people. So this type of development I think is recommendable and the impact of it can be very significant and is important for this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we are also concerned about the Human Capital Development, that the Government has undertaken. The Capital Development of course has to do with Education and Health, but I am speaking to the Education; that's the Free Quality Education. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, for the Free Quality Education, they told us that they are investing in the development of our children and in our future. The implication is that, the Education the Government is focusing on currently is just on Child Education. Child education is important, we agree! But then you will realise that the policy has left out whole generations of people in this country. For instance, when you take the percentage of illiteracy in this country; if you say it is

67%, it means they are in the majority in this country. So if you design a programme just to focus on children and you leave 67% of the population out it means, you are creating a big gap and that will not be effective for our development, because any effective and sustainable development requires some solid foundation for Education. So in that case, we would like to see in this Medium Term National Development Programme, that the development projects you are designing, be people centred as well. Let us centre our development also on the people, because we want to free them from hunger, ignorance and disease.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if we do not centre our development on the people, it will not be effective and sustainable. So with that, we would suggest that the Ministry thinks about coming up with a new strategy in addition to the old ones that they have been using. Let them develop a model of development in this country by targeting in addition to what they already have in special Communities. When you move around the country, especially some of us who have worked for NGOs, we have seen abject poverty in most of our Communities. So you can see that development is not even reflecting on the lives of the majority of people in this country. Mr Speaker, we would like to see some model that will target some communities in addition to the general development you will be taken to the people. We want to see model Regions, model Communities coming up; where they have all the facilities and you can actually see the impact of the development on the lives of the people as we are seeing in Makeni. In Makeni, you can see that the people are really motivated to take ownership of their own development; we made several stop overs in Makeni and we saw how the people are very particular about their development. So, once the pace has been set, the people can own up the development and carry it forward. Mr Speaker, I suggest to the Minister to please think of crafting a way in our development plan as to how we can set up Regions and concentrate on them. If we say we are going to do the Northern Province; Koinadugu District for example, do it thoroughly. You can't talk of tourism in this country without talking of Koinadugu District. Koinadugu District has several facilities that we would need to develop for us to implement the Tourism we are talking about in this budget.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there are several issues that we need to look at; the Relics and the Heritage of our country. You cannot really implement Tourism without the development of these things. So with that, I say thanks to Mr Speaker and thanks to all of you *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Paramount Chief for his contribution to the debate. Now is Honourable Bashiru Silikie, followed by the Honourable Acting Leader of the Opposition.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Thank you very much Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to begin by thanking the Minister for graciously delivering this Budget to this Parliament. This is the Bread and Butter Budget; this Budget is going to move this country to another level. From the theme of the Budget, it is clear that this Budget is going to stand the test of time and by extension, this Budget is going to change the livelihood of the people of this Republic.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Fiscal Consolidation of Human Capital Development and Job Creation. Mr Speaker, this Budget is talking about the Human Development Index. There is no way this country can move forward without developing the capacities and abilities of the humans of this country. Mr Speaker, let us begin with Education.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the only legacy we can leave as Members of Parliament and as a Government, is for us to educate the human resource of this country. Whatever we do, whatever budget we make, whatever funding we get, if we don't have successors of Government, if we don't have people who have the capacity to run their own Communities, if we don't have people who can manage after us, Sierra Leone is in doom. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank the Minister for restoring our dignity in the International Community. Before now, it is clear that we had lost face with the IMF and other Donor Agencies. Thank you very much the Ministry Finance for making us proud and making other Donor Partners to have confidence in us and wanting to do business with us.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let us go to Education, paragraph 8 of the Budget. Mr Speaker, with your leave I read; "Human Capital Development which lays the

foundation towards achieving Middle Income Countries Status by 2039". Mr Speaker that is just what we need! The Middle Income is very low, we don't even have a Middle Income now; it is either you are rich or you are poor. That is why we are under pressure; the few people that have jobs are under pressure. What we want to do is to educate the public; we make sure you have the correct capacity so that you can fend for yourself. You don't need to rely on Government; look at the things we are putting in place for education. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have paid Examination Fees for NPSE, BECE and WASSCE pupils. We have provided Text Books, Teaching and Learning Materials to schools. Look at paragraph 8; we have paid Tuition Fees for all children in Government Owned and Government Assisted Schools. We have commenced the School Feeding programmes in selected Districts, provided School Buses, operationalise the Teaching Service Commission, we have revamped the defunct Technical Vocational and Educational Training, we have now launched the education change of the human capital index. What else do we need? If all of these are achieved, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Sierra Leone will become a paradise. If we achieve that, Members of Parliament will continuously be in this Well, if we achieve that, I don't think if any MP will be kicked out after 2023, because when we achieve that, the pressures will be reduced on Members of Parliament, people will begin to cater for themselves and Sierra Leone will move forward.

Mr Speaker Honourable Members, in the history of Sierra Leone for the last ten to fifteen years, nothing can be said about Football. Madam Minister, please extend my regards to the Ministry. We saw in barely six months when we came, we now saw the employment in the area of Football. We saw footballers now being employed, Coaches being employed, we now see battling stars; huge employment was created in the area of football , thank you very much. These are all job creation, please continue to do more. You have promised us that you are going to bring us Micro Credits and Micro Finance! That is all geared towards creating job for the people. We are going to provide Micro Finance for **20,000** people and 70% of that Micro Finance will be given to women. Thank you very much Madam Minister, do more! The things you are doing are the things that will keep those people into permanent opposition.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, my only advice to you the Ministry is, please don't use the NGOs; go back to our SMEs, there is an organisation created- SME Development Agency. They should be empowered! Please when you bring this Micro Credit, when the women are now capacitated, when the women now begin to provide food for themselves, I believe these guys will be where they are forever *[undertone]*. Not in our live time! With this budget, you will not come; you will remain where you are.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Ministry is talking about Chiefdom Youth Farms. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Chiefdom Youth Farm is not just about job creation, is food creation too. When you provide Chiefdom youth farms, when you provide Military Farms, the reduction in the importation of rice will be reduced drastically. Please support this Budget. This is the Budget that will deliver this Republic. We are not going to build roads for kickbacks; we are developing the capacity of the humans. Madam Minister, please make sure that these youth farms are non-political.

THE SPEAKER: I thought you going to advocate for more time for your leader.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Thank you very much Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when we talk about Teachers; my brother was saying that the Teachers are the least paid, I disagree to that. The Minimum Salary in this country is **Le 600,000**. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, according to this Budget, the Teachers' salaries are going to be increased by 30%. What else do you want?

HON. LAHAI MARAH: Point of order! Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Are you being misrepresented?

HON. LAHAI MARAH: Mr Speaker, I stand on 33 *[1b]*.

THE SPEAKER: ok, what does it say?

HON. LAHAI MARAH: Mr Speaker, 33 *[1b]*.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: What does it say? What does it say?

HON. LAHAI MARAH: Allow me! Mr Speaker, the Honourable Member just mentioned my name directly about the Teachers. When I was making that particular presentation, I made reference to the Honourable Member; the Leader in the making actually

misrepresented me by quoting me wrongly concerning the Teachers. During that deliberation Mr Speaker, I made reference to annex 6, Page Roman 42 and there are figures considering 675 Teachers compared to 34 Judges getting the same salaries.

THE SPEAKER: You have elucidated your point, take your seat. Yes continue!

HON BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank the Ministry of Finance for considering the increase of Teachers. Of course, that is the biggest domain, when you improve on that, we now know we are gearing towards Quality Education. We have now achieved the 'Free'; we have more enrolment into schools, thank you very much. We are now paying school fees for pupils, thank you very much. When we increase the salaries of Teachers, let me tell you what we would achieve; at the end of the day, we would now be having the Class Room as a professional field rather than a Class Room being a spring board. We don't want to have a situation where Teachers go to class room waiting to have another job. We want to have a situation like the Ministry has suggested; adding to their salaries, creating more opportunities for Teachers, so that Teachers will use the Class Room as a permanent profession.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank the Ministry again for considering the Councils. Some of us who have been part of this Parliament know that there are huge leakages in the Councils. Day in day out, when we go to these Councils you hear the Chairmen, the Mayors and the Councillors saying their allowances and salaries are very low. Mr Speaker, this is in the Budget! Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, now when you improve the salaries of the core staff, when you improve the salaries of the Mayor, they can be motivated, the leakages will be stopped, because you cannot pay somebody meagre **Le1,000,000** and the person controls Billions and Billions of Leones, thank you very much for improving their salaries. Thank you Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member for his contribution. Honourable Members wishing to take the floor, but who unfortunately would not be able to catch my eye, my most sincere apologies to all of you. Is just because time is short and we are running out of time. So I am sorry to have to disappoint all of you, but we have to

proceed, we have a time deadline that we have to bring this sitting to a close. Madam, I am aware you have been anxious to speak, but unfortunately your Leadership sent me a list that did not include your name. So consult with your Leadership. I now invite...

HON. GBASSAY U. S. KOROMA: Mr Speaker, Mr Speaker!

THE SPEAKER: You don't have the floor! I have not called on you Sir, with the greatest deference to you, please, please. I have to direct proceedings to bring them to a close at the appointed time.

HON. GBASSAY U. S. KOROMA: Yes, but Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: There is no but about it!

HON. GBASSAY U. S. KOROMA: Mr Speaker, for three consistent Budget debate, I have prepared myself to contribute to these debates and I must remind this House that I represent **65,000** people in Constituency **114**; Calaba Town, Tassor Island that has four towns and Wellington. So, for every given debate...

THE SPEAKER: You are already debating! So please take your seat.

HON. GBASSAY U. S. KOROMA: So if you allow me, I will proceed, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: No, no, no! I will not! No, I will not!

HON. GBASSAY U. S. KOROMA: Because nobody from the Western Area on this side has been called on to debate on this Budget Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, Honourable Member, please take your seat! And let me make one thing abundantly clear; to give everyone a fair chance in this debate, I have been consulting with the Leadership of the various Parties represented here. And every single day, the result of the consultations yielded list of speakers which guided me in directing the proceeding. It is just unfortunate that the time is limited and I cannot accommodate everyone. So be patient Honourable Member. I know like the lady, you are both anxious to take the floor. But at this juncture, I now give the floor to the Acting Leader of the Opposition.

HON. HASSAN A SESAY: Thank you Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, today again we are in the process of concluding a debate that I heard my friends calling "A people centred budget". I heard them saying it's "A bread and butter budget". All of those are words that are beautiful to hear. But there is always one thing I say; there is a difference between rhetoric and reality. I have quoted that once in this Well and today again I will refer to that quote for my colleagues on the other side to understand that "Political ideas that cannot be transformed to reality will always remain to be an ideological abstraction" [*Applause*]. If that is the case Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Budget is rich on rhetoric, but poor on substance when it comes to the people of this country that we are all representing here.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, now let me first of all talk about an issue in the budget that is talking about job creation. Agreed! We understand; our Youths need jobs, you talk about the Youth farms, we know the Budget is addressing that. You are talking about job creation and yet you are closing down institutions that employ over five hundred people. You cannot allow those Institutions to renegotiate, instead you are closing them down and yet you are saying you want to create jobs. What I am saying here is that, you cannot be giving with the left hand and taking with the right hand.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me come to the Budget proper. In paragraph 1 line 6, "we have promised that despite the challenges inherited; we will restore Macro-Economic stability, Fiscal discipline and create the enabling environment for Sustainable Development", good words! That is what we expect to hear from people who actually address Economic issues. But creating Macro-Economic Stability wherein we have inflation currently at double digits; 15 to 17%, depreciation amounts to 3.5% and in 2017-2018, the Dollar was at **Le750**, but now it is at **Le1, 005** or **Le1, 015**. And then we are talking about Monies accumulated, but we still have erratic Mining Policies where you cancelled a particular contract without replacing it. I think if you actually want to cancel a particular contract, you must have negotiated for something to replace that. Now what is happening? It is now leaving people who have been employed, unemployed without having something to replace that. For example, we have SL Mining

now in Lunsar not attended to; the contracts have been terminated, nothing to replace them and this is going to happen for the next six months. Guess what? The people that owned that Mines would go to a Court of Arbitration and until that Court of Arbitration concludes that matter, nothing could be done with those products. What happens in that case? Are we talking about employment? Are we serious? As an Opposition, we are trying to guide this Government, so that it spends and act responsibly; Renegotiate! Because that is the only way we are assured of employment. If we want to create employment, let us renegotiate with those people rather than just terminate them and leave over five hundred to one thousand people unemployed in a town. The Economists know that when the township grows, the Local Economy will grow and the National Economy in turn will also grow; that means development in all Sectors, all the Areas and all the Regions. But when you close a particular institution, putting over one thousand people out of job, then that town becomes a ghost town, economic activities will dwindle. That is all the more reason why we have this pressure on our currency exchange rate *[Applause]*. What is the rationale? I cannot understand that, but maybe the Economic gurus know better. But I also know that in any situation, Economic management in a country is not done by one person; it is done by a team of Economic experts that come together. Are they all getting it wrong?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, they gave us growth figures that do not actually reflect the Economic reality of our people. The growth figures that we are getting can best be described as cosmetic figures. They gave us what we want to see, but not exactly what is reflected on the ground. It is quoted in the budget S.O.2; that "Dea gron dry". Dea gron get for dry, because you are talking about Fiscal Discipline! Just yesterday, a Motion was moved in this House guiding you, but please take it in good fate, and accept our Opposition point. We don't care about symbols over here, so we can say the truth and when you accept the truth from us, that will guide you and that is what we believe. The Opposition is supposed to be an opposition not because we want to destroy, but because we want to help you. Take us in good fate; accept what we say, because they are done in good fate. Like I said the other day, there is only one Sierra Leone. We criticise you to let us all get better; we don't criticise you because we

hate you, no! We are all the same people, we know that! I have demonstrated that more than anybody over there, I assure you.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in Paragraph 5, at the end of 2019, they told us that they mobilised, or they expect to mobilise, the key word is, "Mobilise" or "expect to mobilise", so we are now talking about speculative Economics? I am sure the Economists know better what we are talking about here. I am not an Economist, maybe my Economist stopped at A' Level that was it! But Basic Economist tells me that if you are expecting, it is speculative and if you are speculating, then we are not sure, so the figures cannot be right as long as you speculate, because you either get it wrong or you get it right. In this case, we don't have the system whereby we can be sure of what you are speculating.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as long as you are speculating, it is not certain; there is an element of uncertainty there. So in this situation, we are only speculating! Are we still speculating? Do we have the answers to the problems? Is that what we are doing? In that regard, are we ready to move the Economy forward? The other day, I stood in this Well and spoke to Mr Speaker, that we are going to summon the Bank Governor to the Well of this House to explain to us why the currency is where it is today. Why our exchange rate is where it is today? Somebody on the other side condemned auction yesterday, but it is still a practice of this Governor. That is to tell you that the Governor that we have is out of sync with the reality. He cannot come up or proffer new ideas as to how to handle our economy even if in the short term, because that is what we need. We need somebody who understands our Economic situation and proffers short and long term solutions to the malaise that we are now experiencing. We know that the man has been teaching Economics at Colorado University for ages, and teaching Economics at Colorado University is not the same as managing an Economy. What we need is somebody that understands our Economy and knows exactly what to do to proffer solutions to the teething problems that we have. We look at the dynamics of our Economic system and people that understands it. Are we short of knowledge materials? No! Even within the Ministry of Finance, I will tell you, there are people who can manage the economy or our currency better than this

Governor; I don't know what to call him. I think he is better suited to teach Economics at Fourah Bay College [*Undertone*]. I am talking to him because he is part of it, so let him listen.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, they said they are expected to mobilise **\$613mln** mainly from Multilateral Financial Institutions. 60% of which is concessionary Loans which is equal to **\$367mln**. But I remembered the Minister of Finance telling us in the Well of Parliament, that they are not going to resort to borrowing from both internal and external partners. Quote me on that! The Minister told us in the Well of Parliament that they are not going to resort to borrowing from both internal and external, because they can generate resources within to manage what they have to manage.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, though these Loans are concessionary, yet they still add to the debt burden that we have which we are already crying down. That is again saying, they are giving with the left hand and taking with the right hand. You don't rob Peter to pay Paul; it's still thieving when you rob Peter to pay Paul. So, if you condemned it then because it was wrong, let us condemn it now because it is still wrong. So what are we saying? If it was wrong then, it is wrong now and if you condemned me when I did it, why do you do it now? Which means you only wanted my place. Again that brings me to the idea of a Brazilian Educationist, Paulo Freire, who maintained that; "sometimes people advocate change not because they want to change things, but because they want to be where you are that is why they want the change". So, if we have to go by that theory, it means the issues they attacked to effect the change is the same issues they have resorted to. In that case, are we changing? No!

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in Paragraph 6, 'Domestic Revenue collection was **13.7** from **12.2 %**, nice growth! At least the figures are better. The question here is; are the figures reflecting the reality? Now we are talking about **Le600,000** as an increase in Salaries from **Le500,000** Minimum wage, good when you look at the figures! But the question here is; when we actually increased the Minimum wage, **Le500,000** was equivalent to **\$100**. Now **Le600,000** is equivalent to **\$60**. So, in monetary term, in real value what can you get? So it means the person who was earning **Le500,000** can have a better purchasing power than a man earning

Le600,000 now [Applause]. So, that was why I told you that the Budget is rich in rhetoric but very poor in content. What we are talking about is not Text Book Economics; we are talking about realistic Economics, something that affects the man that we represent because those that we represent are in the majority and those are the people we are supposed to speak for. And that is why we are saying we are giving you these ideas not because we hate you, but because we want to provide guidance as a credible Opposition to let you understand that these are the problems that need to be addressed.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in Paragraph 8, the Budget spoke about paying the NPSE, BECE etc, and it is a laudable effort! But I want to tell my colleagues on the other side that this is not a new phenomenon. Added to that, we used to pay **70%** of the College fees of University Students; check the records, it is there. The Minister of Finance can testify! But what is happening now is, **80%** of Monies paid to University Lecturers come from the Government and **20%** is from the University. That only continues to compound the problem and very soon we will have to hear that, because we know that this arrangement at some point will create its own problem and we must be ready to address these problems, if we want to move forward as a country. And it is Sierra Leone that we care for; not our Parties, but for the nation as a whole.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in Paragraph 9, they spoke about the Free Health Care. Of course, again it is a public secret that the Free Health Care was an initiative of the previous Government. And in Governance, there must be an element of continuity. We support the programme because it is good for this country, because it is something all of us will benefit from.

Mr Speaker, in Paragraph 13, we talked about illegal fishing because we still lack the capacity to effectively surveillance the fishing that is taking place in our waters. We need to improve in that area, because that is a huge revenue generating Arm which we must improve on and we want to hear or see you initiate ideas that will tell us about improving our ability to catch poachers and limit illegal fishing and enable us export our fish. Mr Speaker, let me give you one secret; the poachers come to this country to fish and export to Senegal, because we have still not satisfied the requirements by the

Economic Commission to export fish to Europe. So what is happening? They are taking the Fish from Sierra Leone, export the Fish in the name of Exporting from Senegal, but it is a Sierra Leonean Fish. This is happening because we have not built the capacity to improve that area.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in Paragraph 14, let me touch on one issue; Tourism. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the amount of time we have had the Minister of Tourism travelling with the Director and other Members of the Ministry is too much, if we can use that money to develop the Touristic Sites that we have to market, maybe, just maybe, it might have been better. But we spend the money travelling without adding value to our Tourist Industry. When we talk about the Tourist Industry, we talk about how we have cleaned the beaches, the hangouts, which is good. But what we are saying is; are we serious to develop our Touristic sites?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Minister was telling us the other time 'we are going to build hiking trails, two years down the road; we have not seen one hiking trail. We haven't seen any attempt at developing any of the touristic sites; instead, they keep talking and talking, going to CNN to advertise, what are we advertising? Why are we spending that money for? And where is the tourist site to visit? We have still not improved the Tecogama Sanctuary, what are we doing? We want to improve the sites, we want to attract tourists? Do they only come to see Freetown and go back? No! Back in the days, we used to have people who come; they take vehicles across the Peninsular to visit areas that are interesting. We are not doing that; rather we are talking about "we want to invest in Tourism". If we want to invest in Tourism, how are we investing in Tourism? Consider what has been spent in the travels of the Director and other Officials of Tourism, and if we had taken that money and invested it in to the development of Touristic sites, imagine the network that would have brought to us. We have Bonthe Island, Turtle Island, Banana Island and many other areas to look at and develop, but what have we done? Even in Bonthe, there are areas that are interesting; are we paying attention there? We have not done much in that area, but yet we are talking about developing Tourism; is it at the Beaches in Freetown? That is not enough! It is good for us as locals, but that would not bring in the hard earned currency that we

actually need to support our Economy, because until and unless we improve on that, the pressure will continue to be on our currency and it will continue to depreciate. This is so because; we don't have the corresponding foreign currency to come in, so that we would be able to ease the pressure on the foreign currency demand.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me now come to the Banking Sector. In 2013, the Sierra Leone Commercial Bank and the Rokel Commercial Bank were capitalised. With all due respect to the Financial Gurus; I am not a financial expert but maybe you will correct me along the way where I am wrong. But anyway, the ownership of the Sierra Leone Commercial Bank was changed; **90%** was owned by the Sierra Leone Government and **10%** owned by NaSSIT. A similar arrangement was made for the Rokel Commercial Bank, where the Government ceded a part of its **51%** ownership to the Bank. To ensure effective management in those two Banks, Managements were reconstituted. So what happened? The fortunes turned in both the Sierra Leone Commercial Bank and the Rokel Commercial Bank, because of the thought that they might be very fragile; they were put under the National Commission for Privatisation even though, they were still having their Boards. So what happened? In 2016, Sierra Leone Commercial Bank made **Le35.8 Bln** profit. In 2017, it was **Le79.5 Bln**, which means, progressively, the Banks were improving their performance under the supervision of their Boards. And the Americans normally say; "If it is not broke, don't fix it, if it is broke fix it". For now, it is not broke! So we don't need to fix it. We should know that if they are not up for privatisation any more, let them remove them from there, but let us challenge the Board to continue to improve, because what happens here is, we are all politicians. Let us face the fact, when they came under the supervision of the Ministry of Finance, the removal of the control of the Bank from NCP and transfer to the Ministry of Finance will only create more problems than we can solve, because from what I know or what I think, transferring control to the Ministry of Finance will only increase the political leverage to oversee the day to day running of the Banks. But so far so good, the Boards have demonstrated the ability to control those Banks, let us leave them as they are and give them at least another year rather than transferring them to the Ministry of Finance. We know that the Banks are controlled by

a Banking Policy that regulated from the Bank of Sierra Leone or supervised by the Ministry of Finance, so why do we have to think of what is doing well? Like I said earlier, "if it is not broke, don't fix, if it is broke fix it". We will support, but at this point in time Sierra Leone Commercial Bank is doing well, Rokel Commercial Bank is doing well let us observe them, support them and remove them from the NCP; because they are viable institutions. Let us continue, but let us don't kill them, because the problem here is when that happens, the Banks will be exposed to Politically Exposed Loans and that will kill the Banks. Let us leave it as it is and continue where we are, so that we will continue to realise or have Institutions that we will say are Sierra Leonean Institutions that we can boast of, they are now becoming viable Institutions again let us leave them for now, because I heard the Minister when he came arguing that, S.O. 2 "Wel, nar wi bin say wi dae sell, but wi nor dea sell again", we agree! We don't want to sell, but what do we want? Let them be controlled by the Board taken away from politics, because Government is not a good business person period!

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will talk on the Mining Companies again; cancellations of these Mining Agreements will definitely scare away investors. What will happen when investors who have put their Monies are scared away? They go for litigations and until that litigation is completed, nobody have the right to touch those products, now we have Iron ore laying waste, contracts are been terminated instead of re-negotiations. In this Parliament, the Mines Committee summoned the Sierra Leone Mining Company to come and ask them their own side of the story; they gave their own side of the story and what they wanted re-negotiations on. If it were a bad contract, there is a termination Clause and no contract should be signed without having a termination Clause. If something is wrong, call for re-negotiations and let them say no. If you were given x, y, zee, now we want to give you a, b, c, that is how it must be done, but terminating them will scare away investors. It is also putting pressure on the exchange rate, there by leading to a continuous drop in the value of our currency as against other foreign currency like the Dollar, Euro, Pound, etc. That is why we are where we are, instead of finding ways to correct and improve on it, we are only continuing to accelerate the process. I was saying we have not come up with short

term or long term measures to control this situation, and if we continue to leave it like that by December, and just recently, I saw a letter doing the rounds from the Total Petroleum Station, that if things continues this way, they just might not be able to import fuel by the end of December.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if Mr Speaker wants, I can produce the letter to let him see, that it is a dangerous signal for us. Just recently a press leased stated that the increase in fuel price is not close, but with that kind of thing coming from the Private Sector I am afraid, let us be honest and address the issues. I don't know what has been done, but I hope something is done, but I leave that to the Board so that we don't go through that crisis in the festive period of December. Now we are seeing grimes of that, because people are queuing up in the fuel stations, I hope it is not a signal of what is coming; I just hope so because we don't want that.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the cancellation of these deals again will lead to Toxic External Environment which will further discourage other investors, now let me tell you something Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, what happens in this situation is that, these Mining Companies all belongs to one cartel, they communicate with each other. They don't operate in isolation. They inform themselves and at the end of the day, you scare away some who might have the initiative to come, they think, S.O 2 "if you slap David, den you kin slap Samuel". What we want to do is to attract more investors not to scare away the few.

Mr speaker, Honourable Members, in Paragraph 31, we talked about the growth rate in 2015, it was 4.0%, in 2016, 4.9%, in 2017, 3.5%, in 2018, 3.8%, in 2019, 5.1%, beautiful figures. Mr Speaker, I say again, rich on rhetoric, but poor on substance, but the growth rate is reflective of what is on the ground? Are the people actually paying less for goods or are they paying more? Consider now that you talk of a bag of rice going for over **Le300, 000**, instead of putting more money into Agriculture, we have **6%** to Agriculture, is that correct? And now we are expecting the rest of that to be inputted by Private Sector Investments. When the Private Sector Investments are responsible in the growing of rice, they determined the price because you don't have control over it. But if we improve on Agriculture at Community level, Domestic level, I

heard about the Youth Farm, it is still a theory to be actualised, so let us wait for it to be actualised, but as the saying goes S.O.2, "Dry monkey sweet, but watin are go dae eat tay the monkey dry?" that is why I am not surprise my colleague from Bombali was saying yesterday, we will chew bitter cola and drink water until everything is completed. I earlier on mentioned that it is what we call Cosmetic Growth; the figures they want us to see and understand are what they are feeding us with, we accept, but let us try to have this in reality sir. In paragraph 32, inflation in simple terms, is talking about rise in prices, forces that are leading to that, that is just in simplicity.

THE SPEAKER: Acting Leader, I am sorry if I have interrupted you at this point, just to remind you that time is short, I know that you are the Acting Leader.

HON. HASSAN SESAY: Noted Mr Speaker, I will round up Sir. Now, let me come to the all-powerful exchange rate, the all-powerful exchange rate is key. Now in 2017, it was **Le7, 500**, in 2018, **Le8, 500**, 2019, **Le1, 015**, it is growing I hope it stops at that and somebody come in with something new to actually arrest this and bring it down, but the Governor that we have, like I said, Teaching Economics at Colorado is different from managing Sierra Leone Economy. So we have inimical growth and it will deter development which everybody is shouting for.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in paragraph 40 we talked about Budget execution, but according to the Budget, 72% by September, was executed, so there was still 28% that has not been executed and I am sure most of the MDAs were still talking about their fourth quarter allocation that has not reached them. I am sure if we don't plan better, we are going to continue to accumulate those deficits. So it means that the MDAs will never run on the full Budget that was approved. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we agreed and approved a budget last time of Le2.7 Trillion or something about that, they came with an expenditure without a supplementary Budget, what are we doing? And we know that Monies expended by the Ministry of Finance for the running of Government must come here for approval, but they didn't come here so that was an indictment on us. What we approved they over spent, which they didn't come for authorisation, and the idea of supplementary Budget is provided for in the Constitution, because Budgets are just estimates, so if you know that you are going

above what is required for in the Budget, come back to us we will approve it again, because it is provided for in the Constitution. What we believed in is the Constitution. As long as it is there we will do it, but we want to tell our colleagues on the other side, that we are doing it not because we hate you, but we want to help, we are all in the governance process, that is why we are saying it. We are all in this together, so we are not saying it out of bad faith, we are saying it because this is the only means that we can use to correct, because we were not part of that process. But I am sure my colleagues on the other side will appreciate me for saying the truth. Now in 2018, the revenue collected was **\$370 Mln**; in 2019, they spoke about **Le4.1 Tln**, agreed! When the Government implemented the [TSA], the Single Treasury Account, there was a flow like the wind fall, but what has happened? The kitchen is drying up, because the money that came in as a wind fall is not there anymore, now we have gone back to realities. So let us now measure what has been collected and when that was happening they were on the radio every week telling us what was collected "kudos to Salone"! But is that now the same trend? The kitchen is getting dry because it was not going to be like it used to be, so we are only saying that we need more robust measures to ensure that we address this issue so that we arrest the down turn of our Economy, let us get better and that is why we are saying, that even laws passed we put a Motions to check. We want to guide your reckless spending. In twelve months, Government will be spending over **Le879.9 Bln**, just in wages, and we are talking about cutting down the size of Government when you are increasing it? Creating more Ministries, Embassies and increasing and blotting the Wage Bills, but yet we want Fiscal Discipline and Macro Economics ability. They cannot go together.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, without much ado, I don't think I want to take much of your time again, because Mr Speaker has warned me and I respect him, so in that light, I want to ask my colleagues on the other side to let us work together and try to put together a more robust approach to our Economic Management System and again let me send the message to the Bank Governor to come to this House, let him be told we would call him to this House, because he must explain. We are looking for somebody who when the President calls, that I want to meet my management team he

will not tell him, I am in Lungai going to see my family in America, nor! That is not acceptable. Let me recognise the Deputy Ambassador to China who is here with us Rogers, the brother of my opposite number Mr Leader. I am recognising your brother's presence.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, on that note, I will not go further than this. I know you want to hear more, but I want to save your time because you have more things to manage for now; because we have to go for the laying out. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to crave the indulgence of this House and also the issue I raised about the sacking and payment of benefits of those people who are strangling, others are dead in need, but I am waiting for the petition to come, so I am just given you notice that I am going to revisit that issue Mr Speaker. I thank you all.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Acting Leader of the Opposition for his contributions to the debate. If I may be presumptuous, I just want to advise that since we have the Minister here, abled and ready to respond to the many questions and concerns raised, that the Acting Leader of Government Business takes that into account in managing the time available.

HON. DICKSON ROGERS: Thank you very much Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me first of all use this opportunity to say thank you to the people of this country for Voting for a visionary leader. It is because of his vision he has given us capable people in the Ministry of Finance to give us the Budget they have given us. Mr Speaker, let me also say thank you to my colleague MPs from the other side for their contributions to this debate, and also thank the Opposition Members of Parliament for participating in this debate.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I think our colleagues on that other side have one note they are all copying from, because they are saying the same thing over and again, but let me start from where my counterpart ended. He was saying that Government should pay those they have laid off their jobs, and the other Honourable from the same party was talking about the same thing. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me draw the attention of this House, that in 2007, when Alhaji Kanjah Sesay was relieved from

his job, it took eight years before he was paid. Dr J. D. Rogers, former Bank Governor when he was sacked, it took six years before he was paid, Dr John Karimu when sacked, it took seven years before he was paid, the late Daramy who was at NATCOM he was not paid his gratuity until he died, the late Dr. Bassie Bangura who recently passed away up till now as I am speaking was not paid until he passed away. They are just talking about a month when those workers were laid off at NATCOM and now you are saying they have not been paid, eight years. The Honourable Lahai Marah from the other side said when you put the Teacher's figure together, 675 thousand Teachers, and the salary of 34 Judges are more. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me report to this House that, since we took over the reign of Government 19 months ago, we have not increased salaries for Judges. Meaning, the salaries that they now pay the Judges, are the same before we took the reign of Government *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, he also spoke about 30% been very meagre to Teachers, if I should borrow the word of my counterpart over there, Mr Speaker, it is better we do something than nothing. 30% of **Le1Mln** let us assume it is **Le300, 000** that is an increment very substantial! My colleague on the other side was saying that the increment cannot pay transport for them. We are talking about **Le 300,000**; that is just an assumption! There are Teachers that have been paid over **Le 2,000,000**. If you are paid over **Le2, 000,000**, 30% of that is **Le 600,000**. So I can tell this House that in the not too distant future, the condition of Teachers will improve to the extent that Teachers would want to leave Private Schools to come to Government Schools.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I heard my colleague saying that because of the suspension of some licenses, we have about 500 people out of job. Mr Speaker, our normal prayer here every morning is to thyself be the truth. How can this country mortgage our sovereignty to another country, those contracts were terminated because of the bad Laws, and yet my colleague from the other side was talking about proffering reasons why the Ministry of Finance pay debt instead of pay salaries. How can we have a company in this country Mr Speaker, that takes away **\$600Mln**, and pay Government **\$40,000**, to thyself be the truth!

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, my colleague from the other side, talked about reckless spending, I wonder his definition about, reckless spending.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, two months ago, or round about that, there was an order from State House, that no Minister, no Government Servant should travel without approval from the President. He wants to control expenditure on travelling in this country? Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in 2016 United Nations Conference, we had a delegation of over 60 people leaving this country including Artist to the United Nations doing what? I don't know! And all of those Monies were brought from the consolidated fund; this is the only Government, the only President that travelled with less than 5 in his delegation.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let us talk about budget; what is budget? Budget statement is a projection, these are mere proposals for example, the NRA will raise **Le5Bln** this month. And I would now say Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if NRA will be given **Le5Bln** this month; this is how I will appropriate it; If I give Honourable Lahai Marah **Le1Bln** for XYZ, and I will give Honourable Hassan Sesay **Le2Bln**, I am expecting that NRA will raise me that money, but in a situation wherein NRA fails to raise that money, I will come again for re-appropriation. That is exactly what budget is about.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we are talking about blotted Budgets, and yet our colleagues were saying we have employed less Teachers, and have only increase 30% of Teacher's salaries, I wonder if we had increase it by 50%, what would they have say. Mr Speaker, I can understand the Budget I have here, except if you don't want to be truth to yourself, but my colleague has got nothing to criticise on this Budget *[Applause]*. So what are they doing; they are bringing in like my colleague on the other side was doing yesterday, giving us figures from MCC. Mr Speaker, this is the first time in this country Sierra Leone has been invited to COMPACT. Mr Speaker, I am not talking about M.C.C. Score Card, I am talking about COMPACT. As I am talking, the Vice President is now in the United States for us to make sure that we also pass the COMPACT.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me speak to the theme itself "Bread and Butter", now let me define for my colleague on that side, what is bread and butter? Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, bread and butter in the Budget means, to put additional Monies into people's pocket. Monies they can use to do what they were not doing before you put that money into their pocket *[Applause]*. Now let me come to that, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when we talk about Free Education, we are talking about putting additional money into the pocket of parents. Those fees that were paying **Le 200-300**, there are no longer paying that money, what does that mean? Meaning if they were eating 2 cups of rice, they would increase it to three cups of rice that is what we call bread and butter. Parents that are leaving in the Far East of Freetown, use to give their kids **Le10, 000** for transport. Mr Speaker, today, they are given **Le2, 000**, because we have school buses, what does that mean; it means they are saving **Le8, 000** a day. And if you are saving **Le8, 000** a day, if you are giving your kids **Le2, 000** lunch, you can now increase it to **Le4, 000**, that is bread and butter.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when you look at page 28, paragraph 149, Government would be providing **Le100 Mln** to SMAs targeting over 20,000 people in this country. Meaning, we are going to put money in to the pocket of those 20,000 people that is what we call bread and butter *[Applause]*. If for example you get **Le 100Mln**, you now get additional **Le200, 000** for example, if you use to buy 2 cups of rice, you now increase your purchase to 3-4 cups of rice, that is what we call bread and butter.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, additionally, before this Government came in to power, the IMF, the World Bank, the EU had left, because of the mismanagement of the Economy. We are now saying that this additional Budget of **\$20.3Mln** not Leones, not Billions, **\$20.3Mln** will be allocated for sales, that is the fund from World Bank. I want this House and the general public to know that World Bank will not give money without conditions, if they know that our Economic implementations are poor, there is no way they will give us **\$20Mln**, because they know we would chop it like it used to happen before.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when we talk about Labour based work, the Minister of Finance laid that any contract less than **Le500Mln** will not be awarded to persons that are not permanently resident in that community. Mr Speaker, Honourable members, it means they will now put money into the pocket of our brothers and sisters in those deprived communities. If my brother in Pujehun is given **le450Mln** contract, and let us say the profit is **Le10Mln**, that **Le10Mln** will not come to Freetown, that **Le10Mln** will not go to Bo, that **Le10mIn** will not go to Kenema, it will remain in Pujehun. Now what does that mean? It means we put bread and butter in the pocket of other people. What does that mean; it means we will buy zinc and nail to build a house for himself. Mr Speaker, Honourable members, when you look at page 30, paragraph 55, what does it say? It is saying, putting additional money into the pockets of brothers and sisters S.O 2, "Joe fakaihun", those contracts that we use to award **Le60Mln, 70Mln**, to just patch a road would now be given to those residence in those communities.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in 2011, I was Member of the Works Committee. The past Government used to award contracts to people that we don't know. A contract was awarded in my constituency, I asked for the Contractor and they told me the Contractor is in Freetown or in Bo. And when those contractors are paid, we don't have the Monies reflecting in the Societies. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have Contractors in this country we used to call Brief-Case contractors. When once they are paid, they put the money in their brief-cases and go, you don't see them. That is the reason why today this Government is paying **Le25Bln** every week as debt, debt that we inherited. My colleague on the other side was saying, the only reason why we paid this Monies is because, that is where the Ministry of Finance gets there kickbacks.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I don't know why people can be so inhuman, so deceptive to the people they purport to be representing. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the only reason why World Bank is given us **\$20.3Mln** in addition to the SMAs is because we are meeting their conditions, by paying **Le25Bln** every week.

Mr Speaker, we are paying something like **Le120Bln** every week, let us assume we are not paying those debts, **Le25Bln** coming into our pockets every week in this country,

what would that mean? Mr Speaker, S.O.2 "Dea gron dry" I agree dea gron dry, because the water wells were locked by the APC before they left, so we are not getting to sprinkle. So S.O.2 "dea gron dry", yes! Mr Speaker, the ground is dry, because now we have a system at Water Quay where in every single penny is paid. Yes! The ground is dry Mr Speaker, because now we don't have a lot of leakages that is the only reason why they are saying the ground is dry.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Government in this budget will put extra money into the pockets of over 5,000 young men and women in the western area. We called them the beach securities. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the 5,000 I am referring to are out of job. In creating job for them, this budget will provide for them to guide and protect our investors. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, what do we mean by "Bread and Butter"? Bread and butter is wherein you put extra money into the pockets of those who were never used to get it *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I resigned from going to the National Stadium years ago, because there were no Soccer in this country. Mr Speaker, we have over 16 teams in the Premier League, and because our President wants to put bread and butter in to people's pockets, he revived the National Premier League. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there is no player in the Premier League that is not paid, there is no Manager in the Premier League that is not paid, and there was no backroom staff that is not paid. Precisely, 10 years ago Mr Speaker, there was no Premier League in this country; all of those people were unemployed *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Government is also providing jobs for over 2,000 people leaving with disability, what does that mean? Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when you provide job for 2, 000 people living with disability, you are putting bread and butter on their tables. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I see you are looking at me and you have to go for prayers, I know that, but Mr Speaker, to thyself be the truth, this budget has addressed a lot of bread and butter issues and even beyond bread and butter. Like I said in the beginning Mr Speaker, my brothers on the other side was passing the same note that was the reason why you saw Speaker after Speaker saying

the same thing. And I saw my colleague on the other side, my counterpart, collected all the S.O2 "Ngagbas" from those who were not able to read from the note.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, having said that; I want to say thanks to His Excellency the President, for the vision he has for this country, for given us the likes of the Minister of Finance, which I think is so deliberate. Any time he wants us to pass his budget, he send the beautiful woman, his Deputy Minister [*Dr Patricia N. Laverley*]. I saw Honourable Lahai Marah wanted to speak to the budget, but any time he looks at the face of Madam Deputy Minister his is restrained, so I want to say thanks. I also want to thank my colleague Leaders from the other side, for accepting my Motion that we reduce the budget space for three days. I am grateful; I am gratified to them for that.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I saw the declaration in play, because like my colleague last said; we need to work as a team in this Parliament, let us put our political caps, 2023, is not far, we will take our political hats again. But let us work in the interest of this country; let us work in the interest of our people, let us improve this country. When the President declared Free Education, when you go to register, they will not ask you for party identification cards; as long as you are from this country, you are can register. Mr Speaker, I also want to say thanks to you for regulating us, it is because of your leadership we are where we are today. Mr Speaker, I also want to appeal to my colleagues on this other side, those that submitted their names and are not privileged to speak, we have spoken on your behalf, I want to appeal to all Members, that this is our budget, it is our baby, and every facet in our Manifesto is in this budget. So if you are not able to talk to the budget, we have done it for you and I am sure those that spoke made us proud. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we hope that we continue with the way the Parliament is running. Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Leader of Government Business, at this conjunction, it is for Madam Minister to respond, but I will ask her kindly to forbear for a few minutes while I stand the House down and I will return in five minutes.

[The House stood down at 2:58 and Resume at.....]

THE SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Members, please resume your seats. Yes, Madam Minister!

DR PATRICIA N. LAVERLEY [Deputy Minister of Finance]: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the debate on the 2020 Budget has been very patriotic, so on behalf of His Excellency the President, and the Honourable Minister of Finance, we would like to convey our profound appreciation to Honourable Members, for your constructive contributions and incite based on your review of the Budget.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, you have actually made my job very simple, because a lot of Members favoured the Budget, you agreed with us that the 2020 Budget was indeed a step in the right direction. You agreed with us that it was indeed “bread and butter Budget”, we in the Ministry of Finance are aware of the challenges currently facing the Economy due to the Economic challenges that we inherited. We have however come a long way in making the Economy a better one for all Sierra Leoneans. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, please permit me now to address some salient issues raised by Honourable Members especially, Members from the other side of the House. Some speakers raised concern about the public debt stock. Let this Honourable House know that most of these debts were inherited, but as a responsible Government and in the spirit of continuity, we have actually prepared an arrears clearance strategy in close collaboration with the IMF and this arrears clearance strategy is intended to help reduce the debt stock and give us the fiscal space that we need to make the necessary Socio-Investment *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, some of the Members raised concern about the impact of Agriculture and the contribution to stimulating Micro-Economic growth. We have indeed allotted a large amount of money to the Agriculture Sector and we note the importance of contributing to salary so we can improve research especially, now that we have increased and we have come up with initiatives on the Youth Farms, Chiefdom Farms and we are now encouraging more women to get involved in Agriculture.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we note your concerns about need for a legal adviser in the House of Parliament. Please be assured that the Ministry of Finance stands ready to provide the requisite support to the Honourable House to ensure, that you do have the legal support that needs editing and drafting of the different Bills to the Honourable House. However, we advise that the terms of reference and the recruitment process undertaken to bring in the legal adviser needed in the Honourable House is taken into consideration in collaboration with the Attorney Generals Office. Some Honourable Members mentioned our effort in mobilising Domestic Revenue. Revenue mobilisation falls within the frame work of extending Credit Facility arrangement with IMF, and we have highlighted all the Short Medium Term Strategies in the Budget, but we are appealing to Members of this Honourable House to join us in our revenue mobilisation effort be you APC, be you SLPP, NGC or C4C. We are asking you to complement our efforts as we are now embarking on improving our revenue mobilisation effort at the local council level, we also need your support in helping us minimise the incident of smuggling across our borders.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, on the issue of service delivery, let me inform this noble House that our Government has introduced the Public Expenditure Tracking Survey, which was abolished by the last Government. Very soon, we will submit the report on our Public Expenditure Tracking to this Noble House for your information, and we will continue to support the oversight and monitoring wing of Parliament to complement our effort in service delivery. A lot of Members made comments about the increase in the Wage Bill from **2.3Tln** 2019, to **2.2Tln** in 2020 in the Budget. Let me inform this Noble House that the theme of this Budget as you are all aware is "Job Creation" and I asked you this, how can we increase Job Creation in the Public Sector without a slight increase in the Budget? How can we increase? First, we have to increase the jobs within the institutions in the Public Sector, that we can create the enabling environment for the Private Sector; so that businesses can get created. When businesses are created, new jobs would also be created in the Private Sector.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, on the issue of the National Investment Board and Sierra Leone Investment and Export Promotion Agency [*SLIEPA*], the fundamental

difference between the two entities; you must understand that SLIEPA would continue to focus on operational issues whilst the Investment Board would work on the strategic orientation and consolidation of the investment institutions and working closely with building confidence for new investors coming into the country, and the Ministry of Finance is very much integral in this process. Their concerns about the sources of new resources that we have mobilised as a new Government if you refer to an extent, in the Budget we have actually provided a breakdown of all sources of revenue that our Government has mobilised and these resources are listed by year, by donor and by amount.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me talk on the two State owned Banks, Rokel Commercial Bank and the Sierra Leone Commercial Bank. Supervision of this two Banks has now moved to the Ministry of Finance, because these are Financial Institutions unlike the Non-Financial state own Enterprises that were previously managed under the National Commission for Privatisation. The Ministry of Finance now have a Fiscal Risk Division that reduces the financial performance of these two institutions. Even the Central Bank is under the direct supervision of the Ministry of Finance, the National Commission of Privatisation will primarily focus on the Non-Financial State Owned Enterprises. This is a fundamental difference in the oversight of the two state own Banks and the non-financial own institutions managed by Government.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, with respect to the Minimum Wage the 2018 integrated household survey, it shows the poverty index and each shows that we really, need about **\$50** which is about **Le500, 000**, but we had increased the Minimum Wage to **Le600, 000**, so whilst the integrated household survey advocated **Le500, 000** per month, we have actually increase that by additional **Le100, 000**. With respect to over spending, it is important to note that the very fight against arrears of over **\$340Mln** accumulated between 2016 and 2017 were all as a result of over spending of the Budget by the previous Administration. It is important to note that the 2018 supplementary Budget, was submitted to Parliament and Parliament approved all these expenditures that were reflected in the 2018 Budget.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me turn to Paragraph 45 on the deficits. This specific paragraph should read, "That the overall deficits Excluding grants for January to September is estimated as **1.6Tln** which is represented by **4.2%** of Gross Domestic Products [*GDP*]. It should be excluding grants, so we should take note of that amendment that would be made to this version of the Budget Statement. Let me also state the directionality of the fundamental Macro Economic Variables, the Inflation Rate, the Trade Deficits and the Depreciation Rate. We are monitoring all of these Macro-Economic Variables under IMF program and we have a data reporting arrangements with the IMF, whilst we report on the progress on changing the directionality of all our Macro-Economic Variables.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, finally, let me conclude by recognising the input of all Honourable Members, for your vital contributions and appreciation of the next year's Budget, and we hope that together at both sides of the aisle we would work on delivering the Bread and Butter. Please, join us in delivering the Bread and Butter budget, but not just for our constituents, but for your own Constituencies as well. We hope that with the successful implementation of next year's Budget, not only we will provide more rice for all Sierra Leoneans, but by the end of next year, we would actually be providing "Chicken and Chips" for more Sierra Leoneans. May God bless us all and I thank you very much [*Applause*].

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members of Parliament, I move that the Bill entitled the Appropriation Acts of 2020, being an Act to authorise expenditure from the consolidated fund for the services of Sierra Leone and for other related matters be read the second time. Thank you very much.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[The Bill entitled the Appropriation Acts 2020, being an Act to Authorise Expenditure from the Consolidated Fund for the services of Sierra Leone for the Year 2020, and for other related matters has been read the second time]

COMMITTEE STAGE

HON. FRANCIS A. KAISAMBA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, pursuant to Standing Order 64[2 &3] in tandem with Section 112[6] of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone, I now move that the Appropriation Bill 2020, be committed to the Committee of Supplies.

MR CHAIRMAN: Any seconder?

HON. JOSEPH W. LAMIN: Mr Speaker, I so second the Motion.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[The Bill has been committed to the Committee of Supplies]

MR CHAIRMAN: The Committee of Supplies will start its proceedings on Wednesday, through to Friday of next week and Monday and Tuesday. Madam Minister, you are excused for now. And incidentally, on those five days, any Vote Controller who is not present on those days will suffer the consequence of having their estimate suspended from consideration by the Committee of Supplies. I repeat, any Vote Controller not present during those five days when the Committee on Supplies is considering the estimate, will suffer the consequence of having their estimate suspended until further notice. Shall we move on please?

V. Motion of the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service

PROPOSER: HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS

SECONDER: HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE

MR CHAIRMAN: Yes Mr leader, let us proceed!

HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is assumed that number 1 and 2 was read and accepted.

MR CHAIRMAN: It is not assumed, it is a fact!

1. Introduction

HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS: Thank you, I therefore want to move straight to 39th Sittings of the Committee on Friday 15th November, 2019. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service that is charged with the responsibility of vetting Presidential nominees to select the most fitted and qualified persons to serve in public offices met on Friday, 15th November, 2019 and interviewed a Presidential Nominee for appointment to the position:

2. Procedure

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Committee conducted the hearing within the ambit of its established criteria. The Committee requested for public inputs into the vetting process to ascertain the suitability of the nominee for his proposed Appointment and Members strenuously examined the specified documents provided by the nominee. The Committee also ensured that the nominee was cleared of any criminal record by the Criminal Investigations Department [CID] and further assured itself that the nominee has the relevant qualification and necessary back up experience to mend such important office of state. Probing questions put to the nominee covered wide ranging issues pertaining to his track records in other pertinent work situations, his declared Assets and Liabilities, fulfilment of his Tax obligations to the State and his visions for a successful and nationally productive tenure.

3. 39th Sittings of the Committee on Friday 15th November, 2019

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

[i] Mr Abubakarr Karim, Proposed Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Forestry,

Mr Abubakarr Karim was a Presidential Adviser and Ambassador at large on Trade and Investment. He is a Medical specialist and IBM Clinical Research Coordinator. He was a representative of BHB, GN and BA Project Management. Reacting to probing inquiries, Mr Abubakarr Karim deposed that, "he has had a passion for Food Security. Arcing to that of His Excellency the President, and in other to be able to achieve that in line with His Excellency's declaration, it is my determination to ensure that every Member of Parliament has a Farm. I think we should work towards allocating specific areas where they will be able to farm and not just about working, it is about bringing variety of 5Mln of hectare of hectares of variable land with two climatic conditions and I think we should be able to produce our own rice and feed ourselves. We only have to ensure that we bring people where we can develop the right type of varieties".

RECOMMENDATION:

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Committee judged the Presidential Nominee to be fit and qualify for his proposed appointment, and that he is recommended to the House for approval.

[i] Mr Abubakarr Karim, Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Forestry;

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the extract from the eighth report is a unanimous decision of the Committee. I therefore move that the extract of the eighth report of the Second Session of the Committee of Appointments and the Public Service be adopted by the House and that the recommendations contained therein be approved. The Report is signed by: Honourable Dickson M. Rogers, Acting Chairman.

MR CHAIRMAN: Any seconder?

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: I so second, Mr Speaker.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[Motion of the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service has been Adopted and Approved]

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

THE SPEAKER: On behalf of the House, I wish to convey our congratulations and felicitations to Mr Abubakarr Karim and to wish him well in his new assignment. The promise he has made to Members of Parliament, that he will ensure that each Member has a farm; we hope that promise is not an empty one, but it will actually be actualised through his effort. Every Member of this House, before too long would be proud to stand here and say they have a farm *[Applause]*. I thank you, and you go to that Ministry with our blessings, we wish you well, thank you.

Do you have announcements Honourable Members? We will now take an adjournment. I have just been reminded by the Committee of Supplies, that they will start work on Wednesday through to Tuesday of the following week, but that does not mean that we should not meet on Tuesday.

ADJOURNMENT

[The House rose at 2:30 pm and was adjourned to Tuesday 26th November, 2019 at 10:00 am prompt]