

OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

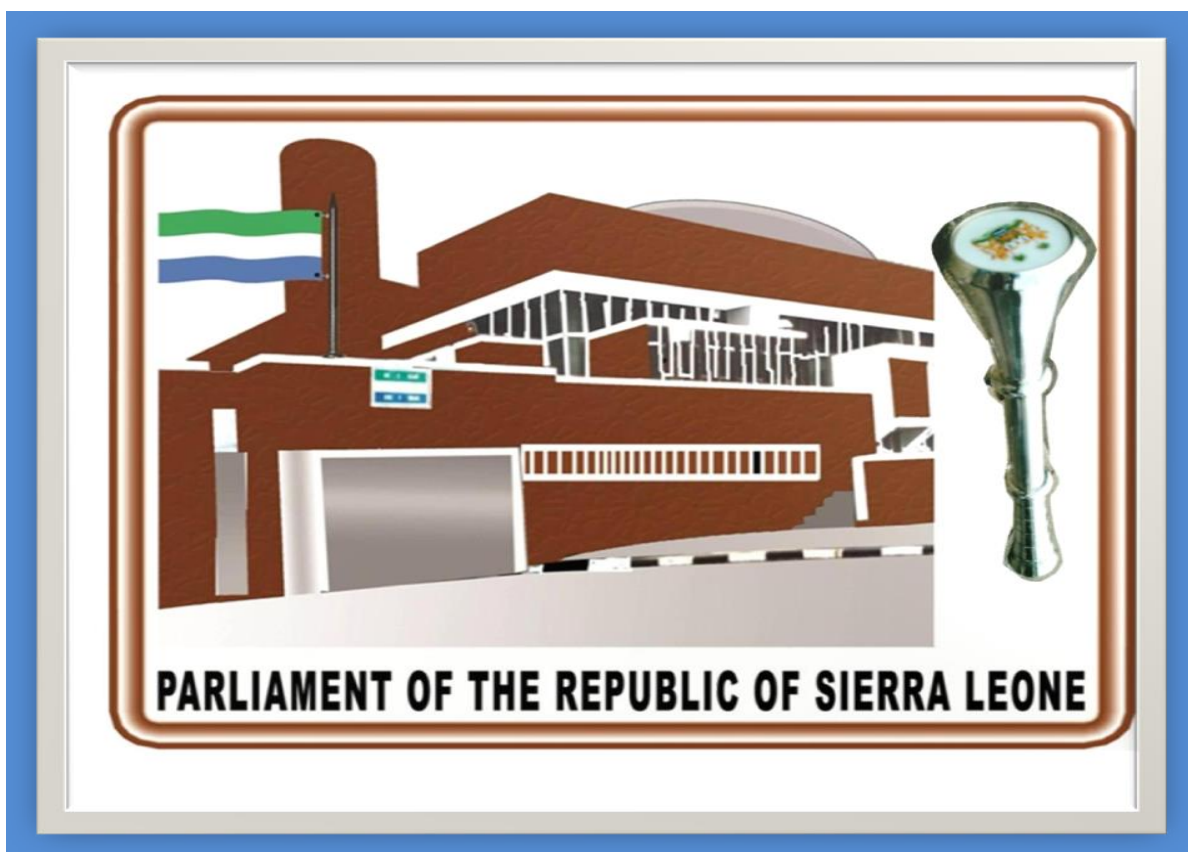
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

ON THE:

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS, DELIVERED BY THE PRESIDENT, DR ERNEST BAI KOROMA, ON THE OCCASION OF STATE OPENING OF THE SECOND SESSION OF THE FOURTH PARLIAMENT OF THE SECOND REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE, IN THE CHAMBER OF PARLIAMENT, ON FRIDAY, 20TH DECEMBER, 2013.

**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT
SECONDT SESSION-SECOND MEETING
TUESDAY, 28TH JANUARY, 2014**

SESSION 2013/2014



OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

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

Proceedings of the Sitting of the House
Held on Tuesday, 28th January, 2014.

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PROPOSER: HON. CLAUDE D. M. KAMANDA

SECONDER: HON. SIDI M.TUNIS



THE CHAMBER OF PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE

Official Hansard Report of the Proceedings of the House

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

Tuesday, 28th January, 2014.

The House met at 10:00 a.m. in Parliament Building, Tower Hill, Freetown.

I. PRAYERS

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

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

The House was called to Order

HON. CLAUDE D. M. KAMANDA: Mr Speaker, I want to move an amendment on the Order Paper for today. I want Honourable Sidi M. Tunis to second the motion, instead of Honourable Ansumana J. Kaikai.

II. CORRECTION OF VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS FOR THE PARLIAMENTARY SITTING HELD ON THURSDAY, 23RD JANUARY, 2014

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, we go through the record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting held on Thursday, 23rd January, 2014. As usual, we start page by page. Page 1? Page 2? Page 3? Page 4? Page 5? Page 6? There being no amendment, can somebody move for the adoption of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting held on Thursday, 23rd January, 2014?

HON. ALHAJI S. DUMBUYA: Mr Speaker, I so move.

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON ALIE KALOKOH: I so second, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Any counter motion?

(Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to)

(Record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting held on Thursday, 23rd January, 2014, was unanimously adopted as presented).

III. MOTION OF THANKS TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT, DR ERNEST BAI KOROMA

PROPOSER: HON. CLAUDE D.M. KAMANDA

SECONDER: HON. Sidi M.TUNIS

(FIRST ALLOTTED DAY)

HON. CLAUDE D. M. KAMANDA (*Chief Whip of the House*): Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, be it resolved that we the Members of Parliament, here assembled wish to thank His Excellency the President, for the Address he so graciously delivered on the occasion of State Opening of the Second Session of the Fourth Parliament of the Second Republic of Sierra Leone, in the Chamber of Parliament, held on Friday, 20th December, 2013.

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON. SIDI M. TUNIS: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I second the motion.

(Question Proposed)

HON. CLAUDE D. M. KAMANDA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we are here this morning to perform a duty, as Honourable Members of this Parliament. It is a constitutional duty we are elected to Parliament to perform. This duty is to thank His Excellency the President, for the Address he so graciously delivered in this Chamber, on Friday, 20th December, 2013.

Mr Speaker, as I said, this is a constitutional duty enshrined in the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone. And this opportunity comes every year. We must seize this opportunity to commend the President for what he has done last year and beyond. We are also here this morning to look at what his plans are for next year. We must seize this opportunity to highlight some of the challenges encountered by the government during the implementation of programmes and policies of the last year and make suggestions and recommendations.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, indeed, the motion says that Members of Parliament, here assembled wish to thank His Excellency the President, for the Address he so graciously delivered in this House. Mr Speaker, I made some research on other Parliaments and I came to know that in other jurisdictions, they call such an Address as 'a Speech from the Throne.' Other Legislatures call it 'the Gracious Speech.' That tells you the authority and sovereignty it depicts. Above all, Mr Speaker, it also tells you the humility and respect it deserves. In the United States of America, even the Flag is respected because it depicts the identity of the State and

its people. In Britain, the British respect not only their country's Flag, but the Speech from the Throne. I want to urge each and every Member of Parliament to see this day as a day for us to speak to the President. This is the only opportunity the Constitution provides for us to talk to the President on issues bordering on the development of this nation. This is an opportunity for Members of Parliament to examine what the President has done for this nation; what we feel is ought to be done; and our recommendations for the furtherance of Sierra Leone. As an Institution, Parliament is the main Organ of government. Therefore, we are part of governance process of the State and the President is the head of government.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the President of this nation comes from a political party, under which he was elected as President. Whether people like him and the party he represents or not, we should respect his office as the President of this country. Let us do that by showing our respect and do justice to this Speech. How can we do that? We can do that by commending the President for what he has done for this country. And this is what we need to do as Members of Parliament.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I know Members of Parliament, especially those on the other side, will pay more attention on the challenges this government has been encountering. But I want to say here that you will not be hitting the waves. You will not be making any good news because the President did highlight, in his Speech, some of the challenges he faced last year. So, you will not be making any news at all by citing them. I want to urge each and every Member of Parliament not to only focus on the challenges but make reasonable and valuable recommendations to the government. It is only when you do this people will admire you as a valuable Member of Parliament.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in his inaugural speech, the President mentioned that this particular Parliament is a Parliament of difference. He said this because we now have a colleague Member of Parliament as Speaker of this Honourable House. The Clerk of this Honourable House is also a former Member of Parliament. Therefore, we need to act in like manner to show the people of this country that we know how to discuss issues of national importance. We should be mindful of the fact that the world is watching us; the Judiciary is listening to us; and the Press is with

us to report to the public what is happening in this House. So, I want to urge each and every Member of Parliament, as this is the first Presidential Address of this 'New Parliament. This is a new Parliament in the sense that, we have an Honourable Member of Parliament as Speaker of this House. We must make sure that members of the public see a difference in the way we debate this Presidential Address.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we need the presence of Vote Controllers to be in this Well, while this debate on the Presidential Address is going on. I am saying this because we will be talking about how they have used government money. Politicians are heads of the Ministries, Departments or Agencies, yet still, Civil Servants are the Vote Controllers and they need to hear us to listen to our observations, comments and recommendations.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, before I take my seat, I want to take this opportunity to caution each and every Member of Parliament that this is a Parliament with a difference and the world is watching us. Let us make the difference by discussing issues of national importance. Let us commend where commendations are needed. Let us make viable suggestions and recommendations to the government, so that at the end of the day, the Clerk and the Leader of this House will be proud enough to go to the President and say, Mr President, after the deliberations of the Presidential Address, these were the suggestions and recommendations made by Members of Parliament for the furtherance of this country.

Therefore, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I urge each and every Member of Parliament to do some research before you stand to make your contribution. I want to also advise Members of Parliament to base their contributions on the activities of the Committees, because the Committees know exactly what is happening in a particular Ministry, Department or Agency. I know that the various Committees in Parliament have been on Oversight functions. Therefore, members of the various Committees in this House know the successes and challenges in those MDAs. Please bring them out and make suggestions or recommendations so that this country will move forward. With these few words, Mr Speaker, I thank you.

HON. SUALIHO M. KOROMA: Thank you Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable members, I rise to make my contribution to the Presidential Address. I thank you very much for giving me this opportunity to open this debate on this side of the ayes. Mr Speaker, as stated on the Order Paper, I will like, on behalf of the people of Constituency 067, Bo City, to thank the President for this policy statement he so graciously delivered to this nation, through the people's representative in this Chamber. Mr Speaker, I want to reiterate that this is a policy statement from the President of this nation. Every Member of Parliament must either have something to say that relates to this document that is not included in this Speech. I will ask every Member of Parliament, especially the other side of the ayes not to prescient this document but look at the critical issues stated in it by the President. It is only when we do this that the people of this country will know that we are representing them well.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let us look at pillar three, on Page 7 of the President's Speech. And Mr Speaker, this has to do with the health sector. For the purpose of this debate, let us look at Paragraph 38. In pillar three, the President talks about the progress we have made in the health sector. The purpose of talking about the health sector is because the health system of this country is not functioning properly. This is because the procedures and measures that have been put in place by Ministers, experts and Civil Servants are not followed.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if you critically look at the Standard Operating Procedure of the Ministry of Health and Sanitation, you will find out that there are six guidelines that must be fulfilled for our health system to be operational. And Mr Speaker, in this Speech, the President spoke about a healthier population. How can we get a healthier population when our health system is not managed properly? The procedures I am talking about are: getting the right commodities, the right quantities, the right qualities; the right place, the right cost and the right time. All of these procedures are not followed in our health sector. If you look at the health sector today, we are not getting the right commodities and the right quantities at the right place. We are not getting the right cost at the right time.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, being a member of the Finance Committee in this House, I could recalled that when we went to the Councils on an Oversight function, we found out that the government is spending a lot of money on cost recovery. This is because we have people in these Ministries and other agencies that do not think that the system that has been put in place for that purpose should function. The cost recovery process is not working. If you go to these hospitals, you will discover that the Cost Recovery Administration is not working and government is losing a lot of funds. I want to inform the Minister of Health that the health system of this country is not working because the procedures used are not properly adhered to.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the President did talk about a healthier population. How can a country be healthy when we do sell expired chicken in the streets of Freetown? How can a population be healthy when the people are selling expired food stuffs in the country? How can the population be healthy when the city is littered with filths and refuses? The government is spending a lot of money on health but we are not achieving what the government is spending for. If the cities of this country are littered with trashes, we cannot have a healthy population.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this government has established a lot of State's institutions. But my question is that why are these institutions not working? Is it because the President is appointing the wrong people to manage these institutions? As Members of Parliament, we should not sit by and allow these institutions to collapse. Almost, all of these State's institutions were established by Acts of Parliament. Where is the Standard Bureau? Where is the Operation WID? Where are the Trade Inspectors? We can invest money into a sector that is viable but we cannot get the required result of the money we are spending.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want us to look at Page 10. Mr Speaker, Paragraph 60 of Page 10 talks about Water Resources. With your leave, Mr Speaker, I read: *"We created a separate Ministry of Water Resources to underscore the importance that government attaches to the sustainable development of this country's water resources to improving the health and wellbeing of Sierra Leoneans."*

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I see part of this Speech as a lip service to this country. I believe seventy-five percent of the health problems in this country is water related issues. Honourable Members of this House can bear me witness that the problems we are facing as a nation are health related problems. I believe if the President can invest massively in infrastructure, Agriculture and Education, why can't he do the same in the health sector?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I call on the President to ensure the allocation of enough resources to the Ministry of Water Resources. I say thanks to the President for creating that Ministry. He created this Ministry because he saw the need for it and for the people of this country. I believe we should not pay lip service to the people of this country. This Address by the President of this nation is very important for the development of this nation. Debate is not about criticising or praise singing, but talking about issues of national importance. And this is what I am doing. The Chief Whip has told us to base our debate on issues we have discovered during our Oversight functions to the respective Committees. I am a member of the Committee on Water Resource and I know the issues of that Ministry. Mr Speaker, the Ministry of Water Resources is one of the Ministries that is underfunded. I believe it is my duty, as a member of the Committee to inform this House about what is happening in that Ministry. That Ministry needs a supplementary budget for it to perform as expected.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I believe all of us have been talking about the Free Health Care. The President has done well; and he has done a lot of things that can make this country moves forward. But it is the responsibility of Members of Parliament to point out issues that are affecting our constituents. Most of these issues are not known by the President. And Mr Speaker, one of the problems we have, as Members of Parliament, is that we are not performing our Oversight responsibilities effectively. Most of these issues cannot be laid to rest because we are neglecting our Oversight responsibilities. As Parliamentarians and as citizens of this country, we have to improve on our Oversight responsibilities so that we can take these Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) to task. We have to make sure that these policies and procedures are followed to the latter.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this Presidential Speech is very critical for the development of this nation. The President, in his wisdom, said in this Speech that even though we have done much in certain sectors, we still face a lot of challenges. Unfortunately, those challenges were not catalogued in this Speech. It is the responsibility of Members of Parliament to examine some these challenges and proffer recommendations to the President for further action. If we do this, it means we are not paying lip service to the people of this country.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, let us take note of what the last Speaker said. In this Address, the President talked about challenges. These have not been highlighted. Bring them out and allow the Opposition to criticise.

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to lend my contribution to the Motion of thanks and appreciation to His Excellency the President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma for the Speech he so graciously delivered in this Well. I am here to perform a sacred duty as a Member of Parliament. Mr Speaker, when the President was delivering his Address on the 20th December, 2013, it was his duty to do so annually. And at that time, it was my right to listen to him. But today, it is my duty to appreciate him and to say thanks to him for this Address. He is listening to me because it is his right to listen to me as I have done. That is always the relationship between every group of individuals.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when you want to thank somebody, I believe the first thing to do as a yardstick, is to tell him who he/she is. Tell him/her your observations before you can appreciate him/her. I believe that the President has never delivered a speech where he claimed perfection. I am a Sierra Leonean and I don't need to hear from him only in Parliament. I can listen to him on radio or Television. I have never heard him claiming to be perfect. He tells people his achievements and later admits that there are challenges. There are still challenges as we speak. In other words, if the President said that there are challenges, then I am in agreement with him. But it is our responsibility to help him in terms of highlighting some of these challenges so that we can address them accordingly.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Member, in Economics, we have what we called 'Opportunity Cost.' And with due respect to my Speaker, who did his sixth form in Economics, Opportunity Cost is the alternative forgone. In other words, you are faced with making a choice between two options. When you choose one, automatically the one you rejected becomes the opportunity cost or the alternative foregone. It is not the alternative postponed. That I will do this and then I will do this later. NO! When you choose one the one is forgone.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, how does the concept of 'Opportunity Cost' applies to Dr Ernest Bai Koroma's government? From my observation, in terms of his development strides, I will start from the road network. Roads are been constructed in every part of the country, starting from Makeni to Kabala, Matotoka to Kono, Maintemi to Yeyi, Yeyi to Koidu City, Kenema to Pendembu, Kenema to Kailahun, Bo to Pujehun, Moyamba Junction to Moyamba, Rogberee Junction to Kambia, Port Loko to Lungi, Lumley to Tokeh etc. Mr Speaker, in terms of the roads construction in this country, is there any alternative foregone? Also, in the construction of major streets in District Head Quarter towns, is there any alternative foregone? I think Dr Ernest Bai Koroma's government worst enemy is 'Opportunity Cost.' He is always trying to undo the principles of Opportunity Cost. That is in terms of development, there is no alternative foregone throughout the length and breadth of Sierra Leone. When you talk about solar lights in all the District Headquarter Towns, is there any alternative foregone? Mr Speaker, is there any alternative foregone in the Free Health Care Programme?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when you talk about the appointment of Ministers and their Deputies, Commissioners and Chairmen of the various Boards across the country, has there been any district without a Minister or a Deputy, a Chairman of a Board or a Commissioner, is there any alternative foregone? I want to say here that Dr Ernest Bai Koroma's government is broad based. There is no alternative foregone. And sometimes when the President chooses to do something now and do the other later, Economists called it 'Scale of Preference.' Scale of preference means 'order of importance.' But Mr Speaker, I want us to know if the Rogberee Junction to Kambia Road was constructed before the Makeni to Kabala

Road. It does not mean that Moyamba Junction to Moyamba Road is less important than Makeni to Kabala Road. This is just a matter of 'Scale of Affordability,' or what we can afford at a time. But with time, all the other areas will be considered as you have seen. Some areas have been completed and some are ongoing.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to tell this Honourable House about the consideration His Excellency the President has for Koinadugu District. For those who do not know, it is my responsibility to tell them. As a Member of Parliament from Koinadugu District and Chairman of the Koinadugu District Caucus, I believe it is my responsibility to tell this Honourable House. Mr Speaker, during the reign of the past regime, Koinadugu District was considered as the land of Gentiles. But under the Presidency of His Excellency, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma, there is neither Jew nor Gentile. We are all equal. Koinadugu District used to experience the visit of the past Head of State about six months to elections. But today, we enjoy the company of His Excellency the President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma. In January, 2014, the President has visited Koinadugu District twice. In fact, he did not use helicopter to go to Kabala. When I heard the information, I went to Faradugu to confirm his arrival. Mr Speaker, after two hours, he appeared with his convoy. When I saw them, I said to myself, S.O. 2, "Ibi, ibi; ibi ma. d President go de ma"... - *(Applause)*.

Mr Speaker Honourable Members, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma is a man of his words. He does whatever he says. He went there to open up a very fine first class building which is being used as a Primary School. He opened three different schools built by a patriotic son of Koinadugu, Momoh Conteh. And that is one of the challenges some of us have now. In three years, he has built three schools. And His Excellency the President, patronised with the people of Koinadugu to open those schools. That is a good example for others to follow.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as I said earlier, Koinadugu District has been considered as the desert of Sierra Leone. Let me inform you now that if you want to spend New Year in Kabala next year, you will meet pipe borne water in Kabala. And to mitigate any problem, there will be waste pipes. That is what this government has done for the people of Koinadugu District.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Koinadugu District has the highest illiteracy rate as compared to any other district in the country. We need help in the district. His Excellency the President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma, has started and he has promised to continue. That is why he has made up his mind to relocate the school to the Youth Village in Koinadugu District. Koinadugu is part of Sierra Leone. Therefore, this Parliament should make sure that education is provided in the district.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Kabala Town, in Koinadugu District was considered as the darkest city in Sierra Leone. When I went there sometimes ago, I saw solar street lights everywhere. I thought it was another world Mr speaker. That is what this government can do. Mr Speaker, when I was driving yesterday, I saw the front page of a newspaper that says: "*SLPP will rise again.*" I said sure, it will rise again. But Mr Speaker, how soon will the SLPP rise again? One thing I like about the SLPP Party is that the party has intelligent people. Mr Speaker, I was listening to the Monologue Programme and two SLPP supporters were presenting a stainless Flag Bearer, John Kerry. I learnt from those speakers that the first time to win the next election is the first day after you lose the previous election. And I said to myself, indeed, SLPP will rise again. But now it is over 400 days after losing the previous elections.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as part of my constitutional duty, I would like to make some recommendations to this government. When I was a member of the parliamentary Committee on Labour, I learnt that the Local Contents Policy is not being properly implemented. Most of these foreign companies in this country do not have any legal document to tell them that they should employ our brothers and sisters in their companies. Therefore, foreign staff are being listed as drivers and cooks, whilst Sierra Leoneans are hustling for jobs. Do you want to tell me that there are no qualified Sierra Leoneans to serve as drivers and sweepers in those companies? Are there not Sierra Leoneans? That is one of the areas that His Excellency needs to take care of, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to talk about our Minerals in this country. Sierra Leone is blessed with abundant Minerals like diamond, iron ore, bauxite, etc. In this 21st Century, Iron ore is being taken out ceaselessly to other countries

without delays. I am recommending that we have secondary production companies in this country. Well, some people will say we lack the Energy to process these raw materials in this country. But I want to assure Members of Parliament that we will have it as soon as possible. Let the iron ore be processed here so that the unemployed youths will be employed.

Finally, Mr Speaker Honourable Members, I want to join hands (with all my heart), with the Minority Leader, Honourable Dr Bernadette Lahai in making a recommendation. She makes this recommendation almost any time she stands here to debate. I want to recommend that the PWD system be restored because roads need continuous maintenance. If you fail to maintain the roads that have been constructed, they will not last as expected. And at the end of the day, we go back to zero Mr Speaker. When I was a small boy, I used to see some of the PWD workers repairing our roads. They were permanently employed to ensure that our roads are in good condition. I think that will be good for the development of this nation. I thank you very much.

HON. KOMBA E. KOEDOYOMA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, one of the duties of Members of Parliament is to deliberate on the issues raised by His Excellency the President, in his annual Address to this nation, through their representatives. Today, I am happy to be part of that process and to add my own voice in terms of thanking him for delivering this Speech. The former Leader of the majority party, who is now the Speaker of this Honourable House, has been reminding Members of Parliament about issues pertaining to truths. He always says: *"to thyself be true."* Therefore, it behooves me to come up with certain truths that might not be good to some of us in this House, but will provide the way forward for our development purpose.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as a Parliament, we must be thankful to His Excellency the President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma. Honestly, before I went out yesterday, I got a text message on my phone. After reading the content of the text message, I became over joyous. I am sure it was also the case for every Member of Parliament on this side. We must thank the President that what he did say here to

us has come out effectively in our various bank accounts. So, on behalf of this Honourable House, I must say thanks to the President for doing what he promised to do for us. The President has taken some bold steps in his second term of office. I think we must thank him for taking those bold steps. Although in his words, we still have lots of challenges that must be pointed out and addressed, I am thankful to the Chief Whip for letting us know that we can bring solutions to the many challenges that His Excellency the President has not been able to address.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Speech of His Excellency the President, delivered on Friday, 20th December, 2013 in this Honourable House, is considered by me to be one of the most beautiful Speeches in this Parliament. The President was very brief but to the point. He did not waste too much of words on issues that are needed to be addressed. But what I found most disturbing in the course of the delivery of this Speech was the reference he made at the end of each paragraph that "*nobody will stop us.*" The question is who will stop you from doing good things for this country? I am appealing to the President to continue doing the good job he has started. Mr Speaker, few issues worried me when I was reading this Speech; and it is our responsibilities to address the issues raised in this Speech at the beginning of every year. So, we are beginning the exercise in providing the necessary solutions for the many problems he has highlighted in this Speech.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will first of all talk about the problem of managing our natural resources. The Honourable Member from Koinadugu District made the issue very clear. Why do we need to export our raw materials in this 21st Century to be processed in other countries? The manner in which they are exported is not good for this country. The quantum of other resources involved could not be ascertained. Let me tell you something Mr Speaker, Honourable Members. Some few years ago, I was a member of the Mines and Minerals Committee and we took a tour to the Rutile Mining site. We were taken around and shown the processes involved in the mining of Rutile and how the final product is derived. But within the process, there were also other minerals which were not involved in the Rutile Agreement, but those minerals were exported without accounting for them to the Sierra Leone

Government. Mr Speaker, we are losing lots of natural resources which could benefit this nation. The President needs to revisit these mining Agreements that are in currently under implementation. When we look at the iron ore, which is now been sent across the seas to China or other countries, the same process applies. I am reliably informed that a lot of other minerals are included in that Iron Ore Agreement, they are not adequately accounted for. So, I think we need to revisit these mining Agreements so that we will be able to have as much from our minerals. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am worried about what is happening with our natural resources. In addition to that, there are also environmental issues as far as these mining activities are concerned. I particularly refer to the mining process which is now taking place in Koidu City. The activities of these mining companies are very disturbing not only to the environment, but also to human convenience. You cannot spend quiet moments when the blasting is taking place in those mining areas. So, the government needs to look into those issues, even though His Excellency spoke about it in his Speech.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to talk about the health sector. We must thank the President for admitting that his efforts to ensure good health care available to all has not been achieved. Mr Speaker, it will interest you to know that the poor and less privileged that should be having these facilities are not benefitting from these facilities because of the attitudes of some officers who are in charge of these Projects. Previous speakers have made references to our health system and those of us who come from the extreme borders of this country suffer a great deal. Our people are not benefitting from these facilities. The President has gone all out to make available to the people of this country. Mr Speaker, much effort is needed in that regard, so that these facilities can reach to the targeted group. If we fail to do this, it is an effort in futility. In that regard, I would advise that the President with his Advisers review this process so that the people can benefit from what is meant for them. The President has made a lot of significant progress in that direction. The supply of drugs, the salaries of workers in the health sector are now favourable. Although the people are benefitting a lot, but there are still problems which need to be addressed. If we do this, intentions of His Excellency the President will reach the

intended beneficiaries. I say so because in my village, there is a health centre. Interestingly, the health centre is being managed by two female officers. But unfortunately, the medicines intended for the lactating mothers and children do not get to the people, but instead, they are sold even before they reach the health centres. These are some of the issues the President needs to look into very seriously.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the President spoke about education in his Speech. The level of our educational output is nothing to write home about. Mr Speaker himself and a lot of us here have taught before. And I am sure some of our students who are Members of Parliament here as we sit together know what we did when we were teachers. But my worry is the teachers. In as much as they need government to look after their welfare, they also need to consider it as a national responsibility to take care of the children. These days, Mr Speaker, there are glut of schools in the country. And the way those schools are administered threatens the standard of education in this country. Sierra Leone used to be known as the 'Athens of West Africa.' People came to this country in search of education. But today, people shy away from coming to Sierra Leone. Why should this happen, Mr Speaker? I am happy to note that the Minister of Education, Science and Technology is working hard but he has spent too much time in chasing 'ghost teachers.' This '*ghost teachers*' issue should now be laid to rest so that we can move forward with the policy. I know the ghost teachers are within our educational system, but we have wasted so much time in looking for them.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank the President for taking off the burden of some of us as parents who have children in universities. Thank you very much for considering the cry of the parents that the fees in the various universities are more than what the parents of this country could afford. But having listened to the cries of the people, you have considered it necessary to take off some of the burdens from the parents. Thank you once more for continuing to pay for internal and external examinations fee for the National Primary School Examination (NPSE), Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) and the West African Senior

Secondary Schools Certificate Examination (WASSSCE). Thank you very much Mr President for your visionary leadership. Mr Speaker, when the Minister of Education was interviewed on the Monologue Programme, he admitted that our schools lacked supervisors in the entire country for a long period. As a result of this, many of our schools are doing things without making reference to school supervisors because they are non-existence. School authorities are now admitting pupils who did not qualify to be in those classes. That is pupils who did not pass NPSE and BECE examinations were admitted without the requirements set by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to talk about the youths. The President, in his Speech, said that he was going to dedicate his entire administration to the youths of this country. Mr Speaker, this is a herculean task. I am saying this because we need to first of all ask ourselves if the youths are willing to take that challenge posed to them by His Excellency the President. The answer is no. Our youths are not in the best frame of mind to take those challenges. This is because they are not responsible, and they are not focused. However, we have few youths who are responsible. I live in the East End of Freetown and what I am saying is out of experience and my relationship with the youths. They are not my constituents. My Constituents are farmers; and they are responsible. They go to school in the morning and in the afternoon, they go to their farms to help their parents. But many of the youth in the urban centres do not have that focus. How can you employ a youth who has not learnt skill? Of what use will that youth be in the job? Those were my worries Mr Speaker, The President has good intention for the youths; but are they ready? I think, we have to start with the school system. We should start training our youths whilst they are young so that as they grow up, we begin to teach them how to take directives and instructions. The youths of nowadays are lawless. Like I did say, I live in the East End of Freetown, among the poorest people in this country. I always commune with them and try to make them happy in terms of challenging their inbuilt abilities... - *(Interruption)*.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Komba E. Koedoyoma, do you see Honourable Mabinty Fornah as a Youth?

HON. KOMBA E. KOEDOYOMA: Yes Mr Speaker. She is a very young lady and I see her as my daughter. So, my appeal to the people's representatives in this Honourable House is for us to come up with solutions that will help the President of this nation in solving the problems of the youths. We have a crisis at hand and if it is not addressed immediately, we might have problems in our old age.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to talk about Pillar 4, which has to do with International Competitiveness in our Transport System. Mr Speaker, even though the President said that they have done a lot to build bus stops, I am yet to find bus stops in Koidu City. There are no bus stops in that city. And that applies to many other major towns in this country. Mr Speaker, we have to be true to ourselves. Let me just proffer some advice for the challenges.

HON. CHERNOR R. M. BAH: Mr Speaker, I rise on SO 34. I want my colleague Honourable Member from Kono to guide us in terms of the specific part of the Speech where the President talked about 'Bus stops'.

HON. KOMBA E. KOEDOYOMA: Possibly Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I did not use his exact words, but let me read the exact words he used. I will refer my colleague Honourable Member to Paragraph 87, Page 14 of the President's Speech. With the leave of Mr Speaker, I will read: "*... we have reverted the Road Transport Corporation by building passenger terminals.*" Mr Speaker, I do not see any reason why my colleague is disturbed.

HON. CHERNOR R. M. BAH: Mr Speaker, if I do have the permission of my colleague ... - *(Interruption)*

HON. KOMBA E. KOEDOYOMA: Mr Speaker, I will refuse to grant him permission.

THE SPEAKER: Proceed, Honourable Member.

HON. KOMBA E. KOEDOYOMA: Thank you Mr Speaker. The President was very sincere when he said that there were lots of challenges. The previous speakers have

been forthright in accepting this as a challenge, not only for His Excellency the President, but for all Members of Parliament. For example, we have a lot of challenges in the school system. There is no discipline among our youths; and that is the reason for our poor educational standards. We need to institute stringent measures to make sure our students behave in the most acceptable manner. Otherwise, Mr Speaker, our teachers in the school system will be doing worthless job. So, I believe that lawlessness in the school system should be addressed as one of the serious challenges this nation faces. We also need to be paying our teachers on time. They have no other resource income except what they get as salary at the end of each month. And this is what the Honourable Paramount Chief from Tonkolili was talking about. I was making reference to him in terms of the length of time it has taken to verify teachers. We should now put the action into play so that the teachers can feel satisfied and be able to carry out their work. I have already talked about health sector of this country. I beg to differ from the Honourable Paramount Chief because I am also a trained and qualified teacher. I taught for twenty years and I know what obtains in the school system. At the tail end of my career as a teacher, I was almost in a very senior position in the school administration. Therefore, I know that it took so long for a teacher to get approval and begin to receive his or her salary on time. It is not a motivating factor for a teacher to stay in the classroom for two to three years without being paid. I believe that if we approve teachers based on competent and useful information provided by that teacher, then the process will be easier.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me give you an example. When I was in Ghana, the Ghanaian system of education operates differently from ours. They have the 'Ghana Teaching Service.' The Ghanaians have a Teaching Service which is almost like the Administrative Wing. Well, I have just been reminded by the Minority Leader that we have a Teaching Service Commission in this country; but unfortunately, it is still not functional. What I will suggest, as a solution to this problem, is that we make our Teaching Service Commission effective and functional so that it can take charge of the responsibilities of recruiting, dismissal and retiring of teachers. That is what the Commission in Ghana does. Teachers should apply in

their district headquarter towns and their applications are processed in the district so that you will not have cause to be moving teachers from one area to the other. The District Teaching Commission would take charge of teachers in that district. It would be responsible for transferring and replacing teachers as the need arises. I will also advise that this Commission be put into effective use.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the President did talk about his efforts in terms of road construction. I want to applaud him for that move. He is doing a wonderful job. The last speaker spoke about Opportunity Cost. But in terms of State administration, Opportunity Cost has nothing to do. This is a question of what you can do, based on the resources available. Let us look at the roads in our cities. Those of us who commute from the East End of the city to this House find it difficult to attend Parliamentary proceedings on time. Those coming from the provinces in the morning to attend parliamentary sittings find it difficult to access Parliament on time. This is because it is still not publicised. What I am saying is that the roads must be maintained on a regular basis. The Honourable Member of Parliament from Koinadugu District was making reference to that. In olden days, they had Public Works Department (PWD) whose workers were attached to every sector of the roads. Wherever there was a road, you had Public Workers there. Let me make it more explicit, as my senior colleague Honourable Member has been saying. Every five kilometers of road should be measured to see how best we can maintain the existing roads. Some of these roads are so bushy that sometimes people are afraid that they might run into another moving vehicle; or run into an object unknowingly. Therefore, the road system must be properly addressed. I am particularly making reference to Honourable Members on the Committee on Works to take note of what I am saying. They should note this and make some refined reference of that in their recommendations to their respective Ministry.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to conclude by telling the President that in as much as we thank and appreciate him, we are still worried about the level of lawlessness that pervades the entire nation. There is lawlessness, even in this Parliament, lawlessness in the Streets, lawlessness in the market places, lawlessness among the commercial drivers, lawlessness in the schools, lawlessness in the

hospitals and lawlessness everywhere. Mr Speaker, Operation 'WID' should be strengthened so that defaulters would be made to suffer. Mr Speaker, if you go to Banjul, it will interest you to know that street trading is strictly prohibited on major streets. In Freetown, it is the right of the traders to trade in the middle of the streets. So, I am appealing to the President to strengthen our law enforcement agencies to ensure that street traders are removed from the streets so that we can have free vehicular movement unhindered. Mr Speaker, the amount of useful working hours lost as a result of this traffic congestion cannot be quantified. I believe our resources should not go down the drain. On that note, Mr Speaker, Honourable members, I want to thank you for giving me this opportunity.

HON. DR MICHEL SHO-SAWYER: Mr Speaker, I thank you for giving me this privilege to contribute to the Address so graciously delivered on the occasion of State Opening of the Second Session of the Fourth Parliament of the Second Republic of Sierra Leone in this Chamber, by His Excellency the President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma. Mr Speaker, I will be addressing two key areas in my contribution. Mr Speaker, in showing my appreciation to His Excellency the President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma, I want to say congratulations and kudos to him.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in the book of John, Chapter 1, verse 1, with the leave of the Speaker I will read: *"In the beginning was the word and the word was with him, and the word was God. And he was with God in the beginning. Through him, all things were made, without him, nothing was made that has been made. In him, was life and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness but the darkness has not understood it. There came a man who was sent from God, his name was John. He came to witness and to testify concerning that light so that through him all men might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the true light that gives everyman coming into the world."*

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, they say History always repeats itself; and I believe, on Friday, 29th November, 2013, we had our own John in this Chamber and John came to witness the light in the person of Dr Kelfala Marah who came to present the national Budget on Friday, 20th December, 2013. Hence, he came to deliver what will bring light to Sierra Leone. Mr Speaker, with your permission, I will

read the book of Genesis 1:1. It says: *"In the beginning, God created the Heavens and the Earth; the earth was formless and empty, darkness was all over the surface and the Spirit of God was covering all over the waters. And God said, let there be light; and there was light."*

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, on Friday, 29th November, 2013, Dr Kelfala Marah was here to deliver his national Budget Speech to the people of this nation, through the representatives of the people. Mr Speaker, on Page 12, Paragraph 69 of the Budget Speech, states that 'wages and salaries are projected at 1.36bln and 6.6% of the GDP. The provision for wages and salaries will accommodate the minimum wage of Le480, 000 per worker.' Mr Speaker, with your leave, I want to take this Honourable House to Paragraph 5 of the Presidential Address. It says: *"We are committed to the dictum that today is better than yesterday, this is why we have acted to ensure that the minimum wage today is better than yesterday."* The President has proclaimed light and there was light.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to take this Honourable House to the Government Budget and Statement of the Economy and Financial Policies for the Financial Year, 2007 delivered by Mr John O. Benjamin on Friday, 27th October, 2006. In that Budget the health sector was provided with Le35bln. Today, the health sector, under Dr Ernest Bai Koroma is provided with Le99.1bln...-(*Interruption*).

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, at that time, don't you think that the money projected by Mr John Benjamin was so much money? It was so much money at that time. If you are making the comparison, please know that it was a lot of money by then.

HON. MICHEL SHO-SWAYER: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the point I am trying to make is that the Le35bln that was provided was not used properly because there was no health care services provided to the citizens of this country. The money was only stated on paper Mr Speaker. It was not utilised prudently. Today, I will give you information on how the money that was allocated by this present government for the health sector was spent. During the days of the SLPP, we had 17.8% of women giving birth in hospitals. Today, we have over 60% women giving birth in

the hospitals. Also, during the days of the SLPP's regime, we had below 40% children that were immunised. Today, we have over 83% children that are immunised. Today, we have over 20 PHUs that are constructed, over five hospitals and eleven CHCs that are up-graded across the country. We can also boast of the Free Health Care Programme which is not available, even in developed countries. Mr Speaker, these are the areas where the money that has been allocated for the health sector will be spent.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to talk about the infection rate of Malaria. During the days of the SLPP regime, the infection rate was above 70%; but today, it has decreased to 43%. Mr Speaker, as a recommendation, I will recommend to the Ministry of Trade and others Ministries that there should be 'consumer protection agency in this country. There should also be a price control mechanism in the country. Today, salaries have been increased for government workers. Tomorrow, the landlords will start to increase their rentage fees. Shop owners will also increase prices of commodities. So, for those who have received increased salaries, I am asking that the Ministry of Trade take what I am saying now into consideration. There should be price control system in the country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I also want to talk about the youths of this country. With your leave, I want to read Page 9, Paragraph 52 of the Speech of His Excellency the President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma. It says: *"Most of the programmes of my government are dedicated to the youths of this country. Two of the largest targets of the landmark Free Health Care Initiative are pregnant women. And young mothers are overwhelmingly female youths, who fall between the age bracket of 18 and 35. Our payment of fees for all students taking WASCE in schools is for you. The thousands of employment opportunities being created by mining, agriculture, road construction, companies, NaCSA and Public Work Schemes are for the youths."*

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I took my time to bring that up because I have been listening to the radio where some youth activists were saying that the allocation for the youths is very small. They are saying that the Ministry of Youths Affairs was only provided with the sum of Le1.5bln. I want the youths and youth activists to take into consideration the money that was provided for the Ministry of

education, Science and Technology. There is an allocation for the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs. These allocations are provided for the youths of this country. Furthermore, part of the allocation for the Ministry of Health and Sanitation is also going to take care of youth issues in the country. The Free Health Care Scheme is also going to take care of some of the problems of the youths.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, a considerable percentage of our pregnant women in this country are youths. I think the President has worked hard to ensure a healthy population in this country. He has also provided thousands of jobs for the youths in the mining sector, agriculture and other sectors in the country. Also, there is a special fund that he has made available for the youths who want to specialise in education. There is also a special fund provided in the Ministry of Labour and Industrial Relations for the provision of job creation centres. Mr Speaker, there is also a Youth Village of Excellence that is being built for the youths of this country. And there is a 'Skills Fund' available for the youths of this country. So, the youth issues have been addressed and this government will continue to address youth issues as they emerge. It is left with the youth to take advantage of these opportunities that have been provided for them by His Excellency the President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma. I stand here as a youth to thank His Excellency the President, for all that he has provided for us, especially the youths of my constituency, Constituency 108.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will like to say in my final statement... - *(Interruption)*.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Michelle Sho-Sawyer, is Bumah part of your constituency?

HON. DR MICHEL SHO-SAWYER: Yes Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: You may proceed, Honourable Member.

HON. DR MICHEL SHO-SAWYER: And for the information of this House, anyone who is in need of fertilizer for Agricultural purposes should contacts me. Throughout History, there have been great men and women that have provided enviable leadership in their respective countries. We have had people like Mahatma Gandhi of

India, Nelson Mandela of South Africa, Winston Churchill of Great Britain, Moses of Egypt, Martin Luther King of the United States, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana and today, we are proud His Excellency the President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma. I thank you Mr Speaker.

HON. EDWARD STYLE JENGO: I thank you Mr Speaker for giving me this opportunity to contribute to this Motion of thanks to His Excellency the President. I am going to be very brief in my contribution. With your leave, Mr Speaker, I want to refer this Honourable House to Pillar 2 of this Speech. Mr Speaker, Pillar 2 of the President's Speech talks about the management of our natural resources. In his words, the President told us that the recent reforms and ongoing projects in the Ministry of Mines and Mineral Resources have resulted to huge national developmental preparedness to achieve the 'Agenda for Prosperity.' To a very large extent, Mr Speaker, I totally agree with him. I am currently hosting the oldest and one of the biggest mining companies in this country; which is the Sierra Rutile. I speak here with authority, as member of the Mines and Minerals Committee. We have travelled the lengths and breadths of this country. I agree with the President Mr Speaker. But it is also my duty, as a Member of Parliament, to let this House know that there are issues confronting the mining companies in this country. Sierra Rutile is the oldest mining company in this country. They started operations in Sierra Leone immediately after the war. People grumbled about the mining concessions given to the London Mining and African Minerals Limited. I want this House to know that Sierra Rutile has benefitted a lot in terms mining concessions. Half of the funds to start the operations of Sierra Rutile were provided by the government of Sierra Leone. There are free concessions in terms of equipment. But yet, Sierra Rutile cannot point at a single medical health centre built by them for the benefit of our people living in that area. I am talking from a position of authority. I have been to London Mining several times. I have been to African Minerals and I say kudos to the Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) that are managing those companies.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to inform this House that my constituents are not benefitting from the proceeds of the minerals extracted from their land. We are going to put a stop to the \$5.00 (five dollars) they pay for an acre of land as

mining concession fee. That is too cheap for our comfort. We need to revisit all mining Agreements signed with these mining companies. We have to revisit these Agreements in due course. We should not allow our children to see some of these mining Agreements because they are not favourable. Mr Speaker, we should not allow our children to judge us on the grounds of posterity. An illustrious writer, Frank Fanon, once said: *"Out of relative obscurity, every generation has a mission to fulfill; and when you fail to fulfill that responsibility, posterity will hold you responsible."*

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Sierra Rutile is not helping our people with basic social amenities; such as good drinking water, schools, health centers etc. Electricity cables are passed over the roofs of the communities that own the lands, but those communities are not benefiting from that electricity. That is totally unacceptable Mr Speaker. The days of exploiting our minerals are over. I was sent here by my people to represent them and I am sad to inform you that my people are very unhappy.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when I was going through the dailies last week, in one of the tabloids, it was written that 'Sierra Rutile on massive localisation.' That statement was fake, Mr Speaker. There was no localisation going on. I am in a better position to tell you how they operate. In fact, I have serious issues with them and I am going to crave the indulgence of Honourable Members to help me unmask some of these problems. As recent as November last year, about thirty employees were laid off without going through the right procedures. That is a violation of their human rights. And they were asked to quit the premises of Sierra Rutile within 24 hours. Mr Speaker, from what I was told, the CEO even hired trucks to evacuate these employees. I will do more investigation as far as this is concerned. This country is on the move and let no one stand on our way (*Applause*).

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I think I am in a better position to educate Honourable Members and the public about these happenings. I have copies of complaints about Sierra Rutile. The Chairman of Mines and Minerals Committee is aware of these complaints.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to join my colleague Honourable Members to thank the President, especially when it comes to infrastructure. Is there anybody in this Well who does not want to drive on paved roads? I think the answer to that question is no. I always drive through Spur Road, Wilkinson Road and other roads in the country. I don't want to go into the cost of those roads because I don't have the facts and figures with me. But the fact remains that in terms of infrastructural development, those roads have given face lift to Freetown as the capital of this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to take this Honourable House to Page 11, Paragraph 65 of this Speech. I know that the President has done his best to tare the major district headquarter towns roads. But Mr Speaker, I see here that there is work in progress in Koidu, Kabala and Moyamba. With all due respect to the President, there is no work going on in Moyamba. I know you were not the one that did this write-up. The President has not visited Moyamba for the past two years Mr Speaker. As we speak, no job is in progress in Moyamba. I am talking about my home town; and not Gbonkolenken. There is no work going on in Moyamba District. I do appreciate the pavement of the roads that is going on in other district headquarter towns. But I want to see the same development taking place in Moyamba District. Moyamba District is one of the highest revenue generating districts in the country, in the form of taxes and royalties. We want to benefit from the taxes and royalties we are generating. Our people need good roads, safe drinking water and other basic social amenities. As a matter of fact, even if NRA does not collect on our behalf, but the taxes and the royalties from Sierra Rutile and Bauxite Company can help us greatly. Please Mr President, come to the aid of the people of Moyamba District. Whilst the Minister of Works and the Director-General of SLRA were busy fighting each other, the President was constructing the roads.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to take you to Pillar 1 of the President's Speech. Pillar 1 has to do with economic diversification... - *(Interruption)*.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Edward Style Jengo, you have the option either to conclude within a short time or we go for lunch and continue when we come back.

HON. EDWARD STYLE JENGO: Mr Speaker, I will conclude shortly. Mr Speaker, I want my colleagues to join me to advocate on behalf of the small scale and medium scale enterprises in this country. The business sector in this country is not being managed by our indigenous business people. The reason is very simple. The access to money to do business is very difficult. And even the few who have access to the money, they get the money at a very exorbitant bank interest rate. This 22% interest rate is killing. I am a victim. I am servicing a loan of Le50 million. We want our people to access loan at a rate of 12% at most. And you know what, Treasury Bills Interest have been reduced from 19% to 4%. Mr Speaker, I think the interest rate on loans should be reduced from 22% to at least 6%? Let us fight for our people. Our people need to access money so that the Sani Abacha traders can go to Dubai, China, Malaysia and other countries to purchase goods. Even the Honourable Albert Kamara needs money so that he can implement his contracts with consummate ease. If they can aid us with reasonable and considerable interest rate on loan, we can buy brand new vehicles as Members of Parliament.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have to advocate for our constituents. Mr Speaker, 80% of this country's loan portfolio is controlled by ten business people. 80% of the four hundred million loan portfolio in this country is controlled by ten people. Nine of them are foreigners. Only one is a Sierra Leonean, who is Kabba Kalu. Mr Speaker, the Bank Governor needs to put policies and systems in place so that our people can tap these resources with reasonable interest rates. Mr Speaker, for the past seven months, the Bank Governor was busy chasing these dollar boys in the streets. That is not his job. If the dollar rate is increasing, it is because he did not put in place better fiscal policies that can help the situation. We have better economists in this Parliament that are willing to offer their advice. If he cannot help us with better financial policies, we will ask him to resign. And in the past seven years, all what we have been hearing is the sacking of bankers. That is not the solution to the problem. There is no better banking supervision in this country. Mr Speaker, I want to thank you for giving me this opportunity.

(The House broke off for lunch at 12: 00 noon and resumed at 1: 15 p. m.).

HON. MABINTY FUNNA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to contribute to the debate of the Presidential Address, delivered by His Excellency the President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma on Friday, 20th December, 2013.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, my first area of intervention is on the health sector of this country. Mr Speaker, it is no surprise that the APC-led government has made a tremendous effort in improving the health sector in this country. Mr Speaker, during the Freetown Golf Club Dinner event last year, one of our renowned diplomats, Dr Kandeh Yumkellah, highlighted Sierra Leone's successful achievements. In his Speech, the President also highlighted them. And with your leave, Mr Speaker, I read: "We constructed new maternity unit in Port Loko, Magburaka, Bo, Bonthe and Kenema District Hospitals. Also, twenty new Primary Health Units (PHUs) were constructed. Additionally, five hospitals and fourteen PHCs have been upgraded. I have done a comprehensive research and will tell where these facilities have been constructed."

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this has shown that APC government takes development everywhere, irrespective of our political, regional and tribal affiliations. We even take development to places and towns that never voted for the APC party. We constructed new facilities in the different areas of the country. In Bo District, one Primary Health Center (PHC) Complex and three health posts were constructed in Bo Town, Yambama, Maboma and Seth. In Bonthe, three health centres and one health post in Gbapp, Madina, Tehun and the Gambia. In Kenema District, three health posts and two health centres in Kojodama, Tongo, Daru, Potoru and Kondoma. In the Port Loko District, we constructed two health posts and two health centres; and in the Tonkolili District, three health centres and two health posts. Mr Speaker, the list is long.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we also upgraded hospitals and constructed maternity wards in Bo Government Hospital, Bonthe Government Hospital, Kenema Government Hospital, Port Loko Government Hospital and Magburaka Government Hospital. We also upgraded PHUs to provide basic emergency obstetrics services in Javoima and Lagor in Kenema District; Daru, Koindu and Pendembu in the Kailahun District; and in the Bo District; Koribondo and Sumbuya. This was also done in

Sewafe and Gandor in Kono District. The same facilities have also been provided for the Western Area - both rural and urban. Mr Speaker, with your leave, I will read Paragraph 38, Page 7 of His Excellency the President's Speech: *"In relation to Human Resources, we established and commenced rolling out the integrated Human resourced information system. Seventy midwives graduated and were posted throughout the country, and we attracted 31 Cubans and Nigerian Doctors to fill the capacity gap of skilled personnel in health facilities"*

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I believe the 31 Cubans and 13 Nigerian doctors were fairly dispersed all over the country. Mr Speaker, S.O. (2), the APC-led government *"na komra pati, wi de tek divelopment olsay."* Mr Speaker, the establishment of the Integrated Health Project Administration Unit has brought integrity, accountability, transparency, confidence and quality assurance in health management and donor partner resources. Mr Speaker, in 2001, African heads of States agreed to spend 15% of their total annual budget on health by 2015. Our government allocation rose from 6.6% in 2012 to approximately 10% in 2013. This is a great achievement. This gives us the assurance that as a government, we are working assiduously in attaining the 2015 Abuja Declaration on health. As a country, we are moving forward and let no one stand in our way *(Applause)*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to talk about gender equality. Sierra Leone is on her way in terms of scoring another achievement by being one of the countries in Africa where women compete with men for access to all areas of governance and decision making positions. Mr Speaker, there is a powerful quotation by the late Baroness Margaret Thatcher. It says: *"Any woman who understands the problems of running a home will be nearer to understanding the problems of running a country."*

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I guess all of you will agree with me that women are very great. Women have ideas, talents, visions, innovations and potentials to transform any institution positively. That is why women must not be left behind. Women cannot only be seen as babysitter or financial secretary in this 21st Century. When it comes to political campaign, women are very instrumental. Women are the main political players and sometimes they are being abused in political campaign.

So, I urge the government to give women the opportunity to explore and exploit their God given potentials. We have already started the process; we only need more empowerment to continue. This government will continue to develop the women of this country. Mr Speaker, we also have young and disabled women who should also be given the opportunity to meaningfully participate in decision making process in this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, with your leave, I want to read Paragraph 142. It says: *"Recognising the low representation and participation of women in decision making, I have committed myself to signing the minimum 80% quota into law after enactment by this Parliament."* Mr Speaker, I believe this statement has brought hope into the lives of many women in this country. It has created the way to a new direction of prosperity and successes. I am proud and pleased that His Excellency the President, has fully committed himself in signing the 30% Quota Bill. Mr Speaker, I hope that when the Bill comes to this House, all of you, especially the men, will give it full support without hesitation. Mr Speaker, I want Honourable Members, especially those on the other side of the 'ayes' to accept the fact that this government has made a remarkable progress in terms of promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. We must be made to pay attention internationally. Mr Speaker, Paragraph 143 on Page 22 says: *"Sierra Leone has been elected for the first time Vice Chair of the Bureau, of the United Nations Economic Community of Women and Development and we will lead the advocacy for promoting the integration of gender equality and Women's empowerment in the Post 2015 Agenda."*

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, for the information of this House, a Sierra Leonean woman has been elected in the ECOWAS Parliament as the second Vice Chair of the ECOWAS Female Parliamentary Association, in the person of Honourable Mabinty Funna. All these achievements and recognitions are great for this country. I believe, as a nation, we are moving forward and let nobody stand in our way *(Applause)*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to talk about Roads, under Pillar 4 of the President's Speech. I want to establish the fact that roads are the nucleus of our

social and economic development; and no country in the world can grow without good road network. The essence of good roads is to provide comfort for human existence. Living at Goderich eight years ago, was like living in hell. I used to take approximately one hour to ride from Metchem Junction to Lumley Police Station. But today, with the effort of the APC government, it takes me less than ten minutes from Metchem Junction to Lumley Police Station. I must say thanks to the President of this nation. Mr Speaker, I can also attest to the fact that the Contractor of the Matotoka Road has complied and established their camp site in my constituency in Masingbi and the work is in progress. I believe very soon, I will start to enjoy smooth ride from Freetown to Masingbi.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I also want to use this opportunity to commend His Excellency the President for changing the ugly face of the Magburaka Town. Now, I can freely cruise around the township of Magburaka without having the fear of potholes. I say thank you very much, Mr President. We, the people of Tonkolili District, appreciate you and we love you. As a country, we are moving towards the right direction of progress. And we are not going to allow anybody or anything to delay our progress. As Sierra Leoneans, we must all work together to ensure sustainable development in this country. Honourable Members, as the representatives of the people of this country, we must set our minds towards development and forget about party politics. Let us focus on the things that will move this country forward.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in 2012, we took an oath in this House to fairly serve and seek the interest of our people. God is watching us. We have been chosen by God to represent the people of this nation. If we fail to represent our people fairly, they will perish. So, I want to urge Honourable House to exercise our parliamentary duties in the fear of God or Allah.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will end with a quotation by the late Nelson Mandela. It says: "It always seems impossible until it is done." I thank you very much Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: I call on Honourable Frank Kposowa to make his presentation.

HON. FRANK KPOSOWA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will like to start my presentation by drawing the attention of this House to what the President said in Paragraph 3 of his Address. The President said: *"I subscribe to the notion that one of the purposes of government is to secure the people against the ravages of time."* Mr Speaker, I like that statement. Also, I want to take the House to Paragraph 4. It says: *"Our country has known greater peace and non-violent than witnessed under previous governments. Under our watch, this country has not carried out capital punishment. Under our Watch, there has not been any enactment of laws pertaining Freedom."*

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, what the President said in those lines is very correct but on the other hand, very dangerous if taken out of context. Now, I will like His Excellency the President, to tell this House, if he were President at the time of the late Dr Siaka P. Stevens, whether he would not have carried out capital punishment when certain military officers tried to overthrow his government. I will also like His Excellency the President, to tell this House if he were in governance at the time of the late President Joseph Saidu Momoh, he would not have carried out capital punishment at the end of the coup trial of J. M. Kaikai and fourteen others. I will also like His Excellency to tell this House if he were in governance during the time of former President Tejan Kabba, when junior military officers over threw this government, he would not have carried out capital punishment against those junior officers. I am giving all of these examples to reinforce the fact that the legislation and subsequent implementation or interpretation of any action, arises out of utter collision. Those people, who did what they did when they were in power, did not do so out of fancy. They went by the law. So, when we are making some of these statements, I think it will be fair to put issues and visions into context.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is true that the APC has ensured a number of development projects in this country. But one thing I like about you is that you study Philosophy. And one of the illustrious Philosophers, Plato once said that 'every action has a beginning, middle and an end.' Government is a continuous process. For example, when the President of the United States, Barak Obama, wanted to remove AIDS stigma as an immigration problem, in his statement, he did say that he is been

acclaimed all over the world today, but much of the work that he is completing now was carried out by the Clinton's Administration. That is to say, if the APC has had time today to carry out most of these development Projects; it is because the SLPP, during those turbulent years, made it possible for the APC to embark on these developments.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is no fallacy that the SLPP ended the war and created an enabling environment for all Sierra Leoneans. Some of the development the APC is doing now would not have been possible, if the war is still in progress. That is why I sometimes sit down and chuckle when I hear people talking about electricity. I am saying this because if the APC was in governance in 1996, (when thousands of our rural people were stuck on the streets of Freetown), they would not have been able to undertake any development programme. Houses were demolished, schools have been demolished. The desks were used as fire wood. The Prisoners were let out of the prisons gates; and criminals were on the run. If you were in governance at that time, what would have been your priority? What you would have done first is to ensure the security of the people of this country and later restore civil authority, build schools and hospitals. Thanks to donor support that enabled us to build and rehabilitate more schools than any other government before.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the President did make reference to one very important aspect in his Speech; 'Good Governance.' In fairness to His Excellency, he has made move since he came to power to give meaning to democracy. However, he has not succeeded in achieving that purpose. This government is always talking about Performance Contract. Ministers have been signing Performance Contract; but we have not seen much in that direction. Well, how do you expect each Minister of government to achieve his/her objectives, if the Ministries are not adequately funded? If that is so, then the idea of Ministers signing Performance Contract becomes meaningless because of lack of adequate funds. What do we do? What measures can we, as Members of Parliament together with the government, take to solve this problem? I think, we should come up with an Anti-Corruption Law to ensure that these seepages are controlled. The Anti-Corruption Commission should employ the services of competent personnel. Lamentably, those in positions of trust

to ensure good governance in this country are not doing what they should be doing. Therefore, they cannot achieve their objectives. The Judiciary has gone all out to frustrate the efforts of this government.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have some of the most competent lawyers in this country who are working at the Anti-Corruption Commission. In fact, the Commissioner is a Lecturer in the Faculty of Law. So, people like him cannot be reckless to the extent of just taking cases to court to lose because they have their reputation to protect. What is happening is that this Judiciary is mismanaged... - *(Interruption)*.

HON. CHERNOR R. M. BAH: Mr Speaker, I rise to draw the attention of my colleague to Section 32(11) of the Standing Orders. He has to guide himself accordingly.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Frank Kposowa, please guide yourself.

HON. FRANK KPOSOWA: Thank you Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when somebody is taken to court nowadays, if that person is rich and is well connected, he will walk out freely; but if a poor man is taken to court, he/she will not get justice. Pervasion of justice in favour of the affluent in society is now the order of the day. Poor people are not given justice. Why are they frustrating this institution? If you go to these courts, you will find out that the courts are not patronised. And this is where the relevance of civil society comes in Mr Speaker. Lamentably, Mr Speaker, the civil society movement in this country is a nonstarter. The Civil Society movement in this country is only interested in travelling overseas. Most of the issues we are addressing here were initiated by civil society groups in Nigeria. We need them as compliments. But the civil society in this country is a nonstarter. We cannot continue this way. What I will suggest is for an enquiry into the Judicial Service Delivery in this country. The people have been pushed to the limit of their endurance because of what is happening in the courts of this country. How many cases have been concluded if they are none political by the Supreme Courts? How many land cases have been concluded in a period not less than three years. Most practicing Barristers prefer to do their work in their chambers. That is

not good for the judicial system in this country. I am sorry for the Speaker of this House because when people are seeing you wearing the Wig, they will think that you are a Judge. They will be coming to your House. This has serious implication as far as our judicial system is concerned.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, most often, we have been talking about education; and the fallen standards in our educational system in this country. Mr Speaker, you would recalled that when you were in the classroom as a teacher, there was a teacher pupil ratio. I think, it was about 25 to 30 pupils per class. Not much has changed in terms of the period allocation per subject. This means that for every subject, the teacher is allocated 30-35 minutes. Now, as a trained teacher, Mr Speaker, if you are to teach from the known to the unknown, you must spend the first ten minutes in trying to get the children know what they already know about the subject; and spend another ten minutes to introduce the subject to the pupils. And Mr Speaker, the last ten minutes is meant to test the pupils' abilities on what the teacher has already taught them in class. But how can these teachers do that when the schools are so congested. There is no room for pupil/teacher ratio. Today, the classroom roll has increased considerably, Mr Speaker. During our days, teachers were giving classwork and assignments and mark those works with ease. The teacher was at liberty to move around the class and check whether the pupils have done the classwork. Today, teachers cannot move freely in the classrooms. Teachers don't give homework anymore because they are afraid to mark 120 scripts. So, how is this learning taking place? What do we do as a nation? What kind of expansion are we going to do? Are we going to be having more pupils congested in one classroom with no teaching environment? Maybe, we should start thinking about constructing more schools in this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there is also this question of discipline. Today, if you go to these schools, a teacher will stop teaching and walk out of the classroom to answer phone calls. Discipline is also another issue that we should take seriously in our educational system. If you go to countries like Korea and see what discipline can do to people, you will see the nakedness of our country as far as discipline is concerned.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to talk about the health sector in this country. The Free Health Care Programme is a very good idea for the people of this country. It is like the Obama Health Care Policy. This is because it aspires to make people who do not have money have access to medical services. Like I said before, when it was announced that all hospitals and medical institutions should work within the confines of the Free Health Care Programme, no alternate provision was made for people suffering from other diseases. And before now, the nurses or the dispensers working in these various Units were in Freetown. If you are not satisfied with what is happening at the Connaught Hospital in terms how they administer treatment, you have to go to these private hospitals for better treatment. But it is not so in our villages. The only health centre you can go to is the NCH posts, where nurses are only interested in procuring drugs that are related to providing medical services to children under five and lactating mothers. So, men with Gonorrhea cannot get treatment in those health centers.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have to develop an alternate programme whereby nurses could be encouraged to buy these none essential drugs so that they can give treatment to people suffering from other ailment, especially adult men who are not qualify for services provided for lactating mothers.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, people have been grumbling about certain measures which the Central Bank of this country has been putting in place. But they have been doing so not out of choice but out of mere ignorance of what actually these policies are there to achieve. As a Parliament, we have promulgated the Banking Act in this Parliament. And what the Central Bank is now pursuing is actually what was provided for in the Banking Act. The Governor of the Central Bank has no power to sack any Bank Manager. This is because every Bank in this country has its own Board or an employing authority over which the Central Bank has no control of. The Central Bank provides Banking supervision to ensure that people's moneys are well managed and if there had been instances where Banking institutions have been fined... - *(Interruption)*.

HON. ALHAJI S. DUMBUYA: Mr Speaker, I stand on S. O. 32 (5). It says: *"A member must confine his observation to the subject under discussion and may not introduce matter irrelevant thereto."*

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, what the Honourable Frank Kposowa has been saying has not been irrelevant.

HON. FRANK KPOSOWA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, to ensure the good image of this country, we have to make sure that credible monetary policies are put in place. Our donor partners will lose confidence in our economy, if we fail to salvage the situation. I will appeal to Members of Parliament to join other well-meaning Sierra Leoneans in terms of encouraging the Central Bank to go ahead with its good work. I thank you Mr Speaker.

HON. BLISS-OSHO WILLIAMS: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to make my contribution on the Speech delivered by His Excellency the President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma, on Friday, 20th December, 2013. First, I want to take you to Page 1 of the President's Speech. With your permission, Mr Speaker, I read: *"By divine providence, this is the 8th time I am standing before this Honourable House as President."* Mr Speaker, by divine providence, this is the very first time the current Speaker is serving as the Speaker of this House. Congratulations Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Speech in words, in deeds, pronouncements, deliberations, contents, aspirations, results and effects is a resounding success. I am the Chairman of the Committee on Energy and Water Resources. I have heard so many statements made in connection with Energy. Before this Government came to power, there was electricity in this city; but when this government came to power, it has made electricity more visible than its status in the previous government. There was Kabba Tiger electricity and the moonlight was shining. I am proud of the present Speaker. I am proud of him because he is the grass root Speaker. He works with me and we ought to give him that praise. He is one of us and he knows our problems.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Prime Minister Macmillan was the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom in 1960. At that time, he made two very important

statements which resonate today in this country. It was the time when Africa was fighting for their independence and people were dismayed. Everybody wanted independence in Africa. He said: *"A wind of change is blowing over a wide area in Africa."*

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, did that affect Sierra Leone in those years? Towards the end of his administration, when the people were prosperous and money was rampant, he said we never had it so good. Today, Sierra Leoneans have never had it so good in this country except under President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma. Let us be realistic for once. Forget about SLPP and APC. It makes no difference. Let me ask you a simple question. Have you had it so good? Mr Speaker, can you enlighten me please? Whenever you go somewhere and call the name Ernest Bai Koroma, people will start looking for him as if he has appeared. They seek for him everywhere in the country. He is the greatest President Sierra Leone has ever had. I am going to be sincere and honest to myself and I want you all to do the same. A house divided against itself can never stand. Unity is strength. The people in England, America, Canada and Australia will never vote for a party that is disunited. Democracy will always work when you get a good opposition, getting ready to take over from a very hardworking government.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to refer you again to Page 10, Paragraph 77 of the President's Speech says: *"We are pleased to report that for the first time in the history of the Ministry of Energy, they now have an Energy Directorate with professional staff. Now, we will embark on efforts to capture further improvements in the performance of energy in this country."*

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, for the first time in the history of this country, the Ministry of Energy and Power now has a Directorate. I think this shows that the Minister of Energy is doing a good job. Therefore, the problem of electricity in this country is about to put to an end. Let me give an example, Newton is presently enjoying solar lights as we speak. Mr Speaker, when I went to Kailahun to attend the late Honourable Alice Foyer's funeral, I saw people gathered in their hundreds under electric lights. I said may God bless the blessed memory of Honourable Alice Foyah and may God bless our beloved President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma. History is in

the making. This Speech started from 2013; and the national Budget was read in 2013. Today, we have a new Speaker who was elected by the entire nation, and not just by Parliament. What Dr Ernest Bai Koroma has done, not any man could do, except a person with wisdom like him. Therefore, I want to move a motion that Wilkinson Road be named after Dr Ernest Bai Koroma and also the new Airport at Mamamah.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me conclude by saying that self-praise is no recommendation. Dr Ernest Bai Koroma has done something with the help (as he puts it in the opening Speech), of the 'divine guidance.' If you have examined your minds, there are two statements made which resonates something in this Parliament. The first one is said by our present Speaker, Honourable Sheku Badara Basiru Dumbuya. He always says: "to thy self be true." The other statement was said by our Ex-Speaker, Honourable Abel N. B. Stronge. He said: "*Advise yourself.*" I am advising myself today, Mr Speaker. For the first time in the history of this country, Sierra Leone has taken its rightful place in the position as a democratic country in the outside world by democratically electing a Speaker from among Members of Parliament (*Applause*).

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will conclude by saying that you should never give up something that is good for something that is unknown. If you put your House in order on this side, they will put their House in order on that side. If your House is divided, you will be in opposition for generation yet unborn. You have got a democratically elected Speaker of this House. You have got a President that is going to finish his second term very soon. A word for a wise is quite sufficient. Put your House in order and be prepared for taking over the governance of this country. That is my recommendation. I rest my case Mr Speaker.

HON. FREDERICK S. SOURIE: I thank you Mr Speaker. I will not repeat what has been said by Members of Parliament. There is a popular music titled: '*Hole in the bucket*'. I am sure the aged in this House have heard that song. The song says: "*Henry, where there is a will, there is a way.*"

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when I went on my campaign to my people during the election, they asked me, S.O. 2 Mr Speaker: "*u SLPP pikin, wetin u de du na APC?*" I replied them that since I was born, every development in this country that I can make reference to has been the handiwork of APC led government. Nobody can deny that and it is a fact Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, this has been made possible because the APC led government has always shown that 'where there is a will, there is a way.' That is the truth Mr Speaker; and nobody in this House can deny it, except people do not want to say the truth.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this means that the President has manifested considerable political will. He has always shown us that where there is a will, there is a way. If anyone of us would have been told that the road leading to Bo School would be tarred by now, the person would have said it is not possible. But today, it is tarred.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, to me, the theme for this debate is 'political will'. I do admire this President for his political will. Mr Speaker, because of his political will, he has ensured that majority of our roads are paved. He said that he was going to rehabilitate our feeder roads. Nobody believes that he will succeed in doing what has done. Today, we have the Wilkinson Road and I will support the motion of naming Wilkinson Road after him.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will be referencing the Presidential Address, the Budget Speech and the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone. Mr Speaker, it is because of his political will that led to massive improvement in terms of encouraging and boosting SME business in this country. That is why the President said that we are going to establish our strongholds in every part of the country. Today, Kenema District is boastful of modern shopping plaza. I am highlighting these developments because some of us do not know about them. These are all indicators for our businesses.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Honourable Frank Kposowa was making reference to the peace the SLPP brought. I think we have to acknowledge them for the peace they brought. Similarly, the APC government should also be acknowledged

for these developments in the country. Mr Speaker, when the President came to power in 2007, he promised the people of this country electricity and within 100 days, it was provided because of his political will.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is because of the political will of the President, we have had an increase in the use of our local products in our local industries. Mr Speaker, 80% of sorghum used by Brewery is produced in this country. Most people in this country do not know that at all. Also, about 20% of the local granite used by Leocem is from Sierra Leone. It is because of his political will that we now have Local Content Policy which will encourage the use of our local products. We will soon bring it here so that it becomes a law of this Country. And once it becomes law, it is binding on all citizens.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is because of the political will of His Excellency the President that the salaries of parliamentarians have been increased. People even doubted whether it could be paid. But it happens. And Mr Speaker, because of his political will, the business climate in this country has improved so much from 2010 to 2013. The Foreign Direct Investments in 2013 was about \$238 million. I am hopeful that it will increase to \$700. Mr Speaker, in less than three years, there are massive improvements that have taken place in this country. This is because of the political will to create the level playing field for the growth of the economy.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to talk about the Ministry of Defence. Mr Speaker, the Ministry of Defence has improved greatly because of the political will of the President. Mr Speaker, we have minimum salary wage for our soldiers. Mr Speaker, when I retired in 2010, my salary was Le600, 000. So, the salary that I used to have as a Captain in the military is now the salary of a private soldier. That is an improvement Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, when I joined the army in 1999, my salary was Le67, 000.00. In 2006 as a Captain, my salary was less than Le400, 000.00. There was nothing like rice giving to the soldiers. In 1999, my salary could buy only a bag of rice. In 2008, our salary saw a huge boost in the military and I started receiving Le500, 000.00. Mr Speaker, at that time, my Net Salary could buy me four bags of rice. Is that not an improvement, Mr Speaker? This is worth mentioning here. And today, the Private soldiers are now taking home a bag of rice

in addition to their salaries. If I am in the system, I would have had more than that by virtue of my rank in the force. Mr Speaker that is an improvement and it is worth recognising.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, political will has also made us, amidst criticism, to have an elected Speaker from this Honourable House. According to the song of Haber, 'one of us is sitting there,' political will can do many things.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have to bring up issues bordering on the development of this nation, and channel them appropriately in order to solve our problems. And because of that belief, I am going to give you an example. I know that most of you are familiar of what I am going to say. It concerns the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces. I am a member of the Defence Committee in this House. Our people expect us to solve their problems now that there is a political will. If we don't get it solved now, it is going to be too late. That is why we have to bring it up. The President mentioned something about defence. And there is something some of us don't know. I will refer the House to Section 168 of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone. Mr Speaker, that provision gives the Chief of Defence Staff and his Commanders the operational control and administration of the Armed Forces as a whole.

Similarly, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Section 157, Sub-Section 4 gives the Inspector-General of Police the power of operational control and administration of the Police. And it is this position that makes the Police to be allocated a budget. Unfortunately, Mr Speaker, you may not be aware of it, but we don't have a special budget line for the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces. The Police have an officer as a Vote Controller. The Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces does not have a military officer as Vote Controller. They have a civilian Director-General who can be transferred at will. After the 1997 Coup, His Excellency the former President, Dr Alhaji Tejan Kabba lost trust in the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces and he called on IMATT to restructure the Army. When they came, the first thing they did was to bring in the OBITA. They also place civilians in charge of the finances of the armed forces in order to increase civilian oversight. As such, it was the Director-General of the Ministry of Defence who will now determine soldiers' remunerations.

They did all this in order to screw the armed forces in such a way that their ability to develop the idea of an attempted coup will go away. They had the justification for doing that and they succeeded. And that is why they had the President as the Minister of Defence.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, upon coming to power, this government got above 85% votes cast from the military. Honourable Deputy Speaker will attest to that because he is the only Member of Parliament that the soldiers at Wilberforce Barracks danced for after winning the elections. He did not campaign there because we do not allow people to campaign but they danced for him. This is because he did so much for them. It was the same for Honourable Kalawa at Murray Town. Mr Speaker, because of that, the President fulfilled a call made by the armed forces, by giving us a Cabinet Minister for the first time in the history of Sierra Leone. It has never happened in the history of Sierra Leone. We have always had Deputy Ministers whereas the President had always retained the position of Minister of Defence. This happened because of the political will of this President. I therefore, implore Major Retired Paulo Conteh, to go and control his men. The only thing we have not done, is to separate the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces, as an agent of government, from the Ministry of Defence. The staff of the Ministry of Defence are civil servants, but soldiers are not civil servants.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to bring it to the attention of the House that soldiers do not control their own budget. If you do not believe what I am saying, I refer you to Page 203; under Security Service, Annex 2. Mr Speaker, I want the Minister of Finance to know what is happening. If you go through the Budget, you will not find anything that concerns the Republic of Sierra Armed Forces. There is something for the Police, Fire Force, Prisons and even Immigration.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to talk about our Petroleum Marketing Companies and their terminals at Kissy. Mr Speaker, because of housing problems, our people have exposed themselves to the dangers of living within the pipes of those terminals; and in most cases, they have the ability to disrupt the whole system. This has been reported by several companies in this country. Mr Speaker, that is applicable but we want the President to know it because he has

demonstrated considerable political will. So, I am asking that these people be removed from those areas.

Finally Mr Speaker, I want to say that my constituents will always thank the President for his political will. So, I salute him. I thank you Mr Speaker (*Applause*).

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, you could recalled that we have approved the membership of those that should serve on the Committee on Selection. Pursuant to S. O. 70, the other Committees have been constituted. So, I am asking the Chief Whip of Parliament to read out the Committees that have been constituted.

HON. CLAUDE D. M. KAMANDA: Thank you Mr Speaker.

STANDING ORDER COMMITTEE S.O. 73

Hon. Speaker, Chairman;

Hon. Chernor R. M. Bah, Deputy Chairman;

Hon. Ibrahim Rasin Bundu, Member;

Hon. Leonard Fofanah, Member;

Hon. Dr Bernadette Lahai, Member;

Hon. Ansumana Jaia Kaikai, Member;

Hon. Claude D. M. Kamanda, Member; and

Hon. Mohamed Sidi Tunis, Member.

PUBLIC PETITION COMMITTEE S.O. 75

Hon. Speaker, Chairman;

Hon. Dr Bernadette Lahai, Deputy Chairman;

Hon. Ibrahim R. M. Bundu, Member;

Hon. Leonard Fofanah, Member;

Hon. Ajibola Manley Spaine, Member; and

Hon. Ansumana J. Kaikai, Member.

HOUSE COMMITTEE S.O. 74

Hon. Speaker, Chairman

Hon. Ibrahim R. Bundu, Deputy Chairman

Hon. Dr Bernadette Lahai, Member

Hon. Leonard Fofanah, Member

Hon. Claude D. M. Kamanda, Member

Hon. Sidi Tunis – Member

Hon. P. C. Bai Bureh Sallu Lugbu II – Member

BUSINESS COMMITTEE S. O. 72

Hon. Ibrahim Rasin Bundu, Chairman;

Hon. Dr Bernadette Lahai, Deputy Chairman;

Hon. Leonard Fofanah, Member;

Hon. Claude M Kamanda, Member;

Hon. C. D Mohamed Tunis, Member;

Hon. Sulaiman M Sesay, Member; and

Hon. P. C. Mohamed Sama Kailondo Banya III, Member.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE S.O.76.

Hon. Chernor R. M. Bah, Chairman;

Hon. Komba E. Koedoyoma, Deputy Chairman;

Hon. Alhassan Jero Kamara, Member;

Hon. Hassan B. Sheriff, Member;

Hon. Alpha B, Lewally, Member;
Hon. Lahai Marah, Member;
Hon. Sulaiman Muluku Sesay, Member;
Hon. Dr Foday I Suma, Member;
Hon. Francis I. Konuwa, Member;
Hon. Helen Kuyembah, Member; and
Hon. P. C. Alhaji Bai Seborah Yek, Member.

APPOINTMENT AND PUBLIC SERVICE COMMITTEE S.O. 79

Hon. Ibrahim Rasin Bundu, Chairman;
Hon. Leonard Fofanah, Deputy Chairman;
Hon. Dr Bernadette Lahai, Member;
Hon. Ansumana Jaia Kaikai, Member;
Hon. Chernor R.M. Bah, Member;
Hon. Augustine Bockarie Torto, Member;
Hon. Mabinty Fornah, Member;
Hon. Bliss Osho Williams, Member;
Hon. Claude Kamanda, Member;
Hon. Benneh Bangura, Member;
Hon. Amadu Mohamed Kanu, Member;
Hon. Eric K. Koedoyoma, Member;
Hon. C. D. M. Tunis, Member;
Hon. Veronica Kadie Sesay, Member;

Hon. Brima Conteh, Member; and

Hon. P. C. Brima C. D. Kebbie.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, that is the announcement relating to the formation of the Committees, as read out by the Chief Whip. The list, as read out to you, is for your approval. Can somebody move a motion for the adoption of this list, particularly the membership of all the Committees?

HON. ALHASSAN KAMARA: Mr Speaker I so move

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON. ABU B. KOROMA: Mr Speaker, I so second.

THE SPEAKER: Any Counter Motion?

(Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to)

THE SPEAKER: Mr Majority Leader, you did tell me that there is an announcement to the effect that officials of all MDAs were to be here today. I don't think there is any official representing any MDA in this Well. I don't see them and this has been a recurring problem. I don't know whether you have anything to say.

HON. IBRAHIM R. BUNDU: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. As you have just said, I did say that all MDAs are required to be here. As it has always been the practice, for us not to be talking to ourselves, but to be talking to the implementers of what is contained in this Presidential Speech. I have asked the Clerk of Parliament to summon all heads of Parastatals to be here tomorrow.

THE SPEAKER: We should be seen doing our work.

ADJOURNMENT

*(The House rose at 3.00 p. m. and was adjourned until Friday, 28th
January, 2014, at 10.00 a.m.)*