

National Assembly Debates (House of Representatives)

Tuesday, 3rd August, 1999

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[Votes and Proceedings]

[Menace of Cultism in Educational Institutions]

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA

Tuesday, 3rd August, 1999

The House met at 11.20 a.m.

PRAYERS

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, I have examined and approved the Votes and Proceedings of Wednesday, 28th July, 1999

OATHS

Mr. Speaker: May I call on hon. Members who have not taken and subscribed to the Oath to please come forward. *(No response)*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Notice of Meetings

Mr. Speaker: Members of the House Committee on Federal Capital Territory should please assemble in Committee Room 15 to receive the Honourable Minister of Federal Capital Territory by 2.00 p.m. today. This announcement is made by the Deputy Chairman, Hon. Yahaya Yinusa.

There will be a meeting of the hon. Members of the House of Representatives from the South-South Zone today, 3rd August, 1999 at Kano Hall, Nicon Hilton Hotel, at 8.00p.m. prompt. This message is signed by Hon Austin Opata.

There will be a meeting of Ad-hoc Committee on Protection of Lives and Property, North-East and North-West Zones at Committee Room 12 today after this Session.

There will be a meeting of the Committee on Women Affairs and Youth tomorrow at 2.00p.m. at Committee Room 23. This announcement is made by Hon Bello Mohammed, Acting Chairman.

NOTICE OF MOTION

Saving the National Fertilizer Company of Nigeria Ltd. (NAFCON) from Imminent Closure

Mr. Speaker : Hon. Members, there is only one Motion on Notice in today's Order Paper awaiting maturity. It is the Motion on saving the National Fertilizer Company of Nigeria from Imminent Closure.

Hon. Abraham Laoshe (Abeokuta South) : Point of Order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker : What Order?

Hon. Abraham Laoshe (Abeokuta South): Order 14, Mr. Speaker, says:

On Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, the House shall meet at 10 a.m.

And it goes on as to what we do on Fridays. Since this House was convened, we have not sat on Mondays. This House has a three-day week. I believe that Nigerians that sent us here asked us to come and do something for them. Mr. Speaker, I think it is time we follow the Rules that we have set by allowing this House to sit at least four days in a week. This our weekly recess, I do not think will speak well of this august Assembly if we continue that way. That is my Point of Order.

Mr. Speaker: That is noted and it will be a subject of discussion when we go into an Executive Session later.

Thank you.

MOTION

The Menace of Cultism in Educational Institutions

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, this House has only one Motion to consider today, and it stands in the name of Hon J. H. O. Agoda. The hon. Member is invited to move his Motion.

Hon. John H. Ochuko Agoda (Ethiopia East/West): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Sir, hon Members, with the leave of the House, I hereby move my Motion as follows:

That in view of the fact that Cultism in the nation's educational Institutions have turned our Schools and

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Universities into places of mayhem and death; and considering the grief and pains it has brought to many Nigerian families, its negative effect on our national image and its potential threat to instability in tertiary institutions, this House do:

(i) condemn in very strong terms the re-occurrence of cultism and the dimension it has assumed in recent times;

(ii) direct the Federal Ministry of Education to work with authorities of tertiary institutions and their student bodies in formulating strategies for identifying those involved in cultism;

(iii) set-up a Panel to inquire into the cause and spread of cultism in our educational institutions and proffer solutions to stamp out the menace;

(iv) urge the Federal Ministry of Education and Tertiary Institutions to intensify efforts with a view to identifying the sponsors and affiliates of cult members within and outside the tertiary institutions with a view to bringing them to face the law.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, my respected Members, I beg to move.

Hon. Oladipo Olaitan (Alimosho): Observation, Mr. Speaker. This is just to help the Mover of the Motion. He is playing around with English Language. I want to read and I hope he will agree with me:

That in view of the fact that Cultism in the nation's educational Institutions have turned our Schools and Universities into places of mayhem and death; and considering the grief and pains it has brought to many Nigerian families, its negative effect on our national image and its potential threat to stability, not instability ...

Hon. Agoda: Your corrections are noted.

Hon. Augustine Obozuwa (Etsako East/West/Central): Observation, Mr. Speaker. I am speaking to help the Mover. That word in the first line should be *has*, not *have* because it is Cultism going with the verb. The first line after *Institutions* should read:

That in view of the fact that Cultism in the nation's educational institutions has, it should not be have -

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Hon. Rauf K. Shittu (Ifelodun/Offa/Oyun): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I stand here to second the Motion so moved as corrected.

Thank you.

Hon. J. H. O. Agoda: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir. First of all I want to refer to the statement of Edmund Bunke and I quote:

All that is needed for evil to survive is for good men to do nothing.

Today, Mr. Speaker, you are all aware of the problem of cultism in our society. First, cultism is defined as the application of exoteric means to achieve desired objectives. It sort of promotes brotherhood based on common goals and ideals. Their activities are most often nocturnal.

The history of cultism in our educational institutions dates back to 1952 by Professor Wole Soyinka at the University of Ibadan. Subsequently, Mr. Speaker, Sir, due to personality clashes and other conflicting interests, 1971 witnessed a break-away faction in the same institution which was later known and called *The Buccaneers*. Since then there has been increase in different factions of cult activities across our Universities. Today, we have the *Pirate Confraternity*, we have the *Black Axe*, we have the *Eiye Confraternity*, we have the *Amazons*, we have *Jezebel*, we have the *Mafites*, we have the *Black Brassiers*. Mr. Speaker, these are the various societies that plague our institutions, not only the tertiary institutions but even the secondary institutions.

The increasing menace of cultism in our various institutions has been on a continuous range in this country. The activities of cultism in our institutions have degraded the image of our educational institutions before the international community.

Our universities have become centres of destruction, mayhem and death. I will substantiate my findings with some recent examples.

In May this year, a clash between cult groups of various factions led to the death of five students at the Enugu State University of Science and Technology. Within the same month, innocent students' lives were also lost at the Edo State University, Ekpoma, where armed cult members attacked more than 500 students, who are final year students, preparing for their examinations. Not too

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long ago a female student shot to death an innocent Lecturer at the Institute of Management, Science and Technology in Enugu. Again, it is true that most of the Southern Universities and Polytechnics have had reported cases of cultism that have led to loss of lives.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, another recent example was the event that took place at the Delta State University, Abraka, in Delta State, where the Assistant Principal Registrar, Academic, was shot dead in his house within the University campus, in the presence of his wife and children and even his wife sustained gun injury in that scenario. The recent OAU tragedy is very instructive.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, we want to look at cult membership in this society. Who can be considered as a member of a cult in our various institutions? It has been alleged that few members of these cults come from poor homes and they are vulnerable groups within the campuses who seek protection from insecurity by joining these cults. They join the cults for them to gain power, for them to have status and for them to have the needed security. That is one version.

Again, on the other hand, it has also been alleged that some students who are from rich homes but have very less educational background, join these universities with less educational qualifications through the influence of their parents. Mr. Speaker, this group of students join these cults as a means or instrument of intimidations which they use to intimidate their lecturers and their fellow students.

Another version is a group of students who are considered rich and also well qualified to gain admission into institutions. This category of students are forcefully initiated either because of the protection the parents of this group of students will provide or because of the money which they are said to possess.

Now, I want to look at the causes of these cultism in our society recently. It has been said that for the past 15 years in our nation's history, less attention has been given to people-centered programmes at the expense of capital development programmes. These capital programmes from all available records, have less or are not too relevant to the socio-economic needs of the poor. For instance, in 1996, the UNDP programme on human development in Nigeria was quite emphatic that the various policies and programmes initiated in this country

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lacked the wherewithal at getting mechanisms that help to improve the lives of the citizenry. Mr. Speaker, what happened?

Again, another reason adduced for this scenario was that due to prolonged military rule in our country, the University authorities have adopted a militarised arrogance in decision making. Not only that, the usual cordial academic atmosphere of yester-years which has helped in curtailing cult activities had, in fact, been with high-handedness. These and other reasons have been adduced as the causes for cult activities in our universities.

I want to proffer some solution. Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is imperative that our present day government, in addition to what I have written in my Motion Paper, should formulate strategies, policies and programmes that are relevant to the needs and the yearnings of the Nigerian people. With good policies and programmes, the larger society vis-a-vis the student community will have less to do in terms of cult activities.

Secondly, Universities should be restored their autonomy and vibrant student unionism should also be encouraged with dialogue as a means of conflict resolution should be encouraged in our universities.

Mr. Speaker, the admission formula in our universities where students who are not qualified are considered into our universities should be highly discouraged. Also, a confirmatory process of confirming the entry qualification of students should also be adopted within three months of entering the university.

I will want this House to urge Mr. President to create a liaison office which should be tagged as Students Liaison Office in the Presidency and a former students' leader should be appointed to head that office and six such offices should be created in the six geo-political zones so that at the end of the day, these liaison offices will now liaise with the students and proffer solutions to the Presidency.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to move.

Hon. Omolola Abiola Edewor (Apapa): Mr. Speaker, Sir, hon Members, I observed that when my fellow honourable was supporting his Motion, he mentioned the name of Professor Wole Soyinka as being partly responsible for what we have today in our Universities. I think we should go back in time. It is very common place in American Universities to have fraternities. You

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have the Alpha Bata Gama, they are all fraternities. They are like social fraternities, they are not out of order, they have not caused the sort of problems we have in this country today. And I believe that from what I have read in history, that was Professor Wole Soyinka's vision at the time. That it has been miscarried is a totally different matter altogether. I just felt that I should call that to the attention of the House.

Thank you.

Hon. Rauf Kolawole Shittu (Ifelodun/Offa/Oyun): Mr. Speaker, Sir, hon. Members, the Mover of this Motion has dealt extensively on the causes and solutions to cultism in our tertiary institutions. My contribution is going to be very short.

One, just to complement his efforts I also want to mention one or two tertiary institutions where you have serious problem of cultism. One, cultism is very rampant in the Federal Polytechnic, Offa. The cult members have virtually taken over that institution to the extent that the school calendar can hardly be followed again. In fact, the people of the Local Government in Kwara State, that is from Offa, have constituted themselves into vigilante groups when the authorities could not contain the cult members.

Secondly, I would also want to mention the University of Ilorin. You will recall, Hon. Speaker, about one year ago, a fine Professor, Professor Yinka, was killed by cult men when he was performing his official duties. These are the only two examples I will give to support the Mover of this Motion.

Now, part of the solution, I believe, should be that the Federal Ministry of Education should set up a strong Committee to handle the aspect of students' admission. I think one of the problems is that most of the students admitted into these Universities are either not qualified or have very poor background. This is very important, Hon. Speaker.

Thirdly, we want the Federal Ministry of Education to take the bull by the horn so that this cultism in our tertiary institutions in the whole of the federation would be wiped out.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Willie Enoma Ogbuide (Oredo): Mr. Speaker, Sir, hon Members, while I share the anxiety of the Mover

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of this Motion. I think it is already overtaken by events. The President, we are aware, has taken the initiative to invite the Vice Chancellors of the Universities, and a Committee has been set up. So I think we should give the President time to act on it (*Interruptions*)

Mr. Speaker : I am going to take arguments for and against this Motion. We shall now take those for the Motion.

Hon. Francis Oluyemi Aladejebi (Ekiti South 1) Mr. Speaker, Sir, hon. Members, I rise to support this Motion. Although somebody has just said that the Presidency is doing something, it does not remove the effort of this honourable House. We must again look at this problem of cultism in our institutions critically. The way to go about it as far as the House of Representatives is concerned is to encourage the Education Committee to have an open hearing on this matter. There are a lot of things to be known if the Committee on Education is empowered to hold public hearing on this matter, we would get a far better result than even what we think the Presidency is doing.

Now we go further to look at some of the reasons why cultism has been sustained and this problem also extends to other issues in Nigeria. We often hear of acid attack, but we have never seen a single person brought to book and, therefore, such attacks will definitely continue. What, therefore, is happening in our institutions is that over the years, those who are caught in these acts of cultism were never punished. In fact, in some cases, you get students arrested and after a week or two, they are re-admitted into the University, which imply that the authorities or some Lecturers or some Vice Chancellors are involved. (*Applause*). Until we know why this is happening, we will never solve it. So, once there is a crime and no punishment goes with it, there will be no solution. In fact, there was one pathetic case in the University of Ibadan of a young girl of about 16 or 17 years old who entered the University to read Medicine. A gang of cult boys had this girl, raped her and inserted a boiling ring into her private part and the girl eventually died. It was a headline of several newspapers, but till tomorrow, we did not hear of those who did that act, or whatever punishment that was meted to them. So, the act will definitely continue.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I will like to say that in going over this matter we want to know why the past people were not punished and we also know that some parents, of course, are also encouraging these children to go into

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these activities. So, Mr. Speaker, Sir, if we encourage the Committee on Education to have open hearing on these issues, we will achieve better results than any private or presidential investigation.

Thank you, Sir.

Hon. Emmanuel Edesiri Aguariawodo (Ughelli North/South/Udu): Mr. Speaker, Sir, the issue at hand is not a laughing matter. We express a very grievous situation. The Mover of the Motion has talked about the causes and attempted some solutions but what we have on hand is a tragic situation that affects even our economy. The problem of cultism dovetails into banditry, all forms of disturbances and threat to peace.

So, I want to proffer some very simple solutions which the government should be informed of when they are thinking about solutions. Firstly, I want to advise that all meetings in tertiary institutions that are not sanctioned by the Students Union bodies of those institutions should be banned.

Secondly, the Police and the State Security Services groups should be involved in the curbing of these menaces in the tertiary institutions. The State Security Services (SSS) in particular should be made to infiltrate into the rank and file of these bodies, because this is the only way they can be monitored and stamped out. Perhaps, it is possible that we are also planning on how to go underground and continue to carry out their activities. So, the Police and SSS should recruit more people to enable them have enough men to distribute round all the institutions so that they can be added to those that will fight the menace of cultism in our institutions.

Thank you.

Hon. Nya Eyoma Asuquo (Calabar Municipal Odukpani): Mr. Speaker, Sir, my Colleague, Hon. Agoda, has spoken very convincingly on this issue. I have decided to add my voice because this is a matter that affects our children, our sons and daughters in tertiary institutions.

Right now, because of the menace of cultism in most Nigerian Universities and Polytechnics, students are not allowed to study. They are intimidated from taking their examinations. The most pathetic and alarming situation is that the cult groups are expanding horizontally and vertically, horizontally to all other tertiary institutions

and vertically to our secondary schools, vertically also to the lectureship strata. If what we are reading is correct, they are about to produce Vice-Chancellors who are cult members. It is said, Sir, that a difficult disease needs a very difficult remedy. While I support all these methods that have been proposed, I think the government should go a step further; that anybody, any student, any cultist, that is involved in killing and is apprehended, should be executed.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, yesterday, on the 9.00 o'clock News, the Lagos Police presented some criminals to the public. Two of those criminals apprehended were cultists who have turned themselves into armed robbers and are terrorising innocent citizens in Lagos.

Mr. Speaker: You say they were what?

Hon. Nya E. Asuquo: Sir, they were apprehended yesterday and presented by the Police to the public as cult students who went into armed robbery. Mr. Speaker, this is a very serious menace and I think this House should pass a very effective and tough resolution to try to stamp out this menace.

Thank you, Sir.

Hon. Uchenna Ekwe (Aniri/Awgu/Oji River): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am happy that this matter has come up at this stage to our national development when truth is gaining ground. I want to add to part of the solutions of resolving this problem. Since government took decisions that students should not be accommodated in campuses again, you will find out that cult activities are stronger in those campuses that do not have hostel. This is because even the school authorities find it more difficult to get close to the cult members. They are now scattered in towns and can operate from various points. Also, one way to find solution to this menace is that politicians themselves should stop using cult members as thugs during elections. This is a fact that we must face. Benjamin Dresslin once said that:

Truth travels slowly but it will reach even you on time.

So, all of us should play a role in resolving this problem because the rich people and their children form the base of cult members as Student Union leaders. Those that their fathers were rich were released within three days. So, in trying to address this problem, the rich people should also talk to themselves. Thank you very much.

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Mr. Speaker: I will allow two more contributions.

Hon. Solomon Agidani (Apa/agatu): While I want to congratulate the author of this Motion and the co-author for a job well done, I would like to suggest that as the Executive Arm of Government is pursuing the ways and means of dealing with cultism, we should ask the author to amend his Motion to a Bill prescribing a legislation seeking to abolish cultism.

Thank you.

Hon. Bala B. Kaoje (Bagudo/Suro): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I stand up here to support the Motion against the issue of cultism in the institutions of this country. I will like to proffer additional solution to this particular problem, because all other issues have so far been exhausted. Some of the solutions I think the Government should consider are:

1. provide adequate Hostel accommodation for all students in our Campuses;
2. all Lecturers must stay on campus and not off campus;
3. the government should provide shopping complexes in the Institutions, as we have something similar, like the Mami-Markets in all the Army Barracks in the Federation.
4. that any Professor or any Vice Chancellor who is appointed in the University should not be given the Vice-Chancellorship in that particular University. He should be posted to a new University. That, of course, will avoid competition which will normally bring a desire to eliminate opponents; and lastly,
5. the government should introduce the Campus Police to monitor the movement of students and to ensure strict discipline in the Campuses.

I think these items will go ahead to solving some of the problems.

Thank you.

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Mr. Speaker : One more speaker, please.

Hon. Dauda Garba Budof (Borodo/Dassi/ Tafawa Balewa): Mr. Speaker, Sir, what happens in our higher Institutions have to be seen as a multiplier effect of what is obtained in the larger society. We have cases of occultic practices everywhere and not only in our higher institutions. As the Proposer has made us to understand, some people have gone into occultic practices just to get a simpler way of getting power or money, so, the students of these universities are looking at these as simpler means to get all these kinds of things. So, as long as it is in practice in the larger society as well as in the higher institutions, I think, there is nothing we can do to stop it. It is like we are just trying to find a solution to a big part of the problem that is a national problem. So, I will suggest that we should look at it as one of the national vices that we should do everything to keep out. By the time we try to find a solution in our higher institutions, we could still have the same problem somewhere. So, I will like to suggest that we should come out with an arrangement or anything that we can do to make sure that we fight this occultic practices all over, not only in the higher institutions.

Thank you very much.

Hon. Eze Anthony Enwereuzor (Aba North/Aba South): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am so glad that you have given me an opportunity to lend my voice in this matter. There is no amount of discourse on this national cancer that is enough until a solution is found. We found two days ago in the Nigerian Newspapers that some Nigerian students, whose parents had some money to take them to University in Ghana, have even taken the cult activities to the University in Ghana and they are already facing some problems over there. So, I think that we have to go to the fundamentals to stamp out this national problem. And in doing so, we must take active cognisance of the fact that most of these students go into the Universities as academically distressed students who are supported by the so-called JAMB. If you trace the history of violent cultism in the Nigerian Institutions, you can tag it to the period that JAMB now dictates. In our own old days, you have to apply to the University of your choice and that University will look at you, look at your records and decide to take you or not. But now, you have to deal with an unknown entity called JAMB.

They falsify results and send to Universities and we have parents who are so eager to send their children to Universities rather than allow them get the fundamental

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education from the Primary School to the Secondary school. They pay to get high scores in JAMB. These children, starting from day one, are distressed students. And to be able to make it, they join these violent cult societies to intimidate teachers, classmates and everybody to get high grades.

Four weeks ago, a kinsman of mine was maimed at Abia State University. The man is still battling with his life because he refused to succumb to the desires of these cultic students.

Some four weeks ago, an old student of mine lost his son at Imo State University. The son was just going his way they shot him by the gate and he died - the history is continuous.

So, I am lending my voice in the direction that for us to solve this problem, please, let us get back to basics. First, how do we get admissions into our Universities? We must, with the number of Universities we have in this country today, allow the University authorities of Abia State, please apply to Abia State University. They will look at your credentials and decide whether they want you or not. It should not be imposed on them. If you want to go to University of Ibadan (UI), our premier University, you should have the academic qualifications to go there. When you apply, they will look at you. With all these mumble-jumble admission policy, it will continue. And for us, those of us who are here, we are being looked upon in the society as those whose voices can be heard.

If we continue to influence admission policies, we are fuelling, aiding and abetting it. If the so-called big men in this country can allow their children to go to school normally, allow their children do so and monitor what they do in schools, I think we are beginning to find a solution. No law that does not address the basic thing will succeed in stamping out this. This is because when you arrest a child whose father is a brother or a friend of one person who is connected in any way in Nigeria, that child is certainly going free. It has happened in many places where children were caught stealing; they even waylaid Coca-Cola truck on the road and took ₦400,000. Till today, those children are walking in the streets free and nothing happened to them.

So, I am saying that this problem is no longer an executive problem, it is a problem of Nigeria. And from today, let us have the political and moral will to deal a decisive blow to it. No section of this country today is

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educationally disadvantaged. Everybody has come to equal stand - (*Interruptions*)

Hon. Ahmed Lawan (Bade/Jakusko): Point of Order!

Several Members : What Order?

Hon. Ahmed Lawan: I have been given the chance to speak and I should be allowed to speak.

Several Members : What Order?

Hon. Ahmed Lawan: Point of correction, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Sir, hon. Members of this House, I would like the last speaker to please withdraw the statement that *there are no educationally disadvantaged States in this country*, because it is not true.

Several Members : Why?

Hon. Ahmed Lawan : If you are asking me why, you should allow me to speak, then I will explain. Mr. Speaker, this is a country that came into Federation in 1914; and some parts of this country started going to formal or western schools forty years before another part. So, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like the last speaker to please withdraw that statement.

Mr. Speaker : Order, please Order! Please, sit down Hon. Lawan.

Hon. Enwereuzor Eze: I have not finished, Mr. Speaker, Sir. Can I round up?

Mr. Speaker: Please, be conscious of time. You have very little time left. I will give you one more minute to finish whatever you are saying.

Hon. Enweruzor Eze: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me correct my distinguished Friend. I did not say, *any State in this country*. I said, *no section* and there are six geo-political sections in Nigeria today. Every section has at least three to four universities and so many secondary schools. No state was mentioned in my address. I am talking of sections of this country. Let that be.

What I am saying in effect is that with the number of schools we have now, we have enough admission places for our children, if they so desire to go to particular schools. Let us not deal with JAMB as our sole placer of students in the Universities.

Thank you.

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Mr. Speaker: I am now going to take arguments against.

Hon. Chukwuemeka Uwaezuoke Nwajiuba (Ehime Mbano/Ihite Oboma/Obowo): My most honoured Speaker, let us address the Members of this honourable House to the Motion in question. The Motion has asked, in respect of its preambles, the prayers that follow, that we:

(i) *condemn in very strong terms the re-occurrence of cultism and the dimension it has assumed in recent times.*

I want us to condemn not this *re-occurrence* but the *occurrence*. It goes further to say again that we:

(ii) *direct the Federal Ministry of Education to work with authorities of tertiary institutions and their student bodies in formulating strategies for identifying those involved in cultism.*

Who have we been liaising with before, is it not the same people? Have we liaised with any other person apart from the Federal Ministry of Education? What are you asking? Sub-section (iii) says that we:

(iii) *set up a Panel to inquire into the causes and spread of cultism in our educational institutions and proffer solutions to stamp out the menace.*

When he has finished telling us the causes and effects, we do not need a Panel. We know where the problems are.

Let me go to Sub-Section (iv). After we have condemned all these, then we should:

(iv) *urge the Federal Ministry of Education and Tertiary Institutions to intensify efforts with a view to identifying the sponsors and affiliates of cult members within and outside the tertiary institutions with a view to bringing them to face the law;*

My most distinguished Hon. Speaker, the point I am making here is that the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Section 66(1)(g) says that it is against the law of Nigeria to be a secret cult member, to start with.

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I will take you to the Criminal Code and the Penal Code because I am sure that the Penal Code has it as a provision. It is also a crime for you to be a secret cult member, whether it is in the University or outside the University or whether you are a sponsor. In law, we call that aiding and abetting. This is under Section 7 of the Criminal Code. If all these things are within the ambit of the law, this Motion tends to make the matter look cheap and casual. This is not a casual matter, we have a serious situation in our hands. If we want to address this issue of cultism, this is not a matter you begin to address by urging the Federal Government. If the Federal Government is urged and you urge the tertiary institutions, somebody urges the other person, then the other urger reaches to enquire. This is making a mockery of what we are discussing here. We have a serious situation in our hands.

There has been gory tales that have been told on the Floor of this House. We all have been telling these stories for years and somebody rises up and asks us to *urge*. We have a situation that demands for us to do things that are concrete, if this is a National Assembly of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Our remedy to cultism, even if we need to stand this Motion aside, is to ask the House Committee on Education and the House Committee on Intelligence and Security to please propound a serious situation-solving mechanism.

Somebody has given an instance when somebody was caught. Many of us who have been to University know how these things operate. It is not something you move a motion on and they clap for you. It does not work like that. This problem can be solved. I have told the Education Committee before that parents who are public officers, who have children in private schools and universities have a duty. Parents have an input to make into the Universities. JAMB and other educational concerns, all have inputs to make into Universities. This is not a problem we can solve with this Motion. This Motion addressed no issue at all.

Hon. Omolola Abiola-Edewor (Apapa): Point of Order, Mr. Speaker! Mr. Speaker, the Order that the hon. Member quoted is Section 66, Sub-section (c). Well, you quoted from the Constitution, did you not? I just wanted you to repeat which part of the Constitution you quoted from.

Hon. Chukwuemeka Uwaezuoke Nwajiuba : I think the hon. Member is out of Order.

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Hon. Omolola Abiola-Edewor : Can I please, finish? Section 66(g) talks about disqualification if you want to run election for Senate and the House of Representatives. It does not refer to the general populace.

Hon. Nwajiuba: The point I am trying to make is not that we should discountenance cultism as it exists in Nigeria. There are so many provisions which I have referred to within the ambits of Nigerian Law and if we must do anything to get solution, it is not by way of this Motion. What we need is to work on it, and that work can be done here by the Committees I have referred to and then we can make inputs as to the solutions that we really want. Somebody has asked for execution. Whether execution is proper in the circumstance is not for us to agree on here but let work be done properly on this thing but not by way of this Motion.

Thank you.

Hon. Abraham Laoshe: Mr. Speaker. Sir, hon. Members I rise to oppose this Motion, because -

Hon. Clifford E. Ohiagu (Obingwa/Osisioma /Ughubagbo): Point of information. Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: What point of information?

Hon. Ohiagu: The hon. Member who stood up now has talked before and some of us should be allowed to speak.

Hon. Laoshe: Mr. Speaker, I did not speak on this Motion. (*Interruptions*)

Mr. Speaker: Order! Order! Please, continue, hon. Member for Abeokuta South (*Hon. A. Laoshe*).

Hon. Laoshe: I rise to oppose this Motion because it is too weak like my Colleague said. The issue of cultism has gone beyond persuasion. Most of our Motions here are persuasive because we are talking to the Executive that would not listen. Cult members meet at night because they do not want to be persuaded by reason and if you see what is happening in terms of armed robbery in Nigeria, we are breeding a group of sophisticated criminals that will hold this country to ransom in point of time.

Mr. Speaker, we have powers in this Assembly that we do not want to use. We have one important weapon that we can use now that the Appropriation Bill is before us.

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Is it not possible that the authors of this Motion can ask the Committee on Education, for instance, to say that until a Vice-Chancellor can prove that in the last six months, all cult activities in his university have been concluded satisfactorily, you will not get the Capital Vote? This is because the thing needs drastic action. One day, they are going to hold us to ransom in this House and we just pass Motions here.

Secondly, there is a law that says: *No Vice Chancellor must spend a second term after four years*. All of them suppressed the said provision to allow them a second term of four years and they are coming to this House to get their budgetary allocation. The Committee on Education can insist that unless the NUC can prove that those Vice Chancellors are not attempting to run a second term, they will not get their capital vote. They will get the recurrent expenditure, but not capital vote. We can also put a moratorium that in the subsequent six months, if there is an activity of cultism in campus that is not sufficiently investigated to identify the culprits- (*Interruptions*). How can students do things that animals will not do? A lion will kill for food but students will put boiling ring in the private part of another student and nobody in Nigeria apprehends those who did it and then pass this weak Motion to *urge* and *persuade*. Who are we persuading? Is it the Ministry of Education?

Mr. Speaker, I think the authors of this Motion should go back and use the weapon we have. The Executive said they have given the Vice Chancellors three months to put an end to cultism. We do not want three months. When the Ministry of Education comes for their allocation, all the University Vice Chancellors should come here and convince us that they have been able to do something about cultism.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Clifford E. Ohiagu: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would have liked to talk for this Motion but because I was not allowed to do so, I will now talk a little bit against this Motion in the sense that this matter is such a grievous matter for which a Motion cannot really solve. We should really look indepth into the causes of cultism in tertiary institutions. Some of us have been in tertiary institutions for twenty-eight years and we know what it takes.

So, for this Motion to have any effect, I will suggest that it be made into a Bill which will now be used to effectively tackle cultism in institutions of higher learning and let it be passed to the House Education

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Committee and let an open hearings be done. We realise now that the Presidency has asked University Vice Chancellors to ensure that cultism is done away with in their universities within three months. I know they cannot do it because there are deep-rooted causes of cultism.

So, I would like us in this honourable House to do a good job and in order to do a good job, I do not think the Motion will really do the job. Let us take all the causes and make a strong Bill which will now be very much effective than an ordinary Motion.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Emaeyak Ukpog (Uyo /Uruan/Nsit Attai/Ibesikpo Asutan): Point of information, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: What point of information?

Hon. Ukpog: Mr. Speaker, Sir, my point of information is that if you look at the issue of cultism critically, it revolves around the southern part of this country and largely the South-Western and former Bendel. We have a few cases within the Eastern part of Nigeria. One has to look at why it should be so. We hardly hear of cases of cultism in the North. In whatever solutions we proffer eventually for this issue of cultism, we have to take this thing into consideration.

Two, there are so many Vice Chancellors who schooled in some of the universities that this cultism thing originated; who have found themselves as Vice Chancellors today. They are promoting this issue. I addressed the Press on this matter before when I was the Chairman of ASUU in my University. I indicted some Vice Chancellors and they have not been able to exonerate themselves up till today. So we should look at this.

Again, one of our hon. Members here said that Professor Wole Soyinka should not be indicted or something. It is all right. Like we know, he originated the Pirate Confraternity. If he has to take credit for whatever good aspect of that confraternity, he should also be able to take responsibility for the fallout of the formation of that confraternity. *(Applause)*

The issue of cultism is an undemocratic process, just like we fought the military to a stand still so to say. Professor Wole Soyinka and others were at the forefront.

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Let them also come out today and be at the forefront of fighting this undemocratic process of cultism in this country.

Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

Hon. Maiyegun Abayomi (Lagos Island 1): Mr. Speaker, Sir, some of my hon. Colleagues have extensively dealt with this matter, but there is angle from which I want us to look at this issue and that is basically, our power here, which is purely legislative. From this angle, I believe we can tackle this matter. It is time we take the bull by the horn. We know that this matter has affected almost every home in this country. We have certain laws in this country which protect the youth. We have the Young Persons (Protection) Act and under our criminal law, we know that the youths are protected and I think that is the problem for the Police to contend with over the years when they are dealing with this issue of cultism.

We have known of cases where some members have been apprehended but the Police have not been able to really do much because of this protection which the youths enjoy and I think, it is from this angle that we can effectively deal with this problem.

My honourable Colleagues have suggested certain Committees to look into it and I think we need to co-opt the Committee on Judiciary and Human Rights as well to sit down and take a look at these laws. It is either we come up with a fresh legislation with which to deal squarely with this matter or those aspects of law which protect the youth. I know that in the criminal law we have certain sections that protect the youths within certain age bracket, may be 17 years or so, that you cannot charge them for murder and all that. What they are doing is simply criminal in nature.

As Mr. President said when he was inaugurating the Committee or when he was speaking with the Vice Chancellors and leaders of the tertiary institutions, that those who were criminal enough to kill should be manly enough to face the consequences of their actions and I think it is from that aspect that we have to look at this matter.

Let us take a look at those laws that protect certain youth within certain age range. It is either we amend those laws or we bring out a legislation that would tackle this matter so that those protection which the youth enjoy will not be within our laws as far as this issue of cult is concerned.

Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

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Hon. Adeleke Kehinde (Ojo) : Mr Speaker, Sir, hon. Members of this House, I want to oppose, in principle, this Motion. In opposing this Motion, I want to say that this Motion cannot solve the problem of cultism in this country. We cannot sit down here and be passing Motions for a very serious and grave entity like cultism. Neither would the Government's three months ultimatum given to the Vice Chancellors to rid their institutions of cultism solve this problem. We must sit down and think properly.

I think the Proposer of this Motion has a very good intention but he has not done enough to make sure that the problem is solved once and for all. A Motion cannot solve this problem. It must be a Bill and we have the right, the function and the duty to bring forward a Bill to solve this problem.

So, I want to suggest and in doing so, I want to align myself with those who have spoken that this Bill should be referred to the Committees to do a thorough job so that we can come out with something that will be long lasting.

I thank you very much.

Hon. Wunmi Bewaji (Lagos Mainland): Honourable Speaker, Sir, my approach to this Motion is that we shall take a look at its prayers, especially Prayer Nos. 2 and 4. Prayer No. 2 says that the House do:

Direct the Federal Ministry of Education to work with authorities of tertiary institutions and their student bodies in formulating strategies to identify those involved in cultism.

Prayer No.4 is saying that we should:

Urge the Federal Ministry of Education and Tertiary Institutions to intensify efforts with a view to identifying the sponsors...

My submission is that Prayer Nos.2 and 4 are saying the same thing basically.

Secondly, when we are talking about setting up a Panel, I think the age of panel beating is over in this country. We are talking about cultism and in an era when we have a constitutional government. I think an open hearing, as has been proposed by some fellow hon.

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Members, will do. Towards this direction, I am proposing an amendment to this Motion if it is to be saved at all.

Honourable Speaker, I am proposing that item No. 3 on the Motion paper be amended thus:

That this House do, through its Education Committee, conduct an open hearing into the immediate and remote causes and consequences of cultism in our educational institutions and proffer solutions to eradicate cultism.

Thank you.

Mr Speaker: Is there any seconder to that amendment? (*No seconder*) Amendment lapses

Hon. Ita S. J. Enang (Itu Ibiono-Ibom): Point of Information! Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The information I want to give is that some hon. Members have proposed that this should be made into a Bill and be passed into law. I want to say that there is a Special Tribunal (Miscellaneous Offenses) Act, which is still existing and has made adequate provisions for adequate punishment for cult and cult activities. It is only that the Tribunal was dissolved at the time that the military was leaving and its jurisdiction was transferred to the conventional courts. So, there is an existing law punishing this matter. If there is an existing law punishing a matter like this, do we need a Motion?

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to say this House should not pass this Motion because the hand of the Nigerian society is not clean enough to want to come and pass a Motion against cultism, because Nigeria and Nigerians are encouraging the cult activities.

This is because when these students graduate, they form themselves into hireable groups in towns and during certain activities, they accept gifts so that they can enforce one thing or the other and is it that same society that will pass a Motion condemning it?

Mr. Speaker, Sir, they say that he who goes to equity should go with clean hands and the hands of the Nigerian society is not clean enough yet for us to start at this stage quarrelling about cultism. We should try to provide jobs for those who graduate because cultism is not only in the universities, it is also more outside the

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universities. Those who have graduated have nothing doing and they are those engaging themselves in what is available and forming themselves into a job group for the boys.

Thank you very much. Sir.

Mr. Speaker: I want to put the question now.

Hon. Esio O. Udoh (Oron/Mbo /Okobo/Udu Nguko Urue Offong Oriko): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have an information to give before you put the question. I want this honourable House to look at the issue of cultism and armed robbery as interchangeable. The reason why I am requesting this House to look at this issue on this premise is because as a Medical Practitioner that I am, I have been opportune, if I may call it opportunity really, to treat cases of armed robbery victims. I have also been opportune to treat cases caused by cultism. If you see the people shot by armed robbers, you will pity them. As a Medical Doctor, I have treated those cases and the appropriate Police machinery was implied and some of them were killed to the best of my knowledge, and then the people who caused damages to human beings by the same process using guns and other forms of weapons were also arrested and let loose.

The question arises; why should somebody that uses gun in the name of armed robbery to kill and the other person who uses gun in the name of cultism to kill, the two are treated in different ways? Why should such a law be allowed to exist in Nigeria? I think those are the issues we should address as a matter of fact and unless we look at it from this premise, I am afraid we would not be able to curb the issue of cultism in our tertiary institutions. Sir.

That is my submission, Sir. Thank you very much.
(Applause)

Hon. Nduka Irabor (Ika North East/Ika South): Point of Order

Mr Speaker: What Order?

Hon. Nduka Irabor : Order 53 (i). Mr. Speaker. I crave your indulgence to cite this Order because this debate is becoming very open-ended and boring if you like. It says:

The Rules and Business Committee shall allocate time to all motions or bills coming before the House.

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We have had no time allocated to this Motion and we have just about 15 minutes to our otherwise common time for adjournment. It would appear as if we have no other time left for other businesses scheduled in the Order Paper. I crave your indulgence, Mr. Speaker, to intervene at this point and call for a divide.

Mr. Speaker: Your point is noted.

Hon. Chijoke Edeoga (Enugu East/Isi Uzo): In the argument for the Motion, one of the hon. Members talked about Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB). If we let that statement go unchallenged, the impression will be created amongst us here, Sir, that (JAMB) is part of the problem or it has contributed to the problem of Cultism in schools. JAMB is just a body set up by the Federal Government of Nigeria to set objective questions and answers. These objective questions and answers have nothing to do with the character, upbringing or the background of the students. JAMB which is now the victim of a whispering campaign from various segments of the country was created to respond to urgent national questions and issues. The urgent national questions and issues which JAMB came to respond to have not died. They have not abated. They are still existing. There is a saying that goes thus: There is no art to know the minds or construction on the face. The student's performance in JAMB or through how he got admitted to the school has nothing to do with cultism. I just want to draw the attention of the House or Members to this attempt to discredit JAMB. Let us bear it in mind.

Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: I am going to put the Question
(Interruptions).

An hon. Member: There was an amendment.

Mr. Speaker: Did anybody second the amendment?

Some hon. Members: Yes! (Interruptions)

Mr. Speaker: Order. hon. Members.

Hon. John H. O. Agoda: By Order 51(11), I, as the Mover of the Motion, Mr. Speaker, have a right of reply. I have listened carefully to the submissions of some of my Colleagues here. I have also agreed to the following amendment. Mr. Speaker, especially No. (iii). It should now read as follows:

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- (iii). That this House through its Education, National Security and Intelligence and Judiciary, Human Rights and Legal Matters Committees conduct an open hearing into the immediate and remote causes and consequences of cultism in our educational institutions and proffer solutions to eradicate cultism.

I beg to move, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Is there any Second to the Amendment?

Hon. Rauf K. Shitu (Ifelodun/Offa/Oyun): I do hereby second the Amendment as proposed by the Mover of this Motion.

Mr. Speaker: I now put the Question. Does the House accept the amendment?

Several hon. Members: Yes.

Amendment put and agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: I now put the Question on the Motion as amended.

Main Question, as amended, accordingly put and agreed to.

Resolved: That in view of the fact that cultism in the nation's educational institutions has turned our schools and universities into places of mayhem and death, and considering the grief and pains it has brought to many Nigerian families, its negative effect on our national image and its potential threat to stability in tertiary institutions, this House do.

- i. condemn in very strong terms the occurrence of cultism and the dimension it has assumed in recent times.
- ii. direct the Federal Ministry of Education to work with authorities of tertiary institutions and their student bodies in formulating strategies for identifying those involved in cultism.
- iii. that this House through its Education, National Security and Intelligence and Judiciary, Human Rights and Legal Matters Committees conduct an open hearing into the immediate and remote causes and consequences of cultism in our

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educational institutions and proffer solutions to eradicate cultism.

- iv. urge the Federal Ministry of Education and Tertiary Institutions to intensify efforts with a view to identifying the sponsors and affiliates of cult members within and outside the tertiary institutions with a view to bringing them to face the law.

Matters of Urgent Public Importance

Protection of Lives and Property in Umuleri, Aguleri and Umuoba-Anam

Hon. Emmanuel O. Anosike (Anambra East/Anambra West): Mr. Speaker, I want to bring to this House a Matter of Urgent National Importance.

Mr. Speaker, as I speak now, there is a terrible war in my constituency, that is, the Umuleri and Aguleri war. I want to bring to your notice some publications of Wednesday last week which reported that 120 people died while on Sunday, about 300 people died also. I want to bring a Motion on this issue and I want you, Mr. Speaker, to please oblige me because this is terrible.

The prolonged communal clashes between the towns of Umuleri, Aguleri and Umuoba-Anam, all in Anambra East Local Government -

Hon. Musa Elayo (Awe / Doma / Keana): Point of Order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Yes, what is your Point Order?

Hon. Musa Elayo: I want to refer this honourable House to Order 40 at page 16 of the Rules of the House. Mr. Speaker, Sir, any matter coming before the House under Matters of Urgent Public Importance are matters that the House cannot take decisions on. We can only comment on them. So, we cannot take resolutions on Matters of Urgent Public Importance without taking it into the Order Paper of the next legislative day.

Several hon. Members: No!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Hon. Musa Elayo: Mr. Speaker, Sir, where an hon. Member raises any Point of Order, it is the discretion of

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the Speaker to first and foremost, agree that it is urgent. And where Mr. Speaker so holds, he throws it to the Floor of the House for one-fifth of the Members of the House to agree that it is urgent. When that is done, it is now reflected in the legislative Order Paper for the following day. That is the procedure.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Jerry Sonny Ugoke (Idemili North/Idemili South): Point of Information, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: What is your information?

Hon. Jerry Sonny Ugokwe: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I just want to inform you that what the Chairman of the Rules and Business Committee (*Hon. Musa Elayo*) has just said is that he has not allowed our Colleague to finish for you to take a decision on the issue.

Mr. Speaker. Sir, I think this is a Matter of Urgent National Importance and we should allow the hon. Member for Anambra East/Anambra West Federal Constituency (*Hon. Emmanuel Anosike*) to finish his Motion before a decision could be taken on it.

Mr. Speaker: I call on the hon. Member for Anambra East/Anambra West Federal Constituency (*Hon. Emmanuel Anosike*) to continue. (*Applause*)

Hon. Emmanuel O. Anosike: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will continue with the Motion.

The prolonged communal clashes between the towns of Umuleri, Aguleri and Umuoba-Anam all in Anambra East Local Government Area of Area of Area of Anambra State, have claimed so many lives and properties and destroyed farm crops. Many of the indigenies have been displaced and are living as refugees in all neighbouring towns. This House, therefore, do resolve:

- i. To look into the matter as a matter of urgent national importance and accordingly refer the matter to the House Committees on Peace and Reconciliation and Police Affairs for urgent action;
- ii. That funds and aids be provided to the victims to enable them to rehabilitate the destroyed houses;

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- iii. That all necessary steps should be taken to ensure that lasting peace returns to the Communities.

I so move, Sir.

Mr. Speaker: I will now put the question.

Question put and agreed to

Resolved: That the Rules and Business Committee should put the Motion in the Order Paper of tomorrow.

PRESENTATION OF REPORT

Ad-hoc Committee on Nigerian Union of Teachers' Strike

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, the next business of the day is the presentation of the Report by the Ad-hoc Committee on the Strike by the Nigerian Union of Teachers. The Chairman of the Ad-hoc Committee (*Hon. Yusuf Bunkure*) is invited to present the Committee's Report.

Hon. M. A. Yusuf Bunkure (Bunkure/Rano/Kidbiya): **Mr. Speaker,** Sir, permit me to lay on the Table of this House, a copy of the Report of the Ad-hoc Committee on the Nigerian Union of Teachers' Strike.

Report laid on the Table

Hon. Bunkure: Mr. Speaker, Sir, hon. Members, I present the Committee's Report with the hope that our recommendations will be accepted as part of efforts at reinvigorating and rejuvenating the educational sector, especially in the primary education sub-sector. However, let me quickly apologise to this honourable House for the delay on this Report. This was because the payment of salaries of teachers had to be monitored and how best to reach the State Primary School Boards, coupled with the nation-wide monitoring visits to some payment centres. Our findings thereof, forms part of the basis of our recommendations to this honourable House.

Also, my profound gratitude goes to the Hon. Speaker and all Members of the House for providing us the opportunity to serve on the Committee and be part of our national history. Members of the Committee have shown unity of purpose and have worked together as a team to resolve the teachers' nation-wide strike and the payment of their salaries have commenced, based on the new

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minimum wage. We hope that our Report will be found useful and our recommendations worthy of the efforts put therein.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, we hereby submit the Report and pray that this House do receive and accept the Report of the Ad-hoc Committee on NUT Strike.

Thank you and God bless. *(Applause)*

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRESENTATION OF BILL

**Establishment of the Niger-Delta
Development Commission Bill, 1999**

A Bill for an Act to establish the Niger-Delta Development Commission, 1999, presented by the Clerk of the House of Representatives and read the First Time.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Death of Hon. Matori's Mother

Mr. Speaker: I want to announce to the House the death of the mother of one of our hon. Members, Hon. Abdullahi Matori, which sad event took place about two weeks ago. May I request the House to pray for the repose of the soul of the hon. Member's late mother. May we observe a minute silence, please.

(A minute silence observed)

May her gentle should rest in peace. Amen.

MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

**Allegations Against Senate President
In the Tell Magazine**

Hon. Adam Jagaba (Kachia/Kagarko): Mr. Speaker, Sir, hon. Members, in view of the recent publication in the *Tell Magazine* against the Senate President, accusing him of age and credential falsifications, I want to urge that this House form three Committees, namely, Ethics and Privileges, Judiciary and National Security, to ascertain the truth and facts about the matter and to report to the House within 48 hours - *(Interruptions)*

Hon. Tony Eze Okere (Ohaji /Eggbema/ Oguta/ Oru West): Point of Order! Mr. Speaker, Sir, hon. Members, I refer to Order 40, No. 3 which says:

Not more than one such motion may be made at the same sitting.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, we have had the first Motion on Matter of Urgent Public Importance and this second Motion is being raised as a Matter of Urgent Public Importance. The House cannot take the Motion today.

Hon. Ita Solomon J. Enang (Itu/Ibionolbon): Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Point of Order I am raising is of such national public importance that we should consider it. Mr. Speaker will urge the House to make that directive to be done. If we think we are right to get to the matter and the Speaker wishes, he can direct that the matter be listed for full discussion and debate tomorrow before we can take a decision.

Thank you, Sir.

Hon. Farouk Mohammed Lawan (Bagwai/ Shanono): Mr. Speaker Sir, I want to bring to the attention of this honourable House that not only the publication in the *Tell Magazine* but also other publications that cast aspersions on the integrity of this entire House. I refer here to another publication in *This Day* newspaper of Sunday as well as the publication in the *Vanguard* of Sunday as well alleging that no less than three honourable Members here have been elected on the basis of falsified documents.

I also want to link this up to the issue we discussed here last week alleging that five honourable Members of this House are confirmed drug peddlers. I, therefore, believe that this House has to take urgent and concerted measures to ensure that we redeem our credibility so that whatever laws we have to pass will be seen as passed by honourable Members, honourably elected and honourably having the right to pass laws for the benefit of all the masses of this country.

Mr. Speaker, it is my view that without violating the Rules of the House in such specific issues, today, my Committee, the Ethics and Privilege Committee, will meet at 2.30 p.m. and by tomorrow, we hope to give a Report to this House on how best we intend to handle this issue.

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So, I crave the indulgence of this House to allow the Committee to deliberate on these issues today, so that by tomorrow, we will tell this honourable House on how to go about it.

Thank you.

Hon. Musa Elayo (Awe): Mr. Speaker Sir, hon. Members, may I humbly refer this House to Order 40(1) which says:

That matter for discussion shall, if possible, be referred to the Speaker before the commencement of the day's sitting and the Speaker shall refuse to allow the claim unless he is satisfied that the matter is definite and urgent.

Mr. Speaker Sir, the key words here are *definite and urgent*. What are the matters that can be termed *urgent* for the House to leave whatever it is doing to go into? They are matters that unless they are discussed immediately may set this country ablaze. The issue of the allegations against the Senate President has been re-occurring since 1983 and it will continue to re-occur. Not only that of the Senate President but any other Member of this honourable House. If we take all these matters everyday as matters of urgent public importance, we will continue to have them everyday here.

We cannot have solutions to these problems here and now. It is, therefore, our humble interpretation that the matter is not *definite and urgent*.

Thank you very much.

Hon. Adam Jagaba (Kagarko/Kachia): Mr. Speaker Sir, I would like to disagree with the last speaker. Order 40(1) says:

The matter for discussion shall, if possible ...

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I think the answer is to put the question as to whether this matter should be discussed or not. This is because, in the first instance, these accusations, as we all know, have a very great impact on the integrity of this House. So, the House, as a matter of urgency, should discuss this issue; and refusal to do so is tantamount to be given different interpretations from outside and it is going to mark our discussions in this House. What are we going to discuss in this House if we have a questioned integrity?

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So, I would urge this House that this matter be accepted for discussion.

Thank you.

Hon. Ibrahim Zailani (Toro): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I will refer this House to Order 40(2) which says:

If the claim is allowed by the Speaker, and the leave of the House is given, by at least one-fifth of all the Members of the House, the matter shall stand over till the next legislative day.

What did Mr. Speaker say? Are you agreeing that this is a matter that is definite and urgent? I think any Member of this House knows that it is definite and urgent. We cannot in this country have a Senate President who is alleged to be an ex-jail bird. We cannot in this country allow a Senate President who was alleged to have pilfered public fund. What is more urgent than that? Are we trying to kill our democracy? Are you trying to portray this House and the Senate as composed of fraudsters?

Please, Gentlemen, let us do what is right. This is definite and urgent and we must constitute a Committee to investigate and report to this House tomorrow.

Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Order! Order!! I will put the Question that the House do refer this matter and other matters to the Ethics and Privileges Committee for discussion tomorrow - (*Interruptions*)

Yes, Hon. Elayo, What is your Amendment?

Hon. Musa Elayo: Mr. Speaker, my amendment is that instead of Ethics and Privileges Committee, we should add Security and Intelligence and also that of the Judiciary.

Several hon. Members: No!

Mr. Speaker: Let me put the question again. Does this honourable House take this matter as a matter of great national importance to be discussed tomorrow?

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved: That Allegations against the Senate President in the *Tell* magazine, be discussed tomorrow.

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[Announcements]

[Adjournment]

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Mr. Speaker: The Mover shall bring it in the form of a Motion for discussion tomorrow.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Committee Meetings

Mr. Speaker: I have some further announcements to make.

There will be a meeting of *Ad-hoc* Committee on National Planning at Committee Room 19 by 2 p.m.

The following hon. Members should meet the Secretary of the Committees on Foreign Affairs, immediately after this Session for an urgent message:

Hon. Folaremi Oyeboji
Hon. Gabriel Suswan
Hon. Uche Nwole
Hon. Abdu'Rauf Tukur
Hon. Abdullahi Idris
Hon. Chukwuemeka Chikelu
Hon. Frank Emeka
Hon. Ned Nwoko
Hon. Nwakamma Chimaobi (Deputy Chairman,
House Committee on Foreign Affairs).

There is also going to be a meeting of the following Committees:

Rules and Business Committee; Tuesday, 3rd August, 1999 by 4.00 p.m. in Committee Room 6

Public Accounts Committee; Tuesday, 3rd August, 1999 by 2.30 p.m. in Hearing Room 1.

House Services Committee; Tuesday, 3rd August, 1999 by 3.00 p.m. in Committee Room 10.

Water Resources Committee; Tuesday, 3rd August, 1999 by 1.00 p.m. in Committee Room 22.

Education Committee; Tuesday, 3rd August, 1999 by 3.00 p.m. in Room 20

Committee on Commerce; Tuesday, 3rd August, 1999 by 4.00 p.m. in Committee Room 18.

Ethics and Privileges Committee; Tuesday, 3rd August, 1999 by 2.30 in Committee Room 4.

Petroleum Resources Committee; Tuesday, 3rd August, 1999 by 2.00 p.m. in Committee Room 8

Again, there will be a meeting on the Supplementary Budget today, 3rd August, 1999 at 4.00 p.m. in Committee Room 1, next to the Deputy Speaker's office. The following hon. Members are requested to attend:

House Leader
APP Leader
AD Leader
Chairmen and Deputy Chairmen of the following Committees:

Finance
Appropriation
House Services and
Ethics and Privileges

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Speaker: Now, I call on the Majority Leader to move a Motion for Adjournment.

Mohammed Wakil (Damboa, Gwoza, Chibok): **Mr. Speaker, Sir, hon. Members, I move that this honourable House do adjourn till tomorrow, 4th August, 1999, by 10.00 a.m.**

Question proposed.

Issues on Welfare and Procedures

Hon. Abioye A. Oyetunji (Odo-Otin/Ifelodun/Boripe): **Mr. Speaker, I beg to second the Motion, Sir, and in doing that, I would like to make one or two comments on observation. This has to do with our Welfare Package and the way we have been handling quite a number of our affairs in this House. Now, Mr. Speaker, the House Services Committee gives us some information in bits and pieces. What some of us have been used to in the previous House of Representatives was that things were done in proper order. We expect the House Services Committee to give us whatever recommendations they have on all Welfare Packages.**

They should have them printed properly and discussed in the Committee of the Whole House and, thereafter, whatever we have approved at the Committee of the Whole House will be printed and a copy given to every Member of this honourable House - that is one, Sir.

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[Adjournment]

Then, on the issue of Committee Membership also, one will expect that in our Votes and Proceedings of the sitting days, we will have Members of different Committees listed for reference and for future purpose.

This is very important that we should have them properly documented and not the way things have been done so far. Some of us do not even know what or which Committees Members belong to, unless we ask questions, whereas, we ought to have the Votes and Proceedings containing all the Committees and Members of such

[Adjournment]

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Committees. I would like to bring this to the attention of the honourable House.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir.

Mr. Speaker: Noted, please.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved: That the House stands adjourned till tomorrow, 4th August, 1999, at 10.00 a.m.

The House adjourned accordingly at 1.25 p.m.