

National Assembly Debates (House of Representatives)

Wednesday, 7th July, 1999

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**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA**

Wednesday, 7th July, 1999

The House met at 11.15 a.m.

PRAYERS

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS

Mr. Speaker: Good morning, hon. Members. I am sorry for the delay in starting this morning's Session. This was due to a problem we had with the preparation of the Order Paper and we hope it will not happen again. Once again, we apologise for the delay, please.

Hon. Members, I have examined and approved the Votes and Proceedings of Tuesday, 6th July, 1999.

OATHS

Hon. Members who have not taken and subscribed the Oaths should please come forward. *(No response)*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Remembrance of late Chief M. K. O. Abiola

Hon. Members, exactly a year ago, one of this country's finest people who fought for democracy, Chief M.K.O. Abiola, died in the cause of democracy.

Can we please rise and pay him one minute silence?

(One minute silence observed). May his soul rest in perfect peace.

All hon. Members: Amen.

Meeting of the Education Committee

Mr. Speaker: There will be a meeting of the Committee on Education after today's sitting. The venue is Committee Room 2. This is signed by Hon. Abubakar Shehu Matazu, Chairman.

Meeting of Internal Affairs Committee

Hon. Members of Internal Affairs Committee should please stay behind after the sitting of the House. This is signed by Hon. J. I. Nwala, Chairman.

**Meeting of the Judiciary, Human Rights
and Legal Affairs Committee**

There shall be a meeting of the Committee on Judiciary, Human Rights and Legal Affairs at the Committee Room on the right of the Chamber at 3.00 p.m. All Members of the Committee are please requested to attend and punctually, too. It is signed by Hon. Obeten, Chairman.

Meeting of Members of South-East Zone

There will be a meeting of Members of South-East Zone immediately after the Session in the first Committee Room to the left of the House Chamber. It is signed by Hon. Mao Ohuabunwa, South East Caucus Leader.

**Inaugural Meeting of the Committee
on Water Resources**

There will be an inaugural meeting of the Committee on Water Resources immediately after today's sitting in Committee Room 15 on the First Floor. All hon. Members of the Committee are please requested to attend. This is signed by Hon. Lumumba Adch, Chairman.

**Meeting of the Committee on
Drugs and Narcotics**

Hon. Members of the Committee on Drugs and Narcotics will please meet in this Chamber immediately after the session today. All Members are please advised to stay behind. This is signed by Hon. Tony, Chairman.

Meeting of all Committee Chairmen

All Committee Chairmen are to meet after the Session at Hearing Room 1 for a brief emergency meeting.

Meeting of the House Services Committee

All Members of the House Services Committee are to meet with their Chairman, Hon. Gabriel Suswan, for five minutes in Hearing Room 1 for brief discussion. It is signed by Hon. Gabriel Suswan.

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**Inaugural Meeting of the Committee on
Privatisation and Commercialisation**

Members of the Committee on Privatisation and Commercialisation are hereby informed that there will be an inaugural meeting of the Committee, today, 7th day of July, 1999, at the Committee Room No. 7, Ground Floor, immediately after the House sitting.

Inaugural Meeting of the Committee on Aviation

The inaugural meeting of the Committee on Aviation will hold immediately after the day's sitting in Committee Room 17, First Floor. This is signed by Hon. Awwal Tukur, Chairman.

**Meeting of the Committee on
Petroleum Resources**

There will be a meeting of the Committee on Petroleum Resources at Committee Room 8 immediately after the sitting of the House. It is signed by Hon. West Idahosa, Chairman.

Press Conference on late Chief M.K.O Abiola

There will be a Press Conference in Committee Room 1 on late Chief M.K.O Abiola. The time of the Conference is 2.00 p.m. All hon. Members are invited. It is signed by Hon. Oladipo Olaitan, AD Party Leader.

MOTIONS

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, there are three Motions on the Order Paper. The first Motion is standing in the name of the Leader of the House, Hon. Mohammed Wakil. He is invited to move his Motion.

**Amendment to the Rules of the
House of Representatives**

Hon. Mohammed Wakil (Damboa/ Chibok/ Gwoza): Mr. Speaker, Sir, hon. Members, I beg to move the Motion standing in my name on the Order paper that:

WHEREAS the House has six Special and Thirty-Seven Standing Committees;

WHEREAS the exigencies of the House require the establishment of one additional Special Committee to be known as "Committee on Special Duties" and two additional Standing Committees to be known as

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"Committee on Governmental Affairs" and "Committee on Justice" respectively.

AND WHEREAS it is necessary to enlarge the membership of each of the Special Committees to between 15 - 30 Members and each of the Standing Committees to 30 - 34 members respectively.

AND now, therefore, it is hereby moved and be it resolved as follows:

(i) That Rule 91 be amended by creating "Committee on Special Duties" to be numbered as Rule 91 (g) as follows:

(g) There shall be a Special Committee to be known as Committee on Special Duties consisting of 15 - 30 members. The Committee's jurisdiction shall cover:

(a) All matters relating to the Presidency generally;

(b) All Matters relating to the office functions of the Presidential Liaison Officer attached to this honourable House and/or the National Assembly;

(c) The performance of such duties as may be assigned by the Speaker from time to time.

92(38) There shall be established a Standing Committee to be known as Committee on Governmental Affairs consisting of 15-45 members.

The Committee's jurisdiction shall cover:

(a) All matters relating to the office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation;

(b) Annual budget estimates.

92(39) There shall be established a Standing Committee to be known as Committee on Justice consisting of 15 - 45 members.

The Committee's jurisdiction shall cover:

(a) All matters relating to the Ministry of Justice and Attorney-General of the Federation;

(b) Constitutional matters;

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- (c) Measures relating to claims against Nigeria;
- (d) Revision and codification of Statutes of Nigeria;
- (e) Legal practitioners;
- (f) Annual budget estimates.

Rule 92(13) shall accordingly be amended by deleting items 2(b)(d)(h) and (j) and the words "legal matters".

- (d) Membership of Special Committees shall be between 15 - 30 members and Standing Committees shall be between 15 - 45 members wherever it occurs in the Rules of the House of Representatives as amended in 1999.
- (e) That all amendments herein made be deemed to form part of the House Rules in accordance with Rule 104(5) of the Rules of the House of Representatives as amended in 1999 and shall be incorporated accordingly.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, hon. Members, on that note may I move that this amendment should be approved by this honourable House.

Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Is there any Seconder?

Hon. Hamisu Mu'Azu Shira (Shira/Giade): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to second the Motion moved by the House Leader, (*Hon. Mohammed Wakil*).

Thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker: I now call on the House Leader, Hon. Mohammed Wakil, to speak on his Motion.

Hon. Mohammed Wakil (Damboa/Chibok/Gwoza): Mr. Speaker, Sir, hon. Members, this Motion is straightforward. It is an Administrative Motion which relates to the honourable House.

Mr. Speaker, you will agree with me that we have had a lot of complaints. Some hon. Members used to say that there is a lumping of the work of some of the Committees and that there are some lapses in communicating with the Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation and the House.

There is no Committee that could handle the relationship between SGF and this House.

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If Mr. Speaker and hon. Members will permit me, I can take it one by one. I will start with the Special Duties Committee. I quite appreciate that we have a number of Principal Officers in this House that are assisting you from time to time but, we cannot run away from the fact that sometimes the workload will make it look like some of the works are not moving faster. The Committee Chairmen and Members have been assigned and it is good that we should advise that you should create a Committee on Special Duties to assist your office in communicating with the Presidency and the other areas which are enshrined in the proposed amendment in the Order Paper. If you look at it, Mr. Speaker, you will agree with me that a Special Committee has to be attached to your office thereby assisting you from time to time for any *ad hoc* assignments and where there is no need to create any *ad hoc* Committee again, a Special Committee will handle the affairs for you.

Let us now go to the second Committee, that is, the Committee on Governmental Affairs. As I said in my opening remarks, there is no Committee that will take care of the relationship between this honourable House and the Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation. So, Mr. Speaker, it is my view that this Committee will now take care of these related matters between the honourable House and the Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation. In my view, this Committee is relevant and I urge the honourable House to look at it and the contents of its functions and you will agree with me that we have to get a Committee that will communicate between the Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation and our honourable House.

The other one is the Committee on Justice. There are a lot of letters and Memos coming in to the Selection Committee. So, it is good for us to get a separate Committee on Justice, Committee on Human Rights and Legal Matters, so that the Committee on Justice will only take care of matters from the Office of the Attorney-General and all the Courts, including the Supreme Court and so on, to take care of the relationship between the House and the bodies I mentioned. Then the Human Rights and other related matters have to take care of issues concerning human rights and the likes separately.

So, I think it is a very straightforward issue which I know that it is in the view of hon. Members that we are now presenting this Motion to the Floor of the House. I am sure that the hon. Members will agree that the

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suggestions they gave us are what we are now presenting to the Floor of the House.

On that note, may I urge this honourable House to approve this Motion because that is what you asked for and this is what I have now presented in the form of a Motion. I hope that the honourable House will approve it.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: I call on Hon. Mohammed Kumalia to make his contributions.

Hon. Mohammed Umara Kumalia (Maiduguri Metropolitan): Mr. Speaker, Sir. - *(Interruptions)*

Hon. Patrick Ene Okon (Calabar South/ Akpabuyo/ Bakassi): Point of Order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: What Order, please?

Hon. Okon: Mr. Speaker, my Point of Order is on Order 104 (3 & 4). Mr. Speaker, we have only one Mover of the Motion and that is Hon. Mohammed Wakil and this Order, Sub-3, states that -

The Mover or Movers (in this case we can forget about the Movers) of the amendments shall be allowed to explain in detail the proposed amendments; thereafter the House shall decide by simple majority votes whether the amendments should be considered or rejected

Then Sub-4 says -

If the decision is to consider the amendments, then another date shall be set aside by the Rules and Business Committee whereby opportunity would be given to members to further propose amendments but must strictly be confined to the original amendments.

Mr. Speaker, the Mover of the Motion has just explained and I think it is our duty to either vote to consider or reject the amendment and if we consider it, then we should give the Rules and Business Committee some time to consider it and set another date for it.

Thank you.

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Mr. Speaker: Thank you for the Point of Order.

Hon. Ojo Olusegun (Ekiti North I): Point of observation, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: What is your observation, please?

Hon. Ojo Olusegun: In the Notice of the proposed amendment paper that is given to us, there are two Committees mentioned there, but in the Motion today, we have three Committees. The ones that were mentioned there are Committees on Government Affairs and - *(Interruptions)*

Hon. Patrick Ene Okon: Point of Order, Mr. Speaker. I moved a Point of Order and you should allow Mr. Speaker to rule on that before any other discussion, please.

Mr. Speaker: Based on Rule 104(3 & 4) raised by Hon. Patrick Ene Okon, I think he is correct. So, I will now put the question, since the mover of the Motion has explained in detail his proposal.

Question put and negatived.

Mr. Speaker: I now call on the Deputy Speaker (Chibudom N. Nwuche) to move his Motion.

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Hon. Chibudom N. Nwuche (Abua/Odual/Ahoada East): Mr. Speaker, Sir, hon. Members of this honourable House, I beg to move the Motion Standing in my name on the Order Paper that:

WHEREAS some expatriates working in the oil companies at the Niger Delta region have been taken hostage by suspected youths of the Niger Delta as protest against certain deprivations, besides seizure of an helicopter,

WHEREAS the said youths are said to have demanded ransom for the release of the men and the helicopter; and WHEREAS the health of the men and security of the helicopter is in serious jeopardy.

Now, therefore, be it resolved:

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- (i) That this House do urge the Federal Government to intervene and dialogue with the Oil Companies and concerned youths to ensure urgent release of the hostages and the helicopter;
- (ii) That the President do take urgent steps to lay before the House the proposed Niger-Delta Commission Bill for consideration to assuage the grievances of the youths;
- (iii) That the Federal Government do liaise with the Oil Companies and take remedial measures to ensure that peace returns to the Niger-Delta for smooth operation of the Oil Companies pending the implementation of the Niger-Delta Development budgeted programmes; and
- (iv) That this House do institute Parliamentary peace delegation to the Niger Delta generally to assure them of the resolve of Government to address comprehensively developmental needs of the Communities and intervene in the hostage matters.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I wish to so move.

Mr. Speaker: Is there any Seconder?

Hon. Nduese Essien (Eket/Onwa/Esit/Eket/Ibeno): Mr. Speaker, Sir, hon. Members, I rise to second the Motion.

Hon. Nwuche: Mr. Speaker, Sir, hon. Members, recently, there was an incident of the highjacking of a helicopter from Enwen Field in Abua/Odual Federal Constituency, which is where I happen to represent. The helicopter was hijacked along with some expatriate staff and taken to Delta State. The expatriates are still being held hostage up till today and we hear from latest reports from few of my friends here that the expatriates are in very poor health and they are at the risk of death. Also, I had travelled home last week-end, and while there, I had spoken to few oil Companies who are very much concerned with the safety of their staff in most of the

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Niger Delta Region. I believe that if we do not take urgent actions to assuage the youths of these areas and to assure them of government interest in their plights and measures being put in place to remedy the neglect of the past, they would not allow these Companies to operate. And as you are aware, petroleum is currently the country's livewire. We cannot afford to lose production of the companies, and also it is threatening the peace and security of the Niger Delta area.

I will urge this House to please support the Motion moved on these grounds in view of the importance of the industry to the economy, in view of the fact that the companies are now threatened and feel insecure to operate in Nigeria. I wish to urge that the House supports this Motion. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: I call on Hon. Emibra to speak.

Hon. Agbeotu Emibra (Burutu): Mr. Speaker, Sir, hon. Members, based on the fact that I, in the company of my three other Colleagues went and have done some work concerning this Motion, I hereby stand to inform the House of the importance of this Motion.

From 1987 to 1990, Shell has recorded 582 incidents of communal disturbances for various cases bordering on the neglect of the Niger Delta Area. These figures were taken from the Rivers State, Bayelsa and Delta States. This has caused Shell production losses amounting to 367 million barrels of crude oil. From the said three-year period, a total of 115 cases of hostage taking in different forms for different reasons have also been recorded.

The irate youths this time drawn from Cross River, Bayelsa, Rivers and Delta States, even some others from Ondo State have teamed up and hijacked a Bristol helicopter at Enwen (a village in the constituency of the Deputy Speaker of this honourable House) to Okoloba in Delta State. They are demanding for N30m to enable them fly their colleagues abroad for treatment. They explained that that is to enforce the Kiama declaration to press home their demands. *(Interruptions)*

Hon. Femi Kehinde (Iwo): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have a point of Order.

Mr. Speaker: What point of Order, please.

Hon. Femi Kehinde: My point of order is Order 60 (1) and (2) (3) which states:

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It shall be out of order to make a motion or move an amendment dealing with the subject matter of a bill or other order of the day appointed for consideration.

- (2) *An order of the Day, Notice of Motion or amendment of which notice has been given shall not be anticipated in a debate upon a Motion for the adjournment of the House in any other debate*
- (3) *In determining whether a discussion is out of order on the grounds of anticipation, regard shall be had by the Speaker to the probability of the matter anticipated being brought before the House within a reasonable time.*

Mr. Speaker, the words are *reasonable time*. In paragraph two of the Motion, they said:

That the President do take urgent steps to lay before the House the proposed Niger-Delta Commission Bill for consideration to assuage the grievances of the youths.

In other words, the Mover of this Motion knows that Mr. President is bringing a Bill on the Niger-Delta Commission before this honourable House.

I thereby humbly submit, Sir, that this Motion is speculative and anticipatory. (Applause).

Mr. Speaker: On paragraphs 1 and 2, what the Motion is saying is that *they urge Mr. President to take urgent steps*. What is speculative about this?

Hon. Abdullahi Idris Umar (Yamaltu/Deba): Mr. Speaker, hon. Members, I think the Point of Order raised by the last speaker with reference to Rule 60 of this House is well founded and in order. The Movers of this Motion in paragraph 2 thereof, are urging Mr. President, Commander-in-Chief to set in motion the machinery for the effective presentation of the Bill on the Niger Delta Commission before this honourable House. What the Rule is saying is that since this Bill is being anticipated by this House, a Motion cannot lie on the same Bill.

The Movers of this Motion have stated clearly that a Bill is coming before this House on the Niger-Delta Commission and the Mover of that Order is saying that since that is anticipated by the Movers of the Motion, that we should not go into any debate on the matter and that it should not be considered by this honourable

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House. To do that would amount to constituting a problem to the Bill. It is going to be anticipated. For this reason, I subscribe to his interpretation of Rule 60 of this House.

Thank you.

Hon. Chibudom N. Nwuche (Abua/Ahoada East): Mr. Speaker, in view of the objections raised by my hon. Colleagues, I wish to withdraw paragraph 2 of this Order, please.

Hon. Jerry Sonny Ugokwe (Idemili North/Idemili South): I have a point of Order and that is Order 49 which deals with withdrawal of Motions and amendments. It says:

1. *A Motion or an amendment may be withdrawn, at the request of the mover by leave of the House of Committee, before the commencement of debate. A motion or an amendment so withdrawn may be made again but in the case of a Motion, notice is required.*

So, Mr. Speaker, I say that the withdrawal made by Hon. Nwuche is not in order.

Hon. Babatunde Olokun (Remo): Mr. Speaker, I have a point of Order.

Mr. Speaker: What point of Order?

Hon. Babatunde Olokun: I agree with the last submission. However, Order 50 reads:

Notice shall not be dispensed within the case of a Motion or in respect of any other proceeding for which notice is required except with the consent of the Speaker and the general assent of the Members present.

So, if Mr. Speaker so rules (Interruptions)

Mr. Speaker: With the leave of this House, the Mover of the Motion seeks to withdraw Section 2(ii) of the proposed Motion and it has been withdrawn.

Hon. Egbeotu Emibra: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Like I was saying, the youths are explaining that in their bid to enforce the Kaiama Declaration to drive home their points, the Federal Military might engage them.

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Hon. Olaitan Oladipo (Alimosho): Point of Order!

Mr. Speaker: What Order?

Hon. Olaitan Oladipo: With tremendous respect to Mr. Speaker, Section 56 says: *The Speaker can dispense but with the general assent of the Members.* The Speaker has not asked for our assent.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the wish of this honourable House that we now approve the amendment as requested by the Mover of this Motion that Section 2(ii) of his Motion be withdrawn?

Amendment put and agreed to.

Paragraph (ii) of Motion by leave withdrawn.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Agbeotu Emibra, please proceed.

Hon. Agbeotu Emibra: Mr. Speaker, Sir, like I was explaining, the youths explained that their demand for the N30 million is expected to enable them fly the victims that were engaged in the Kiama declaration. They said some of their colleagues have been amputated, others were burnt with chemical weapons and those that did not die on the spot are dying by the day. Shell staff explained as we met with them that they cannot negotiate any ransom and that as they cannot go to the field to embark on productive activities, everything seem to be at a standstill. Right now, the six expatriates are still being held hostage, the helicopter is still there. Since things are coming to a standstill, that is, talking about oil production in the country, I do support the Motion as amended.

Hon. Andie Clement (Sagbama/Egberemor): Mr. Speaker, Sir, hon. Colleagues, please I want this honourable House to take this matter as a serious matter. The youths that are involved in this thing have the mandate of the Niger Delta who attributed the problems to neglect. These areas have been neglected for a very long time. As I am speaking to you now, the water the people are drinking is being polluted by these oil companies. As I am speaking, most of these youths are being hospitalised. As I am speaking, because, of the neglect, most of the people from that area have not seen what is called television, they have not seen what is called newspaper, they have not seen what is called motor car. This is a serious matter and it is known to everybody in the area.

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Hon. Ismaila Mohammed (Dukku/Nafida): Point of Order!

Mr. Speaker: What is your Point of Order?

Hon. Ismaila Mohammed: It is Order 63. Mr. Speaker, Sir, hon. Members, I call the attention of Mr. Speaker as the adviser and the custodian of the Rules of this honourable House.

Mr. Speaker: You are out of order. If your Point of Order is based on the Motion, I have not ruled on that. The Motion is still in order. Can you please sit down?

Hon. Andie Clement can please continue.

Hon. Andie Clement: Mr. Speaker, Sir, as I was saying, the matter is a serious matter. *(Interruptions)*

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Andie, please you have just two more minutes left.

Hon. Andie Clement: The youths are not demanding this money to go and buy clothes or something, it is the problem of Niger Delta. I know that President Olusegun Obasanjo is presenting a Bill before this honourable House, but the problem on the ground is more serious than the Bill.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Hon. Andie. Can you please sit down? I call on Hon. Mike Epengule.

Hon. Mike Epengule (Yenagoa/Opokuma): Mr. Speaker, Sir, my hon. Colleagues *(Interruptions)*

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, please every hon. Member of this honourable House has the right to be heard on this Floor.

Hon. Mike Epengule: As the matter implies, it is of a very great risk to the Niger Delta area. The youths as you are all aware, have captured a helicopter belonging to Shell Company and two white expatriates are being held hostage. Their demand is that the area is being neglected for the past years of their operation in the environment and what is on the ground now is not the Niger Delta Commission issue. We are talking of immediate problem that will need our contribution or our ideas as to the way to settle this very problem. We are not formulating. It is a matter that is currently on the ground- people are being held hostage and an aircraft being detained. I want this House to come together as a

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body to solve this matter because it is of great importance to this great nation.

If you do not know, let me remind you, this continuous harassment of expatriates and seizing of aircraft and so on will affect our economy. Already, data have been given out as a result of this development. So, we need to, at least, work as a team to see that this matter is tackled to an extent rather than to be discouraged, so that oil operations and other things will work effectively. The information on ground right now, is that some of the white men captured are not all right, their condition is bad. We do not know what is happening at the moment because by the time we met them, their condition was very bad.

So, I urge this House to come together to see a way of releasing this helicopter and the white-men so that their operations will go on fine.

Thank you, Sir.

Mr. Speaker: I will take arguments against this Motion, please.

Hon. Akanineyene Eno Eyo (Abak/Etim Ekpo): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am observing that among the Movers of the Motion, the hon. Member from Ughelli North/Ughelli South/Udu (*Hon. Emmanuel E. A. Aguariavwodo*) has not been called to explain this Motion, Sir.

Mr. Speaker: That is right because the time is up. (*Applause*)

Hon. Tony Anyanwu (Ahiazu/Ezinbite): Mr. Speaker, Sir, with the greatest respect to everybody and to my Colleagues from the Niger Delta, I beg to differ. I do understand the intent of this Motion but we have to be very expansive the way we look at it. I think the impression they have given us based on the arguments in favour of the Motion is that we have a terrorist situation on our hands. (*Applause*). And which as I understand the plight of our Colleagues from Niger Delta, it is the policy of every responsible government not to deal with terrorists. (*Applause*) They may hold these expatriates, but I do understand these are Americans and America has a way of getting their people home and punish whosoever is responsible. Let us not trivialize our mandate. Our mandate here is to legislate for the good governance of this country. We should not get involved in every trivial issue, with due respect to my Colleagues. Under those circumstances, and again with respect to the Deputy Speaker, my initial intention was to support it

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given the fact that the Deputy Speaker is leading the team-

Hon. Nwakanma Chimaobi (Isiala Ngwa North/Isiala Ngwa South): Mr. Speaker, Sir, initially, I was raising my hands to support this Motion, because I share the feelings and sentiments of my brothers from the other parts of the Niger Delta and Niger Delta, by definition, includes Abia and Imo States which some of them tend to forget. The Motion here is for us to take certain actions that, first all, will save this country from serious embarrassment arising from a terrorist action. I find that inside this Motion, there is no condemnation of the action of these young men. (*Applause*) I think that this is a very strong omission indeed and my suggestion in this regard is that this Motion be withdrawn and properly amended accordingly.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I also want to observe that the last request here is that the House institutes a Parliamentary Peace Delegation and to assure the people of the Niger Delta of the government's resolve. I am not so sure we are in a position to make commitment on behalf of the President and his Executive. We can only speak for ourselves. We can only hope that whatever commitment we make, the government will be in a position to execute it. So, I will suggest that again, the mover of this Motion should please withdraw it and make an improvement on these two particular areas. When they have done that, I will wholeheartedly support this important Motion.

Thank you.

Hon. Ibrahim Issa Bio (Baruten/Kaima): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I seem to sympathise with the Movers of this Motion because they are representing their people. Unfortunately, however, the trend of their agitation in the Niger Delta area is assuming a terrorist situation and I do not think this country will encourage terrorism; a situation where a group of youths will go and detain foreigners. This has portrayed our country in a very bad light and I think it should be condemned by all concerned. (*Applause*)

This is a case where we have 115 hijackers in this country, 587 cases of communal disturbances in the Niger Delta. Mr. Speaker, Sir, you will agree with me that it is not a good development for good governance in this country. I will appeal to the communities of Niger Delta to give peace a chance. This is a new dawn. They should give the President, Commander-in-Chief of the

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Armed Forces, Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo, a chance to be able to resolve their problems. We know they have problems and they have been neglected but the youths should not hold the country to ransom. About thirty oil wells have been closed before Gen. Abdulsalam Abubakar handed over. The economy of the country is dwindling. Must people in Niger State for instance, where power is generated, go and hijack the engineers and say, until they are paid five million Naira, power should not be generated in this country? (*Applause*) So, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I plead that this Motion should not be passed.

Mr. Speaker: Please, you can sit down, I think the Mover of this Motion wants to say something.

Hon. Chibudom Nwuche (Abua/Odual/Ahoada East): Mr. Speaker, Sir, my hon. Colleagues, I have digested all the comments made in regard to this Motion and I feel they are eminently sensible. I, for one, would not encourage terrorism. Fortunately, I am aware of the President's efforts to address those issues very seriously and I think, those efforts are not being adequately publicised. Therefore, this House, at some point, should make effort to publicise those efforts of Mr. President.

I would like to withdraw this Motion and re-present it later. (*Applause*) However, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to do so with a caveat. Members here would like to support our position. I thank them for their support and when I do come back with this Motion in two days' time, I hope they would support it wholly. Thank you very much.

Motion by leave withdrawn.

Hon. Gabriel T. Suswan (Katsina Ala/Logo/Ukum): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have a point of Order. It is also a point of observation. I will like to refer Mr. Speaker to Order 54.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I had raised this issue of decorum here before, and I would like to urge Mr. Speaker to inform hon. Members who have mobile telephones to please switch them off when they are here.

Order 54(1) says: *During a sitting all Members shall enter and leave this House with decorum.*

I think it is insensitive for us to be discussing serious national issues and some people are busy operating their telephones. There have been mobile telephones ringing

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here and there. Mr. Speaker, please, enforce that Order. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you for that information and notice.

I will now call on the hon. Member for Mokwa/Lavum/Edati): (*Hon. Isa Saidu*) to move the Motion standing in his name.

Industrial Action by the Petrol Tanker Drivers Association.

Hon. Isa Saidu (Mokwa/Lavum/Edati): Mr. Speaker, Sir, hon. Members of the House, I want to move the Motion standing in my name that:

In view of the nation-wide industrial action embarked upon by Tanker Drivers as a result of the alleged closure of their Kano Office by security agents, and considering the need to guarantee uninterrupted supply of fuel to all parts of the country in order to avert economic and social crises attendant unto the scarcity of fuel occasioned by the withdrawal of services by Tanker Drivers etc; this House do:

- (i) Call on Tanker Drivers Association to suspend its industrial action in order to ensure uninterrupted supply of fuel to petrol stations nation-wide;
- 0471 (ii) Call on security agents to open the Kano branch office of the Association; and
- (iii) Refer the matter to Committees on Labour and Productivity and Petroleum.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I do hereby move the Motion.

Hon. Florence D. Aya (Kaura): Mr. Speaker, Sir, hon. Members, I beg to second the Motion.

Hon. Anthony Eze Ewureuzor (Aba North/South): I have a Point of Information, Mr. Speaker. On the network news last night, the Chairman of the affected trade union assured the country that this matter has been put on hold till 31st of this month to allow the Senate complete their work on the matter and the industrial action is already put off. So, I would think that there is no use any more deliberating on this since they have called off the strike and the Senate is handling it.

Thank you. (*Applause*)

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Hon. Isa Saidu: Mr. Speaker, Sir, hon. Members, what my hon Colleagues for Aba Constituency (*Hon. Eze Enwereuzor*) has just said is that this one we are talking about is a fresh one. It has nothing to do with PENGASSAN that is being handled by the Senate. This action is by the PTD (Petroleum Tankers Drivers) under NUPENG and not PENGASSAN. The one the hon. Member is talking about has to do with PENGASSAN whereby fifty (50) staff of PENGASSAN affected were sacked and now the Union is calling on the government to reinstate them.

Mr. Speaker: Your point is noted. Please, continue with your comments on the Motion.

Hon. Isa Saidu: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The issue here is a very serious one because this strike action started yesterday and I am sure most of my Colleagues must have noticed long queues by the time they were coming to the House this morning. There used to be about 40 tankers supplying fuel to Abuja and environs daily but since yesterday, no single tanker has delivered fuel to Abuja even today too.

This issue according to findings started on 27th May this year whereby Petroleum Tanker Drivers under the National Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers (NUPENG) sent in a letter to the Commissioner of Police in Kano asking him to withdraw his men that sealed up their Kano office. This letter was dated 27th May, 1999. If Mr. Speaker will permit me I will read part of the letter. It was signed by Comrade E. B. Awe on behalf of Chief Frank Kokori. The letter says:

That you will recall that officers of this Union in the past few weeks have refused to visit your office with a view to securing the evacuation of your men who are currently occupying Tanker Drivers Kano Union Office but are not to gain any access to the office. In view of the foregoing, the National Leadership of this Union sitting at a meeting of the National Executive Council today, 27th May, 1999 in Port Harcourt, wish to restate clearly that minor intra-union disagreements are not settled by the Police. The legal provisions are there in the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and that of the Union.

[Industrial Action by Petrol Tanker Drivers Association]

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In conclusion, therefore, the National Executive Council in session demands with utmost urgency the evacuation of your men from PTD's office to pave way for the only legitimate leadership under the chairmanship of Alhaji Aliyu Umaru Mohammed to resume their legitimate functions without any hindrance. Failure to lift this siege on the Union's office will continue to hinder our legitimate business in Kano and the remaining parts of the country.

This letter was dated 27th May, 1999. There was another letter sent to His Excellency, the Governor of Kano State. That letter too also called on the Kano State Government during the military regime to intervene so that their office will be opened and if it is not opened, this is what will happen. They gave one week ultimatum. Up till the end of that ultimatum, nothing happened. The government did not intervene and that is what led to this strike.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, hon. Members, the danger of petrol scarcity need not be over-emphasised. We all know the danger, we know what it will cause, we know the social crisis and other things that will follow it. Right from yesterday, prices of foodstuff and other things have already skyrocketed and if we allow this one till tomorrow or next, only God knows what will happen because there will be no fuel in all the petrol stations in the country especially in Abuja. All of us will be affected. All the people in our constituencies will be affected; even the government and this one will lead to chaos which we do not pray for. This is one of the tests of democracy. We have to do something urgently so that we will avert any social crisis that will follow this strike action.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (*Applause*)

Mr. Speaker: We can have comments for the Motion.

Hon. Ibrahim A. Ganyam (Buji/Kiyawa): Point of Order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Yes, what is the Point of Order?

Hon. Ganyam: Mr. Speaker, Sir, hon. Members, I stand before hon. Colleagues to tell you that the

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Executive Governor of Kano State and the Kano State House of Assembly are attending to this case as of now. So, we could let them do their immediate job. Maybe that will be advisable.

Thank you.

Hon. Solomon Agidani (Apa/Agatu): Mr. Speaker, Sir, hon. Members, before I make my contribution, I would like to observe that this our attitude of saying, *my names are and my name is* I think has to go. We will have to reconcile the proper one between the two so that we can pick either *my name is* or *my names are*. We have people who are observing us here; I do not know why one person can have several names. The English man that taught us in various schools - *(Interruption)*

Mr. Speaker: Order! Order!

Hon. Agidani: Anybody asking you your name will naturally say, what is your name? Nobody ever asked, what are your names. So let us stick to one if we accept one as better than the other, please.

As regards the Motion, I want to suggest a two-pronged attack, the immediate and the long term. The immediate is the resolution of whatever is happening now so that we can have fuel back in the filling stations. The long term is how do we forestall this incessant strike action by people who are supposed to be rendering essential services. I think there should be classification of services in this country so that those services that come under essential services should have some level of prohibition against strike action because we cannot have a situation where people believe that they can hold this country to ransom at any given excuse; they wake up one day, take us for granted and seize our privileges.

To that extent, I want the matter to be referred to the Labour and Productivity and Petroleum Joint Sitting so that we can give them some terms of reference within which to operate.

Thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker: Can we have arguments for the Motion, please?

Hon. Farouk Mohammed Lawan (Bagwai/Shanono): Mr. Speaker, Sir, Point of Privilege.

Mr. Speaker: What Point of Privilege?

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Hon. Lawan: Mr. Speaker, Sir, hon. Members. I am the Chairman of Ethics and Privileges Committee and as the Chairman, I think I should rule on the observation made by the Member for Apa/Agatu (*Hon. Solomon Agidani*). The proper conduct linguistically is, *my name* is rather than *my names are*, hon. Members.

Thank you. *(Applause)*

Mr. Speaker: Thank you very much.

Hon. Musa Nuhu Abdullahi (Kaita/Jibia): Mr. Speaker, Sir, hon. Members, inasmuch as I am supporting this Motion because it is of security importance to the country, I would like to draw the attention of the Mover of the Motion that the matter should only be referred to the Committee on Labour, not Petroleum. This is because all matters relating to Trade Union and Labour generally and all matters relating to Social Security and other cognate issues should be referred only to the Committee on Labour.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am appealing to our hon. Members to please allow this Committee to go and look into this issue and maybe report to the House before we reconvene tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you. I will take arguments against the Motion, please.

Hon. Adams Jagaba (Kachia/Kagarko): Mr. Speaker, Sir, hon. Members, I look at this crisis as another act of terrorism because we cannot actually fold our hands and see tanker drivers holding people hostage in this country. When we talk of terrorism, we are talking of depriving somebody from movement, freedom of eating, freedom of his own right. So, as far as I am concerned, this matter should be referred to the Petroleum Committee and they should find a lasting solution to this problem.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Jagaba, you are out of order. We want arguments against the Motion. The Motion includes referring the matter to the Committees on Labour and Productivity and Petroleum.

Hon. Jagaba: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This Motion should be rejected by this House, because this is an act of terrorism.

Mr. Speaker: Can we have arguments against the Motion, please?

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Hon. Bernard Ambrose Udoh (Ikot Abasi/Mkpat Enin East/Obolo): Mr. Speaker, Sir, hon. Members, this House has been privileged to be informed that the Kano State Government is handling this matter. In that case, it would be wrong for us to sit down here and take on the same matter that is being handled where the trouble is being carried on. We should allow the Kano State Government and the Kano State House of Assembly to -
(Interruptions)

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member, I have ruled on that. That information was made and I ruled that the Motion should be heard on this Floor. This is a national matter; it is not Kano State matter. Thank you very much.

I will now take arguments against the Motion, please.

Hon. Sule Yari Gandi (Wurno/Raba): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am against the prayers of this Motion. A while ago, a Motion was brought to this Floor on the issue of the Niger-Delta and somebody rose and condemned the prayers of that Motion, that the proposers of the Motion did not condemn the act of terrorism being perpetrated by the youths in the Niger-Delta. In the same vein, the prayers of this Motion did not condemn the act of sabotage being perpetrated by Tanker Drivers. (Applause) I would have loved that they include it in their prayers. Any action, consciously or unconsciously, deliberately or not deliberately carried out by any organisation which affects the life of the common man negatively ought to be condemned, even if any action is to be taken on the matter. This is just my own opposition to the Motion.

Thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you very much. I will take only one more contribution against the Motion, please.

Hon. Faloranmi Oyeibanji (Ogo-Oluwa/Surulere): Mr. Speaker, I stand up here to oppose this Motion on the ground that it is an act of indiscipline. We have been clamouring for discipline in this country. Again, I have been praying for an occasion like this where I will be able to say *Na God Catch You*. So, God has caught these Tanker Drivers today, because of the way they have been behaving. If you are opportune to drive on our Highways and meet them on the road and see the way they drive, you will know that these people are another set of terrorists; and we need to check them. They know the essence of their services to this nation. (Interruptions)

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

[Industrial Action by Petrol Tanker Drivers Association] 0462

Hon. Oyeibanji: Because of a minor and flimsy excuse of having a minor problem with their Branch in Kano State, they are ready to hold the whole nation to ransom. It is very unjust and I am against this Motion. It is better we discipline these people ethically and morally. This is why I am against this Motion.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Isa Saidu, can you please reply to some of these comments?

Hon. Isah Saidu (Lavun/Mokwa/Edati): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I completely disagree with some of the hon. Members who are of the opinion that the issue has to do with indiscipline or terrorism. We all know the importance of these Tanker Drivers and how formidable the Union is right from time immemorial. This Union did their best. The problem started since 26th June when a letter was written to the then Governor of Kano State to take action but the government failed to take any action. Thereafter, they gave one week ultimatum and no action was taken again. The National Executive Council of the Union Sitting in Port Harcourt also wrote to the Government but no action was taken. They further wrote to the Kano State Commissioner of Police to take action, but nothing was done. It seems those at the helms of affairs of the State who are supposed to take action failed to do their duties. What the tanker drivers have to do, therefore, is to embark on the strike action. Now that they have started, all of us are feeling the pinch. If we say they are terrorists, and so on and so forth, by tomorrow, some of us may not be here because there will be no fuel, except one decides to come by Taxi.

Mr. Speaker: Can you round up, please?

Hon. Saidu: I, therefore, urge the House to refer this matter to the appropriate Committee as I said in my prayers so that action will be taken immediately to forestall further strikes.

Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: I will now put the question first, please.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved: That in view of the nation-wide industrial action embarked upon by Tanker Drivers as a result of the alleged closure of their Kano Office by security agents, and considering the need to guarantee uninterrupted supply of fuel to all parts of the country in order to avert economic and social crises attendant unto

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the scarcity of fuel occasioned by the withdrawal of services by Tanker Drivers, etc.; this House do

- (i.) Call on the Tanker Drivers Association to suspend its industrial action in order to ensure uninterrupted supply of fuel to petrol stations nationwide;
- (ii.) Call on security agents to open the Kano branch office of the Association;
- (iii.) Refer the matter to the Committees on Labour and Productivity and Petroleum.

The issue of Fertilizer and Allowances

Hon. Binta Koje (Kaduna South): Mr. Speaker, information, please.

Mr. Speaker: What is your information, please?

Hon. Koje: Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is a mis-information given which has been going round all over the country but I can be corrected. I hope this Honourable House will agree to deliberate on such information. For the past two weeks, I could not go to my constituency because I was asked a big question which I could not answer. One of the questions boils down on fertilizer and the second one boils on these allowances. The last one which is even more annoying is about this N13 million Meal Allowance given to us daily. Right outside now, I have about 10 people from my constituency with one or two problems. I told them that I do not have money but one of them told me that we have just been given N13 million Meal Allowance. So, Mr. Speaker, you should please alert us and give us some certain information so that we could have a first hand information to give to our people.

Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

Mr. Speaker: Your request for information is well noted, please. We will now go on to item number four, that is, Prohibition and Punishment of Bribery, Corruption and other related Offences Bill, 199 - Second Reading.

Prohibition and Punishment of, Bribery, Corruption and other related Offences Bill 1999 - Order for Second Reading read.

[Prohibition and Punishment of Bribery and Corruption] 0464

Mr. Speaker: At this juncture, I would like to inform hon. Members that the procedure which we will adopt will be that we will allocate five legislative days for the general debate before we refer it to the various Committees that will handle this Bill. All hon. Members that want to comment, either for or against a position paper or whatever form of contribution, should please submit their names to the Clerk so that we could start debate on the Bill tomorrow.

Hon. Patrick Okon (Calabar South/ Akpabuyo/ Bakassi): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to observe that when we start to discuss this Bill, we should not use the alphabetical order again because some of us up till today have not made any comment on the Presidential Address. We are still waiting for our turn.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you very much. That is why I said that those that want to make contributions should submit their names to the Clerk. So, you should listen more attentively, please.

Votes and Proceedings of 6th July, 1999

Hon. Musa Aliyu Abdullahi (Bindawa/Maw): Mr. Speaker, Sir, if you look at page 2 of the Votes and Proceedings of yesterday, 6th July, 1999, No. 8, where it reads:

Question put and agreed to.

Publication accordingly referred to the House Committee on Ethics and Privilege for appropriate action.

If you watched the network news yesterday, it was read that the House has ordered that Alhaji Wada Nas should be invited. I think the NTA should correct this impression, because the House has never invited Alhaji Wada Nas to this House. We only ordered the House Committee on Ethics and Privileges to look into the matter.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you. I think the Clerk should ensure that the actual Resolution passed yesterday on this matter be communicated to the Press to amend their mistakes.

I now call on Hon. Nasiru.

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[Observations]

**Furniture Allowance to Members
of National Assembly**

Hon. Aminu Abdu Nasiru (Gczawa/Gabasawa): Mr. Speaker, Sir, Hon. Members, my attention has been drawn to the centre page of *This Day* newspaper where a caption was addressed as:

Federal Government disburses N2 billion Furniture Allowance to the National Assembly Members.

In confirming this release of funds, the Chairman of the House Committee on House Services has confirmed to them that the amount has been released to this honourable House and this is the implicating fact that is affecting us. People are now having the impression that we have been given that amount of money.

The issue raised by Hon. Binta is that almost all of us have never been to our villages for week-ends. If we go, people will start saying that we have money but we have refused to release it to them. We have gone through the newspapers where it is being revealed that Legislators collect a lot of money every day. So we want the Chairman of the House Committee to confer with us before conferring with the Press about the goings-on in the House. Let us know if the said amount has been released, instead of addressing the Press on the release of the money to us thereby implicating us. Thank you. (Applause).

**Debate on the Address of the President,
Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the
Federal Republic of Nigeria**

*(Seventh Allotted Day) (Adjourned Debate
1st July, 1999)*

Mr. Speaker: Thank you very much. Your Point of Information is noted and it will be addressed. Can we please go on to item No. 5 - Debate on the Address of the President, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria *(Seventh Allotted Day)*.

I call on Hon. Fagbite to make his contributions.

Hon. L. A. Fagbite (Idanre Ifedore): Mr. Speaker, Sir, hon. Members, I thank you all for giving me the opportunity to say something on the Presidential speech. I am not going to comment because I am too young to comment on the President's speech. However, I am going to appreciate it and I am going to talk in parables.

[Presidential Address]

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The old leopard has never changed his skin. The latter is as old as that of the former Presidents. I am surprised when most of our speakers gave us all sorts of adjectives - robust, fantastic, romantic, dramatic - all sorts of adjectives. I will implore this honourable House not to join the gang of flatterers. Flattery kills all governments. We must allow the President to settle down and work. The letter is just an intention. He has not done anything. The letter has failed to address four principal tiers which characterise the nation.

First, we have not got the spirit of nationalism. We have that of tribalism there, against nationalism. How can we educate our young children to cultivate good habits of nationalism? I cannot boast of calling myself an Hausa man, or an Ibo man. I cannot say that. Nobody from outside will even say that he is a Nigerian. In many parts of the world, they prefer to identify themselves with their nation, e.g., somebody from Ghana will prefer to be called a Ghanaian. My father once told me this. We want the President to address the situation whereby we become nationalists. How do we kill the spirit of tribalism? The Presidential speech has actually failed to address this.

The Presidential speech has also failed to declare the type of government we are practising. Are we practicing true democracy, a unitary type or a parliamentary system of government? We are only mixing up everything and this is our fear. At the same time, the minorities are afraid and that is why they are agitating. They are fighting to survive, but they have not taken the right step - peaceful agitation.

Now the Nigerian being; when you give him the material comfort, the evil in him is gone.

I will now go on to Agriculture. The Federal Government has not done the right thing to invest on agriculture. Let the Federal Government surrender the right to the State Governments. For instance, the agricultural problems in Niger State is quite different from that of Ondo State. In Ondo State, for example, you do not need fertilizers, what we need is gamalin. We need copper sulphate, we need steel to cut big trees in the forest. We need to re-afforest the forests because we plant cocoa. So, when you give this money to the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, they are there to go and bulldoze land, saying that they are planting maize. A case in point is the Benin-Owena River Basin Development Authority where huge amounts of money - about half a million Naira - *(Interruptions)*

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[Presidential Address]

Mr. Speaker: Thank you very much. I call on Hon. Fajuru for his contribution, please.

Hon. Fajuru C. Adebayo (Ekiti Central I): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I join other Members in congratulating Mr. President for this beautiful speech and we only hope that his speech with all our speeches and contributions will move this country forward. I only want to comment on the areas of infrastructural development which have been the bane of industrialisation over the years.

Mr. Speaker, when I talk about infrastructural development, I will specifically talk about power generation, distribution and maintainance as well as roads. Over the years, National Power Electric Authority (NEPA) has been able to do the little it could in the areas of power distribution. It is so unfortunate that at this jet age, as we are now entering the next millenium, Nigeria still relies on hydro-electric power to generate power to most parts of this country save for Egbin Thermal Station in Lagos State. Mr. Speaker, I think we should encourage the President to create more Sub-stations especially for the six new States created in 1996. All the States created in 1996, especially Ekiti State, do not have the 132 KV sub-Station. Ekiti State is leaning on three States, one part to Ondo State, one part each to Kwara and Osun States. This does not augur well for industrial development. Mr. Speaker, my contribution is that Mr. President should be encouraged that immediate steps should be taken by Power and Steel Ministry to extend separate sub-stations of 132 KV to these new States.

Talking about roads, most of these new States do not have good road network. As I am speaking to you here, the road linking Ekiti State and Ondo State has been cut off. We now have to rely on another road passing through Osun State to enter Ekiti State. I think the road building work left by the Petroleum (Special) Trust Fund (PTF) should be continued by Federal Ministry of Works.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Ibrahim A. Ganyam (Dutse, Kiyawa): Mr. Speaker, Sir, while several Members have talked about how good Mr. President's Speech was, I have a different opinion. I think he did not cover anything that refers to Jigawa State. Some of my Colleagues might not know what Jigawa means. Let me tell you that Jigawa means a mountain of sand which by extension, means that it is an agricultural State. Agriculture is the main, and foremost occupation of the inhabitants there.

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Mr. President only made mention of agriculture but our main and foremost problem in Jigawa State is desert encroachment and desertification. Some people may think they are one and the same thing but they are not. So, in the whole speech, Mr. President did not mention anything on desert encroachment and desert encroachment tortures most of the States in the North East, more than half of the States in the North West and even some States in the South East suffer from desert erosion. Desert encroachment also affects one of the States in North Central.

So, I think this encroachment and erosion are very important issues that should be taken up by this administration. The speech was almost silent on this even though the House talked about forming arid-Zone Committee and what have you. All I am saying is that even though the President's speech talked a lot about the basic and the main thing that has been mentioned by the previous governments, I think there is a lot that is needed in his speech. If I were to give marks for the speech, I think I will give only 40 per cent.

Thank you.

Hon. Almajiri Geidam (Yumusa/Geidam/Busari): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to agree with most of my Colleagues that the President's speech is a good one, though it is very short. The speeches being policy statements, I have no doubt that the President intends to follow up his speech with action.

Already, we have seen his resolve to fight corruption in this country. He has already presented his Bill on how to fight this menace. We have seen how he intends to make agriculture his priority in this country. At least, he has started by subsidising the cost of fertilizer. Already, the President has intervened in the education crisis and Nigeria Union of Teachers strike by paying the minimum wage to teachers. I believe the President is on a good path.

However, having come from an area that I can say is neglected, I will like to call on the President to ensure that people like us from rural areas are taken care of in terms of power supply, telecommunication and good road network.

However, I would like to caution Mr. President on his intention to open up the rural areas through feeder roads by direct labour. We have seen how direct labour programmes have failed in this country. I would also

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like, finally, to appeal to Mr. President as a matter of urgency; as he had appointed his Ministers, that if he intends to make his administration very efficient, he should create more Ministries rather than appointing more Ministers. I will suggest that he creates more Ministries.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Jidda Ahmed Gella (Mubi North/Mubi South): Mr. Speaker, Sir, my observation on the President's speech is that he has made some lofty ideas, very good ones but he has forgotten to talk about security. No mention was made of security. Security is our major problem right now.

On the economy he mentioned how previous governments siphoned our money and the rest but he has not mentioned how to get back this money. We wanted him to say, for example, how much money has been paid to our foreign creditors. We want to know what he is going to do to get these ill-gotten monies back. We want to know what are the measures being taken on our Iron and Steel Company at Ajaokuta. These are all the things we want him to enumerate so that we know that we are forging ahead instead of taking us back to reconciliation. We are not at war. We want him to tell us how we can forge ahead.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Muktar Abdulrazaq Gora (Dala): Mr. Speaker, Sir, hon. Members, a lot has been said about the Address of Mr. President, more especially with regard to agriculture which is very important to our economy. When we say that agriculture is one of the major employer of labour in this country it is because most of our people are farmers and our economy seriously depend on agriculture. So, I would like to advise Mr. President to give more money to the agricultural sector, especially to subsidise fertilizer, agricultural inputs, to provide tractors for mechanised farming, to provide chemicals and so on. This would improve our living standard, we would create more employment and our agro-industries would get their raw materials.

I would also like to talk on transportation which is also very important to any economy. Without a good transport system nothing will move either outside or within the economy. So, I would like Mr. President to repair and dualise some of our highways, especially the

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ones from Ibadan to Kaduna and from Kano to Maiduguri. This would greatly assist our economy.

In the case of education, we all know our situation with regard to education. So, I would like Mr. President in his re-launching the UPE, that is, the 6-3-3-4 system of education, to provide more funds so that we would have more accommodation for class rooms, offices for staff and dormitories. We should also provide books in our libraries for our students to read and make references. This, I think, would assist our country greatly.

Hon. Abdullahi A. Gumel (Gumel/ Maigatari/ Suletankartar/Gagarawa): Mr. Speaker, hon. Members, after looking through Mr. President's speech, I would want to comment on one item which is food security. I chose this topic on food security because I have the eleven River Basin Authorities in mind. These River Basin Authorities are almost dead. Thank God, Mr. President was the one that created these River Basin Development Authorities when he was the Head of State of the country. In resuscitating these River Basin Development Authorities, Mr. Speaker, I have a particular dam in mind, the Chalawa Garje in Karaye Local Government of Kano State. This particular dam is the second largest dam in this country and it is dormant. This dam if channelised properly, would provide the much needed food in this country. My idea of channelising this dam is to create these channels from the Chalawa Dam through Gwarzo-Bichi to join the reservoirs at Tomas in Dambatta Local Government and Wawarafa in Kazaure Local Government and from there, Mr. Speaker, the channels should be in two branches. One branch is for Tomas through Babura, Suletankartar, Maigatari through Malammodori and then to join the dam project in Hadeija. The other branch should go through Gabasawa, Garki, Gumel Gagarawa to go through to join the Dam Project in Kafin Hausa. From there, the waters would flow to the farming areas of Nguru and Gashua in Yobe State. If these channels are made, the farming population of the Northern Senatorial District of Kano, the Western Senatorial District of Jigawa and the Senatorial District of Nguru in Yobe State will be able to feed this country with irrigated food. I am imploring the President to, as a matter of urgency, make use of the availability of the waters of this Dam.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: I think that brings us to the end of the debate for today.

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[Announcements]

[Adjournment]

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Committee on Environment

I have one or two announcements to make. Members of the Committee on Environment are hereby informed that there would be a meeting today immediately after this Session.

Date: 7th June, 1999

Venue: Committee Room 3, along the Deputy Speaker's Office.

Time: Immediately after today's session

Signed: Hon. Mercy Almona Isei - Chairman.

Hon. Jerry Sonny Ugokwe (Idemili North/Idemili South): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have a point of Order. It is Order 45(2) (3) and (4) and Order 72 (2). My reason for bringing this point of Order, Mr. Speaker, Sir, is that, on the Votes and Proceedings which you approved yesterday, I discovered that there are some issues that might mislead this House and it is important that I point them out before it becomes too late.

45 (2) *All notices of motions must be submitted to the Speaker at the following periods -*

If you permit me, I will read further but before that, there was a letter from the Chairman of the Committee on Rules and Business and I will read a portion of that which you have approved in this House. It says:

The Committee also resolved that henceforth all Motions, Bills and amendments should be submitted to the Committee Secretariat;

and our Rules says that the Motion should be submitted to your office. And that Bills on Order 72 (2) says that it should be submitted to the Clerk of National Assembly.

If you permit me, Mr. Speaker, let me read it through (2) *All notices of motions must be submitted to the Speaker at the following periods:*

(a) *on a day on which the House is sitting;*

(b) *on a day when the House is not sitting between the hours of 9. a.m. and 3 p.m. except*

on Saturdays, Sundays and Public Holidays.

(3) *The Speaker shall cause such notices of motion to be numbered and published in the "Schedule of Notices of Motions" and assigned to the relevant Committees not later than seven days after the publication in the Schedule.*

(4) *The Committee shall examine the substance of all motions referred to it and if approved for presentation to the House, shall forward its recommendation to Rules and Business Committee for scheduling. Let me go on to Order 72 (2)*

Any member who wishes to move for leave to bring in a bill shall give notice of provisions proposed to be embodied in the bill to the Clerk, who shall cause them to be published in three successive issues of the Official Gazette or House Journal and shall send a copy of the first of such issues to every member.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I do want to say that it is not the business of the Rules and Business Committee to control the Motions and Bills that come to this House.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you very much. Point of information. Also, the Hon. Member from Idemili North/Idemili South. (Hon. Jerry Ugokwe Sonny) the Office of the Chairman of the House Rules and Business Committee is an extension of the office of the Speaker of this honourable House.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Mohammed Wakil (Damboa/ Gwoza/Chibok): Mr. Speaker, hon. Members of this House, may I move that this honourable House do stand adjourned till 10.00 a.m. tomorrow, 8th July, 1999.

Hon. Mohammed Umara Kumalia (Maiduguri Metro): Mr. Speaker, Sir, hon. Members, I second the Motion for Adjournment moved by the House Leader.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved. That the House do stand adjourned till 10.00 a.m. tomorrow, 8th July, 1999.

The House adjourned accordingly at 1.25 p.m.