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THE
PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC
OF GHANA

FIRST MEETING, 2025

Friday, 28th February, 2025

The House met at 11.08 a.m.

[MR SECOND DEPUTY SPEAKER
IN THE CHAIR]

[PRAYERS]

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, we will skip item numbered 2; there is no communication from the President, and we equally do not have any formal communication from the Speaker. So, let us turn to the item numbered 5, Correction of *Votes and Proceedings* and the *Official Report*.

**VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS
AND THE OFFICIAL REPORT**

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: We will begin with the *Votes and Proceedings*.

Page 1...7—

Yes, Hon Member for Offinso North?

Dr Fred Kyei Asamoah: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

I would want to verify whether we are doing that of the 26th February, 2025 or 27th February, 2025 since, yesterday, due to the Message on the

State of the Nation, we could not work on that of the 26th February, 2025.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Member, I cannot hear you.

Dr Asamoah: I want to verify whether we are working on that of Wednesday, 26th February, 2025 or Thursday, 27th February, 2025 since we could not review that of 26th February, 2025, due to the Message on the State of the Nation.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Very well

So, it means that, yesterday, we did not review the *Votes and Proceedings* of 26th February, 2025.

Dr Asamoah: Yes, Mr Speaker

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Very well

I think that, at the moment, what is before you is that of 27th February, 2025, so let us review that—*[Pause]*—I am told that the *Votes and Proceedings* of 26th February, 2025, is yet to come, so let us review that of 27th February, 2025.

Page 8—

Yes, Hon Member for Afadjato South?

Mr Frank Afriyie: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Please, indulge me; I lost my voice a bit.

On page 8, under the *Votes and Proceedings*, the item numbered 6(ii)(5) under the Cabinet Ministers, if we look at the word “Minster” as captured under the “Attorney-General and Minster...”, there is “i” inadvertently missing. So, the word should read “Attorney-General and Minister...”, but there is no “i” in the Minister over there.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker:
Thank you very much.

Table, kindly take note.

Page 9...10—

Yes, Prof Nyarko, if I had not seen you, then I would not be going through this process.

Prof Kingsley Nyarko: Mr Speaker, I have in my hand the *Votes and Proceedings* of Wednesday, 26th February, 2025. So, I am surprised that the Clerks-at-the-Table are saying that they are yet to be delivered; they are here. However, on page 10, the item numbered 9(vii), “Justices of the Superior Court of Judicature”, the “s” is missing after the court.

If you would indulge me, the item numbered 9(xii), the Chairman of my party, the New Patriotic Party is Mr Stephen Ayesu Ntim; it is not “Ayensu”. Also, with your guidance, on the item numbered 9(xiii), “Mr Asaki Awingobit, the National

Chairman of the PNC”—Since the other parties have been spelt in full, I would be glad if same is applied to the PNC.

Thank you very much.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker:
Thank you very much, Prof.

Yes, Hon Member for Afadjato?

11.18 a.m.

Mr Afriyie: Mr Speaker, still page 10 of the *Votes and Proceedings*, the name of my National Chairman has also been wrongly captured. That is the item numbered 9 (xi) “Johnson Asiedu” has been wrongly captured as “Johnson Aseidu”. So, if the Table Office could capture it properly.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Very well, Table Office, kindly take note of that.

Hon Members, let us turn to page 11. Yes, Prof Nyarko.

Prof Nyarko: It seems today we are correcting names of our party leaders. My indefatigable General Secretary’s name is Mr Justin Kodua Frimpong and it is not hyphenated. Thank you.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker:
Thank you very much.

Finally, page 12—?

Yes, Hon Member for Afadjato?

Mr Afriyie: Mr Speaker, just a bit of guidance, let me send you back to page 11. As Prof Nyarko said, the name of my General Secretary is “Fiifi”. Over here, it is captured as “Fifi”. I do not know which of them—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Is it supposed to be “Fii”?

Mr Afriyie: I am told it has been properly captured. Thank you.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, in the absence of any further corrections, the *Votes and Proceedings* of Thursday 27th February, 2025 is hereby adopted as the true record of proceedings.

Hon Members, I believe you have been supplied with the *Votes and Proceedings* of Wednesday, 26th February, 2025. Hon Members, I hope you have copies. Let us review that one. So, we start from page 1.

Page 1...5—

Yes, Hon Member for Offinso North.

Mr Asamoah: Mr Speaker, on page 5, item numbered 35, I have been captured as absent but I was here.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: But did you register your name?

Mr Asamoah: Yes, I did.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Very well, Table Office, kindly take note of it.

Page 6...9—

Hon Members, in the absence of any further corrections, the *Votes and Proceedings* of Wednesday, 26th February, 2025 is hereby adopted as the true records of proceedings.

Hon Members, I equally have in my hands the 18th February, 2025 edition of the *Official Report*.

Any corrections?

[No correction was made to the Official Report of Wednesday, 18th February, 2025]

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, item numbered 6, which is Business Statement for the ensuing 8th Week is yet to be presented to Members so we would hold on and turn to item numbered 7, Urgent Questions.

We would invite the Minister responsible for Roads and Highways to take an Urgent Question from Mr Kwame Dzudzorli Gakpey, the Member of Parliament for Keta. So, Hon Member, if you are here, you may ask your Urgent Question. The Minister is available.

URGENT QUESTION

MINISTRY OF ROADS AND HIGHWAYS

Status of Indebtedness and Commitment of the Ministry of Roads and Highways

**Mr Kwame Dzudzorli Gakpey
(NDC — Keta):** Mr Speaker, I beg to

ask the Minister for Roads and Highways what the status of indebtedness and commitment of the Ministry is.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, Hon Minister?

Hon Members, please. This is the first Question we are asking a Minister under this regime so I hope it is going to pave the way for Members to follow up with a lot of questions. So, Hon Minister for Roads and Highways, kindly hold on for me to acknowledge our children at the Public Gallery. The first school is from Magmax Educational Centre. They are being led by Mr Samuel Boateng who is the headmaster. The school is located in the Weiija-Gbawe Constituency.

[Pupils of Magmax Educational Centre were acknowledged.]

11.28 a.m.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: The second school is Kotobabi “7” Junior High School (JHS) and they are being led by Mr Shadrach Ashitey Trebi who is also the headteacher. The school is located in the Ayawaso Central Constituency.

[Pupils of Kotobabi “7” Junior High School were acknowledged.]

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: The third school is Scott L. Carmona College of Business. They are not yet here. Our children who have found your way into the Public Gallery of this Chamber, we are pleased that you have

come to witness your Members of Parliament. You are here to monitor us and I believe that this would inform you to study extremely hard, so that you take over from us when we retire. You are welcome.

Hon Minister for Roads and Highways, let me now invite you to take the podium.

Minister for Roads and Highways (Mr Kwame Governs Agbodza) (MP): Mr Speaker, the response to the Question asked by my Colleague is as follows:

Ministry of Roads and Highways’ indebtedness and commitment as at December, 2024—The total indebtedness in the Ministry as at December, 2024, is GHC21,200,660,270.52. That is what is on record as at now.

Mr Speaker, I must put on record—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Can you mention the figures again?

Mr Agbodza: GHC21,200,660,270.52.

The breakdown of this debt is as follows: Consolidated Fund Projects, GHC15,339,887,294.92; and Ghana Road Fund Projects, GHC5,662,772,975.60. These pending debts cover payment certificates from 2018 to 2024. It is worth noting that these debts do not include interests accrued to delayed payments.

Mr Speaker, on record, the interest on delayed payments can go as high as

50 per cent or 100 per cent on some of the projects. In November 2019, GH¢1.2 billion was borrowed from syndicated banks to finance the road maintenance. However, the Ghana Road Fund still owes contractors bills dating as far back as 2018, with some as low as GH¢2,000.

At the close of 2024, outstanding commitments in the road sector representing unexecuted contracts segments were estimated at GH¢103,500,000,000, exclusive of adjustments for variations on contracts which are yet to be agreed.

The sector is further challenged by numerous contracts awarded with insufficient financial planning, often lacking the mandatory commencement warrant as stipulated by the Public Financial Management Act (PFMA).

Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Member, do you have any supplementary question?

Mr Gakpey: I would like to ask the Minister for Roads and Highways that, based on the commitments, how does the Ministry intend to pay those?

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, Hon Minister?

Mr Agbodza: Mr Speaker, this is a very important question. All I would say is—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: It is very important indeed.

Mr Agbodza: Yes, as and when Government gets more resources, we would retire this debt and also continue to do what is required by adding on more projects.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Minister, based on the figures, does it mean that projects that are ongoing but the contractors have not submitted the certificates are not part of the figures you mentioned to us?

Mr Agbodza: Mr Speaker, I know you do not participate in debates, but road matters cover everybody and you are also a Member of Parliament so it is a relevant question.

Mr Speaker, that is why we segment it into debt and commitments. The debt is the certificate that has been approved for payment, but unfortunately, we cannot pay. So, those projects that are yet to be certified come under commitments.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Very well.

Yes, Hon Member for Akim Swedru?

Mr Kennedy Nyarko Osei (NPP — Akim Swedru): Mr Speaker, thank you.

I want to ask the Minister what plans he has to realign the commitment of the Ministry to reflect the budget of

the Ministry. I ask this Question because, the commitments of the Ministry are not projects that are sometimes awarded and are ongoing. It could be a project that has been agreed on and signed in the books for several years and is still sitting in the books of the Ministry as commitment, some of which go as far back as five to six years. I want to ask the Minister if he has any plans of reviewing those projects and taking them off from the books of the Ministry, so that the commitment or the obligation of the Ministry would reduce.

Thank you.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, Hon Minister?

Mr Agbodza: Mr Speaker, yes, my Colleague is very right. We are currently undergoing an exercise at the Ministry to rationalise the portfolio. This is to tell exactly whether every contract awarded is very active. On record, some contracts are awarded and the contractors never turn up on site. Every contract has got a termination clause. If a contract is awarded and for about two to three years the contractor never turns up on site, it is difficult to understand whether that is still a valid contract. So, he is right; we are rationalising our procedures to determine exactly what is commitment and what projects we can take off our books to make sure we are dealing with the right numbers.

Mr Speaker, thank you.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, Hon Sampson Ahi?

Mr Sampson Ahi (NDC — Bodi): Mr Speaker, thank you very much.

Mr Speaker, the Minister has just told us that the debts of over GH¢21 billion excludes interests on the debts which he claims sometimes ranges over 50 per cent on the debt. I want to find out from the Minister if there is a way to find out or ensure that officials and the technical people whose negligence have resulted into these huge interest payments would be punished.

Mr Speaker, thank you.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, Minister?

Mr Agbodza: Mr Speaker, I did not exactly attribute the interest of delayed payments to the negligence of any technical staff. But it is also clear that part of the reason for this unsustainable cost is the uncontrolled way of contracting.

11.38 p.m.

Mr Speaker, today, I will be answering another 11 or 12 Questions rightly put by our Colleagues, demanding to hear from me actions that are going to be taken on their roads. Mr Speaker, it is not for no reason that the Minister for Roads and Highways answers more Questions than any other Minister because roads are critical in everything we do.

So, yes, Hon Ahi is right. If it is proven that anybody negligently caused an expenditure which we should not have paid, the laws exist for that person to be punished, but that is not for me to determine currently. This is because I do not have any evidence based on these Answers that I provided, on anybody being negligent in the numbers I mentioned.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much.

Hon Kingsley Nyarko, hold on; you are now an available Leader, so I would give you the last slot.

Yes, let me go to the Hon Member for Okere.

Mr Daniel Nana Addo-Kenneth: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, I just need some clarity. The Hon Minister indicated that the outstanding debt and commitment ranges from 2018 to 2024. Is the Hon Minister telling us that before this year, for all the commitments that he stated, which was about GH¢100 billion if I heard him right, we did not have commitments from 2016 to 2017 in addition? And is he saying that within the debt, there is no carry-forward debt from 2016 and 2017?

Mr Agbodza: Mr Speaker, that is a good Question—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, please, let us listen to the Minister.

Mr Agbodza: On record, the commitment up to January 2017 was about GH¢17 billion and the former Minister, our former Colleague, Hon Kwasi Amoako-Attah, stood at this same place and made us aware that, as of the time the National Democratic Congress (NDC) was leaving power in January 2017, the total commitment was GH¢17 billion, compared to the over GH¢105 billion today. So, we can see the contrast.

Indeed, the debt as of January 2017 was about GH¢3.5 billion, as compared to GH¢21 billion today. We can see the contrast. There is something wrong with the way we contract. This debt is not sustainable and we need to do something as a House on how we contract. So, it is not about blaming any government, but the point is that 2018 is the cutoff year. It means that the debt up to 2018 has been cleared according to the data. What we are dealing with is from 2018 till this time.

Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, Hon Member for Amenfi West?

Mr Eric Afful: Mr Speaker, I would like to know from the Minister if this narration includes or excludes the cocoa road projects stalled from 2017 to 2024.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Very well. I was going to ask the same Question.

Yes, Hon Minister?

Mr Agbodza: Mr Speaker, that does not include the cocoa road projects. As we may all be aware, the Ministry of Roads and Highways only provides limited supervision of the cocoa road projects. The debt there is also over GH¢5 billion currently. If we were to add the cocoa road and others, it would be quite scary, so cocoa road figures are not inclusive of what I have just given out.

Dr Abdul Kabiru Tiah Mahama: Mr Speaker, this is a follow-up to the Question on interest on the back of the principal. The Minister mentioned that we have about GH¢21,200,660,214.50 as the outstanding debt, or if we like, principal of all Government contracts between 2017 and 2024. He mentioned that this is without prejudice to the interest payment.

Mr Speaker, I want to ask the Minister how much interest is accumulated on the back of this principal.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Minister, are you mindful in answering the Question? Very well.

Mr Agbodza: Mr Speaker, it would be difficult to give an accurate figure of interest on delayed payments. Normally, it is when the payment is due that the actual interest is

calculated. But, Mr Speaker, you would notice that during my vetting, I gave out—For instance, in 2018, under Government of Ghana (GoG), we owed GH¢113 million. As of the time I was being vetted, the interest on the GH¢113 million, because of just a one-line item, was over GH¢750 million. That is the interest alone on the GH¢113 million; so, if we were to project from 2013 on all the indebtedness, that figure would be more than GH¢40 billion.

So, it is something that I would come to the House with because, Mr Speaker, I do not know whether it would be fair to Ghanaians that they got GH¢20 million worth of road – that is, even if we are able to pay – yet, they are supposed to pay another GH¢30 billion for no road done. I do not think that is fair, and we need to find another way of contracting and to also make sure that contractors do not lose out. This is because these moneys are 30 per cent compounding; it is in the law. Is that a good way of writing contracts? But, Mr Speaker, when we get there, we would discuss that.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Very well.

Yes, my Brother, Hon Member for Nkwanta North?

Mr John Kwabena Bless Oti: Mr Speaker, I want to find out from the Minister whether he would consider constituting a proper audit team to look into this debt as to whether they are really genuine.

Mr Agbodza: Mr Speaker, during the budget hearing of my Ministry with the Ministry of Finance, they had already signalled that they may want to take a second look at the figures to be sure that they are not overpaid. Why did the Hon Member say that? Mr Speaker, it is not uncommon for a road project to be awarded with the source of funding for, let us say, the Road Fund, then somewhere down the road, the contractor decides that they should change the funding source to GoG.

There is no clear way of Road Fund knowing whether that certificate has been honoured by GoG. So, it could happen that, if care is not taken, the same certificate could be honoured by GoG and at the same time by the Road Fund. There would be the need for us to look into that to make sure that we pay what is due people and not overpay.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, I think—Yes, Hon Kingsley Nyarko?

Prof Kingsley Nyarko: Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity.

Mr Speaker, the Hon Minister for Roads and Highways is one of the most diligent Members of this House; he is very punctual and also pragmatic. But, in responding to the questioner as to what his outfit would do to ensure that these commitments are met for the roads to be built, his response was that it would be as and when Government gets the resources. But I know Hon Agbodza to be pragmatic and

proactive, so I want to ask him, what are the concrete steps that he intends to put forward for these commitments to be met for our constituents to benefit from these roads?

Mr Agbodza: Mr Speaker, Government's sources of getting money are defined, and fortunately, this House determines how Government gets money: it is either by loans or taxation. The Minister for Finance would be in the House on the 11th of next month to outline the ways by which he would tackle the debt and also make way for new things to be done. I would not want to jump the gun by suggesting something.

But, one of the ways this House can look at it is to consider how we can get our own sources of funding. As we speak, Mr Speaker, we do not have the opportunity to borrow money to do anything. It would be necessary for us to find ways of generating our resources.

11.48 a.m.

Mr Speaker, it is not for no reason that I decided with my Colleagues that the road tolls should be brought back. That would be another way; it may not be the solution but it may be a small way of solving part of the problem while we wait for a bigger opportunity.

So, Mr Speaker, we would be coming to the House to determine the ways we can get significant internal resources to be able to work on our roads.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker:
Thank you very much.

Hon Member for Manhyia South,
take the last bite.

Nana Agyei Baffour Awuah (NPP — Manhyia South): Thank you, Mr Speaker, and thank you Chief Whip for ceding to me. Listening to the Hon Minister, respectfully, I want the House to be very clear in our minds as to what has resulted in the astronomical increase in the debt in the sector.

Mr Speaker, is it as a result of penalty for delayed payments or interests? This is because he keeps referring to interests as if it is interest on a loan, but if it is penalty for delayed payments, that ought to be cleared and we ought to be clear in our minds that these are payments that have resulted from default in servicing the road debts or contracts as and when they become due. So, that clarity is very important.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker:
Very well. Hon Minister, I hope you got him?

Mr Agbodza: Mr Speaker, I was very clear when I said the 21 billion does not include interest on delayed payments at all. For instance, we are currently building some by-passes on the Accra-Kumasi Road, the total contract sum at the time of contracting was 1.9 billion; the contract is still within contract period and we are being asked to do a variation of 1.7 billion on top of the 1.9 billion. The question is, how were we able to do a variation or

determine a 1.7 billion variation on a contract that is 1.9 billion? Something must be wrong. In fact, on some of the projects, the variation required is over 100 per cent, yes.

So over 100 per cent on a project that is active within the contractual period, so is it the case that the project was not prepared? In fact, the last time we spoke, when Hon Oppong Nkrumah read a Statement on Public Private Partnership (PPP), my Colleague, the former Minister for Roads and Highways gave a suggestion that one of the reasons we arrive at that position is because of the rush in getting projects started without proper packaging of the projects.

Mr Speaker, on this project for instance, the understanding is that we were in a hurry to do the by-passes on the Accra-Kumasi Road, and instead of doing a proper study, somebody flew a drone over the alignment and contracted—The contractor got to the site and realised that there were *galamsey* pits under the cocoa trees, so the variation is coming as a result of some people failing to do due diligence, packaging and proper costing. That was what has resulted into this. So, I hope my Colleague who asked the Question would know that sometimes, it is as a result of negligence in terms of packaging of projects. And I am determined that we shall do whatever it takes to minimise the unnecessary variation on the projects that we undertake going forward.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker:
Lastly, the Leader of the House?

Majority Leader (Mr Mahama Ayariga): Mr Speaker, mine is not a follow-up question but listening to the Minister, on several occasions, he has asked the House to assist him to get a sense of direction as to what to do about the problems that he has encountered in the road sector. That he has highlighted in his various answers based on the questions that have been asked.

So, Mr Speaker, I think that the problem looks systemic. It is the whole system and how the system functions. This is the kind of issue that this Parliament should conduct an enquiry and a pro into; to understand the nature of the problem, listen to experts and come out with some specific recommendations to guide how we manage our road sector. Like he said, there can now be a situation where a road which is valued at 1 billion, ends up with a debt of 15 or 30 billion. Clearly, a number of institutions have worked in a manner that does not serve the interest of the country, so we need to understand what is happening. Is the fault coming from the Ministry of Finance, the budgeting arrangement, the Ministry of Roads and Highways, the awarding institutions or the contractors in the execution of the projects? What are the sources of the delays in the payment or execution of the projects?

Mr Speaker, this is how we should approach these challenges so that we can have some clear direction.

So, Mr Speaker, I would suggest that you direct that this matter be referred to the Committee on Roads and Transportation as well as the Finance Committee when they are established, so that they can inquire into it and come out with some recommendations. Then as a Parliament, we would be in a better position to guide the Minister. That is the only way we can make progress, otherwise, we would keep asking these Questions and get these Answers.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker:
Thank you very much. Minority Chief Whip, let me hear you. I thought you said you have yielded your opportunity.

Minority Chief Whip (Mr Frank Annoh-Dompreh): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Let me commend my Minister, at least he is the first Minister to appear before the House; all the other ministers have written to give one reason or the other. I commend him highly. We miss him anyway; I miss him.

Mr Speaker, let me corroborate what the Leader said, however, it is important we put matters in perspective because I recall there were a number of Questions directed at the Minister and he duly answered all the Questions. However, we need to define the terms,

what is the Speaker going to direct on? Is it a concern or variable in terms of how contracts are awarded? The payments, mode of variations being done and all that; so we need to be clear on the terms of referral, otherwise, we would be moving in cycles.

To that extent, I would want the — yes, there should be some drafting for certainty in terms of the terms that would be referred to the Minister. Clearly, the Minister on a number of times has indicated his willingness to come to this House for assistance, so not to re-invent the wheel, we may probably have to define the terms and then I am sure we can get it clarified.

I had a question but I would withdraw it for now; I would ask it at the appropriate time.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much.

Hon Members, this is the Urgent Question. The Minister is here again to answer 11 other Questions from Hon Members, so he has a lot of work to do today, and we would take it this way. The owner of the Question may ask his Question, if it is constituency specific, the supplementary question would be limited to the owner of the Question alone, and there would be two supplementary questions. The main Question, two supplementary questions and as I said, if it is constituency related Question, the supplementary question would be limited to the Hon Member who owns the Question.

11.58 a.m.

So, we will start from Question 8, item numbered 7, and the Question stands in the name of Dr Fred Kyei Asamoah, the Member for Offinso North.

Hon Member, you have the floor now.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

MINISTRY FOR ROADS AND HIGHWAYS

Completion of Selected Roads in Offinso North

Dr Fred Kyei Asamoah (NPP — Offinso North): Thank you, Hon Speaker.

Mr Speaker, I beg to ask the Minister for Roads and Highways Afrancho, Akomadan, Nkenkaaso, Darso and Kobreso towns and its area roads upgrading project awarded by the previous Government would be completed.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, Hon Minister?

Mr Agbodza: Mr Speaker, Afrancho Town Roads—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: My Friend who said eight years, please, he is entitled to the Question. He has asked the Question, and the Minister is here to respond, please.

Yes, Minister?

Mr Agbodza: Mr Speaker,

(i) Afrancho Town Roads

Background

Afrancho is one of the principal towns in the Offinso North District of the Ashanti Region. It is located along the Kumasi-Techiman Highway. It is a gravel road with fair surface condition.

Current Programme

The Afrancho Town Roads have been awarded under the contract titled **“Upgrading of Afrancho town roads and others (10.75km)”** to bituminous surfacing. The works commenced on 15th October, 2024 for completion by 14th April, 2026.

The progress of works is estimated at 41 per cent physical completion. The contractor is currently on site and works are ongoing.

(ii) Akomadan Town Roads

Background

Akomadan is the capital of Offinso North District of the Ashanti Region. It is located along the Kumasi - Techiman Highway. It is a gravel road with fair surface condition.

Current Programme

The Akomadan Town Roads have been awarded under the contract titled **“Upgrading of Afrancho town roads and others (10.75km)”** to bituminous

surfacing. The works commenced on 15th October, 2024 for completion by 14th April, 2026.

The progress of works is estimated at 41 per cent physical completion, and the contractor is currently on site and works are ongoing.

(iii) Nkenkaaso Town Roads

Background

Nkenkaaso is one of the principal towns in the Offinso North District of the Ashanti Region. It is located along the Kumasi - Techiman highway, which is a gravel road with poor surface condition.

Current Programme

The Nkenkaaso Town Roads have been awarded under the contract titled **“Upgrading of Nkenkaaso town roads (8.75km)”** to bituminous surfacing. The works commenced on 24th January, 2025 for completion by 6th August, 2026. The Contractor is currently mobilizing to commence the works.

(iv) Darso Town Roads

Background

Darso is one of the principal towns in the Offinso North District of the Ashanti Region. It is located along the Kumasi - Techiman Highway. It is a gravel road with fair surface condition.

Current Programme

The Darso Town Roads have been awarded under the contract titled **“Upgrading of Kobreso town roads and others (13.7km)”** to bituminous surfacing. The works commenced on 24th January, 2025 for completion by 6th August, 2026. The Contractor is currently mobilising to commence the works.

(v) Kobreso Town Roads

Background

Kobreso is one of the principal towns in the Offinso North District of the Ashanti Region. It is located along the Kumasi - Techiman highway. It is a gravel road with fair surface condition.

Current Programme

The Kobreso Town Roads have been awarded under the contract titled **“Upgrading of Kobreso town roads and others (13.7km)”** to bituminous surfacing. The works commenced on 24th January, 2025 for completion by 6th August, 2026. The Contractor is currently mobilising to commence the work on site.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, Hon Member, any supplementary question?

Dr Asamoah: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, I want to ask, with the current state of the roads in Offinso

North, I want the Hon Minister to assure us how he is going to help the contractor to mobilise quickly to the site because it is posing a lot of inconvenience to the good people of Offinso North and, in some instances, it is even posing a health risk to them.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, Hon Minister?

Mr Agbodza: Yes, Mr Speaker, I sympathise with my Colleague on the nature of the road he describes, and I know when roads are in that condition, as a Member of Parliament, you get a lot of pressure from your constituents as to what you can do.

Some of the projects have already started, and the contractors are now mobilizing on two of them. For mobilisation, it is the responsibility of the contractor, and, as I indicated earlier, we will do as much as we can to mobilise funds and pay the bills. On this particular project, I am not aware of what certificates have been raised. In any case, many of the projects started this year, so it is unlikely that the contractors are demanding payment, but whatever we can do to make sure the contractors work, we shall do within our limits.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Your final supplementary question?

Dr Asamoah: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, so, I would like to ask what can be done temporarily for the good people of Offinso North, so that these roads can be motorable?

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, Minister?

Mr Agbodza: Mr Speaker, when roads are on contract, normally, it is the responsibility of the contractors to keep the roads motorable, especially if it is an existing road. So, we shall insist that the contractors carry out the necessary activities that make the road motorable and, at the same time, continue the construction. So, there will not be any need for an external help or getting somebody else there to do anything. It is the responsibility of the contractor to make sure the road remains reasonably motorable at the time of doing the work.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much.

Leader, like I said, this is constituency specific.

After everything, Leader, you can get a slot for it, but let us—Because we have 11 or 12 Questions to answer, so that we can move on.

Minority Chief Whip (Mr Frank Annoh-Dompreh): Speaker, I will plead with you. This is a very important follow-up, and the Minister made a

very important statement that part of the contractor's functionality is to ensure that the road is motorable. I want to plead with my Colleague that it is not specific to him. It is a general situation in the country. Would he want to reach out to the contractors, so that that part of their function is not abandoned?

Mr Agbodza: Mr Speaker, I agree with the Minority Chief Whip. On many occasions, we have members of the public complaining about roads in their neighbourhood that are under construction and are in deplorable state. Indeed, part of the contract sum requires that, and the obligation on the contractors is to make sure that the roads remain reasonably motorable even at the time of construction. I know contractors who have diligently adhered to this to make sure that whilst it is not a completed road for road users to drive at the speed they want to drive, they remain motorable for them. So, I make a commitment that we will keep insisting and then encouraging contractors to carry out that part of their responsibility whenever they undertake road projects in our country.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much.

We turn to Question 8, and the Question stands in the name of Mr Frank Yeboah, the Member for Atwima Nwabiagyia North.

Hon Member, you have the floor now.

MINISTRY FOR ROADS AND HIGHWAYS

Plans to Construct the Offinso – Worapung Road in Atwima Nwabiagya North

Mr Frank Yeboah (NPP — Atwima Nwabiagya North): Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, I beg to ask the Minister for Roads and Highways when the Ministry plans to construct the Offinso – Worapung road in the Atwima Nwabiagya North Municipality.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, Hon Minister?

12.08 p.m.

Mr Agbodza: Mr Speaker, the Offinso-Worapung is captured on the Department of Feeder Road's road database as Offinso-Bonsua-Wawase feeder road (33km) and Bonsua-Worampong-Addaikrom (14km). Some sections of the road are partially engineered while some sections are unengineered.

The Offinso-Bonsua-Worampong is 19km long and located in the Offinso and Atwima Nwabiagya Municipalities of the Ashanti Region. It is a gravel road in poor surface condition.

Current Programme

There is no programme on the Offinso-Bonsua-Wawase feeder road.

However, the Bonsua-Worampong-Addaikrom road was awarded in two (2) phases as follows:

- Phase 1: Upgrading of Bonsua–Worampong–Addaikrom Road (Km 0+000 – 7+000)
- Phase 2: Upgrading of Bonsua – Worampong – Addaikrom Road (Km 7+000 – 16+400)

Upgrading of Bonsua–Worampong–Addaikrom Road (Km 0+000 – 7+000) to bituminous surfacing.

The contract commenced on 13th January, 2021, for completion by 12th January, 2022. The progress of works is estimated at 7 per cent physical completion. The Contractor is currently not on site and works have stalled. The contract has been recommended for termination.

Upgrading of Bonsua–Worampong–Addaikrom Road (Km 7+000 – 16+400) to bituminous surfacing.

The contract commenced on 6th November, 2020, for completion by 5th November, 2021. The progress of works is estimated at 52 per cent physical completion. The Contractor is currently not on site and works have stalled.

The contract has therefore, been recommended for termination.

Future Programme

Engineering design studies will be carried out upon termination of the contract by the end of the fourth quarter

of 2025, to assess the appropriate intervention after which consideration would be given under the 2026 Budget.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Yeboah, any supplementary questions?

Mr Yeboah: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

To the Hon Minister, since the contract would be terminated, how soon can he fast-track the process of termination so that the contract can be re-awarded to someone who can do the work?

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, Hon Minister?

Mr Agbodza: Mr Speaker, embedded in every contract are the termination clauses. We shall explore the appropriate termination clauses to avoid being sued, but as I said, it has already been recommended for termination, which means that some of the processes have already been carried out. I would work with him to see how quickly the contract can be terminated and hopefully, re-package it to have another shot at getting it fixed.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much.

Hon Obeng, do you want to speak?

Mr Kwame Asare Obeng: Yes, Mr Speaker.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: But I gave the initial grounds work.

Mr Obeng: Mr Speaker, I am only begging you to allow me to make a short comment. My people on the Right Side are going to benefit from what I am going to say, especially—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Obeng, let me follow my rules and later on, I would see how best to address you.

Mr Obeng: Mr Speaker, the Whip indicated that—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Obeng, he is a Leader. You hold on and I would find a way of giving you the opportunity.

Mr Obeng: Mr Speaker, thank you very much

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Frank Yeboah, your last supplementary question.

Mr Yeboah: Mr Speaker, I do not have any supplementary questions again. I would work with the Minister on that. Thank you very much.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much.

Hon Members, we would turn to Question 9, which stands in the name of the same person, Mr Frank Yeboah, Hon Member for Atwima Nwabiagya North. You have the floor.

MINISTRY OF ROADS AND HIGHWAYS

Plans to Construct the Amanfrom- Offinso and the Adankwame- Ntensere Road

Mr Frank Yeboah (NPP — Atwima Nwabiagya North): Mr Speaker, I beg to ask the Minister for Roads and Highways the plans the Ministry has in respect of the Amanfrom–Offinso road and the Adankwame–Ntensere road in the Atwima Nwabiagya North Municipality which construction has stalled.

Mr Agbodza: Mr Speaker, for Amanfrom–Offinso Road,

Background

The Amanfrom–Offinso Road forms part of the Abrepo Junction - Barekese-Offinso Road, which is a Regional Road (R052). The road connects Kumasi, at Abrepo Junction through major towns such as Bohyen, Abrepo, Atafoa, Amanfrom, Asuofia, Kokoben, Achiase, Adankwame, Barekese, Kyekyewere, Kokote and their surrounding communities along the corridor to Offinso. The road traverses the Atwima Nwabiagya District and Offinso Municipality of the Ashanti Region.

The Abrepo Junction–Barekese–Offinso road is 35.9km bituminous surface treated road in fair to poor condition. The road is being

rehabilitated and upgraded to asphaltic concrete surface in phases.

Current Programme/Plans

The Amanfrom–Offinso section of the road has been awarded in three (3) Lots (**thus Lot 3, 4 and 5**) with the contract details below:

- Rehabilitation of Abrepo Junction–Barekese–Offinso Road (km 12.0 – km 21.0) – **Lot 3** —

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, Order! There are so many discussions and meetings in the Chamber. Please, let us listen to the Minister.

Mr Agbodza: Rehabilitation of Abrepo Junction–Barekese–Offinso Road (km 21.0 – km 29.0) – **Lot 4**

- Rehabilitation of Abrepo Junction–Barekese–Offinso Road (km 29.0 – km 35.9) – **Lot 5**

Information available indicates that the Contractor has been on site and work is progressing steadily on all the Lots.

The physical progress of work is as below:

- Lot 3 – 61.32 per cent
- Lot 4 – 60.45 per cent
- Lot 5 – 60.26 per cent

The projects are ahead of schedule and expected to be completed according to the Contractor's work programme.

(ii) **Adankwame-Ntensere**

Background

The Adankwame-Ntensere — Adankwame?

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members—Yes, Adankwame.

Mr Agbodza: But my name is Kwame, and the way the Kwame is written there is the same so what is the —[*Laughter*]

Adankwame-Ntensere feeder road is 13km long. It serves as a connector road linking two highways: The Kumasi-Barekese and the Kumasi-Sunyani roads. It is a gravel-surfaced engineered road in poor condition. It is located in the Atwima Nwabiagya Municipality of the Ashanti Region.

Current Programme/Plans

The Adankwame-Ntensere feeder road has been awarded under the contract titled “**Upgrading of Adankwame-Ntensere road (13km)**” to bituminous surfacing. The works commenced on 10th February, 2025 for completion by 10th August, 2026.

The Contractor is currently mobilising to commence the works.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Member, any supplementary questions?

Mr Yeboah: Yes, Mr Speaker. The Minister mentioned that the contractor is mobilising to site. Does this mobilisation mean that he has been paid to mobilise and is he preparing to go to the site, or he is yet to be paid to mobilise?

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, Hon Minister?

Mr Agbodza: Mobilisation is not about money; it is about the contractor getting themselves ready to go to site. Yes, there is something we all know as mobilisation, which is money that is paid in advance to contractors to go to site. It is not very likely on Government of Ghana funded projects, or it is not common to pay mobilisation before contractors go on site. I doubt if this particular project has a function of an advance payment.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Your last supplementary question.

12.18 p.m.

Mr Yeboah: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I just want to thank the Minister for the answer and to say that my people would not be happy with the way the Minister managed to pronounce the names. On a lighter

note, I would see him later and help him learn the names of my towns. It is Adankwame, so I would see him later and—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker:
Thank you.

See the Minister privately and train him.

Hon Members, we turn to Question 10, and it stands in the name of Nana Asafo-Adjei Ayeh, the Member for Bosome Freho. Hon Member, the Minister is available and you have the floor now.

MINISTRY OF ROADS AND HIGHWAYS

Plans by Government to Construct Roads in the Bosome Freho Constituency

Nana Asafo-Adjei Ayeh (NPP — Bosome Freho): Mr Speaker, I beg to ask the Minister for Roads and Highways what plans the Government has to construct the following roads:

- i. Beposo – Asiwa;
- ii. Mmrontuo – Ankaase;
- iii. Asiwa – Abosamso /Asumama;
- iv. Dwumakyi – Abosamso /Asumama;
- v. Nsuaem – Tebeso;

- vi. Anyaso – Tebeso; Anyaso – Nsueme;
- vii. Nsuta – Nsese; Nsuta – Damaskus - Appiakrom; and Keteke – Supom in the Bosome Freho Constituency.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker:
Thank you very much. Yes, Hon Minister?

I am laughing because the Hon Member is mentioning names that I know very well—No, do not mention that. Power for eight years? Do not say that. He is entitled to ask the question. Hon Minister, you have the floor.

Mr Agbodza: Mr Speaker,

- (i) Beposo – Asiwa (16.4km)
- (ii) Mmrontuo-Ankaase road (20km)
- (iii) Asiwa – Abosamso/ Asumama (17.6km)
- (iv) Dwumakyi – Abosamso /Asumama (21.33km)
- (v) Nsuaem – Tebeso (12.4km)
- (vi) Anyaso – Tebeso; Anyaso – Nsueme (10.6km)
- (vii) Nsuta – Nsese; Nsuta – Damaskus – Appiakrom; and Keteke – Supom (6.85km)

Current Programme

There are no programmes on these roads.

Future Programme/Plans

Engineering design studies are programmed to be carried out on these roads by end of the second quarter of 2025 to assess the appropriate intervention after which consideration would be given under the 2026 budget.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, Hon Member, any supplement question?

Mr Ayeh: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I am grateful for the response.

I want to plead with the Minister, the current state of the roads is so bad. Reports from all the health centres and hospitals in Bosome Freho state clearly that majority of the problems that we suffer are dust and lung health related problems. I am asking the Minister; what immediate or temporal measure can be put in place while we await the proper awarding of the contract by the Ministry?

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, Hon Minister?

Mr Agbodza: Mr Speaker, I would work with my Colleague, together with the relevant road agencies to, as much as possible, carry out interventions that would, at least, minimise the condition

he is describing. I agree with him that dusty roads and others can increase the chances of respiratory diseases so, I would work with him. I suspect these are under Department of Feeder Roads, so I would continue to work with them to improve it until we do the major interventions.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr Ayeh: Mr Speaker, I would be extremely grateful to work hand-in-hand with the Minister to ensure that some of these things are done. I would want to draw the Minister's attention to the fact that approval was given for the construction of the Asiwa – Abosamso/Asumama Roads, and I would work hand-in-hand with him to ensure that we finalise that road.

Finally, I want to ask if there can be some timelines that would help me as a Member of Parliament to follow up to ensure that these commitments by the Government are done.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, Hon Minister?

Mr Agbodza: Mr Speaker, yes. Indeed, my Colleague approached me to brief me on an intervention that is ongoing before asking the Question. I assured him that we would follow up together to see that particular process to its logical conclusion. I am unable to offer a timeline. I know generally, this year, we are going to carry out a lot more maintenance works on the roads.

So, surely, we shall include some of the things the Hon Member has described here for an intervention when we get there. So, while I can assure the Hon Member that we would do something about it, I am unable to give timelines as to when we can carry it out.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, we turn to Question 11, and before I invite Nana Osei-Adjei, Member of Parliament for New Juaben North to ask his Question, let me bring to your attention that yesterday, the Speaker brought to our attention, the communication from His Excellency the President on 10th February, 2025, informing the House of the nomination of Mr Michael Harry Yamson, as the Acting Administrator of the District Assemblies Common Fund (DACF) for the approval of Parliament in accordance with Article 252 (4) of the 1992 Constitution. I think yesterday when the Speaker made the announcement, he was short of referencing the nominee to the Appointments Committee. I hereby do so by referring the President's nominee for the DACF to the Appointments Committee for processing and report back to the House.

Hon Members, we turn to Question 11, and it stands in the name of Nana Osei-Adjei, Member for New Juaben North.

Hon Member, you have the floor.

MINISTRY OF ROADS AND HIGHWAYS

Plans by the Ministry to Construct Roads in the New Juaben North Constituency

Nana Osei-Adjei (NPP — New Juaben North): Mr Speaker, I beg to ask the Minister for Roads and Highways when the Ministry plans to construct the deplorable road from Akwadum Roundabout to Effiduase Kingsby Roundabout in the New Juaben North Constituency.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, Hon Minister?

Hon Members, please stop saying that. Everybody is entitled, no matter the period. So, please allow Members to ask their Question. The Minister is willing to respond to the Questions. Minister, you have the floor respond to them.

Mr Agbodza: Mr Speaker,

Background

The Akwadum Roundabout — Effiduase Kingsby Road forms part of the Koforidua (Effiduase) — Suhum Road (25km). It is a Regional Road (R41) in poor condition.

Current Programme

There is no programme on the road.

Future Programme

Engineering design studies have been carried out on the road and cost estimates have been submitted to assess the appropriate intervention after which consideration would be given under the 2026 budget.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, Hon Member, any supplementary question?

12.28 p.m.

Mr Osei-Adjei: Mr Speaker, I am grateful for the response given by the Minister for Roads and Highways.

Mr Speaker, I would like the Minister to also know that this road is a very busy road in the New Juaben North Constituency. The road leads to the new Eastern Regional Hospital, which was started by His Excellency Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, which is about 70 per cent complete. I would like to find out from the Minister that in the interim, what can be done for the road to be a bit motorable and for the dusty situations to come down?

Mr Agbodza: Yes, Mr Speaker, I acknowledge that this road actually leads to the proposed Regional Hospital which is abandoned at the moment. The Regional Hospital project is stalled as well. Yes, I agree with him that we need to work on it. Hopefully, by the time we get the hospital up and running, the road would have been done to make sure they function appropriately.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker:
Thank you very much.

We would move to Question 12—

Mr Osei-Adjei — *rose* —

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: All right, let us hear your last supplementary question.

Mr Osei-Adjei: Mr Speaker, thank you very much.

Mr Speaker, as the Minister for Roads and Highways said, the hospital is about 70 per cent complete. And I know that from the speech read by His Excellency, the President yesterday, the 30 per cent would be done by the NDC Government.

Mr Speaker, my second supplementary question is that since the road is very deplorable, in the interim, what can he do about it for the good people of New Juaben North?

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Is this different from the first supplementary question?

Yes, Minister?

Mr Agbodza: Mr Speaker, we will look at the best ways—I think this is likely under urban roads. We would look at the best way to do some maintenance works on it. Standing here, I do not know the extent of damage the road has, but depending on the level of damage, that would determine the level of interventions we

can make. I can assure him that we would work together to see what we can do to make it motorable until we find a solution after 2026.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much.

Now, the Question numbered 12, which stands in the name of Mr Akwasi Gyamfi Onyina-Acheampong, the Hon Member for Kwabre East.

Mr Davis Ansah Opoku — *rose* —

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Member, I know you are the Member for Mpraeso.

Mr D. A. Opoku: Yes, Mr Speaker, I have his permission to ask the Question on his behalf.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Let us hear you.

MINISTRY OF ROADS AND HIGHWAYS

Resumption and Completion of Selected Roads in the Kwabre East Constituency

Mr Davis Ansah Opoku *on behalf of Mr Akwasi Gyamfi Onyina-Acheampong (NPP — Kwabre East):* Mr Speaker, I beg to ask the Minister for Roads and Highways when the following road projects in the Kwabre East Constituency would be resumed and completed:

- i. Fawoade – Kenyase;
- ii. Mampongtenge – Ahodwo;
- iii. iii. Medoma Abass Junction – Maase;
- iv. Abira – Abirem;
- v. Aboaso – Kenyase Brofoyedur; and
- vi. Wonoo/Ahodwo – Asonomaso.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Now, you see that it is not only the Minister who cannot pronounce some of the names well? Minister, you are pardoned.

Mr Agbodza: Mr Speaker, my good Friend, Akwasi, who was correcting me was seated right beside my Colleague. I thought he would have just whispered to him to correct him instead of allowing him to get here, but that is fine.

Mr Speaker,

i) Fawode-Kenyase Road

Background

The Fawode-Kenyase feeder road is a 5.5km collector road located in the Kwabre East District of the Ashanti Region. It is an engineered road in good condition.

Current Programme

The Fawode-Kenyase road has been awarded under the contract titled “Bitumen Surfacing of Fawode-Kenyase feeder road (5.5km)”. The works commenced on 22nd January, 2020 for completion by 22nd January, 2021. The contractor sealed 1.2km of the road surface. However, the works stalled due to delay in payment for works done. The contract has since been terminated. The project’s physical completion was projected at 62.11 per cent.

The Department of Urban Roads (DUR) is currently executing the contract titled “Rehabilitation of Fawode-Kenyase road in Kwabre East Municipality (6.5km)” starting from kilometer 1.20 – 6.5. The project commenced on 26th August, 2024 for completion by 26th August, 2026. The project is estimated at 70.66 per cent physical completion. The contractor is currently on site and works are ongoing.

- ii. **Mamponteng-Ahodwo;**
- iii. **Medoma Abass Junction-Maase; and**
- iv. **Aboaso-Kenyase Brofoyedur**

Mr Speaker, the Mamponteng-Ahodwo road, Medoma Abass Junction-Maase Road and Aboaso-Kenyase Brofoyedur road have been awarded under the contract titled “Rehabilitation of selected roads in Kwabre East Municipality and Afigya Kwabre South District (42km)”.

The project commenced on 1st March, 2023 for completion by 28th February, 2025. All the aforementioned roads are at a sub-base level. The contractor has requested for an extension of time which is under consideration. The project is at 67 per cent physical completion and the contractor is currently on site working.

(iii) Abira – Abirem

Background

The Abira – Abirem road is a section of the Abirem – Antoa – Bonwire road, which forms an integral part of the Regional Road (R53). The road serves as a strategic link between the Ejisu Municipality and the Kwabre East Municipality in the Ashanti Region.

Current Programme

The Abira – Abirem road has been awarded under the project titled “Rehabilitation of Abirem - Antoa - Bonwire Road (km 0-10.38) and Critical Access roads (17.3km)”. The works commenced on 28th December, 2023, for completion by 27th December, 2025. The contractor is on site and works are ongoing. The physical progress of work is estimated at 42.63 per cent.

(iv) Wonoo/Ahodwo – Asonomaso

Background

The Wonoo/Ahodwo – Asonomaso road connects Bonwire-Abira-Abirem

Road at Krobo and traverses Sakora Wonoo to Asonomaso in the Kwabre East Municipality of the Ashanti Region. The road is 6.3km long and in poor condition.

Current Programme

The Wonoo/Ahodwo – Asonomaso road has been awarded under the project titled “Rehabilitation of Krobo – Sakora Wonoo – Asonomaso Road (6.3km) and Critical Access Roads (7.87km)”.

12.38 p.m.

The contract was awarded on 1st October, 2024 and is expected to be completed in 24 calendar months. The Contractor is mobilising to commence works.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much. Did he also ask you to take Supplementary questions as well?

Mr D. A. Opoku: Once I am standing in his stead, I think it is expected that I do that.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: All right.

Mr D. A. Opoku: Mr Speaker, I want to thank the Hon Minister for the detailed answer he has given. Just to say that, the Fawoade to Kenyasi road contract that has been terminated, the people of Kwabre East want to find out from the Minister what steps he is taking to re-award this contract to a

new contractor so that the gains that have been made on the road—Because we realised that 62.11 per cent of the road has been completed and if the contract is terminated, what it means then is that we would allow this road to go bad. So, what step is he taking to re-award the contract to a new person?

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Very well. Hon Minister?

Mr Agbodza: Mr Speaker, we shall review the current status under the relevant agency. Since it appears that there are two other contracts going on within the area, we would review and see if it would be appropriate to find a way of letting one of them get on with it if their contracts allow us to do so. So, we would explore that channel as well.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much. It is now the turn of the Hon Member who asked the previous Question, Hon Davis Ansah Opoku, Member for Mpraeso. Now you may ask your own Question.

MINISTRY FOR ROADS AND HIGHWAYS

Status of Atibie and Twenedurase- Akwasihio Road

Mr Davis Ansah Opoku (NPP — Mpraeso): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I seek to ask the Minister for Roads and Highways the status of the Atibie and

Twenedurase – Akwasiho roads leading to the paragliding site.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Minister?

Mr Agbodza: Mr Speaker, thank you.

Background

Atibie and Twenedurase – Akwasiho roads are located in the Kwahu South District of the Eastern Region.

Current Programme

The Atibie and Twenedurase – Akwasiho roads have been awarded under the project titled “Reconstruction of Atibie–Paragliding Road (km 0.0–km 2.5)-PH 1 and Reconstruction of Atibie–Paragliding Road (km 2.5–km 5.0) -PH 2”. Both projects commenced on 18th December, 2019 for completion by 17th December 2020.

- The overall progress for Reconstruction of Atibie – Paragliding (km 0.00 – 2.50) Phase 1 is 55.34 per cent.
- The overall progress for Reconstruction of Atibie – Paragliding (km 2.50 – 5.0) Phase 2 is 78.79 per cent.
- Works have stalled due to delay in payment for work done.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Opoku, any further Question?

Mr Opoku: Mr Speaker, I want to draw the attention of the Minister to the significance of this road. In April, we would be in the Easter festivities and paragliding brings a lot of money to the State. Also, we know that when we say Easter in Ghana, it is “Kwahu oo Kwahu”. People would be trooping to Kwahu to witness Easter and also to have a feel of the paragliding activities that the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Creative Arts has initiated.

I think it is important that, for the first time that we would be hosting the President of the Republic in Kwahu for this Easter festivities, at least, the President would appreciate that his Minister for Roads and Highways would have completed this road. Mr Speaker, we are just talking about 5km of road so, I am urging the Minister to put in effort—Just 5km of road. The effort that has been put in by previous Ministers to get the road to the percentages given us by the Hon Minister sees to the completion of this very road project.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: This is very persuasive. Yes, Minister?

Mr Agbodza: Mr Speaker, my good Friend appears to be sending an invitation to the President through me for Easter. I am not sure I am worthy of carrying that invitation but I think it is on a lighter note. Yes, Mr Speaker, by the answers I gave, this project started in 2019 and should have been completed in 2020 so, it is quite surprising that for all these years, we have been unable to complete it. He

says it is 5km only, 78 per cent has been done. Mr Speaker, I do not know what is left but I know I will work with my agency head to see what is left. The only thing is Easter is just two months or less away. I do not know how much we can do to complete it before then but, whatever we can do in the circumstances, we shall do them. I fully agree with him; Kwahu Easter is the most popular Easter destination here and we shall capitalise on that and make sure that it brings in the necessary attraction that boosts tourism. I agree with him; we shall work on that as the financial space would agree.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, Hon Opoku?

Mr Opoku: Mr Speaker, I just want to commend the Minister for the assurance and also to give him an open invitation to come and enjoy Easter in Kwahu. We have the best of baby making weather so, he can come with his spouse and enjoy Kwahu Easter.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Minister, are you responding to the invitation?

Mr Agbodza: I accept this invitation.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: So, we turn to Question 14 and the Question stands in the name of Dr Kingsley Agyemang, Hon Member for Abuakwa South. Hon Member, the Minister is waiting for your Question.

MINISTRY FOR ROADS AND HIGHWAYS

Completion of Bitumen Surfacing Road Projects in Abuakwa South Constituency

Dr Kingsley Agyemang (NPP — Abuakwa South): To ask the Minister for Roads and Highways plans for the completion of the following stalled bitumen surfacing road projects in the Abuakwa South Constituency: Asikam Town Roads; Nkronso Town Roads; Asafo Town Roads; Asafo – Maase – Old Tafo Road; and Kyebi – Apapam – Larbikrom Road.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, Hon Minister?

Mr Agbodza: Mr Speaker,

(i) Asikam Town Roads

Background

The Asikam Town Roads is 4.5km long. It is located in the Abuakwa South Municipality of the Eastern Region.

Current Programme

The Asikam town roads have been awarded under the contract titled “Upgrading of Asafo-Maase roads and others (29.3km)” to bituminous surfacing. The works commenced on 25th September, 2024 for completion by 24th March, 2026.

The progress of works is estimated at 55.77 per cent physical completion. The Contractor is currently on site and works are ongoing.

(ii) Nkronso Town Roads

Background

The Nkronso Town Roads is 4.4km long. It is located in the Abuakwa South Municipality of the Eastern Region.

Current Programme

The Nkronso town roads have been awarded under the contract titled “Upgrading of Asafo-Maase roads and others (29.3km)” to bituminous surfacing. The works commenced on 25th September, 2024 for completion by 24th March, 2026.

The progress of works is estimated at 55.77 per cent physical completion. The Contractor is currently on site and works are ongoing.

12.48 p.m.

(iii) Asafo Town Roads

Background

The Asafo Town Roads is 6.4km long. It is located in the Abuakwa South Municipality of the Eastern Region.

Current Programme

The Asafo Town Roads have been awarded under the contract titled “**Upgrading of Asafo-Maase roads and others (29.3km)**” to bituminous surfacing. The works commenced on 25th September, 2024 and schedule for completion by 24th March, 2026.

The progress of works is estimated at 55.77 per cent physical completion. The contractor is currently on site and works are ongoing.

(iv) Asafo-Maase-Old Tafo Road

Background

The Asafo-Maase-Old Tafo feeder road is 14km long. It is located in the Abuakwa South Municipality of the Eastern Region.

Current Programme

The Asafo-Maase-Old Tafo Feeder Road has been awarded under the contract titled “**Upgrading of Asafo-Maase Road and others (29.3km)**” to bituminous surfacing. The works commenced on 25th September, 2024 and schedule for completion by 24th March, 2026. The progress of works is estimated at 55.77 per cent physical completion. The contractor is currently on site and works are ongoing.

(iv) Kyebi – Apapam – Larbikrom Road

Background

The Kyebi – Apapam - Larbikrom feeder road is 14km long. It is located

in the Abuakwa South Municipality of the Eastern Region.

Current Programme

The Kyebi-Apapam-Larbikrom Feeder Road was awarded in two (2) phases:

- **Phase 1:** Upgrading of Kyebi-Apapam-Larbikrom Road (Km 0+000 – 7+000)
- **Phase 2:** Upgrading of Kyebi-Apapam-Larbikrom Road (Km 7+000 – 14+400)

Phase I

The contract commenced on 21st May, 2020, and completion date as expected to be to 4th September, 2023 which has since elapsed. The progress of works is estimated at 50.77 per cent physical completion. The contractor is currently not on site, and works have stalled. An injunction has been placed on the contract due to delay in payment.

Phase II

The contract commenced on 13th July, 2020 and expected to have been completed by 15th September, 2022 which has since elapsed. The progress of works is estimated at 17.77 per cent physical completion. The contractor is currently not on site and works have stalled. An injunction has been placed on the contract due to delay in payment for work done.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, any supplementary question?

Dr Agyemang: Thank you very much, Hon Minister.

Mr Speaker, in Hon Minister's Response, he indicated that phase 1 and 2 of the Kyebi-Apapam-Larbikrom Road have been enjoined as a result of non-payment. May I, respectfully, know the plans of the Ministry toward the payment of the contract sums or the sums that have been worked under that particular road?

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, Hon Minister?

Mr Agbodza: Mr Speaker, I do not know why the payment was not made when it was due to the extent that the contractor—Or, at least, we are told there is an injunction on the project because of lack of payment. I am not fully briefed on the circumstances surrounding lack of payment, but I can understand that if we pay attention to the Urgent Question I answered, it, probably, would explain why. This is because it is clearly the case that Government does not have enough funds to pay for those works, but since we are told there is an injunction, I do not know the details under which the injunction was sought and granted.

When I get the accurate briefing, I would work with you to see. What matters to the Hon Member is for the road to be completed, and we would work together to see how we can get it done.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, Hon Agyemang?

Dr Kingsley Agyemang: Thank you Mr Speaker and Hon Minister, thank you for your candid response.

Mr Speaker, as you may be aware, multi-morbidity index in Ghana has increased tremendously, and one of the key factors has to do with upper-respiratory disorders. I am seeking the Hon Minister's kind attention that—Because this has to do with bitumen resurfacing, it means the top surface of the road has been scratched, and there is a lot of dust in the area; I crave the indulgence of the Hon Minister that he keeps a good eye on these roads for the people of Abuakwa South.

Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

Hon Members, we turn to Question 15 which stands in the name of Dr Abdul Kabiru Tia Mahama, Member for Walewale.

You may ask your Question now.

MINISTRY FOR ROADS AND HIGHWAYS

Completion of Selected Roads in the Walewale Constituency

Dr Abdul Kabiru Tiah Mahama (NPP — Walewale): Mr Speaker, I

beg to ask the Minister for the Roads and Highways when the following road projects would be completed:

- i. Nasia–Janga;
- ii. Nasia–Kparogu–Mimima;
- iii. Wulugu–Kpansekpe;
- iv. Gbimsi–Nayorku–Gaagbini; and Mimima–Boayini.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, Hon Minister?

Mr Agbodza: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

(i) **Nasia-Janga**

Background

Nasia-Janga feeder road (25.7km) is located in the West Mamprusi Municipality of the North East Region.

Current Programme

The Nasia-Janga Feeder Road has been awarded in two (2) phases under the contracts titled “**Nasia-Janga Feeder Road Phase 1 (km0 – 10.50) and Nasia-Janga Feeder Road Phase 2 (km10.50-25.90).**”

Phase I

The contract commenced on 31st August, 2018 for completion by 31st August, 2020 which was later revised to 31st December, 2024. The progress of works is estimated at 75 per cent

physical completion. The contractor is currently on site, and works are ongoing.

Phase II

The contract commenced on 9th December, 2024 for completion by 8th June, 2026. The progress of works is estimated at 21.7 per cent physical completion. The contractor is currently on site, and works are ongoing.

(ii) Nasia-Kparigu-Mimima

Background

Nasia-Mimima Feeder Road is a 34-km long engineered network in the West Mamprusi Municipality of the North East Region. The road is earth surface in poor condition.

Current Programme

The Nasia-Kparigu-Mimima Feeder Road was awarded on 25th October, 2024 for completion by 25th October, 2026. The contractor is mobilising to commence works.

(iii) Wulugu – Kpansekpe

Background

The Wulugu–Kpansekpe road is 35-km long road. It is a regional road (R116) with gravel surface in poor condition.

12.58 p.m.

Current Programme

The Wulugu–Kpansekpe road was awarded in three (3) lots:

- Upgrading of Wulugu-Wiase Lot 1 (Km 0-13)
- Upgrading of Wulugu-Wiase Lot 2 (Km 13-24)
- Upgrading of Wulugu-Wiase Lot 3 (Km 24-35)

Phase I

The contract commenced on 26th July 2024 for completion by 26th July, 2026. The progress of works is estimated at 13.47 per cent physical completion. The Contractor is currently on site and works are ongoing.

Phase II

The contract commenced on 26th July, 2024 for completion by 26th July, 2026. The progress of works is estimated at 18.43 per cent physical completion. The Contractor is currently on site and works are ongoing.

Phase III

The contract commenced on 26th July, 2024 for completion by 26th July, 2027. The progress of works is estimated at 17.62 per cent physical completion. The Contractor is currently on site and works are ongoing.

(iv) Gbimsi–Nayorko–Gaagbini

Background

Gbimsi–Nayorko–Gaagbini is a 5.2km feeder road in the West

Mamprusi Municipality of the North East Region. The road is earth surface and in poor condition.

Current Programme

The Gbimsi-Nayorko-Gaagbini feeder road forms part of the “**Upgrading of Walewale-Wungu feeder road (3.5km) and others (25.45km), total (28.95km)**” to bituminous surfacing. The project commenced on 29th November 2024 for completion by 28th November, 2026.

The progress of work is estimated at 55 per cent physical completion. The Contractor is currently on site and works are ongoing.

(vi) Mimima-Boayini

Mimima-Boayini is a 5.3km feeder road in the West Mamprusi Municipality of the North East Region. The road is earth surface and in poor condition.

Current Programme

There is no programme on this road.

Future Programme

Engineering design studies will be carried out by the end of the second quarter of 2025 to assess the appropriate intervention after which consideration would be given under the 2026 Budget allocations.

Thank you.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker:

Thank you very much. Hon Kabiru, any further supplementary question?

Dr Mahama: Yes, Mr Speaker, I would like to thank the respected

Minister for Roads and Highways for his diligence in respect of these Questions. I am acutely aware that the Wulugu-Kpasenkpe roads has been thoroughly assessed by the Minister after some presentations were made to him and the possibility of us looking at the various modeling to ensuring that, because that is a regional road and possibly an international road. So, I want to thank him. I also want to thank the Minister for his assurance in respect of the Mimima-Boayini road, and trying to let it have expression in the 2026 Budget. Hon Minister, I will be working closely with you to ensure that this is done.

But the last supplementary question I want to put to the Minister—The Nasia-Kparogu-Mimima Road, Mr Speaker, was first awarded in 2018. I believe that that arrangement did not work after some work had been done on the road. I want to know whether this has been brought to the attention of the Minister and whether or not this current arrangement could expedite the process to ensure that the time loss between 2018 and 2024 would be catered for in the implementation of this programme. But that said, I am also aware that the contractor is a very diligent contractor, and he will do a good work if given the opportunity.

Thank you.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, Minister?

Mr Agbodza: Mr Speaker, I thank my Colleague and I would review the additional information he has provided with the agency head to make sure the interventions capture exactly what he is talking about.

Mr Speaker, thank you very much.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much. We would take Question 16. I think it is the second bite of Mr Davis Ansah Opoku, Hon Member of Parliament for Mpraeso.

MINISTRY OF ROADS AND HIGHWAYS

Plan by Government to Construct the Adawso–New Jerusalem Road Leading to Begoro

Mr Davis Ansah Opoku (NPP — Mpraeso): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

I beg to ask the Minister for Roads and Highways the plan of the Government to construct the Adawso–New Jerusalem Road leading to Begoro.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, Hon Minister?

Mr Agbodza: Mr Speaker, thank you once again for the opportunity.

Background

The Adawso–New Jerusalem Road forms part of the Inter-Regional

Road (IR3), which starts from Oterkpolu and traverses along the Volta Lake through major towns such as Asesewa, Abooso, Dedeso, Mpaem, New Jerusalem, Adawso and continues to Kwahu Tafo and beyond; all in the Eastern Region.

The road connects the Regional Road (R32) at Abooso which leads to Begoro, the capital of Fanteakwa North District in the Eastern Region.

Current Programme

There is no programme on the road.

Future Programme

Engineering design studies will be carried out by the end of the second quarter of 2025 to assess the appropriate intervention after which consideration would be given under the 2026 budget.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much. Yes, Hon Opoku?

Mr D. A. Opoku: Mr Speaker, on the 14th of February in this very House, we approved a loan facility amounting to about €350million for the Afram Plains roads and a part of it connects to these roads that I have mentioned so, I

am surprised that the Minister says that—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Is it 14th February of this year?

Mr D. A. Opoku: No, of 2022.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: 2022?

Mr D. A. Opoku: Yes, so I am surprised that the Minister says that there is no programme on the road because I know that this contract was awarded to Contracta Construction UK Limited for an amount of about €150 million to construct from Bunso leading to Adawso and all these roads that we have mentioned are captured in it. So, if the Hon Minister says there is no program, is he able to tell us what that means?

Thank you.

Mr Agbodza: Mr Speaker, my Colleague is very right. That was the Parliament before this one. We approved a significant amount of money for not only the roads, but also some bridges. My Colleague is fully aware that by the close of that year, the Minister for Roads and Highways and the Minister for Finance came here and vied that that amount of money be applied to other roads. Maybe Mr Davis Ansah Opoku forgot about that one. That was what made this programme stalled, but the truth is that the road mentioned is very critical, so it is upon us to find alternative sources of funding to go back to execute this project. So, as and when funding is

approved, we will go back and do this but the good thing is that it is in focus at least for the 2026 Budget. So, we will work together to see how we will get this done.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Finally?

Mr D. A. Opoku: Yes, Mr Speaker, finally, I would like to thank the Minister and also to hold him to his assurance because this road when constructed, can end the importation of onions into our country. I mean, all these roads are along the Volta River, the Afram River and because of the lack of good roads, market men and women come and take advantage of farmers and sometimes the produce go bad and so when constructed, the over US\$100 million worth of onions that were imported to this country from neighbouring countries, those monies can stay in our country and help. So, I thank him for the assurance and I am praying that when the 2026 Budget is read, we would see Bunso, Adawso to Afram Plains well captured.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much.

Mr Agbodza: Mr Speaker, I thank my Colleague and my assurance had a preamble or caveat that when our finances get better. We are all praying that by 2026, the finances will get better, and yes, I agree with him. These are the kind of roads we need to prioritise because they unlock a lot

more than just roads. It actually unlocks our agricultural potential. So, I agree with him that we need to work to bring it to fruition.

Thank you.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much, Hon Minister. Now we take the final Question from Mr Tweneboa Kodua Fokuo, Hon Member of Parliament for Manso Nkwanta and he has not also mandated anybody to do that on his behalf. So, we will—

Nana Asafo-Adjei Ayeh — *rose* —

1.08 p.m.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Are you doing that? All right, let me give you the floor to do that on his behalf.

MINISTRY OF ROADS AND HIGHWAYS

Measures to address the road infrastructural problems in Manso Nkwanta Constituency

Nana Asafo-Adjei Ayeh on behalf of Mr Tweneboa Kodua Fokuo (NPP — Manso Nkwanta): Mr Speaker, I beg to ask the Minister for Roads and Highways the measures the Ministry is implementing to address the road infrastructural problems in the Manso Nkwanta Constituency.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, Hon Minister?

Mr Agbodza: Mr Speaker,

Background

Manso Nkwanta is the District Capital of Amansie West in the Ashanti Region.

Current Programme

The Department of Feeder Roads is undertaking four (4) projects in the district:

- (a) Bitumen Surfacing of Manso Kensere – Watreso feeder road Ph. 1 (0.00-10.00km)
- (b) Upgrading of Kumpese - Tontokrom feeder road (17.65km) to bituminous surfacing.
- (c) Upgrading of Pakyi No. 2 – Antoakrom feeder road (km 0.00-1.40) Bitumen Surfacing of Pakyi No. 1 Pakyi No. 2 (1.40km) feeder road and critical accesses (1.8km) Total length (4.60km)
- (d) Upgrading of Pakyi No. 2 - Antoakrom feeder road (21.30km) Trede - Pakyi No. 2 Link (2.40km) and critical accesses (0.95km). Total Length (24.65km).

(a) **Bitumen Surfacing of Manso Kensere – Watreso Feeder Roads Ph. 1 (0.00-10.00km)**

Current Programme

The Manso Kensere-Watreso road has been awarded under the contract titled “**Bitumen Surfacing of Manso**

Kensere – Watreso Feeder Roads Ph. 1 (0.00-10.00km)". The works commenced on 30th July, 2020 for completion by 28th December, 2023.

The progress of work is estimated at 53.55 per cent physical completion. Works stalled due to delay in payment for work done.

(b) **Upgrading of Kumpese - Tontokrom Feeder Road (17.65km)** to bituminous surfacing.

Current Programme

The Kumpese-Tontokrom road has been awarded under the contract titled **"Upgrading of Kumpese-Tontokrom feeder road (17.65km)"** to bituminous surfacing. The project was awarded on 15th November, 2024. The Contractor is yet to commence works.

(c) **Upgrading of Pakyi No. 2 - Antoakrom Feeder Road (km 0.0-1.4) and - Pakyi no. 1-Pakyi no. 2 (1.4km) Feeder Road and Critical Accesses (1.8km) total length (4.6km)** to bituminous surfacing.

The Pakyi No.2-Antoakrom road (km 0.0-1.4) and Pakyi No.1-Pakyi No.2 (1.4km) and some critical access roads have been awarded under the contract titled **"Upgrading of Pakyi No. 2 - Antoakrom Feeder Road (km 0.0-1.4) and - Pakyi no. 1-Pakyi no. 2 (km 0.0 - 1.4km) Feeder Road and Critical Accesses (1.8km) total length (4.6km)"** to bituminous surfacing. The works commenced on 6th September, 2024 for completion by

8th September, 2025. The progress of works is estimated at 20.96 per cent physical completion. The contractor is currently on site and works are ongoing.

d) **Upgrading of Pakyi No. 2 - Antoakrom Feeder Road (21.3km) Trede - Pakyi no. 2 link (2.4km) and Critical Accesses (0.95km) total length (24.65km)** to bituminous surfacing.

The Pakyi No.2-Antoakrom road (21.3km) and Trede-Pakyi No.2 link (2.4km) and some critical access roads have been awarded under the contract titled **"Upgrading of Pakyi No. 2 - Antoakrom Feeder Road (21.3km) Trede - Pakyi no. 2 link (2.4km) and Critical Accesses (0.95km) total length (24.65km)"** to bituminous surfacing.

The works commenced on 9th July, 2024 for completion by 9th July, 2026.

The progress of work is estimated at 15 per cent physical completion. The contractor is currently on site and works are ongoing.

The Ghana Highway Authority (GHA) is undertaking four (4) projects in the district:

a) Rehabilitation of Mim Junction – Manso Adubea – Kumpese Road (17km) & Critical Access Roads (8.006km) = 25.006km.

b) Upgrading of Mim Junction – Agroyesum road (km 0.0 – km 7.0)

c) Rehabilitation of Wioso - Moseaso (19.5km) and Critical Accesses (5km)

d) Rehabilitation of Anwiankwanta – Mim Junction (26.4km)

(a) Rehabilitation of Mim Junction – Manso Adubea – Kumpese Road (17km) & Critical Access Roads (8.006km) = 25.006km.

The contract commenced on 9th December, 2022 for completion by 8th June, 2024. The works are substantially completed.

(b) Upgrading of Mim Junction – Agroyesum road (km 0.0 – km 7.0) to bituminous surfacing.

The contract commenced on 28th October, 2024 for completion by 27th October, 2026. The progress of work is estimated at 29.63 per cent physical completion. The contractor is currently on site and works are ongoing.

(c) Rehabilitation of Wioso - Moseaso (19.5km) and Critical Accesses (5km)

The contract commenced on 28th December, 2023 for completion by 27th December, 2025. The progress of work is estimated at 5.2 per cent physical completion. The contractor has suspended works.

(d) Rehabilitation of Anwiankwanta – Mim Junction (26.4km)

The contract was awarded on 1st October, 2024. The progress of works is estimated at 9.32 per cent physical completion. The contractor is currently on site and works are ongoing.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker:
Thank you very much, Hon Minister.

I believe that what I observed in the Eighth Parliament, we are not going to observe the same thing. In the Eighth Parliament, most of the Questions came from the Minority. I believe that this time around, the Majority would also ask Questions.

Today, 11 Questions—You cannot come under a point of order when the Speaker is speaking. Today, there were 11 Questions plus one Urgent Question which makes it 12, and all of them emanated from the Minority. The Urgent Question was from the Majority. Yes, that is right.

Hon Members, we are all entitled to ask Questions and that is the way our constituents can even assess us. So, Hon Minister, on behalf of the House, let me thank you. Members can see that you candidly responded to the Questions, and we urge other Ministers to do the same thing. We are grateful to you; you are hereby discharged.

Hon Members, before we go back to the item numbered 6 in today's

Order Paper, let me crave the indulgence of the House to acknowledge our children, who have come all the way from the Bono Region. They are from Yamoransa Model Labs, and they are being led by Jonathan Amponsem, who is the senior project associate. They are coming from Dormaa West Constituency, and I guess that the Hon Member, Mr Vincent Oppong Asamoah, is here.

I hope you take care of them.

[Students of Yamoransa Model Labs were acknowledged]

Mr Vincent Oppong Asamoah: Mr Speaker, with your support, I will take care of them.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Very well. We thank you for coming all the way from—Is it the Sampa area?

1.18 p.m.

Mr Asamoah: Mr Speaker, we have so many Labs; my Lab is Lab 12. We have Labs 1, 2 and other Labs in all the regions of the country. We have Liberians and even Gambians. It is an annual event where they do robotics competition and others. I am a promoter; we have promoters around. I know Hon Elizabeth Ofosu-Agyare is a promoter for Bono East, I am for Bono, and there is another for—It is all over the country. So, this is an annual event.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Very well. Thank you very much.

Yes, Majority Chief Whip?

Majority Chief Whip (Mr Rockson-Nelson Etse Kwami Dafeamekpor): Mr Speaker, actually, I have two schools from South Dayi and we participate annually. This year we came second, and—*[Interruption]*—Let me see the Hon Member. Yes. So, as my Brother, Mr Vincent Oppong Asamoah, said, it is a national event, and I think this House should take cognisance of this programme. I can make preliminary comments on the matter. It produces young scientists and this is how nations grow. This is how we create people who manufacture and are creative. So, this House should pay attention to this programme and we need to encourage the agencies to sponsor it. They will go places, and they would go to Silicon Valley and do wonders—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Then ask Hon Yaw Boamah to sponsor.

Mr Dafeamekpor: Yes, Mr Yaw Boamah, we must co-sponsor next year's programme and ferry them to Silicon Valley in California.
[Laughter]

Mr Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity, and congratulations once more to all of them.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much.

You are welcome and I hope you would monitor what is going on in the Chamber and that it would motivate

you for your future career. I would not ask you to become politicians like us, but for your future career.

Ms Formadi — *rose* —

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, can I also hear from you.

Ms Jean-Marie Formadi: Mr Speaker, thank you very much.

I am happy to also announce to you that Yamoransa Lab 7 are from the Biakoye Constituency and they came first. They were first last year and this year too, they came first. [*Hear! Hear!*] So, Lab 7, congratulations once again.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: You are welcome once again.

Hon Members, let us welcome the Leader of the House to give us the activities for the ensuing week, eighth week. Hon Leader, the floor is yours.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Chairman of the Business Committee/Majority Leader (Mr Mahama Ayariga): Mr Speaker, your

Committee, the Business Committee, met today, Friday 28th February, 2025, to arrange the Business for the eighth week ending Friday, 7th March, 2025. We could not meet yesterday for obvious reasons. The President was here to deliver the Message on the State of the Nation.

Mr Speaker, the Committee accordingly submits its report as follows:

Arrangement of Business

Formal Communications by the Speaker

Mr Speaker, you may read any available communication to the House.

Question(s)

Mr Speaker, the Business Committee has scheduled the following Ministers to respond to Questions asked of them during the week:

	<u>No. of Question(s)</u>
i. Minister for Energy and Green Transition	6
ii. Minister for Gender, Children and Social Protection	4
iii. Minister for Education	3
iv. Minister for Local Government, Chieftaincy and Religious Affairs	5
v. Minister for Roads and Highways	5
Total Number of Questions	<u>23</u>

Mr Speaker, in all, five Ministers are expected to attend upon the House to respond to 23 Questions during the

Week. The Questions are of the following types:

- i. Urgent – 2;
- ii. Oral – 21

Statements

Mr Speaker, pursuant to Order 91(2), Ministers of State may be permitted to make Statements on Government policy. You may also admit Statements by Hon Members in accordance with Order 93.

Papers and Reports

Mr Speaker, pursuant to Order 97, Papers may be laid during the week and reports from Committees may also be presented to the House for consideration.

Motions and Resolutions

Mr Speaker, Motions may be debated and their consequential Resolutions, if any, taken during the week.

Briefing of the House

Mr Speaker, if you will recall, you directed that the Minister for Energy and Green Transitions should appear before the House to brief us on measures being taken towards the

gradual transition of the country to the use of clean and renewable energy.

Mr Speaker, the Business Committee has re-scheduled the Minister for Energy and Green Transition for Tuesday, 4th March, 2025, to brief the House on the steps being taken by the Ministry towards the gradual transition of the country to the use of clean and renewable energy. We urge the Minister to avail himself, so that we would be briefed.

Hon Members are to take note and avail themselves for the briefings on the said dates.

Public Holiday

Mr Speaker, Thursday, 6th March 2025, is Independence Day. The day would be observed as a statutory public holiday.

Debate on the Message on the State of the Nation

Mr Speaker, the major Business for next week will be the debate on the Message on the State of the Nation. A motion to thank H. E. the President for the Message on the State of the Nation would be moved on Tuesday, 4th March, 2025. Hon Members are, therefore, urged to participate actively in the debate after the motion has been moved.

The Business Committee, mindful of the need to thoroughly debate the Message by H. E. the President, recommends the following time

allotments for Hon Members to make their contributions:

- i. Majority Leader & Minority Leader — 40 minutes
- ii. Other Leaders — 20 minutes
- iii. Leadership of Committees — 15 minutes
- iii. Other Hon Members — 10 minutes

Mr Speaker, the Committee considered the issue of the number of Members to be recognised from each Side of the House to contribute to the Debate each day, but could not reach a consensus.

The Minority held the view that in line with existing practice and convention, the number of contributors to the debate should be equal for both Sides, that is, five Members from the Majority and five Members from the Minority. The Majority on the other hand argued that in view of the present composition of the House and the high number of Members of the Majority Caucus as opposed to the Minority, equal allotment will disadvantage Members of the Majority Caucus. The Majority Caucus accordingly proposed that the allotment of opportunities for debate on the Message should be based on the proportional composition of the House. They accordingly proposed a ratio of 68:32, to represent the different sizes of the Caucuses in the House.

Having regard to the inability of the Committee to reach a consensus on the matter and in accordance with Order

284(2) of Standing Orders, the Question was put, and Majority of seven Members voted in favour of a proportional allotment of opportunity for debate. The Minority, however, gave indication that they were not part of the decision, and accordingly do not recognise the vote. The Committee accordingly submits the matter for the consideration of the House.

Sitting Time and Extended Sittings

Mr Speaker, the Business Committee recommends that the House keeps to the 10.00 a.m. Sitting time and also have extended Sittings from Tuesday, 4th March, 2025, to ensure that the Statement on the Message on the State of the Nation is thoroughly debated and other Business scheduled for the week is completed.

Conclusion

Mr Speaker, in accordance with Order 216(2) and subject to Order 67, the Committee submits to the House the order in which the Business of the House shall be taken during the week.

Tuesday, 4th March, 2025

Roll Call

National Pledge

Statements —

- (a) Minister for Energy to apprise the House on Tuesday, 4th March, 2025, on the gradual

transition of the nation to the use of clean and renewable energy.

Urgent Questions —

(a) **Mr John Darko (Suame):** To ask the Minister for Energy the causes of power fluctuation in the Ashanti Region, Suame Constituency in particular, and what the Ministry is doing to provide stable power supply to the people in the Ashanti Region.

(b) **Ms Patricia Appiagyei (Asokwa):** To ask the Minister for Gender, Children and Social Protection what measures the Ministry has put in place to ensure the effective and efficient implementation of the Affirmative Action Act, 2024.

Questions —

*24. **Mr Davis Ansah Opoku (Mpraeso):** To ask the Minister for Energy the plans of the Ministry to provide electricity to the communities along the Volta River within the Kwahu South Municipality to aid farmers in irrigation to ensure an all-year round production.

*25. **Dr Abdul Kabiru Tiah Mahama (Walewale):** To ask the Minister for Energy the steps the Ministry is taking to extend electricity to new areas in the following communities in the Walewale constituency:

- i. Walewale Kperiga ii. Walewale Tampulin iii. Walewale Kukuazugu iv. Nasia v. Kparigu vi. Junga vii. Yaama viii. Wungu ix. Wulugu and Kpansekpe.

*43. **Mr Vincent Ekow Assafuah (Old Tafo):** To ask the Minister for Energy the measures being taken by Government to address the rising cost of energy and its impact on businesses and households.

*44. **Ms Patricia Appiagyei (Asokwa):** To ask the Minister for Energy the state of the rural electrification interventions made by the Government since 2017.

*49. **Mrs Laurette Korkor Asante (Atiwa West):** To ask the Minister for Energy when the electrification extension which was to be undertaken as an emergency turnkey project in 2024 in the following communities will begin: i. Kwabeng ii. Abomosu iii. Tumfa iv. Muoso v. Sankubenase vi. Asunafo vii. Asamama viii. Akwabuasoo ix. Ekorso x. Gyamase xi. Pameng xii. Awenare xiii. Akropong xiv. Banso xv. Bomaa xvii. Abisim xviii. Safarikrom xix. Yamama xx. Akukuso

*18. **Mrs Mavis Nkansah-Boadu (Afigya Sekyere East):** To ask the Minister for Gender,

Children and Social Protection what measures the Ministry is taking to ensure the full compliance to section 87 of the Children's Act, 1998 (Act 560) which prohibits child labour exploitation.

***19. Mrs Mavis Nkansah-Boadu (Afigya Sekyere East):** To ask the Minister for Gender, Children and Social Protection what plans the Ministry has to address the increasing number of streetism among children of school going age.

***36. Mr Vincent Ekow Assafuah (Old Tafo):** To ask the Minister for Gender, Children and Social Protection the plans of the Ministry to ensure the continuity of the Kayaye Empowerment Programme.

Presentation of Papers —

Report of the Appointments Committee on His Excellency the President's Nominations for Appointment as Minister and Deputy Ministers of State.

Motions —

That this Honourable House thanks H. E. the President for the Message on the State of the Nation which he delivered to Parliament on Thursday, 27th February, 2025.

(Commencement of Debate)

Committee sittings.

Wednesday, 5th March, 2025

Roll Call

Statements

Questions

***30. Dr Fred Kyei Asamoah (Offinso North):** To ask the Minister for Education when the boys and girls' dormitories, multi-purpose dining hall, teachers quarters and two storey-classroom block in the Akomadan Applied Technology Institute will be completed.

***41. Mr Vincent Ekow Assafuah (Old Tafo):** To ask the Minister for Education the details on the interventions aimed at bridging the digital divide in rural schools.

***65. Mr Rudolf Amoako-Gyamerah (Upper Denkyira West):** To ask the Minister for Education the immediate plans of the Ministry to complete the following projects in the Diaso Senior High School: i. Girls & Boys Dormitory; ii. Teachers and Headteacher's Bungalows; iii. other facilities the previous Government started which is about 20 per cent completed.

***26. Dr Fred Kyei Asamoah (Offinso North):** To ask the Minister for Local Government, Chieftaincy and Religious Affairs when the University of Local Governance and Development Bill will be re-laid to allow the operationalisation of a university in Akomadan in the Offinso North Constituency.

***27. Mr Akwasi Gyamfi Onyina-Acheampong (Kwabre East):** To ask the Minister for Local Government, Chieftaincy and Religious Affairs when work will resume on the Mampong teng market which has been abandoned since 2008 in the Kwabre East Constituency.

***28. Mr Akwasi Gyamfi Onyina-Acheampong (Kwabre East):** To ask the Minister for Local Government, Chieftaincy and Religious Affairs when work will resume on the abandoned Astroturf at Aboaso funded by the District Assembly Common Fund (DACF) in the Kwabre East Constituency.

***29. Dr Fred Kyei Asamoah (Offinso North):** To ask the Minister for Local Government, Chieftaincy and Religious Affairs when the ongoing construction of the six-unit classroom block in Akomadan and Nkenkaasu

and the teachers quarters in Brehoma, rural clinic at Akrofua will be completed under the Integrated Rural Development Project II.

34. Dr Kingsley Agyemang (Abuakwa South): To ask the Minister for Local Government, Chieftaincy and Religious Affairs the plans for the Kantamanto and Kwadaso Wood Village markets that have been destroyed by fire.

Presentation of Papers —

Report of the Appointments Committee on His Excellency the President's Nominations for Appointment as Minister and Deputy Ministers of State.

Motions —

(a) That this honourable House thanks H. E. the President for the Message on the State of the Nation which he delivered to Parliament on Thursday, 27th February, 2025.

(Continuation of Debate)

(b) That this honourable House adopts the Twelfth Report of the Appointments Committee on His Excellency the President's Nominations for Appointment as Minister and Deputy Ministers of State.

Committee Sitings

- Committee of the Whole

Thursday, 6th March, 2025

Public Holiday (Independence Day)

Friday, 7th March, 2025

Roll Call

Statements —

Minister for Foreign Affairs to apprise the House on the deportation of Ghanaian Citizens in the United States of America.

Questions —

***55. Mr Isaac Boamah-Nyarko (Effia):** To ask the Minister for Roads and Highways what the Ministry intends to do to ensure the completion of the Effiakuma Number 9 Bypass Road (Part of Effia Lot 2) as the current state of the road poses great challenge to motorists and the community.

***56. Mr Isaac Boamah-Nyarko (Effia):** To ask the Minister for Roads and Highways what the immediate plans of the Ministry are to fix the nonfunctional Effiakuma Number 9 traffic light as the current state of the traffic light poses a great danger to road users and the community.

***57. Mr Seth Osei-Akoto (Atwima Mponua):** To ask the Minister for Roads and

Highways the plans of the Ministry to rehabilitate an old bridge that serves communities of: i. Kotokuom ii. Katakwiwa and Akonkye through to Apanemadi in Atwima Mponua Constituency.

***58. Mr Isaac Boamah-Nyarko (Effia):** To ask the Minister for Roads and Highways what the Ministry intends to do to ensure the completion of the CDH road as the current state of the road causes grave challenges to motorists and the people.

***59. Mr Anthony Mmieh (Odotobri):** To ask the Minister for Roads and Highways the measures the Ministry is putting in place to ensure that all contractors return to complete projects abandoned for the past six years within the Amansie Central District.

Presentation of Papers

Motions

(a) That this honourable House thanks H. E. the President for the Message on the State of the Nation which he delivered to Parliament on Thursday, 27th February, 2025.

(Conclusion of Debate)

(b) That this honourable House adopts the Thirteenth Report of the Appointments Committee on His Excellency the President's Nominations for Appointment as Minister and Deputy Ministers of State.

Committee Sitings

Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, the Business Statement for the ensuing eighth week has been read to us by the Leader of the House. It is now before the House for consideration, so if any Member has concerns, this is the time.

Alhaji Habib Iddrisu — *rose* —

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: As it stands, I can only see the Minority Chief Whip.

Alhaji Habib Iddrisu: Mr Speaker, I think I would start and my Colleagues would follow.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: You want to start so that your Colleagues will follow?

Alhaji Habib Iddrisu: Yes, Mr Speaker.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Then why not allow your Colleagues to come then you take the final lap?

Alhaji Habib Iddrisu: Mr Speaker, I have concerns; let me raise my concerns. Maybe their—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: What I am saying is that normally, per our practice, when the Leader of the Caucus speaks, we do not go back. So, if you would allow the Members to speak then you give the final—Or if you want to change it—

Alhaji Habib Iddrisu: Mr Speaker, in the case of Business Statement, there are so many matters, so any Member can speak to any matter. I think that has been the guidance of the House.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Let us hear you

1.28 p.m.

Alhaji Habib Iddrisu: Mr Speaker, listening to the Leader of the House and Majority Leader on page 2, item 5, debates on the Message on the State of the Nation, I do not know where this is coming from, to the effect that we are going to debate on the Message on the State of the Nation based on proportions? This is alien to the House. It has never been practiced from the Fourth Republic; from the First Parliament up to the Ninth Parliament, we have never set proportions in this House as basis for debates. So, when the Majority Leader said that they even took a decision in terms of voting—that is actually not the procedure.

He is a senior man of this House and he knows. Even in the Seventh Parliament, when the New Patriotic Party (NPP), had a Majority of 169 Members, and the National Democratic Congress (NDC), had 106 Members, we never used proportions in terms of debates. It has never happened. So why is it that, now, we want to say that to debate on the Message on the State of the Nation, proportions would be used and they have introduced their own proportion?

Mr Speaker, in any case, what are they afraid of? If five of them speak and five of us from this Minority Side speak—What are they afraid of? Because they believe that the message that the President presented is the State of the Nation.

Mr Speaker, with all due respect to the Leader of the House, I think this part of the Business Statement should be expunged from the record, because it is alien to the rules. If we look at our Standing Orders, specifically, Order 115 talks about time and manner of speaking. Mr Speaker, with your permission, I read;

“Subject to the discretion of the Speaker and Order 169(3)(b), a Member who intends to speak shall rise in the Member's place and address the Chair while standing only after catching the eye of the Speaker.”

There is nowhere in our Standing Orders which tells us to use proportions when we are speaking on

the floor of the House. We should not entertain this because we would be setting a very bad precedent. We those on the Minority Side would not be part of this. We will not entertain this. Because it has never happened and we will not allow them to set a wrong precedent to us. It is wrong.

Mr Speaker, we will definitely not be in agreement with any proportion. If we are to debate on the Message on the State of the Nation, if five of us on the Minority Side would be speaking, five on the Majority Side will speak. There is nothing to be afraid of. They do not need to say we would speak using proportions. We will all speak and debate the message of the President. But we will not use any proportion to do that. [*Hear! Hear!*]

Dr Thomas Winsum Anabah: Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity.

I think we all came to Parliament for the same purpose. Both the Majority and Minority Members. We in the Majority have observed that there is one function in Parliament that most of us are not getting the opportunity to play, which is, to deliberate in this House. Whether or not it was a previous practice or something we are introducing, we have to look at the merits. If we are going to do a proportional participation in this Parliament, it would disadvantage some of us in the Majority — [*Interruption*]*—No, listen.*

Mr Speaker, our duty here is for all of us to comment and participate in

every activity and any deliberation in this House—[*Hear! Hear!*]*—All of us are supposed to contribute, whether one is a Majority or Minority. We should not use partisanship to limit anybody from participating on the floor of Parliament. — [Hear! Hear!] We should not use it.*

It is because any Statement one makes in this House, I have the equal right with anybody here to participate. So, if we use partisanship to allow participation, it would disadvantage anybody who is on the Majority side. For example, let us consider that one day the Minority are only 10 Members, how are the rest going to participate on the floor of the House? For instance, as Members of Parliament, we know we are assessed to get our chance to return. There are Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) assessing our participation in Parliament. There are NGOs that would come out with data on those who speak on the Floor and those who do not. I want to speak, but we are saying our Side has two chances to speak, and the Minority Side also has two chances to speak.

Meanwhile, our number here is twice their number. They would have 10 times the opportunity to participate. But if they are allowing those on the Majority Side to speak, I will only have one chance to do so. So, when they are assessing parliamentarians, I would be poorly assessed, but it would be because of that. Just like their Members have the right to comment on the President's Message on the State of the Nation, I also have the chance,

privilege and right to participate. So, in every debate, we have to do it proportionally. In every debate, we can use the proportion 4:1. In every debate, we must all have equal opportunities as parties and representatives of our people and that is how we must participate in this House.

Mr Speaker, I thank you.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Member, thank you very much.

Mr Patrick Yaw Boamah: Mr Speaker, thank you.

I think we are by this going to introduce some unfairness and a novelty unknown to the practice of this House.

Mr Speaker, it is very important—the NPP has had 169 Members of Parliament before. We have never on any occasion advocated for this. In any event, if you look at—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Order! Order!

Hon Members, please, let us listen to him. I would also give you the floor to also speak. Please, let us hear him. Other than that, we would not hear him.

Mr Boamah: Mr Speaker, what are we running away from? Paragraph 5 of the Business Statement is just a debate on the President's Address to the House, to thank him. Why are we rationing Members of Parliament, deciding on the number of people to

speak? What are we running away from? Debate? Is the Majority running away from the debate?

Mr Speaker, the Speaker of Parliament chairs the Committee of Selection. Committee of Selection only uses ratio in the apportioning of Members on Committees, and that is all. This is a Chamber for debate. For the Majority to go for a Business Committee meeting to propose this, is unfair. It is alien to the House. We have never seen this before and it must not be entertained.

Mr Speaker, I thank you.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker:
Thank you very much. Yes, Hon Ebenezer Okletey Terlarbi?

Mr Ebenezer Okletey Terlarbi:
Mr Speaker, I thank you.

Mr Speaker, I think that if we allow this to go, it will disadvantage the Majority seriously. Because it is not for nothing that our Standing Orders give equity to Members on Committees. Why? Yes, it is because of equity, so far as participation is concerned. What it means is that if we allot two hours for debate, it means that 183 or 187 Members would have one hour divided by 183 and then 88 divided by whatever number. But what are they talking about? It will be unfair. It seriously does not give equal opportunity.

As my other Colleagues said, others are looking at people who speak. They are assessing Members of Parliament based on the opportunity to talk. So, if the probability is higher on their Side, what is going to happen is that they will think that our people—it is for this reason that the former Minister for Information had the guts to go and say that Members from our Side are not speaking because—

Mr Speaker, that is the reason.

I think that for the sake of equity, we need to go by the proportion, so that everybody will have the opportunity to speak.

1.38 p.m.

Mr Kojo Oppong Nkrumah: Mr Speaker, I have two points to make: the first is on this proposal for proportionality and the second on something else which I believe should be programmed in the Business Statement for next week.

Mr Speaker, first is this question of proportionality. For the purposes of debate, that is why, next week, we have an opportunity for about four or five days to debate. What is a debate? It is to exchange contrasting views on what His Excellency the President has presented. Is there anybody on the Majority Side who is going to say he disagrees with the President? No. What is going to happen, Mr Speaker, is that, in this debate, the contrasting views that you would get would come from the Minority Side, and that is why the

convention has been, over the years, from the First, Second, Third, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, Seventh and Eighth Parliament, that when one person speaks on the Majority Side, ostensibly to repeat what the President has said, we would get a contrasting view from another person from this Side.

So, Mr Speaker, we should not fall for this temptation that we are now coming to do some proportional representation when it comes to the debate of the Message of the State of the Nation. The convention has always been that one person from the Majority Side and one from the Minority Side. To our Brother at the back who is labouring to answer the question on what formular should be used, the Standing Orders have prescribed the formular that should be used: Order 115(1).

It does not lie in the mouth of any Caucus to make a determination on numbers. Actually, the rules say that it is the Speaker who examines the Chamber and selects who should speak. The convention has been that one must catch the Speaker's eye, and the Speaker would select one from the Majority Side and one from the Minority Side.

Mr Speaker, we should not get into this new proposal that is being given us that we should now select two or three Members from one Side before we select—We will not hear any contrasting views if we go that way.

Secondly, Mr Speaker, looking at the Business Statement for the week ahead of us, one would imagine that any other matter that is a precursor to the Budget Statement and Economic Policy of Ghana should be executed next week before it is brought. There are about three policy documents that the Government bench has advertised to the whole country, which are relevant to the Budget Statement. Looking at the manifesto of the Government, I have a copy here, we have what they call the Economic Recovery Programme, Economic Transformation Agenda, and they have the 24-Hour Economy Policy. Mr Speaker, the Budget Statement that we are going to receive on the 11th March, 2025 is based on these documents, but none of these documents have been brought to this House.

In previous times, documents like the Ghana Beyond Aid Policy, *et cetera*, would be brought to this House. I think that what the Government bench should consider, including in this Business Statement, is bringing to this House the 24-Hour Economy Policy, the Economic Recovery Programme and the Economic Transformation Agenda, so that Parliament can have an opportunity to see it, make input into it and query it before the Budget Statement itself is brought. I want to urge on the Leader of Government Business that they should consider including this before the Budget Statement itself is brought.

I thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker:
Thank you very much.

Yes, Hon Edem Agbana?

Mr Eric Edem Agbana: Thank you, Mr Speaker for the opportunity.

Mr Speaker, Order 216 of our Standing Orders has, clearly, given the mandate to the Business Committee to determine the order in which Business is conducted in this House. Under the same Order 216(2), the time allotted for debate is also determined by the same Business Committee. Parliament is a House of representation; we are representing our individual constituencies. So, when it comes to deliberations in the House, it is important that time allotted and opportunities given reflect the manner of representation.

That is why the framers of the Constitution, in their own wisdom, decided that, in determining composition of Committees, which is critical to the performance of our duties as a legislative body, it is determined by representation in the House, and that is why the ratio is used. So, it is only proper that we have this determination done in such a way that because we have the Majority and the numbers are so huge that we are more than twice the number of the Minority, in the debate on the Message on the State of the Nation, we are given more slots than the Minority in debates and all other proceedings. So, Mr Speaker, we in the Majority stand firmly behind the Majority Leader in proposing that, in

the debate of the Message on the State of the Nation, the Majority be given more time or slots than the Minority.

Thank you.

Mr Alhassan Tampuli Sulemana:
Mr Speaker, I am grateful for the opportunity to contribute to this debate.

Mr Speaker, the Leader of this House, the distinguished Member of Parliament for Bawku Central, is a man who is well-versed in the Standing Orders of this House. But, Mr Speaker, when he spoke, ordinarily, he would have made reference to the part of the Standing Orders that gives the Business Committee the powers to allocate the number of people who would be contributing to the debate.

Mr Speaker, the Constitution of the Republic of Ghana and other extant laws of the Republic do not also give any such powers to a Committee like that. Mr Speaker, the closest we have is Order 216 which has been referenced by my good Friend, Mr Edem Agbana. Now, that Order is short of also making a pronouncement as to the number of people who would be debating on each Side of the House.

Mr Speaker, this is not the First Parliament of the Republic, this is the Ninth Parliament. I make specific reference to the Second Parliament of this Republic in 1996 where the NDC had 132, and the New Patriotic Party (NPP) had 66, and I believe there were two Independent Members; I stand corrected. Even under those

circumstances there were no such proportional representation as far as debates are concerned. So, it is very strange the President has delivered his Message on the State of the Nation on behalf of the Majority or Ghanaians generally, and that is a statement which they all believe and imbibe in. But we disagree, to some extent, on some of the things that the President said. So, we deserve every opportunity to impeach what the President has said, and we should be able to do so; we should be given enough room.

Indeed, Mr Speaker, ordinarily, the proportion should even favour the Minority than the Majority. This is not Committees or some international representation or trips abroad; this is a debate. It is not the number of people who debate but the quality of the debate. I challenge the Majority that we can debate them on any day. Even if they make it 10:1 ratio, we would beat them on the debate Floor.

Mr Speaker, in this hallowed Chamber, we are ready for the Majority, but we are not ready for them to trample upon our rights. We would debate with them as has been done previously, and we would do so equitably and in accordance with our Standing Orders and the Constitution of the Republic of Ghana.

I thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, Hon James Agalga?

Mr James Agalga: Mr Speaker, the argument made by our Colleagues

from the other Side suggests that when the Motion is moved, all those who rise and catch Mr Speaker's eye from the Majority Side of the House will necessarily speak in favour of the Motion.

Mr Speaker, this is an erroneous assumption. In fact, it is a presumption which is rebuttable. We are in a democracy—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Is it rebuttable under the Ghanaian circumstance?

Mr Agalga: The assumption is rebuttable.

1.48 p.m.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: If it is Europe or America, I can see that, but in Ghana's circumstance, is it rebuttable? Hon James Agalga, I am saying under Ghanaian circumstances, the way we see our discussion, is it rebuttable?

Mr James Agalga: Mr Speaker, without attempting to draw you into the debate, I can say you are a classic example of the rebuttal of that presumption. You came close to rebutting the presumption some time ago when you stood firm and bold in taking certain decisions. At the end of the day, Mr Speaker was hailed by all for being courageous.

Mr Speaker, we must encourage Members to hold dissenting views and express them regardless of which Side of the aisle you belong to. It should be possible for my good Friend, Hon Tampuli to speak in favour of the Motion which will be moved on Tuesday. In the same measure, it should be possible for my Leader, Mr Rockson-Nelson Dafeamekpor to speak against the Motion.

So, Mr Speaker, with the greatest respect, let us be guided by what the Standing Order says, and it is very clear. Standing Order 216 (2) says, and with your kind permission, let me read;

“Subject to Order 67, the Committee shall

(a) propose the business of each Sitting and the order in which the business is taken...”

That is all and it is clear. Now, the Business Committee has clearly determined the order upon which the debate on the Motion will be taken. The Committee's determination is that we go by the proportion of 68:32, and this is representative of the numbers in this House.

Mr Speaker, the fact that one Side won by an overwhelming Majority does not mean that our Majority status should work to our disadvantage. Which is why we are saying, let us adopt a proportion which reflects the numbers in the House, so that Members would have the opportunity to

participate in the debate, regardless of which Side of the House they belong to.

The fact that I belong to the Majority does not mean that I should be limited or restrained, because I was voted for by the overwhelming majority of the people, and I sit to the right hand of the Speaker.

So, Mr Speaker, let us do the right thing. Democracy is about majoritarian rule. The Majority must have every opportunity to participate effectively in this debate.

Mr Speaker, given the numbers on this Side of the House, if you limit us, you would be denying 184 constituencies equal opportunity to be heard. Why would 88 Members of the House have equal opportunity to speak? Equal opportunity—50-50? This would be unfair and inequitable.

So, Mr Speaker, I think we should go by what the Committee has determined and do justice.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker:
Very well. Hon Stephen Amoah?

Dr Stephen Amoah: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, I think the same Standing Orders—Order 216(2) (a).

Mr Speaker, with your permission, I read;

(a) propose the business of each Sitting and the order in which the business is taken, except that the House may determine which matters may properly be introduced in the House at any time;”

Mr Speaker, I think this extract is so clear without any ambiguity. Unless somebody wants to undermine the very law that has conferred on us the power that we want to abuse in this House.

It is so clear that the Business Committee will make their proposal and propositions but it is the House that will determine which matter should be actually dealt with and there is the adverb “properly” there. So, it does not lie within the jurisdiction of the Business Committee to impose on us anything which is unlawful.

Mr Speaker, I think we have come too far to accept any imposition of one party's interest. We are here—At least understand that the Constitution, the Standing Orders or Conventions are the very tools that actually guide us in this House. Looking at 2000 and 1996, we had different numbers in terms of ratios and we could not use that as a yardstick to make the decisions they want to make today. I am advising my brothers from the other Side that we want to live in peace. We want to adhere to the democratic principles that have brought us this far and that has earned Ghana the reputation we have on the continent of Africa.

If they think they want to abuse their number and by doing that impose on us their interest, we will not allow that. We will resist any form of imposition, intimidation, and threat that will undermine the very democracy and the Constitution that is leading us.

So, Mr Speaker, all that I am saying is that we will not sit down and allow anything that will be done—In law, it is said that *mala fide*, in bad faith. I think the good people of this country voted for us to position ourselves in a way that they will learn from us. The students were here, the media are here.

Now, because of their numbers—Are we practicing autocracy or democracy? Are we practicing military rule or we are practising democracy? Please, respectfully, we want to work together in harmony. We want to harmonise the interests of every Ghanaian. Equality, as the Constitution says, Article 17 must be respected. We cannot decide anyhow because we have power.

Mr Speaker, we cannot decide anyhow because we think we are yielding power that Ghanaians have given us to distort and destroy the beautiful democracy we have. Do not let anybody think that we would be intimidated because of our numbers. Do not let anybody think because we have these small numbers, they will behave in a way that we will succumb to their threat. We will not be controlled by cowardice.

Mr Speaker, I will end by saying this. The very Bible that we read, God has assured us and given us. God did not create us with the spirit of timidity nor fear, but that of boldness and courage. Do not be afraid, my people. Do not be dismayed. For the Lord, your God, is with you. And we will stand on the authority of God and the democracy and the Constitution, understanding others, and lead up to expectation.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you. Hon Members, please—If I continue to listen to almost everybody who speaks to it, it would be the same. Anybody who speaks from the right will speak to the same point, as well as my group from the left will also speak to the same point. So let me listen to Leadership and I will have my own conclusion on it.

Yes, Minority leader.

Minority Leader (Osahen Alexander Kwamena Afenyo-Markin): Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity. This morning, because I had some other engagement outside of the precincts of Parliament, the Chief Whip on our Side stood in for the caucus at the usual Business Committee meeting. He has fully briefed me on what transpired. Well, regrettably, the Majority Leader did not give me a heads up on the intention of the Majority on this very matter. But that is to be expected. We are in a political enterprise. Sometimes it is

normal to hide some of your cards. Though it is a surprise, it is normal to me. It is all right.

1.58 p.m.

Mr Speaker, let me make some few references, and I will leave the matter to our good conscience, to posterity, and for all to think through.

Mr Speaker, when I was a Majority Leader, at a point, close to elections and after elections, we were to take some decisions in this House. The then Minority resisted, and through their resistance, they referred me to the *Hansard* of 2016, after the election, where my predecessor, the respected Mr Osei Kyei-Mensah-Bonsu, had made some strong arguments about the transition, and the fact that since they had lost elections, certain decisions were to be placed on ice. And they were fortified by that, to say that Government Business could not continue.

I have listened to the forceful argument by Hon Edem Agbana. I have also heard my own Friend, the Hon James Agalga, talking about the majoritarian rule. Fortunately, everything said today, will be part of the *Hansard* of this House.

The practice, as I have known it to be, is that in this House, although we come here as Majority and Minority, when it comes to debates, there is equal share. Since 1997, when the first opposition party was in this House, we had 61, plus six smaller parties, making

the Minority 67, with the overwhelming Majority being the National Democratic Congress (NDC), with 133. The records would bear me out that the then Speaker, D.F. Annan of blessed memory, during all debates, would pick one from the right and pick one from the left.

The practice continued under Rt Hon Peter Ala Adjetey, and then eventually, under Rt Hon Speaker Aaron Mike Oquaye, where the New Patriotic Party (NPP), had overwhelming numbers in this House. The very first in the history of our politics; NPP had 169.

Mr Speaker, the practice did not change. With 169, the debate was still shared equally, and I do recall that even with Committee settings, some consensus was built with Committee sharing, and some concessions had to be made by the Majority to accommodate some more numbers for the Minority.

Mr Speaker, with regard to the delegation to sub-regional Parliaments and all, we all had some understanding on the way to go. Well, I am not going to challenge the Majority on this. I will not, because as Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o wrote in *Weep not child*:

“Weep not child, weep not my darling. With these kisses, let me remove your tears. The ravaging clouds shall not long be victorious. They shall not long possess their skies.”

If today, the Majority Side are of the view that in this debating Chamber, seven of them should be called while only three of the Minority Side are called because they have the rule, I will not debate or make us break shoulders over this matter. Because I know that as long as there is life, even if I am dead and gone, and this democracy that we have all established is in force, the NPP will someday come into power. Be it four years, eight years, 50 years, or 100 years, NPP will someday come and the records of this House will be the guiding rule.

So, Mr Speaker, I would strongly urge upon the Majority Leader that they be measured in some of these new precedents that they are introducing because we are watching; we are taking notes and a day may come that references will be made. I tasted that bitter pill when the Majority Side referred me to some of the actions of the then opposition leader in this House in 2016. They said that was the basis for them even preventing Supreme Court nominees from being considered on the floor of the House. They went to the extent that the then Minority Chief Whip, Hon Kwame Govers Agbodza, threatened that should I make an attempt to lay the Report, there will be chaos. We retreated; we listened to them, and we said it was all right. After all, in a democracy, one cannot get everything. So, we will let it go.

Mr Speaker, without more, I will take my seat and leave the matter to you.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker:
Thank you. Yes, Majority Leader?

Mr Ayariga: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

I have listened carefully to Colleagues in the Chamber and I think, in a sense, there has been an attempt to question the mandate of the Business Committee to engage in a determination that the time allotted for debates should be proportional to our numbers in the Chamber.

Mr Speaker, let us look at Order 216(2)(b) which says that:

“Subject to Order 67, the Committee shall recommend the time allotted for debate on Bills, Motions, Private Member’s Bills, Private Member’s Motions, and other business”.

Here, we are discussing a Motion to thank the President for coming to this House to deliver a Message on the State of the Nation. So, it is part of the mandate of the Business Committee to recommend the allotment of time.

Mr Speaker, let us break it down to what is in issue. What is in issue is that the Business Committee proposed that we have 10 slots per day, and the debate will last four days. So, in effect, Mr Speaker, we are looking at 40 slots in all, for the debate. All right? There would be 40 slots in all for the debate, and we have allotted the specific time that each speaker may speak. The allotment to Leadership, the allotment

to Chairs, and the allotment to ordinary Members.

Mr Speaker, according to what my Friends on the other Side are proposing, we should allot 20 slots, and the time allocated for those slots to their Side, and also, allot 20 slots, and the time allocated for those 20 slots to our Side

2.08 p.m.

Mr Speaker, what that means is that their Side, with 88 Members, will individually have a higher allocation of allotted time than this Side that has 188 Members. So, we are saying that it is inequitable to have 188 Members, who constitute 68 per cent of the House, to take 20 slots and then have 88 Members, who are 32 per cent of the House, also taking 20 slots. It is just inequitable.

Mr Speaker, what that means is that Members of that Side get more airtime and opportunity than Members on this Side. A Member indicated earlier that because of this, the public watching us often come to a conclusion that we, with 188 Members, are being overshadowed by those who are only 88. And that is because of the allocation of time. This is because if we give 88 Members 20 hours and give 188 Members 20 hours, definitely, the 88 Members with 20 hours will end up outshining the 188. So, it is only fair that we allot the time on the basis of our numbers in the Chamber. So, Mr Speaker, it is only equitable.

I have also heard Colleagues try to argue that Order 115 governs the allocation of time or the determination of who speaks. Mr Speaker, let us read Order 115, and with your indulgence, I read. It says that:

- (1) “Subject to the discretion of the Speaker and Order 169(3)(b), a Member who intends to speak shall rise in the Member's place and address the Chair while standing only and catching the eye of the Speaker.”

Mr Speaker, this has nothing to do with the allotment of time or the allotment of the number of speakers determined for each Side. It has always been the practice of this House that we agree on the number of speakers on both Sides. We always agree. This is not the first time. At all times, we agree that for instance, this Side gets 10 and the other Side five, or this Side gets five and the other Side five. So, to now say that the agreement should be varied equitably, then we are taking away the power of the Speaker to recognise somebody standing so that he can give the person an opportunity to contribute.

So, Mr Speaker, Order 115 has nothing to do with this decision. Indeed, this decision is wholly governed by Order 216 (2)(b). So, it is obvious.

Mr Speaker, let me conclude by saying that whatever it is, let us be fair. We have a lot of new Members on this Side, and we also have new Members

on that Side. When we restrict the allocations the way that they are proposing, what will happen invariably is that a Member on their Side gets two opportunities when a Member on this Side gets only one, and that is not fair.

Mr Speaker, let me get to the subject matter: a debate on the Message of the State of the Nation presented by the President. There are two sides: there is a side that will be seeking to disprove what the President has said, and there is a side that will be seeking to confirm what the President has said. Mr Speaker, let me indicate that we on this Side stand by our position that when it comes to Government Business and we are allotting time, let us allot it equitably. So that we have, based on our numbers, a greater allocation of time than their Side.

That is why during the Committee meeting, when we had our disagreements, we went according to the procedures spelt out in our Standing Orders and put it to a vote. Seven voted in favour of that proposed allocation of time and four on their Side decided not to participate in the vote, and asked that the record indicates that they protested and disagreed with the decision. But seven of us voted in favour of the position that we have 68 per cent of the time and they have 32 per cent of the time, reflecting the different sizes of the parties in this Chamber.

Mr Speaker, like you said, it is not the amount of time; it is the quality of

the debate. If they believe that it is the quality of the debate, then why are they worried about how much time we are taking? We are worried about time, and they say they are more interested in the quality; so, within their short time frame, they should make sure that their debate is highly qualitative and leave us to decide what we do with our time.

So, Mr Speaker, that was the position that was taken, but I forgot to add one thing because those who wrote the Report omitted it, and Members of the Committee will confirm that. We also decided at the Committee meeting that, next week Wednesday, we will invite the Governor of the Bank of Ghana (BoG) as an independent constitutional body to come to this House to brief us on the pricing of the new BoG head office building. How the price variations took place, what the quantities were, and the justification for the construction of the new BoG headquarters.

So, this has been programmed for next week, that this House is inviting the Governor of BoG to brief us on the pricing of the BoG head office building. I urge Members to show up on Wednesday, so that we will hear from the Governor on the pricing of the Bank of Ghana head office.

I also take on board the proposal that we should consider having the relevant sector Ministers to present policy proposals on major policies that this Government has pronounced. I think that it would be a good idea for the relevant sector Ministers to come

and present the policy documents to us, but the issue is timing. Whether it should be before the Budget Statement or after, I will convey the message to them.

It is a good proposal; I will convey the message to them and see whether they are prepared to come before us with those policy documents before the Minister for Finance appears, or if they will incorporate it in the Budget Statement, so that the Minister for Finance will make those policy pronouncements and then proceed to present a budget reallocation to implement those policies.

The invitation of the Governor is on Wednesday, and it will be at the sitting of the Committee of the Whole. It has been provided for in the draft document that we had, but when they went to print the final document, I did not see it.

Mr Speaker, I think those are the issues, and that is how we have programmed next week. I urge the House to adopt the programme for next week as presented by the Chairman of the Business Committee.

I thank you.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members—

Alhaji Habib Iddrisu: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, I want to invite you to Article 104(1) of the Constitution, and with your permission, I read:

“Except as otherwise provided in this Constitution, matters in Parliament shall be determined by the votes of majority of members present and voting, with at least half of members of Parliament present.”

2.18 p.m.

Mr Speaker, on page 2 of the Business On page 2 of the Business Statement, the concluding part, it reads that:

“The Minority, however, gave the indication that they were not part of the decision, and accordingly do not recognise the vote. The Committee accordingly submit the matter for the consideration of the House”.

The consideration of the House implies we need a decision quorum, which is 138 Members. Mr Speaker, we cannot take that decision at the moment, we do not have 138 Members in this Chamber, and we cannot take a decision because the Committee recommend for the House to adopt it. And I invite you that, we can approve the Business Statement and stand down this very matter, because it is for the consideration of the House, and in Article 104, we do not have 138 Members present to take that decision.

Mr Speaker, I so invite you.

Thank you.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Very well, Hon Members, I think this issue—Yes, let me hear you.

Mr Dafeamekpor: Mr Speaker, I have listened to the Hon First Deputy Minority Whip. He has read the Constitution to you. He has not conveyed anything other than that to you. The invitation has not been done. He has not told this House how many we are; he has not. I have counted. He has not told the House how many we are. If we are not 138, how many are we? — *[Interruption]*—

Mr Speaker, it is inaccurate for him to suggest to you and to the House that we are not 138. For we are, and we are more than 138. So, he cannot merely and whimsically say that we are less than 138, and that is it. He has not backed it with any evidence, that is, having done the head count personally as a Whip and showed the evidence, and we are more than 138.

Mr Speaker, I will invite you to disregard his submissions as if same was never done at all and put the question, so we can deal with this matter.

Mr Speaker, I thank you.

Alhaji Habib Iddrisu: Mr Speaker, in raising the constitutional matter, I made it clear that we are not 138. When I invited you to the constitutional provisions, I told you that we are not 138. On this Side, they are 40; on the other Side, they are 28, and on the left Side, they are 17. We are

less than 100. We are not 138. So, I invite Mr Speaker to stand on the matter because we do not have a decision-making quorum to continue with that matter. We can approve other parts of the Business Statement, but that matter that the Committee invited the House for its consideration, on that particular matter— The Committee invited us, and we are not 138, and based on Article 104, we cannot continue. I invite Mr Speaker to do the right thing. As a lawyer as you are, you should do the right thing and respect the Constitution and the provisions in Article 104.

Mr Speaker, I so invite you, thank you.

Mr Ayariga: Mr Speaker, I was at the Business Committee meeting. What happened at the Committee meeting was that when the matter came up, we argued and argued, the same way that we are arguing in the Chamber, and there was no consensus. So I referred them to the appropriate Order, Order 284(2) and said if we cannot come to a consensus which is what the rules says, that we should decide by consensus—If we cannot come to a consensus, then we will have to put it to a vote, and the Chairman, Mr Ricketts-Hagan—I was there. I am the Chairman, but I was not chairing; he was chairing. He put it to a vote—a voice vote first. Then there was some disagreement, so we decided to do head count, but they said they did not want their heads to be counted. So I even encouraged them to cover their heads

so that we will count the other available heads.

Mr Speaker, on a lighter note, we joked about it, so we counted and the Majority Side were seven, and then they said they wanted it recorded that they protested. To say they wanted something recorded, that they are protesting against it, that they do not recognise it, does not mean that a vote was not taken. It also does not mean that they did not lose the vote because the rules are clear that we put the matter to a vote; they either win, lose or abstain. They did not want to abstain and also did not want their heads to be counted. So how are we to go about it? So we said they should count those who are voting for it; they counted and seven voted for, and they were four, so we assumed that naturally, the four were either abstaining or voting against.

So the matter could not have been referred to this House to take a decision. No matter what the Secretary wrote there—Because of this same matter, we said the Secretary should tell us exactly what our conclusions were at the meeting because we did not want a situation where we would get to the Chamber and there would be a dispute as to what had actually happened. So the Secretary then indicated to us in their presence the conclusion that there was a vote and the vote was seven in favour of, and we did not know whether the four were abstaining or they were voting against, but they wanted to record that they

were against the position that we had taken, and that was it. There was no decision there that the matter was being referred to the House to decide.

Mr Speaker, that provision is hereby amended because there was no decision, and there are Members who were there. If they are in this room—Unfortunately, in order to raise the question of quorum, I noticed people walking out in rows and so those who are members are no longer in the Chamber to confirm exactly what happened, but that was what happened at the Committee meeting. So the matter was referred to this House to take a decision, so it is amended, and if there is a dispute, the Clerk should be invited here to come and confirm whether what I am saying is true or not. That was exactly what happened. No referral was made to this House.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Very well. Hon Members, I think we have spent time on this—

Mr Ayariga: Mr Speaker, the same way that the Bank of Ghana component of our conclusions was also omitted. If we read what you have, the decision to invite the Bank of Ghana here on Wednesday was also omitted, and yet if we ask them, they will tell us that they took that decision. So that was why I had to subsequently amend the Report to incorporate that. So I hereby amend the Report to also delete any indication that the matter was referred to this House to take a decision. [*Hear! Hear!*]

2.28 p.m.

Osahen Alexander Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, my suggestion to you is that this very matter be referred to the Rt Hon Speaker for further discussion with Leadership because it is going to set certain new precedent, and you are a Member of this House and a Second Deputy Speaker. I suggest that we go and discuss this matter with the Rt Hon Speaker and then we can make progress. If he, as the head of this Assembly, finally exercises the discretion that whatever is being said by the Majority should be the new practice, then we have it on record, and then we are guided accordingly for tomorrow.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much.

I think we have had a lot of discussion. Personally, I think I have had this discussion with the Speaker. I think the Majority Leader was there when this issue was raised. According to him, he wanted us to go by the status quo that one Member be taken from each Side. I was there when this decision—

Mr Ayariga — rose —

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Majority Leader, let me finish. I would give you the opportunity to speak.

When this issue was raised, to the effect that the Majority will be short-changed and they would not get

enough—Hon Members, please, allow me to speak— They will be short-changed and not get enough space to also air their views since their constituents would like to hear them.

The Speaker insisted that there are so many means through which a Member can be heard. There are so many means through which a Member who is desirous to be heard that he or she is, indeed, working in the Chamber, be heard. It can be done through Questions, as this morning, I was in a way trying to invite Members from the Majority to ask Questions. They can come through Statements and Motions, and all these are ways that Members who are desirous to be industrious in the Chamber can do so. When it comes to contributions and debates, normally, the practice of the House and by extension, to other—Order! Order!

Hon Members, I would not change what I have said. I would like to go by the status quo, but the Business Committee has taken a decision. I think what the Minority Leader said is to refer this to the Speaker again, and I think it is in order—

Hon Members, Order! Order! Please, allow me to finish. Hon Members, I think allowing anybody to speak on the Floor rests with the Speaker, per Standing Order 115—*[Hear! Hear!]*—So, whether the Speaker, my Brother, or I, would be in the Chair, we would be guided by it. I think as to whether we would allow Members here to speak more or less, it would depend on the Speaker. So,

please, I do not think we need to split hairs over this.

I have heard the Majority on an equitable point of view, and I share with you. But the standard and the practice of the House is that one Member from each Side speaks—That is why, in the Second Parliament, where there were 166 Members against 134 Members, that issue was not raised. That is why in the Seventh Parliament, with 169 Members against—That was not raised. Let us maintain it—**[Some Hon Members of the Majority: No!]**—Hon Members, whatever it is, the Business Statement that has been discussed is, hereby, adopted—*[Hear! Hear!]*

Mr Ayariga: Mr Speaker—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: I have adopted your Business Statement. It is all right.

Hon Members, I said the Business Statement has been adopted. I was just speaking for the way—

Yes, Majority Leader—

Mr Ayariga: Mr Speaker, for the avoidance of doubt, the media is covering; the Business Statement is what has been adopted. The Business Statement says that the allocation of time for the debate on the Message on the State of the Nation's Motion shall be 63 per cent here, and 32 per cent there—*[Interruption]*—That is what it says.

Alhaji Habib Iddrisu: Mr Speaker, we are guided by you in this House. I do not want to say what the Minority Leader said.

Mr Second Speaker: Hon Members, let us close the chapter on this discussion.

Alhaji Habib Iddrisu: Mr Speaker, you heard the Majority Leader, and what I am simply trying to put across is that you have guided. You said the Speaker, and “the Speaker” here means the Leader of the institution of Parliament—You said that the Speaker said one Member on each Side is the way to go, and that is what stands. Whatever is contained in here, was not what the Speaker said. In Order 115, choosing a Member to speak lies with the Speaker. So, the assertion of the Majority Leader on time allocation of 68 to 32 is not approved. The Speaker says one Member each from both Sides, so it is not approved.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, the presentation by the Majority Leader was to the effect that whatever decision was taken at the Business Committee, was not to be brought to the Chamber for us to take a decision on. It has been presented; Members have raised issues, and I have also raised my own issues. Whatever it is, the Business Statement ought to be adopted. So, we have adopted it with all, — But like I said, if I am presiding or the First Deputy Speaker is, per our Standing Orders, Order 115, the person must catch the eye of Mr Speaker.

Of course, I also encourage Leadership—Because this has a far-reaching consequence. Therefore, I encourage Leadership to meet and take decisions on this. Even after the discussion of the Message on the State of the Nation by the President, I think we need to holistically take a decision on this. So, that is my discussion.

Mr Ayariga: Mr Speaker, I beg you. We speak not just to ourselves in this Chamber, but we speak to a nation. There is a whole country and the whole world watching us— *[Interruption]*—Bawku is in the world.

Mr Speaker, what happened today is that we brought the Report of the Business Committee to be adopted. One of the items in the Report is how we allot time for the debate on the Motion on the Message on the State of the Nation next week, and we have specific recommendations.

2.38 p.m.

It was disputed at the Committee meeting, but we voted on it, so it is part of the Report. It has been disputed here; comments have been made *et cetera*. Mr Speaker, you have expressed your reservations, but in the end, you put the question to us to vote and adopt it, so we have voted and adopted the Report.

So, the Report as adopted, my understanding—Mr Speaker, it is important because the journalists are going to report it in the news today. My understanding is that the decision of

the House is that, 68 per cent of the time is allocated to the Majority and 32 per cent of the time allocated to the Minority. That is the decision of the House. I want the media to convey this because this is the decision.

Mr Speaker has made some comments and his comments are that, in his opinion, the allocation of time is governed by Order 115. That is what I heard the Speaker say – to catch the Speaker's eye. But Mr Speaker, you know that when we are debating the Budget Statement and the Message on the State of the Nation, it is not the person who rises that catches your eye. We normally write down the names on a piece of paper and give it to you and then you call them according to the names that we have given you and the times agreed. So, it is not a question of who catches your eye. It is how many and who the Majority Side has given you, and how many and who the Minority Side has given you that you call. That is what would govern the debate next week.

So next week, we will give you 68 per cent of the names and they will give you 32 per cent of the names and that is what you will call.

Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.
[Uproar]

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Majority Leader, can you educate me regarding the names? Because all these are more or less conventions we have adopted. So specifically, if you are talking of handing over names to the Speaker, can you educate me on that? I

thought it is a convention that we have all adopted. So, if you want to help me, then help me well so that I know per which Orders the Leadership can hand names to the Speaker.

Mr Ayariga: Mr Speaker, I have been in this Chamber for close to two decades. You always agree on the numbers for each Side and based on that agreement, the Sides will give you the names of the Members.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes.

Mr Ayariga: Is that the case? So, we are agreeing on the numbers. Mr Speaker, because there was no consensus, we voted and used our numbers. So, we have concluded that the Minority is taking 32 per cent of the numbers and we are taking 68 per cent of the numbers. Mr Speaker, this is straightforward. I do not see why we are debating this. This has been concluded by the Committee. You have put the question on the Report and it has been adopted.

The only issue I have is that, Mr Speaker, after the House has taken a decision, you are running commentary that appears to undermine the decision of the House, and that confuses the public. That is why I want clarity and keep repeating myself that this, so far as I am concerned, is the decision of the House. The House has adopted the Report.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Leader, thank you. Let us bring this to a close. I do not want to talk about it. I

said probably Leadership will have to take – because it has a far-reaching consequence. Leadership, any indication?

Mr Dafeamekpor: Mr Speaker, considering that we have just adopted a Business Statement and the Questions slotted for today have all been taken, we are in your hands. It is past 2 o'clock, so we are ready to be adjourned. In any case, we have orientation starting tonight. I thank you—Orientation in Ho. Mr Speaker, we want to urge our Colleagues to join us for the orientation. It is important—*[Uproar]*—The orientation will cure some of these matters that they are debating. So, we encourage them to join us in Ho at 6 p.m. tonight.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Majority Leader, will you move the Motion?

Mr Dafeamekpor: Mr Speaker, I move that the House be adjourned.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Leader, in seconding, say whatever you want to say.

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: Mr Speaker, I will not second the Motion now. I just want to make a comment.

The Majority Chief Whip earlier made a call to us that we should join in the retreat. Let the record reflect now and in the future that we are always for a workshop to build our capacity and we have never turned down any

invitation to such gathering. However, at the Business Committee meeting, I made it abundantly clear the position of the Minority. We said that as far as this recent decision is at variance with custom and practices and what we are used to—There has never been a time that Parliament goes out for a retreat and the Leadership is not consulted or involved in the planning in terms of the choice of venue and resource persons to make presentations to us. This was not done.

So, our position is a very principled position. We are saying that the Clerk-to-Parliament and the management should consult Leadership; that has been the practice. So, until that consultation is done, we cannot be part of this weekend's retreat, and let nobody take it with malice. It is a very principled position, and that should be respected.

Mr Speaker, besides the point, we had also said that—And it is important our Colleagues stay consistent with your earlier argument; we all want to reduce cost. So, the last time, the argument was strongly made that let us reduce cost by having the engagement here. What has changed? They are already saying that the economy is not strong. So, simply put, we want to reduce cost. Mr Speaker, to that end, let the retreat—With respect to my Leader, the principled position is that we want to reduce cost, and the Chamber is spacious enough to contain all of us. So, let us hold a retreat here just as it was done the other time. So, let the record reflect same. It is the

reason we are not partaking in this weekend's retreat.

Cost is so important. That is it. But, Mr Speaker, we had agreed that Colleagues—The Hon Richard Acheampong was here. Leader, sit down. Well, I do not know. Well, he can come under Order 122; I have no problem. Is he advising the Leader?

Mr Speaker, the Hon Richard Acheampong was here, and we agreed that we will take Statements from both Sides. So, I asked him whether they had a Statement on their Side and he answered in the affirmative that there are two Statements on the Majority Side and we also have some Statements. Mr Speaker, we will leave the decision to you to decide the number of Statements to be admitted. So, we can take one on each Side then we will call it a day —*[Interruption]*— Yes, we have.

Quorum is determined by the mood of the House.

2.48 p.m.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, Leader?

Deputy Majority Leader (Mr George Kweku Ricketts-Hagan): Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I understand what my Hon Brother is trying to say. Ideally, one would expect that the Clerk to Parliament would have engaged the Minority Side, but I think there is something quite unique this time around because we

ourselves were also not invited to anything. But then, of course, we like Ho, so we are going to Ho — *[Laughter]*.

I mean, it is an issue which the Majority Side must resolve with the Clerk to Parliament. It should not happen that way, but I will encourage the Minority Side to come to Ho. We will be there and we will be waiting for the Minority Side. Hopefully, they will show up. The dance that the Minority Leader was requesting at the Appointments Committee is danced in Ho, so he can come to Ho.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: I am assuming, without admitting that our Colleagues are not taking a cue from what His Excellency the President has done. Even the celebration of Independence Day is to be done at the Jubilee House for a very good reason. It is to reduce costs. The Minority Side is here; they want to increase costs. They need to take a cue from His Excellency the President.

For the reason of reducing costs, we are not going to Ho. We will have it here and that is the decision; come and join us. *[Laughter]*

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, Leader?

Mr Ayariga: Mr Speaker, the Minority Chief Whip is insisting that for the reason of reducing costs, we

will have it here. Assuming we want to have it now, they should show me their Members. *[Laughter]* Where are the Members from the Minority Side? Where are they for the purposes of the orientation? All right, we will have the orientation now. They are not here. This is the reason the Clerk to Parliament would like to move the location, because it is often difficult to get the Members of Parliament (MPs). It is difficult.

So, if MPs are moved to different locations where it is difficult for them to stay away, then we can have their attention for the purposes of the orientation. That was the reason we often moved out of the building. Mr Speaker, I do not even think that we have a facility that can take all of us at once. I do not think so. Unless we decide to have it in this Chamber. That is the only other option.

Mr Speaker, I think this is a matter for the Clerk to Parliament. I mean, we as Leadership of the House can engage with the Clerk to Parliament for the future but I think with this one, plans are far advanced and I urge our Colleagues to avail themselves for the opportunity to have this orientation programme.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker:
Thank you very much.

So, Hon Members, the Motion has been moved. I hope you seconded?

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: Mr Speaker, I did not. What I suggested was — we have one Statement here and one there. Mr Speaker, I will second the Motion, but just to put the Majority on notice that His Excellency the President has come to present the Message on the State of the Nation to us, and the Majority Chief Whip has not done what he has to do. All those matters are still at large. Mr Speaker, I want to put my Majority Chief Whip on notice. When we were on the other Side, housekeeping matters were taken seriously. So, I plead with my Majority Chief Whip, he should not take these matters lightly. I am pleading with him. On that note, I second the Motion.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, let me thank you for your cooperation. It is all part of parliamentary practice.

I would go ahead to adjourn the House to Tuesday, 4th March, 2025. The House stands adjourned.

Question put and Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

The House was accordingly adjourned at 2.55p.m. till Tuesday, 4th March, 2025 at 10.00 a.m.

