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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

OFFICIAL REPORT

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THE
PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC
OF GHANA

FIRST MEETING, 2025

Friday, 7th February, 2025

The House met at 11.45 a.m.

[MR FIRST DEPUTY SPEAKER
IN THE CHAIR]

[PRAYERS]

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Yes,
Hon First Deputy Minority Whip?

First Deputy Minority Whip (Alhaji Habib Iddrisu): Mr Speaker, good morning. I have not actually seen you in a smock before and you look so handsome in it. However, I would want to draw your attention to Article 102 of the Constitution and fortified by Standing Order 64(1) on the issue of quorum. Mr Speaker, with your permission, Article 102 reads:

“A quorum of Parliament, apart from the person presiding, shall be one-third of all the members of Parliament”.

Mr Speaker, there are 16 Members on the Majority Side and

we are 18 here, so we are less than 35, and one-third of 275 Members of Parliament should be over 90.

Mr Speaker, as a lawyer that I respect so much, who has spent 22 years and more at the Bar, I invite you to respect Article 102 of the 1992 Constitution.

Mr Speaker, I respectfully submit.

[Pause]

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Yes,
Majority Chief Whip?

Majority Chief Whip (Mr Rockson-Nelson Etse Kwami Dafeamekpor): Mr Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to react to the important matter raised by the First Deputy Minority Whip.

Mr Speaker, it is a constitutional imperative, and I can see from the numbers that, indeed, we do not meet the threshold for commencement and I cannot litigate this matter. But my Brother knows that today is Friday and he also knows that, as we speak, there are two Committees meeting. The Ad Hoc Committee is meeting. In fact, they are using my conference room,

so we would defer to you. As I speak, the bell has been rung, and I am sure that—

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, my attention has been drawn to the absence of quorum, and I intend to rely on Order 64. I hereby direct the Clerks-at-the-Table to ring the bell for ten minutes and after 10 minutes, we would come back to the issue of quorum.

Hon Members, with all due respect, can we take the Business Statement?

Alhaji Habib Iddrisu: Mr Speaker, even though I am guided by Order 64 as you said, but we do not have the quorum for the commencement of Business. I do not see why we should start with the Business Statement when we do not even have a quorum to commence Business. It is not a quorum-taking decision where we could say that we would go through the constitutional provisions or the Standing Orders, but this is to start the business. So, if we are going to take the Business Statement, without having a quorum to start with, I think that it is not right.

Mr Speaker, as a lawyer that I respect so much, I want you to look at Order 102 very well and apply where necessary.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Member, at the Commencement of Public Business, we will take the item numbered 8. Hon First Deputy Minority Whip, are you with me? Turn to your Order Paper for today.

At the Commencement of Public Business, we will take the item numbered 8—Presentation of Papers, then it continues. These are items before the commencement of the main Business of the House.
[Pause]

Hon Members, the Business Statement.

Mr Dafeamekpor: Mr Speaker, we are entirely in your hands. We are ready with the Business Statement.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Please, present the Business Statement.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Member of the Business Committee/ Majority Chief Whip (Mr Rockson-Nelson Etse Kwami Dafeamekpor) *on behalf of the Chairman of the Business Committee:* Mr Speaker, the Business Committee met yesterday, Thursday, 6th February, 2025, and

arranged Business of the House for the Fifth Week ending Friday, 14th February, 2025.

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—

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Majority Chief Whip, I am varying the order of Business to take the Business Statement before the Correction of *Votes and Proceedings* and *Official Report*.

Minority Chief Whip (Mr Frank Annoh-Dompreh): Mr Speaker, we are in your hands; however, in this House, the Business Statement is supposed to be presented by the Majority Leader and the Chair of the Business Committee. I do not have anything against my Colleague, but he needs to make an application to you; he has not done that, so let him do it. Mr Speaker, he must show respect to you.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Yes, Hon Member, I agree perfectly with you; so, for the record, Hon Majority Chief Whip?

Mr Dafeamekpor: Mr Speaker, the direction for the Business Statement to be taken came from the Chair. Also, any Member of the Business Committee can present the Business Statement.

So, Mr Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity. May I continue.

Statements

Mr Speaker, pursuant to Order 91(2) of the Standing Orders of Parliament, 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.

Mr Speaker, the Business Committee is still urging the Committee of Selection to expedite work on the composition of the various Committees of the House and submit its Report on same to the House as soon as possible.

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, as you may recall, the Hon Second Deputy Speaker, consequent to a Statement made by the Hon Member for Suhum, Mr Frank Asiedu Bekoe, on Tuesday, 21st January, 2025, directed the Ghana Health Service to apprise the House on the preparatory steps being taken by the Service in response to the outbreak and spread of the Human Metapneumovirus (HMPV).

The Business Committee has, therefore, programmed the Minister for Health to appear before the House on Wednesday, 12th February, 2025, to brief the House on the matter.

Hon Members are, therefore, to take note and avail themselves for the briefing.

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, 11th February, 2025

Roll Call

National Pledge

Statements

Presentation of Papers

Motions

Committee Sittings

Wednesday, 12th February, 2025

Roll Call

Statements

Presentation of Papers

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

Motions

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

Thursday, 13th February, 2025

Roll Call

Statements

Presentation of Papers

Motions

Committee Sitings

Friday, 14th February, 2025

Roll Call

Statements

Presentation of Papers

Motions

Committee Sitings

Mr Speaker, in conclusion, we may also receive further communication

from His Excellency, the President of the Republic of Ghana.

Respectfully submitted.

11.55 p.m.

Mr Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity.

Mr First Deputy Speaker:
Thank you very much.

Hon Members the Business Statement has been presented; I would now take comments from Members.

Alhaji Habib Iddrisu —rose—

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Deputy Minority Whip, do you want to make comments on the Business Statement?

Alhaji Habib Iddrisu: Mr Speaker, I would make comments on that, but, as Mr Speaker, you need to guide us. Like my Chief Whip rightly said, even though the Majority Chief Whip is new in Leadership, he needs to understand that if he wants to read the Business Statement, he needs to make an application because he is not the Chairman of the Business Committee.

Mr Speaker, to also guide us, from the practice of this House, if after Prayers, we would not take the other items such as the items listed 2 and 3 on the Order Paper, and we are varying the order of Business and moving to the item numbered 5, you should inform the House that we are varying the order of Business.

If the indication is from the Majority Side, then there must be an application to vary the order of Business and there must be a reason for such. But the Majority Chief Whip cannot just stand and start reading the Business Statement when the next items on the Order Paper are Roll Call, Message from the President, and in that order.

Mr Speaker, you could guide us by telling us that you are varying the order of Business, but that has not been done and it is bad for our parliamentary practice.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much; your point is well noted.

Alhaji Habib Iddrisu: Mr Speaker, the 10 minutes you gave is up now, and I am drawing your attention to it, as I have raised Article 102 of the 1992 Constitution.

Mr Dafeamekpor —*rose*—

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Any comments on the Business Statement?

Hon Majority Chief Whip, you have presented the Business Statement and I want to take comments on it.

Yes, Hon Minority Chief Whip?

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: Mr Speaker, I have seen that my good Friend presented a Statement. I found a number of issues conspicuously missing; he may want to apprise the House. They are two matters.

The first one had to do with the programming of the Ghana Health Service (GHS), which I see has been rightly captured. The second one was a Statement which was presented on renewable energy, its usage and adaptation. Apparently, the Second Deputy Speaker gave a consequential directive on the two subject matters.

When we met the last time, the Majority Leader had said that he rather prefers that because we have a Minister for Energy and Green

Transitions, we should rather programme him to apprise us instead of the Energy Commission, which was a directive of the Second Deputy Speaker. I cannot find it there even though I concede that they have programmed the Ghana Health Service, but that of the Minister for Energy and Green Transitions is not there; my Colleague could take notice and do the needful.

Mr Speaker, secondly, we are aware that our Side has filed a number of Questions. I know the Orders say admissibility is in the bosom of the Speaker; yes, these Questions have been admitted. I have letters, which I have been copied, that these Questions have been admitted. I cannot find the Questions advertised on the Business Statement; I do not know what the issues are and what the programme is. Can my good Friend tell us why the Questions are missing?

Again, my good Friend knows I have been raising this matter about the Committees. The composition of the Committees is overly delayed. We on the Minority Side are done. The reason they cited—Now, we cannot be at the beck and call of the Executive. It cannot be the case that

the Executive has not brought the full complement of Members of Parliament who would constitute Ministers and, therefore, the delay.

I think the Hon Majority Chief Whip can do better. The last time he showed us two big files. Where are the files? I had called that we do not go beyond today. Clearly, he is still dragging his feet. We cannot go beyond Tuesday. By Tuesday, he should submit their list to the Clerk to the Committee of Selection and the Report must be generated for a Motion to be moved. We cannot be at the beck and call of the Executive—[Uproar]—Everybody, even on the Minority Side, is eager to know the Committee they belong to. The delay is unacceptable.

Mr Speaker, I do not want to further belabour this matter. I know the work ethics of my Colleague. Mr Dafeamekpor is thorough and when he wants to work, he really works. Let us not further delay this matter and leave it hanging. These are the issues I have raised. For the benefit of doubt, do not miss any of them.

I spoke about the Minister for Energy and Green Transitions speaking to the renewable energy matter, then I spoke about the Committee, then the third one—

Which one is the third one? Did the Majority Chief Whip take note? Please, respond to them.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Minority Chief Whip—Alhaji Habib Iddrisu, I am on the floor. Hon Minority Chief Whip, if you look at the Order Paper, the item numbered 8 is the “Report of Leadership on the Formula for the Composition of Parliamentary Delegations and other Parliamentary Groups and Associations”. Then the 8(b) is the “Second Report of the Committee of Selection on the Composition of other Standing and Select Committees”. So, it is a Business programme for today; let us see the way it goes.

Secondly, Questions admitted were just transmitted to the Ministries, so the Ministers would appear before the House and appropriately provide Answers to them, and you know some of the Ministers are even yet to be sworn in—

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: I do not know if this is the case; my Colleague is capable of handling the Questions, so, with respect, would you kindly allow him to come to the

dispatch box and answer the questions?

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Well, I would give him the opportunity, but these are matters that you assisted with the knowledge of, so I am surprised you assisted with knowledge of these matters and the Hon Minority Chief Whip is still raising them. I would now give the floor to the presenter—All right, you can ask your questions, and then he would compound them and respond.

Alhaji Habib Iddrisu: Mr Speaker, I want to find out from the Majority Chief Whip when the President would deliver the Message on the State of the Nation Address and when the Budget would come.

Mr Speaker, just to add to what my Chief Whip said, at the moment, the President has appointed 56 Ministers and Deputy Ministers; there are four left. The only hope of their Colleagues left are the composition of the Committees. So, if they continue to delay the composition of Committees, it means they would be hopeless because they have missed out on ministerial and deputy ministerial positions. So, if they continue to

delay the composition of the Committees, it would be a problem. So far, only 40 MPs out of their 183 have been appointed Ministers and Deputy Ministers. The 140 Members left are hopeless and their only hope—Like my Sister seated over there, she is on the Committees. So, please, Majority Chief Whip, let us finish the composition Committees. We have already submitted ours, and even the sitting arrangement is not yet done.

Mr Speaker, I have reached out to him that we should be able to finish it; his Colleagues are seated anyhow; his seniors come and they are seated at the back. He should be able to do this job; it should be something he should be able to finish.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

12.05 p.m.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Majority Chief Whip?

Mr Dafeamekpor: Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity.

Mr Speaker, I have listened to the concerns raised by Hon Members in respect of the Business

Statements, so let me respond to the issues raised one after the other.

Mr Speaker, in respect of the briefing to be given to the House by the Ghana Health Service (GHS), that has been duly slated for next week, specifically on Wednesday. So, when they are ready, we can take them on Wednesday.

Mr Speaker, in respect of the other briefing from the Ministry of Energy and Green Transition, the Committee—May I have the attention of the Hon Minority Chief Whip; he raised these matters. The Committee decided that we should allow the Ghana Health Service to brief the House next week; then, the week after that, we would bring the Minister for Energy and Green Transition and his agencies to also brief the House on the matter on energy. That was the decision, and that is why they do not see the briefing from the Minister for Energy and Green Transition on clean energy for next week. We have only slated the briefing from the Ministry of Health and the Ghana Health Service for next week.

In respect of the Questions, the Office of the Speaker related—I had a copy of the remittal letters

yesterday, and I am sure that the Hon Member also had his copies. So, the Questions have been remitted to the respective Ministers. Given the context, we know the Ministers have just taken office. As a Committee, we would want to give them, at least, one week to settle and respond to the Questions, so, that after next week, we can slate them to come and respond to the Questions. The Questions have been respectfully admitted and remitted to the various ministries, so that is in respect of Questions.

Now, the Committees—You and I know how this work is, but we would get it done, and I am sure it would be by Monday. Like Mr Speaker drew your attention to, it is slated on the Order Paper for today, but, clearly, we may not be able to take it. So, it is a matter that is already before us.

Mr Habib Iddrisu raised two issues: when the Message on the State of the Nation would be delivered by His Excellency the President and when the Budget would be read. The indication I have is that, tentatively, the Message on the State of the Nation would be delivered a week before the Budget. However, the tentative period for the delivery of the Budget, as given

by the Hon Minister for Finance, is that he is expected in this House between the 3rd and 5th March, 2025. So, depending on when he is able to fix the date, the Message on the State of the Nation will be a week before then. So, the Message on the State of the Nation would be delivered “dolly dolly” and the Budget would follow.

Mr Speaker, humbly, these are the responses I have in respect of the issues arising from the Business Statement for now.

Thank you very much.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Minority Chief Whip?

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: Mr Speaker, with respect—And I say this with good context and intendment; yesterday, Mr Dafeamekpor was here when our Colleague, Dr Sebastian Ngmenenso Sandaare, raised a matter on meningitis and 14 lives, we are told, as reported by his Statement, were lost. Because the Ghana Health Service has been programmed to appear before us, does it find favour with Mr Speaker that, within the limitation of time, we inform the Ghana Health Service since it is a matter that concerns

lives being lost? This is so that we add it as a subject matter to the Ghana Health Service, so that when they come, as the saying goes, they kill two birds with one stone. I think we should look at that.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, conveniently, we can add the issue to it, so that they can come and wholistically address both.

Minority Leader (Osahen Alexander Kwamena Afenyo-Markin): Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity.

Mr Speaker, I was at the Business Committee meeting, and these issues were raised and discussed. But, in the national interest, there are some important matters that I would want to raise for the consideration of this House since the Hon Minority Chief Whip is taking charge of today's matters for him to ferry same to Government.

Mr Speaker, firstly, we expect that the Hon Minister for Finance would come to this House next week to brief us on this issue of a nominee of His Excellency the President going to the Central Bank and parading himself as a Governor. In the letter nominating, Mr President

said that it is subject to the consultation process required of the yet-to-be constituted Council of State. This is a constitutional *bona fide* which nobody in the Republic can do away with. So, we want the Hon Minister for Finance to brief this House on how the matter is being managed. In fact, the Minority, as responsible as it, has written to Mr President. We have not received a response yet, but we believe strongly that the Minister for Finance, if he is programmed to appear before us, can help us to understand what is really happening at the Central Bank.

Mr Speaker, if the Leader of Government Business can push for this on Tuesday, it would help the nation. This is about the economy and if international partners are not sure who is heading the Central Bank—We are aware that the Governor, Dr Ernest Kwamina Addison, is on leave prior to retirement, but there are two deputies. We are aware that one of the deputies has resigned, and it is left with one deputy. In terms of the hierarchy, there is no such vacuum to result in a nominee rushing to the place with the media. This is because a deputy can act as the Acting Governor, pending the Council of State receiving the letter

from Mr President and deliberating on it. The Leader of Government should, please, take note.

Mr Speaker, there is also an issue of great concern to us as a Minority Caucus. On Thursday, 30th January, 2025, some matters took place at the Appointments Committee and the Speaker made some pronouncements on it. The Leadership of this House, I refer to my respected Colleague, the Hon Majority Leader, and my good self, met with the Speaker, and we had a fruitful discussion which resulted in a solution of same on the floor of the House on Tuesday. Of course, the Speaker gave some consequential directives that there is a Committee to enquire into the matter, so that we can have a way forward.

Mr Speaker, I would want to say this for the records that the Speaker said, without any equivocation, that the hearing of the Committee must not be a matter for public debate. The video is there; I have procured it and Hon Members can play it. The Speaker also went further to say that there are things that are known to us, as Members of Parliament (MPs), and there are some words that we use that are best understood by us that the public may not appreciate.

Mr Speaker, we were of the view that, in view of the absence of the Speaker from the jurisdiction, we should engage him on this matter.

12.15 p.m.

The Hon Majority Leader and I agreed and discussed with the Chairman of the Committee that he should put his deliberations on ice because the Rt Hon Speaker would come today, Friday. When he comes, we would meet him and discuss the way forward.

Mr Speaker, let me say this — it is very regrettable that the Chairman of the Committee who is supposed to be a neutral referee has granted not less than six interviews to the media, casting aspersions against my person, attacking my personality and the Minority, pronouncing guilt, and all. If we as Parliamentarians are talking about collective peace, then each one of us must keep to the side of the bargain. I have written a memo to the Rt Hon Speaker as part of the due process that I want to follow, but it is unacceptable that there would be live telecast of events that the Rt Hon Speaker has directed that it should not be a public hearing. I emphasise this because, those were the orders of Rt Hon Speaker. The audiovisual can

be procured; I have procured it and we can check it. That is exactly what Rt Hon Speaker said. So, I do not understand why there is this public hearing where witnesses are being invited and people are saying all manner of things. I have restrained my Side because we would want to respect the Rt Hon Speaker.

Mr Speaker, I want the public to know that what is happening by the Chairman of the Committee is being done in bad faith and that is not how a neutral referee is supposed to behave. Enough of the insults, attacks, aspersions, and castigation. When we do not even know the outcome, he was on radio saying that the Minority is guilty. Guilty of what? We would all tell our story and the threat to our lives where people were elbowing us on the stairs and people who are not Members of Parliament were part of the struggle in that room. Who brought them there? We all want peace. If indeed we are putting the matter to a peaceful rest, then in the national interest, let us all retreat and conduct ourselves as such. Mr Speaker, that is my second most important issue.

The third matter I would want to bring to the attention of the House has to do with the attendance by the

Majority Caucus. Mr Speaker, we know that they are 181 or more. If all these empty seats, — *[Interruption]*— yes, it does not matter. I am not doing Government Business. Do not worry, you are doing Government Business. My Members have gone to their Constituency to do some constituency work and they have taken my permission. Well, we cannot do —you are the super-Majority. If the super-Majority cannot marshal its numbers, then what is your Majority for? Mr Speaker, all these seats, this Side, it is only one and another. Look at all the seats.

Mr Speaker, so a Colleague has raised quorum. I believe that Rt Hon Speaker, in his wisdom, at the right time, would take the necessary steps to enforce the laws on quorum.

That said, Mr Speaker, in the interest of peace, I want to reiterate the second point that we have written to the Rt Hon Speaker and we know he is unavailable, but we would respect the authority and office of the Rt Hon Speaker. We await him to take a decision on our letter. Meanwhile, if the Chairman still wants to proceed, we would not be part of that one-sided Committee. Our Members have withdrawn from

the proceedings because the Chairman is prejudiced. The Chairman is pre-judging the issue, and indeed, he is not a fair and neutral referee.

In October 2024, when there was this impasse on vacant seats, he openly to the media threatened to beat the Majority then. “That if they come and sit on our seats, we would beat them”. I quote him. This is what he said. Is it the same person who today is pursuing a high moral standard? —

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Minority Leader —

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, it is important.

Mr Speaker, please. It is within my right to make the point. Please permit me. Mr Speaker, I have restrained myself —

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Minority Leader, so long as it is within your rights, —

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, let me conclude, but respectfully, I think the posture of this House since Tuesday has been that we should allow ourselves to be

heard. Heckling is part of politics, but reckless heckling is not part of decent politics and the Majority must know this. You must hear and have the opportunity to oppose me. You must hear me in silence and catch the eye of Mr Speaker and rise gently from your seat and also make your point; that is the practice. This issue of shouting does not help.

Mr Speaker, I have made my point and I thank you.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much.

Majority Leadership, please take note of the concern. I will proceed to have the Business Statement adopted.

Mr Habib Iddrisu — rose —

Mr First Deputy Speaker: I would permit you to comment—

Mr Habib Iddrisu: Mr Speaker, when I raised the quorum issue it has been 35 minutes—

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Subject to limiting your comment to the Business Statement.

Mr Habib Iddrisu: Mr Speaker, I drew your attention to Article 102 of the Constitution that we do not have quorum to commence Business. Mr Speaker, it has been 40 minutes and you must enforce the Constitution. You are a lawyer by all standards — 22 years at the Bar, you should not be invited into this. Mr Speaker, it is a constitutional matter.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, the Business Statement as presented is hereby adopted. [*Hear! Hear!*]

Mr Habib Iddrisu: Mr Speaker, you must enforce the Constitution. You must be able to uphold — [*Uproar*]

Mr Speaker, up to now, we are not up to 92 or 93 to commence Business.

Mr Speaker, you must adjourn the House now because we do not have the number. We have to adjourn the House now. We do not have the number. You must adjourn the House now, Mr Speaker.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, I intend to adjourn the House.

[Teachers and students of Boso Senior High Technical School were acknowledged]

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, we need about 91 Members for quorum and currently the number in the Chamber is 73. It is now 74. I will accordingly proceed to adjourn the House.

ADJOURNMENT

The House was adjourned at 12.24 p.m. till Tuesday, 11th February, 2025, at 10.00 a.m.

Editor's Note

This *Official Report* was corrected by the House on 13th February, 2025, as follows:

- a) Column 2, last paragraph, line 9 to 11, “The Ad Hoc Committee and some other Committees are meeting” was deleted and “The Ad Hoc Committee is meeting” was inserted.
- b) Column 2, paragraph 5, line 4, “the” was deleted after “you”
- c) Column 9, paragraph 1, line 6, “Minsters” was corrected to “Ministers”