

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

OFFICIAL REPORT

Wednesday, 27th July, 2005

The House met at 2.30 p.m.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

PRAYERS

QUESTIONS BY PRIVATE NOTICE

DISMISSAL OF PRISONS
DEPARTMENT RECRUITS

(Mr. Moi) to ask the Minister for Home Affairs:-

Why were Messrs Philip Serem - No.0941; Philemon K. Chepkonga - No.0950 and Joshua Ruto Barturen - No.0954, all of whom were recruits at the Prisons Department abruptly dismissed on 15th May, 2005, after undergoing training for nearly one month at the Prisons Training College, Ruiru?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Mr. Moi is not here? His Question is dropped!

(Question dropped)

Dr. Khalwale: On a point of Order, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir. With all due respect, given the fact that Mr. Moi has never asked a Question, could you kindly defer that Question?

(Laughter)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: There is no provision for that! The Question remains dropped! Next Question by Mr. Mbau!

BURNING DOWN OF KAHARO
SECONDARY SCHOOL DORMITORY

(Mr. Mbau) to ask the Minister for Education, Science and Technology:-

(a) Is the Minister aware that a dormitory housing 60 students of Kaharo Secondary School burnt down on the night of 12th July, 2005, completely destroying everything including personal effects?

(b) What urgent measures is the Minister taking to assist the school and ensure that academic programs do not stall, especially when the KCSE candidates are sitting for their upcoming mock exams?

(c) When will the Ministry set up a disaster fund in view of the many tragedies that frequently befall educational institutions?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Mr. Mbau is not here? His Question is dropped!

(Question dropped)

MEASURES TO ENSURE TIMELY
PURCHASE OF MAIZE BY NCPB

Dr. Kibunguchy: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to ask the Minister for Agriculture the following Question by Private Notice.

(a) Is the Minister aware that this season's maize crop is almost ready for harvesting in some parts of Lugari District?

(b) Is he further aware that the National Cereals and Produce Board (NCPB) starts buying maize from farmers long after the middlemen have bought most of the maize?

(c) What plans does he, in conjunction with the NCPB, have to start buying maize from farmers as soon as harvesting starts?

The Minister for Agriculture (Mr. Kirwa): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to reply.

(a) I am aware that the maize crop in some parts of Lugari District, among other areas in Western Kenya, is almost ready for harvesting.

(b) I am also aware that most of the times middlemen purchase maize from farmers before the NCPB starts buying. However, being a liberalized market, such maize purchases are based on willing buyer, willing seller agreements.

(c) In the current financial year, the Government has allocated the NCPB Kshs1.5 billion for purchase of maize. The NCPB has finalized plans to purchase maize including the crop in Lugari which will be harvested around October, 2005.

Dr. Kibunguchy: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to thank the Minister for his answer although it falls short of my expectations. I am disappointed that the Minister has taken such an important issue about food security and empowerment of our farmers lightly. Since the NCPB is the major player in the cereals market, why does it enter into the market after the middlemen have bought most of the maize from the farmers?

Mr. Kirwa: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, there are certain parameters we must take into consideration before we purchase maize from farmers. The middlemen purchase the maize, dry it or sell it the way it is. However, the NCPB is supposed to purchase the maize if it meets the moisture content of 13.5 per cent for purposes of preparation for storage. This means that the NCPB has to wait until it gets the threshold moisture content before it moves into the market. However, last year, the NCPB bought maize from farmers whose moisture content was 15 per cent and above. The drying charges were borne by the Government so that the farmers could get returns on their investment.

Mr. Midiwo: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir. The Government should address the issue of food security in this country. Could the Minister tell us what his Ministry is doing to foster the growing of alternative food crops like, sorghum, millet and cassava? Many parts of Western Kenya are not favourable for the growing of maize, and yet they grow the crop. What policy does the Ministry have to reverse that trend?

Mr. Kirwa: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, when I moved the Vote of my Ministry yesterday, I indicated that we are focused on encouraging alternative crops such as traditional food crops, including sorghum, millet, finger millet and tuber crops. In some cases, this is done through purchases of finger millet, sorghum and bulrush millet by the NCPB. We also encourage farmers, through the various extension officers in the field, to grow other food crops to ensure that there is food security in many parts of this country.

Capt. Nakitare: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir. The Minister has given us a very

elaborate answer. Could he tell this House when he will pay the outstanding dues to farmers who delivered their maize to the NCPB in the last three years?

Mr. Kirwa: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I first correct the impression that we have not paid for the maize the farmers delivered to the NCPB for the last three years. We have not paid the farmers for the crop they delivered from February, 2005. We only paid them Kshs4.8 billion. We are [Mr. Kirwa]

yet to pay the balance of Kshs1.2 billion. Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I indicated yesterday, we intend to pay that money in the course of this week and the other half in the course of next week.

Mr. Mwacha: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir. The Minister is aware that maize has become a major killer, especially for the people of Ukambani. The cause of the deaths has been aflatoxin. What will the Minister do to ensure that maize becomes food in this country rather than a killer?

Mr. Kirwa: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I appreciate that problem. However, it does not have anything to do with maize but with the component of aflatoxin occasioned by storage of maize before the required moisture content is attained. One way of dealing with this problem is to ensure that the maize which gets into this country meets all our local standards, which include the moisture content. We have had a very aggressive campaign within the country to sensitize the farmers on proper storage facilities.

*(Several hon. Members stood
up in their places)*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members, I have given enough time to that Question! Dr. Kibunguchy, ask your last question.

Dr. Kibunguchy: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Minister has said that the NCPB enters the market late because it buys maize which meets a certain moisture content. Does the Minister care about the welfare of Kenyans when he allows middlemen to buy maize which is not very dry, and yet we know the NCPB should control maize prices and purchase it? Does he care that Kenyans are dying because of aflatoxin, as my colleague has said, and yet the NCPB enters the market late because it wants dry maize? Does he care about the middlemen who buy maize early?

Mr. Kirwa: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I made a caveat to the statement as to why we enter the market at a certain time. We do this because the physiology of maize must reach certain moisture content for us to buy it. If that has not been attained, we cannot just enter the market for the sake of it. We have assisted the farmers by absorbing drying charges for any bag of maize delivered to any NCPB depot throughout the country. We have been more aggressive for the purpose of buying maize from the farmers to stabilise the prices and avail maize to other parts of the country which do not have adequate food.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Next Question by Mr. Kamotho!

GOVERNMENT PLANS TO PURCHASE
COSTLY SECURITY EQUIPMENT

(Mr. Kamotho) to ask the Minister for Justice and Constitutional Affairs:-

- (a) Could the Minister confirm the plan by the Government to purchase security equipment at a cost of Kshs10 billion?
- (b) What is the justification for such a costly plan under the current economic circumstances where the poverty levels exceed 60 per cent in the country?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Office of the Clerk has informed me that Mr. Kamotho has requested that the Question be deferred because he is unwell. The Question is deferred until tomorrow afternoon. I do not think that a Question by Private Notice should be deferred for more than a day.

(Question deferred)

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Question No.081

MEASURES TO CURB INSECURITY IN BUTERE DIVISION

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I have been informed that Mr. Oparanya is in Dar-es-Salaam. Therefore, I defer the Question until next week.

The Assistant Minister for Justice and Constitutional Affairs (Mr. Githae): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir. I was supposed to answer the Question by Mr. Kamotho. However, even Mr. Oparanya's Question has been deferred.

Could it also not be courteous for the Ministers and Assistant Ministers who are supposed to answer the Questions to be informed that the hon. Members will not ask the Questions so that we can also make the necessary arrangements?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Mr. Githae, you are right. However, you can see that I have just received the letter from the Clerk's office. Ideally, the Clerk's Office should have called the Assistant Minister to inform him so that he is aware. I think that should be the direction to take in future so that we do not just inform one side. So, Mr. Oparanya's Question is deferred until next week. Hopefully, he will be back by that time.

(Question deferred)

Question No.392

RETENTION OF PPOS WHO HAVE ATTAINED RETIREMENT AGE

Mr. Serut asked the Minister of State, Office of the President:-

- (a) how many Provincial Police Officers (PPOs) have attained retirement age and are still in service; and,
- (b) whether he could name those officers and state what special skills they possess to be retained in service past retirement.

The Assistant Minister, Office of the President (Mr. M. Kariuki): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to reply.

(a) There is only one PPO who has attained the retirement age and is still in service.

(b) The only officer in question is Mr. Joseph Kitonyi, Deputy Commissioner of Police, PPO, Rift Valley Province. The Public Service Commission (PSC) was requested to extend the service of the officer for a further one year-term to enable him complete some special security assignments which were going on in some parts of the province at the time of his retirement.

Mr. Serut: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am happy with the answer from the Assistant Minister; in fact, he has been very sincere. The reason I have asked this Question is because of the

police officer. It is common knowledge that Rift Valley Province, and especially the North Rift is known for its insecurity.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I speak here, there is a lot of insecurity in this country. Security in this country is supposed to be provided by police officers. We are talking about one officer who is in charge of that docket. What special skills does this officer have that he has to be retained in the service past the retirement age, when we have many Kenyans yearning for jobs in this country?

Mr. M. Kariuki: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Public Service Commission (PSC), under its general regulations has the mandate to extend a retirement or not. It can exercise this at its discretion accordingly, and we cannot interfere with the exercise. The special duties the officer is carrying out are of security. I cannot say more.

Mr. Bett: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, why should the PSC retain an officer? Are the security problems in the Rift Valley personal to him that he must be retained?

Mr. M. Kariuki: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the PSC found the officer the right person to complete the assignment.

Mr. Khamisi: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, there are reports that, indeed, the police force has recalled some retirees in order to cope with insecurity in this country. Is this true?

Mr. M. Kariuki: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am not aware of any retirees who have been recently recruited.

Mr. Serut: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Assistant Minister has admitted that the officer is the one who is in charge of security in the Rift Valley Province. Why has he also gone ahead to sack chiefs and their assistants from the troubled community, claiming that they are the ones who are causing insecurity, yet the force is retaining an officer who is supposed to provide security to the same people?

Mr. M. Kariuki: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, Mr. Kittony, the Deputy Commissioner of Police will proceed on retirement, latest on 15th November, 2005 when he completes his one year extension.

As far as the issue of chiefs is concerned, we evaluated their performance and there is a criteria that we used. If the Sabaot chiefs were found wanting, it was for good reason that they had to leave.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The next Question is by the hon. Member for Machakos Town, Mr. Mwanzia. Mr. Mwanzia, before you ask your Question, we have a request from the Ministry of Roads and Public Works. Both the Minister and his Assistant Minister are out of town. We have a request from the Minister that the Question be deferred. There is nothing we can do about this. Is that okay?

Mr. Mwanzia: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am sorry, but I did not hear you very well.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I said that the request from the Minister is that the Question be deferred. Is that okay?

Mr. Mwanzia: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir. That is okay with me, but when will it be answered?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: We will defer it to Tuesday next week.

Question No.379

MAINTENANCE OF MAKAVETI-
IUNI ROAD

(Question deferred)

Question No.492

TELEPHONE SERVICES FOR TEGAT/KIPLABOTWA CENTRES

Mr. Salat asked the Minister for Information and Communications when he will restore the telephone land lines that were removed many years ago, to serve Tegat and Kiplabotwa Market centres.

The Assistant Minister for Information and Communications (Mr. Were): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to reply. The telephone landlines at Tegat and Kiplabotwa markets were removed because of repeated incidences of vandalism of the equipment. Repairs of the equipment became prohibitively costly to Telkom Kenya and it was decided that the services at Kiplabotwa Market be relocated to Itembe Market and those of Tegat Market be relocated to Chemaner Market. The telephone facilities are currently functional.

Mr. Salat: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am asking this Question because the two centres, Kiplabotwa and Tegat are places where the Government has invested Kshs6 million to upgrade a health centre, yet there are no telephone facilities. The relocation of telephone lines from Kiplabotwa to Itembe Market was not good because the latter is in a different constituency.

Does the Assistant Minister expect people from Kiplabotwa Centre to go and make telephone calls in a different constituency? Itembe Market is about 20 kilometres from Kiplabotwa Centre.

(Laughter)

Mr. Were: Mr. Deputy Speaker Sir, I said that the services were relocated owing to repeated incidences of vandalism. I am told that these centres are only four kilometres away from their former locations. So, this is not very far and people can still walk to make phone calls.

(Laughter)

Mr. Abdirhman: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am sure this House will agree that this is not a very serious Assistant Minister. Vandalism is not a very good excuse. This is a way of denying people essential services. The police force is now moving towards community policing. Telkom Kenya has a responsibility to provide telephone services to Kenyans.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: What is your question?

Mr. Abdirahman: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, we know that in this country, there are areas where people are yet to access telephone lines, like the one I come from. Besides the consultancy which Telkom Kenya is carrying out in planning for the future, what plans does the Ministry have in the current financial year to expand its services?

Mr. Were: Mr. Deputy Speaker Sir, my Ministry is in the process of setting up a universal access fund. When this is through, we will restore services and install additional services in new centres using wireless technology.

Mr. Mwanzia: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir. I am sure that the Assistant Minister is aware of a programme that is being undertaken in his Ministry by the Chinese Government to provide telephone facilities which are wireless in urban centres and towns. Could he assure this House that these two markets are being considered under that programme because he said that the

services were relocated due to of vandalism? The new services are offering wireless telephone services and there will not be any telephone lines to vandalise.

Could he assure us that the two markets will be included in the programme?

Mr. Were: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me assure the hon. Member that we are going to consider Kiplabotwa and Tegat to fall within this programme.

Mr. Sasura: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is very sad for the Assistant Minister to say that the people of Bomet are vandals. To ensure that these people do not vandalise and miss this service because of that habit, would it not be fair for the Assistant Minister to devise some burglar-proof and vandal-proof equipment for the people of Bomet?

(Laughter)

Mr. Were: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have indicated that we are in the process of using wireless technology. I believe that they will not be able to vandalise the wireless technology.

*(Mr. Salat pointed his
finger at Mr. Were)*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, Mr. Salat! Ask a question! Do not point a finger at the Assistant Minister! Could you ask a question?

Mr. Salat: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like the Assistant Minister to withdraw the word "vandalism". My people do not vandalise poles.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, Mr. Salat! Do you have a question?

Mr. Salat: Yes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Please, ask it!

Mr. Salat: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, initially, when we inquired why the lines had not been restored, Telkom Kenya said that they were not making any money because the lines were not profitable. I do not know how the Assistant Minister has come around to say that my people are vandalising these lines.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Now ask your question, Mr. Salat!

(Laughter)

Mr. Salat: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, when will these lines be restored?

Mr. Were: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the said exercise is going to take approximately 24 months to complete.

Question No 415

DISMISSAL OF TEITA SISAL
ESTATE WORKERS

Mr. Mwandawiro asked the Minister for Labour and Human Resource Development:-

- (a) whether he was aware that more than 300 workers of Teita Sisal Estate in Taita-Taveta District were recently dismissed without pay and brutally evicted from company houses for peacefully demanding for improved working conditions; and,
- (b) whether he could intervene to ensure that the workers are reinstated, paid their dues and

their working conditions improved.

The Minister for Labour and Human Resource Development (Dr. Kulundu): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to reply.

(a) I am not aware that more than 300 workers of Teita Sisal Estate in Taita-Taveta District were dismissed and brutally evicted from their houses. I am, however, aware that 229 employees who had gone on a strike that involved 541 employees between 23rd March and 2nd April, 2005, and who eventually had agreed to resume duty after a return-to-work formula was brokered between their union's representatives and the management refused to do so.

(b) My Ministry ensured that all the 229 workers who refused to resume work as per the return-to-work formula were paid their accruing dues which included wages for days worked, any overtime worked and leave due, all totalling to Kshs289,727. However, if the workers' union feels that there is anything they are still owed by the company, they are at liberty to lodge a complaint to my Ministry. The same union is also better placed to help improve the terms and conditions of service by negotiating better terms and conditions of employment through collective bargaining agreement as my Ministry's responsibility is only to enforce the minimum labour standards.

Mr. Mwandawiro: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am shocked! I cannot even find words with which to deal with this answer. I am ashamed that the Minister is not ashamed to read this answer. I did not expect even the most conservative Government to come to this conclusion. It is a pity that the 229 workers were paid total dues amounting to Kshs289,727, which includes overtime, leave due and all accruing dues. This amounts to Kshs1,500 per individual and the Minister is not ashamed.

An hon. Member: Shame!

Mr. Mwandawiro: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, could this Minister go to Mwatate Colonial Sisal Estate and reverse that decision?

(Applause)

Dr. Kulundu: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the signs of shock were not very apparent in the hon. Questioner.

(Laughter)

However, there is still an outstanding Kshs1.27 million which will be paid by July, 2005. They are going to pay Kshs50,000 per month up to 31st July, 2005.

Mr. Midiwo: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir. Is the Minister in order to say that the balance of the money will be paid to the fired workers by July, 2005, yet we only have two days to the end of July? Which July are we talking about?

(Laughter)

Dr. Kulundu: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the end of July means today up to 31st July. Who knows? Maybe the workers will be paid Kshs1.27 million tomorrow.

Prof. Oniang'o: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are in a political arena and beginning to enjoy democracy. The workers' voice is getting more stifled. Could the Minister tell us what measures he is putting in place to guarantee workers that they can peacefully demonstrate and demand their rights without fearing victimisation?

Dr. Kulundu: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, my Ministry is in the forefront of demanding that

all unionisable workers belong to a union. In this case, the Kenya Agricultural and Plantation Workers Union is the one representing these workers headed by the COTU Secretary-General. I expect good results practise from this particular case. I have told all employers that their workers must belong to a union for better services from the employer.

Maj. Madoka: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir. This estate is in my constituency. The major problem in this area is that the labour officer and the union officials do not see eye to eye. The labour officer and the trade union have been compromised. The Government has a responsibility to try and ensure that the basic labour laws and minimum wages are paid to these employees. The terms and conditions of service for these sisal estates, as my colleague says, are disgraceful. The union does nothing about it! The Ministry has a responsibility to ensure that they have a proper collective bargaining agreement to implement. Could the Minister tell us what the Ministry is doing to ensure that proper salaries are paid?

Dr. Kulundu: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, my Ministry is only involved in fixing the minimum wage. However, through the Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs), unions can negotiate with employers what workers will be paid. I would like to assure you---

Mr. Sambu: Assure the House!

Dr. Kulundu: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me assure the House that we do not condone any malpractice between either the union and the labour officers, or the labour officers and the employers. The cases where the labour officers have been compromised should be reported to my Ministry for remedial action. Maj. Madoka is a very close friend of mine. I am, therefore, surprised that he has never mentioned that a labour officer in his constituency has been compromised. All the same, we will take action when evidence is produced.

Mr. Sambu: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir. Is the Minister in order to mislead the House that all employees should belong to a union and yet he issued a directive to sack unionisable employees of the Kenya Civil Servants Union (KCSU), who went on strike?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Dr. Kulundu, are you in order?

Dr. Kulundu: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, that is a different Question. However, I am able to answer it.

Hon. Members: Go ahead!

Dr. Kulundu: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, first of all, the function of hiring and firing of civil servants belongs to the Office of the President.

Hon. Members: No! No!

Dr. Kulundu: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are only there to ensure that there are good industrial relations in---

Mr. Omingo: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, Mr. Omingo! The Minister is responding to a point of order! You cannot load a point of order on another one!

Dr. Kulundu: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, these workers were not dismissed, but they were suspended pending investigations---

Hon. Members: For what?

Dr. Kulundu: Obviously, for participating in an illegal strike. Secondly and more important is that---

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, Dr. Kulundu! You are running into trouble with hon. Members because you are not addressing the Chair! Please, address the Chair and you will be all right.

Dr. Kulundu: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have no problem at all. The actions by some of these workers that we are defending in this House, especially those from Nyanza, Makueni and

Kitui---

Hon. Members: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Dr. Kulundu: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am already responding to a point of order. Can I be protected?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Dr. Kulundu, you are protected. Order, hon. Members!

Dr. Kulundu: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the actions of workers on suspension---

(Hon. Members laughed loudly)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, there should be some decorum in the way hon. Members laugh!

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, hon. Members! Let the Minister finish what he is saying.

Dr. Kulundu: Now, the actions of some of these workers directly led to the deaths of Kenyans. We have evidence to that effect. In some cases, especially at Kenyatta National Hospital (KNH), workers switched off electricity, water and even oxygen---

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Dr. Kulundu, that is enough! Stop there!

Hon. Members: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, hon. Members! Order! This Question has been allocated more time than necessary.

Last question, Mr. Mwandawiro!

Mr. Kombe: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, Mr. Kombe! Will you sit down?

Mr. Mwandawiro: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, plantation workers, especially those in Taita-Taveta sisal estates, work under slave-like conditions. They are not allowed to be visited by their families. They are bitten by snakes and they are never treated. They work during odd hours. They have no toilets, or housing and they are even beaten up by their employers.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Question which was not been answered by the Minister, and which is in the Order Paper is: "What is the Ministry doing to ensure that they change these colonial conditions of the Kenyan workers and, specifically in sisal estates, in Taita-Taveta Constituency?"

Dr. Kulundu: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is unfortunate if these conditions actually exist. I promised Mr. Kombe this morning that I would visit a *Jua Kali* shed. While going to Malindi, I will stop by to verify the assertions that Mr. Mwandawiro is putting across. So, I will arrange with the two gentlemen and see if we can fix the problems.

Mr. Kombe: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Will you sit down? Mr. Kombe, when will you learn that when the Chair is speaking or standing, you maintain your silence? We must have some decorum in this House. I am already giving some direction. The direction here is that the conditions as narrated by Mr. Mwandawiro are really serious. Therefore, it is right for the Minister and he must avail himself time to investigate this matter, not only in that estate, but even in other sisal estates. That should rest the matter there.

Next Question, Mr. Weya!

Mr. Kombe: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Mr. Kombe, what is it?

Mr. Kombe: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, you heard the Minister say that he is concerned with the issue of minimum wages. Is he in order to say so, at a time when workers in Taita-Taveta are being paid Ksh69 per day after cutting over 139 leaves of sisal?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Mr. Kombe, the matter is concluded. The Chair has given some guidelines on that matter. The Minister has agreed to investigate conditions of work in all sisal

estates, including Vipingo.

Next Question, Mr. Weya!

Question No.576

CONTRAVENTION OF COFFEE ACT BY KPCU

Mr. Weya asked the Minister for Co-operative Development and Marketing:-

(a) whether he is aware that the Kenya Planters Co-operative Union (KPCU) is contravening the Coffee Act of 2001 with regard to payment of coffee farmers 14 days after auction;

(b) whether he is further aware that there is rampant theft of coffee in KPCU stores?

(c) what steps he is taking to ensure that KPCU pays farmers within the stipulated time and security of coffee in their warehouses.

The Minister for Co-operative Development and Marketing (Mr. Ndwiga): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to reply.

(a) I am not aware.

(b) I am further not aware that there is rampant theft of coffee in KPCU stores. However, I am aware of one incident.

(c) I have no steps to take on KPCU payments to farmers because the payments are always made within the stipulated time. All the coffee in KPCU stores is insured.

Mr. Weya: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am shocked by the answer given by the Minister. There are coffee farmers in Nyanza, Western and Eastern provinces, who have not been paid from January by KPCU. I can even mention some factories such as Nyaboko, Nyachaje and Irengi factories in Kisii. If the Minister is telling the truth, could he lay on the Table of this House an updated register of sale No.38 of 14th July, 2005. He should also table a copy of the same from the Coffee Board of Kenya (CBK), which is the regulatory body for Parliament.

Mr. Ndwiga: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, could Mr. Weya repeat his question?

Mr. Weya: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, could the Minister table an updated register of up to Sale No.38 of 19th July, 2005? Could he also give a copy to the Coffee Board of Kenya (CBK), which is the regulatory body, if he is speaking the truth?

Mr. Ndwiga: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am happy to do that! Here it is!

(Mr. Ndwiga laid the document on the Table)

Mr. Gachagua: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I rise to support what Mr. Weya is saying because that is also happening in Central Province. Many co-operative societies have not been paid but, even more relevant, it is the CBK which is supposed to ensure that, Kenya Planters Co-operative Union (KPCU), as a miller and marketer, pays the farmers and coffee dealers on time. The Minister in charge of CBK should make that assurance to the House! Is he in order---

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Are you asking a question or raising a point of order? You have already asked a question! Let the Minister respond to it?

Mr. Gachagua: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, could the Minister, now that he has tabled some papers there, ensure that CBK operates under the Act and pays the farmers on time?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Mr. Minister, did you get the question?

Mr. Ndwiga: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I do not know what the hon. Member wants! I have tabled the list of the payments. There is no other separate list of auctions and payments. I do not

know what the hon. Member wants!

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Bishop O.K. Mwangi!

Mr. O.K. Mwangi: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, may God bless this House!

(Laughter)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, earlier this year, the Minister promised Kenyans that CBK was going to pay coffee farmers Kshs641 million, for coffee deliveries which had not been paid for by March this year.

Could he tell the House what happened to that payment and when it will be made to farmers?

Mr. Ndwiga: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I do not remember making any such promise because CBK is not under my docket. So, I request the hon. Member to channel his question to the relevant Ministry.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Last question, Mr. Weya!

Mr. Weya: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, you have heard the Minister say that coffee is not being stolen at the KPCU and yet, he knows very well that, up to last week, it was being stolen. That is why I have a list of credit notes which were given to exporters because the coffee they had paid for in the auction was stolen.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: What is the question?

Mr. Weya: Could I table this list?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: No! This is a matter of questions. You stood to ask a question. What question have you asked?

Mr. Weya: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have proof that coffee is being stolen from Kenya Planters Co-operative Union (KPCU). The exporters who had paid for coffee in the auctions were given credit notes in excess of US\$300,000 because the coffee that they had paid for was stolen from the warehouse.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: You have made a statement. Could you now ask a question?

Mr. Weya: Could the Minister confirm whether that is not true?

Mr. Ndwiga: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, that is what happens when people ask question on things they are not familiar with. I would like to tell my friend, Mr. Weya, that I am aware of only one incident. It is true that 2,841 bags of coffee were stolen from KPCU.

Further, I said that coffee is insured and, indeed, the credit notes that Mr. Weya has were given to exporters to compensate them for the coffee that was stolen.

*(Mr. Weya stood up
in his place)*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: No, Mr. Weya! That is the end!

Hon. Members, that is the end of Question Time. We now move on to the next Order. But before then, Prof. Oniang'o has a matter that she wants to raise.

POINT OF ORDER MASSIVE LAY-OFFS IN EPZS

Prof. Oniang'o: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I rise to seek a Ministerial Statement from the Minister for Trade and Industry regarding the lay-offs in the Export Processing Zones (EPZs)---

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Just a minute, Professor! Is the Minister for Trade and Industry here? Any Assistant Ministers? Could we, then, ask the Leader of Government Business to listen to that? Go ahead, Professor!

Prof. Oniang'o: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is in the public domain that there have been massive lay-offs in the EPZs. Kenya has lost more than 700 jobs in the past one week, supposedly because of new tax regimes which are causing delays in the clearing of goods at the Mombasa Port.

In his reply, I would like the Minister to tell the House how many Kenyans have lost their jobs at the EPZs since that new tax regime came into place; how many companies are threatened with closure since the reading of the Budget; how many companies are likely to relocate to other countries causing Kenyans to lose more jobs and what measures the Government is putting in place to ensure that goods from EPZs benefit Kenyan consumers instead of outsiders.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Very well. I will ask His Excellency the Vice-President and Minister for Home Affairs to inform the Minister responsible through the HANSARD. I think next week will be appropriate.

Any other matter? Mr. Omingo!

NOTICE OF MOTION FOR THE ADJOURNMENT

UNSATISFACTORY REPLY TO QUESTION
ON CANCELLATION OF CBK
CURRENCY PRINTING TENDER

Mr. Omingo: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, following an unsatisfactory answer to Question No.3 this morning, I give notice of Motion that this House adjourns to discuss the tendering procedures at the Central Bank of Kenya (CBK), which is a matter of national importance.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I confirm that Mr. Omingo wrote to the Speaker to state that he was not satisfied with the answer given this morning to Question No.3 by the Minister for Finance. Under Standing Order No.18, I allow Mr. Omingo to move a Motion for the Adjournment. Therefore, the matter will be discussed for 30 minutes on Wednesday next week. That gives him time to prepare.

Next Order!

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

*(Order for Committee read,
being Fourth Allotted Day)*

MOTION

THAT MR. SPEAKER DO
NOW LEAVE THE CHAIR

Vote 10 - Ministry of Agriculture

*(The Minister for Agriculture
on 26.7.2005)*

*(Resumption of Debate
interrupted on 26.7.2005)*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members, Mr. Muturi finished his contribution. So, it is open now.

Ms. Mwau!

Ms. Mwau: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir. I stand to support the Vote of the Ministry of Agriculture. This Ministry is very important to this country in terms of food security. It is the backbone of this economy. Therefore, this Ministry requires more funds, if we are serious about poverty eradication and food security.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think this Ministry should liaise with the Ministry of Water and Irrigation and in particular on ASAL areas. I come from Makueni which is one of the districts that are supplied with famine relief food when famine strikes. So, the Ministry needs to work together with the Ministry of Water and Irrigation so that they introduce simple irrigation techniques so that poverty is eradicated in ASAL areas.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I want to add my voice on the issue of extension workers. Who do they work for? What are their terms of reference? I am asking these questions because extension services are non-existent particularly in the place where I come from. Extension officers have become consultants. They get money from farmers when they are treating their animals. So, it is important to come up with performance indicators and contracts so that we can benefit from extension services. The mechanism of reviving extension services is very important. How many extension workers are in Makueni District? What do they do because we have not seen them?

I want to add my voice and challenge one of the hon. Members who spoke of women being very few in the farming sector. For a long time, women farmers have been viewed as "invisible farmers" and yet 80 per cent of the food grown in this country is by women. Do you know why women are viewed as invisible farmers? One, because technology does not target women. Two, extension services actually target men. Only men are admitted to the farmers training centres. When they come home they instruct their wives to do some chores and that information is lost. No wonder we cannot grow enough food to feed this country. Another reason why women are actually seen as invisible farmers is that they do not own land and so they cannot make decisions on where and what to plant.

We are talking of encouraging the growing of traditional foodstuffs. These are viewed as women's crops and most of the technology does not target millet, cassava, sweet potatoes, arrow roots. Men's crops are cotton, coffee, tea, pyrethrum and yet more women than men are farmers. For example, in cash crop growing areas, women spend up to 62 hours a week on coffee, tea, pyrethrum and cotton farms and who gets the cheque? It is the men! So, I look forward to the time when women in this country will be recognised as farmers and not as "invisible farmers". If we did this, we would be self-sufficient because we shall have targeted the people who grow food and they are women. I also look forward to that time when the Ministry of Agriculture will tell us how much money has been allocated to women farmers and men farmers so that we can encourage women to farm.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker left the Chair]

*[The Temporary Deputy Speaker
(Mr. Khamasi) took the Chair]*

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, I want to talk a little bit on the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI) because its technology does not reach *wananchi*. I have had an opportunity to visit KARI station at Katumani when I organised farmers in one of the divisions of Makueni District to visit there and they have wonderful technology. I am talking of encouraging horticulture and yet the technology does not get to the real farmer at the grassroots level. I am asking the Ministry to fund KARI more so that it can be able to transfer that technology to the people that need it.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, I want to talk a little bit about traditional foods. I was looking at the Vote of the Ministry of Agriculture and I was surprised because, for example in Eastern Province, a lot of things that are being funded by the International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD) are things to do with subsistence, travel, advertising, training, hospitality and construction. Where is the money for the farmers who are the men and women of this country? For example, Makueni District has been allocated Kshs.4.8 million and yet these other things do not benefit farmers. So, it is important that the Ministry comes out very clear on how much money is allocated to the farmers.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, in conclusion, I want to talk about Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs). Before the Ministry takes up the issue of GMOs, let it learn from Argentina and those countries that have policies on GMOs. A legislation should be brought to this House so that we can talk of GMOs because the issue of food security and sustainability cannot be achieved through GMOs. It can be solved by looking at where the problem is. The problem is that women are farmers but, for a long time, they have been viewed as "invisible farmers".

Thank you very much.

I support.

Mr. Kosgey: Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, thank you very much for this opportunity.

From the outset, I would like to congratulate the Minister for Agriculture for the good work that he is doing. Agriculture is a very important industry for our economy. It is the main industry for our people in the rural areas. In fact, 70 per cent of our people live in the rural areas and 60 per cent of employment opportunities in this country are created by agriculture. Therefore, in order to really boost the economy of this country and eradicate poverty, we have to make sure that agriculture works and farmers in the rural areas make returns on agriculture. It is about time we made farming a business rather than an occupation of the people in the rural areas because they have nothing else to do.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, the growth which has been recorded in this sector is commendable although it is still small. In fact, 1.4 per cent is not a very big growth. The question which we should ask ourselves is not really about the growth in terms of volume of production but it is: What is the profit? What did the farmer make out of that one acre of maize? The reason why there is rampant poverty in the country is that rural incomes in real terms have gone down very drastically. It is evident in every sector. If you go to the rural areas, you will find that maize, sugarcane and wheat farmers have no money because, whereas they have increased in production, the sales figures do not reflect any profit for them. For example, for wheat, you will find that its prices have been constant for a very long time up to a maximum of Kshs1,600 per 90-kilogramme bag and yet the cost of production is very high. Fertiliser prices went up from about Kshs1,000 to Kshs2,000 per 50-kilogramme bag and so did fuel. So, in actual fact, farmers made a loss even in wheat farming. Farmers continue growing wheat and maize, yet they have not received payments for about six months. If we continue lagging behind like that in payment, the farmers will not have much to

enable them grow crops.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, we were hoping that a solution will be found on the sugar sector this time. The Minister, who I have just complimented, is busy listening to somebody else, instead of listening to my contribution.

(Laughter)

Many people, including those in my constituency, depend on sugar-cane farming. If you look at the pricing of sugar-cane in the last three or four years, farmers have been paid constant prices; Kshs1,700 per tonne. Consumer prices, particularly in the last six months have gone up to about Kshs90 per kilogramme; who is making this profit? Farmers should now be paid a little bit better as a return on their investment in farming sugar-cane. We reckon that if, farmers were paid about Kshs2,500 per tonne, instead of recording an 11 per cent growth, I can guarantee the Minister that they would record a 50 per cent growth. The farmer just needs some incentives; what he can get from farming this crop.

Regarding maize farming, Kshs1,400 which the Minister promised us has been erratic because sometimes the price goes lower and sometimes a little bit higher, but on average, it is about Kshs1,400. More serious is the question of payments; farmers are not being paid, and I think there is an outstanding amount of Kshs1.2 billion which is due to maize farmers in the North Rift. Unless they are paid, they cannot continue farming because it is not a subsidy. We cannot continue subsidizing consumers!

Tea farming has been profitable until the last two years, and the volume that has been recorded in the growth of the tea sector has not been reflected in the pockets of the farmers. You will notice that, this year, you have not heard of any farmers either in Nyeri or Kericho enjoying themselves during bonus time as they used to in the past, simply because they did not make any money. Tea and horticulture make very important contributions in earning foreign exchange for this country. Although farmers helped this country make Kshs43 billion in tea and Kshs32 billion in horticulture, farmers actually made a loss because the exchange rate has been stagnant at Kshs76. Go anywhere; the flower industries in Naivasha and tea farmers in Kericho, all of them are crying because of the strength of the Kenyan Shilling. We urge the Government to do something, particularly the Ministry of Agriculture, which should be on the side of farmers, to make sure that they actually campaign for the Central Bank of Kenya to weaken the Kenyan Shilling a little, so that those farmers could have some income.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, I was happy to hear that Kshs250 million was allocated to cotton farming, but that is not enough, because we really need to grow this crop in this country. As I have said in the past when making contributions in this House, a country that does not clothe itself and just relies on *Marehemu George, mitumba* and foreign clothes to clothe its people is like a country that relies on imported food. If we want to stimulate industries in this country, we need to get the textile industry going, and one way of doing that is to grow more cotton. We heard about this policy or strategy which the Minister keeps referring to. Last year, he referred to the Strategy for Revitalization of Agriculture (SRA), which we do not know what it is and, this year, he has referred to it again. When is this SRA going to be brought to this House for debate? Is it a policy or strategy? What sort of animal is it? It was discussed elsewhere, but, we need to know as farmers and representatives of farmers, what is this strategy that the Government has for us?

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, *Marufuku Njaa Kenya* is something that has come in very handy, but I did not hear the Minister saying anything about irrigation. We cannot continue relying on rainfed agriculture, and we need to revitalize the irrigation sector in order to meet the

needs of this country. We need to do research, and I am happy to hear that the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI) is getting Kshs1.2 billion for research. We need to carry out research so that we can get high yielding and disease resistant varieties of crops, whether it is maize, sugar or wheat, so that production can be increased. The only way we can actually compete in the sugar sector is to increase our yield per acreage, and that can only be achieved through research. So, we should emphasize more on research.

Many people put a lot of emphasis on agricultural extension services and, personally, I really have nothing to complain about those extension services. But I think if we have to make farming profitable, we should concentrate on marketing and the farmers will actually take farming much more seriously. At the moment, because farming is not profitable, we think we can actually revamp agriculture by increasing extension services, but I think that is putting the cart before the horse. We need to actually make agriculture profitable by improving marketing, and the rest will follow. If you look at many programmes which the Minister mentioned, a lot of money is pumped to the headquarters in terms of operating expenses and fuel, among others; all that money goes to the headquarters. I can see that the headquarters has even increased more staff, for example, he talked of secretary for this, director of that, and it is becoming talk-heavy, just to consume the money we are allocating here.

With those few remarks, I beg to support.

The Vice-President and Minister for Home Affairs (Mr. Awori): Asante sana, Bw. Naibu Spika wa Muda, kwa kunipa fursa hii, ili nichangie kidogo Hoja hii. Tulipochukua hatamu ya uongozi wa nchi hii, dhamira ya kwanza ilikuwa kufufua uchumi wa nchi hii; ya pili ilikuwa kuondoa ufukara wa watu wetu ili tuweze kuimarisha maisha yao. Tunajua kwamba uchumi wa nchi hii unategemea kilimo, licha ya ukulima wa mazao kama majani chai na ufugaji wa ng'ombe wa maziwa katika mashamba madogo ya ekari mbili au tano. Ikiwa tunataka kweli kufanya ukulima wetu uwe biashara, lazima tuangalie jinsi tutakavyoangaalia mashamba yetu. Lazima tugeuze utamaduni wetu ambao unasema kwamba ukiwa na shamba, wakati utakapofariki, ni lazima uwe umegawanya shamba hilo kwa watoto wako. Mila hii imefanya sehemu nyingi sana kuwa na mashamba madogo ya ekari moja au mbili, kwa mfano huko Kisii, Vihiga na kwengineko. Kwa kweli mtu hawezi kuendesha kilimo cha maana ikiwa shamba lake ni ndogo.

Bw. Naibu Spika wa Muda, inafaa tugeuze mbinu zetu za kilimo. Mheshimiwa mama mmoja hapa amesema akina mama wetu ndiyo wako na shida sana. Kwa kweli, sisi ambao tunaakilisha watu wa mashinani, kila asubuhi tunawaona akina mama na majembe yao wakienda shambani kulima. Hata akitia bidii ya namna gani, mama mmoja hawezi kulima ekari moja kwa wiki nzima. Lazima sasa tuzingatie mbinu mpya za kisasa za ukulima. Hata hivyo, huwezi kutumia trakta, kwa mfano, kulima ekari moja ya shamba. Nimeshangaa kusoma magazetini leo kwamba kuna shamba moja la ekari 17,000 ambalo watu fulani wanataka kuligawanya katika vipande vya ekari mbili au tatu. Wakati huu, dunia nzima watu wameanza kuleta mashamba yao pamoja ili waweze kutumia trakta na wapunguze gharama ya ukulima.

Bw. Naibu Spika wa Muda, tunajua kwamba hali ya anga imegeuka kabisa kwa sababu tumeharibu mazingara yetu. Hivyo basi, hatuwezi kupata mvua ya kutosha. Imefika wakati ambao hatufai kuendelea kutegemea ukulima wa mvua. Huu ni wakati wa kutegemea kilimo cha unyunyizaji maji mashamba yetu. Wizara hii imetegewa Kshs3 bilioni. Kusema kweli, pesa hizi hazitoshi.

Mheshimiwa aliyenitangulia alisema kwamba anataka Waziri alete hapa jawabu la kuonyesha ni kwa nini wale wenye rasilimali katika Export Processing Zones (EPZs) wameanza kuhamia nchi jirani wakati huu. Ameeleza vile wenye rasilimali katika EPZs wanapeleka faida yote nje ya nchi hii. Hii ni kweli. Je, ni kwa sababu gani? Ni kwa sababu wanategemea pamba ambayo

wanainunua kutoka Uchina, Tanzania na kwingineko. Ni huzuni kuwa sisi hatuchangii kwa njia yoyote ile katika EPZs, na ilhali, hii ni nchi yetu. Tunafaa kufufua sekta ya pamba. Waziri ametenga Kshs200 milioni kwa minajili ya kufufua sekta hii. Kiasi cha Kshs200 milioni kitafanya nini? Pesa hizi hata haziwezi kufanya utafiti. Sisi tunaotoka katika sehemu ambazo zinakuza pamba tumefanya hesabu. Ikiwa tunataka kwa kweli kuongeza ukulima wa pamba, itagharimu Kshs90 milioni kwa wilaya moja. Je, ikiwa lazima mkulima akuze pamba tutamsaidia vipi kupanda, kuvuna na kupeleka kwa kiwanda na kuuza? Jana, mheshimiwa mmoja alisema kwamba mwaka uliopita pamba ilikuwa inauzwa kwa bei ya Kshs25 kwa

kilo moja. Mwaka huu inanunuliwa Kshs16 kwa kilo moja. Hii ni kwa sababu mkulima hamiliki pamba. Ni wanabiashara wa katikati wanaofaidika. Imefika wakati wa sekta ya pamba kufufuliwa. Ili tuwe na mashamba makubwa ni lazima tuanze kuyaleta pamoja. Tunafaa kujenga mabwawa ili tuhifadhi maji wakati wa mvua ya masika. Tunaweza kuyatumia maji haya kunyunyizia pamba yetu. Hii itafanya ukulima wa pamba uimarike sana.

Nataka kumpongeza Waziri kwa sababu tangu achukue uongozi wa Wizara hii, ameimarisha sana. Tunataka kwanza kufufua mashirika kama Kenya Farmers Association (KFA). Wakati KFA ilikuwa imara, ilikuwa inaangalia masilahi ya wakulima. Shirika hili lilikuwa linawapa wakulima mbolea na vifaa mbalimbali vya ukulima. Pia lilikuwa linatafuta soko kwa mavuno ya wakulima wetu. Tunataka pia kulifufua shirika la KFA. Pia tunataka kuongeza rasilmali katika Agricultural Finance Corporation (AFC) ndiyo wakulima waweze kupata mikopo ambayo itawawezesha kuimarisha ukulima katika nchi hii.

Sote ambao ni washika dau katika kilimo tunataka kufanya kazi pamoja. Nataka kumshukuru Waziri kwa sababu ameangalia mbele sana. Kama vile mheshimiwa mama mmoja alivyosema hapa, tunafaa kuipiga vita njaa katika nchi hii. Hii itawezekana tu ikiwa sote tunaweka bidii kwa ukulima wa mashamba makubwa.

Bw. Naibu Spika wa Muda, kwa hayo machache, naunga mkono Hoja hii.

Mr. Serut: Thank you, Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir. From the outset, I rise to support this Vote on the Ministry of Agriculture. I want to say that the Minister of Agriculture is moving in the right direction as far as reviving the agricultural sector in this country is concerned. I know that when the NARC Government took over the running of this country, most institutions had been run down. We have to appreciate the fact that most of them are being revived. The most feasible ones are AFC, KFA and others which actually deal with the agricultural production in this country.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, allow me to say something about the revival of AFC. Whereas we appreciate its revival, we still have problems within the corporation. First of all, the Minister has not defined how much of the money, which is being given to AFC, will go to the small-scale farmers in this country. What is happening is that the money has been given to AFC to lend to farmers in general. This is what failed AFC in the past. The money was given and the "big-shots" went for all of it. So, the small farmers could not get any money to assist them to produce in this country. I would urge the Minister to define a certain percentage, specifically meant for the small-scale farmers, and another for those who are willing to borrow money from AFC.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, the other problem which the AFC faced in the past and is still facing now, is the issue of collateral for the money which is being lent to the farmers. Some of the farmers were given money, but there was no security for it. During this era of the NARC Government, we all know that the Minister for Lands and Housing has already declared title deeds mere pieces of paper. My question to the Minister for Agriculture is: Has he defined other means and mechanisms of lending to the farmers as security? We do not want to go into a situation where money will be given to the farmers and, at the end of the day, there is no security for such money.

That means the farmers will receive the money and will not redeem their mortgages.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, another institution which is being revived is the KFA and as Kenyans, we appreciate this. Farmers in the rural areas appreciate it. It will serve as the best way to subsidise on inputs. However, there is the problem of distribution of the inputs. We know most of the shops that used to retail fertilizers and seeds on behalf of KFA do not exist. The revival of KFA without retail shops will not serve the farmers' interests.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, some hon. Members have dwelt on certain crops which are grown in this country. One of the cash crops which has been generating a lot of revenue for this country is tea. At the moment, there is surplus tea in the world market. Most countries which usually import tea from this country have started importing very little of it. This is because we produce quality tea and as such, the big companies like Unilever are buying very little of our tea for blending purposes. Instead, they buy cheap tea from other countries and then do the blending. That means we will produce so much tea which will not be consumed in the world market.

The other problem is our source. When you go to big supermarkets like Nakumatt, you will find that most Kenyans are buying imported tea, like the Five Roses brand, instead of buying local tea. The Five Roses is not tea from this country. It is from South Africa. That means we are trying to create tea market for outsiders.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, the issue of exporting tea as a commodity should now come to an end. Other countries in the Far East, like Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Indonesia have diversified the manufacturing of tea. They have gone into making juice out of tea. In Japan, for example, tea is eaten like any other food and not drunk as we do in this country. This is not happening in this country. Therefore, it is high time the Ministry of Agriculture woke up to the realities of the day and brought in experts. The direction the tea industry is going is that producer countries must sensitise their people on consumption of tea. We must now promote our own tea. The only way to do it, is to encourage our youth to take iced tea. Iced tea cannot be taken unless we manufacture it here. If we do not do that, we will end up creating market for other countries. Whereas we are trying to say we should plant more tea, we should be asking ourselves whether we have market for that tea. If we do not do that, we will not have market for our tea.

The only way to deal with the issue of sub-standard tea is for the producer countries, including Kenya, to come up and say they cannot produce sub-standard tea. I have heard hon. Members of Parliament ask questions as to why we are allowing our tea to be used for blending purposes. These are issues which are beyond our control as Kenyans. The only way is to stop production of sub-standard tea. That will mean that those who buy sub-standard tea will have no tea to buy.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, the reason why our maize is going to waste while some of it kill our people in Ukambani is because of storage. Storage facilities in this country are in a pathetic condition. We have a lot of storage facilities which are under-utilised and not properly kept. It is high time the Ministry of Agriculture privatised the storage of maize in this country. That is the only way we can have proper storage. Private storage will necessitate insurance and, therefore, any damage that will be caused either to the crop or to Kenyans by virtue of any poor storage will be met by the insurance. The damage will also be minimised.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, the other issue is about prompt payment to maize farmers. Most people in my area have stopped growing maize because they deliver maize to the National Cereals and Produce Board (NCPB) and it takes them three to six months to be paid.

By the time they are being paid for their deliveries, they have already lost interest in their maize, whereas most of them depend on maize.

With those remarks, I beg to support.

Mr. Bett: Thank you, Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir. With a light touch, I am impressed by the mug you are using to take your watch. It is quite impressive for the Speaker.

QUORUM

Mr. Wamunyinyi: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, Sir. The Ministry of Agriculture is one of those Ministries that are very strategic to this country. It touches on our lives; food security, earnings, *et cetera*. We cannot move on with this kind of debate on such an important and strategic Ministry when we do not have quorum.

The Temporary Deputy Speaker (Mr. Khamasi): Mr. Wamunyinyi is right. There is no quorum. Ring the Division Bell!

(The Division Bell was rung)

The Temporary Deputy Speaker (Mr. Khamasi): Order! Order! We now have a quorum. You may proceed, Mr. Bett!

Mr. Bett: Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, when the Minister rises to reply to this debate, I would like to request him to clarify to this House, why it has become necessary for his Ministry to compulsorily acquire Wambugu and Waruhiu Farmers training centres. It is indicated in this document that the Ministry will spend Kshs80 million to compulsorily acquire those training centres. I wonder why the Ministry should do so, because at the moment, there are so many farmers training centres which are idle and rotting. We have Kabianga Farmers Training Centre and others in Kitale and Embu which are all under-utilised. I, therefore, see no reason whatsoever for the Ministry to acquire these facilities. If the reason for doing so is that the Government spent money to develop those facilities, in the first place, why did the Government have to spend money on facilities that did not belong to the public?

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, you will recall that, in the recent past, I brought a Question to this House, in which I sought to know why Kerenga Airstrip in Kericho was not being developed. The Minister for Roads and Public Works explained that they could not do so because the airstrip stands on private land. If that was the case for that airstrip, why does the same principle not apply for these training centres?

My colleagues have spoken eloquently on the importance of agriculture. It cannot be gainsaid that agriculture is, indeed, the backbone and engine of our economy. However, I wonder why we keep on referring to agriculture as the backbone of this country's economy, when we have never stopped for a moment to ask ourselves what backbone means. We have kept on referring to agriculture as the engine of the economy, but we have not stopped for a moment to ask ourselves what an engine is or what its role is. A backbone and an engine are key elements of the human body and a car respectively. Without those two, you cannot have a human body or a car.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, we always say all that, but at the end of the day, we allocate very little funds to the Ministry of Agriculture. The Departmental Committee on Agriculture, Lands and Natural Resources, which I chair, summoned the Minister for Finance and requested him to consider giving more funds to the Ministry of Agriculture. Despite that, the Ministry of Agriculture has been given a paltry amount of Kshs8 billion out of the total Budget of Kshs508 billion. That is, indeed, insulting to the agricultural sector, given that agriculture is supposed to support the economy in various ways.

Agriculture is the source of food, be it for local consumption or export. How will agriculture contribute to this worthy course of supplying food to the people of Kenya if we give the Ministry

very little money? Incidentally, it appears we are grateful to see our supermarkets full of farm produce from outside this country. One only needs to take a walk to any Nakumatt or Uchumi Supermarket to see fruits from Israel, Egypt and Australia on the shelves.

We have land and the capacity to grow those commodities, and yet we cannot grow our own. We have to import and sell them so proudly in our own supermarkets. Eggs are imported into this country from South Africa, yet there are so many women and youth groups in this country that can be encouraged to keep chicken and produce eggs. Where are the Ministry officials in charge of agricultural extension services?

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, the delivery of extension services in the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries Development is so wanting. The services are not there. The Departmental Committee on Agriculture, Lands and Natural Resources had the opportunity to tour this country and every time we arrived at any location, we did not find extension officers. If there are no extension officers in the field, how would a farmer know how to keep chicken and get eggs to sell them to supermarkets? How will they know that you have to till land to get potatoes to sell to supermarkets? We have allowed ourselves to be lazy as a country. The agricultural sector is a top notch employer in this country. Many people would be employed if we had taken this sector seriously.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, my colleagues have talked about value-addition. What is value-addition? It is progressing farm produce to the next stage of production. In other words, you increase the economic value of a produce by increasing its quality and in the process, you get by-products out of it. Let me give the example of wheat. The by-products of wheat are used to feed animals. If we do not add value to our wheat, or send our wheat out, we will not get the by-product, which will earn the farmer and our economy more money. Were we to do value-addition to our products, we would export our raw coffee and tea to London and receive them back in the form of beverages. When we visited the Botswana Meat Commission recently, we learnt that, that commission's meat is exported to Europe which is subsequently sold to us via Europe. On the other hand, Botswana receives our tea via Europe. I keep wondering why we cannot export our tea directly to Botswana and import that country's meat directly.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will now talk about the cotton industry. We have let our cotton sector to collapse by simply allowing and encouraging the use of *mitumba* clothes in this country. I know that so many people in this country depend on the *mitumba* business. However, by encouraging this business, we kill our cotton sector. We are killing the ginneries and discouraging those who buy cotton lint to make clothes. It is time this country took seriously the cotton sector.

Further, the Minister has alluded that there are so many Bills before us. I want to confirm to him that those Bills are before the Departmental Committee on Agriculture, Lands and Natural Resources; they were from the House. We have not received Bills directly from the Ministry of Agriculture. The Ministry take action as quickly as possible.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wonder whether we are serious about developing our horticultural sector. Are we serious about controlling environmental pollution? We are polluting our lakes indiscriminately. Companies in Naivasha are discharging a lot of chemicals into Lake Naivasha. Those chemicals kill fish, which we need for proper growth and generation of revenue for this country.

Another issue I would like to raise is that there are over 100 pieces of legislation, which give the Ministry of Agriculture different instructions. Could the Ministry, very quickly, consolidate these pieces of legislation into few which could be used to manage the agricultural affairs of this country?

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, a colleague of mine said here that there are some crops

which are grown mainly by women and others which are grown mainly by men. That is irrelevant to me. We need both the cereals and the traditional crops. It does not matter who grows which crop.

The other issue is to do with marketing of our produce. You cannot do proper marketing of farm produce if the roads are bad. The Ministry of Roads and Public Works should ensure that access roads are passable, so that we can transport our farm produce to the market. Also, the Ministry of Agriculture and that of Co-operative Development and Marketing must work together in marketing our farm produce.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, of what value are the Agricultural Society of Kenya (ASK) shows? Are we achieving anything through those shows? Are the exhibitions of any value to the people of this country? Is it not time that we changed the theme or the way we lay out our ASK shows, so that they may be of value to this country? If we continue that way, we will continue shouting at the end of every year that attendance to the ASK shows is becoming less every year. The issue is that, nobody likes monotony. We need to find a way of adding some value to the ASK shows, so that when a farmer attends an ASK show, he should be able to come out with something to implement when he gets home.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, I do not think the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries Development is serious on whether or not the Kenya Meat Commission (KMC) should re-open. The Committee on Agriculture, Lands and Natural Resources has been waiting for the Minister for Livestock and Fisheries Development to confirm whether KMC will be opened or not. I do not think KMC is economically viable.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, finally, I would like to talk about the issue of Genetically Modified (GM) foods. The Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI) has been quietly organising for the introduction of GM foods. That is a dangerous move which must be stopped.

With those few remarks, I beg to support.

Prof. Oniang'o: Thank you, Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, for giving me this opportunity to support this Vote. Agriculture is a very important sector. I also congratulate the Minister for what he is trying to do. I believe that agriculture can industrialise this country. But the Ministry cannot work in isolation. It cannot work alone. We are aware that they are co-operating with the Ministry of Co-operative Development and Marketing and Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries Development. But they seriously need to bring on board---

QUORUM

Mr. Wamunyinyi: Jambo la nidhamu, Bw. Naibu Spika wa Muda. Vile nilivyosema hapo awali, Hoja hii ni muhimu sana kwa nchi yetu ya Kenya. Hatuwezi kuendelea na majadiliano ikiwa hakuna idadi ya kutosha ya Wabunge katika Bunge hili.

The Minister for Gender, Sports, Culture and Social Services (Mr. Balala): On a point of order, Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Temporary Deputy Speaker (Mr. Khamasi): Order, Mr. Balala! You cannot raise a point of order when another hon. Member has raised one!

Mr. Wamunyinyi: Hajui! Haelewi kanuni za Bunge!

(Laughter)

The Temporary Deputy Speaker (Mr. Khamasi): Order, hon. Members! We do not have a quorum. Ring the Division Bell.

(The Division Bell was rung)

The Temporary Deputy Speaker (Mr. Khamasi): Order, hon. Members! We have attained a quorum now!

Proceed, Prof. Oniang'o!

Prof. Oniang'o: Thank you, Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir. I had risen to support this Motion. I said that the Minister has worked very hard and collaborated with the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries Development and Ministry of Co-operative Development and Marketing. But he needs to bring on board the Ministry of Water and Irrigation. We are aware that four-fifth of this country is either arid or semi-arid. We are also aware that with the current weather changes, some of the earlier productive areas are becoming dry and unproductive. Therefore, we must manage the water sector very carefully, so that we can continue to be productive in agriculture.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Minister also needs to bring on board the Ministry of Roads and Public Works. We are aware that many roads in our rural areas are impassable when it rains. Farmers may have their produce, but they are unable to ferry them to the market. When they do, it is too expensive for them and, therefore, production becomes very expensive. That is why we hear products being imported from as far away as South Africa. That is not acceptable.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, I want to touch on research. We do not seem to give enough credit and importance to agricultural research in this country. We are aware that they are getting more money this year than they have been getting in the past. But we are also aware that KARI gets a lot of donor funding and so long as you depend on donor-funding, you are going to be dictated on what to do. We would like the Government to put more money into research, remunerate staff properly and build facilities. We should also prioritise traditional foods. Kenyans are now eating more traditional foods. They are associating modern foods with modern illnesses that we have. In fact, Kenyans are now reverting to traditional foods knowing that they are not only foods, but also contain medicinal ingredients. We require KARI to put traditional foods on top of their agenda. The Ministry should encourage that by putting more money in KARI.

We are also aware that Kenyans are not continuing to just eat maize. Recently, it was reported that we are spending Kshs97 billion per year to import rice. That is a scandal. If Kenyans want to eat rice, we have areas that produce rice in this country. Our rice-growing areas in Mwea and Yala have not been handled well by this Ministry. So, I would like to urge the Ministry to look into that area and make sure that our farmers have an alternative way of making money by producing more rice.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, when I looked at the Budget, I was shocked to see what the Minister has brought here now as itemised Budget. I think they just lifted this from some past document, because it reads the same under each line; training, overseas travel, maintenance of facilities, vehicles overhaul, equipment purchase and so on. When we had the Strategy for Revitalisation of Agriculture (SRA) conference, we decided that the farmer will be the driver of the agricultural sector.

What I have seen now is that the Minister has only put Kshs5 million as seed funds to the farmers all over Kenya. That is not acceptable, and farmers are being hoodwinked. Farmers are producing for this country only because they have no alternative. I would like the Minister to put resources where his words are.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am aware that Kenya can improve on horticulture and floriculture. Kenya can produce more flowers in a friendly environment. I was recently in the Netherlands, and I visited a flower market. I even saw Kenyan flowers, but I was made to believe

that those flowers did not belong to Kenya. There is a market for flowers and we should encourage our people instead of accepting foreign companies here who do not care about the Kenyan environment but just siphon money overseas. I would like the Minister to tell us how many of those companies that export flowers overseas are actually Kenyan-owned. I would also like to know how many of them get ruined just because of an inefficient system of marketing. The Government needs to get in and facilitate this for the farmers.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would also like to talk about GM foods. Whether we like it or not, because of free trade, these foods are here with us. The Minister has to bring here a bill for legislation so that we can confront this situation. Avoiding to talk about it is not the answer. I would like to urge the Minister for Finance to allocate more money to agriculture for irrigation purposes.

With those remarks, I beg to support.

The Assistant Minister, Office of the President (Mr. M. Kariuki): Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, I also wish to support this Vote.

I wish to say from the outset that the Ministry of Agriculture has a lot of goodwill from this House. Every other Member who has contributed has questioned the amount of Kshs3 billion, and the observation is that it is too small to turn around our economy. Given that agriculture is the mainstay of our economy, I think we should have done much better by putting more money into this sector.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, first of all, I would like to say something on urban agriculture. Today, our universities are teaching a new subject called urban agriculture. We have seen, in agricultural shows, demonstrations of what urban agriculture entails. You find that compost is put in a gunny and *sukuma wiki* is planted from all corners of that gunny. The production from that small space occupied by that gunny is, perhaps, ten times the production of a normal crop in a farm. I think it is time we begin to think in that direction. We have a lot to borrow from countries like Japan who have small-holder agriculture. You will find that right in the balcony of their houses, they are planting vegetables which are sufficient for subsistence of particular families.

Now, given the concern expressed here about the sizes of our agricultural holdings, and the continuing sub-divisions, I think in terms of looking forward, we need to look at our local government legislation which prohibits agriculture within urban areas. I think we need to rethink whether we should not, in fact, be promoting agriculture within our compounds. Look at the amount of space we take planting flowers and all manner of trees around ourselves, when we could actually plant a fruit tree which would serve the double purpose of environment conservation, as well as being a source of food. Instead of planting too many flowers, we can plant *sukuma wiki* on our compounds on the measures that I have already pointed out here; urban agriculture. You will find that the urban population will have enough for themselves. I do not understand why we continue to teach this course in our universities when our laws prohibit planting of crops within urban areas. This is a new direction which we should be looking forward to in terms of food sufficiency and strategy for ensuring that we have sufficient food reserves.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, the point has already been made that there are too many legislations touching on agriculture. We have pointed out this before, but nothing seems to be coming out of the Ministry. It is time we have one consolidated Act, putting all aspects of agriculture together. It is much easier to apply and supervise under one legislation, than having 100 pieces of legislation dealing with different aspects of agriculture. I hope the Minister will, before the next Budget, put something in place so that we can move forward.

In the area of research, I would like to acknowledge one fact. In the last one year, the Ministry has fought a very good war. They have been able to reclaim the Kenya Seed Company

back to public ownership, and I think that is commendable. This was a company riddled with all manner of corruption. If you wanted to grow seeds for purposes of seedlings, all you needed to do was make friends with the people who were running that particular organisation. Many rich Kenyans in this country have been growing substandard seeds merely because of the patronage aspect between them and the management of the Kenya Seed Company. I think the Minister must step in now to find out who are these people who were growing seeds under the old management of the company. We need to scrutinise that. As our farmers continue to plant their seeds, particularly the maize crop, you will find it going from bad to worse. This form of corruption needs to be weeded out. If we are going to have demonstration farms where quality seeds are grown, there must be proper supervision, and not merely to enrich an individual.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, when you look at the Kenya Seed Company, you cannot escape looking at an organisation called (Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Services (KEPHIS)). This is an organisation that has worked very closely with the Kenya Seed Company, and it has tried to preserve the monopoly of Kenya Seed Company in the market, such that they have turned hostile to all potential competitors.

In particular, I have in mind a company like Faida Seeds Company, which is 40 per cent owned by the World Bank, with 60 per cent local ownership. They have had serious problems with the Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS) because as they plant their seeds, the procedures laid down in the Act are such that the plant has to be overseen as it grows every three weeks and every four months. Somebody has to inspect the plant. They have frustrated potential competitors into the seed market by ensuring that they do not oversee what they are doing. The Minister needs to step in, perhaps to restructure the KEPHIS management, so that we can have people who have the welfare of this country at heart, and people who will move away from the monopoly of the Kenya Seeds Company in the seed market.

I would also like to appreciate, like the previous speakers, the efforts being made to put the Kenya Farmers Association (KFA) back to its feet. Indeed, the KFA is the heartbeat of agriculture in this country. The services that were being extended to farmers through the KFA have been lost in the last ten years. I commend the Government for having put in Kshs2 billion in the revival efforts at the KFA. We hope that in the fullness of time, the branches across the country will be operational, and the farmers will benefit in terms of credit and marketing from the KFA. That is a step in the right direction.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me also raise some concerns about the question of subsidy. The global village is not level in terms of competition, and more particularly in agricultural products. The European Union continues to subsidise their farmers in a very big way. They continue to give them US\$2 per cow per day and on many other agricultural products. That is why, if you go to a supermarket today, you will find that it is much cheaper to buy butter from Denmark than the local butter. The cost of producing butter here; the cost of animal feeds, is much higher than in Denmark. If a farmer is going to make profitable returns, he will be forced to push the price down in order to compete with other agricultural products in the external market.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, we must continue with our efforts, perhaps, to raise tariffs on agricultural imports from the advanced countries that continue to subsidise their farmers. That is the only way that we will be able to ensure that our local farming community is safe. There is not fair competition as long as the West continues to subsidise their farmers. In that regard, it is important that the Government disregards some of the conditionalities that we continue to receive from the multilateral donors, the IMF and the World Bank.

QUORUM

Mr. Wamunyinyi: On a point of order, Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir. I want to bring two issues to the attention of the Chair: First, I do not think that hon. Kajwang is properly dressed to be in this House. Secondly, it appears we do not have a quorum in the House.

The Temporary Deputy Speaker (Mr. Khamasi): Order! Hon. Kajwang, can you stand up? We want to see you.

Mr. Kajwang: Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am properly dressed.

The Temporary Deputy Speaker (Mr. Khamasi): I think so. Can we continue?

The Assistant Minister, Office of the President (Mr. M. Kariuki): Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think the second request can be disregarded.

Mr. Wamunyinyi: On a point of order, Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member has said that my second request should be disregarded. This is not a request. I am drawing the attention of the Chair to the fact that we do not have a quorum in the House. That cannot be disregarded. In fact, hon. Kajwang is wearing a short-sleeved shirt!

The Temporary Deputy Speaker (Mr. Khamasi): Order, hon. Wamunyinyi!

*(Mr. Wamunyinyi stood up
in his place)*

Order, hon. Wamunyinyi! Thou shall obey without question what the Chair has ordered you to do. When I say "order", you are supposed to sit down.

We do not have a quorum. Ring the Division Bell!

(The Division Bell was rung)

The Temporary Deputy Speaker (Mr. Khamasi): Order, hon. Members! We now have a quorum. You may proceed, Mr. M. Kariuki.

The Assistant Minister, Office of the President (Mr. M. Kariuki): Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, the multilateral donors have been laying conditions to the developing countries on how to borrow their money. Among the conditionalities is that the borrowers should not subsidise their farmers, and that competition must be fair, but they are not reciprocating. They continue to subsidise their farmers while they continue to tell us not to subsidise our farmers. Subsequently, it has become very difficult for an ordinary farmer in a developing country to make reasonable returns by way of farming.

Something has been mentioned about storage facilities. We had a tragedy this year when a number of Kenyans lost their lives because of maize which was not properly stored and dried. Besides the national storage facilities that we have, the Ministry has a duty, through its extension services, to

ensure that the small-scale farmers have proper storage facilities. Some of the maize which is finding itself in the market is certainly not coming from the National Cereals and Produce Board (NCPD). It is coming from small-scale farmers who are not able to preserve the maize from moisture and, consequently, this has endangered the health of our people. This is an important service that requires to be addressed by the Ministry of Agriculture.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to enhancing our strategic food reserve, we must double our efforts, because we now have a very good weather, and crop production is promising. I hope that the Minister for Agriculture will take the advantage of this weather to ensure that we get a good harvest. If we get a good harvest, we should make sure that our stores are full with food

reserve. The strategic food reserve should be kept under guard for 24 hours.

It was very embarrassing last year to see that even after a good harvest in the year 2003, we had a short spell of drought, and we began to import food. We wondered what had happened to our strategic food reserve. This is an area which we need to give more attention to. We cannot be relying on the vagaries of weather. When there is drought we import food, and when the weather is good, we waste and squander harvests that we get.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is a good Vote, save for the fact that it is too small.

With those few remarks, I beg to support.

Mr. Wamunyinyi: Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, thank you very much for giving me this opportunity to contribute to this very important Motion. Agriculture is one of the very strategic Ministries in our country, and must be given due consideration during resource allocations.

As we debate this Vote, I wish to point out that I do not really see any meaningful reforms being undertaken in the sugar industry in this country. Our four-year heavy duty imports from the COMESA countries will end soon, and merchants will be allowed to import sugar duty free.

Archbishop Ondiek: On a point of order, Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Temporary Deputy Speaker (Mr. Khamasi): What is it, Archbishop Ondiek?

Archbishop Ondiek: Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, I do not think we have quorum in the House.

Laughter

The Temporary Deputy Speaker (Mr. Khamasi): Archbishop Ondiek, we do have quorum.

Archbishop Ondiek: No, Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir.

(Mr. Cheboi started walking away)

The Temporary Deputy Speaker (Mr. Khamasi): Order! Order! Mr. Cheboi, could you, please, go back to your position. You cannot walk out of the Chamber when I am on my feet.

I will ask the Clerk-at-the-Table to tell me how many hon. Members are in here.

*(The Clerk-at-the-Table
consulted with the Chair)*

The Temporary Deputy Speaker (Mr. Khamasi): Archbishop Ondiek, you cannot mislead the Chair. Could you, please, apologise?

Archbishop Ondiek: Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, I do not see why we should not count the hon. Members in the Chamber because they are only 28.

The Temporary Deputy Speaker (Mr. Khamasi): You cannot argue with the Chair. All I have asked you to do is to apologise.

Archbishop Ondiek: Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, I apologise.

Mr. Wamunyinyi: Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is why we should be serious in the House. Somebody like Archbishop Ondiek should not peddle lies here and mislead the House.

It is important for the Ministry of Agriculture to put in place reforms geared towards improving the Sugar Industry. Unless this is done, the sugar industry will collapse.

Mr. Phogiso: On a point of order, Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Temporary Deputy Speaker (Mr. Khamasi): Order, Mr. Wamunyinyi. What is it, Mr. Phogisio?

Mr. Phogisio: Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, is it in order for the hon. Member on the Floor to use unparliamentary language against Archbishop Ondiek? If you heard him well, he said that the Archbishop was peddling lies. Is he in order to use that kind of language?

Mr. Wamunyinyi: Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to withdraw what I said and apologise. What I meant was that he was attempting to mislead the House.

The issue of sugar imports in this country must be taken seriously. This is one issue which, if not taken seriously, the industry will collapse. The cost of sugar production is very high. When the concession of four years by COMESA countries is over, the sugar industry is going to collapse. I am saying so because the sugar that is being imported at high tariffs is still very cheap. In fact, even if a higher duty was charged on it, importers would still be making a lot of profit. They are in a booming business. They are making abnormal profits. Now, after the four years, member countries of COMESA will be allowed to bring in very cheap sugar, and the sugar industry will collapse.

The Ministry of Agriculture should be at the forefront in advising citizens of this country, particularly those from sugar-cane farming areas, to diversify their farming. Unless something else happens, the sugar industry will collapse and farmers will face difficulties. It is up to the Ministry of Agriculture to put in place the necessary reforms to ensure that costs of production are brought down. Farmers should be allowed to access cheap fertilizers. The cost of transport and taxes should also be reduced. Those who are doing sugar-cane farming, including the Archbishop - I know he is a sugar-cane farmer - should be advised. Those in sugar-cane farming in Nyanza and Western Provinces should be advised to grow something else like coffee, tea and other crops. I am sure that if the current trend continues, the sugar industry will not survive.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, cotton does very well in our region. It is one of the crops we had in the past, but due to bad management and corruption, it collapsed. You recall that even Malakisi Ginnery collapsed a long time ago in the hands of a few individuals of the previous Government. I will always agree with you on the point about people who were rolled over. The people who served in the previous Government presided over the collapse of the economy of this country. I know the Chair agrees with me on this point.

The Temporary Deputy Speaker (Mr. Khamasi): Mr. Wamunyinyi, please, do not involve me or the Chair in your contribution. Those are your views and the Chair has absolutely nothing to do with them.

Proceed.

Mr. Wamunyinyi: Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, you understand what I mean.

The issue is that we must reform in totality. Even the people who joined us from the previous Government must also reform. If they cannot reform, I do not see why they should be retained in the Government.

*[The Temporary Deputy Speaker
(Mr. Khamasi) left the Chair]*

[Mr. Deputy Speaker took the Chair]

I also understand from recent developments - I think some of us should oppose things very strongly - somebody only understands the opposing language. I think we should begin a new stand by opposing this Motion. We should not go on like this. We fight to see that the Government pushes through what it wants or attains its goals, but those who oppose it are the good boys. So, we must rethink our position.

The Agricultural Finance Corporation (AFC) used to help farmers in the past. The Ministry of Agriculture lost its AFC office premises in Bungoma. If you want to improve farming by helping small farmers access loans from AFC, then the Government should invest more money into the corporation. We have both sugar-cane and maize farmers in Bungoma. I want to urge the Ministry of Agriculture to consider reopening the AFC office in Bungoma immediately, so that farmers there can also benefit from the money which is put in.

The other issue is that of dairy farmers. All the cattle dips have collapsed. We have been talking to the Minister for Livestock and Fisheries Development, who is sitting next to the Minister for Agriculture, so that he can correct the situation. For how long shall we continue talking about this issue before something is done? If you want to encourage dairy farmers, then you must rehabilitate cattle dips, which collapsed a long time ago. We must make a difference! We must not, as I said, continue practising things that took place in the previous Government.

With those few remarks, I beg to support.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: We only have two minutes left before I call upon the Mover to respond.

Mr. Biwott: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir. I will move straight on to what I think matters. This country has been relying on agriculture as its mainstay of the economy. Agricultural production accounts for 80 per cent of our economy. On the other hand, 80 per cent of our population lives in poverty. Those people who depend on agriculture can barely survive because we do not have a comprehensive policy to assist the sector to produce high value crops and increase productivity per unit. We still experience famine regularly owing to drought. We have not worked out a comprehensive plan to deal with the matter once and for all. We have not concentrated on minor and major irrigation schemes. We still have the menace of food insecurity, the problem of strategic food reserves and food which is poisonous. One wonders why Ukambani is affected by the problem of food poisoning all the time. No one has conducted research work to find out what goes wrong and why this problem affects Ukambani only.

The other point which needs to be addressed is the rural road network. We need to have airstrips which are serviceable in the rural areas. The farmer at the grassroots level cannot survive. The question of land title deeds is extremely important because without it, one has no security of ownership of land. Without ownership--

I beg to support.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, Mr. Biwott! Time is up! I now call upon the Minister to reply.

QUORUM

Mr. Cheboi: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir. Before you call upon the Mover to respond, I think we have a problem with quorum. We did not give the pyrethrum sector money anyway! It is the problem of quorum!

Mr. Deputy Speaker: What does pyrethrum have to do with quorum? All right, ring the Division Bell.

(Loud consultations)

(The Division Bell was rung)

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members, owing to lack of quorum, we will interrupt the business of the House. The House is, therefore, adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, 28th July, 2005, at 2.30 p.m The House rose at 5.10 p.m

