

PARLIAMENT OF KENYA

THE SENATE

THE HANSARD

Thursday, 27th September, 2018

*(Convened via Kenya Gazette Notice
No.9567 of 19th September, 2018)*

*The House met at Uasin Gishu County Assembly
Chamber, Eldoret, at 2.30 p.m.*

[The Speaker (Hon. Lusaka) in the Chair]

PRAYER

Sen. Olekina: He had already chosen me.

The Speaker (Hon. Lusaka): Yes, I had given Sen. Olekina a chance.

(Laughter)

Let us use three minutes, so that we have more people contributing.

Sen. Olekina: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to support this Petition. I have always been an extremist when it comes to freedom and liberty; issues of justice and environment.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, when we talk about environment in this country, it behooves us, as this generation, to realize that this is the only time in history that we have a Government that is willing to protect our water catchment areas. We had a big issue in Nairobi when people made a lot of noise as to why the bypass should go through the National Park. Now, we have issues with the bypass here. However, when we are in this House and we are talking about issues of water catchment areas, it is highly hypocritical when we try to make it a red herring so as to divert attention and start focusing on other issues.

What is clear, Mr. Speaker, Sir, is that this House must always adhere to the protection of the environment. When we deviate from the main point---

(Loud consultations)

The Speaker (Hon. Lusaka): Order, Sen. Olekina. Stick to the Petition!

(Several Senators stood up in their places)

Sen. Wambua: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, Sir.

Sen. Olekina: Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is not fair to rise a point of order when I am focusing on the Petition. What is the point of order?

The Speaker (Hon. Lusaka): Order, Members.

What is your point of order, Sen. Wambua?

Sen. Wambua: Mr. Speaker, Sir, is Sen. Olekina in order in terms of being relevant to the issue we are discussing?

The Speaker (Hon. Lusaka): Order, Hon. Members! That is why I was cautioning him that he was veering off the subject matter of the Petition. Please, try to stick to the issue.

Sen. Olekina: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir. I stand guided. It is good for us never to have any double standards in terms of focusing on the environment. When we talk about the bypass, it affects the environment in one way or the other. People are moved from the way they used to live; maybe they had planted their trees and all that stuff. All I am saying is that we are happy and very lucky that we have a Government that is protecting the environment and taking the steps that have never been taken by any other government before; not Mzee Kenyatta's, Moi's or even Kibaki's. However, His Excellency Uhuru Kenyatta's Government is actually taking the first steps of protecting the environment.

We talk about these bypasses because they affect the environment. Therefore, when we talk about issues about the Mau Forest---

Sen. Wambua: On a point of order Mr. Speaker, Sir.

Sen. Olekina: It is not for us to deviate. Let us focus on the environment.

Hon. Senators: Point of Order! Point of Order!

The Speaker (Hon. Lusaka): What is your point of order Sen. Wambua?

Sen. Wambua: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the petitioners have raised specific issues where they accuse the Government on matters of compensation. The Senator for Narok should actually declare whether he is in support of or against the Petition.

The Speaker (Hon. Lusaka): Sen. Olekina, I am giving you half a minute, because your time is over.

Sen. Olekina: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir. I support the Petition in as much as it protects the environment and focuses on the issues raised. The issue of compensation is broad. We are talking about compensating people and identifying whether they are the rightful owners or not. I am, therefore, totally relevant in what I am saying.

The Speaker (Hon. Lusaka): Your time is up, Sen. Olekina.

Proceed, Sen. Mutula Kilonzo Jnr.

should be encouraged to join alternative institutions to be trained so that in future they will become useful members of the society.

Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, industrialised countries such as China, Japan and the USA started from somewhere. At Independence, we were almost at the same level, particularly with China. They ensured that they took education that encouraged industrialisation right into the villages. Right now, China is an area we can call an 'IMF' to various countries in Africa. Many African countries get loans from China. We are now going to China to obtain funding for various development projects.

Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, I was encouraged today to learn that our Government has already set aside funds for students who join TIVETs; vocational institutions, because school fees is a challenge. We have heard from the Chair of the

Committee on Education that there is HELB funding from Kshs30,000 up to Kshs40,000 from the Government that can be accessed by students who join polytechnics. Therefore, we should encourage our youths to join such institutions to help our country develop into an industrialised nation.

I am sure our country is grappling with the issue of unemployment. The reason why there is a lot of unemployed youth is because we have not redirected the skills. We have not taken our youth to courses where they can be employed in the villages. When you talk of agriculture, you require skills. We are talking about repairing of vehicles and motorcycles in the villages. Of late, the motorcycle business in this country is booming. In any case, we require people to work there.

When we visited Kisii County, we went to a Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) Unit. We realised that the individual who was operating that particular hospital had acquired skills through vocational training. In fact, we were surprised that he was one of the best. We thought he had been trained in a university but we realised that he went to a vocational training college and became one of the best MRI operator in that particular hospital. I think there are many other areas.

When we go to the villages, as leaders, we should visit schools and carry out mentorship programmes to mentor our youth. Immediately, they get out of schools, they do not have to wait to be admitted to the universities. By the time they finish Form Four, they will be aware that there is another alternative way to train and be useful members of the society. We are praying that we will have a polytechnic in every location.

With those few remarks, I beg to support.

Sen. Pareno: Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, thank you for giving me this opportunity. I rise to support this Motion. I would like to say that we do not have a choice in view of the systems that are being put in place courtesy of devolution. I say this because right now, there are many challenges that come with development, new things and devolution. We can only address these challenges with innovations and creative ways of handling small problems in view of development. I also think that---

Sen. (Dr.) Zani: On point of order, Mr. Temporary Speaker. I stand under Standing Order No.106, to request that we reduce time for debate to five minutes to allow more Members to contribute because there is a lot of interest on this Motion.

Sen. Olekina: On a point of order!

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. Lelegwe): Order, Sen. Olekina. Before the Chair rules, you cannot stand on another point of order.

Proceed.

Sen. Olekina: Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, I know it is not good to come before you but I am a little bit confused when it comes to the issue of this Standing Order. I do not know whether it applies to limiting debate when debate has already started.

Yesterday, this issue came up but it is good for us to be procedural. The Standing Order No.106(3) states as follows:-

“A Motion under paragraph (2) shall not be made in the course of the debate to which it refers unless it is moved after the adjournment of such debate and before the debate is resumed.”

Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, I know the decision is yours but it is important for us to be guided in terms of how we apply the Standing Orders.

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. Lelegwe): Hon. Senators, with regard to the Standing Order raised by Sen. (Dr.) Zani, it does not require the House to reduce the debating time to five minutes. However, if that is the mood of the House, we can still reduce time to five minutes per a Member.

Sen. Pareno, please proceed.

Sen. Pareno: Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, I was saying that because of development as a result of devolution, then we need to get skilled labour in order to match the kind of work that we expect from counties for us to develop.

Yesterday and even this morning, as we were coming from the hotel to this place, I saw a young man along the road side who seemed to be of unsound mind, and I was touched. The young man was seated by the road side with a rope that he was using to make baskets and I kept wondering if somebody of unsound mind can sit somewhere and do the kind of work that I saw him do, what would happen if we did a lot of input in terms of empowering our youth?

Since we came, the man has always been there. He seems to be doing a lot of work without talking to anybody. Later on, I approached the Senator for Uasin Gishu and asked whether the man needs rehabilitation or some sort of training or if he can be empowered through training in some of the technical institutions that we are talking about. Many of our youth are unemployed. I am sure that having tertiary institutions is the way to go for us to develop.

Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, the polytechnics or vocational training centres are a bridge or ladder for people to better their trainings, improve their credentials and move from one stage to another. You can imagine somebody who dropped out of school at the Form Four and had nowhere to go because they did not qualify to join university. The polytechnics are a ladder up the scale for people to improve on their studies.

You also notice that in the polytechnics, the courses are designed in a way that they are short and cheap. The courses are actually demand-driven. If you see that an industry needs a particular skill, you go for it and train people who will be out into the market within a short time. Most of the times, because they are demand-driven, the market or job opportunity is there. Instead of having many youth out there or sitting at home with no employment because they did not make it to the next level of education, it is time for us to tap and ensure that counties have polytechnics.

We should have polytechnics in each county and if possible, down to sub-counties. This is because we call them village polytechnics. Can we actualise that and ensure we have village polytechnics that will help our people to acquire the necessary skills? These polytechnics and tertiary institutions combine theory and practicals. I have always wondered why I was taught about Napoleon II in Form Six. I am a lawyer and have never, along the way in my practice, applied what we were taught in History. I keep asking myself why I was taught about Napoleon II and other things. Why was I not just taught how to behave in a court, read the law and apply it? Some of these things are designed in such a way that they address the actual need that a community requires or what we need in development. That is better for us to move.

Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, if you have visited any of these polytechnics, you will also notice that they have small classes, and not big ones of over 200 or 300 students.

Therefore, somebody gets actual theory and practical training; it is a one-on-one engagement with the trainer. In the end, one will give the best to the students.

This is a good idea and I support this Motion. Some counties have polytechnics and tertiary institutions, but others do not have them at all. Can we start with the ones that do not have at all?

Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, I support.

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. Lelegwe): Hon. Senators, I now reduce the time for contributing to this Motion to ten minutes.

Sen. (Rev.) Waqo: Thank you, Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, for allowing me to add my voice to this important Motion on the establishment of youth polytechnics in our counties.

I support the Motion and thank the sponsor because it touches on each one of us, as leaders.

Again, we all know the dilemma that we are all in as a nation. We are proud to have many youth in our country, but, again, as leaders, we are saddened that a large number of them are unemployed. At the end of the day, they are frustrated because they have no hope for the future and no one to guide them. If we sit here and deliberate on important issues, without thinking of the young people who are unable to go beyond Class Eight, then we will not be doing any justice.

My reason for supporting this Motion is because of our own experience. We know that almost half the number of the pupils who enroll in Class One drop out when they finish Class Eight or even before that. This exposes them to many challenges and also promotes poverty in our country. Many of us come from marginalised areas. It is even worse for students from those areas because the challenges that they go through are huge compared to those that come from urban areas. When our girls do not go beyond Class Eight, they are exposed to early marriages. Sometimes because our area is known for tribal clashes, they lose their husbands even when they are young and become so hopeless in life. If we can ensure that polytechnics are established in all counties, we will empower the girls and boys to depend on themselves.

Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, many parents invest a lot in their children. We should not call some of our children or students failures. This is the language that we use back in the villages. If one has not gone to high school or is unable to join high school, we call them failures in life. That is in itself traumatising, it brings down their hopes and frustrates them. As a result, many young people have committed suicide and parents who have invested in them from Class One to Class Eight have lost a lot. Their hope of one day their son or daughter giving them support is shattered. Therefore, the establishment of polytechnic is something that we all need to support and stand for.

Establishment of polytechnics in every county is an important thing, but we also know that in all the counties there is a lot of corruption. Tenders are awarded to friends and relatives. Sometimes, those in offices end up benefitting from this. They then do some shoddy work which cannot help the people on the ground. As we establish the polytechnics, it is good for us to also stress on equipping and maintaining them, so that the resources that the country is putting into establishment of polytechnics will be felt even 20 years from today. As a nation, we are known for just doing things for the sake of it and not maintaining.

[The Temporary Speaker (Sen. Lelegwe) left the Chair]

[The Temporary Speaker (Sen. Pareno) in the Chair]

Again, I urge young people that when they get the opportunity to join the polytechnics, they should give all their attention to what they are taught. If they do this, by the time they leave, they will be able to support themselves and take care of their families. Today, many of us are complaining that young people are jobless, but in every county--- Even as we were coming here, a young man was asking us to help him get a job. Anywhere you go, that is the plea. That is the dilemma that our young people are in. I suggest that as we empower and encourage them to go to polytechnics and study, let us also think of some funds, not only to educate them, but also to even start small businesses. This will ensure that they do not go back to the streets or remain hopeless. Let us ensure that they can go back, form groups and start their own businesses, so that they can stand on their own and support their families. If we invest in their education and cannot support them to start businesses, then our investment is useless and may not help them a lot. So, let us think of how we can empower them and walk with them.

Our young people today are missing a lot in life because they have no role models. We all condemn our young girls because of moving with old men, who misuse them and, at the end of the day, frustrate them. This is because they have no alternatives. We, as mothers, as we discourage them from doing that, what alternative can we give to our boys so that they are not misused by older ladies? It is high time for us, as a nation and as leaders, to think of how we can deliver our young people from the problems and challenges they are facing today. If we cannot do that, this nation will suffer. We are already suffering and we will suffer even more.

Thank you, Madam Temporary Speaker.

I beg to support.

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. Pareno): Let us have Sen. Olekina.

Sen. Olekina: Madam Temporary Speaker, I thank you for this opportunity. I rise to support the Motion by the Senator for Uasin Gishu on the establishment of youth polytechnics in counties.

I hold the view that, first of all, before we establish these youth polytechnics in these counties, we must carry out skills audit and align it with the current development in this country.

This morning, we went through audit queries relating to the County Government of West Pokot.

When I look at this Motion, it is proposing that we should establish youth polytechnics in every ward. Sometimes I think we aim too much without understanding the reality of things.

Last year, a county such as West Pokot only managed to collect Ksh80, 000,000. They were allocated Ksh80 billion by the Equitable Share Fund. Before thinking about establishing a youth polytechnic in each ward, we must ask ourselves what industries are there. Do we have any industries where these youth will get local jobs once we train them?

Madam Temporary Speaker, Sen. Wetangula spoke about the oil industry that is very key. Even in universities, we are now training doctors and engineers. However, when we look at the oil industry, for every one engineer, we need 12 technicians who can only be trained in these youth polytechnics. If we decide that every ward will have a youth polytechnic, I think we will be missing the point.

It is my humble submission that we carry out a skills audit in every county. We have masons and everyone here is constructing; I do so almost on a daily basis maybe it is a fence, a small classroom. I just get a few people who are masons and some helpers. The first thing we need to do is to carry out this skills audit, since this issue of polytechnics is a devolved function. Let us, for example, see how many masons, carpenters and plumbers we have in Narok County before we decide to youth polytechnics there. They can be career driven.

I would support county governments doing a career day to find out the number of youths who are graduating from primary schools and then end up being *boda boda* riders. We should also find out from them what they want to do. We have one very good youth polytechnic which is about three kilometres from my home. It is a structure that was constructed by the county government, but they missed an opportunity to approach more investors to build students' hostels. If we identify a location where there is no private land that can be used to build students' hostels, then the county government should be prepared to either build the houses or offer land so that the students who will be going there can find a place to live and learn effectively.

We were told that the Higher Education Loans Board (*HELB*) provides about Kshs40, 000 per year as loans to these students. What happens to those youth who were given Kshs40,000 and were trained somewhere in West Pokot and graduated but could not secure employment? There are so many youths in Narok? How will they ever pay that money? As we propose to bring all these things, we need to realign our existing resources. We should look at how we can help these youth.

One of the biggest problems that we have in this country is that every county wants to copy something that looks interesting. We were ashamed today when we looked at the audit query of West Pokot County Government. It seemed as if the former Governor wanted to develop a city or a country because he had ardhhi house and maji house yet they do not have water. Right now, the funds sent to the county governments are being reduced yet we are telling the county governments that they must build youth polytechnics. If that is what we want them to do, we must ensure that there is a fund which caters for the construction of those youth polytechnics during the Division of Revenue Bill. We also know that there is donor funding that supports these youth polytechnics.

I support this but we should not do it blindly. Let us look at the skills that we need. Once we sort out the issue of the Petroleum Bill and Energy Bill, we will have more investors coming and there will be need for more plumbers and electricians. We can then introduce those courses in the polytechnics that already exist.

Finally, it will be wrong for us to ignore the existing institutions. Some of us in this House benefitted from the Kenya Polytechnic and Mombasa Polytechnic. Those institutions changed from being polytechnics to universities. That whole scope of work changed. Therefore, let us do an audit before we move forward. I support this Motion but it does not make sense to say that we should build youth polytechnics in every single

ward. Counties that are collecting very little money should only build two polytechnics until they are able to generate more revenue. That will help us to reduce the burden on the other counties or not to have a situation where the money that goes in cannot support the entire population.

With those few remarks, I support.