

**IN THE FIRST SESSION OF THE THIRD PARLIAMENT OF THE
FOURTH REPUBLIC OF GHANA**

**EIGHTH REPORT OF THE APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE ON
DEPUTY MINISTERIAL NOMINATIONS**

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Appointments Committee, appointed under Article 103 of the Constitution and Standing Order No. 172 (1) and (2) has the authority/mandate to consider nominations for Deputy Ministerial and such other appointments made by the President as specified, in this instance under Article 79 of the Constitution for prior approval of Parliament.

Pursuant to Standing Orders 156 and 172 and Article 79 of the Constitution, the Rt. Hon. Speaker of Parliament, on Wednesday 28th February 2001, referred nominations made by His Excellency the President for Deputy Ministerial Appointments to the Committee for consideration and report.

The Committee, having held a number of sittings in the course of the recess and in the Second Meeting of the First Session of Parliament to consider the nomination of Hon. Benjamin Osei-Kuffour, reports as follows:

2.0 NOMINEE CONSIDERED

Hon. Benjamin Osei-Kuffour - MP & Dep. Minister for
Lands, Forestry and Mines
- designate

3.0 PROCEDURE ADOPTED

To enable the Committee decide on the suitability of Hon. Benjamin Osei-Kuffour, the time-tested method of getting an informed opinion as to the competence, eligibility and experience of the nominee was applied.

As has been the practice, the media was used as a conduit to solicit public opinion in the form of submissions on the suitability or otherwise of the nominee.

The nominee, on appearing before the Committee at the public hearing session, was extensively interviewed on oath.

4.0 OBSERVATIONS

At the vetting of Hon. Benjamin Osei-Kuffuor, a member of the Committee put it straight to the nominee for his confirmation or denial an allegation that he, the nominee was "sacked" from his previous employment which the Committee later found to be Mim Timber Company, for "stealing".

The allegation caused a stir initially for the Committee itself. The Hon. Osei-Kuffour denied the allegation and went further to state that, circumstances then prevailing in the Company compelled him to leave on his own.

The Committee subsequently discussed in detail issues relating to the allegation and the nominee's denial of same. The Hon. Member who made the allegation later made available to the Committee through the Chairman, photocopies of some correspondence purportedly relating to the circumstances that led to the end of the nominee's service with his former employers.

The Committee invited officials of the Company to Accra to bring the nominee's personal record/file. An official brought the file. He told the Chairman that he was not in a position to speak to the file and that he would prefer the Human Resource Manager to come and answer questions if any.

He at the same time pointed out that the said Manager was no longer at post because Government had divested the Mim Timber Company.

The Committee then on its own examined and read through the nominee's file. As a matter of fact the three copies of the

documents that the member provided to the Committee were on that file. The documents were closely examined by the Committee with particular interest taken in a letter headed 'SUMMARY DISMISSAL' which was purported to have been written to the nominee, dated 10th February 1989.

The copy of the letter, which was without the Company's letterhead had indicated that Hon. Benjamin Osei-Kuffuor was being summarily dismissed for what was described in the letter as a "case of fraud" relating to an over-payment.

The records also showed that Mr. Osei-Kuffuor explained the action as an over-sight and indicated his preparedness to refund the over-paid ₵10,000 to the Company.

The Committee took judicial notice of the contents of the documents and subsequently, invited the nominee to react to the issues and allegations made in the correspondence.

In response to questions posed by Committee Members, the nominee admitted appearing before a Management Committee but maintained that he was not dismissed and that he never received any dismissal letter. As stated earlier, he quit the job on his own due to unfavourable circumstances then prevailing

within and outside the Company and not upon receipt of any dismissal letter as has been alleged.

Asked whether this allegation had not come up earlier before his nomination, Mr. Osei-Kuffour indicated that he had had wind of it in a form of rumours during the year 2000 electioneering campaign but he did not consider it serious since he thought it was just one of the smear campaign tactics by his opponents to cause his defeat.

There were two strong positions during the Committee's close sitting sessions. One line of Members' opinion doubted the allegation that the nominee was "sacked" for "stealing".

Important note was taken of the fact that the nominee insisted that he never received any correspondence in respect of his alleged dismissal as contained in the letter.

It was further argued that since there was nothing to prove that he did actually receive the said dismissal letter Members cannot conclude that he lied on oath. That letter might not have reached him.

Mr. Osei-Kuffour also justified the reason for his preparedness to refund the money over-paid, as referred to in the letter by

stating that, although he did not personally handle the said money, being the superior officer-in-charge of the organisation of the function, he felt obliged to do so.

The second line of Members' opinion on the other hand, expressed disbelief in the answers and explanation given by Mr. Osei-Kuffour. They argued that being a senior officer at that time, the nominee needed to have set a good example by giving appropriate notice – writing a resignation letter before quitting his job. Thus, they found the nominee's explanation for his conduct which some even described as "Anansesem" as not tangible.

At this stage, Members thoroughly discussed the matter and gave their considered opinion that, this particular incident occurred in 1989 - about 13 years ago and, even if it were true and the nominee had been tried and convicted at that time, he would have after 10 years of conviction been eligible for holding public office/position.

In evidence of another allegation that the nominee did not possess the University degree indicated on his Curriculum Vitae, Mr. Osei-Kuffour submitted his Certificate which showed a B.Sc. (Hons) degree in Administration (Accounting option) to the

Committee for its scrutiny. The nominee therefore convinced the Committee that he possesses the said qualification.

5.0 RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

In view of the fact that the Committee did not have any proof of delivery or receipt of the said dismissal letter as insisted by the nominee, some Members conclude that Hon. Osei-Kuffour did not lie to the Committee when he said he was not "sacked" from his previous employment.

The Committee, therefore, by a majority decision recommends that the House approves the nomination of Hon. Benjamin Osei-Kuffour for the Deputy Ministerial appointment.

Respectfully submitted.



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HON. F.W.A. BLAY
1ST DEPUTY SPEAKER &
CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE



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PEACE A. FIAWOYIFE (Ms)
CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE

24TH JULY 2001