

TRIBUTE BY PARLIAMENT IN MEMORY OF THE LATE HON. JOSEPH BOAKYE DANQUAH
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“And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on: Yea, says the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them”

(Rev. 14:13, King James Version).

Throughout the human race, it has been the custom of every distinguished institution to commemorate the renowned dead, thereby enshrining their memories in the hearts of succeeding generations and causing their heroic deeds to be emulated by posterity.

Tuesday, the 5th of February, 2016 will forever be recorded in the history of our Parliament, and indeed the nation Ghana, as one of the most painful moments we have experienced as a country when we woke up at dawn to be greeted with the news of the gruesome murder of our dear colleague, Hon. Joseph Boakye Adu Danquah.

The late Hon. Member's association with the Parliament of Ghana dates back to 2005 when he entered Parliament, as the Member for Akim Abuakwa North Constituency. Hon. Joseph Boakye Adu Danquah missed out in the Fifth Parliament but returned in the Sixth Parliament as the sitting Member of Parliament for the Abuakwa North Constituency until his demise.

In Parliament, he served on a number of Committees including, Committee on Trade, Industry and Tourism, Public Accounts Committee, Business Committee and the Special Budget Committee. The late Hon Member also served as a Deputy Minister of Trade, Industry and Presidential Initiative.

As a Chartered Accountant, J. B. as he was affectionately called, availed Parliament of his knowledge, skills and expertise both in plenary and at Committees in matters of finance, industry, trade and economic development.

J. B. was a distinguished statesman who was primarily concerned about nation building. He would forever be remembered by Parliament and indeed the good people of Ghana as, an agent of change and development, a purpose driven industrialist, a model legislator an honest and friendly gentlemen, a selfless politician who sought to demystify politics as a “do-or-die affair”, a consensus builder, a patriot and true a statesman.

In contributing to debate on the Annual Budget Estimates of the Ministry of Trade and Industry, J.B. stated:

“..... The observation has to do with the made-in-Ghana or what I call the local content, which is missing in our policy and investment... If you take our roads, the bitumen is imported; if you take our poultry, the vaccines are imported. So Mr. Speaker, the “made in Ghana” is not just words, we must get the policy and investment going.”

J. B. held on to the conviction that the time had come for specific policy intervention to propel the growth of industry and in this regard he said:

“Mr. Speaker, on sugar, as it is rightly put, Komenda has started and we pray that there will be a legislative framework put in place by our able Hon. Minister through a Sugar Act to help regulate and motivate the industry of sugar, so that more

investment and investors would develop the Northern part of the country in terms of sugar estate and bring the requisite investment in excess of two hundred million Dollars plus....”

J. B. believed that appropriate policy measures could create the necessary environment for finance and funding of economic and industrial development projects through private initiatives and thus minimize over-dependence on the Ministry of Finance for funding of all development projects. He was of the view that such initiatives would also facilitate employment generation and wealth creation.

J. B.'s unwavering commitment to private-sector led growth and development featured prominently in his contributions on matters bordering on the economy. Speaking to a motion on the Annual Budget Estimates of the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development, J.B. had this to say:

“Mr. Speaker, if you read the Report, it talks about private sector involvement in fish feed production and I would encourage the Government to encourage Ghanaian industrialists to take up a lot initiatives in this area, so that they can produce fish feed and also in a way, create jobs and employment and acquire wealth.

Most importantly, I realised that a lot of the time, we talk of the Government in this Report, Government cannot do business and actually, create the profitability that would ensure sustainable growth for our teeming youth and creation of employment. Government cannot actually create or complete a fish processing plant.

In the 21st Century, they should further encourage the Ghanaian investor and the Ghanaian private sector to be going into such lucrative sectors and the Government should provide the enabling environment and the right incentives, so that the Ghanaian industrialist can actually help in the support of the growth of this sector.”

He was a staunch advocate for transformational change and saw this as condition precedent to sustainable growth and development and therefore called for consistent and sustained effort in this regard. Contributing to the debate on the Government's Financial Policy for the 2015 Financial Year, J. B. remarked:

“Mr. Speaker, not long ago, I was reading something from the Harvard Business Journal and it talked about reforms. This country and this budget needs serious structural reforms to boost investments, trading and growth, if we want to achieve this theme of “Transformational Agenda: Securing the Bright Medium-Term Prospects of the Economy”..... However, I know we have talked about the Export-Import (EXIM) Bank. It has been the consequence of all the reforms that we needed with the Export Development and Agricultural Investment Fund (EDAIF) which has culminated in the formation of this Ghana EXIM Bank. But it could be the same ball game if the reforms that we require do not take place.”

J. B., as a legislator, exerted himself in law-making. His contribution during the passing of the Export Trade and Agriculture Development Fund Act cannot go unnoticed. As usual, he contended passionately for credit facilities to be extended to the export trade, agriculture and agro-processing and industry sectors, amongst others. His contributions informed, in particular, sections 17 on credit facility, section 19 on eligibility for credit facility account, section 20 on period of credit facility and section 29 on imposition of import levy, amongst others.

J. B. the legislator, paid attention to detail. During the Consideration Stage of the Ghana Civil Aviation Authority Bill, 2015, J. B. drew attention to a key omission in the Bill. He contended:

“Mr. Speaker, there is no provision in the interpretation defining “regulatory directive.” There is nothing in the Bill under the Interpretation column, which defines it.....Mr. Speaker, if it is about giving the power to the Director-General to issue directives, I do not think the House has a problem, especially for the emergencies of their safety concerns. But the definition as contained in the interpretation clause, cannot be acceptable under the circumstances...”

J. B. was an honest and a friendly gentleman who related so well with all colleagues from both sides of the divide and staff of the Parliamentary Service. His usual perpetual smile and conciliatory demeanour was enough to dispel traits of disaffection which may have been nurtured against him by persons he came into contact with, as it was almost impossible for him to react in an untoward manner even in the face of provocation. Even in sharp disagreement, he would always carry his views across but in a very civil manner.

J. B. as selfless politician, lived and demonstrated the beauty of democracy by supporting any cause, which in his view, promoted the interest and dignity of humanity irrespective of whether or not he derived any gains therefrom. As a politician and a business man, he was seen as a person who always put the interest of society above his own. While sticking to his political philosophy, indeed one could hardly notice any trait of political colouration in his dealings with colleagues from either side of the divide, an attribute which enabled him endear himself to colleagues. As a gentleman, J B on the Floor always yielded to superior arguments.

During moments of sharp disagreements on the Floor, he always found it useful in crossing to the opposing side to negotiate, trade-off, and where possible, galvanise support on any matter he found necessary in the national interest. This conduct, he exhibited consistently during debates to the admiration of all. J.B. would sometimes better walk away to avoid confrontation.

He was a great but simple man. He led a humble life and found joy in service to humanity. Indeed, the family, the people of Akim Abuakwa North Constituency, the New Patriotic Party, Parliament, and the nation as a whole have lost a husband, father, nephew, a true friend and a gem of gentleman, model Parliamentarian, a democrat, a true patriot, a philanthropist and a statesman. The entire nation will surely remember him for his frankness, open-mindedness, critical but affable nature, his selflessness and particularly, his dedication to duty and sense of responsibility to Ghana.

Needless to say, our sense of loss at his passing is poignant. We would have wished to have him for many more beautiful years to enable us work together. We however must be grateful to God at all to have him with us. Thoughts of him will forever linger in our hearts and minds long after we have wiped our tears and he will be dearly missed.

We do know one thing - when God gives, He takes away at an appointed time. The late J. B. has performed his earthly assignment excellently. His duties are now in Heaven with the angels.

Hon. Joseph Boakye Adu Danquah rest in perfect peace in the bosom of the Good Lord till we meet again.