



## [#MondayMeme](#)

### Notice Paper & Hansard

(Ref. 03/29/09/15)

Welcome to today's **#MondayMeme**. In this series we have shared knowledge on **ORDER PAPER & VOTES & PROCEEDINGS** as important documents of parliament. Today, we will be looking at two other documents that ensure a smooth running of the Parliament: the **NOTICE PAPER**; and **HANSARD**. We will also look at the concept of PRIVILEGE in the legislature.

The **NOTICE PAPER** is a document that lists the orders of business for the week. It is circulated ahead of commencement of sitting for the week to guide MPs on what issues are scheduled for debate and/or consideration during sitting days of the period.

It is from the **NOTICE PAPER** usually that the **ORDER PAPER** is distilled, prepared and circulated on a daily basis except on occasions when certain matters not listed arise that need to be taken without delay.

An important point to note is that both the **ORDER & NOTICE PAPERS** are prepared by the parliamentary committee on **RULES & BUSINESS** with assistance and guidance from designated bureaucrats in the legislature.

We now turn our attention to another very important legislative document, the **HANSARD**. It is the official record of debates and proceedings of parliament and it is taken down in an almost verbatim manner to reflect as

accurately as possible, all that is spoken by MPs and any other person permitted to address the parliament in session.

The **HANSARD** has an interesting history which speaks to the current clamour for an **#OPENNASS** in Nigeria. Its emergence dates back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century when the British Parliament was forced by sustained popular pressure to open up its proceedings to the public.

Before 1771, the parliament was pretty much secretive and it was a breach of parliamentary privilege and a punishable offence to publish proceedings therefrom either by the media or private persons. It was after decades of agitations and individual sacrifices that the British parliament was forced to commission **Thomas Curson Hansard**, after whom the document became subsequently named, to begin to publish records of proceedings.

Hansard was a London printer who became the first official printer to the parliament at Westminster. Soon enough countries of the Commonwealth adopted the practice of having the Hansard which has now become a critical component of legislative documentation across the world.

The **Hansard** is prepared by specially trained official reporters and transcribers who cover the proceedings of parliament. The reporters are assisted by automated recording devices positioned at appropriate points and supervised during sittings.

We share with you a copy of the Hansard of the Nigerian parliament in the first republic (attached.)

Now, to the matter of **PRIVILEGES**. These are statutory rights enjoyed by the parliament as a body and MPs individually. They are conferred by law and in the case of Nigeria, the **LEGISLATIVE HOUSES (POWERS & PRIVILEGES) ACT 1990**.

Privileges also issue from other legal statutes, parliamentary practices, precedents and customs passed on from session to session over a long period of time. Examples are the use of the appellations 'Honourable' and 'Distinguished' by members of the House of Representatives and the Senate respectively.

When a matter of **PRIVILEGE** is raised on the floor, it is taken into consideration immediately and dealt with as may be dictated by the parliament's standing rules.

A motion on breach of **PRIVILEGE** is often referred to the parliamentary committee on Ethics and Privileges for investigation and recommendation back to the entire parliament for necessary action.

*This edition of **#MondayMeme** was broadcast live on our Twitter Handle @orderpaper on Sept. 29, 2015. To read and download other editions of the programme please visit [www.orderpaper.ng/downloads](http://www.orderpaper.ng/downloads)*