

## Debates in the Eastern House of Assembly

Tuesday, 16th February, 1954

The House met at ten o'clock a.m.

Speech by His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor

HONOURABLE MEMBERS,

The Estimates for the Public Services of the Region will be placed before you and consideration of these Estimates will be your main task at this meeting. These Estimates have of necessity had to take the form of a Caretaker Budget—for the first reason because of the shortness of time which has elapsed between the coming into office of the Government and the presentation of the Estimates, and secondly, because the Constitutional decisions taken at the London and Lagos Conferences will inevitably render necessary the introduction of a Supplementary Budget in July or August this year. I shall make no mention of the details of the Budget but shall leave these to the Financial Secretary in his Budget Speech.

It is Government's policy to develop as rapidly as possible the social and other essential services which are its responsibility and to raise the standard of living of the people of this Region. This can only be done by increasing the resources of the people of this Region and to this end Government will encourage industrial and commercial activities and assist in an endeavour to increase their earning capacity and purchasing power.

At the same time, in order to safeguard the interests of the wage-earner every effort will be made to obtain reliable indices of the cost of living and prices.

The introduction of Local Government throughout the Region will be accelerated and in this connection Government will consider the advisability of conferring Municipal status on the larger townships in the Region. The introduction of Universal Adult Suffrage will be carefully examined and it is hoped that the Electoral Regulations may be amended to secure elections to Local, District and County Councils as well as elections to the Eastern House of Assembly and the House of Representatives by Adult Suffrage.

The greatest importance is attached to community development and assistance will be given to Community Development Projects. By this means it is intended greatly to extend the Community Development efforts in the construction of roads, water supplies, schools, post offices and hospitals.

Education at the Primary and Secondary level will be expanded to enable all pupils to be eligible to compete in State conducted final examinations for school leavers. Such an expansion will, of course, require the training of many more teachers, and in the Draft Estimates provision has been made for the expansion of facilities for Teacher Training.



Encouragement will be given to the provision of recreational facilities, particularly the construction of play-grounds, and the Government will assist in the provision of sports equipment as well as provide specialist instruction in Physical Education.

It is Government's intention to develop to the fullest possible extent the Crown Lands under its control.

Agriculture is the basic industry of this Region and the objective of the Government's Agricultural Policy will be to use all available land to the best advantage. It is proposed to encourage livestock and poultry development as a means of improving the food supply of the Region, while every effort will be made to popularise the use of fertilisers. Special attention will be paid to the development of rice growing and of other crops in addition to palm produce.

In the field of medicine the aim is the co-ordination of all medical and health organisations to achieve the greatest degree of efficiency. While improving the efficiency of existing hospitals emphasis will be on carrying the advantages of modern preventive and curative medicine into the rural areas and to achieve this a Rural Health Service will be developed. The Laboratory Service and the School Medical Service will be expanded and attention will be devoted to the establishment of specialist hospitals for mental and T.B. cases.

In order to ensure a cordial hospital patient relationship Advisory Boards will be set up in all hospitals.

The development of these services will, of course, only be possible if the financial resources necessary to defray their cost are available. To this end it will be necessary to raise additional revenue, but new taxation will only be imposed after adequate explanation to the people of the Region.

Owing to the high cost of imported building materials, the possibility of using local building materials of durable quality will be investigated. In the case of water supplies every effort will be made to improve these.

The Government attaches great importance to improving its public relations and to this end will develop the use of pictorial matter and publications in the vernacular to reach the widest possible public. It will also encourage the local production of film documentaries and hopes greatly to expand facilities for the reception of broadcasts.

It is also the intention carefully to examine the possibility of strengthening the censorship of films in the interests of public morality.

Finally, I would remind Honourable Members that the progress and development of this Region, which is so dear to the hearts of us all, depends on the willingness of its men and women to work hard and to work together for the common good.

I pray that the blessing of Almighty God may guide your deliberations.

*(His Honour then retired from the Chamber).*



## Eastern House of Assembly

(President: The Lieutenant-Governor, Eastern Region,  
His Honour Sir Clement John Pleass, K.B.E., C.M.G.)

Vice-President: Mr C. A. L. Guise, M.B.E., Development  
Secretary).

### MEMBERS OF THE REGIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

The Lieutenant-Governor,  
His Honour Sir Clement John Pleass, K.B.E., C.M.G.

The Civil Secretary,  
The honourable J. G. Mackenzie.

The Legal Secretary,  
The honourable G. G. Briggs.

The Financial Secretary,  
The honourable A. E. Cook.

The Development Secretary,  
The honourable C. A. L. Guise, M.B.E.

Brigadier the honourable E. J. Gibbons, C.B.E.,  
Commissioner of the Cameroons, (*Appointed by name*).

The Minister of Local Government,  
Dr the honourable Nnamdi Azikiwe.

The Minister of Works,  
The honourable Mbonu Ojike.

The Minister of Public Health,  
Dr the honourable M. I. Okpara.

The Minister of Land and Survey,  
The honourable M. C. Awgu.

The Minister of Education,  
The honourable I. U. Akpabio.

The Minister of Natural Resources,  
Dr the honourable W. N. Onubogu.

The Minister Without Portfolio,  
The honourable I. U. Imeh.

The Minister Without Portfolio,  
The honourable E. P. Okoya.

The Minister Without Portfolio,  
(Vacant).

### OFFICER OF THE HOUSE

The Clerk of the House,  
Mr A. E. Eronini, M.B.E.

### Appointment of Vice-President

#### The Civil Secretary:

I will read an Instrument signed by His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, appointing Mr C. A. L. Guise, M.B.E., Development Secretary, as Vice-President.

L.S.

C. J. PLEASS,  
*Lieutenant-Governor*

“By His Honour SIR CLEMENT JOHN PLEASS, Knight Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, Companion of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, Lieutenant-in and over the Eastern Region of Nigeria.

WHEREAS it is provided by section 40 of the Nigeria (Constitution) Order in Council, 1951; that the Lieutenant-Governor may, acting in his discretion, by Instrument under the Public Seal appoint a Member of the House of Assembly to be Vice-President:

AND WHEREAS I am minded to appoint CHARLES ALEXANDER LEONARD GUISE, Esquire, Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, Development Secretary of the Eastern Region, to be the Vice-President of the House of Assembly for the Second Meeting of the Third Session thereof:

NOW THEREFORE, I, CLEMENT JOHN PLEASS, Knight Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, Companion of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, Lieutenant-Governor in and over the Eastern Region of Nigeria, do hereby appoint CHARLES ALEXANDER LEONARD GUISE, Esquire, Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, Development Secretary of the Eastern Region, to be the Vice-President of the House of Assembly for the Second Meeting of the Third Session thereof.

GIVEN under my hand, and the Public Seal of the Eastern Region of Nigeria, this 12th day of February, one thousand nine hundred and fifty-four.”

(Mr C. A. L. Guise then took and subscribed the Oath required by law and in pursuance of section 53 (2) (b) of the Order took the Chair).

### Prayers

#### Oath of Allegiance of New Members

The following took and subscribed to the oath required by law as Members:—

Dr the honourable E. M. L. Endeley, Victoria Division.  
The honourable S. T. Muna, Bamenda Division.



**The Legal Secretary:**

Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

**ORDERS OF THE DAY****THE 1952-53 EASTERN REGION SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION  
LAW, 1954**

Second reading.

**The Financial Secretary:**

Mr President, Sir, I beg to move that the Bill entitled "A Law to make Supplementary Provision for the Service of the Eastern Region for the Year Ending the 31st day of March, 1953," be now read a second time.

The object, Sir, of this Bill, is to obtain Legislative sanction for the expenditure set out in the Schedule to the Bill and incurred in the Financial Year 1952-53 which is over and above the amounts already appropriated in respect of the seven Heads of Expenditure mentioned in the Schedule to the Bill. The total expenditure from Regional funds in the Financial Year 1952-53 was £4,021,250, which is £67,340 less than the total sum appropriated for that year. There has thus, Sir, been no over-expenditure of the total sum appropriated by this House. The position is that the excess expenditure noted in the Schedule to this bill is more than offset by savings under other heads of expenditure. As, however, the schedules to the appropriation laws provide for appropriations under each head of expenditure, it is necessary to seek Legislative sanction for excess expenditure under any head, even although, as in the present case, such expenditure is more than offset by savings under other heads. The major part of the expenditure noted in the Schedule to this Bill is the result of the payment of arrears of salary consequent upon salaries revision and was therefore quite unavoidable, and I would add that in respect of this expenditure on salaries revision, a special grant of £218,000 was received from the Centre in 1952-53. The Bill, therefore, Sir, does not sanction any new expenditure, but merely seeks to regularise the position as it was at the closing of accounts for the year 1952-53. The whole of the expenditure which is noted in the Schedule has been approved at various times by the Standing Committee on Finance and, as honourable Members are aware, the accounts for the year 1952-53 will in due course be subjected to examination by the Public Accounts Committee.

Sir, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Local Government:**

Sir, I beg to second.



Question proposed. And under Standing Order 67 the Debate stood adjourned. Debate to be resumed on Thursday the 18th of February, 1954.

THE 1954-55 EASTERN REGION APPROPRIATION LAW, 1954

Second reading.

**The Financial Secretary:**

Mr President, Sir, I beg to move that the Bill entitled "A Law to appropriate the sum of five million, two hundred and twenty six thousand, five hundred and forty pounds to the service of the year ending on the thirty-first day of March, one thousand nine hundred and fifty-five," be now read a second time.

In moving the second reading of this Bill, I feel I owe the House an explanation of the delay in placing copies of the draft Estimates for 1954-55 in the hands of honourable Members. In normal circumstances it is the aim of Government to issue copies of the draft Estimates to honourable Members before they come to Enugu for the Budget Session, so that they may have as long a time as possible to study them before the Appropriation Bill is debated in this House. But, Sir, on the present occasion the impact of events has made it impossible to follow the normal practice. This is not due to any dilatoriness in setting in train the processes by which the draft Estimates are framed, which began many months ago; on the contrary it is due to the political events that have been taking place in this Region and in Nigeria during recent months, and to the necessity to fix the date of the Budget Session sufficiently early to enable it to be concluded in good time before the Budget Session of the House of Representatives, early in March. This meant opening our Budget Session not later than the middle of February. Normally there would have been no difficulty in circulating copies of the draft Estimates some little time before this date, but the very recent general election in the Region and the formation of a new Government followed immediately by the constitutional Conference in Lagos, has inevitably upset the normal time-table, and although the Government Printer has made valiant efforts it was not physically possible for the draft Estimates to be considered and approved by the new Government and finally printed in time for their issue to honourable Members before their arrival in Enugu for the Budget Session. I trust, therefore, that the House will accept the assurance of the Government that the late issue of the draft Estimates this year has been solely due to the pressure of events, and is not due to any lack of consideration of the convenience of honourable Members.

It is perhaps fortunate, in the circumstances which I have just mentioned, that the present Budget should, in the nature of things, be destined to follow very much the same pattern as the Budget for the current year.

It is my duty on this occasion to give the House an account of the economic and financial state of the Region, and this brings me straight



measures of taxation or for any increase in rates of existing taxes. On the expenditure side provision has been made for normal increments and here and there a modest measure of expansion has been permitted.

A detailed memorandum has been circulated to honourable Members in which attention is drawn to the main variations from the 1953-54 Estimates and I do not therefore propose to deal with matters of detail on the present occasion. As honourable Members are no doubt aware, debate on this motion is limited to matters of principle, matters of detail being reserved for the Committee stage.

Honourable Members will see from the financial statement on Page E 5 of the printed Estimates that it is anticipated that the Region will begin the new Financial Year with a general revenue balance of £1,054,000. This is £431,000 more than the figure estimated a year ago. This increase is due in part to the opening balance on the 1st April, 1953, being £294,000 more than had been anticipated. The difference of £137,000 is mainly due to the omission from the original revenue Estimates for 1953-54 of an item representing the reimbursement due to the Region on account of its deficit on account of the Southern Cameroons, for which the sum of £130,000 has been included in the revised Estimates of Revenue.

The Budget as framed balances by a margin of £5,000. It provides, under Head 454, Public Works Extraordinary for some £113,000 to complete works in hand and for some £112,000 for new works.

This is not a result with which the Government would feel satisfied in a normal year, particularly in view of the very modest measure of expansion for which provision has been made, and it has only been achieved by severely limiting expenditure.

But the Financial Year upon which we are about to embark will be the reverse of normal in that it will be begun under one system of revenue allocation and distribution of functions, and will be finished under a completely different system. In these peculiar circumstances it is not perhaps entirely unsatisfactory that the present Budget offers a reasonable prospect that the Regional Government will not have to dip into its somewhat meagre reserves during the period between the 1st of April, 1954, and the coming into operation of the new system of revenue allocation.

It is, in short, a very pedestrian sort of Budget, but in the circumstances a policy of marking time for a short while until the effects of the new fiscal arrangements can be properly assimilated is obviously the right one.

Before I pass on to a more factual assessment of the financial and economic position of the Region as it is likely to be under the new fiscal arrangements, there is one item in the Estimates to which I wish to draw attention, because I know that particular importance is attached to it by all sections of the House. I refer to the provision of £83,000 under Head 437 as a contribution towards the Eastern Regional Scholarship Scheme. It is proposed to fund the annual appropriations from revenue for the purpose of implementing this scheme, and particulars of the object of the fund and of the manner



in which it is proposed to operate it are contained in the paper which was laid on the Table of the House at an earlier stage in the proceedings. I am confident that these arrangements, which are designed to safeguard the operation of the Scholarship Scheme against temporary revenue recessions, will commend itself to all honourable Members.

I now turn to a more factual survey of how the Region is likely to stand financially and economically when the new constitutional arrangements, including the new fiscal arrangements, take effect; and I ask the House to put aside for the moment their consideration of the present Budget, which necessary though it is in order to provide for the service of the Region, is nevertheless bound to be of a makeshift and transitory nature, and to consider the shape of things to come. This is not by any means a premature exercise, because unless we begin to think now, and to think hard about ways and means, we are likely to be caught on the wrong foot when the present system of grants-in-aid from the Centre comes to an end.

As I said earlier on the new system of revenue allocation will give us a greater measure of fiscal autonomy, and we certainly welcome that. On the other hand, it will make us more vulnerable, but autonomy, standing on our own feet, is bound to have that result. In terms of money the Fiscal Commissioner has recommended, and this has been approved, that the Region should receive a capital grant of £2 million from Central reserves when the new arrangements take effect. This, together with our existing general revenue balance of about £1 million will give the Region a general revenue balance of about £3 million at the outset of the revised Constitution. There is already a serious shortage of housing and office accommodation which the new constitutional arrangements will make more acute, and it is evident that we shall have to draw heavily on our reserves in order to meet the situation. A certain amount of the general revenue balance is inevitably locked up in advances, and a certain amount again is needed as till-money, or ready cash as the flow of revenue does not proceed equally with the flow of expenditure. But the main purpose of a reserve is to safeguard the social services against a revenue recession pending the taking of the necessary remedial measures. In the light of these considerations a general revenue balance of £3 million is by no means excessive.

As regards the recurrent position, it will be noted from paragraph 57 of the Fiscal Commissioner's Report that he estimated that this Region would have a deficit of £460,000 per annum under the new system, if the Southern Cameroons remained with the Region. He estimates the Region's deficit in respect of the Southern Cameroons to be of the order of £280,000 per annum. It has recently been decided that the Southern Cameroons is to become quasi-federal territory, and the Eastern Region will therefore shed this deficit of £280,000 per annum; thus reducing its overall estimated deficit from £460,000 to £180,000 per annum; and in order to give the Eastern Region breathing space in which to put its finances on a firm footing and to raise more revenue from the various sources within its legislative competence the Region



first, the average quality of Nigeria palm oil has risen to levels undreamed of a few years ago, enabling the Board and, thereby, the producers to face with more confidence the buyer's market for palm oil which has existed for the last two years; second—an advantage more readily observable by the farmer—incomes have steadily increased; even in 1953, when the producer prices of the higher grades of palm oil were about 5 per cent lower than in the previous year, the improvement in quality was so great that the weighted average producer price for oil produced in the Eastern Region rose from £66 3s 0d to £67 13s 0d per ton. Since total production also increased, the rise in aggregate income was substantial; it is in addition worthy of note that the average price per ton of palm oil in the rest of Nigeria in 1953 was only just over £44, or less than two-thirds of the average price in the East.

With the adoption of the recommendations of the Fiscal Commissioner's report concerning the distribution of export duties, the Eastern Regional revenue will become a direct beneficiary both of the higher production trend and of the improvement in quality: better oil naturally attracts a higher price overseas, and, accordingly, a higher rate of export duty.

Reference, Sir, has been made to a buyer's market for palm oil, and certainly the contrast between the depressed state of the world market in this commodity throughout 1953 and the foregoing picture I have just drawn of continued and increasing prosperity in the areas of production is most striking. It is estimated that the 1953 producer prices were subsidised by the Nigeria Oil Palm Produce Marketing Board to the extent of £29 2s 0d per ton of Special Grade Oil and £12 10s 0d per ton of Technical Oil. The total deficit incurred by the Board on its palm oil operations in 1953 is estimated at £3.7 million.

A deficit of this magnitude clearly could not be sustained indefinitely by the Board in the complete absence of any indication that market values would improve appreciably. Considerable reductions in the prices to be paid to producers for palm oil in 1954 were therefore announced by the Nigeria Oil Palm Produce Marketing Board in November, following consultation with the Representative Committee. It is emphasised that these reductions do not by any means bring the producer price, particularly for Special Grade Oil, fully into line with probable selling prices: indeed it is estimated that the Board will in 1954 have to apply some £2.8 million of its reserves in subsidising the new price for this grade. In the view of the Board, the great importance of providing sufficient inducement for increased production of Special Grade Oil fully justifies its continued heavy subsidisation. Producers, particularly those in this Region who have advanced further towards the goal of quality improvement, are thus for the second year in succession benefiting directly from the substantial reserves built up by the Board in the early years of its operation when selling conditions were most favourable.

When world prospects for palm oil are considered, the importance of the striking improvement in the quality of palm oil is underlined.



The main use of technical palm oil is in soap-making and in that sphere it competes with tallow and other oil and fats. Largely because of the increased consumption of synthetic detergents in place of soap in America and Western European countries and an increase in the supply of competing types of oils and fats, the world demand for technical oil has fallen considerably and its future outlook is uncertain. As has already been shown, thanks to the remarkable response to the policy of the Nigeria Oil Palm Produce Marketing Board, a large proportion of the Nigerian output of palm oil is now of Special Grade quality. Special Grade Oil comes within the category of oils and fats which can be used for edible purposes, e.g. in the production of margarine and cooking fats. Here the market prospects are considerably brighter as world consumption of edible oils and fats is expected in the long run to increase with rising populations and the achievement of better standards of living, although, at the moment, the prospect of the release of some of the heavy surpluses of oils and fats in some countries, notably the United States, exerts a depressing influence on market prices. Had the improvement in quality of Nigerian palm oil not been achieved, it is most likely that the technical palm oil price would have been as much as 50 per cent lower than it is at present. In such circumstances the outlook for the major industry of the Eastern Region would have been grim indeed. As it is, acting in response to the incentives provided by the Nigeria Oil Palm Produce Marketing Board, the palm oil producer, particularly in the Eastern Region, has demonstrated his ability to adapt his industry to the changing requirements of the world markets and in so doing has benefited not only himself but also the Eastern Region as a whole.

The palm-kernel market remained relatively firm during 1953 and the Board decided to maintain the producer price for 1954 at the same figure (£34 per ton) as in the previous year. It is anticipated that this price will bear a sound relationship to market values ruling during 1954 and possibly enable the Board to make a small surplus on its palm kernel operations, though it is foreseen that increased supplies of copra reaching world markets will probably tend in time to depress palm kernel prices.

In view, Sir, of what I have said about price incentives, it is, I feel, of paramount importance to the Region that the new Regional Marketing Board should, when it is set up, adopt the same wise policy in this regard, as has been adopted with such remarkable success by the Nigeria Oil Palm Produce Marketing Board.

No review of economic development in the Region would be complete, Sir, without reference to the work done by the Eastern Regional Production Development Board. Reference has already been made to the valuable part played by the Pioneer Oil Mills in enhancing the value of our oil palm industry, but the Board has also been doing everything in its power to introduce other crops such as coffee, copra, rubber and cashew. Nor is the expansion of the production of cocoa, which commands a particularly favourable price in the world market,



## OFFICIAL CORRUPTION IN CALABAR URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

*Question—***45. Mr O. O. Ita:**

To ask the Minister of Local Government, Eastern Region:—

Is it a fact that there have been several complaints of official corruptions in the Calabar Urban District Council; what steps has Government taken to investigate the complaints and what are the results arrived at?

*Answer—***The Minister of Local Government, Eastern Region:**

No complaints of official corruption in the Calabar Urban District Council have been made to this Ministry. Official corruption is a criminal offence, and if evidence of it exists it is the duty of those in possession of it to lay an information. Investigation by Government of allegations of official corruption otherwise than by Inquiry into the affairs of the Council under section 15 of the Ordinance would be out of order. It is not proposed to initiate an Inquiry.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN THE EASTERN REGION

*Question—***46. Mr O. O. Ita:**

To ask the Minister of Local Government, Eastern Region:—

In view of the urgency for introducing Local Government into all sections of the Eastern Region, is the Government proposing to appoint trained men to spread Local Government education in the Region; and is there any proposal for giving Local Council Secretaries training in Public Administration?

*Answer—***The Minister of Local Government, Eastern Region:**

It is not proposed to appoint persons to spread Local Government Education in the Region. The Estimates provide for a number of Local Government Assistants to be employed on a temporary basis to speed the introduction of Local Government, and full use is being made of this provision to create the organisation necessary for Local Government in many parts of the Region.

At present training courses for Secretaries and Treasurers of Local Government Councils are held at the University College, Ibadan. It is hoped that when the Nigeria College of Arts, Science and Technology opens at Enugu, it will be possible to provide this training within the Region.

## LANDING STAGE AT ORON

*Question—***47. Mr O. O. Ita:**

To ask the Minister of Land and Survey, Eastern Region:—

Whether the Elder Dempster Lines, Limited, is in contract with the Government for the erection of the Landing Stage at Oron, if so what are the terms? If there is no such contract, what percentage of the earnings of the company goes to the revenue of the Eastern Region and to the local land owners as rent?



[Written Answers]

16th February, 1954

[Written Answers]

*Answer—***The Minister of Land and Survey, Eastern Region:**

(a) The existing landing stage at Oron was constructed by Government between 1946 and 1948 with Colonial Development and Welfare funds, as a result of an agreement with Messrs Elder Dempster Lines Limited. The Public Works Department is responsible for the maintenance of the structure of the landing stage and for provision of a small labour force for handling and operational purposes.

(b) No percentage of the earnings of the company accrues to the Regional Government. A rent of £20 per annum is paid by Government to the local landlords in respect of the 6 acres of Crown Land on which the landing stage is sited. Government considers that this payment, and the services detailed in paragraph (a) above, form Government's contribution to the maintenance of the essential transport link between Oron and Calabar.

## FOREST RESERVES

*Question—***49. Mr O. O. Ita:**

To ask the Minister of Natural Resources, Eastern Region:—

Are there many forest reserves in the Eastern Region; and what are the purposes of this reservation of the forests?

*Answer—***The Minister of Natural Resources, Eastern Region:**

In the Eastern Region, there are fifty-seven Forest Reserves constituted under the Forestry Ordinance, of which thirty-two are in the Eastern Provinces and twenty-five are in the Southern Cameroons. These Reserves cover a total area of 4,788 square miles, 2,422 being in the Eastern Provinces and 2,366 in the Southern Cameroons.

The purposes of Forest Reservation are:—

1. To supply in perpetuity timber and other forms of forest produce to satisfy the requirements of the people.
2. To preserve the climate, physical condition and water economy of the Region.

## AREA OF LIMESTONE DEPOSITS IN NKALAGU

*Question—***71. Mr P. A. Onwe:**

To ask the Minister of Land and Survey, Eastern Region:—

What is the extent of land taken up by the limestone deposits in Nkalagu; has any agreement been reached with the owners of the land; if so what are the terms?

*Answer—***The Minister of Land and Survey, Eastern Region:**

(a) The full extent of the lime-stone deposits in the Nkalagu area is not known. The area so far surveyed in connection with a possible cement industry is 3801.6 acres (5.94 square miles).

- (b) No, Sir.
- (c) Does not arise.



crime. We are now on the threshold of attaining self-government, and when we do come into it, we shall be exposed to the impact of the outside world without any insulation at all (if the Financial Secretary will allow me to use the words) we shall be less insulated, we shall be exposed fully to the impact of the outside world, and what account have we to give of our nation? A nation that has no conscience, a nation that fears no God, a nation that is without morals. Surely it will be a disgrace!

Gentlemen, lady and gentlemen!—(laughter) it is not part of my function here, or part of the function of this motion to spotlight the departments or to mention cases of bribery and corruption. It may be the function of the Commission of Enquiry if it is set up, but I think we are all aware of what happens right from our villages, right from the Native Authority Councils, from the Local Councils, from the Native Courts and so on, and in the press day after day we have released cases that have been committed of bribery and corruption. There is no department that has not been affected all over the country.

Mr President, I think this motion is so very obvious, and I have no doubt that everybody who gets up to speak to this motion will speak in favour because as I said before, if we allow this thing to continue, if we do not put a check to it, then it is very, very certain that this nation which we are trying to build today, before it gets to the end of its construction, will certainly collapse.

Mr President, I beg to move.

**Mr E. O. Eyo (Uyo Division):**

Mr President, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

**The Minister of Works:**

Mr President, I rise to amend the motion proposed by Dr the honourable S. E. Imoke. The amendment reads as follows: "That a Committee be set up by the Government to probe the question of bribery and corruption which appears to be rampant in the Civil Service, Native Courts and Schools with a view to putting a check to it."

Honourable Members will notice the basis of amendment to this motion, instead of asking this House to set up a Committee, the amendment proposes that the Government be requested to set up a Committee to do the job outlined by the motion. Secondly, instead of confining our reference to departments, it is more useful for our objective that we should widen the scope. Hence, the whole system of Civil Service, Schools, and Courts are suggested.

First, I would like to define the terms bribery and corruption, as before us, from a criminal law point of view, even though I am not a legal practitioner. In addition, I would like to congratulate the honourable Mover, Dr S. E. Imoke, First Member for Afikpo Division, for drawing the attention of this honourable House to the question



of bribery and corruption. This issue, which I hope is uppermost in the minds of every segment of this community. I congratulate him because at this initial stage of this new House it is right and proper that these honourable Members declare their stand irrevocably and unequivocally on this question both individually and collectively in order that we may be able to steer those eight million people in the Eastern Region with justice and equity for the next five years of the life of this honourable House. In criminal law, bribery connotes both the giving and the offering or receiving "of any undue reward by or to any person whomsoever whose ordinary profession and business relates to the administration of public justice in order to influence his behaviour, to influence and incline him to act contrary to his duty and the known rules of honesty and integrity." A bribe itself denotes "any valuable thing or promise given or promised or any preferment, or emolument given or promised corruptly and against the law as an inducement to any person acting in his official or public capacity to violate or forbear from his duty or to improperly influence his behaviour in the performance of his duty." The worst form of bribery and corruption is the corruption of the best men of the community. Honourable Members no doubt agree with me that this House, together with the Civil Service constitutes a group of the best there are in this Region. To corrupt a public servant, therefore, is the highest criminal act in a given community. On this subject, let us not lose sight of private enterprise, private life in which corruption and bribery also are noticeable.

I like to state . . . . .

**Dr E. U. Udoma (Opobo Division):**

Point of Order. Standing Order 27 (1).

**The President:**

The honourable Minister may proceed.

**The Minister of Works:**

that it is most important for us as a legislature at this time in our lives when the nation is approaching self-government, to take a leaf from other countries of the world on this question. It is not enough to state that corruption is found in the Civil Service of the United States, United Kingdom and the Gold Coast, and therefore if it is prevalent here it is not a thing to worry us. The important fact is that it is the duty of the Government and Government Officers to eschew and condemn what is evil in the discharge of public service. I need not go into examples of corruption and bribery but it may suit us to refer to an act by a public servant, by a private individual acting in his private capacity an act which induced such a person to give a job to a person because of sanguinary, linguistic, fraternal, religious, business or any other relation, a job which he knows that by known principles of merit such a person could not win. The result is that when such is done it deprives the best in the society on that given job the opportunity to give his best service to the society.



**Mr E. Ita (Calabar Division):**

Mr President, I want first of all to congratulate the mover of this motion "that a Committee be set up by this House to probe the question of bribery and corruption which appears to be rampant in all the departments of the Civil Service including schools with a view to putting a check to it," and I want to oppose the amendment made by the Minister of Works that this Committee should be set up by the Government.

I think it is the declared policy of the present Government to have a democratic legislature. If this is so, I do not see any reason why this House cannot set up a Committee to probe this question of bribery and corruption. In addition, I would like to add that we have heard of corruption not only in the departments of the Civil Service, the Native Courts and Schools, we have also the Hospitals. We have heard a lot about corruption and bribery in the Hospitals . . . . . (Interruption).

**The President:**

Order! Order!

**Mr E. Ita:**

. . . . . for that reason, Sir, I feel we ought to include Hospitals.

I do not have much to say, Mr President, this is what I have to add. I hope Members will see the necessity for leaving it to the House and not to the Government to set up a Committee.

**Mr J. O. Umolu (Port Harcourt Division):**

Mr President, I stand to support the motion of amendment put forward by the Minister of Works. In doing so, I want to know what is responsible for this monster which is known as corruption and bribery. In our African way of life, in days gone by, this evil practice has never been known to some of us here, as it was by our pilgrim fathers. It was in fact the impact of our connection with foreign lands, that has brought this about. Because of the feeling that certain people can dominate, because they have been put in a position of that greatness in this Region—as in this Region—some months ago. That is why this question of seeking something from somebody in a privileged position—it is a bottle-neck—to grease the palms of certain individuals so that our request may be granted, has come about.

I am inclined to believe, Mr President, that now that our country is moving towards independence, if I may use that word, we must have a moral foundation, that is why I support this motion *in toto*. It must be inculcated and instilled into our minds that we must be proud, that we are free to set up a Government and free to go anywhere to seek our rights, without needing to grease the palms of anybody.

Mr President, what, as I said in the beginning, is responsible for this crime? For example, now that this country is moving towards independence, our people must be taught that they cannot stick to



this bottle-neck—that they cannot grease the palms of anybody. They are free to go to any department, be that department a school where admission is sought, you are right to go there in as much as you are right to go about, in as much in fact as the qualifications necessary for such schools are assured. In the past, our people have been deprived of their rights because of this bottle-neck, as they cannot get what they want because of some selected few. We must be able—especially as the N.C.N.C. Government of the people, because our party stands not for individuals or the selected few, but a party based on equal right—to accomodate everybody.

I support this motion. I think this motion is very timely and I am thankful to Dr the honourable Imoke, and I am very sure that honourable Members will stand up in this House to support this motion *in toto*. Honourable Members, the scope cannot be narrowed down to particular sections, it must be widened. I fully support the amendment proposed by the Minister of Works.

Mr President, I support.

**Mr M. E. Ogon (Ikom Division):**

Mr President, I rise to support the amendment to the motion. This amendment to the motion is so simple, so lucid and useful to the Region. I will first start by supporting the idea that the Committee itself should be set up by the Government and not by the whole House. I think the impression of the Member of the Opposition who rose on this question of the whole House setting up the Committee is that we may discriminate against them. I want to assure him that our leader takes more interest in the Opposition than the Opposition itself.

Sir, while not wishing to take the place of a Commission of Enquiry, I should like to reflect on the different forms of corruption we want them to investigate. Sir, what is bribery and corruption? It is corruption when a leader, when even a head of department pads his budget in order to include fictitious expenses. It is corruption when a Judge in court accepts favours in order to influence his decisions. Sir, it is corruption when a Civil Administrator gives out contracts to friends and relatives in order to share in the profits. Sir, it is corruption when a principal of a school admits students not on merit but on bribes. Sir, it is even corruption when anybody in this Region in the Civil Service creates unnecessary jobs to support his henchmen. So, Sir, having named different forms of corruption, we can now proceed to look into how to cure them. There is another type of corruption which is difficult to detect, that is corruption which comes in the form of gifts and “dashes.” Sir, I say this because it is not unusual that a contractor or merchant approaches somebody, some great man in the Civil Service, to give him a “dash” at Christmas time. There is no harm in such a gift if it is given in the true sense of a gift, but if those gifts are given so that the giver gets priority in



handling the service of that department, then such a gift is not a gift. I say, Sir, that such a gift is an unvarnished bribe.

Further, in the interim—in the meanwhile—between the setting up of this Committee, I feel very strongly, Sir, that the press should intensify the campaign against bribery and corruption. It is true, Sir, that we cannot enforce honesty, but the press can appeal to our patriotic sentiments. I say that Nigeria is sorely in need of sincere and honest men. It is our wish and prayers, that these men should be N.C.N.Cers who are always responsible—not only responsible but honest and God-fearing.

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E. (Enyong Division):**

Mr President, Sir, I rise to make a few brief observations. I want to set it on record that this side of the House are fully in sympathy with the motion, in fact we are more than in sympathy, we wholeheartedly accept the spirit underlying the motion; but I think it is only fair to give a caution. Motions and resolutions and even legislation do not change the spirit of a nation. We are very gratified to find that there is a realisation on both sides of the House that the ship of this nation is approaching dangerous waters, if indeed it is not in them already, and if we awaken at this stage and take action so much the better. But I think I should warn the House against the dangers of covering facts with words. We might pour out a volume of words against corruption but until our souls are against it we deceive not only the public but ourselves as well.

Now, I hate to strike a personal note. I have a small rural secondary school I have run for years and I do sincerely hope that the Committee, when appointed, will not leave us out as Government have left out little Arochuku in many matters in the past. I hope the Committee will give us a warm search and we promise them a warm reception (*Laughter*).

I want to support the honourable Mr Eyo Ita in suggesting that this House and not the Government should appoint the Committee. In saying so I reflect no lack of confidence in the Government but I want merely to underline the new atmosphere and climate. In the old Legislative Council, and the Leader of the Government will bear me out, and in the old House of Assembly, and here my friend on my left the honourable the First Member for Aba Division will bear me out, we were used to seeing Government appoint this and that Committee. I thought we had crossed the bridge to a People's Government and I am disappointed that the "People's Government" should hesitate to allow this House to appoint a Committee. The request to allow the House to appoint a Committee has proper parliamentary backing from the traditions of the Mother of Parliaments, and I should not have thought that that needed a debate.

About hospitals, I should have liked to see the mover of the motion remember there are Voluntary Agency Hospitals as well as Voluntary



Agency Schools. If we say "the Civil Service" includes hospitals (as somebody whispered to me a moment ago) then, "schools" in the original motion is redundant. But I take it the mover means all schools, including schools outside the Civil Service arrangements, and, therefore, it is only fair to take all hospitals including hospitals outside the Civil Service gamut. I should have thought that one of the most serious and detestable forms of bribery is bribery when life is in danger. We all know, we have perhaps all witnessed the spectacle of nurses being unable to do their duty even when life is hanging in the balance. I do beseech the House not to draw a party line, but to answer to the dictates of commonsense and include hospitals under this investigation.

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Mr N. W. Abengowe (Aba Division):**

Mr President, I beg to move the motion which stands in my name: "That this House instructs all Local Councils and Native Authorities in the Eastern Region to regulate bride prices and divorces in their respective areas, and report to the House conditions stipulated for any area."

Mr President, in moving this motion, I am aware of the responsibility of serving the Eastern Region which this House has expressed in various ways. The matter which is the object of this motion is one of a social character, and if the House adopts the motion as I anticipate, we should have been saving this Region from one form of social misdemeanour.

Mr President, bride price is an age-long custom in Africa, but at the rate at which it is soaring now, if we do not check it, we should not be surprised to see women being exhibited in the market for sale. Previously, our fathers and grandfathers married for love, but today some parents give out their daughters in marriage to the highest bidder. I am not in this motion suggesting a complete abrogation of bride price because it is un-African, but I maintain that it should be regulated throughout the Region in the interest of all sections of the community. Some of our mothers were married with less than £10 and they were faithful and loyal to their husbands, but today in certain areas, the bride price of a girl is between £200 and £300, yet they are not so faithful. Bride price has risen so high that one cannot expect to get a wife for less than £150. I understand that in certain areas of the Region one cannot expect to marry a girl with less than £200.

I must remark that this change is so sudden. I appreciate the rise in the cost of living (*Laughter*)—but at the same time I feel that the rise in bride price is most unfair to the people of this country. I attribute this rise to our ex-servicemen who were in the habit of "get married at all costs" when they returned from the war.

Mr President, this is one of the social maladies I cannot attribute to Western civilisation or Christianity; it is purely of our own making



building a most unhealthy society. If we want major social reforms, Sir, it will be our responsibility to work for them, and also preserve them.

• Before I end this debate I would like this House to be fully satisfied that I am quite sure that the Local Councils and Native Authorities who are in the Region will be willing to enforce our desire, if only the motion is adopted. The Assemblymen themselves should not indulge in the promotion of high bride price by paying too much for wives, and they should not also encourage divorces directly or indirectly.

I know, Sir, that in support of my motion, there is a particular portion in the Eastern Region Local Government Ordinance which I would like to bring to the notice of this House. The portion stipulates functions which apply to Local Authorities on the one hand, and to Members of this House in respect of this undertaking. I would like to draw the attention of honourable Members, to section 88 of the Eastern Region Local Government Ordinance, No. 16 of 1950, which reads:—

“(1) A council may, and where the Governor so requires, shall, record in writing a declaration of what in the opinion of the council is the local customary law relating to any subject either as applying throughout the area of the authority of such council or in any specific part thereof or so affecting specified persons or classes of persons in such area or in any part thereof, and submit such declaration to the Governor.

(2) A council may, if in the opinion of the council it is expedient for the good government and welfare of the inhabitants of the area of its authority, submit for the consideration of the Governor a recommendation for the modification of any local customary law, whether or not a declaration has been recorded and an order made under the provisions of this section in respect of such local customary law, relating to any subject either as applying throughout the area of its authority or in any part thereof or as affecting certain specified persons or classes of persons or any part thereof.

(3) If the Governor is satisfied that such declaration accurately records the local customary law with respect to the subject to which it relates, or that such modification is expedient and that such local customary law or modification is not repugnant to justice, equity or good conscience, nor incompatible either in its terms or by necessary implication with any Ordinance, he may by order direct such declaration or such modification to be the local customary law in respect of the subject to which it relates and to be in force in the area concerned.”

I feel, Sir, that if this House adopts this motion the Native Authorities and Local Councils will be alive to their responsibilities, and we will be serving the Eastern Region and posterity yet unborn.

Mr President, I beg to move.



**Mr K. Kiri (Degema Division):**

Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

**The Minister of Public Health:**

Mr President, I rise to move the following amendment to the motion: "That this House urges the Government to set up a Committee to probe the whole question of bride price in the Eastern Region and to make recommendations to the Government as soon as possible."

The purpose of this amendment is to give a wider scope to the Committee so that it will go into the matter in a thorough way. The original motion is rather an academical one, but at the same time it is very important and has no doubt been agitating the minds of many people, particularly the young men and women and also those who have daughters to give in marriage. Originally, bride price was intended to show that the young man really meant business and was not just a pretender. It also served to defray part of the expenses of the wedding where the two families were formally united, but with the coming of western civilisation increased wealth flowed into the hands of the people. As you know, most of our people are polygamous and they used part of their new wealth to acquire more wives. You will see from the census of the Eastern Region that the number of women outnumbers the number of men, but it does not double the number of men. It is obvious, therefore, that if polygamy should be the order of the day, we won't have enough girls to go round; indeed, I imagine that this was the very first thing that happened when people married two or three wives and girls became scarce that bride prices went up. It is purely an economic question, and though this is a prosaic point of view it is the inescapable conclusion. You also know that educated girls and girls who are both educated and beautiful are even scarcer. As my honourable friend, the Member for Aba Division said, ex-servicemen when they were soldiers during the last war started to marry right, left and centre, and we all know what happened—there were no girls left anywhere and bride prices skyrocketed to £200. The evil has more or less become established in our community. Marriage has become so very expensive that the young men do not think it worth bothering about, for where are they to get the money? The bride price system originally formulated many centuries ago to safeguard family life, has under the impact of social and economic change started to undermine the very family life which it was designed to safeguard.

The next question we shall have to examine with regard to bride price is the economic status of the average man in the Eastern Region. We have heard that two Oxford economists, Messrs Prest and Stewart came out to enquire into the earnings of the average Easterner and they came to the conclusion that he did not earn more than £23 a year. Yet the father-in-law is supposed to give, in the form of dowry, to his daughter a Raleigh bicycle, chinaware, a Singer sewing machine,



a box full of clothes and even pocket money up to £20. How can a poor man give his daughter away for nothing in the face of this? Where can he get the money? So it would seem that the dowry system also helps to keep bride prices up. If we are to find out a permanent solution and one acceptable to the majority of the people, we have to look into this question of dowry.

One wonders why it is that young men, if they are unable to get a bride in their own division, do not go to another division or another Region or even another country where there is no bride price. I suppose one of the reasons is that people are usually sentimentally parochial and also because of the psycho-pathological state which is popularly known as "love." If young men would leave their own areas and seek a bride in other places, where bride prices are lower, bride prices could be forced down. I know a young man who was asked to pay £150 by his father-in-law. He could only produce £100, but this was not acceptable, so he collected his bride, rushed to a Magistrate and got a special licence, and the old man lost both his daughter and the bride price. I understand that in this particular area this one act of bravery or boldness has started to force down bride price.

If, therefore, we are to force down bride prices permanently so that we shall really as a nation cease to be the laughing stock of the wide world, we shall have to go into all these questions. One of them is the rather delicate question of polygamy. We shall have to stop polygamy so that girls do not become scarce in the Region. Secondly we shall have to educate more girls so that the literate girl is again not as scarce as before. That is a matter for the Minister of Education. Of course, we must also increase the economic status of the average individual in the Region, and I am happy to relate that Government is taking that matter well in hand. We must also encourage inter-tribal, inter-Regional and inter-racial marriages. If we have no more polygamy and young men go to other areas, the old bride prices will go down.

Finally, I would suggest that the Committee to be set up might investigate to see whether it would not be wise to leave bride prices as they are and institute some form of purchase or bride tax on any bride price beyond, say, £20. This will not only force down these exorbitant bride prices but will help to increase the revenue of the Region.

Mr President, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Land and Survey:**

Sir, I beg to second.

**The President:**

The original question was: "That this House instructs all Local Councils and Native Authorities in the Eastern Region to regulate bridal prices and divorces in their respective areas, and report to



the House conditions stipulated for any area," since when an amendment has been proposed in the following terms: "That this House urges the Government to set up a Committee to probe the whole question of bride price in the Eastern Region and to make recommendations to the Government as soon as possible."

The question I have to propose is "That this House urges the Government to set up a Committee to probe the whole question of bride price in the Eastern Region and to make recommendations to the Government as soon as possible."

**Chief M. W. Ubani (Aba Division):**

Mr President, Sir, I rise in support of the amendment to the motion. It is true, Sir, I do support it, but I am quite convinced of the fact that this is a matter which should not be a matter for legislation. It is yet another matter of social life which we can overcome by moral standards and education. It is a delicate issue and is a matter which really touches the very life of those who have sent us here and those for whom we are actually legislating. No amount of legislation can overcome the difficulties confronting the people in this respect. I do realise the difficulties facing every young man when it comes to the question of marriage. In our functions as members of Native Authorities or Local Government bodies, attempts have been made to legislate or to draw up rules to control bride prices, and I can assure this House, Sir, that I say this with full authority that it has proved very difficult indeed. However, I am very happy in supporting this amendment because it goes to show that the Committee will be set up merely as a fact-finding Committee whose report will be subject to debate in this House, whereby every Member of this House or the public will be at liberty to accept or reject such recommendations after mature consideration and experience, whereas if the motion were to be passed in its original form it would be just merely thrown to the people without implementation. I feel, Sir, that the mover of the original motion, coming as he does from the same area as I do, will be very well advised to accept the amendment, because our people, whom he represents as I do, will not be very happy to have this matter deliberated upon only by the House of Assembly without any reference to the people concerned. By setting up the Committee, as I have said the Government will be acting in the right way. When that Committee brings its final report to us I think by that time everyone will have studied the implications involved in either controlling or allowing the people to eradicate or cut off this social evil caused by the high cost of bride price. This can only be done by education and by people who have really seen and have benefited from the history of what has happened in other parts of the world.

Mr President, Sir, I support the amendment to the original motion.

**Mr D. C. Ugwu (Nsukka Division):**

Mr President, I rise to support the motion as modified. I could not have supported the motion as it stood at first because I am one



of those people who believe in the total abolition of pride prices, and I am happy that the motion as it stands says "That this House urges the Government to set up a Committee to probe the whole question of bride price in the Eastern Region and to make recommendations to the Government as soon as possible." It does not suggest the control of bride prices. I shall make it clear that I am married and that I am a Catholic by religion and therefore do not intend to marry another. Therefore I am not interested in the price of women at all as such because it does not affect me directly.

There is one thing I should like to say, Mr President. This is a legislative and representative assembly and it should assess public opinion and be able to act according to the wishes of the people. This matter has been discussed in the newspapers; it has been discussed among unions, tribal unions, etc., who have passed several resolutions. Some have arbitrarily decided on the price of women. Some say that educated women should cost about £100, and uneducated £20, but they say nothing about beauty and character. Beauty and morality to them have no prices. Some of them say that the high cost of women is responsible for the number of divorces we have now in the country. But, Mr President, I am one of those who say that bride prices should be abolished entirely from our marriage system, and I have my reasons. The payment of a price for women reduces the dignity of women because it makes women mere commodities. Secondly, I believe that the prices of women, like the prices of other commodities, cannot be controlled. Any commodity that has a price can hardly be controlled unless the Government or the Native Authority will be able to provide those who want to buy the commodities with the commodities without bothering as to whether sellers will refuse to bring their own commodities to an open market for the buyers. The question of bride price control is a delicate one. What of the parents who are so poor that they will want to give their girls in marriage at the cheapest possible price? And what of those wealthy men who are ready to spend double the fixed price to get the girls of their choice? How is a Committee to see into these details. In my opinion there will be black marketing in the girl-traffic if we control prices. Many people will be shocked when I use the words "sell" and "black market" and "commodity," but there is no getting away from the fact that we have degraded women to the level of commodities. It is a custom which has lived for a long time and one which will be difficult to eradicate, but I do not believe that legislation or a Committee set up will be able to control bride prices. This is something that the people must do themselves to know that women are human beings and should not be sold.

With regard to dowry, it is true that parents have to send with their daughter a sewing machine and other things to a husband, but it is their job to see that their daughter is well maintained when she is with her husband. They cannot shake off their natural obligations and bounden duties to their God-given daughter.



**Mr D. O. Anu (Udi Division):**

Mr President, I do not believe that the Member is speaking in favour of the motion.

**Mr D. C. Ugwu:**

What has that to do with you ?

Mr President, in my opinion it is now time that we should abolish this custom. Because I consider that it is impossible for the Government to control the bride prices of girls since the Government cannot offer girls as Government has no girls to offer. I am supporting this motion on the ground that this Committee will have to investigate the whole question and will be able to make recommendations on bride prices generally. I support the motion on these grounds.

**The Minister of Land and Survey:**

Mr President, I rise to support the amendment on the motion and have the following observations to make.

Like every other native law or custom the payment of bride price has been a sacred institution from time immemorial.

It has not always been settled or determined in terms of money. It was never the practice of our forefathers to rally round to fix the price of a girl as one would do in the case of a goat or a fowl.

Once the contract was proposed the parents of the bride would accept piecemeal whatever the son-in-law could afford to give.

A departure from this sound traditional custom became evident as from the time when the impact of Western culture began to exert its influence on our people. Every situation in our social relationship has to be commercialised.

Our girls and women are at present regarded as marketable commodities. In some divisions and villages it is always the highest bidder who makes the purchase with the result that the sacredness of marriage relationship is no longer kept inviolate.

Many young girls remain spinsters indefinitely and many young men are confirmed bachelors. There are today many cases of forced marriages with a view to demanding excessive bride price.

Cases of divorce are rampant in the country due to the fact that girls are sold to the highest bidders for whom in no way they have any love.

Freedom of choice on the part of girls barely exists and there are rarely any happy homes after marriage because the husbands are often rendered penniless and are in consequence incapable of maintaining their homes.

I strongly recommend the reduction or total abolition of bride price. If this country is to enjoy the full measure of freedom and if it is to progress in every department of civilised life, we certainly must raise the social standing of our womenfolk and that, I think, is the corner stone of the policy of our Government.

Mr President, I support.



we want our womenfolk to march side by side with the men but, surely, if women are left out of the picture in the field of education, how can they march side by side with us. It should be the duty of all concerned, and that is where this motion becomes necessary of publicity, to help tell the parents, suggest to them, advise them, teach and remind them, that it is their duty to train and educate their offspring, irrespective of sex.

I dare say, Sir, that some people may feel that this motion is frivolous or that it is something which should not be discussed in a House like this. I beg to differ from the people who hold that view. If we can go among the common people especially during the festive parts of the year, Easter and Christmas, when a lot of people who are living away from their homes return to them, we find them holding meetings in their families, their towns, clans, districts and divisions. All these family meetings, clan meetings, divisional meetings, are important to various sections of the people we represent in this House. I think, Sir, that honourable Members will agree with me that last Christmas a lot of people were speaking about bride price. I think that some honourable Members, Sir, have even had letters from their own constituents to see what they can do when they come to this House in order to bring sanity into the question of "dowry" as it affects our marriage system. This motion is therefore momentous. It is not something which is brought here to amuse us or to kill time. It is something very near the hearts of the people whom we represent in this House. I do not intend, Mr President, to reiterate all the social evils which earlier speakers have already emphasised as emanating from the practice of this system of high bride price—if I may continue to use the word. One thing important is that it makes the wife feel inferior. There is no doubt about it, also that a lot of families have been ruined owing to debts which have been incurred by the bridegroom before marriage.

About three months ago a young man approached me and said he wanted to marry a girl from my division. This girl was a certificated teacher and the parents were demanding two hundred pounds. The boy was only two years in the Civil Service having only passed his School Certificate Examination two years previously. He thought the girl would make a good wife and they were old enough to get married but could not. There was an example of this pernicious system which goes to break what would have been a happy marital relationship between members of this community. Examples of this sort of thing are legion. I do not think that anybody would like other specific examples to be mentioned. Mr President, in supporting this motion as I am, I would like to urge that the whole framework should be examined and all sections considered including areas where the people have been wise enough to start to control it. In certain areas that I know of, say in the Ahoada Division, Local Government Councils and Native Authority Councils have made legislation controlling it.



I think in some parts of the Ahoáda area, bride prices have been cut down to a nominal sum of twenty pounds. When you compare this and the gifts which are supposed to pass from the parents of the bride these gifts are invariably about half the amount of money which has passed from the other side. Sometimes when the parents of the bride are wealthy they even provide gifts which are of higher monetary value than what they receive as dowry. That is one of the reasons why I suggest that the system should not be abrogated. I think also that it has the effect of helping marriages to be stable. When, in this country, you have a marriage celebrated according to native law and custom and this question of dowry—I prefer to call it that, Sir—is an essential part of it, then there is more at stake for the parties to this sacred contract of marriage than there is in two young people coming together and saying “we are getting married.” There is more to it, and that is what I would like the Committee to bear in mind. The stabilising element in this institution of dowry should not be lost sight of so that our marriages may be sound. There is no point, Mr President, in speaking about the motion as it originally stood. I think that as amended it is more intelligible and the work of the Committee would be quite practicable.

The question of divorce has been adequately provided for in the Native Courts Ordinance and other local legislation and, Mr President, I humbly beg to support this motion and I hope that when the Committee gets going, if appointed, they will bear in mind all that the honourable Members who have spoken here have pointed out, and that also they will bring us a report which is lucid, intelligible and factual.

Sir, I beg to support.

**Mrs M. U. Ekpo (Special Member):**

Mr Chairman, I beg to speak in support of the amended motion. I have to render my appreciation to the honourable Member who produced this motion to this honourable House. I dissociate myself from those of our honourable Members in this House who try to feel that this motion should not have been brought to this place. In another way, I am beginning to think and I am beginning to be very proud of myself to know and to feel that our honourable Members in this House and our young men outside this House are beginning to realise the insults and the unscrupulous ways. I want to beg this House that as from today henceforth, now that a woman has got a seat in this honourable House (*Laughter*) that they must be very careful of the words they use to qualify all they say against my own sex (*Hear! Hear!*) (*Laughter*).

I have to thank our Central Minister of Commerce and Industries whose thought and mine ran the same (*Laughter*).

That word, Mr President, “bride price,” “bride price” like “salt price” and “chicken price” is very very insulting indeed to the women of the Eastern Region. I beg that that word, if the honourable Member



N.C.N.C. (National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons) were trying to teach Parliamentary democracy, I refused to move the motion (*Hear! Hear!*). Now it has come to the House again through another source and I am in full support of the motion.

Before I go further I must make a revelation, that is, that many people have admitted that they received £150 on their daughters. With your permission I wish to refer to an article in the *Eastern Outlook and Camroons Star* of 25th September, 1952. Page 2 of that Paper was devoted to bride price. "Parents gain nothing from it," so said one of the parents. "In fact we parents do not gain at all from the marriages of our daughters. I received £120 as bride price for my first daughter. With the money I bought a sewing machine. . . ." and so on and so forth. The name of the parent is clear and he is a man from a division in Owerri Province. Another man said: "Reduce it to normal." Another man said: "Bride price is out of date." Another man said, "Pay anything for the girl you love." (*Laughter*). Another man said, "Let it be abolished." All these are opinions on the bride price.

Let us first know the purpose for which bride price is paid. I understand—and that is what I infer from the last lady Member speaker here—that she will shortly table a motion calling this House to denounce the name or term "bride price" because girls or women are not sold. They are not commodities of trade.

Now let me refer to what C. K. Meek said in his *Law and Authority in a Nigerian Tribe* about bride price. I am reading part of what he said. "The main purpose of bride price is to regularise and to give permanence to the union of a man and a woman, and so to distinguish marriage and the foundations of a family from a mere paramour relationship and the promiscuous begetting and bearing of children." That is to say, that the only thing which makes it necessary for parents to demand bride price, or whatever name may be given to it in due course, is to see that children got out of the marriage are legitimate children and not bastards; but because of the high bride price many children are presently bastards in each town. Yes, I say so because of what is happening. I do not want those who live in rural areas to interfere unnecessarily with my speech because they do not know really what is happening: happier and holier lives are being led in rural villages. (*Hear! Hear!*). I mention this because those of us who have been living in townships and big towns have experienced many things that are happening because of the high bride price.

Now many people when they find that they have no money to pay resort to writing love letters. When they approach a man to marry his daughter and he charges them £500 or £200 or so the girl and the man will agree between themselves that they must marry under any circumstances; so the man will go away, if he is in a big town, and will continue to write the girl until one day the girl will run away from the parents. So the parents lose. What happens?



In Iboland, according to custom, when you have not paid any dowry or bride price on a girl, if she gets a child for you, it will not be your own—you will not claim the child at all. That is the custom in many parts of Iboland, and, I hope, that it is so throughout Iboland.

What happens is that such girls run away and then they hide—and hide—until they become old; some do not even return home again. It is because of high bride price that sometime ago, when the Ibo State Union conducted investigations into the emigration of certain ladies from Iboland, about eighty of them were found in the Gold Coast. These women who ran away to the Gold Coast were obviously looking for husbands. (*Laughter*). They were driven away by circumstances beyond their control.

People say, "I educated my daughter and I must get some money." In my own area, people educate both their daughter and their son. Those who go to school are trained by their parents, but if the one does not go to school (I mean a boy) when that one grows up into a young man it is the responsibility of the father to marry a wife for him, give him a hoe, give him goods, and prepare everything that will make him live a happy life. In the same way, girls ought to be trained. It is the responsibility of any sensible parent or parents to train their sons or their daughters, and that will not make them to demand £250—that is rendering the wife to be a slave. Now some people say they buy things, say sewing machines and other things, and give to their daughters when they are going to their husbands' homes. I must remind this House of the fact that in certain areas, even after marriage that is, after you have paid the high bride price on the girl, you continue to give services to the parents of the girl: you build houses for the mother you repair the houses and you give them money if you are not able to provide labour yourself. That is done in my own village, in my own area, and in many parts of the Eastern Region.

What I suggest is that the Committee to be set up should try to see that a nominal bride price to be paid on each girl in the Eastern Region should not be above twenty pounds no matter whether literate or illiterate. Even I would say that illiterate girls in certain areas do make better wives. Illiterate girls, I emphasise, do make better wives in certain areas and even if a higher bride price should be demanded it should be demanded on illiterate girls. (*Laughter*). By this I am not discouraging any girls from going to school but I say what I am saying from practical experience. It is obvious that girls in the townships who call themselves educated are worse than anything. I am not condemning all the girls but I am saying what I have found.

**Mr E. O. Eyo (Uyo Division):**

Is the Member's wife illiterate?

**Mr D. A. Nnaji:**

Mr President, I suggest that a nominal bride price, or whatever name is given to that in due course, should be not more than twenty pounds whether the girl is educated or uneducated.

I beg to support the amended motion.



Mr President, Sir, I would have wished that the mover of the motion withdraws it but if it is the wish of the Region that we should regulate, and a Committee is set up, I feel, Sir, that the customs of respective areas should not be tampered with in dealing with them and that only a recommendation to this House should be made. In our recommendations, Sir, if it is necessary to have a Committee, I do not know what I should say about this whether we are going to say about the height of girls, the beauty of girls, the gait of girls, and what would be the factors to be taken into consideration before making the recommendation to the House. What would influence the Committee in saying something about particular customs of areas. (*Laughter*). And what is the use trying to tamper with the customs of our areas in matters affecting marriage. At the same time, Sir, will it serve any useful purpose at all to form a Committee to probe into the matters of marriage in this Region, and, if it is necessary, what would it bring? If the parents object to the recommendation how are we going to enforce it? (*Laughter*). Is it because we have nothing to do here that we are here to say how to regulate marriages in our areas and how much will be paid on girls and so on? Afterwards they are not slaves. They should be allowed to say and they should be mediators between the parents and the would-be husbands. It is for the girl to say what her parents should receive.

Mr President, Sir, I know of no occasion on which a young man has approached a parent for marriage and because of high price he was refused the hand of the daughter. (*Laughter*). I know of none, Sir, and I do not see why we should worry ourselves over this matter.

Mr President, I asked a question and I like to see whether the mover when responding to this motion should please bear in mind and explain whether he had met with difficulty, and if he had any mandate of the whole Region to bring this kind of motion.

Somebody said in this House, Sir, that we are opposed to Committee and so on . . .

**The President:**

Order! Order! There should not be so much unseemly interruption to the Member's speech.

**Mr A. U. A. Inyang:**

Somebody said in this House, Sir, that the Opposition Party is opposed to certain motions, and so on, and that we asked the House to undertake any responsibility and that we do not want anything to be done by the Government. That is not the intention. The intention of the party is that we want anything which will be done to be done and, if it is not the responsibility of the Government we leave it to the House. Here is a case of appointing a Committee to go into this matter, and the terms of reference—I do not know whether we will have to make another motion as to that or we leave it to the Government to see what may be the terms of reference in this respect. And if, perchance, we pass this motion, whether it will not occupy



most of the Government time in getting to enter into trivial matters and leave undone certain things which should give some improvement for the Region? And if high price is paid on girls, Sir, is it not coming back to the pockets of the Easterners? (*Laughter*).

**The President:**

I think the honourable Member is repeating himself too much. Let us hear what he wishes to say.

**Mr A. U. A. Inyang:**

And, Sir, I am asking this House that if we want to appoint a Committee we should not in any way interfere with any custom that prevails in any area of the Region but that we should ask their consent if they would like to regulate, and, if so, they should be allowed to use the Local Government Ordinance or the Native Authority Ordinance where they can find some scope or function which is allowed to any Native Authority or Local Government Council.

I support. (*Laughter*).

**Mr E. O. Eyo:**

Mr President, I move that the question be now put.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Original question put accordingly and agreed to.*

**Adjournment**

**Mr I. U. Imeh (Minister Without Portfolio):**

Mr President, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn.

**The Civil Secretary:**

Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*House adjourned accordingly at five minutes to one o'clock p.m. until 10 a.m. on Thursday, 18th February, 1954.*



## WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS Wednesday, 17th February, 1954

### FOREIGN INVESTMENTS

*Question—*

**9. Mr D. A. Nnaji:**

To ask the Minister of Local Government, Eastern Region:—

What Native Authorities and Local Government Bodies in the Eastern Region have Reserve Funds in foreign countries, and where; will the Minister give the date of each investment and how much was invested by each Native Authority and Local Government Body?

*Answer—*

**The Minister of Local Government, Eastern Region:**

The Schedules attached show holdings of investments, both overseas and Nigeria, of Local Government Bodies in the Eastern Region, amounting to a total of £85,812 1s 8d and also the total amount invested in each type of stock.

There is no information available concerning the date of the investments.

**Return of cash balance and securities held by the Crown Agents for the Colonies on behalf of the Native Administration and Local Government Councils at 31st March, 1953:—**

Authority	Holding <sup>1</sup>	Amount		
		£	s	d
Afikpo Native Administration	F.M.S. 3% 1960-70 ..	1,000	0	0
	Australia 3½% 1964-74 ..	1,000	0	0
	New Zealand 3% 1952-55 ..	1,021	16	5
	Total .. .. .	£3,021	16	5
Ahoada Native Administration	Ceylon 3% 1959-64.. ..	1,000	0	0
	Trinidad 3% 1965-70 ..	1,186	8	4
	3% Defence Bonds (P.O. Issue)	1,000	0	0
	2½% Treasury Stock 1975 or after	25	8	9
	Total .. .. .	£3,211	17	1
Awka Native Administration ..	Nigeria 3% 1955 .. ..	2,904	8	7
	3% Savings Bonds 1955-65..	571	0	0
	Total .. .. .	£3,475	8	7
Brass Native Administration ..	Australia 3½% 1964-74 ..	£3,200	11	1
Calabar U.D.C. .. ..	Nigeria 3% 1955 .. ..	£1,000	0	0
Eastern Annang Native Administration .. .. .	Nigeria 3% 1955 .. ..	501	18	0
	Nigeria 3% 1975-77 ..	5,000	0	0
	Leeds 3½% 1957-60 ..	500	0	0
	Total .. .. .	£6,001	18	0
Izi Native Administration ..	E.A.H.C. 3½% 1966-68 ..	984	5	4
	Australia 3% 1955-58 ..	1,066	11	7
	New Zealand 3% 1952-55 ..	1,000	0	0
	Total .. .. .	£3,050	16	11



[Written Answers]

17th February, 1954

[Written Answers]

Authority	Holding	Amount		
		£	s	d
Kalabari Native Administration	E.A.H.C. 3½% 1966-68 ..	502	3	6
	New Zealand 3½% 1960-64 ..	510	5	11
	War Loan 3% 1955-59 ..	501	2	4
	3% Savings Bonds 1955-65 ..	600	14	6
	Total .. .. .	£2,114	6	3
Mamfe Native Administration	N. Rhodesia 3½% 1955-65 ..	1,000	0	0
	Trinidad 3½% 1958-68 ..	1,000	0	0
	3% Savings Bonds 1955 ..	1,240	14	6
	Total .. .. .	£3,240	14	6
Ngwa Native Administration ..	Nigeria 3% 1955 .. ..	1,434	7	9
	South Africa 3% 1954-64 ..	1,500	0	0
	Total .. .. .	£2,934	7	9
Nsukka Native Administration	E.A.H.C. 3½% 1966-68 ..	1,476	8	0
	Nigeria 3% 1955 .. ..	1,654	10	0
	Australia 3½% 1951-54 ..	1,030	18	7
	New Zealand 3% 1952-55 ..	1,546	6	4
	3% Savings Bonds 1955-65 ..	1,000	0	0
	Total .. .. .	£6,708	2	11
Ogoja Native Administration ..	Ceylon 3% 1959-64 .. ..	1,000	0	0
	F.M.S. 3% 1960-70 .. ..	878	10	5
	Australia 3½% 1956-61 ..	995	9	5
	3% Savings Bonds 1955-65 ..	2,019	3	2
	Total .. .. .	£4,893	3	0
Ogoni Native Administration	Nigeria 3% 1975-77 .. ..	4,000	0	0
Okigwi Native Administration	Nigeria 3% 1955 .. ..	2,170	13	11
	Nigeria 3% 1975-77 .. ..	6,917	9	11
	3% Defence Bonds (4th P.O. Issue) .. .. .	1,000	0	0
	3½% Defence Bonds (P.O. Issue) .. .. .	1,000	0	0
	Total .. .. .	£11,088	3	10
Oron Native Administration ..	Nigeria 3% 1975-77 .. ..	£2,565	15	1
Otoro District Council .. ..	Nigeria 3% 1975-77 .. ..	£3,839	10	6
Owerri Native Administration ..	E.A.H.C. 3½% 1966-68 .. ..	2,774	13	5
	F.M.S. 3% 1960-70 .. ..	890	3	11
	Nigeria 3% 1955 .. ..	1,500	0	0
	New Zealand 3½% 1960-64 ..	1,530	18	0
	South Africa 3% 1954-64 ..	543	2	2
	War Loan 3% 1955-59 .. ..	1,503	6	11
	Total .. .. .	£8,742	4	5
Udi Native Administration ..	Nigeria 3% 1955 .. ..	£3,093	10	0
Uyo Native Administration ..	Nigeria 3% 1955 .. ..	1,000	0	0
	Nigeria 3% 1975-77 .. ..	3,341	6	4
	Total .. .. .	£4,341	6	4



Authority	Holding	Amount		
		£	s	d
Victoria Native Administration	N. Rhodesia 3½% 1955-65 ..	2,000	0	0
	Trinidad 3½% 1958-68 ..	2,000	0	0
	3% Savings Bonds 1955-65 ..	1,288	9	0
Total .. .. .		£5,288	9	0

## SUMMARY

	£	s	d
Afikpo Native Administration .. .. .	3,021	16	5
Ahoada Native Administration .. .. .	3,211	17	1
Awka Native Administration .. .. .	3,475	8	7
Brass Native Administration .. .. .	3,200	11	1
Calabar U.D.C. .. .. .	1,000	0	0
Eastern Annang Native Administration .. .. .	6,001	18	0
Izi Native Administration .. .. .	3,050	16	11
Kalabari Native Administration .. .. .	2,114	6	3
Mamfe Native Administration .. .. .	3,240	14	6
Ngwa Native Administration .. .. .	2,934	7	9
Nsukka Native Administration .. .. .	6,708	2	11
Ogoja Native Administration .. .. .	4,893	3	0
Ogoni Native Administration .. .. .	4,000	0	0
Okigwi Native Administration .. .. .	11,088	3	10
Oron Native Administration .. .. .	2,565	15	1
Otoro District Council .. .. .	3,839	10	6
Owerri Native Administration .. .. .	8,742	4	5
Udi Native Administration .. .. .	3,093	10	0
Uyo Native Administration .. .. .	4,341	6	4
Victoria Native Administration .. .. .	5,288	9	0
Total .. .. .	£85,812	1	8

F.M.S., 3%:1960-70	Australia, 3½%:1964-74	New Zealand, 3%:1952-55	Ceylon, 3%:1959-64	Trinidad, 3%:1965-70	3½% Defence Bonds (P.O. Issue)
Afikpo £1,000	Afikpo £1,000	Afikpo £1,021 16s 5d	Ahoada £1,000	Ahoada £1,186 8s 4d	Ahoada £1,000
Ogoja £878 10s 5d	Brass £3,200 11s 1	Izi £1,000	Ogoja £1,000		Okigwi £1,000
Owerri £890 3s 11d		Nsukka £1,546 6s 4d			
TOTAL: £2,768 14s 4d	£4,200 11s 1d	£3,568 2s 9d	£2,000	£1,186 8s 4d	£2,000
2½%: Treasury Stock: 1975 or after	Nigeria, 3%:1955	3% Savings Bonds 1955-65	Nigeria, 3%:1975-77	Leeds, 3½%:1957-60	E.A.H.C., 3½%:1966-68
Ahoada £25 8s 9d	Awka £2,904 8s 7d	Awka £571	E. Annang £5,000	E. Annang £500	Izi £984 5s 4d
	Calabar U.D.C. £1,000	Kalabari £600 14s 6d	Ogoni £4,000		Kalabari £502 3s 6d
	E. Annang £501 18s	Mamfe £1,240 14s 6d	Okigwi £6,917 9s 11d		Nsukka £1,476 8s
	Ngwa £1,434 7s 9d	Nsukka £1,000	Oron £2,565 15s 1d		Owerri 2,774 13s 5d
	Nsukka £1,654 10s	Ogoja £2,019 3s 2	Otoro £3,839 10s 6d		
	Okigwi £2,170 13s 11d	Victoria £1,288 9s 0d	Uyo £3,341 6s 4d		
	Owerri £1,500				
	Udi £3,093 10s				
	Uyo £1,000				
TOTAL: £25 8s 9d	£15,259 8s 3d	£6,720 1s 2d	£25,664 1s 10d	£500	£5,737 10s 3d



[Written Answers]

17th February, 1954

[Written Answers]

<i>Australia</i> 3%: 1955-58	<i>New Zealand</i> 3½%: 1960-64	<i>War Loan</i> 3%: 1955-59	<i>N. Rhodesia</i> 3½%: 1955-65	<i>Trinidad</i> 3½%: 1958-68	<i>South Africa</i> 3%: 1954-64
Izi £1,066 11s 7d	Kalabari £510 5s 11d	Kalabari £501 2s 4d	Mamfe £1,000	Mamfe £1,000	Ngwa £1,500
	Owerri £1,530 18s	Owerri £1,503 6s 11d	Victoria £2,000	Victoria £2,000	Owerri £543 2s 2d
<b>TOTAL:</b> £1,066 11s 7d	£2,041 3s 11d	£2,004 9s 3d	£3,000	£3,000	£2,043 2s 2d

<i>Australia</i> 3½%: 1951-54	<i>Australia</i> 3½%: 1956-61	<i>3% Defence Bonds (4th P.O. Issue)</i>
Nsukka £1,030 18s 7d	Ogoja £995 9s 5d	Okigwi £1,000
<b>TOTAL:</b> £1,030 18s 7d	£995 9s 5d	£1,000

## SUMMARY

	£	s	d
F.M.S. 3% 1960-70 .. .. .	2,768	14	4
Australia 3½% 1964-74 .. .. .	4,200	11	1
New Zealand 3% 1952-55 .. .. .	3,568	2	9
Ceylon 3% 1959-64 .. .. .	2,000	0	0
Trinidad 3% 1965-70 .. .. .	1,186	8	4
3½% Defence Bonds (P.O. Issue) .. .. .	2,000	0	0
2½% Treasury Stock 1975 or after .. .. .	25	8	9
Nigeria 3% 1955 .. .. .	15,259	8	3
3% Savings Bonds 1955-65 .. .. .	6,720	1	2
Nigeria 3% 1975-77 .. .. .	25,664	1	10
Leeds 3½% 1957-60 .. .. .	500	0	0
E.A.H.C. 3½% 1966-68 .. .. .	5,737	10	3
Australia 3% 1955-58 .. .. .	1,066	11	7
New Zealand 3½% 1960-64 .. .. .	2,041	3	11
War Loan 3% 1955-59 .. .. .	2,004	9	3
N. Rhodesia 3½% 1955-65 .. .. .	3,000	0	0
Trinidad 3½% 1958-68 .. .. .	3,000	0	0
South Africa 3% 1954-64 .. .. .	2,043	2	2
Australia 3½% 1951-54 .. .. .	1,030	18	7
Australia 3½% 1956-61 .. .. .	995	9	5
3% Defence Bonds (4th P.O. Issue) .. .. .	1,000	0	0
<b>Total .. .. .</b>	<b>£85,812</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>

## LIVING CONDITIONS OF THE MISSION NURSES

Question—

## 35. Mr O. O. Ita:

To ask the Minister of Public Health, Eastern Region:—

Whether the Government had at any time investigated the living conditions of the Mission nurses; if so what were the findings of such investigations?

Answer—

**The Minister of Public Health, Eastern Region:**

There has been no special investigation by the Regional Government into the living conditions of Mission nurses. The second part of the question does not therefore arise.

Routine inspections of Mission and Private Hospitals are made by officers of the Medical Department, and these include the nurses quarters.



## MINERAL DEPOSITS

*Question—*

**69. Mr P. A. Onwe:**

To ask the Minister of Natural Resources, Eastern Region:—

What mineral deposits have yet been discovered at Nyeba Mines in Abakaliki Division and are they of commercial value?

*Answer—*

**The Minister of Natural Resources, Eastern Region:**

The honourable Member should please direct his question to the honourable Minister of Mines and Power.



# Debates in the Eastern House of Assembly

Thursday, 18th February, 1954

The House met at ten o'clock a.m.

## Prayers

(Mr President in the Chair).

## QUESTIONS AND ORAL ANSWERS

### ALLOWANCES TO REGIONAL MINISTERS

*Question—*

**\*3. Mr B. C. Okwu:**

To ask the Financial Secretary, Eastern Region:—

The total sum of money drawn by each of the non-expatriate members of the Regional Executive Council since the 1st of May, 1953, to the 31st of December, 1953, in respect of salaries, and allowances ?

*Answer:—*

**The Financial Secretary, Eastern Region:**

	£	s	d
The honourable Eyo Ita ... ..	1,437	6	8
Mr E. I. Oli ... ..	1,504	2	6
Mr S. W. Ubani-Ukoma ... ..	1,436	3	3
Mr S. J. Una ... ..	1,402	18	4
Mr R. I. Uzoma ... ..	1,572	15	8
Mr R. J. E. Koripamo ... ..	1,493	7	9

**Supplementary Question to No. \*3, by Mr B. C. Okwu:**

Whether the figures quoted included the expenses incurred by the Ministers during their general election campaign tours ?

*Answer:—*

**The Financial Secretary, Eastern Region:**

The figures given include all the emoluments drawn by the gentlemen named during the period in question in respect of their Ministerial appointments.

### ALLOWANCES TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCILLORS

*Question—*

**\*4. Mr B. C. Okwu:**

To ask the Minister of Local Government, Eastern Region:—

Is the Government aware of the popular demand for reasonable sitting allowance to be paid to Local Government councillors, if so, is the Minister taking steps to amend the Eastern Region Local Government Ordinance, 1950, to make this possible ?



recommended to this House. For a Member sitting on the Ministerial Bench to get up on the floor of this House and to say that this is a reward for this man having acted as a detective to his party when he was a Member of the House, I think it is beyond the height of what I would call political scandal.

I think that if anybody is going to be appointed on to any Government Board or Committee, it must be on his merits and his ability to discharge the functions pertaining to such Board or Committee. But for a man who is holding a position of state—which indeed is an office of trust—to come here and say that the only consideration, indeed the most important consideration for offering this appointment to Mr Offor was that having acted as a spy for his party and that detective having failed his election he must be compensated—I think this is squandering public funds on bribing party failures.

I would say this, Sir, Mr Offor is a man I know very well. I do not know him to be an efficient produce trader. I know him as a detective who was in the Police Force. Now, Sir, I maintain that if men who are to advise the Government on the job of produce inspection are to be detectives, well surely then we should have established here an *ogpu*—a Police Depot for the training of more detectives to supervise Produce Inspectors, such an institution would serve this Region better than to appoint a man who is being offered a job because he was a spy to a political party. Now, Sir, I hope that this is not going to be the criterion for the appointment of citizens of this Region on to public offices. Yesterday, Sir, we debated corruption and bribery—that it should be stamped out and it was the Ministers themselves who amended that motion. They swore everything that they were not going to offer jobs to their brothers and their relations, to their supporters merely because their supporters were their brothers and relations, and they swore that if anybody were to find out that that sort of thing was going on, they were prepared to give up their jobs. I would say, Sir, with respect, that even the Leader of this Government has made that pronouncement time and time again. But for a Minister of State, that is, the Minister of Natural Resources, to have the effrontery to come to this House and make bold to say that this man is being offered such a post, not because he deserves it, but because he was a detective to a political party, I say, Sir, is something that should be condemned by this House. The only person who should be appointed into the Produce Inspection Board should be a man of considerable experience in the produce trade—a dealer in produce. Such a person would be a useful instrument in the hands of Government. He would advise the Board as to what should be done by Produce Inspectors and what rules should be made by Government to guide produce inspectors in their work and a man like that, Sir, should be the only person to be considered for appointment onto such a Board. For a Minister, to be so frank, to be so bold and daring to come to this House, and put forward such a tactless proposition, deserves, I repeat, condemnation. It is now time I think when the Leader of the Govern-



[Appointment of a  
Member of]

18th February, 1954

[the Produce Inspection  
Board]

ment should make it quite clear to his henchman that the Eastern Region is not coterminous with the N.C.N.C. This is not an N.C.N.C. Region. (*Laughter*). If it were, there might be others who might not like to live in an N.C.N.C. Region (*Laughter*), and certainly a Coastal Region will come. I say this, Sir, that fools will always rush in where angels fear to tread.

**Mr E. O. Eyo (Uyo Division):**

Mr President, Sir, he is using unparliamentary language and should be made to withdraw.

**Dr E. U. Udoma:**

I said fools, I did not say Members of this House. (*Shouts of "Withdraw! Withdraw!"*). Am I being ordered by the Chair or by the House. (*Cries of "the Chair! the Chair!"*) I said fools rush . . .

**Mr D. A. Nnaji (Udi Division):**

The honourable Member continues to use unparliamentary language and he must be made to withdraw.

**Dr E. U. Udoma:**

Mr President, would you kindly maintain order in this House. (*Much noise and laughter*).

**The President:**

I ask the honourable Member to withdraw.

**Dr E. U. Udoma:**

I gladly withdraw under the order of the President. (*Shame! Shame!*) Shame to those of you who don't understand parliamentary language. Shame to those of you who have no parliamentary experience. Now, Mr President, what I was saying is this—if I may be allowed to continue—that there are people who are to be appointed—there are certain persons who are qualified to be appointed on Boards and Committees and Public Offices. They should be appointed only on merits not because they acted as detectives, and spies, to political parties, otherwise, it would be an abuse of public office. And I say, Sir, that I hope that what has been said by the Minister—the mover of this motion—had not the approval of the Leader of the Government—that this man was awarded this office because he was a detective;—and Mr President, those who don't understand the English language can go to school. I said I hope that this statement does not meet with the approval of the Leader of the Government. I hope that Mr Offor is being appointed purely because he is a man who deals in produce and has experience and would be of use to the Board when appointed.

**Mr M. T. Mbu (Ogoja Division):**

Mr President, I would not have liked to speak on this motion because it is a simple one. But, it is unfortunate, that the honourable mover of this motion, in his attempt to give us antecedent of Mr Offor, had in a way erred and has given us much more than what



**Mr K. O. Mbadiwe (Orlu Division):**

Mr President, I had expected that the Members of the Opposition would have congratulated us for the wise decision in selecting Mr Ofor for this post. I say this because at this time of oil adulteration, which is causing a great handicap in our foreign trade, palm oil and palm kernel are the only source of major revenue for the Eastern Region. This oil adulteration has been a major concern to the Eastern Regional Production Development Board. How are we going to curb it in this Eastern Region? People are using various chemicals to inflate the percentage of oil to come to Special Palm Oil grade, and within few months it deteriorates; and it has been our concern to find out how these things are being done and how they can be checked and stopped. So we went in to look for the man who can do this type of job and we thought of no other than a retired detective (*Hear! Hear!*) who is at present engaged in business in Port Harcourt, and Port Harcourt is the centre for our Produce Export. Most of the oil are transported there and through the BOP (Bulk Oil Plant) they are shipped to our overseas market. If our oil continues to deteriorate, if we continue to adulterate our oil, surely the foreign markets will no longer tap it and you will not come here to discuss the Budget in the future if that happens, unless you can reproduce or replace other cash crops in this Region and we are not ready to do that yet, or it may take us ten to twenty years and we may not be successful. What we have, we hold, and we hold tight.

So, Mr President, that is the consideration responsible for the appointment of Mr Ofor. I think, Mr President, that we have come here with humble hearts to give the best as God gives us the right to know the best, to this Region. Let us not harp on mistakes. Let us give, to my mind, corrections where they are necessary but not to exploit situations. That will not help us, and that is the mind for which we have come, and, Mr President, I support the motion and commend it to the House.

**Mr S. O. Achara (Okigwi Division):**

Mr President, Sir, I happen to come from the Okigwi Division in which the gentleman referred to was born and bred. I happen also to know that the gentleman referred to has at present in Okigwi Division four hand pressing machines for extracting palm oil and palm kernels. (*Hear! Hear!*). Mr President, I also happen to know that the gentleman referred to has an area of approximately  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile square in which he has planted palm trees. (*Hear! Hear!*). Mr President, on the Okigwi-Ezinachi road also I happen to know—and all these are facts—that the gentleman referred to is planning to plant palm trees on an area of one mile square. I was wondering when the Member in the Opposition bench was speaking and making certain allegations whether he did know anything about the gentleman referred to. All he knew of Mr Ofor, Mr President, was when Mr Ofor was in the Police Department and he went constantly to him to seek for legal advice when he had difficult Police cases. (*Hear! Hear!*).



Mr President, I do not want to belabour the question. References have been made to the outstanding personal integrity of the gentleman referred to. It is on this score, on this question of my personal knowledge of Mr Offor as one of the wealthiest palm produce dealers in Okigwi Division, that I very much support the motion appointing him as a member of the Produce Inspection Board.

Mr President, I beg to support the motion.

**Mr A. Ikoku (Enyong Division):**

Mr President, I must express amazement at the turn a very simple and perfectly non-contentious motion is taking in the House. I do deprecate the tendency to degenerate into the sort of tirade we had twelve months ago, and I should like to appeal, through the Chair if I may, to honourable Members to be more objective and less inclined to impute evil motives to one another, and let us, for goodness sake, carry through the Business of the House in perfect peace and harmony.

Now it must be admitted by all fair thinking people that the honourable the Minister of Natural Resources made a very tactless speech when introducing Mr Offor. He drew a party line, which was not necessary to the motion, and he made it perfectly clear—if the English language has any meaning at all—that the candidate was being rewarded for his services to his party.

Mr President, if that is so then it is only natural to expect the Opposition not to participate in that reward. That is how I understood my friend the honourable Dr Udoma. We are perfectly not opposing this motion; it is non-contentious; but we are not going to participate in rewarding a party candidate with Public Office for serving the party, and, therefore, Mr President, I beg to give notice that the Opposition will abstain from voting.

**Mr B. C. Okwu (Awgu Division):**

I like to make my speech very short on this motion. In the first place, there is just one wrong impression which I want to erase from the minds of the Members. I do not think that it is right to consider the attempt to appoint this gentleman a member of the Board from his connections with his party. As a matter of fact considering the nature of the activities of the gentleman during the last struggle, which was not a struggle between the party in power (the Government) and the Opposition, but between the people and the enemies of the people, one can readily commend Mr Offor. Anyone who has the audacity, to say here or in the public, that the party is not the voice of the people is, to my mind, entirely wrong. Until we lose the confidence of the people, we can assert authoritatively that we speak the minds of the people. If the honourable Dr Udoma can claim to represent a section of the people, we as well represent sections of the people.

The stand which Mr Offor made here was a stand with the people of the Eastern Region, and, surely, there can be no greater partiotism



than that. It is to his merit. And again, Sir, I like to know where fair dealing or fair distribution of Government privileges ends and where nepotism or other selfish distribution of privileges begins, because it will be seen clearly from what happened here during the last fifteen months that the Government in power did, as a matter of fact, distribute all the privileges available to it to its friends and to the immediate relatives of the Ministers. That was why we had to go on the last parliamentary strike, commonly referred to as the crisis in the Eastern House. Anyone who, because he has lost the power now, that gets up here to say that he wants to defend the right of fair distribution is actually telling a lie. Example is better than precept. I want to make it clear that the appointment of this gentleman to this Board was purely on the grounds that the man has been a hard-working person. He is a man of high integrity, and he is a man who will not let down the people.

On this ground I support the motion.

**Mrs M. U. Ekpo (Special Member):**

Mr President, I beg to speak in support of this motion, and also I like to make it clear to our Opposition Members that what the honourable mover of this motion meant was not to glorify Mr Offor that he was an N.C.N.Cer. What the honourable gentleman who moved this motion meant was that in so far as Mr Offor was able to stand fast with his party he will be able to stand fast in the Produce Inspection Board and that he will not disclose any secrets of the laws and regulations that might bind that Board, and also as an ex-C.I.D. man he will be in a position to detect any adulteration of our oil. I think that is what the honourable mover meant and I am standing here to support this motion that Mr Offor should serve on the Produce Inspection Board.

Mr President, I beg to support.

**Mr I. U. Imeh (Minister Without Portfolio):**

Mr President, I move that the question be now put.

**Mr E. O. Eyo:**

Sir, I beg to second.

*Question—“That the question be now put” put and agreed to.*

*Original question put accordingly and agreed to.*

**ORDER OF THE DAY**

THE 1952-53 EASTERN REGION SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION  
LAW, 1954

Order read for resuming the adjourned debate on the second reading.  
Question again proposed “That the Bill be now read a second time.”  
Question put and agreed to.



[1952-53 E.R. Supplement-  
ary Appropriation Law,  
1954: Committee and  
Third Reading]

18th February, 1954

[Adjournment]

Bill accordingly read a second time and, pursuant to Standing Order 67, stood committed to the Committee of Supply.

Committee today. (The Financial Secretary).

House in Committee.

*Clauses 1 and 2 postponed.*

*Schedule to the Bill agreed to.*

*Postponed clauses agreed to.*

*Preamble agreed to.*

*House resumed.*

*The President resumed the Chair.*

*Bill reported without amendment.*

*Bill read the third time and passed.*

### Adjournment

#### **The Minister of Local Government:**

Mr President, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn.

#### **Mr E. P. Okoya (Minister Without Portfolio):**

Sir, I beg to second.

#### **Dr E. U. Udoma (Opobo Division):**

Mr President, I did give notice of two matters which I had wanted to raise on the adjournment, and, Mr President, those two matters relate to matters of procedure, and I think it is the duty of every Member of the House to protect the rights and liberties and privileges of this House, and it is in that spirit that I am proposing to raise these two matters this morning.

The first one, Sir, is that there was this question of the Address from the Throne. The Lieutenant-Governor, as representative of Her Majesty, delivered an Address which enunciated the policy to be pursued by the present Government during the present year, and, usually, according to parliamentary practice, Mr President—and everybody had expected that that practice would be followed—that Address should have been followed by a Motion for an Address, which would give every Member in this House the opportunity of discussing the details of the policy enunciated by the Government.

But what did we find? On the contrary, instead of that procedure being followed, there was another long Address coming from the Financial Secretary thrust upon this House. I do not know, Sir, if you are aware that by this procedure and by that practice, Members of this House are deprived of the opportunity of discussing the Government policy with which the Eastern Region is going to be governed for a whole year. I do not know, Sir, whether it is the intention of Government that that Address from the Throne should be treated with contempt by this House or thrown into the waste paper basket. But here we are; we are coming back to discuss the Estimates, and I do not know what the Government intends to do. Perhaps by way of information the Government would make it clear to this House what



they propose to do in relation to that Address from the Throne. That is the first point, Sir, and we on this side of the House would like to know whether it is the intention of the Government that the Address should be taken together with the Estimates, because, as you probably know, it is speaking on the Motion for an Address that Members can express what they think about the whole policy of Government and make whatever contribution they can in assisting the Government to govern the Region according to Law. Mr President, that opportunity has been deprived Members of this House, and I think it is only right and proper that I should mention this matter and that it be recorded and that that point was noted by Government. It is up to the Government to say whether some other procedure would be followed in the future or whether a precedent is being created that when an Address comes from the Throne nobody should say a thing about it.

The second point, Sir, concerns the two Private Members' motions of yesterday—the treatment meted out to those motions by the Government. In the first place, Sir, yesterday was Private Members' Day. We were so told and it is so recorded in the Order of the Day.

**The Legal Secretary:**

Point of order—Standing Order 35.

**The President:**

I think the honourable Member will read Standing Order 35. It seems to me that this matter the honourable Member is raising is, in effect, a motion to review the conduct of the Chair in allowing the amendments in the form in which they were moved. I would refer you to Standing Order 35.

**Dr E. U. Udoma:**

I quite appreciate that and I am quite aware of Standing Order 35. I would say with the greatest respect—and of course I am subject to the rule of the Chair—that I never intended any such thing at all. It is only to guide the Chair and the House for future conduct because somebody has to point it out. It is a very important point of parliamentary procedure.

**Mr E. O. Eyo (Uyo Division):**

Point of order. May I draw the honourable Member's attention to Standing Order 27 (4).

**Dr E. U. Udoma:**

Mr President, I would say it is absolutely irrelevant.

**The Legal Secretary:**

What I wish to say is that the honourable Member should not introduce two subjects.

**Dr E. U. Udoma:**

Alright, Sir, I am prepared to rest with one. All I am saying is that I am doing it in the interests of Members of this House and of the House, and in the interest of the President for future guidance.



[Adjournment]

18th February, 1954

[Adjournment]

**The President:**

Will the honourable Member continue on his first subject.

**Dr E. U. Udoma:**

I think I have finished with the first, I am going to the second. Since they cannot be taken together I drop that for the present.

**The Legal Secretary:**

Sir, I move that the question be now put.

*Question—that the question be now put—put and agreed to.*

*Original question put accordingly and agreed to.*

*The House adjourned accordingly at five minutes to eleven o'clock a.m. until 9 a.m. on Friday, the 19th of February, 1954.*



extend from 9 a.m. until noon. Moreover, the Membership of this House has increased since the preparation of our Standing Orders on 27th December, 1951, and it is thought that since Friday and Saturday are short days, it would be much more convenient and advisable to prolong the number of days for the full-dress debate on the Budget by one day and shorten the Committee stage correspondingly.

Mr President, I beg to move.

**The Legal Secretary:**

Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

### ORDER OF THE DAY

THE 1954-55 EASTERN REGION APPROPRIATION LAW, 1954

*(First Allotted Day)*

*Order read for resuming adjourned Debate on Question (16th February),  
"That the Bill be now read a second time."*

*Question again proposed.*

**Mr E. U. Eronini (Owerri Division):**

Mr President, in rising to support this Appropriation Bill I beg to make a few observations.

In the first place, I wish to congratulate the Minister of Public Health for taking up the subject of Advisory Boards in our hospitals. In 1952, at the Budget Session of this House, I suggested the setting up of such a Board, and it is gratifying that our Minister of Health, himself a medical man, realises the necessity for such a Board, and I hope he will take it up immediately and see that all hospitals in the Eastern Region have Advisory Boards. The effect of those Boards cannot be overestimated. The relationship between the patient and the doctor is so delicate that to ask the patient to say something even about a nurse is hard. The legislation that debarred Medical Officers from private practice has worsened the situation. The only thing that will help is a neutral body that by itself will probe some of the complaints in these hospitals.

This brings me, Sir, to a question which is a burning desire in my mind, that is that the Eastern Region is the only Region wherein lunatics are sent into prison and remain prisoners. I have been a prison visitor at Port Harcourt for eight years. There are not less than three hundred lunatics who are harboured in that prison and they live like wild beasts, naked, some of them on the bare ground chained day and night. We have heard of one lunatic in Lagos prison who



was taken to the asylum, but as there was no room for him he was returned to the Lagos Prison and he died there after a few days. But in the Eastern Region our man-power is lessened by making almost all of our prisoners lunatics and criminal lunatics. It is illegal to have lunatics in prison. They are not cared for, because prison warders are not trained lunatic attendants and the prison warders know nothing about treatment of lunatics. The lunatics are packed like sardines. They have no recreation of their own and therefore are not given that little change that might mitigate their mental diseases. I think, Sir, that our Minister of Health should give this his consideration and visit Port Harcourt prison himself to see the conditions in which three hundred of our people are living. Not only that, but it is observed that prisoners in Port Harcourt prison, easily become lunatics because of the effect of those lunatics in the prison, who seem to affect the other inmates.

Sir, the Financial Secretary in his Budget speech laboured exhaustively on the subject of the palm produce industry in this Region. Palm produce is the main industry of this Region and gives the Eastern Region its economic standing and, indeed, needs our consideration and a far-reaching consideration at that. Some years ago it was considered that to give our producers more money for their produce would make them lazy and reduce their efforts. That saying has been proved wrong. It has also been proved that by giving him more money for his produce you give him a better chance of producing good quality and good standard produce. There is one thing which is likely to give us trouble in the Eastern Region and that is the state of our palm trees. They are starting to grow old and many are not cultivated palms and soon will not produce as much. Efforts should be taken by this Government to teach and encourage our farmers to plant more palm trees, otherwise in the near future we will not have enough to play with.

Another point, Sir, is the bulking of our produce. At the moment the system of bulking is so slow that the palm product has time to deteriorate. It has been found that where palm oil is bulked quickly and sent away to a cold climate there is no deterioration, but where it is left in this country for a long time deterioration sets in so quickly that by the time it leaves this country it has changed from edible oil to third grade oil. We should now try to institute Gazetted Stations in the areas of production. In the past it has been the practice to set up Gazetted Stations along railway lines and river lines, and in many cases these are not in the areas of production, say like Oguta where the oil remains six or eight months before it is carried away, and it takes a month to get to the bulking point at Abonnema. By that time the oil has deteriorated so much that it is not anything near what it was when it was originally produced. Therefore the creation of Gazetted Stations in the areas of production will help the producers and farmers and also give our palm produce the same quality it had at the time it was produced. If one went to Orlu today one would



have given a skeleton of the future policy which this Government should follow so that with regards to his speech I thank him very much. There is one point which I would like to make and that is the heavy subsidisation of the palm industry with a view to giving an incentive to producers. Some months ago it happened that His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor visited my county where I am chairman and brought the same question forward. I still hold the opinion that the system is wrong because farmers should be able to take the risk as well as good fortune of their trade. They should be made to understand the inferences and factors—the factors which influence the world market—and should be made to understand that they should be prepared to undergo whatever misfortune may arise. But to fritter away the sum of 3.7 million pounds in 1952 and 2.8 millions in 1953—money which should be used in developing other industries in the country—is in my opinion not a sound financial policy. I may be corrected by the Financial Secretary when he winds up the debate, but I feel it is not right because in the Eastern Region the main source of income is palm produce. Can we not intensify the production of things like cocoa which has a stable market? It would take from seven to ten years but it is always very good and wise to have a beginning. In my opinion, I feel the five million pounds which have been frittered away should have been used to develop coffee, cocoa and other industries in the Eastern Region; because as we know there are other places which will compete and this will tend to depress the price of palm produce. We should be prepared against such things and not waste this money. Then again we hear cashew is being planted in the Owerri and Onitsha Provinces in the hope of preventing soil erosion, . . . I again feel that this is wrong and not a sound financial policy. How will Nigerian people benefit from it? We have in Enugu here coal from which we could extract phenol as a by-product, and should be able to begin supplying homes with coal-gas and thereby produce money to increase the revenue.

Now, I come from a backward province and represent the Eket people. Before I left for England the cost of living was very very low indeed in that place but on my return, I found it had gone up which is an indication of the world position. We are increasing rapidly, the population is increasing but what steps are being taken to see that food production goes hand in hand with the population? There is reclaimed land which could be used for rice planting. I am sure if instead of wasting millions in subsidising palm oil—we had considered this important development—Nigerian people would have rice enough to help themselves and possibly for export.

Another point is concerning schools in the Calabar Province and in particular in my own area—the Eket County. There is a school at Oron for which the Government has given quite a lot of money to develop. I am speaking with particular reference to the Government School at Eket. The Government School has been there for quite a



number of years and one would have thought that with the passage of years it would have developed into a full secondary school in the western section of my county. To my great surprise there has been no provision made for developing the Eket Government School into a full secondary school, so when I go about the county as I did the other day, I am asked by the people "You promised us a secondary school but have done nothing about it." I said "Certainly not, it is not my business but the business of the Education Department. I will put the whole position forward." Before I pass on, I would also ask that a Girls' Secondary School be centrally placed in my county because my county is one of the oldest as far as education is concerned.

The last speaker, Mr Eronini, made mention of other things—he made mention of town planning. As you go through the Eket County you find a lot of towns developing with very thick population and poorly planned. I think the time has come, and I am glad my Government is in power, and I take the opportunity of saying that an efficient Town Planning Officer should be seconded to the Eastern Region to have towns suitably planned. I have in mind big towns like Calabar, Oron and Umuahia here, and so on, and I feel we should have a town like that to avoid disease and the only way to bring this into effect is to have an efficient man who knows all about town planning; and also to start the manufacture of cement right away in this country. Then the question of water supply. The water supply of the Eastern Region is very poor. I am in charge of a big hospital, Iquita. We have a well some 110 feet deep but it is difficult to get water out of it. There is a little distance away—about a mile—a very lovely spring from which pipe-borne water could supply the whole hospital. Dr Bland asked me what I was going to do about it. I told him I could not do anything about it as I had no means to harness the spring. A place like that should have pipe-borne water supply. On Sundays, when my water-men do not come to work, I have to take my car and drive down to the spring to get water to supply my hospital. Mr President, in the Committee stage there is much that I would like to say on this Budget but with these few remarks I beg to support it.

**Mr K. Kiri (Degema Division):**

Mr President, I have to credit the Financial Secretary who, in the midst of arduous duties has been able to prepare a report: but I would add that the report is not very informative. In a financial report I expect to notice not only how money is to be spent but also how money is to be brought in. Unfortunately, we have been given a report which says much on agriculture and less emphasis on industrialisation. I do know, as well as other honourable Members, that Nigeria's economy is a sort of subsistence economy. As a Colonial people we have no alternative other than to supply principally the needs of the Mother country; hence agriculture, which has been the mainstay of our economy for the past sixty years and is still the same



What is the Government's plan for improving fishing in the Rivers Province? I urge that the Government pay sufficient attention to the fishing industry, the only main industry of the neglected Rivers people. I beg to request the Government of this Region to establish a salt industry along with other suitable agricultural projects in the Rivers Province. I appeal to this honourable House to be very sympathetic as to introduce economic projects in the Degema Division. The inhabitants of this division are mainly fishermen left without Government assistance. To be frank, no tangible thing has been done for them for many years, and yet they continue to pay their widow's mite into the Nigerian revenue. I think it is high time they were considered for receiving material aid and not only to give out the little they have.

In conclusion, I have to say that for a country like Nigeria to be economically independent, it requires long- and short-term planning. It requires Nigerians working with foreign experts to survey the resources of this part of the country with a view to having a good co-ordinated economic plan before inviting the necessary capital for development. Not until we have embarked on such a project would this Government be justified in allowing foreigners to enjoy capital investment. Foreign capitalists know exactly what is most useful and profitable before investing their capital. It should be the interest of this Government to know the value of its natural resources before encouraging exploitation on a partnership basis with interested aliens. I would suggest that a team of economic experts be commissioned to investigate the natural resources of the Eastern Region and to report to this House, so that we may be in a position to say what industries would be much safer to establish of the various industries we have in mind for this section of the country. Many people have spoken in favour of a cement industry, which I would say is long overdue to be established in a place like Nigeria. As we are thinking of industrialisation, we should begin now to think of developing the man-power for the various industries we have in mind. Government should establish technical schools to train our people. Trained man-power is one of the most important factors of production, and it is the key to industrial efficiency and high standard of living for us all.

With these words, I support the Appropriation Bill.

**Mr V. K. Onyeri (Port Harcourt Division):**

Mr President, in rising to speak in support of this Appropriation Bill, I think I cannot do justice to the Bill without first of all thanking the Financial Secretary in the able way he prepared same and also to express my own happiness and joy in seeing the new Government in action. One cannot debate this Appropriation Bill in full and enjoy it without first of all taking into consideration all the human personalities within this House especially in the Government Bench that have made it possible that the Appropriation Bill should be in the form that we see it today. I must say here, Sir, that if we want to consider the financial and economic status of this Region we must



take into consideration the human personalities therein. We have in this House one distinguished personality whom no doubt God has sent to lead this Region and this nation. I was amazed, Sir, the other day to read in a newspaper where one Mr Wigg, a member of the British House of Parliament, had made some uncomplimentary remarks about the National President of this party, Dr Azikiwe. Sir, I must state that if there will be a sound relationship in this world, people must know how they talk about the leadership of other nations. Let it be known that the time has come when some of the back-benchers in the House of Parliament should respect our National Leader in the same way they respect Sir Winston Churchill as we honour and respect him here. We feel that our National President—Dr the honourable Nnamdi Azikiwe—shall no longer be mentioned in any House of Legislature with any sense as to portray him as if to say that he is not the Leader of this Nation. We resent very strongly this type of attitude from some members of Parliament. Let a Mr Wigg without a wig understand same; and let this my protest be conveyed to all who think like him through the right and proper channel. (*Hear! Hear!*).

Turning to the Appropriation Bill, I have in recent weeks heard it said from some suffocated politicians from the Western Region that this Region is very very poor! This invidious impression is fallacious and unrealistic for people to think that the East is poor. I must say, Sir, that the East is not poor. The people who have this erroneous idea do not know the East or that they know the East but they do not want to state the fact.

Suppose, Sir, that the two other Regions—Western and Northern Governments—accumulated more reserve funds than this Eastern Government, can it then be said that the Eastern Region is poor? Certainly not! I am supported in this my assertion, Sir, by two economists—Messrs Stewart and Prest in their recent Home Office publication entitled *The National Income of Nigeria* (abridged edition) page 10 paragraph 3 which reads as follows:—

“Another breakdown is that between the Regions. Total Income is built up from that of each Region. How much better off is one Region than another?”

Are grants from the Central Government to the Regions reasonable in view of their relative wealth and poverty? To answer such questions corrections have to be made to the raw income figures to allow for price differences (i.e., a Westerner may have a larger income, cash plus imputed than, say, an Easterner, but if, say, Western prices are higher than Eastern, this is no indication at all that the standard of living is higher) but once again this income information is basic.”

With the above quotation, Sir, are people not given very bad and undue alarm about the financial and economic status of this Region?



Let us ask ourselves into what use the money Government collects yearly is put? The answer, Mr President, is that the money is used for providing schools, hospitals, roads, water supply and other essential needs of a people. Let us pause a moment—have we not provided majority of these needs ourselves? Certainly we have! Through our self-help efforts and community developments without the aid of Central or Regional funds we in this Region through some divisional unions and state unions have built many of our colleges, schools, hospitals, roads, water supply, town halls, markets, etc. What greater attribute equals this? Have the political “know-nots” of the Western Region this economic and financial community self-help, which if calculated run into millions of pounds to the credit of the Eastern Region? (*Cries of No! No!*).

I heard from an honourable Friend of mine from the Opposition Bench raising a hue and cry about the financial status of this Government.

I must remind this honourable Friend that it was his sit-tight “N.I.P.” Government which was in office when the Chicks Report was made to the detriment of this Eastern Government. They were there sitting tight, Sir, doing nothing to safeguard the interest of this Region. (*Shame! Shame!*).

I must assure him that this N.C.N.C. Government as I know it, shall soon transform our Government into a very wealthy Government that will command the honour and dignity that it deserves. (*Hear! Hear!*).

Let me, Mr President, suggest to my able Government how more money can be earned into the Government coffer. Firstly, the Government should do all that lies in its power to see that the establishment of the cement industry at Nkalagu—twenty-five miles on the Enugu-Abakaliki road—is no longer delayed. With the establishment of this industry this Region can build beautiful buildings at low rate and still have plenty to sell to the other Regions. (*Cheers!*).

Secondly, Sir, we have plenty of mineral oil here in this Region. Let the Government go all out without any further delay to negotiate with the Shell D’Arcy, and any other company that is interested in this venture. Mr President, the royalties that shall accrue to this Region from this venture will amount to millions of pounds. With this alone, in two to three years hence this Region shall rank with any other wealthy nation in the world. (*Hear! Hear!*).

Thirdly, Sir, our palm oil industry must be intensified by importing and establishing more oil mills in the various divisions where they are very badly needed now. We must also encourage the farmers by way of subsidising the prices of their palm oil and palm kernel. This reminds me, Sir, about the Bulk Oil Plant at Port Harcourt. I am appealing to the Government to see to it that this plant is extended. As the present plant has five tanks, I do not see the reason why it should not be extended up to ten tanks, so that bulking of our oil will be easier and quicker.



Fourthly, in my Budget speech in 1951-52 Appropriation Bill, I pleaded that if we want more revenue in this Region as I observed that much of our revenue comes from import and export duties; that the wharf at Port Harcourt needs expansion. Since that my speech, Sir, nothing has been done.

I am reminding this honourable House that this matter should be taken up straightaway with the Council of Ministers, and get the Central Minister of Transport to see to the expansion of this wharf within a reasonable time. For years now ships coming to discharge their cargoes which should have meant more revenue to this Region had to go back to Lagos after waiting for weeks to come in to port. One wonders why only Lagos and Apapa wharfs are properly looked after to the exclusion of other ports in Nigeria; and still people talk of the poor East.

In conclusion, Sir, technical education must be properly encouraged in this Region. There is no need to have only secondary grammar schools.

The time is overdue when we shall turn our attention also to technical education which is very very important to any nation. Incentives must be given to the pupils who attend the technical college here at Enugu.

With the confidence I have in the present Government, Mr President, I am sure that in a few years' time this Government will be the richest of all the Regional Governments in this country.

Sir, I beg to support the Appropriation Bill.

**Mr B. C. Okwu (Awgu Division):**

Mr President, I rise to support the Appropriation Bill in principle. In doing so, I would like to point out that before making observations I look upon the Budget as a provisional one, so clearly stated in the Speech from the Throne. I wish to state that there can be no doubt that the East is passing through the most crucial stage in its chequered history.

In order to appreciate fully the financial and economic background on which the new order must make its start, it would be worth while to bear in mind few significant factors.

Lately, the Government Party emerged victoriously from the most historic and exciting constitutional struggle known in the history of political evolution in the British Colonial Empire. Though the battle has ended, we can still see the debris and I am sure that every honourable Member and members of the public will appreciate the fact that the problem of reconstruction and rehabilitation will not be an easy one.

We are on the eve of a revised Constitution with its consequent Chick's Report which asserts frankly that the East has just enough fuel in the ship of state to start on its voyage but that every effort



must be made to provide more fuel if it is to make its journey successfully within record time.

We have friends and critics inside and outside Nigeria who will be watching our progress. In the race we are about to start, it is significant to note that we have two neighbours, the West and the North, who are also participating and there can be no doubt that the race is bound to be an exciting one and it is expected that new records will be created.

For the first time the true N.C.N.C. Party is in power. The eight million toiling people of the East gave the party the mace of authority. They believe that with the N.C.N.C. everything is possible, ignorant as they are of the circumstances I enumerated above under which the new Government has to operate.

This is the picture as it were, as the new Government takes office. However, I am happy to say that we have as Ministers, a team of men with great foresight and ability who hold records in various fields of human endeavour.

Mr President, one can hardly discuss the economic and financial state of the Region without discussing the role of the expatriate officers in the scheme of things. The usual method of starting off by criticising or attacking justly or unjustly the overseas officers, I think, has outlived its usefulness and it is not my intention to adopt that method. I want, accordingly, to be constructive but also brutally frank in my observations. To the overseas officers of the East, the East is grateful for the measure of economic progress so far achieved. Their great devotion to duty and very high standard of integrity are a great asset to their homeland and future Anglo-Nigerian relationship. Their continued importance in the Civil Service has been acknowledged widely. The Colonial Secretary, Mr Oliver Lyttelton, during the Lagos Constitutional Conference demanded and obtained assurances from our National Leaders that their future in the Nigerian Civil Service will be protected. That is as it should be and nobody quarrels with the assurances given, but Mr President, I wish to state categorically that the principle for such assurances, is a two-way traffic. We are entitled to demand reciprocal assurances from the leaders of the overseas officers that in the first place there must be observed absolute, I repeat, absolute neutrality by the expatriate officers, in our local and national politics. We demand assurances from expatriate officers that they are going to give a sincere pledge of loyalty to the African Ministers. We demand from the overseas officers an assurance that the shameful role which some of them played during the political upheaval of some months ago, shall never be repeated in this Region. I refer, Sir, to the excessive enthusiasm shown by the Commissioner of Police, Eastern Region, Mr George, by openly taking sides and victimising our natural rulers and supporters of the N.C.N.C. It was not a credit to his official position that he and his men could not measure up creditably to the



best interest of cordial relationship between leaders of any future Government and officers of the Civil Service.

Mr President, I want to state that confidence begets confidence; it is only on the basis of give and take that there can be a guarantee that the assurances given will be honoured. It is not enough for one side to give the assurance and the other side not to give it or for one side to keep it and the other side not to bother about it.

Now, Sir, I want to make a few observations on the state of the Regional revenue. It is a unanimously acknowledged principle that a government cannot function without revenue. 1953, on account of the political crisis, was a year of vacuum. No new taxes were voted and notwithstanding that fact the N.I.P. Ministers, I am sorry to say, not only endeavoured to drain the Treasury dry on personal stipends but vigorously pursued a "scorch-earth-policy" in order to make the task of the new Government that was to succeed, unnecessarily difficult. I want to assure the Government that the people of the Region are solidly behind them and we give them full co-operation in order to be able to translate into actuality the proposals embodied in the Speech from the Throne. There is an insinuation that the East is poor—that is untrue. Besides the financial losses to the Region as a sequel to the political crisis, to the square mile, the East is the most thickly populated. Our potentialities are yet to be tapped. But were the East really poor, it would be a clear evidence of political immaturity of any true Nigerian to jubilate over that. But, Mr President, the fact remains that from whatever angle we choose to look at it, nature has been very generous to the East. I am very optimistic about the future of the East. Our mineral resources are yet to be exploited. There is no single crop which is grown in other Regions that cannot be raised in the East. With planning and foresight, the East can become self-sufficient. I want to say that I associate myself with the views of the previous speakers who say that they do not believe in the policy of the Production Board in subsidising the price of palm oil and palm kernels.

The Government is well advised to look into the possibilities of making use of our palm oil and palm kernels in a number of ways. There is no assurance that the resources of the Production Board are inexhaustible; there is no guarantee that the price will rise again in the foreseeable future. There is certainly a limit to what the Board can continue in its present policy of subsidising the prices paid to the farmers for their palm oil and palm kernels. It would be a better policy for the Government or the Board to use the resources in developing other sources of revenue such as establishing secondary manufacturing processes for palm oil and palm kernels. There is no reason why eventually the East should not compete with the West in the production of cocoa, kola nuts, timber and rubber, besides, growing coffee, cashew, and other crops. I am sure that we have got the soil for the growth of these crops. The East will be better off for that matter within a number of years.

of the countryside. If it is a Government of the people, by the people, for the people, they should be given special attention from now. (*Hear! Hear!*). The question is this that within those townships live people



I strongly recommend the expansion of the Obudu Cattle and Sheep Scheme and also the raising of our pig-breeding industry to a higher and commercial level.

the policy of the Government to regard the needs of those few as the needs of the nation. Now we are the elected representatives of the East. We seriously demand that the rural areas must be given priority. In the townships where the new evils we inherit from Western civilisation are put into practice live few thousands of people. There is no reason why we should concentrate on the townships at the expense of the hard-working people of the countryside. I want to say, Sir, that in the past the Government in office have not treated all the divisions of the East as they should. I want to say, Sir, that it is highly desirable—I am going to press for this in the form of a motion—that a Commission of Enquiry be appointed to investigate how the past Governments have distributed the privileges at their disposal to the various parts of the Region.

**The President:**

I should remind the honourable Member that he has three minutes left.

**Mr B. C. Okwu:**

I wish to stress the necessity of providing the following for all the divisions of the East:—

- (1) Pure water supply for everybody.
- (2) Hospital facilities.
- (3) At least one secondary school in every division.
- (4) Improved roads—communications.
- (5) Free compulsory elementary education.

I can assure the Government that the people would be prepared to pay for these facilities.

Now, the last but not the least I wish to protest against the policy of dampening African initiative. If he distils a local gin, the gin is termed "illicit," if he manufactures gunpowder the stuff is labelled "illicit" gunpowder, if he constructs an aeroplane, it becomes an "illicit" plane, if he manufactures firearms he is thrown into prison. When an African goes into the U.A.C. to buy any of these which he dare not manufacture, though capable of doing so, his act is legal. We look to the new Government to lift the embargo.

I support the Appropriation Bill.

**Mr L. O. Uzoigwe (Aba Division):**

Mr President, I rise to support the Appropriation Bill, but before I do this I should like to make some observations on both the policy Speech of His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor and that of the Financial Secretary because these Speeches have some reflection on the estimates.

**The President:**

The honourable Member must confine his remarks to the Appropriation Bill and not the Speech of the Lieutenant-Governor.



**Mr L. O. Uzoigwe (Aba Division):**

Well, Sir, I am not going to limit my speech to the policy Speech of the Lieutenant-Governor and the Financial Secretary only but in my opinion the Speeches are reflected on the estimates and I want to suggest ways and methods by which the policy Speech may be implemented. As a matter of opinion I think one cannot really do justice to the Appropriation Bill without making some observations on the Speech of the Lieutenant-Governor and the Financial Secretary. The Speech of the Lieutenant-Governor, in my opinion, was well balanced. (*Laughter*). With regard to the finances of the Region, I think we should above all concern ourselves with raising the standard of living of the people. In my opinion there are different ways by which we can do this. One of the most important methods is by planting certain industries in the Region because those industries will not only enable the people to increase the revenue of the country but will also provide employment for the idle and needy of the Region. When I talk of industries, personally I have in mind of recommending to this House the advisability of considering the introduction of industries like ship-building, the mining of our raw materials, the cement industry and other related industries. Mineral deposits are known to exist in the Eastern Region. These, as we know, are mostly untapped. Take, for instance, iron, lead, oil and perhaps diamonds. All these are known to exist in this part of the world and, in my opinion, no effort has been made to tap these minerals. When I spoke of ship-building, I did not say that out of sentiment because I realise the fact that America—even in its Colonial days—began ship-building. Here we have the timber, the coal, the iron, the oil and the man-power to supply the labour and we can provide the expert knowledge required for these industries by inviting experts from Britain or from other naval countries. The importance of ship-building and other closely related industries cannot be over emphasised at this particular time when we are looking forward to a time when we shall have the reigns of Government of this country in our hands. This is a time when we should train ourselves for self-government.

Ship-building and these other industries I have mentioned are not the only ones which I should like to recommend to this House. Take, for instance, the engineering science, this should be introduced into the Region, and how can we do that? I would suggest that in the not too distant future, a university should be established where this science can be developed and I know that the Region has formulated some scholarship scheme. I am not sure of the exact number that have been offered engineering scholarships but I have no doubt that when the Board comes to consider scholarships consideration should be given to engineering in all its different branches. For instance, when we talk of engineering we have in mind the different branches of engineering such as electrical, civil, mechanical, aeronautical, naval as well as automobile and many others. Nobody will dispute that these are genuinely and really necessary to this country. The policy of our community development, in my opinion, is laudable enough.



of about three million pounds at the commencement of the new Constitution. We are told that a supplementary budget will be prepared by the middle of the financial year which will take account of the new financial arrangements in accordance with the new Constitution and further we know that the Region will shed the expenditure on the Police which will become a Federal responsibility. Current expenditure on the Police for the year is set at about £638,700. This is a handsome amount to increase or replenish our revenue. The Region will also regain the sum of £280,000 from the Southern Cameroons which is to become a quasi-federal territory. The Region, we are told, is to find also the residual recurrent cost of the present plan when the present grants cease by the end of the financial year, 1955-56.

The Region, therefore, is to look for other means of raising some revenue. Mineral oil has been discovered in the Region. The royalties on this and other minerals will increase our regional revenue. In addition to this, we are informed by the Financial Secretary that the Secretary of State for the Colonies has called for further plans for the purpose of framing a new development plan with assistance from Colonial Development and Welfare Funds. I don't know the magnitude and the aim of this development plan. I hope that the Government will be asked to submit its own plans. The plan should not be prepared for us by the Imperial Government. Many of us are familiar with the saying "Fear the Greeks when they bring you gifts."

With regard to the actual Estimates, I observe that various items come under the Public Works. The total under the Ministry of Works plus the Public Works is £775,420. The Ministry of Works has earmarked for him the sum of £6,310 leaving a balance of £769,110. Of this £225,610 come under Public Works Extraordinary. Looking through the list of Public Works, I found a multitude of engineers, foremen and inspectors. I am of the opinion that these engineers, inspectors of work and foremen would do more to rebuild Nigeria if they participated actively in actual construction work. I am of the opinion that many simply sit over tables in the offices doing more of administrative work which is really the Chief Clerk's responsibility and little of the actual work for which they were employed. If they have the requisite qualifications they could easily form the nucleus of our ship-building industry.

**The President:**

I am to remind the honourable Member that he has three minutes left.

**Mr L. O. Uzoigwe:**

On another item under Miscellaneous Expenditure, I find that the passages of expatriates presumably cost a total of £85,000.

**Mr A. U. A. Inyang:**

I refer to Standing Order No. 66 (3).



**The President:**

I do not see anything appropriate in Standing Order No. 66 (3).

**Mr L. O. Uzoigwe :**

And another item under Miscellaneous, I find that the passages presumably of expatriates, cost a total of £85,000 while Children Separate Domicile Allowance cost some £20,000. With proper economy I think that these could be appreciably reduced. On the other hand I find that the repatriation fee stood at only £100. Thank God. One would normally expect that since passages cost a total of £85,000 the repatriation fee should approximate one third of this. Thank God we have not been given the opportunity to increase the repatriation fee.

Mr President, with these remarks, I beg to support the Appropriation Bill.

**Mr M. E. Ogon (Ikom Division):**

Mr President, I rise to support the Appropriation Bill. I will start by congratulating the Financial Secretary for the time he had taken to present a very long report. I do not think there is much to be debated in the present Budget since it was prepared on a caretaker and maintenance basis, and one would not need to quarrel in marking time till the effects of the new fiscal arrangements can be properly assessed.

Our hope then, Sir, is in the supplementary budget. We do hope that when that time comes more facts will be placed before us of how the revenue of this Region shall be increased and how it shall be disbursed; because after all the conferences in the past year and after the confusion and instability set on by the Nippers (The National Independence Party members) the people of the Eastern Region want at present the welfare of the governed.

I think there is everything to praise for the good policy of setting aside a huge sum of £83,000 for the Eastern Regional Scholarship Fund because that will be used as a buttress: no one can be sure of what the price of education can be at any given time. I think, Sir, that the people of the Eastern Region really want progress at this stage, and if they want progress they must have to pay the price of progress. In other words, with apologies to our dynamic K. O. (Mr K. O. Mbadiwe), "If you want greatness you must have to finance greatness." What I mean, Sir, is that I am in full support of taxation with consultation for the benefit of those who pay it, and at this stage I say that I support the honourable Member who said that working class girls must have to pay taxes. I see the lady Member is smiling her approval. I would even go further to say, Sir, that not only the working class girls but rich women who possess plots and lorries should be taxed under the Income Tax Ordinance, because if the women want to come up they must have to bear the burden of providing amenities for our State.

Acceptance of the Chick's Report has really meant a revolution for the Region. Above anything else it has meant two things—that the



which had occurred, and which should be noted by the Government for future guidance. Mr President, my remarks this morning will be entirely confined to that aspect of it in the belief that I am trying to assist the Government in the very arduous task before it.

Mr President, what I am trying to say is this. The 17th was set apart for private Members, and to Members of this House, that private Members' day is regarded as a "holy day." It is not a day to be tampered with by the Government. Two Members' motions were before this House—Members who had spent a long time thinking on these problems—and they brought their motions before this House apparently screened by their party. Now what happened? The Government had a brain wave; they would like the motion worded a different way; and they promptly, without contacting the movers of these motions to make suggestion to assist them to fit in with their programme; they had a brain wave, and they distorted the motion and converted the motion to a Government motion, and they converted the 17th to Government day instead of private Members' day.

Now, Sir, I submit that is an encroachment. If the Government did not approve of that motion and did not wish to support it, it should have been the duty of the Government to say that they cannot support that motion in the way it stood but that the House could debate it. I am saying this, Sir, because we are here—all Members—to protect the privileges and rights of Parliament and I am to say that that sort of conduct by Government is not one to be encouraged. Unless this lapse is pointed out it might lead to all sorts of things.

**The Minister of Works:**

Point of order—Standing Order 27 (4); he is talking on a decision which this House has taken.

**The President:**

I am afraid I must say that it is so. It is distinctly on a decision that was taken. The amendment was moved and was accepted by the house.

**Dr E. U. Udoma:**

I am not talking about the amendment. I am not seeking a way of reversing the amendment. I am saying this for Government to note. (*Interruption by Members on the Government side*). I am sorry, Sir, Mr President, I should have thought the Official Bench would be more orderly, and I am in the hands of the President, if I am out of order.

**The President:**

The honourable Member will note that Standing Order 27 (4) distinctly deals with matters on which the House has come to a conclusion. It is out of order to reconsider any specific question upon which the House has come to a conclusion.

**Dr E. U. Udoma:**

You are quite right, Mr President, and I agree with you *in toto*. My point is this: I am not asking for anything of the sort. I am not



taking the House back. It is my duty, I believe, and the duty of every Member of this House to protect this House from undue Government encroachment.

**Mr E. O. Eyo:**

On a point of order, Mr President. I understand that the Member is going to question the conduct of the Government. May I refer you, Sir, to Standing Order 27 (8). I am afraid, Sir, that we must insist on a substantive motion.

**The President:**

That Standing Order does not deal with the conduct of the Government. I must ask that the honourable Member should confine himself to discussing the conduct of the Government and not the amendment which has been accepted.

**Dr E. U. Udoma:**

I appreciate that, Mr President, and I would like to observe that Members should be conversant with Standing Orders before they cite them.

Mr President, however, my duty was merely to have this recorded, that is, that we feel that the procedure adopted by the Government was an encroachment on the rights of private Members; and if the Government did not want to approve of these motions it ought to have said so, and that is all that I wanted to say before this House.

**Mr E. O. Eyo:**

I move that the question be now put.

*Question—"That the Question be now put" put and agreed to.*

*Original question put accordingly and agreed to.*

*House adjourned accordingly at ten minutes to twelve o'clock noon, until 9 a.m. on Saturday, the 20th of February, 1954.*



## WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Friday, 19th February, 1954

### TARRED ROADS IN OGOJA PROVINCE

*Question—*

**20. Mr M. E. Ogon:**

To ask the Minister of Works, Eastern Region:—

How many roads in the Ogoja Province of the Eastern Region are tarred roads? How many miles of each road have been tarred?

*Answer—*

**The Minister of Works, Eastern Region:**

(a) One road, that is, the Trunk Road A4 from Abakaliki to the boundary with Onitsha Province.

(b) 30 miles.

### ROAD CONSTRUCTION

*Question—*

**21. Mr N. L. P. Apreala:**

To ask the Minister of Works, Eastern Region:—

How far the following road construction works have been carried out and how much has been spent on each?

(a) Yenogoa to Ahoada.

(b) Gbaran to Ahoada.

(c) Oloibiri to Ahoada.

*Answer—*

**The Minister of Works, Eastern Region:**

No road construction work has been carried out as these are not approved project under the 1946-56 Development Plan. However, both the Minister of Works and the Minister of Local Government had been to Yenogoa and Oloibiri shortly before the last elections which swept them into office last month. The honourable N. L. P. Apreala is assured that these roads will be considered along with other Development Schemes for 1955-60. The second part of the question does not arise.

### — ORON-EKET ROAD

*Question—*

**22. Mr O. O. Ita:**

To ask the Minister of Works, Eastern Region:—

Was the Oron-Eket road earmarked for tarring in 1953?

*Answer—*

**The Minister of Works, Eastern Region:**

No, Sir.

### BRIDGES ON THE ORON-EKET ROAD

*Question—*

**23. Mr O. O. Ita:**

To ask the Minister of Works, Eastern Region:—

How soon will the bridges on the Oron-Eket road be constructed with permanent materials, and what became of the money which was voted for the construction of these bridges in the 1952-53 Estimates?



*Answer—*

**The Minister of Works, Eastern Region:**

Shortage of supervisory staff has delayed the continuance of this work. It is not at present possible to say when an officer can be allocated.

Part of the funds voted for the construction of these bridges in the 1952-53 Estimates was expended on the collection and preparation of materials and costing of concrete piles during the short period when an officer was posted to the work. The balance of the funds is available for expenditure in due course.

GOVERNMENT POLICY ON CONTRACTS

*Question—*

**24. Mr O. O. Ita:**

To ask the Minister of Works, Eastern Region:—

What is the Government policy in the granting of contracts to various firms of contractors in the Eastern Region?

*Answer—*

**The Minister of Works, Eastern Region:**

Government policy in the granting of contracts is controlled by "Financial Instructions." If the House desires it, I could read the relevant sections of the document. But as it is rather lengthy, I refer those interested to pages 191-5, chapter 45 of the Government of Nigeria Financial Instructions (Revised), 1950; price 42s.

IMPROVEMENT OF ELELE-AHOADA ROAD

*Question—*

**53. Mr J. H. E. Nwuke:**

To ask the Minister of Works, Eastern Region:—

Whether he is aware of the fact that in the Ahoada Division transport is usually held up during the rainy season between Elele and Ahoada due to bad road? If so, what is the Government doing to get this road improved?

*Answer—*

**The Minister of Works, Eastern Region:**

Yes, Sir. This road suffered badly as a result of timber traffic when world prices for timber were high. Only normal maintenance could be carried out with the funds available, however.

This road was not included as a project in the Ten Year Development Plan; consequently, Colonial Development and Welfare Funds available to the Region could not be used for its improvement.

Enquiry is now being made in regard to soil conditions, to determine whether the natural soil is suitable for adequate compaction to receive bituminous surfacing. If this proves to be the case, the cost of improvements and bituminous surfacing would be of the order of £2,500 per mile.



If the natural soil is not suitable, it would be necessary to haul in good material from the nearest sources of such good material, of which a further report is awaited.

A census of traffic actually using this road is being made, to decide on the present justification for bituminous surfacing.

MAINTENANCE OF ABAKALIKI-AFIKPO ROAD AND ABAKALIKI-  
OBUBRA ROAD

*Question—*

**74. Mr P. A. Onwe:**

To ask the Minister of Works, Eastern Region:—

Does the Minister not consider it proper that the Government should take full responsibility over the maintenance of Abakaliki-Afikpo Road and Abakaliki-Obubra Road ?

*Answer—*

**The Minister of Works, Eastern Region:**

The Abakaliki-Afikpo Road and Abakaliki-Obubra Road are at present maintained by the Abakaliki Native Authority which receives from Government a grant of 75 per cent and 50 per cent respectively of the expenditure incurred yearly in arrears.

The question of re-classification of roads in this Region was under consideration, but had not been finalised in time to be dealt with before the recent political crisis. The matter will have to be re-examined and a proposal submitted to Executive Council in due course.



# Debates in the Eastern House of Assembly

Saturday, 20th February, 1954

The House met at 9 o'clock a.m.

Prayers

(Mr President in the Chair).

## ORDER OF THE DAY

THE 1954-55 EASTERN REGION APPROPRIATION LAW, 1954

(*Second Allotted Day*)

Order read for resuming adjourned Debate on Question (16th February),  
"That the Bill be now read a second time."

*Question again proposed.*

Mr M. E. Ogon (Ikom Division):

Mr President, yesterday I said that the policy of continuing with expert expatriates is sound but it is also known that many of the expatriates still in this country are not in that category. I recommend, Sir, that the Government produce a report which will show clearly how many of them are experts. My idea is that when such a report is produced, it will leave us in a position to know who among them to support and who not to. My party, the party in power in the Eastern Region, has declared that it will invite foreign capital on a partnership basis. I am not saying that this is not a sound policy, but I would want to know the percentage of capital to be held by local investors in the country because I suspect that foreign investors will be senior partners in such projects. If that happens, it will be a real danger to the economy of this country and the continued political development of the state, because, Sir, if this country, after her independence, is dominated by foreign capital, it will only mean that our independence is superficial and essentially we are dependent.

In this connection I would like to draw attention to Liberia, Cuba, Egypt and the other countries of the Middle East. A condition for inviting foreign capital may be the retarding of the political development of a country since foreign investors would like to control the political system of any country where they have invested their money in order to guarantee the safety of their money. In this connection, I refer to Persia, where foreign capital in the oil industry has dominated the politics of that country for many decades. There, Sir, foreign capital was challenged by a popular Government and then the foreign investors engineered a *coup d'etat* overthrowing the popular Government and imposing on the people of Persia a military and reactionary dictatorship.

What I want to stress is that while we recommend that foreign capital should come into our country, particularly our Region, I would recommend that we be the dominant partner. It is very good to industrialise the



## WESTERN REGION, INCLUDING LAGOS

Private vehicles total ... ..	8,128
Commercial vehicles ... ..	5,083

While I do not have accurate statistics for the private vehicles which operate in Lagos, I can conveniently say, basing alone on the white population in Lagos, that, the vehicles licensed in Lagos will total, if not exceed, three thousand—a conservative estimate. And once you take out Lagos from the West, the West has no claim that her vehicles exceed those of the East or those of the North. It is not the East or the North which is living on the resources of the country entirely, but I can say it is the West which claims all types of economic benefits, because it was merged with Lagos. The West, through Lagos, has been living on the combined resources of the East and the North and that brings me to the question of Lagos. I say the question of Lagos because it has a direct bearing on the economics of this country.

Men who fought that Lagos should become a federal capital did not fight for it just because of its political significance but because of its economic significance. And Lagos eventually was separated from the West, but it seems to me that Chick's Report did not take actual and realistic viewpoint of this separation from the economic angle or the financial aspect of it. And recently, Sir, I read that the Leader of the Government in the West had the audacity to say that Lagos will continue to belong to the West. I want to make it clear, Sir—he said it in the Western House and I am now speaking from the Eastern House—that any attempt to change the decision of the majority will not be accomplished and will not be permitted. It is a federal capital and every attempt will be made to see that the real financial arrangement and the revenue of Lagos should be properly determined so that no one section can claim what belongs to the three sections.

I am in a position to say, after consulting many of the leading firms operating in Lagos, that 75 per cent of the imported goods sold in Lagos are distributed in the North and the East and because of lack of adequate check those sales and those purchases of materials consumed in the East have been credited to swell the coffers of the West. I am saying this, that if adequate check is not made, it may be possible to place checking officers or customs officers across the Asaba Ferry, not for purposes of toll or inter-regional economic battle, but to check actually what comes from the West to be consumed in the Eastern Region so that these erroneous conclusions reached in the financial report of Mr Chick will not be repeated. It is unfortunate, when other Governments were presenting data and memoranda to the Fiscal Commissioner, that the old Government here in the East were all busy campaigning and did not make adequate representation to the Commissioner that was appointed to look into the various revenues, and for that irresponsibility—and for that lack of sense of public duty—this Region will suffer for two years until we amend it, and we are going to amend it. (*Hear! Hear!*).

Sir, the summary of that Report is what I could term “financial or economic appeasement” and I say this with all respect. Because Lagos was taken by right as a federal capital and there are noise-makers who feel their grievances and their dissensions in the pages of newspapers which should not have influence over anybody with an economic sense; I want



to say that it is only because we were not in a position to look into things at that time, and that the old Government allowed it to pass, that Chick's Report did not favour the East. But in the future let it be clear that we will not stand for any economic appeasement in whatever form it is called.

Coming, Sir, to the development and the sources of revenue for this Region, I want to say this. The Eastern Region, when it comes to competition, when it comes to a show-down, we have never been behind and we will never be behind. But we want a fair competition. Sir, the new Government is prepared to gear up, first of all, the human resources of this country. We talk of money, we talk of finance as if there is something so peculiar, so outstanding that it is not related to human life. I have always said this, "Man makes money possible and money has never made man possible." The East with more than seven million people will make money possible for this Region based upon gearing up the human resources of the East. We must divest the old mentality in the East and give it a new gown. We cannot put a new wine into an old bottle. (*Hear! Hear!*). Here, we have a new bottle; we have a new wine; the old bottle must be discarded. A new bottle must be found; finding it in the human resources, we must touch every level of our society from the rural areas to the urban areas. They must have a sense of belonging and participating in the Government so that the Government of the people by the people and for the people will be a practical reality in the Eastern Region. That is the first thing.

Mr President, when that is done, when every class of our people come to understand our programme and participate in it and contribute to it, the Financial Secretary will be happy in the next financial year or the year after by giving us more balances and more surpluses and we will be here to see that accomplished. In developing these human resources, our rural population—the agricultural population—must be elevated to participate in the Government through whatever channel we may devise in the near future.

Secondly, our middle class population—the businessmen, the petty traders—whether they are resident in the East or in Fernando Po or in Kano—must be aware of the need of the Region and a chance must be made for them to participate in it.

And again, there is the theory that you cannot reap where you do not sow. We must think of putting something in the soil that these people can look up to as the medium of help. It is on this principle, to my mind, that the N.C.N.C initiated the move to bring Mr Fisher, the adviser to the Bank of England, to come to Nigeria in the motion of developing the Central Bank of Nigeria which was moved in the House of Representatives by this speaker. Through that motion, Mr Fisher was sent here and his report is now in the hands of honourable Members. I think that the recommendations made by Mr Fisher should be examined thoroughly and that the East should be the first to initiate some measures recommended in that report. He has suggested that instead of a bank, there should be a development and industrial corporation and we have sources like the Loan Board and so on which could be merged and there should be an industrial corporation financed with over one million pounds to do several things: to see that short-term financial arrangements are made for our middle-class



grade oil." In other words, as I have said we are going to lose, within two years only, six and a half million pounds from the reserve!

If this is continued for another four or five years, all the cushion will disappear and we shall then drop on the ground.

It is even known, Sir, that but for the improvement of special grade oil, what is known as "technical palm oil" would have dropped its price 50 per cent. That is very serious.

We understand also that the Ministry of Food which has been the "fairy-godmother" for the marketing of palm produce will soon cease to operate. When that happens, what are we going to do? Surely, the price incentive will "suffer a sea-change." We are going to suffer a change for the worse.

It should also be noted, Sir, that we have a warning from the Fiscal Commissioner. He has warned, in his words, "that it would be particularly unsafe to assume that revenue from export duties from which sources the Region is expected to derive £915,000 per annum at current rates will continue at its present high level." Sir, this is a very serious thing. We have been expecting that we are going to draw so much from export duties. But from the warning of the Fiscal Commissioner, these high rates are not going to continue as they have been. He must have sufficient reason to give this warning for he is an expert in this field. We must take his warning very seriously.

Moreover, Sir, our palm oil and kernel which have enjoyed monopoly in the markets for a long time are no longer enjoying this monopoly. They have new rivals in the oil market. There are new oil substitutes. We have heard of synthetic detergents in Germany and America. We have also heard of the increase of copra in the market.

Other parts of this country, and other countries are now competing with us in the production of palm oil and kernel. It is true that new uses are being found for what we have as edible oil, and that it may be possible to produce margarine and food fats from this source. But, after all, considering all those points, we can safely say that palm oil and kernel are not going to continue to enjoy the supremacy they have enjoyed in the world markets. It is clear then, Sir, that we must look for new sources of revenue. The new handicaps facing us are very serious.

It is clear from a study of our revenue over the last three, four or five years that every year our services—the social services and other essential services—have kept on expanding and will continue developing and costing more. Then, now, we are faced with the new constitutional changes bringing to this Region and to other Regions what we call "residual powers." These things are soon going to make enormous extra demands upon our financial strength. Then, in the third place, we have to face the fact that the present development grants will cease after 1955; and we shall then have to find about £500,000 to meet the residual current costs of the present plan. Even with the new hope that the Secretary of State for the Colonies has raised about continuing the grant up to 1960, we must remember that we have limits as to the amount of money we can get, and limits to the time.



In the fourth place, we are starting our journey to our "new East" with very serious handicaps. At first, it was estimated that we were going to have a deficit of about half a million pounds, but it is now known that it cannot be less than £180,000 per annum.

To be sure, each Region is going to receive two million pounds from the Federal Fund to begin with. The East is going to receive half a million pounds for the first year, and a quarter of a million pounds for the second year in order to meet these deficits. But what are all these to our new and heavy responsibilities? What are they to the coming residual powers? What are they to the expanding services and the rising costs of materials and the increase in the salaries and wages of workers? What are they to the residual recurrent cost of the Development Plan, and the big initial deficit facing us. These are but mere drops in the ocean. Even with our present essential services, it is believed that when we start around July or August, we are going to have to find 85 per cent of our revenue from new sources. Then, with the additional responsibilities, and what I have referred to in respect of the Development Plan, we are going to have this burden not only doubled, but possibly trebled. What are we going to do? That is the question which we in this House must face, and face quite frankly. What are we going to do about it?

Well, some people are beginning to talk about tax, the very people who never believed in taxation, and who have been teaching people to believe that we can enjoy benefits and services without paying for them. They are beginning to talk about educating and consulting tax-payers. How are we going to educate the people? I do hope that this education is going to be a very successful one. Just what are we going to do? Are we going to kill our poor people with heavy taxation? (*Laughter*). Are we going to overwork producers and the workers, people who produce the palm kernel and oil and other things in order to produce more? Are we going to overwork them in slave camps? Now, there has been talk of a new mineral oil in the East—of course, there is a big question mark—I should say several question marks about this new mineral oil, and all must beware. What is going to happen supposing we do not find enough of the oil for commercial purposes? What are we going to do?

Now, Sir, let us face quite frankly the situation which confronts us. In the first place, it is quite clear, whether we like to believe it or not, whether we know it or not, that the economy of this Region in particular has been one of consumption without production. It has been one of primitive agriculture without industrialisation.

Social services and other essential services have been piling up year by year while we have done very little by way of productive enterprise to increase the wealth of the Region, so that from this wealth we could have higher revenue to meet the expanding services. That is one of the facts we have to face, Sir, whether we like it or not.

In the second place, we have to face the fact that in this Region and in other parts of this country we have irresponsible politicians, political "pagans suckled in a creed outworn," who go about teaching the people that they can enjoy benefits and have services, without ever paying for them, without working for them. And they have taught the people that self-government means financial irresponsibility, social irresponsibility, and moral irresponsibility. (*Laughter*).



the Region will derive from these taxes will not be tied to particular items of Regional expenditure (as in the case with the present Education Grant), but will be completely at the disposal of the Regional Government, in the same way as other Regional revenue. That is to say, the whole of the revenue of the Regional Government will be available to meet the whole of its expenditure, and it will be for the Regional Government to decide how much of the available revenue should be allocated to each particular service, education, health, agriculture, etc."

As this is so, Sir, I suggest that some of the money coming from the Centre—about one and a half million pounds of the money—should be used at once for the cement industry. The following industries should also be tried immediately. Textile industry, paper industry and leather industry. There was a time when Mr Nwapa, the former Minister of Commerce and Industry, kept people's expectation high in this country by promising that the Government would soon commence a cement industry and that there would be a wonderful inflow of Lancashire cloths into this country. People will not be prepared to entertain promises again which will not be accomplished. Industrialisation will create jobs for the people of this Region. These workers will pay higher taxes, pay bicycle licences, because they will have money. Their family's standard of living will be raised. Furthermore, cement and other products of industrialisation will be had cheaply at home but even if not now it will be in future. The Region should not fight shy of industrialisation for even if we start at a loss now the time will come when it will pay us well. Mr President, the third Annual Report of the Eastern Regional Development Board is a shame to the Region. £346,000 of this Region is wasted on useless projects. If we mean economic development, £346,000 is nothing. On Page 3 of the Report it says "The policy of the Board is the fostering of economic development of Nigeria by making Grants and Advances out of such moneys as may be available, and for purposes connected therewith." But you need to see Pages 11, 12 and 13 . . . .

**The President:**

The honourable Member must be relevant to the motion.

**Mr D. C. Ugwu:**

But the Report deals with economic development. But you need to read Pages 11, 12 and 13 of the Report to realise that the whole money is just spent on pretenders—people who say they wish to instal oil mills, to be farmers, to start this craft and that craft. They just take the money, use a part of it for farming or local craft, etc., in order to be free from the hands of the law and then use the money for transport lorries and for some other capitalist purpose. I suggest that this Board should either be scrapped or its policy changed. I suggest that money should be loaned only to corporate bodies like Native Authorities or District Councils or well established organisations who will use the money for economic development. Otherwise, I urge this Government to set up a Board of Inquiry to look into the working of the projects for which money was advanced. It will be seen that 75 per cent of the money is not used at all for the purpose it was intended. The Government should not use people's money to create local capitalists who will simply use the money for selfish purposes and not for economic development and be unable to pay the money back again.



**The President:**

I must again rule that the Loans Board is not in the Regional Estimates and does not form part of the motion of this debate. This is a debate on the Estimates of the Appropriation for this Region and has nothing to do with the Loans Board.

**Mr D. C. Ugwu:**

Mr President, I wish also to say a few words on the Eastern Regional Production Development Board. I submit that since about 50 per cent of the farmers revenue in the Region accrues from palm oil and palm kernel, and that although the Board does a good job for the farmers, its present policy is not sound. I refer honourable Members to Page 7 of the Fourth Annual Report of the Eastern Regional Production Development Board where it is reported as follows:—

“The proposal of a tripartite partnership between the Colonial Development Corporation, the Board and a European Plantation Company has met with a set-back owing to political opposition expressed in the House of Assembly.

“In view of the very great importance of the scheme in itself and its possibilities as a means of opening up a completely undeveloped area, the Board is continuing to investigate means of initiating it, even if this entails a smaller plantation than was originally planned.”

Mr President, I submit that before the Board invites overseas investors to this country to take part in industrialisation, Native Authorities and native financiers should first be invited otherwise we are just fighting for political freedom forgetting economic freedom. The same thing applies to the Oban (Nigeria) Rubber Estates, Limited, mentioned on Page 17 of the Report. Why should the Board not have more than 49 per cent of the capital of £800,000 in order to have more than 50 per cent of the directors? And in fact, why not start it alone and call on Nigerian financiers to buy shares. I wish also to say a few words about the Pioneer Oil Mills. I come from a division where the Board will find it almost impossible to instal the mills until the policy is changed. It is universally agreed that mills produce higher quality oil but the mills should compete with the native producers of oil in the open market. Or the Board should undertake to extract oil for the farmers on contract basis. That is to say, let the Board charge the natives for the labour of extracting oil and allow them to have the oil, the kernel and all the by-products of palm-nuts. I cannot understand why the Board should ask the Native Authorities and Local Councils to make local rules forcing producers to carry nuts to the oil mills.

Mr President, in the Financial Secretary's address nothing has been said about ways and means of raising revenue. His Honour in his Speech from the Throne said nothing about raising revenue for this Region. The Speech from the Throne has only told us what they propose to do for the country, without saying anything about how to raise revenue.

**The President:**

I must rule the honourable Member out of order in discussing the Speech from the Throne.

**Mr D. C. Ugwu:**

I therefore suggest that this Government should go all out to explore ways and means of raising revenue for the Region. I suggest the following:— The Region should now try a Producers' Tax, even though many



of the people mistakenly think that the members of this party last year were against it because they did not want people to pay tax. That was not so, Sir. They did not want to pay tax because they did not know whether the money would be used in the interests of the people. I also suggest, Sir, that the Region should legalise sweep-stakes. Certain Church members say it is sinful and immoral to engage in sweep-stakes but I suggest these members come from Europe. Thousands of pounds are gambled every year from this country to help countries in Europe. I think there is nothing wrong in it. I therefore humbly suggest that we legalise sweep-stakes for certain specific projects. I also support *in toto* what was suggested by an honourable Member yesterday that working class women should pay tax. There is no reason why they should not pay tax. We are now discussing the question of universal adult suffrage and also the question of bride price: that women should be regarded as men's equals. Women are now represented in this House and they should also be prepared to accept responsibility. I suggest they should pay tax immediately. I pray that we should try these ways and means. The common people of this country will soon begin to ask the Government where is the hospital? Where is the university? They will not be prepared again to listen to promises and I do not think we shall get anywhere without money. The Government should not fight shy of taxation. The people realise that amenities will not fall like manna from heaven.

Mr President, before I conclude this speech, I wish to say a few words about universal adult suffrage. I pray that this Government will plan this universal adult suffrage scientifically before it is introduced. If it does not plan it scientifically, we are sure to fail. It would be very difficult, Mr President, to call upon 90,000 tax-payers and about 100,000 women in my own division scattered far and wide to vote five persons into a legislature and two members into the House of Representatives without scientific planning. I suggest we should plan it scientifically. Group the Region into single member constituencies before we try universal adult suffrage. It was published in a local newspaper recently that a leader of this Government has promised that universal adult suffrage would be introduced before the forthcoming House of Representatives elections. I just hope that is not so. I know that this Government will have to plan universal adult suffrage scientifically and it is very important before it is thrust upon the people.

Mr President, I support the Bill.

**Mr. M. T. Mbu (Ogoja Division):**

Mr President, it is always very difficult to express the broad general feeling in new terms in the House on this debate because, after all, it happens every year and most of the good points have been taken by previous speakers. Though it is always very difficult to forecast, and rash to foresee, the course of future events. Government agricultural policy, as read to us in this House is, indeed, a lofty one. It looks very tantalising. But no doubt Government will consider the importance of subsidising the farmers and communities to allow them to produce more. Government are aware that there will be no tinkering when we talk of agriculture, and to this end I hope Government will leave no stone unturned to see that the farmers are given moral and financial encouragement by way of subsidies or loans to increase output in production. It is far too serious a problem to be



tinkered with any longer. I have no doubt that it is Government intention to deal realistically with the problem of increasing the earning capacity and purchasing power of our industrial and financial enterprises. As we have been told, it would be most unfair to talk of increased production in respect of the regional economy without necessarily mentioning the fate of that class which works for such increased productivity, and that is labour. The labouring class occupies a prominent place in any country's economy and unless this class produces more, the country is bound to suffer. To this end, it is gratifying to note the intention of Government to obtain reliable cost of living and price indices in order to work out a living wage for the workers. I understand that such indices are already in the course of preparation, and when they are ready, Government will waste no time in seeing that the matter is looked into seriously. In looking into that aspect of the problem, I hope Government will also take into consideration the various problems that confront our labour class in the metropolis, Urban and Rural Districts. Unless such a fair consideration is given, we may be rash to commit ourselves by introducing a wage scale that may not be acceptable to the majority of the workers.

With reference, Sir, to the Fiscal Commissioner's Report, we are aware that the usual grants from the Centre for essential services will be abolished. The position does not sound healthy, but we must experiment with what we have. Our leaders are the authors of these constitutional changes and since they enjoy our implicit confidence, as such, I have no doubt in my mind that what they have drawn up for us will be a workable constitution. Let us all co-operate to make the new Constitution a success. The leader of Government, forty hours before the opening of this Session announced in the party victory rally that there should be a cessation of hostilities and a genesis of new era for construction and production for the welfare of the people of this Region. Let the debate on the second reading be constructive and suggestive in order to give Government plans to improve the economy of this Region. We cannot achieve this without the co-operation of the two sides of this House, and we cannot achieve this, Sir, unless we fight shy of partisan politics such as that which beclouded the speech of the honourable Member from the opposite side of this House this morning. Hostile speeches will not help this Region. It is always true that it is somebody's money that looks very gigantic to do good with, and no doubt the speech from the opposite bench takes full advantage of this by trying to accuse Government of not looking after the interests of the tax-payers of this Region. When he was in power, he did not look adequately into the problem of scholarship awards; in fact, much to the contrary, many divisions had no scholarships. The speaker was one of those affected.

This Budget has been described by the Financial Secretary as a pedestrian or transitory one. I agree with the honourable mover that the real debate will be the debate on the supplementary budget when the new changes shall have been put into effect. At one time it was described as a "Care-taker" Budget, and it behoves us, therefore to take great care how we debate on this second reading. Mention was made of Messrs Prest and Stewart survey of Nigeria's National Economy. I would say with a little contempt and slight that no specific mention was made of the economy of this Region. It is indeed gratifying to learn of the discovery of oil in this Region. Government will, no doubt, endeavour to get the public to



understand whether that wonderful discovery will be of commercial value to the people of this Region. And I feel sure Government will also endeavour to get the public of this Region to understand and know the great strides which Government is making towards the opening of a brewery in Enugu, a tobacco factory in Port Harcourt and a Cement Industry at Nkalagu. Besides these, I hope it will be Government's intention to try to investigate why our coal does not fetch a good market in our neighbouring country, the Gold Coast. The Gold Coast goes all out to buy coal from South Africa: this is an anomaly. It would save a lot of expenses in the cost of transportation for the Gold Coast and would also bring to us a stable economy. We can then speak with one voice what we said that we can compete with other Regions in this aspect of economy.

Palm oil, Sir, I am very inclined to believe that this product should not be over-emphasised. Everyone is fully sensitive to its importance and that it is the main industry from which the bulk of our revenue accrues. But all the same, we must explore other avenues of building a stable economy for this Region. Let us consider the advisability of, as the honourable Member for Orlu Division said, introducing other cash crops like benniseed, soya beans, castor seeds, etc., etc. These crops have been tried and did very well in the division from which I come, and I say with no hesitation that we have the rich land which could support the production of such cash crops. If we take cocoa, for instance: we have the land which could produce cocoa, with this, we could produce even a higher tonnage than that produced by the West now. We have every reason to believe that in a few years this Region could be the richest of the three. Look at our minerals, our agricultural resources, our cattle ranch, our cashew estates, our boat yard with the exception of the Santa Coffee Estate which unfortunately, Sir, is in Cameroons Territory, and which we do not know what will happen to it. No other Region has all these blessings and an economy of such momentous importance. I do not know of one yet, and we must therefore rejoice that the East has such a bright future.

I will talk, slightly, Sir, of the Secretary of State's call for plans for framing a new Development Plan under the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund which is to be executed in the years 1956-1960.

I would draw attention of Government, Sir, to call on Heads of Departments to carefully get ready plans. Such plans must be very evasive and tidy. In conclusion, Sir, we and other Regions, stand in this hour in Nigerian history. My faith is that, we of the N.C.N.C. in God's mercy we shall choose aright.

Mr President, I beg to support.

**Chief M. W. Ubani (Aba Division):**

Mr President, Sir, I rise to speak in opposition to the Bill entitled "A Law to appropriate the sum of £5,226,540 to the Service of the Eastern Region for the year ending on the 31st March, 1955."

Before going further, Sir, I take leave of the House in welcoming all honourable Members and expressing a heartfelt appreciation to all honourable Members who have been fortunate enough to be returned by their various constituencies for the service of the Eastern Region—the Region where the sun rises to throw its radiant rays of light and hope.



I must remind the honourable Members that our presence here is temporary but our doings will be permanent and will remain for history to judge.

About twelve months ago this Region witnessed chaos and disorder unparalleled in the political history of this country when the work of darkness, evil ambition, selfishness, hate and jealousy was placed first rather than service to the people.

Our rate of progress, Sir, and development were wrested and it is a fact which no one interested in the affairs of the Eastern Region can argue against.

My prayer and hope, Mr President, Sir, is that this new House may cultivate a new outlook to develop a sense of responsibility in all our political conducts to serve without defrauding the public or pervert public trust to serve selfish ends.

I strongly believe that politics demand some moral virtues and obligations, so let all those who have been returned to this House and who have the genuine spirit to serve this country aim at the four absolute moral standards of honesty, purity, unselfishness and love and by cultivating these standards, Sir, we can at least try to avoid the repetition of 1953 disgrace and shame.

Mr President, Sir, turning to the Financial Secretary's Budget Speech, I declare it an "obituary" of the Eastern Region economic and financial policy. The address is frank and straightforward and has put facts bare and naked to the fullest understanding of those who are prepared to learn and understand. It has shown us that the ship of state of the Eastern Region is sailing on bad waters and that unless the Captain and his crew are experts, the fierce billows ahead are bound to swallow them up and sink the ship. I declare again, Mr President, that the financial and economic state of the Eastern Region is in danger.

The gravity of the danger becomes more acute when one thinks of what awaits us ahead as the outcome of those dangerous, stupid and foolish decisions of the Lagos Conference.

How does the Eastern Region, whose 85 per cent of the Revenue comes from grants and payments out of the Revenue of Nigeria, hope to survive when those grants and payments are withdrawn according to the Lagos Conference decisions?

These percentages reduced in figures mean that about £4,474,000 of the Revenue of the Region comes from the Centre and only about £757,000 is declared Regional.

Assuming that these grants are completely withdrawn we shall be faced with only £757,000 to run the Region and I challenge anybody to show that Eastern Region is not in danger. (*Interruption*).

**The Minister of Works:**

State public finances.

**Chief M. W. Ubani:**

I dare say, that anybody should challenge me to say that the finances of this country, the Eastern Region for that matter, will not suffer depletion or reduction.



These are hard facts. It is the truth which is a bitter pill and we on this side of the House must tell it. This danger has been aggravated by the Lagos Conference decisions by which this Region is gradually being led to financial and economic strangulation by partitioning the country into absolute autonomous Regions.

Mr President, Sir, I may perhaps guess one consolation. That is—since the Leader of this Government, the honourable Minister of Local Government, was a party to all those unpalatable deeds of the Lagos Conference it may be possible that he has some tricks up his sleeves . . .

**The Minister of Local Government:**

Wait and see! (*Laughter!*) (*Cheers!*).

**Chief M. W. Ubani:**

. . . with which to save this Region from the collapsing of the existing services, e.g., education, medical, general development, the welfare of the civil servants, and in fact the whole Region from bankruptcy and financial strangulation. Whether the party in power or party in defence, nobody in this House will like to see hardship brought to the doors of us all and even to those of our people in the home villages. The poor peasants cannot any longer stand any heavy taxation and any collection towards that end.

In order to maintain the services of this Region, it is up to the Government to present to this House a complete economic and financial policy and until that is done, I will always call such a Government a "blank" Government with no idea of finance. There is always a temptation, and tendency of the Government to try and save itself from financial entanglement by resorting to heavy taxation. For some time now it has been remarkably noticed, Mr President, Sir, that since after the elections the statements of the Leader of the Government have changed enormously and have similarly reflected the desire of his Government to introduce more taxation contrary to his party's election promises, when the people were told that it is iniquitous and a crime to pay taxes.

(*Shame! Shame!*).

I can assure this Government that it has placed itself in a very dangerous position because no amount of explanation, and no amount of consultation can remove the pains of taxation and the people are aware of it.

Some honourable Members like Messrs Okwu and Ogon have suggested a way out when they stated to this House that the women of the country, of the Eastern Region, especially the working class and rich women should be taxed.

**Mr B. C. Okwu:**

I never said any such thing, I never mentioned the rich—working class girls was what I said.

**Chief M. W. Ubani:**

I hope that these utterances, Mr President, Sir, do not reflect the intentions of this Government. I sound a warning that any attempt to form the chiefs of the Eastern Region into Advisory Boards and Consultative Councils and offer them sitting fees so that they may be happy to ask their people to pay more taxes would meet with failure.



This House—or at least this side of the House—is entitled to see a sound economic and financial position of the Government with which to save this Region from the impending danger—not the expectation to introduce more taxes on the poor peasants of this Region.

I come to the next phase of revelations as made by Members here, Sir. The honourable Mr Okwu said that he was speaking with full responsibility when he said that palm produce prices should not be subsidised. It is erroneous in the interest of the poor farmers at home to make such a statement. He was apparently referring to the Nigeria Oil Palm Produce Marketing Board Stabilisation Fund. This fund has in the past served as a cushion with which the prices of our palm produce, when there has been a fall in the market prices, have been stabilised. I dare say that a Member who really says he speaks in the interest of the poorer classes at home would not suggest in one moment that such a scheme should be abolished. In fact, the Financial Secretary's address mentioned the increase in the production of palm produce and apart from the use of Pioneer Oil Mills and hand presses it is the encouragement that the producers have had, by the use of this Stabilisation Fund, that has also contributed to the greater production of palm produce for the world market. I am just wondering, Mr President, Sir, if the honourable Member would be prepared to support such a view before the producers at home.

Sound financial and economic state of any locality must affect all from the highest industrial concerns to the smallest producer in the village. In fact, this reminds me of another economic and financial strangulation facing this Region. This stabilisation fund of £74,000,000 which was divided recently by the Lagos Conference gives the Eastern Region £15,000,000 whereas the West and the North respectively went away with £34,000,000 and £24,000,000.

The Leader of this Government, Dr the honourable Nnamdi Azikiwe, Minister of Local Government, was a party to this destructive deed too. But Eastern Region has been ahead of other Regions in the matter of need in order to meet up with its development projects and although the Region contributed the least into the Central Fund but it derived more. These are facts which must be faced.

The Minister of Local Government:

Prove that.

Chief M. W. Ubani:

All this is done by the grants and payments, which are gone, due perhaps to the ignorance or some other force propelling those who were participating in this unholy performance and are now leaving us to accept a condition which is bound to bring misery, grief and woe economically and financially to the people. This Government must be prepared to tell the people of this Region why prices of palm produce fall—if it does fall this year. Our financial position is indeed a wonderful one for a Region of eight million people budgeting for a working balance of £5,000 in round figures.

The Fiscal Commissioner's Report has shown a deficit of £180,000 per annum and in order to give this Region a breathing space, it will receive special grants. We have got to go a-begging—in the first year for £500,000 and the second year for £250,000. It is indeed a "begging Region."



We may talk of industrialisation and of appointing more Ministers, we may talk of expansion of existing services but where is the financial and economic policy from which more revenue can be derived to meet these projects. This is not the age of talking but the age of doing. (*Hear! Hear!*). The Financial Secretary has shown that the task ahead of the Government is a formidable one—I support him and I say that it is not only formidable but abnormally hopeless. We want a revenue-earning Government and not a squandermania Government. (*Hear! Hear!*).

Mr President, Sir, I feel that I do not dwell on promises which I know are very vital and I am convinced that even in the hearts of the Members of the Government Bench—and I will leave them with the fear of these words—that unless and until they are prepared to show this Region how the Region will be run, how the existing services will be expanded and how new services will be introduced and how our new Government will be carried on, they must expect severest opposition from this side of the House.

Mr President, Sir, there are two important matters before winding up which affect the people of my constituency, especially the owners of the land round Aba and the surrounding rural villages and towns of Aba-Ngwa County Council Area. My people have instructed me in unqualified terms to present their view to this House that no attempt should be made by the present Government to convert Aba Township into a Municipality. My people are opposed to this idea.

Also there is a distress at present whereby the Ngwa market women are made to pay 6d and 3d as tolls for the old and new markets respectively. Take, for example, a woman who goes to market everyday—she pays a rate of 15s a month which comes to £9 a year. That is in the old market, whereas if she goes to the new market, she pays 7s 6d a month or £4 10s 0d a year and this is the highest tax we could impose upon our women. This matter comes within the portfolio of the honourable the Minister of Local Government and this calls for an investigation so that the women of my constituency will be saved from this hardship.

Mr President, Sir, with these remarks which I am sure have gone deep into the bones of the Members of the Government, I oppose the Appropriation Bill.

**Mr A. G. Umoh (Enyong Division):**

Mr President, I rise to support the Appropriation Bill, and in doing so I wish to say how happy I am that after the recent crisis it has been possible to form a new House with all the high hopes of progress everything portends.

The recent crisis was a test of confidence of the part of the various constituencies and I do congratulate all the old Members of this House, as well as the new ones who successfully won the confidence of their constituencies to this House. (*Cheers!*). I do wish this House God's guidance, a peaceful term and a heavy crop of success. (*Cries of "We'll get them!"*).

Mr President, as some one connected with school work, it might not be difficult to understand why I chose to start my observations from the Education Department of this Region. It is always very sad to find a number



of children who, after passing Standard VI, cannot get into Secondary Schools. These children are left to wander about from month to month; some of them for two or three years without having jobs. The end of it is that they band themselves into small groups starting to steal, and as a result a hierarchy of crime is being built up in this Region. I am getting apprehensive, Mr President, that if nothing is done to ease this situation, it might become too late to check crime in this Region. That being the case, I wish to deplore the one-sided education we give to our children and which only helps them to read and write. I advocate an education policy which would give technical education a good place. I realise there is one trade centre here in Enugu for the training of our children. As a matter of fact, when I went there last year I was very happy to see the progress that our children make. I was just wondering if it was possible for the Trade Centre to expand its scope to include a more elementary part of the training. For instance, children at the Trade Centre could be taught to make footballs for schools and other rubber and leather goods. It would be a means of helping the children who leave school if they were able to employ their time in say, making enamelled utensils to sell for money. They could be taught how to make shoes and suitcases, etc., out of the leather of this country. The point is that leaving them to hang around after they have finished up in Standard VI is helping to build up a hierarchy of crime which tends to ruin the good name of this Region. I feel that it is the responsibility of this Government to see that something is done to save this situation. A lot has been said in this House about the difficulty of getting money. Mr President, I wish I could suggest an immediate source of acquiring a huge revenue.

Sir, there is a Department of Government in this country which, I suggest, should be disbanded. It is the Police Department, and from it we can save a lot of money. I am not trying to be sentimental, but if you see the bad work that is done by the Police Force in this country you would agree with me that it is not worth the respect we give them. Sir, I do realise the importance of the Police Force, especially when I think that it is the duty of policemen to protect the interest of the public, but Mr President, if you could get to see the havoc done by these supposed friends of the public, you would see why I feel this way about them. I would like to give an example of a police officer called upon to investigate a case of stealing. The thief in question is duly reported to the police who, after taking the statement of the complainant, sets out to arrest the thief. When the thief is arrested and his statements are recorded, what happens in 99.9 cases out of a 100 is that the police enter into negotiation to share the stolen property with the thief, not minding the poor complainant who reported the case. When this wicked agreement is duly made between the thief and the police officer, the whole case turns to a very sad one. The police now uses the very training and knowledge which were given to him to use in saving the poor man who was robbed, in distorting all the facts so that what was a hopeful case at the beginning for the complainant ends up in no case at all. It is not an uncommon thing to find that when the case finally comes to the Magistrate's Court, the supposed falsely-accused man gets off free through the unjust deal of the police officer and the man who was robbed of his property becomes involved, and generally ends up in imprisonment. Mr



President, I honestly feel that this is a very sad state of affairs, and I strongly appeal to the Government of this Region to do everything at its command to see that we have an honest Police Force. If it becomes necessary to pay one honest policeman £30 a month, I honestly would uphold it. (*Laughter*).

The trouble is that the police have become such a constant menace that I feel there is no Police Force at all, and the respect we should have for them is naturally lost.

Mr President, there is the other case, too, of somebody arriving in a township, say at night. You might be unlucky enough to have a breakdown in the lorry and so arrive at a motor park at some time in the night. Well, you would be consoled to see a policeman there, and you would say to yourself: Well, if the men I see there are robbers, this policeman can protect me. There again, it is known that the policeman is not defending you, but is rather at the head of that group which is to attack you. (*Laughter*). And what does happen is that when the attack starts you find your police friend walking away lest you appeal to him for help, and you are thus deprived of your belongings in the very face of your protector. He walks away unmindful of his duties and gets to an agreed point where he gets a lion share of the booty. Mr President, this is not fine talk. I feel that if the Government is not prepared to make its Police Force as responsible as those of other countries, it need not be ashamed that the shameful acts of its Police Force are exposed to the world. I feel that it is our duty to check up this anomaly and ensure that what we have in this country is as good as what other countries have. I said that even if we had to pay one policeman £30, if that will keep him off his dishonesty and help him to protect the interests of the public, I will stand for it. At the moment, I strongly recommend to the Government to liquidate the present Police Force.

I come now to examine the work done by the Department of Customs and Excise. I think it is important to just ventilate a bit of the anomalies in this Department.

**The President:**

I do not think we can discuss something which is clearly out of the scope of this House.

**Mr A. G. Umoh:**

Well, Sir, I would crave your indulgence to tell you of the ill treatments that are meted out to traders by this Department.

It is true that in this Region we object to smuggling and we intend to fight smuggling in all forms. But I feel that our policy should be one of respect for human dignity. It is known that some people go to Fernando Po to get gin into this country. These men are being chased in the middle of the ocean, in small canoes, and those of them who are not actually shot down are being so chased that they get drowned, and the result is that you have hundreds of lives being lost that way yearly. I should have thought it was better to arrest the offenders and bring them to port safely, and charge them with whatever crime they have been found guilty of, instead of shooting them. We have so many lives lost in the attempt to make money for this Department! I feel it is not good, Mr President.

Besides, too, it looks extraordinary that somebody who is arrested for this crime is being deprived of not only the things smuggled but also of



his canoe. We have in many cases huge canoes which cost £250 and more being taken from the owners. If a policeman goes to search the house of an offender I should think it was his duty only to look for the thing the suspect was accused of. If that policeman was to knock down the house of this man during the search I would say it was extraordinary. (*Laughter*). That is what happens always with these smugglers. Whoever is arrested for smuggling is deprived of his canoe and all his lawful property. There are instances where men are caught with 3,000 cases of gin which if sold out could help to augment the revenue of this Government. In many cases it is known that officers in the Marine sell out so many bottles of this drink behind, and only present a few bottles for the case in Court. This is the policy that is making Nigeria poor, and I feel it should not be allowed. If you examine the case you will find that for every bottle of gin bought in Fernando Po for 4s the Customs demand a duty of 11s. This is extraordinary. They say if you like doing this so much, bring it by the legal way. But who would get a passport when he knows that for a bottle of gin costing 4s he was going to pay a tax of 11s. I am not aware that any of the drinks brought into this country from Fernando Po has been thrown away. On the contrary, they are as popularly used as any other drink. It forces me to the inevitable conclusion, Sir, that the policy of this Department is merely to intensify the sale of the English-made drinks, and cut off all means of making the people of this country rich. If the English are sincere in wanting to stop us from getting what they call "bad drinks," well they should be prepared to lower the cost of their own drinks. (*Laughter*).

Sir, I come on to the industries of this country. I just want to associate myself with one of the speakers of yesterday, that we are now at the cross-roads and we should really look at where we are going before we start. I am sorry if I give the impression of mistrusting our English masters, but judging from past events I might be allowed to feel that way. I have watched the way the Government of this country have proposed and are trying to suggest that we are an agricultural country. I really feel that we could be agricultural, but I want to say that if we are entirely agricultural we are heading towards doom.

I take the example of some years ago when a tin of palm oil was bought for 6d only, and today we have it for 17s. I feel that at any time in the future if our consumers choose to be as cruel as they had been when they paid 6d for a tin of our palm oil, they could easily cut down the price of our palm produce to anything that would make this Government bankrupt. Mr President, I feel that it is dangerous to put all our eggs into the agricultural basket. I wish to appeal to this Government therefore to look both ways; to invest part of its money in something that will make this Government secure, in spite of the outside pressure on it. It is true that we are poor and may not have the money with which to start industries. I want to agree with those speakers who suggested that we should invite foreign investors, provided I can at the same time maintain that before we invite foreign investments, we should be sure that we have exhausted our home resources. I ask this Government therefore to have a complete documentation of our man-power and natural resources before we start to invite foreign investors into this Region: otherwise, if we start bringing these people in without knowing our own resources, they might eventually



seize the economic control of this Region, even though we feel that we are ruling it. Thus we can make ourselves slaves to an alien power again.

Mr President, last year, I opposed the Produce Sales Tax very vehemently, and today, I still oppose it. I would think it the height of inconsistency that we who said that we opposed it could easily change around and say we didn't. (*Hear! Hear!*). I want to reiterate that the Produce Sales Tax is against the interest of the poor farmers of this Region. Is it not a fact that the Eastern Regional Production Board is getting a quotation from England that is higher than it is giving the people of this country? Is it not a fact that the people of England are getting a quotation for palm oil from America higher than what they are giving to Nigeria? If these are facts, then I maintain that if there is any tax to be paid on produce, it should not be paid by the local farmers. It should rather be paid by the Eastern Regional Production Marketing Board or the middlemen. I object to the policy of allowing the poor to be poorer in the East—and that is why I still oppose the Produce Tax. When I get to my own people I will tell them that I still oppose it.

But there is also the question of taxing our women. It is true, Sir, that our girls want equality with the boys and that they are being paid the same salary now with the boys, but I still feel, Sir, in considering the fact that these girls get married in two or three years and then stop work, that it is unfair to ask them to pay tax.

Mr President, if I am going to support the taxation of women, it is going to be the taxation of the working class. Why I find it necessary, Sir, to make this distinction, is that I thought I overheard someone yesterday saying "and some of the rich market women." Sir, I can only hope that the Member who said so was not serious. If there is any attempt to make market women pay taxes in this country, we are certainly going to precipitate disaster. Sir, I am appealing that we limit the taxation of the women to the working class.

Mr President, I wish I could say a word or two about where I come from. There are lots of advantages that we have derived from the recent crisis. One of the advantages is that it has given most of the Members of the Executive the opportunity of going to see for themselves where each Member of this House comes from, and I believe that when I say that I come from a very backward area of this Region, most of the Members of the Executive will believe me. During the election campaign, some Executive Members could see the difficulty of travelling in Enyong Division. Enyong people are regular tax-payers of this Region and they have not even a road to travel along. When I hear of municipality in this town and that town and I realise that there is no road for the Itu-Aro people, I begin to think that things are not going well. (*Hear! Hear!*). I do not want to show disrespect to the idea of municipalities but I want to say that we should also consider the people of the rural areas. In Itu District where I come from there has been a programme for the provision of twenty-eight wells since three years now. In the very village I come from, Ikot Ambang, people have to travel 2½ miles to get drinking water. You might come to my own home and find that there is no water. You need not think I am too poor—it is just the difficulty of getting water. (*Interruption*).

The President:

Order! Order!



**Mr A. G. Umoh:**

I am appealing that the people in Enyong Division be considered for the water scheme. I have heard one of the Members saying he would like to have pipe-borne water supply as he was getting fed up with well water. I wish we could even have well water! (*Hear! Hear!*).

I wish I could mention to the Executive here a statement that the Minister of Communications made about them. During the Budget meeting of last year at Lagos, I appealed for a Post Office at Itu. The existing Post Office is very wretched, and the Lieutenant-Governor himself saw it and agreed with me that we need a new one. The last time that we were at Lagos, as I said, I appealed to the Minister of Communications for a modern Post Office building for Itu. With your permission, Mr President, I will quote from the file what the honourable Minister replied: "With regard to your enquiries relating to a Post Office at Itu, a request endorsed 'Very desirable' was put forward for a type E Post Office at Itu. This was evidently not approved by the Eastern Region as it was not included in the Estimates." Mr President, I am appealing to the Executive that if this ever comes up in the Estimates they should please approve it. (*Laughter*).

**The President:**

This is surely a matter for the Committee of Supply.

**Mr A. G. Umoh:**

It is very interesting indeed, Mr President, that the Secretary of State is proposing to work out a further scheme for development. When we come to this House and start to draw up development schemes for our own areas, we were told that all the plans had been laid out. I am appealing to the Executive that they will consider Enyong Division equally in whatever development schemes come up. In a place like Okopedi, we wish the Government to help in reclaiming the land to make it possible for the people to live there as human beings. It looks as though a lot of the things that I have to say will come in at the Committee Stage, and as such I would like to end by thanking the House for giving me such a patient hearing.

Mr President, I support the Appropriation Bill in principle.

**Mr E. Emole (Bende Division):**

Mr President, I rise to support the Appropriation Bill, but before I go further, I must associate myself with those who have thanked the Financial Secretary for preparing this Budget. I do so, Sir, because I know the circumstances under which it was prepared.

Mention was made of oil palm production. It is very satisfying to hear that not only the quantity but also the quality of our palm produce have been raised, but that is not enough, Sir, because as some honourable Members have already indicated, the prices of this palm produce are falling in the world market. There are other products which are competing with our palm produce and there are certain other factors which we take into consideration before concluding that the future of our palm produce is not quite bright. I have myself held the view that the farmer and the trader are the two people on whom the main burden of our economic development falls, and I am very happy, Sir, that most of the speakers here have referred to the farmer.



[Adjournment]

20th February, 1954

[Adjournment]

(Moment of Interruption: 11.45 a.m.).

The President:

Order! Order!

Adjournment

The Minister of Local Government:

Sir, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn.

The Financial Secretary:

Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*House adjourned accordingly at thirteen minutes to twelve o'clock noon until 10 a.m. on Monday, 22 February, 1954.*



## WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Saturday, 20th February, 1954

### INTRODUCTION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, EASTERN REGION

*Question—*

97. **MR R. O. Iwuagwu:**

To ask the Minister of Local Government, Eastern Region:—

How soon will the introduction of Local Government to all divisions in the Eastern Region be completed?

*Answer—*

**The Minister of Local Government, Eastern Region:**

Plans for the application of the Eastern Region Local Government Ordinance are being pressed as hard as possible, and by 1st April, 1955, the whole of the Calabar, Owerri and Onitsha Provinces will have been covered, and most of the Ogoja Province, while a start will have been made in the Rivers Province. It is hoped to complete the rest in 1956.







# Debates in the Eastern House of Assembly

Monday, 22nd February, 1954

The House met at 10 o'clock a.m.

Prayers

(Mr President in the Chair)

## QUESTIONS AND ORAL ANSWERS

BORE HOLES FOR WATER SUPPLY IN NSUKKA DIVISION

*Question—*

**\*13. Mr J. U. Nwodo:**

To ask the Minister of Works, Eastern Region:—

Whether he is aware that the two bore holes for water supply in Obukpa and Enugu-Ezike, Nsukka Division, have not been working for the past ten months? If so how soon does the Minister propose to send an Engineer to inspect and get the engine repaired?

*Answer—*

**The Minister of Works, Eastern Region:**

Yes, Sir.

It is not proposed to send an Engineer until the Native Authority supplies the necessary pumps.

DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF ENUGU-AGBANI-AFIKPO ROAD

*Question—*

**\*14. Dr S. E. Imoke:**

To ask the Minister of Works, Eastern Region:—

If he would not consider it advisable from economic point of view that the Regional Government takes up the development and maintenance, as Trunk B, the road that passes through Agbani to connect Enugu directly with Afikpo?

*Answer—*

**The Minister of Works, Eastern Region:**

The road that passes through Agbani to connect Enugu directly with Afikpo is at present maintained by the Native Authorities of the areas traversed. If the Regional Government takes up the development and maintenance as, Trunk B of this road, then additional provision will be necessary from Regional Government funds.

**Supplementary Question to No. \*14 by Mr D. A. Nnaji:**

Has the Minister ever been to the road in question, if not, will it not be wise for him to visit the road from Agbani and also from Afikpo side, so as to know its true position?

*Answer—*

**The Minister of Works, Eastern Region:**

The Minister of Works has had the privilege of visiting the roads concerned in that area for more than three times in his short life-time and the latest visit was during the last elections when he visited the



areas concerned. I may like to add that the question is that the road is not a Regional road and at present, the Department is considering re-classification of Regional roads and Native Authority roads and in consultation with the Inspector-General of Works in Lagos, it may be possible throughout 1954-55 in the great scheme of 1955-60 to bring into the Regional jurisdiction certain roads which admittedly ought not to continue to be under the Native Authorities.

#### ORAMURUKWA RIVER BRIDGE

*Question—*

**\*61. Chief S. E. Onukogu:**

To ask the Minister of Works, Eastern Region:—

Whether the Minister is aware that Oramurukwa River Bridge at Azaraegbelu-Emekuku on Owerri-Umuahia road has been broken down for twelve months, thus closing down that road for motor traffic? How soon will the Nigerian Public Works reconstruct this bridge?

*Answer—*

**The Minister of Works, Eastern Region:**

Yes, Sir. This road is maintained by the Native Authority, being assisted by a Government grant of 50 per cent of the cost paid annually in arrear. It is not a responsibility of the Public Works Department of the Eastern Region.

**Supplementary Question to No. \*61 by Mr D. A. Nnaji:**

Does the Government propose to take over the road in view of the big bridge over it?

*Answer—*

**The Minister of Works, Eastern Region:**

Government, as has already been mentioned in the last few minutes, is considering a re-classification of all the important road systems in the Eastern Region in consultation, in due course, with the Central Government in order to consider the availability of funds and probably with the help of the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund will be in a position to make its findings better in the future meetings of this House. But I can add that there are many roads in the Region which the Inspector-General of Works, and I should say, every citizen of this country, would like to be tarred; but we have to consider the question of jurisdiction, the question of availability of funds in addition to the availability of efficient and skilled Engineers.

#### MAINTENANCE OF OWERRI-EMEKUKU-UMUAHIA ROAD

*Question—*

**\*62. Chief S. E. Onukogu:**

To ask the Minister of Works, Eastern Region:—

(a) How much annually does the Government spend in maintaining the road from Owerri-Emekuku-Enyiogugu-Ahiara-Umuahia, which is the major road between Owerri and Umuahia?

(b) Whether the Government will not consider taking over entirely the maintenance of this road?



*Answer—*

**The Minister of Works, Eastern Region:**

(a) Government makes a grant to each of the three Native Authorities concerned, Mbaise, Oratta and Mbasa, based on 50 per cent of the expenditure incurred by them on maintenance of the road during the previous year.

The total amounts paid by Government in the last two years were:—

1951-52	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	£ 549
1952-53	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	571

The major road between Owerri and Umuahia is the Trunk Road A 2 as far as Umu Ovo, just beyond Owerinta Bridge, and then on Trunk Road A 3 to Umuahia through Obiakabi, Ahia Aba and Ama Apu.

(b) If Government takes over entirely the maintenance of this road then additional provision of Regional funds will be necessary.

The question of re-classification of roads in the Region was under consideration, but had not been finalised in time to be dealt with before the recent political crisis in the Eastern Region. The question will have to be re-examined and a proposal submitted to the Executive Council in due course.

N.A. WORKERS IN NSUKKA DIVISION

*Question—*

**\*75. Mr D. C. Ugwu:**

To ask the Minister of Local Government, Eastern Region:—

Why N.A. workers in Nsukka Division have not been paid increased pay of 5 per cent of salaries already paid to workers in other N.A.s in the Region.

*Answer—*

**The Minister of Local Government, Eastern Region:**

Government does not control the salaries paid by Native Authorities to their employees except to see that they are not in excess of the salaries paid by Government for similar services. At the time of the 1952 Revision of Salaries the Native Authorities of the Nsukka Division decided to pay only a 25 per cent increase and the matter is between the Native Authorities concerned and their employees.

**Supplementary Question to No. \*75 by Mr D. C. Ugwu:**

Is the Minister aware that the four Native Authorities had since last year approved the payment of 25 per cent increase of pay to their workers?

*Answer—*

**The Minister of Local Government, Eastern Region:**

No, Sir.



## INTRODUCTION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN AHOADA DIVISION

*Question—***\*84. Mr. S. O. Masi:**

To ask the Minister of Local Government, Eastern Region:—

(a) Whether he is aware that as a token of great desire by the people of Ahoada District for Local Government set up, both the Eastern and Western Ahoada Federated Native Authorities already have on their staff Local Government trainees as Administrative Secretaries?

(b) If the answer to the above is in the affirmative, how soon will Local Government be introduced in Ahoada Division?

*Answer—***The Minister of Local Government, Eastern Region:**

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) In order to prepare for Local Government, the Etche Native Authority has been established as a separate unit to include the Etche elements from Aba Division which will eventually form a District Council. Ikwerre will form a second District Council, and Western Ahoada, which has just employed an Administrative Secretary, a third District. It is planned to apply the Eastern Region Local Government Ordinance on 1st April, 1955, after the new councils and their staff have had a year to prepare the necessary organisation.

## PORT HARCOURT WATER SUPPLY

*Question—***\*88. Mr V. K. Onyeri:**

To ask the Minister of Public Health, Eastern Region:—

Is the Minister aware of the fact that water supply in Port Harcourt tastes saltish? If so, is there any scheme for the immediate installation of machinery for pure drinking water supply for Port Harcourt?

*Answer—***The Minister of Public Health, Eastern Region:**

The water supply at Port Harcourt is brackish and this has become worse during the past few years due to over-pumping of the four deep bore-hole wells. Drinking water therefore tastes salty but is not, it is understood, markedly unpleasant. It is some consolation to report that its degree of purity is excellent and bacteriological examinations carried out on samples are nearly always completely satisfactory.

2. A scheme has been prepared for a complete new water system to meet expansion until 1960—this provides for several new bore holes at mile 5.5 on the Aba road and could supply about 1½ million gallons daily, sufficient for the new township extensions and for a water-carriage sewage system (if the latter was contemplated).

3. The cost of the above-mentioned scheme would be approximately £167,000; the township would have to find £80,000 of this. The balance will be made available from Colonial Development and Welfare Funds.



**Supplementary Question to No. \*88 by Mr D. A. Nnaji:**

Is the Minister aware of the fact that pure drinking water should have no taste?

*Answer—*

**The Minister of Public Health, Eastern Region:**

He is aware.

**DR BRAITHWAITE NURSING HOME**

*Question—*

**\*89. Mr V. K. Onyeri:**

To ask the Minister of Public Health, Eastern Region:—

Are admission fees for patients into the Dr Braithwaite Nursing Home the same as those in the Port Harcourt General Hospital? If not, what step does the Minister propose to take to regularise the position?

*Answer—*

**The Minister of Public Health, Eastern Region:**

The fees charged in all Government Hospitals are governed by the regulations made under the Hospital Fees Ordinance. These regulations specify (a) the maximum scale of fees for professional attendance, and (b) the scale of charge for accommodation of patients in Government Hospitals and Nursing Homes.

2. The maximum fees for professional attendants are subject to reduction, a proportionate fee being charged according to the assessed income of the patient. Thus, since patients attending the Dr Braithwaite Nursing Home are generally from the higher income groups of the community, the fees charged there are generally higher than those for the General Hospital.

3. Similarly, the charge made for accommodation increases with the income of the patient. The accommodation charges at the Dr Braithwaite Nursing Home are therefore higher than those in the General Hospital since the patients at the Nursing Home are from the higher income groups of the community. In return for the higher accommodation fees charged at the Nursing Home, better accommodation facilities are provided than at the General Hospital.

4. Since there is nothing irregular about the position the second part of the question does not arise.

5. The regulations in question are Regulations No. 21 of 1951, which appeared in the Supplement to the *Nigeria Gazette* No. 16, Vol. 38 of the 29th March, 1951.

**ORDER OF THE DAY**

THE 1954-55 EASTERN REGION APPROPRIATION LAW, 1954

(Third Allotted Day)

Order read for resuming adjourned Debate on Question (16th February), "That the Bill be now read a second time."



*Question again proposed.*

**Mr E. Emole (Bende Division):**

Mr President, Sir, the other day I started my observation on the Appropriation Bill by saying that the main burden of the economic development of this Region is being borne by the farmers and the traders. It follows therefore that no discussion of the economic state of the Region can be complete unless something is said about these two groups. I have always held the view, Sir, that the problem of industrialisation and that of farming are interwoven.

It is usual for us in this country to refer to the high industrialisation in the U.S.A., but we always lose sight of the fact that in that country the essence of high industrialisation is efficient and sound farming. In that country, Sir, one farmer produces enough to feed himself and probably fourteen others. That means, Sir, that about fourteen people out of every fifteen could be released for secondary and other occupations. That is very healthy. In our own case, Sir, although figures are not available, probably two farmers can feed three men. The problem, therefore, is that of high productivity. We must increase the productivity per capita out of all proportion so that more members of this Region can be released for other occupations. To do this, Sir, we must make rural life attractive. The farmer must be sufficiently fed, sufficiently enlightened, sufficiently sheltered and sufficiently entertained. Above all, Sir, his health must of necessity be cared for. The soil that the farmer uses must be enriched and mechanised farming be introduced where possible. The farmer should be advised to specialise in growing such crops as the circumstances permit, but over-specialisation should not be encouraged.

Those who have done economic history of the U.S.A. may probably agree, Sir, that during the 1929-1932 depression that country was the worst sufferer. This was attributed to over-specialised farming. We, in this Region, Sir, should take note of that in our farming policy. The farmer must also be provided with adequate means of transport.

I come from Bende Division, Sir, where most of the important roads are not in use during the rainy season. The result of this, is that the economic crops produced by rural areas in that division are never brought to the towns or railway stations where they could be disposed of. They remain there, some of them deteriorate in value, others perish before the dry season appears. This is not peculiar to my division, it is the universal suffering of the entire Region. To help the farmer increase his productivity, a vigorous road programme is essential.

There is one aspect of our farming, Sir, which I very much commend. Hitherto we have been producing food for our local consumption as well as produce for foreign markets. That is a very good start, Sir, and I hope that everything possible will be done to see that it is carried on.

Before I pass on to another aspect of our economy, I wish to say something—a few words—about the alleged subsidies to farmers. Unless I have got it wrong, Sir, in saying that farmers in this Region



are being subsidised, Members refer to the money in the reserves of the Marketing Boards. The object of this, Sir, is to stabilise prices. If that money is merely meant for that purpose and part of it is being applied for that purpose, I cannot see how we can complain. I think that money, strictly speaking, belongs to the farmer and must be applied for his own advantage. Instead of saying Sir, that the farmers in this Region are being subsidised, I would say that the boot is on the other leg. Before long, Sir, the sum of £15 million will be made available to this Region and this money belongs to the farmers.

The other group I mentioned, Sir, are the traders. The important position occupied by traders in the economic development of this Region cannot be overestimated. The bulk of money required for the economic development of the Region is in the hands of the traders. These traders and intra-territorial companies should be encouraged. Every effort should be made to enable them have direct contact with traders outside the Region.

If I may strike a personal note, Sir, when I made a tour of some European countries, I interviewed some traders, some trade associations and some high officials connected with trade. My impression, Sir, was that they are all yearning to have direct contact with our traders here. Every effort, therefore, should be made to see that our traders and the intra-territorial companies are in direct contact with the outside world. I am very happy, Sir, that my party, the Government Party, has adopted a very progressive agricultural and commercial policy. I have no doubt, Sir, that when the N.C.N.C. Budget—a budget which I will call “The People’s Budget” is presented, that policy will be clearly and adequately reflected.

Now, Sir, I would like to make some few remarks about the financial state of the Region. It is true that when the new dispensation comes into operation, we will have to find the money to run this Region. I do not believe, Sir, that the people of this Region are helpless. This, my belief, is clearly borne out by the Financial Secretary, himself, when he said, if I may be allowed to quote: “It is the firm belief of the Government that the economy of the Region is capable of sustaining the services which the Government at present provides and of providing for their expansion. The Government is reinforced in this view by the recent survey of the national income of Nigeria by Messrs Prest and Stewart.”

My only regret is, that the Financial Secretary merely advises us to think hard. He failed to provide a basis on, or the line along which, we must do this thinking. In a matter like this, Sir, one would think that the Financial Secretary will realise that there is a duty on him to make concrete suggestions as to how this money can be found when the time comes. However, Sir, the people of this Region will accept whatever challenge fate may throw out to them and you can be sure, that they will march on when the time comes.

I have a few remarks to make about Community Development. It is gratifying, Sir, that there is provision for Community Development.



recommendations by saying that they were partial and not to the best interest of the Region. He was not quite correct. Mr President, Sir, the common reason why men fail to be intelligible is this—the thing they wish to express is not even clear to them. You cannot make people understand a subject, Sir, unless you understand the subject yourself. I dare say, Sir, that the recommendations are factual and no amount of ignorance can change them. They were recommended without prejudice by experts.

3. Installation, Sir, of Pioneer Oil Mills at convenient places all over the Region.

4. Industrialisation of our industries.

5. Implementation of the recommendations for the Nigerianisation of the Civil Service as recommended by Sir Sydney Phillipson (*Interruptions*).

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E. (Enyong Division):**

Mr President, may I claim protection for this speaker.

**Mr A. U. A. Inyang:**

Sir, this will reduce the possibility of transferred payment of pensions and salaries and other incomes at factor cost.

6. Reduction in salaries of the Regional Ministers by £1,800 per annum per Minister.

7. When the amended Constitution is in force, Sir, I suggest the appointment of an overseas financial expert as the Minister of Finance. In this connection and in the interest of our Region, the person presently earmarked should not be considered on the grounds of his past financial entanglements. May I invite the attention of the Leader of the Government seriously to this suggestion?

8. Establishment of a Central Bank of Nigeria with a branch in the Eastern Region as recommended by Mr J. L. Fisher. This bank and its branch will hold deposit for the Government and will issue overdraft, lend money and discount Bills for the people of the Eastern Region. At present, Sir, the Bank of England is the only bank which issues notes to this country under legal bullion. If we have our Central Bank, Sir, it would control our monetary policy and offer to commercial banks of Nigeria greater security. The bank would specialise in developing forms of security in relation to African businesses which would be regarded as having the necessary degree of liquidity. Sir, the overseas Commercial Banks in this Region find it difficult to have adequate securities for the issue of loans to Nigerians, due to our land tenure. Nigerians cannot even offer securities acceptable to British banks.

9. Sir, the health of the producers in this Region should be cared for.

10. Improvement of conditions of employment and the extension of working hours.



11. Education: The late Government made proposals for the award of 250 scholarships for higher studies. Due to the efficient way in which the amount allocated was managed additional awards were made. That was a very satisfactory beginning, Mr President. At the moment I understand that the Government have dissolved that efficient Scholarship Board. I understand also, Sir, that no notice was given to the members. They have been rewarded otherwise. Mr President, I own that the Leader of this Government owes us explanation.

House of Chiefs: there should be a House of Chiefs for the chiefs of the Eastern Region. There should be no "Consultative Council" unless the Government can prove that the present Ministers are by nature and tradition the only persons to form the Government of the Eastern Region. In my humble opinion, our chiefs must be allowed to be a legitimate part of the Government.

Tax: Sir, to answer the Government's statement as to the advisability of levying additional taxes and rates after consultation with the people of this Region, I must say at once that the people of my division shall be opposed to such measures. There has been a gradual tendency towards lower prices of palm produce and in recent weeks the position is worse.

In the N.C.N.C. Party's pre-election statement, they said that they were prepared to run the Eastern Government without additional cost to the tax-payers! Now, Sir, that the party has succeeded, the Government must put its policy into effect. In my area, Sir, it is felt that the official action to levy more taxes which has so far been announced should be regarded as a partial step and if this proposal should be enforced then it might well be prudent to resort to riot. The Government must have itself more concerned with other sources of revenue and should be content with the appreciation which is in prospect. If they do so, then there is possibly less reason to urge riots. My people need not be consulted otherwise.

I say with all the emphasis at my command that under no circumstances should the women of this Region be taxed. It would look mean of me, Mr President, to go home from this House only to tell the women of Ikot Ekpene Division that a new form of taxation is being devised and that they would be called upon to pay tax by the N.C.N.C. Government.

Code Grants to Local Government bodies: I warn that the sum of £10,000, part of the special grants to Local Government bodies, removed to provide more salaries to the Ministers should be restored forthwith . . .

**The President:**

The honourable Member must not go into matters of detail. That is for the Committee of Supply stage. (*Shame! Shame!*)

**Mr A. U. A. Inyang:**

Local Government bodies, Sir, should be allowed to use this grant to improve their areas. I am made to believe, Sir, that we are budgeting



for the services of the Eastern Region. Going through the Estimates, Sir, I come across no proposal for the Calabar Province of which my constituency, Ikot Ekpene, is part and parcel. At page E.58, Public Works Extraordinary, the Government provides for special works for. . .

**Mr D. A. Nnaji (Udi Division):**

On a point of order—Standing Order 66 (3) Appropriation Bill. May I read, Sir?

Section 3 of Standing Order 66 (3) says: "After a motion for the second reading of the Bill has been made and seconded the debate thereon shall be adjourned for not less than two days and when resumed shall be confined to the financial and economic state of the Region . . ."

**The President:**

I am watching it. At this early stage it is traditional to allow certain latitude. I must admit it is difficult when an honourable Member commits a breach of more than one Standing Order at the same time to find which to study more. I have warned the honourable Member not to go into details and to stick to the point. (*Shame! Shame!*).

**Mr A. U. A. Inyang:**

Sir, I had already said that at page 58, Public Works Extraordinary, there is no provision made for . . .

**The President:**

The honourable Member will not go into details. (*Shame! Shame!*).

**Mr A. U. A. Inyang:**

I wish to make it clearly understood, Sir, that the Estimates were prepared by the Executive Council and not by the House, so that the neglect of my division is the concern of the Regional Executive—No water supply, no electric light, and nothing for the division whatsoever. I want the people of Ikot Ekpene to know that I have presented their requests to this Government. It is for them to demonstrate and show the Government that they, too, have feelings. For the life of me, Sir, I cannot support this Bill which makes no provision for my division.

Mr President, Sir, that ancient town of Ikot Ekpene which once was famous is now an appendix to the Eastern Region. I am entitled to say, Sir—and I do so on behalf of this Region—that we make every effort any Region could possibly make for peace, and what is it that we are fighting for? Everyone knows, and no one knows better than the Government, the terrible incalculable suffering—economic, social, personal and political—which crises, and especially crises between political parties, must entail. I do not believe that any nation ever entered into a great controversy with a clear conscience and stronger conviction that it is fighting not for aggression, not for the maintenance of its own selfish interest, but it is fighting in defence of principles, the maintenance of which is vital to the welfare of the nation.

The Civil Service: Mr President, Sir, I feel bound to associate myself with the views expressed by the honourable Mr Ogon about



our Civil Service. Our friends, the overseas officers, have been very worrisome.

Here is a case of a mere supervisor of the Rest House. There was a lady supervisor in charge who was sacked, even at the expense of the guests. The present supervisor has promised not only to sack our African staff, but goes as far as assaulting them before sacking them. One of them was recently assaulted and finally dismissed, and the remaining miserable Africans have been promised dismissal. I resist, Mr President, and I therefore declare to this House that this is a common cause.

Mr President, you will see that throughout my speech I made less mention of political parties. I want to assure you Sir, that we the youth of this House, have a duty to the Region. I declare, Sir, that any attempt to regiment our sentiments, any attempt to force a policy upon the people of our Region and any attempt by our leaders to deceive us for selfish ends shall be resisted by the young legislators of this House.

Mr President, my sincere wishes and congratulations go to the new Government and to all Members present in this House.

Sir, I beg to oppose.

**Mr J. U. Nwodo (Nsukka Division):**

Mr President, we are here assembled together again to discuss the Budget of this Region. In rising to support the Appropriation Bill I have the following observations to make. In the speech of the honourable the Financial Secretary, one wonders if he has not raised undue alarm in his effort to explain the financial standing of this Region. Good and commendable as his speech has been, he has to some extent raised a notion as to the ability of this Region to pay its recurrent expenses; in this way he has held the minds of the honourable Members in suspense. I would like to quote the Financial Secretary more correctly by reading from page 10 of his very speech:—

“In assessing the task ahead of us it is therefore necessary, on the basis of the Fiscal Commissioner’s estimates, to assume initially a deficit of £180,000 per annum, that is to say, we should leave the purely temporary special grant out of account. The Region will also have to find funds to meet the residual recurrent cost of the present Development Plan, when the present grants cease at the end of the Financial Year, 1955-56, and for this purpose a sum of the order of between £400,000 and £500,000 per annum will be required.”

With regard to this deficit of £180,000, the Financial Secretary is aware that the Fiscal Commissioner originally estimated the deficit at a sum of £460,000, and further suggested that the bulk of this amount is in respect of the Southern Cameroons, which territory we have nursed as intimately as we could. Now that the Southern Cameroons has decided to carry on of its own, we can rest assured that it will be prepared to bear the financial and economic burdens that will devolve on it as a quasi-territory. It would therefore be essential to suggest in the Committee of Supply that any allocation







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in respect of the Southern Cameroons will have to be deleted from our Estimates.

Under the development projects which the honourable Financial Secretary advocated that this Region would after 1956 have to find money "to meet the residual recurrent costs" arising therefrom, I want to say here that the Administration is to blame. Earlier enough these development projects were listed under the title of "Ten Year Development Plan." Later on it was called the "Five Year Development Plan." After 1956 I wish it could be called the "Three Year Development Plan" so that it could go in a descending order of magnitude. The reason for this extension of time is obvious. Most of the development projects have not been accomplished. Provision, for instance, was made in the Development Estimates, 1951-56 for tarring trunk roads linking this Region with the other Regions in the country. Till today the figures inserted have remained in the book as mere decoration. I would mention specifically the road. It is the major trunk "A" road from the Nine-mile corner to Nsukka. This road has served as a means of evacuating produce from the Northern part of this Region to Onitsha, Port Harcourt and other places of shipment.

In discussing the Budget in 1952 in this House I said that the people of this Region want something concrete in exchange for the money they are paying. We are committed as a party to the task of being responsible for the welfare of the people of this Region. This is no easy task. It calls for advice from within and outside this Assembly and it needs a lot of planning. To a citizen, whatever is planned should be immediately implemented. Here, Mr President, the essential difference lies. The Legislature is unavoidably concerned with planning within the scope of its financial resources. The nation, on the other hand, is much interested in the amount of social services provided. Some citizens go to the length of suggesting that the Government ought to provide such-and-such services free. I want to say that no services are free. They must be paid for by the people. The hard fact is that this party, unlike any other in this country, is cautious of taxing people against their wishes or without at least sufficiently educating them to an understanding that their needs involve extra expenditure, which expenditure must be met with increased revenue. I am speaking, Mr President, as a representative of the people, whose job it is to consider these essential differences of opinion and work out a solution for the common good. The solution which I suggest, Mr President, is clear and simple: it is that all should give the Government genuine advice, educate the people rightly and, above all, self-help. Both the Government and the Opposition are agreed on one fundamental principle—the well-being and progress of the people of the Eastern Region. It is that belief of the two that now stands the test of time. The N.C.N.C. Government has thrown a challenge by publicising early enough its political aspirations and calling upon the people of the Eastern Region who have voted it into power to support it morally and financially. I would say that the people of this Region are solidly behind the N.C.N.C., and that we must do all that lies in our power to allow it to go ahead and work for the benefit of all.



The Budget for the ensuing financial year provides for an expenditure of £5,226,540 out of an estimated revenue of £5,231,840 for the services of the Eastern Region. These services are Administration, Medicine, Agriculture, Works, Veterinary, Education and, to some extent, Police. In comparison with last year's Budget, the Estimates of Expenditure provide an increase. This gives rise to a very welcome speculation in that increased expenditure presupposes increased social services and production, but contrary to my observations the reverse is the case. While I argue that civil servants should through collective bargaining demand pay commensurate with their labours and sacrifices, I still maintain, Mr President, that production has been very low and not at all satisfactory. The civil servants, from the Heads of Departments down to the lowest grade, should pull their weight sufficiently. The habit of the Heads or immediate Heads of Department keeping members of the public waiting or asking them to visit offices repeatedly before they are attended to causes untold inconveniences and hardships, and should be discouraged. On the other hand, some members of the Civil Service should be encouraged. The Police Department, for instance, is making a ridicule of its career that in future it will find it difficult, if not impossible, to recruit in masses as it now does. What is the use of a young man entering the Police with no bright hope of progress? A Police Corporal promoted to the rank of Sergeant stands to lose that rank if on almost the last day of his first year of promotion he happens to incur the displeasure of his immediate boss.

I have said that the Veterinary Department is part and parcel of the Agricultural Department. The two are correlated and should be one department.

The economic status of this Region can be well assessed from a survey of our staple products, their supply and demand and means of their immediate evacuation. There are also the imported commodities which must be considered on the same lines as our own products. With an increasing population of eight million people and the gradual drawing away of the people from the villages to the townships, there is the fear that the population will not be self-supporting. Of course I do not wish to raise alarm as did the English Economist, Mr Malthus who, in 1798, declared that the population would increase until it had forced the level of subsistence to starvation level. Malthus depended upon the unrestricted law of Diminishing Returns and therefore drew a wrong conclusion. The study of population is of interest because it indicates what effects or changes in the numbers of persons inhabiting an area under consideration have upon *per capita* distribution of wealth.

According to the honourable Financial Secretary palm oil purchased for 1953 was 198,273 tons and palm kernels purchased totalled 214,653 tons. This shows an increase in production over the previous year. Unfortunately, this increase is not reflected in price stabilisation for the ensuing year. Rather, the price has been reduced considerably, and perhaps the honourable Member of the Opposition who has been a member of the Marketing Board can give an explanation as to why



prices of our palm produce have fallen so low. The Opposition Member whom I refer to, unfortunately is absent. I do not know where he has gone to, Mr President. I trust his co-members will kindly deliver him the message when he comes back. I understand from the honourable mover that we have been producing a better quality oil and that nearly 60 per cent of our total output has been Special Grade Oil. This should have fetched better prices in world markets.

On page 2 of a booklet entitled *National Income of Nigeria* I was treated to an interesting statistical figure which compared production with expenditure. Mr President, on the expenditure side a total of 86.7 per cent went to meals and mainly to imported goods such as clothing, footwear, fuel or light, household goods, cigarettes, etc. In a regional broadcast earlier this month it was announced that the total number of British-manufactured cars which now stands in excess of the total for the year ending 1952 is 147,000. I am yet to be convinced that the prices of these cars and other imported goods have fallen considerably low to make room for our economic advancement and social development. Imported goods should be stocked sufficiently and their prices reduced to a minimum. If need be, a special Board should be appointed to regulate their prices in the same way as our palm products are regulated.

Mr President, before I close this speech, I would like to say a few words on the policy of the present Government, as this policy must have the financial backing of the people. It gladdens my heart and that of every other Member of this House to begin the business of the House with a clear understanding of Government's policy. The policy to promote education, increase social services, raise the standard of living, increase industrial and commercial activities in the Region and encourage community development projects certainly justifies itself to be financially supported by the people. No doubting Thomas would still be under any misapprehension as to whether this Government has the support of the people of this Region. The verdict of our people at the polls clearly indicates their sincere intention to support N.C.N.C. ideology. A nation is built on love, loyalty and friendship. Democracy thrives on party politics not degenerate into party enmity.

In concluding my observations on the Appropriation Bill, I would like to make the following suggestions: (a) that Government should take into consideration improvement of rural areas with respect to water supply, and immediate reconstruction and improvement of major roads. Roads which are within the Region but are under Central control should, when they deteriorate, be reported on by the Region. I do believe that it is within the competence of the Regional Government to apply to the Centre for grant and carry out the improvements desired; (b) codified grants made to Native Authorities and Local Government bodies should not be restricted to certain subjects, Such Regional bloc-grants should be used for any other services such as promoting service and social conditions in the area



concerned; (c) vast areas of land in Nsukka and Udi Divisions could be used for the planting of benniseed, cattle rearing and the institution of technical schools for the promotion of industry in this Region; (d) a Public Board should be set up to regulate and control the prices of imported goods.

With these few observations, Mr President, I support the Appropriation Bill.

**Mr T. Brady (Special Member):**

Mr President, I rise to support the Appropriation Bill. I will be very brief. I represent commercial interests, and my observations will be limited to the commercial aspect of the Budget.

First of all, I would like to say a word of caution on the subject of expenditure. It behoves Government to think very clearly before embarking on any new undertaking of the recurrent expenditure attaching to that undertaking. Let me illustrate in a simple way. It is all very well to say I have the money and I will buy a car. The purchase price is only the beginning. Thereafter it requires petrol, oil, driver's wages, tyres, spares, repairs and, eventually, complete replacement. Similarly, and less personally, on Regional expenditure. After the first capital cost, there are the recurrent cost of salaries, maintenance, depreciation, etc. I would like, Sir, to ask all of us to bear in mind all the financial implications of any new undertaking and understand fully the weight of money that is attached to the expense of each new project.

The Financial Secretary, in his very able speech, made some good points on the subject of the palm produce trade. The improvement in quality of oil is impressive and the tonnage of both oil and kernels marketed last year showed a good increase on 1952. I have reason to believe that the tonnage this year will improve even on that of 1953. The most important thing the Financial Secretary said, was that the world supply of oils and fats has increased and we could not expect to enjoy the abnormally high prices we have had during the past few years. I think that is a most important statement, and I would like to underline it. It is true that the price for Special Grade Oil is being supported by help from the reserve funds created by the Palm Produce Board. These payments are merely giving back to the producer money that was withheld from him before. I think that the people of the Eastern Region should now appreciate fully the prudence of the Marketing Boards in the past, and I hope, with the Financial Secretary, that the new Regional Board will also bear in mind at all times the interests of the producer. The Eastern Regional Production Development Board is doing a good job in encouraging production, Sir, often in remote places and without publicity. Very often too it is a waiting policy, waiting for trees to grow, waiting for things to go into production. Nevertheless, it is doing excellent work and should have the full appreciation and support of the House. It is to increased production that Eastern Nigeria must turn for increased revenue, and particularly the development of



agricultural resources. In any reasonable and workable project I am sure the Region will find close sympathy and support from the trading world. Given a measure of financial support from outside, the skill of experienced people, and add to it, the industry, determination, common sense and good humour of the people of this Region, much can and will be accomplished.

Sir, I support the Appropriation Bill.

**Mr A. J. Ekpe (Opobo Division):**

Mr President, Sir, from the first month of this year, the eyes of the world have been focussed on the Eastern Region of Nigeria since the assumption of the leadership of its Government by Dr the honourable Nnamdi Azikiwe. Some ask, will his party govern listening? Others hope to see the realisation of a Utopia Eastern Region with wonderful changes for the best in the social and economic life of its people. Everybody is waiting and watching for the signs in July or August when the "People's" Second Budget will be released.

I shall confine my observations to the "People's" First Budget. The Financial Secretary's speech if stripped of the literary garment and heavy make-up, one finds a lean, hollow, ugly and starved Eastern Region leaning on groggy rail of a collapsing economic bridge and beneath is swift running river of regionalisation and financial autonomy.

Mr President, the first thing that comes to my mind is the position of the rural people. The economic architect of the Region has raised an alarm in his famous warning that "if we do not think fast and think hard, we are likely to be caught on the wrong foot."

About 95 per cent of the Members of this House come from the rural areas and so the welfare of the rural peasants should have the first consideration in our deliberations in this House. But what has happened in the "People's" First Budget! In the Estimates, Subvention item which is used directly for a scheme for the development of the rural areas has been completely scrapped and codified grants to Native Authorities and Local Government Bodies heavily reduced by £10,000.

Oh, Allah! what are we going to tell the rural people—our very voters the very people who bought the N.C.N.C. buttons, fought for the party to win the majority and danced lustily to the rhythmic syncopation of the "Freedom Song"—the people we made all sorts of promises to develop?

I am glad because the "Lion of Judah" is now come to take up the reins of Government and the bags of money handed to the old and aged people in the "Cartoonist" column of the *Pilot* will now materialise as promised our peasant population during the election campaign (*Hear! Hear!*). We all hope these things will now materialise. It will be a joy really when I go back home to see the old and the weak dancing with glee because the N.C.N.C. Government has distributed money to them, and civilisation and light promised brought to their very door. What a "People's" Budget!



I have read and heard, Mr President, that the Government is going to consult the people before any measure of taxation is introduced in the Eastern Region. How can a Government, manned by the very persons who went about preaching before the election against taxation have the effrontery to go back to the people and consult them about taxation. We had thought that the Leader of Government would bring Aladdin's lamp and rub out the money necessary for running the Eastern Region, and expanding and extending its social and essential services. I think it would be a shame for anybody on the Opposition side of the House to go out to the people to consult them before taxation.

And the worst of it, Sir, although I have not heard it from a responsible quarter, and by that Mr President, I mean the Government, I have heard that our working class girls are to be taxed. I overheard an honourable Member on the Government Bench chuckle and smile and say "Ah! it is the working class, not the ordinary women." We shall resist any form of taxation of any group of women. We shall tell the women how to resist it and we shall show them how to resist it.

Mr President, there has been no increase in the People's Budget in the Roads Maintenance Vote and yet the Leader of Government, without the least compunction gets £500 for himself as Leader of Government. He forgets that this money could go to swell the Roads Maintenance Vote. He forgets the collapsing bridge at Atan Ikpe, and the Opobo Town Mission Bridge. He forgets about the weeping women standing at the water point at Ndiya in Uyo Division. He forgets, Mr President, about the producer pining in the burning sun watching and waiting for the Ferry at Ibagwa in Abak Division to trace its way like a snail from the opposite point of the river to take them away to sell their produce. He has the nerve and the courage, the "People's" Leader, to vote £500 for himself. Again, without blushing, he raises his salary from £1,800 to £2,500 and on top of that are entertainment and car allowances. (*Cries of "Allowances"*). What a "People's" Leader! What a Government!

Mr President, Sir, I think it is very shameful indeed. I never expected that a Ghandi—I mean the Ghandi who is leading the Government, could condescend to such low depths.

The Department of Agriculture is just a waste of public revenue. The Department, as suggested in 1952, Mr President, in my maiden speech, should be made to produce food for the people. There is no sense I think in appointing a statistician and placing him in the division and giving him the beautiful name of an Agricultural Assistant; he spends most of the month in a state of inactivity and at the end of the month runs into the local markets, collects figures, builds up a tower of statistics and sends them up to the headquarters and the next three weeks he goes back to sleep. There are no conferences, no direct contact with the farmers to advise them, to assist them in their everyday life to develop their system of rural farming. Something should be done, Mr President, to bring the experimentation and the



discoveries in the field of agriculture to bear directly with the farmers in a very intensive way. I want to say something, Mr President, about how to raise revenue in the Region. If this Government urges the Eastern Regional Production Development Board to extend the boat-building industry in Opofo to include the building of steamers of considerable size, they will attract people into the Region from the Gold Coast, Sierra Leone, etc., to patronise the boat-building industry and that should bring more money to the Region.

The palm oil industry as painted by the Financial Secretary shows an interesting and impressive picture but behind the scenes there is something sinister and wrong with the produce inspection side of it. I refer to the system by which the palm produce is graded. The officers, it is alleged, demand tips and dashes and all sorts of things and they then pass as better more inferior quality oil for those who have tipped them. I hope the Ministers will fix their attention on the produce inspection aspect of the palm oil industry.

Mr President, I wish to state here and now in plain terms that the people of Ogoja, Calabar and Rivers Provinces are determined to have a separate Region, with legislative, and executive machineries and a House of Chiefs by 1956—and these at all costs, Mr President, I repeat, at all costs; we are working towards that goal and we shall proceed with all our resources towards that goal. We shall require the co-operation of our genuine friends in this honourable House and I know we have lots of them and during that time I hope that a lot of our friends will commend the cause which is very dear to the hearts of the peoples which constitute the minority groups of this Region. The example which has been shown to the Cameroons, Mr President, by the majority groups of the Eastern Region is an eye-opener to the minority groups of this Region. Men who have denounced national leadership in order to battle for prominence in clans and the tribes of the East have taught us a lesson; we shall never trust them, we shall fight because they have agreed by common consent to divide Nigeria into three and if into three why not into any other number?

The Regional policy on education; the needs of most divisions in the East like Opofo, Eket, Abakaliki and Obubra—is secondary schools. The sooner a bold and progressive policy for the establishment of secondary schools in the divisions is put forward and put into practice, the better it will be for the development and advancement of education in Opofo and other divisions seriously needing educational facilities. I can see that opportunism, nepotism, tribalism and all other vicious “isms” are once again trying to rear their ugly heads in the Eastern Legislature because any political organisation that delights in rewarding its good boys with public offices is heading for disaster. We shall support any progressive policy that the Government Party puts forward. But any step not in the best interests of the people of this Region, shall be vigorously opposed. A lot has been said, Mr President, about the Police Force. I think it is the feeling of all Members of this House that there is something seriously wrong with the Police Force of this country. A probe is the solution; a thorough investigation. The



Police are not helpful—they are very few who are helpful to the people, to protect their lives and property. There have been serious cases of official corruption, negligence of duty and all sorts of vices connected with the Police. In fact, the Police Force, Mr President, is supposed to be the protector of the people's property and the people's lives. Many members of the Police Force expect bribes even when life is involved; there is something seriously wrong and it must be probed by the Authorities without delay.

The wage policy of the workers of the Eastern Region is deplorable. In a country where idleness sits at banquet and industry wears rags; where virtue receives the lash, and there is no true value or spiritual values or true standards of morality something must be done, Mr President, to teach not only by legislation against these vices but by going out and showing examples in our own lives; to educate the people to the true and value of humanity and service.

Local industries should be extended; and the facilities for development extended beyond Okigwi and Enugu. Nothing or next to nothing is done in my division. If the Minister of Natural Resources would care to investigate he would find there is enough material for development of pottery industry in Opobo Division.

The pace at which the Local Government system is being applied is deplorably slow—nothing should have priority claim on the Local Government Minister than the application of Local Government (not the Government's) "as soon as possible."

In the East the expansion of the co-operative movement for improving rural economy is very essential. I do appreciate the fact that the task ahead is great and I also think that the charm of the Minister of Local Government, whom I personally admire and respect (*Hear! Hear!*) will be able to do something to assist in the expansion of co-operative movements and the quick application of Local Government system throughout the Region.

In 1952, Mr President, I mentioned something about dentistry service in this Region. I drew attention to the fact that the money which was voted then to look after the teeth of the people of Eastern Region was so poor and, I want to reiterate that something should be done to help towards this development: the development of dentistry service in this Region. The question asked by the Member for Ogoja Province about what help the Government is giving to the area to build a cottage hospital and the evasive reply of the Minister is a pointer to what is in store under the new Government for people in neglected areas like Ogoja, Opobo, and Arochuku—and so I hope the Government will improve its policy and deal with questions like these fairly for simple development especially in something affecting the life of the people.

Mr President, I hope that the Opposition Bench, as I have already said, will assist the Government to do that which is right and will oppose the Government when it proposes that which is wrong.



We are trying to teach the people of the Eastern Region that democracy in the true sense of the word must be practised in the Eastern Region as well as in Nigeria as a whole.

With these remarks Mr President, I oppose the Appropriation Bill.

**Mr F. E. Ikpeme (Calabar Division):**

Mr President, I rise to oppose the Appropriation Bill presented to this honourable House by the Financial Secretary.

Sir, in doing so, I do not oppose it merely because I am on the Opposition Bench but I feel that as a statesman and Member of this honourable House I have every right to be sincere to my conscience.

Judging from the Financial Secretary's Report we can quite well see that things are not quite well with the Region. Sir, with your permission I shall refer to the Financial Secretary's Budget Speech for a little revelation:

"Now the sound attitude to adopt in a situation such as the above, the attitude which a sensible individual would adopt with regard to his personal affairs in similar circumstances is firstly to consider whether the level of expenditure can be reduced, and if this is rejected, to consider how the revenue can be increased to enable the Region to pay its way and develop its services when the brief two-year period of special financial assistance comes to an end."

Like a very good father he consoles us somehow but everybody admits there is some fear somewhere. He knows quite well that we are not financially strong and on that point I rise up to suggest to this honourable House certain things we should do as the eyes of the people so that we can be strong as a Region.

It is a pity, unfortunately, that while the Financial Secretary has warned us in his Budget Speech—the Appropriation Bill—the Government pays little or no attention to that warning; I mean to infer that it is unsound argument or rather it is a very bad philosophy if we should believe, that while milk is good for our health we should not care for the cows that provide our milk.

I do not see why rural areas should not first of all be considered and protected since we depend for our wealth on the rural areas. It has always been said here in this honourable House that about 95 per cent of the honourable Members in this House come from the rural areas, whether they now live in municipality or urban city. Sir, I am representing Calabar Township in this House. I believe that it will be a disgrace and embarrassment for me when I get back to Calabar to tell my constituency about the progress of Calabar Township, when I attach no importance to the economic and financial resources of that Calabar Township. Everybody admits that the wealth of Calabar comes from the rural area, and if we do not protect the interests of rural areas I believe that the hygiene that we teach or whatever the doctors tell us about, will fail, since drinking water in such places is generally bad, and food not handled or prepared according to scientific or hygienic methods. Therefore, Mr President, I am suggesting in



the interests of my constituency that certain things should be done for Calabar Township through the development of its rural areas.

Mr President, I strongly maintain like one writer that "the sole of all improvements is the improvement of the soul"—if Calabar Township is to benefit as I have already said, she can enjoy such benefits best only through the improvement and development of her rural areas. Mr President, I am asking this honourable House and the Government for that matter, to try to provide better roads and bridges on Akpabuyo, Ikang and Mamfe roads. The importance of these roads cannot be over emphasised. I am asking also, Mr President, that health and educational facilities should be extended to the rural areas of Okoyong, Odot, Kwa and Uyanga.

I believe that if we embark on certain schemes like cocoa and new rice cultivation, I think we will not only improve the food supply of Calabar Township but will also help the Region economically and financially. I am asking also, Mr President, that encouragement of co-operative farming and industrial enterprises should be undertaken in these rural areas. I further ask—even if it does not fall within the jurisdiction of our Regional Government—that this honourable House should implore the Central Government to improve the port of Calabar for export and import of produce and goods.

While I never thought of suggesting possible ways to raise money to solve these problems it is quite clear from the Estimates that such services could have been done if the codified grants had been left unabolished and the special grants to Local Government Bodies not reduced.

Mr President, while I oppose the Bill, I hope this honourable House will take into consideration that whenever a Bill is bad it does not matter whether a Member is on this side of the Bench or the other, whatever we do, we must do in the interests of this Region, and therefore I oppose the Bill.

**Chief Nyong Essien (Uyo Division):**

Mr President, I rise to associate myself with my honourable Colleagues in the observations made by them on the motion so ably moved by honourable the Financial Secretary on the Budget of this Region. In the first place, I have to congratulate the honourable the Financial Secretary for his success in producing and presenting to this House the Budget, and particularly, for his ability to balance it.

Before I refer to any item in the Estimates, a copy of which has been laid on the table of this honourable House, I present to you, Sir, greetings from my constituency, and extend the same, by your permission, to all the honourable Members of this House.

This House, Sir, is a centre of the life and the strength of this Region. For that reason, I want to refer to the speech delivered by your predecessor, then His Honour the Chief Commissioner, Eastern Provinces, Commander J. G. Pyke-Nott, C.M.G., R.N., on 6th December, 1950, to the honourable Members of this House who preceded the last group of the Members who were the successors referred to in that speech.



I refer to the last paragraph of that speech which reads as follows:—

“Gentlemen, I have indicated to you that we are almost certainly attending the last Budget Session of this House as at present constituted, and consequently, before bringing this Speech to a close, I should like to pay the highest possible tribute to all the Members. As wardens of the public interests and welfare, as champions of progress, and as watchdogs of the public purse, you have set a standard which has brought fame to the Eastern Region, and, which will remain as an inspiration to your successors.”

In that speech, Mr President, those Members of this House were awarded such titles, namely:

- (a) Wardens of the public interests and welfare,
- (b) champions of progress, and
- (c) watchdogs of the public purse.

Those, Sir, were the titles won by those Members of this House for their faithful and meritorious services to this Region. It is up to us now as a bounden duty to emulate those “gentlemen.”

Another speech was delivered by the same President of this House, who was then known as His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, on the occasion of opening this House on 5th January, 1952, to the Members whose seats we are now occupying. That speech, Sir, served not only as a lesson and encouragement, but also as a warning to those Members of the old House which was dissolved on 6th May, 1953. The speech reads as follows:

“ . . . In welcoming honourable Members to this House, it would not, I think, be inappropriate on my part, as the President, to make some reference to the traditions of the House which have been built up over the past few years, and which were most jealously guarded by the small band of our predecessors who had the distinction and honour of sitting where we are now. The tradition which deserves the greatest prominence is the one which governed the manner in which the proceedings of the House were conducted. This tradition was founded by the comportment of Members in the last House, and I believe the seven honourable Members of this House, who were numbered amongst our predecessors, will bear me out when I describe it as one of alertness coupled with dignity, and which in turn was characterised especially by the virtues of fairness, courtesy and friendliness.

I feel sure that honourable Members will wish this tradition to be preserved in order that we may be able to develop and sustain our pride in this House and pass it on in due course as a heritage to our successors.”

Mr President, we who have the honour of meeting here now in this House today are the “successors” referred to in that never-to-be-forgotten speech which, as a factual statement, is saturated with truth. Therefore, Sir, it is incumbent upon us, as such “successors,” to imbibe the virtues contained in that speech by maintaining and preserving so invaluable a tradition which is a sacred trust in our keeping, and our heritage indeed.



Mr President, in the Budget Session of this House, which was held on 12th February, 1952, the same President delivered another speech, a section in the penultimate paragraph of which reads:

"Honourable Members, as I have already said, the Eastern Region ship is financially seaworthy. There may not be a great deal of bullion in her hold as she leaves port on her maiden voyage; but she is a fine speedy craft with a large spread of sail and she is manned by a first-rate crew. It behoves us as the crew to take full advantage of the winds and tides and to sail her free and fair in open waters and in safety to her next port of call. Let the watchwords of her 'look-outs' be 'The Unity of Nigeria, the progress of the Eastern Region, and first and foremost, and all the time, the welfare of the people.'"

Mr President, in considering and realising the weighty truths and charge contained in the speeches of that once father of this Eastern Region, Commander Sir James Pyke-Nott, Kt., C.M.G., R.N., I do not entertain in my mind the least shadow of doubt of the fact that that great British Colonial Administrator, that modern Wilberforce, did succeed mysteriously to immortalise his personality and his noble services to this Region.

Mr President, I was in this House for about a period of ten years and in the Legislative Council of Nigeria. (*Hear! Hear!*). In his speeches His Honour the former Lieutenant-Governor advised us to maintain the traditions of this House. We are here not only to maintain the traditions of this House, but also to serve as reliable and honest crews of the ship of this Region. It is our bounden duty, Sir, to maintain the unity of Nigeria and the prosperity and the general welfare of the people. It is for us to win the titles which the honourable the former father of this Region gave us, which are—Wardens of public interest and welfare; champions of Eastern Nigerian progress; watchdogs of the public purse. I say, Sir, that we are here to answer and claim all these titles, otherwise we fail and our Region fails. The N.C.N.C. Party, of which I am proud to be member and which forms this Government, is quite prepared with all these titles to man the ship of this Region to a safety shore. We are made up of very strong pillars. Bacon says:—

"Men in great places are thrice servants; servants of the State, servants of fame and servants of business"

with which statement Milton agreed when he said:—

"Whosoever in a state knows how wisely to form the manners of men, and to rule them at home and abroad with excellent institutes, him in the first place above all others I should esteem worthy of all honour."

Whomsoever that cap fits, let him wear it.

Mr President, Madam and Gentlemen, I now look to an item in the estimates of this House, and that item has got provision made for it of £638,700, that is the Police Department. The Police Department, Sir. For ten years now I have been taking interest in the police, because I know the police to be the eye of the law, the hand of the



law and the foot of the law. I championed for them to enjoy amenities in appointment, in salary, in promotion and in housing, as well as in other remunerative aspects of the service. Nevertheless, I do not close my eyes when the police—as a cat, is set to watch and keep the mice away from consuming bread, cake and cheese; instead of doing that duty, the cat hid itself in one corner and turned itself into a mighty mouse, and consumed all the bread, all the cake and all the cheese. (*Laughter*).

Mr President, I support the honourable Member for Enyong Division in his views. In my time, Sir, we were advised not to mention Members by name. The old has been rung out, ring in the new. So we are here to learn the full parliamentary procedure of the House of Commons.

Mr President, serious crimes have been committed by this department, serious offences have been committed to the detriment of the public, who pays them; to the detriment of justice, the justice of humanity. I say British justice, because we are still under the Union Jack. That department has to be looked into—seriously. First of all, I say that the primary duty of that department is protection of life and property, and prevention of crime. But instead of that duty being done, we find that our property and our lives are in jeopardy in the hands of those who have got the trust and confidence of this Region. They have committed abuse of and betrayed our confidence. Therefore, Sir, that department of my pride, should be very closely supervised for the sake of public welfare which is the supreme law.

Another weakness of that department will be found in the investigation of crimes. When a report is made to the office of that department the proper procedure should be to take evidence or statement of the complainant after whom, his witnesses should be called upon to confirm the complaint before the accused or suspect should be called upon to answer questions. But instead of that the moment a report is made, the suspect is sent for at once and when the suspect comes after sometime, he becomes wiser than Solomon, especially where property or human life is in danger, as was in the case of the late Apalara in Lagos. Mr President, the law demands that human life, the most valuable property, must be protected by the police at all costs.

Another weakness is prosecution in the Magistrates' Court by policemen. Policemen as they are should not be made prosecutors of criminals or offenders in the Magistrates' Court. The Magistrates' Court is not a parade ground where drill is. There should be a properly qualified prosecutor appointed and engaged in the Magistrates' Courts of this Region, so that administration of justice may be controlled directly, and the course of justice may run straight and smoothly for the safety of the lives of the people of this Region, and for maintenance of order and peace.

I know what should be the solution of this department. The Police in Britain is known as the friend of the public, and I met them in 1947 and I loved them. It is not their long trousers nor their boots that



make them what they are, but the right kind of education that make them what they are. Our policemen should be thoroughly educated. Now we have Ministers in the persons of Nigerians—not that our expatriate officials or Heads of Departments fail in their duty, but it is a native adage which says: “*Oboho mfem itukho owo edem isim isin*,” which in English means that “It is natural that a stranger cannot, in his dealing with his host, give complete satisfaction to the host.” It is now the duty of Ministers to co-operate and cause the right kind of education to be given to our policemen.

Mr President, I know that this is the key to the weakness of that department. When the reins of the Government, the whole rein of the Government of the Eastern Nigeria, will be in the hands of indigenous natives, the Nigerian Police will know themselves and because I do know their responsibilities better, because it is certain that but for the fact that Britishers rule Britain, as a matter of fact, the Police in Britain would not be the friends of the public. So I know we have the key. It will be for us when we have the reins of Government in our hands to employ new police and give them proper training. We know the kind of education we should give to our people so that our Police in their department might constitute custodians of Nigerian law, and friends of Nigerian public.

I feel proud, Sir, and I feel very grateful that at this stage of our development, Britain has succeeded in showing Nigeria, yea, Eastern Nigeria, the light and we are now beginning to find the way. The Government is now beginning to come into our hands and we are very, very grateful that Britain has succeeded in educating us. I do not believe in flattery, for a flatterer is a liar. We have imbibed from the sources of British administration and have successfully begun to answer the words of the Lord's command, “Son of Man—Stand up on thy feet and I will speak to thee! Loose him and let him go.” We have now begun to stand up on our feet, and I am very grateful, Sir, that we have been educated by Britain to be free and breathe the air of freedom on our dear fatherland.

The next point which I have to touch upon is education. Education, Sir, is a peg on which hangs all the other professions, all the other trades, all the other businesses in human walk of life and unless the right kind of education is given to our people it means that our progress and development will be very, very poor. The best part of education is not mere intellectual skill, but consists rather in broadening the outlook by the life which consists in a finer sense of responsibility. It consists in a keener sympathy with the minds of others; it consists in readiness to sacrifice selfish interests to the public service. It is our bounden duty, Mr President, in this work we are doing today, to be so educated so that we as a Government new in our land may be able to lead the ship of Nigeria, yea, Eastern Nigeria, to a shore that is of perfect safety.

The right kind of education, Sir, consists in deepened insight into duty. Duty! Duty must be! That rule applies to everyone, and painful though that duty may be, to run away from our duty is to be



condemned. I know we can rely upon the Government, to which I belong, that with the man-power we have, with the strength we have, we shall be able to lead this ship to safety.

And I can assure you, Sir, that we as a Government will not so much succeed to do that, if the Opposition on the other side is a weak Opposition. (*Interruption*). It is a strong Opposition that makes a strong and successful Government. We wish that the Opposition of this House should be a very strong one, to answer that name "Opposition," not to answer to the definition of a name by Burke, but to that of the Bible: "As his name is so is he." We call upon the Opposition to oppose all in their power, so that we in this Government may work to succeed, and do better work. (*Hear! Hear!*). Here in this House we may man the ship of Nigeria, yea of Eastern Nigeria to a successful shore and to our prosperity.

Mr President, I feel, Sir, that the interests of the rural areas which has already been mentioned, should be well cared for, especially by the honourable the Minister of Education. Every section of the community that is backward needs education. It is said that no chain is stronger than the weakest link. So if any village in this Region is weak in Education, the whole Region is weak, because what affects one affects all. I am therefore appealing to the honourable the Minister of Education to extend his visits to all the villages in rural areas, and cause the right kind of primary education to be given to all the villages. Youths, children as well as adults need education. If he succeeds in educating rural areas, urban areas will take care of themselves. Take care of the pence, and the pounds will take care of themselves.

On this Head, Sir, I have one section of that department to attack and expose. That is the section known as Students' Advisory Committee. I suggest, Sir, that that section of Education Department be scrapped. If not, let us here in the Eastern Region form our own Students' Advisory Committee. I have a case in my hand now, Sir, where a student presented herself to this Committee for interview and was rejected—a student who has been well-qualified in education; she holds a letter of recommendation from the Church of Scotland Mission. She holds a very reliable Nigerian School Leaving Certificate. She is a qualified nurse and midwife. Her father works in a District Office, and when the District Officer asked him, he produced his bank cheque and other bank books. She is a very healthy girl, healthy physically, intellectually and morally. This student, Sir, was called by that Committee for interview. With all her qualifications, she was not allowed to pass. She also has in possession a letter of admission to a Hospital in England for further training and employment. With a higher qualification she would have returned to this Region and give good service, but she was turned away. A letter from the Secretary of the Committee reads:

"I am directed to refer to your interview before the Students' Advisory Committee and to inform you with regret that the Committee were unable to recommend your application for nursing and training in the United Kingdom."



Why? What was her disqualification? It is not stated. In the interests of our youths of both sexes, we have to form an Advisory Committee for this Region, if we find it is necessary. Even then such a Committee should have no control over an independent student whose parents or guardians are well qualified in finance as well as otherwise. That Committee has no right to interfere with the liberty of that student, especially when she has got a letter of admission, qualifications and finance.

**The President:**

The honourable Member has three minutes more.

**Chief Nyong Essien:**

Mr President, I am quite satisfied that I have been able to ventilate so much on education. We know, everyone of us knows. Let the way be open for those who wish to go overseas to qualify themselves for better service for this Region. So much and so far I support the Appropriation Bill. (*Cheers*).

**Mr D. A. Nnaji (Udi Division):**

Mr President, before speaking on the principle of the Appropriation Bill before this House, I must first heartily congratulate the N.C.N.C. which has made it possible for the atmosphere of this House to be what it is today. About this time last year, Mr President, the atmosphere was charged with quarrelling and struggle for power. It was a struggle between the Executive and the Legislature and fortunately the Legislature ultimately prevailed. We of the N.C.N.C. at that time were trying to teach the Executive Council Members parliamentary democracy, and we insisted that a lesson must be learnt not only by the people of the Eastern Region but by the people of the whole country. At that time it was known as the Eastern crisis. Now we have no more Eastern crisis.

I am happy that the honourable the Minister of Local Government, that tall tree of Africa as he is popularly known, the international figure, the embodiment of freedom and the embodiment of progress in this country, is now in this House. (*Hear! Hear!*). Last year, Sir, somebody was looking up the gallery and saying, "Look at the man from the West coming to dictate what should be the policy of this Region." This man is now without while that man from the West is now within.

Mr President, I am also happy that another international figure, the honourable the Minister of Works, Mazi Mbonu Ojike, known as "boycott the boycottables" is now in the House. Once these two honourable Ministers are here why should people be afraid. They know how we can get money to run the Eastern Region. Their presence here is even more than money.

Mr President, I cannot proceed to talk about the Appropriation Bill without referring to the honourable lady Member of this House in the person of Mrs Margaret Ekpo. Her appointment as a Special Member is a glory to the women of the Eastern Region, and I hope that the people not only of this Region but also of the other parts of



Nigeria are proud of her not because she has entered the House but because of her past activities in the interest of this country,

There is one significant feature of the House now and that is, that Sir Clement Pless, the Lieutenant-Governor of the Eastern Region who was both the President of this House and at the same time the Lieutenant-Governor of the Region has been relieved of his dual responsibilities. This is because of the Eastern crisis. That crisis has brought many good changes to the Region and to Nigeria as a whole. Last year, he was acting as the President and also the Lieutenant-Governor of the Eastern Region. I am happy that that position has been changed.

There is one other important thing which I wish to mention and that is, that the N.C.N.C. has recognised the Opposition—the first of its kind in Nigeria. In the Western Region there is a strong Opposition, stronger than what is called Opposition here, but nobody thought it fit to give Official recognition to it. The Opposition here is recognised not only in name but also in remuneration. I was surprised when I heard the Leader of the Opposition say this morning that his own remuneration should be cut. I wonder why he wanted money at all. He was suggesting that all the Members here should have £100 per annum as their allowances. I was listening to hear him say that he would not like to have anything, much more having an addition of £250.

**Mr Ikoku, O.B.E.:**

Mr President, point of order—the gentleman is both incorrect in citing the speakers and also is guilty of anticipation.

**The President:**

I think the honourable Member will go on with the main part of his speech in relation to the Appropriation Bill.

**Mr D. A. Nnaji:**

Mr President, if the Acting Leader of the Opposition was allowed the latitude of talking about the salaries and allowances of the Members during his speech in the morning I think it will be an injustice if I am not allowed the same latitude.

**The President:**

I have given my ruling.

**Mr D. A. Nnaji:**

Thank you, Mr President.

I am only yet making observations before going to the principle of the Bill. I wish to refer again to one of the features of this House, Mr President, and that is that this time I have seen that the Permanent Secretaries to the different Ministries are here in this House unlike the last year when the "Nipper" Government was in power. At that time, Mr President, the Ministers used to stand up when these Secretaries, who are here now, entered their offices. That was a disgrace to the Region and that is why we had to remove them. But this time now they are very near, and this shows that they are under our Ministers of State. They are the servants of the people; so that now the State Ministers can send them on errands.



Coming to the question of the economic position of this Region, Mr President, I am glad to observe that one of the greatest liabilities of the Region has been removed. I have in mind the Trust Territory of the Cameroons. I wish that, as this liability has been removed, the Ministers or the Government would try to recall as soon as possible the sum of £130,000 which that Territory is owing to this Region. That will also add to our revenue.

I come back to the Financial Secretary's Speech. Many people from the Opposition side criticised the Financial Secretary. They said that his speech was not full, but they forgot that he made it clear that this is not the true Budget being presented before this House by the new Government, that the full Budget will be presented during the next sitting of the House. I wonder whether they read and digested properly the speech of the Financial Secretary. I am glad that the Financial Secretary's Speech has revealed that the economic picture of the Eastern Region is not as gloomy as many people think it. He has revealed that for beginning the new Constitution the Eastern Region is going to start with nothing less than three million pounds. Well, this is a good beginning. If we have three million pounds to start with plus many other sources of revenue which the new Government is going to devise I do not think that the picture is as gloomy as people think it.

Turning to the sources of revenue, I have to suggest the following without wasting time. I have observed that most of the revenues we get in the Region are from water supplies and houses—that is Government property. If the Government will see that all the important parts of the Region are supplied in the first instance with pipe-borne water and the people are charged accordingly I think more revenue will accrue.

Looking at the Estimates one sees that Senior Service quarters will fetch about £50,000 and the Junior Service quarters about £10,000. I think that if the building of quarters for not only the Senior Service civil servants but also for all the Junior Civil servants including labourers is carried out, the Government will be able to raise some substantial sum of money. It is known that by allowing the Junior Civil servants to live in houses built by other people they not only throw away what would have been the revenue of the Region but also become bankrupt, and also their families suffer. If you build, say, thatch roof houses for the labourers they would be happy to pay a reasonable kind of rent charged them and that will come to the Government instead of allowing them to go to the landlords to pay, say, £2 when they earn only about £2 10s every month. If they are charged accordingly that will bring revenue to the Region.

Another thing is that all the departments that bring revenue to the Region should be expanded. I have in mind such departments as the Printing Department. The Printing Department has been bringing much money to the Region, but unfortunately, it is under-staffed and is not well expanded, so that with only a few people working there some money is being lost and their energy is going out in vain.



Another place is the Public Relations Department. We have one newspaper called the *Eastern Outlook and the Cameroons Star*, which will soon be known as the *Eastern Outlook* without Cameroons. That place yields money, too. But there is one thing that is impeding the progress of that paper and that is that the Civil Secretary of the Eastern Region dictates the policy of the paper, which is wrong. In this connection I would suggest that a proper Board of Management which will be responsible for the policy of the paper in order to attract more readers and not to publish certain things which will suit the Government only, be set up and take over the management and control of that paper so that we get more revenue from it.

Mr President, many people have been talking about industrialisation. There are many things in this country. There are many industries to be developed or started. I said here last time that there is a salt lake in Uburu in Afikpo Division. Before the advent of the white man that salt lake used to serve nearly all the people of the Eastern Region. What is required there is only refinery. If the Government improves the position of that salt lake I think we shall have to cut away imported salt. The people of the Eastern Region can have their salt from that lake.

Recently iron was found in Nsukka Division. I wonder why we should not start iron industry in this country.

I learn also from one distinguished son of Africa, known as Professor Nwankwo Chukwuemeka, that the sands in the river at Aba can be used in manufacturing glass. All these are mineral resources which can be developed for the revenue earning of this Region.

We have coal here. Somebody told me that if we can get some hard stones and coal and burn them properly what we will need to produce steel iron is manganese from the Gold Coast.

We have cement in Abakaliki Division. The extent of that cement is not yet known according to the reply given by, I think, the Minister of Works to a question by the honourable P. A. Onwe. Yet people continue to talk that the Eastern Region is poor. How long are we to wait to start these industries.

We can start tile industry. Instead of buying corrugated iron sheets we can use them in building our houses. I think that houses built with tiles are better than those built with corrugated iron sheets. We have the clay for it in Ndeaboh of Awgu Division. I remember the Railway Station at Enugu. The chalking of the bricks that were used in constructing that house in 1921 was made with lime from Emene side. If we can use lime for chalking bricks I wonder why we should still continue to buy cement from overseas when we have the materials here. These are all sources of revenue. If these industries are started and they develop, I think that they will yield much more money to this Region.

The other time the honourable B. C. Okwu was talking about gin. Yes, there is one kind of gin known as illicit gin—illicit because we are under a Colonial Power. That is why it is illicit. Illicit gun-



powder! During the war no gunpowder could be had in this country. People invented the manufacturing by themselves. I wonder why such people should not be licensed and encouraged to teach those who might not have known that certain things put together would make gunpowder. But we still continue to call such people those manufacturing illicit gunpowder.

I happened to be in a function by a policeman. That party was organised by a policeman. When I got there I found that most of the gin he produced was illicit. (*Laughter*). Nobody queried him because he is a policeman, but had he been to another man's function and found illicit gin that man would have been arrested for taking illicit gin, and I am made to understand that certain Europeans in this country prefer what is termed illicit gin. But is it because they are locally manufactured that they are termed illicit gin? I hope that the new Government will try to encourage those who through their own ingenuity are able to manufacture gin in this country and gunpowder.

I happened to go to the Commissioner of Police the other day. Unfortunately I met his Deputy, Mr Proud. I went to find out why the people of the Eastern Region are being arrested for being able to manufacture guns—cap guns. He said that they had no licence and nobody would be permitted to manufacture cap guns, and that there were four hundred cases of those arrested for manufacturing cap guns. He revealed also that before one could even repair cap guns that person should be licensed. But people used to say, you are going to rule yourself can you manufacture guns? Can you manufacture aeroplanes? Can you do this or that? But our own people who have been able to learn it are being prevented. I think that instead of preventing these people they should be encouraged by charging them reasonable licence fees. Time has come when we shall not need all these things from abroad. And unless we try to encourage those who have learned them I think we shall continue to suffer.

Another source of revenue which I would suggest is the bridging of all important streams or rivers in this Region. There are so many people, so many rural villagers, who have different kinds of crops to sell but because they have no road and when they have those roads, the roads are termed Native Administration and anybody driving in a car seeing Native Administration road tends to suspect that that road is inferior and will be very cautious lest he or she may fall into a river.

I think the best thing to do is for the Minister of Works to tour round different parts of the Region. In the morning he said, of course that he travelled through the road mentioned by the honourable Dr S. E. Imoke but I think when he was touring as one of the delegates of the N.C.N.C. he never touched that end at all. I am making it clear to him that he has never gone beyond Agbani.

**The Minister of Works:**

I have.



**Mr D. A. Nnaji:**

If he has been beyond Agbani, Mr President, he would have known that the people of Ezza inside and the people of Okposi, the people of Izzi, and the people of Onicha Ebie in Afikpo Division have no way of bringing out their produce to the outside world, and that if that road is taken over these people will be able to interchange their farm products with the other side of the Region. And some of our people travelling from here to Uburu usually carry money. There is one big river there known as Esu. When the people who have canoe there know that somebody has sufficient amount of money, if that man enters into their canoe they will shake the canoe like this and the man drops inside. They then take his money and say that Esu has swept away the man. I do not think the Minister of Works has been there, but if he still insists that he has been there let him describe Esu River on the road.

Sir, I would add something to what honourable V. K. Onyeri said about the Port Harcourt Wharf. I do not think that only Port Harcourt Wharf is the wharf existing in the Eastern Region. There is a wharf at Oron, there is another one at Opobo, there is another one also at Calabar. All these should be developed. They are within the Region. If they are properly developed then those steamers or ships coming only to Port Harcourt could go there and anchor, but because these ports are left as they have been since about eighteen something, then when any ship comes to the Eastern Region it will go to Port Harcourt, and failing to anchor, it will go back to Lagos, thus we are losing the revenue which would otherwise accrue to this Region. So I think that the Minister responsible will try to investigate the matter.

There is another thing. I refer to Crown Lands. I have observed that in places like Enugu, missionaries own more than three-quarters of the habitable land. I think time has come now to stop this because the acquisition of the big areas of land by the missionaries has not only deprived some people—some Africans—of the privileges they would have enjoyed by establishing their own schools or missions there but has also reduced the revenue, and time has come when the payment of nominal rent of one shilling or two shillings and sixpence at the most, per annum, should be reviewed so that people could pay according to the expanse of the land they own. If you look at the Estimates, Crown Lands alone will bring to this Region a sum of £60,000. But how are we to get the required sum of money if the missionaries are to acquire all the lands which would have been given to people? The same remarks apply to foreign contractors. So, I think that the acquisition of land should be reviewed so that proper distribution of land to both non-missionaries and missionaries can be equitably done.

Lastly, Sir, there is one thing everybody appears to refer to, and that is the taxation of employed girls. I endorse the suggestion by the honourable B. C. Okwu, that girls employed whether by corporations, whether by the Government, whether by the missionaries, all should pay taxes . . . (*Interruptions*).

Mr President, I support the Bill.



**Dr S. E. Imoke (Afikpo Division):**

Mr President, I would like to start by thanking the last speaker, the honourable Member representing Agbani for the particular interest he has taken in my question concerning the road which is common to both of us, the Agbani-Afikpo road. I would also like to refer, Mr President, to a speech from the Opposition Bench by the honourable Member for Opoobo this morning. I want to take this opportunity to warn that it is the height of political transgression and insult for Members to come to this House and make statements on vital subjects such as that of carving a separate state for a province or people which they do not represent, (*Hear! Hear!*) particularly, when they have not been briefed to do so. I wish, in future, Members would confine themselves to their constituencies. (*Hear! Hear!*). I would, in that connection, Mr President, like to refer to releases in the Press where a few disgruntled individuals, including one-time Ministers of State, try to disseminate bad blood in the name of the rights of minority which rights they even abuse by not consulting the people of the minority group before taking decisions affecting their destiny. I would, therefore, warn all concerned that the people of Ogoja realise well enough that the problems confronting them, when, and if it is decided that this Region should be broken up into states are great and we shall take care of them, by God's grace, when the time comes.

We have come, this time, determined not to allow ourselves to be used as tools for precipitating or gingering up crises, so don't try to woo us.

Mr President, now coming to the Appropriation Bill and the Speech from the Throne, it is realised that the Bill which the Financial Secretary is seeking this House to pass is not a normal one, having been drawn under circumstances—extraneous circumstances—and controlled by changing events of history. Yet, I will attempt, in supporting it, to make a few general remarks which might help to guide the Government.

Starting with Government policy as portrayed in the Speech from the Throne, I would like to begin with education, which, in my opinion, should receive priority attention in this Region. Government has made a very encouraging statement in its policy about providing at least one secondary school for each division. I should have expected Government would also make a clear statement regarding primary schools and free universal primary education. Some years gone by, it was Government policy to provide at least one strong Government School for each division. Today, many of these schools have been closed down or handed over to Voluntary Agencies, remaining only a few which may be closed or handed over any day. I would like Government to make a statement about Government schools in this Region. If education is a vital state responsibility, as I hope it is, why should Government shirk that responsibility by turning over all Government Schools to missionaries. I do not quarrel with Voluntary Agencies helping in areas where they are best needed as missionaries, but I would have liked to see a Government Primary School in all divisions as feeders to the proposed secondary schools.



I had expected a statement on education rates which most Local Government bodies and Native Authorities have now adopted to foster free primary education.

I had expected a statement on the healthy competition on this which is now going on particularly in my province, Ogoja, and a categorical statement from Government that Government would give it its blessing and full support and would not tolerate any obstacle in the way of these councils either by the people or by the Administration, particularly as Government does not appear to be ready to undertake the responsibility of primary education. It appears it is the inclination of Government and the Administration to regard the collection of all rates, including education rates, as the concern of Native Authorities, maintaining that Government Administration is only concerned with capitation tax.

That, of course, may be the ideal practice in other countries where Local Government has been practised for many years, but here there is bound to be untold misery if that is allowed to go on at this transitional stage. Unless the Administration or Central Government concerns itself directly with it, at least by using the Police where necessary, as soon as public peace and tranquility is threatened, then I am afraid, there is bound to be riots upon riots.

I would like to cite the case of Abakaliki Division where at least three souls have been lost as a result of agitation by the women over payment by their men of education rates simply because the co-operation of the Administration and Police was very slow and reluctant in coming.

It is the policy of Government to establish as soon as possible a university in the Eastern Region. This policy is ideal as it will help to produce man-power for all fields of our proposed social, commercial and industrial development. But if a university we must have, let us make sure we don't repeat the half measure policy we were at one time familiar with in this country. I mean my dear, but now, dead college, the Yaba Higher College. It must be a universally recognised university or none at all. Rather let us continue the overseas scholarship system with all the obstacles that may surround it.

Talking about revenue, Mr President, I would like just to add to the stock of ideas already contributed by previous speakers the following suggestions:—

That while we still proceed with agriculture,—palm produce, etc.—as our main source of income, we must not lose sight of the fact that “little drops of water make a mighty ocean.”

Let us first check up on the existing avenues of our revenue. Is the Government sure that it gets 100 per cent return from taxes, especially income tax? Are the people being properly and impartially assessed and are we sure we have no defaulters allowed to go about scot-free every year? How much of the revenue we spend produces results? For example, some speakers have mentioned wastage in



labour. Can we not check on that to save some of the revenue? I would suggest we seek to revise those portions of the Labour Code which give rise to this wastage, for example, where a daily paid labourer cannot be dismissed on a day or two days' notice, but seven days'. Those seven days are usually wasted days as he puts down tools or goes slow as soon as he gets the notice.

Let us improve on existing programmes and avenues so as to increase our revenue. For example, let us forge ahead with Nigerisation of the Civil Service as this will help to reduce expenditure by trimming down expatriation allowances. Let us abolish redundant posts or offices. Let us step up taxes on motor vehicles. I realise it has just been done by the old Government, but the people—motor owners—can still afford it. They are in the privileged classes and should be prepared to bear the greater burden of our revenue than the poor peasants. Let us introduce produce purchase, not, repeat not, sales tax.

I agree that we should make our working class women pay tax and those women who have a clearly defined source of income not dependent on their husbands.

Finally, let us explore new avenues by setting up our own insurance company for motor vehicles, etc. Let us industrialise if we can find the capital. This long talked of cement industry of Nkalagu in Abakaliki Division—it is time that the Government starts on it straightaway, but I would like to strike a note of warning and say that while it is my wish that this industry should be started, I would like the Eastern Regional Government to take full responsibility. I shall be opposed to investments from outside or locally by individuals unless Government is concerned. In other words, I mean I shall be opposed to private enterprise starting this industry. If, after exploiting all our resources, we find that we are still handicapped, then we must face facts and do what most great nations of the world do today, namely raise loans either internally or externally. All our Local Government bodies and Native Authorities are going to look up to us for loans for their major development projects and so I do not see how we can evade raising loans from outside if we are to meet their responsibilities and ours.

Mr President, I would like to say a word about adult suffrage. There is no doubt that adult suffrage is the only guarantee for a cleanly contested election in this country. Apart from that, it is the true fulfilment of basic human rights. The Government should leave no stone unturned to see that it is introduced in the next central election. It will eliminate the mean, corrupt and disgraceful performances which occurred in the last elections practised not only by the common men who were candidates, but also by Ministers of State.

Mr President, I would like to end by saying that today the entire populace of this Region, in fact the whole of the negro race have collectively heaved a deep breath of relief, that after the long and tempestuous waves of political tumult that this Region had to face, she has been able to lay anchor safely ashore, and is now in a position to deliver her goods. That the Leader of Government, having now



descended from the Gallery into this House, the true N.C.N.C. Government has now arrived to be put to the test. That fact cannot now be disputed. But I would like to strike a note of warning for all at this juncture. I hope that honourable Members on the other side of the House will forget self and the past and think of the present and the future of our race now. With a Government led by our honourable Minister of Local Government, all the eyes of the African race are now centred on us, and as such I would like to appeal to all to think seriously of our reputation in whatever we do in or outside this honourable House.

Of course no one should be opposed to jokes or humour and criticisms when they are well meaning, but I certainly abhor references to either party or party personalities that are embarrassing with a view to creating bad blood. It amounts to nothing short of sabotage in our humble efforts to show the world that we are not an inferior race.

Mr President, I beg to support the Appropriation Bill.

**Mr A. O. Chikwendu (Bende Division):**

Mr President, Sir, in rising to speak to the Appropriation Bill, I beg leave to state that although the Eastern Regional Government depends almost practically on the Nigerian Government for her economy, it is commendable that the financial year begins with a surplus of a little over one million pounds. With the introduction of the New Constitution and the granting of a relative fiscal autonomy, the Region will find herself in a better position to order her finances. It will be wise for the Region to develop her independent revenues. The proportion of taxes of the Federal Government under the new dispensation which will accrue to the Region will be surely commensurate with the amount of export from and import to the particular Region. It becomes desirable, therefore, that the marketable products of the Eastern Region should be developed to ensure increased export.

The good work of the Oil Palm Produce Marketing Board is yielding very great results. There is considerable interests in the cultivation of new oil palm plantations by the indigenes of this Region and the quantity and quality of the palm oil produced are on the upward gradient. Encouragement should be given to the cultivation of cocoa in those areas of the Region where the plant thrives, and other cash crops should be grown, particularly groundnut, cashew, banana and coco-nut.

No leader of any people can lead them very wisely without having an insight into the character of the people. The people of this Region are very emulative and given the proper stimulus they will find their way in every field of endeavour. I hardly think that any discussion of the economic policy of this Region will be complete without reference to our educational system.

I think our education based on the old colonial educational system of producing material for the clerical service is poor. It is only a few of our brothers who were privileged to acquire higher education and they pursued mainly the easiest of professions—Law and Medicine. But now we have most of our leaders as men who have gone abroad



and acquired sound sense of values and in whose hands it now falls to evolve the new educational system, I have no doubt that there will be a revolution both in our educational life and in our economic life.

It will be desirable for the Oil Palm Produce Marketing Board to endeavour to secure stability of the price of palm oil in the world market as any meteoric rise in the price abroad or a corresponding fall will be fraught with danger. I have to emphasise the point which most Members have made that it is very desirable for local industries to be established, particularly the processing of palm oil, soap and detergents, including edible fats like margarine, can be undertaken.

The Government policy of encouraging commercial activities should be concretely interpreted. Enterprisers should be assisted to establish trading companies and, with proper safeguards, loans should be made available to them. To this end, I would emphasise that Government should embark upon a policy of vigorous road development since commerce is interdependent with transport and communications. Provided that the cannons of taxation are applied and the people duly consulted Government should impose taxes.

I would like to emphasise on a point raised by a previous Member that the Government should introduce purchase tax. To that end, I will add that all European civil servants including those working in the merchantile houses and missionaries should pay their taxes to the Regional Government.

I agree with those who feel that the time has come when Government should introduce legislation to tax all female workers. Much as we appreciate the good work and the activities of the Eastern Nigerian Produce Development Board, we need more oil mills particularly in Bende Division. It is gratifying that the charge on the Cameroons is being removed. That mineral oil has been discovered in the Region is indeed very welcome news. Government should encourage speedy development. Government should encourage the supply of fertilisers to the agrarian population of this Region since increased yield means increased wealth and the consequent raising of the standard of living. The cement industry project should be resurrected as this will be in accord with the Government policy of encouraging the use of local building materials of durable quality. Government should encourage the exploitation of timber from our forest reserves and the Forest Department should produce a substitute by the cultivation of new plants. The cattle ranch at Obudu should be developed to increase our livestock products and our dairy products. It is high time to establish an institution for research into our herbal remedies with a view to extraction and standardisation, and a department of industrial chemistry should be attached to our proposed university college. Wood pulp industries and paper manufactories should be established in this Region. The Government policy, generally, is good. Let us hope that Government will live up to the people's expectation.

Mr President, I beg leave to support the Appropriation Bill in principle.



**Mr R. U. Umo-Inyang, M.B.E. (Ikot Ekpene Division):**

Mr President, Sir, I rise to speak in opposition to the Appropriation Bill before this honourable House.

I beg to make the following observations on the Bill.

I observe that, for reasons of economy, no provision has been made for general codified grants and that the provision for special grants to Local Government bodies has been reduced by £10,000. In the first place general codified grants in the previous year amounted to £35,000. Taking into account the increased cost of materials, labour and expansion, I would have expected these items to be either doubled or trebled, but instead there is no provision made whatever. I do not consider this a wise economy, but a positive neglect of the rural areas.

Secondly, in the previous year, we had £65,000 provided for the special grants to Local Government bodies but these have now been reduced to £55,000. This also is narrowing down development work in the rural areas under Local Government bodies. As I said earlier in my speech, I would have expected a much larger amount voted under this item.

Sir, I would like to have a say in the matter of Ministers' salaries. In the beginning the salary for each of the Ministers with portfolios was £1,800.

**The President:**

I think we must accept that this is a matter for the Committee of Supply.

*(Interruption).*

**The President:**

Order! Order! We will stick to the motion which is for general discussion of the fiscal, financial and economic policy of the Government.

**Mr R. U. Umo-Inyang, M.B.E.:**

In any case, Mr President, there is an increase of £200 in each case and upon this increase, we have, also, £120 per annum, as entertainment allowance and . . .

**The President:**

The honourable Member will please conform with my ruling.

*(Shame! Shame!).*

**Mr R. U. Umo-Inyang, M.B.E.:**

This, to my mind, is creating unnecessary avenues of expenditure. I do not consider the position of a Minister of State as one of money-making opportunity, but as a position of trust and honour. I would, therefore, suggest that the previous rates of salaries be retained and any increased rates be scrapped. If this were done, a few thousand pounds would be saved to provide more social services.

**The President:**

I must remind the honourable Member that he is dealing with details. There is plenty of opportunity for this in the Supply stage.



**Mr R. U. Umo-Inyang, M.B.E.:**

On the other hand, it will be seen that a greater amount of money will be spent when the number of Ministers is increased as proposed. I wish to warn that we should not spend large sums of money unnecessarily. It is extremely disgraceful to note that the Budget of the Region is balanced by only £5,000. I, personally, will not consider it an achievement if a rich Local Government Council were to balance its Budget by such a sum. I wish, therefore, to warn that our financial position is certainly not sound. A serious step must be taken to improve the position at once or we should not be surprised if within a short time we find the Regional Government running in debt.

I am pleased to note that it is the pleasure of the present Government to give very fair treatment to the civil servants. I would press that the lot of certain Government teachers who are underrated in the scales of salary be improved. Since the general revision of teachers' salaries, those underrated Government teachers have been left out of the scheme. I suggest that they should be paid according to the revised scale of salaries with regard to their qualifications and length of service. In answer to a question on this point in the House of Representatives a year or two ago, it was stated that Government teachers have not been placed on the same scale of salary as their corresponding type of teachers under the Voluntary Agencies for the simple reason that the Government teacher is enjoying a pension scheme. But a Government school teacher is under a very close supervision and very strict discipline and his work is undertaken in accordance with General Orders and the Education Ordinance.

He cannot undertake in accordance with General Orders and the Education Ordinance, any other business to improve his economic position. Whilst the other teacher is free to undertake other business in his spare time.

I know of some Voluntary Agencies teachers who run motor transport and run a very profitable business or trade. When such a teacher retires, he can depend upon his accumulated wealth, which even places him in a better economic position than the one said to be enjoying a pension scheme. Hence, pension or no pension, I consider that it is only just and fair to give teachers of equal qualification and same length of service equal salary.

Furthermore, Sir, I am glad that according to declared policy, a great attention will be paid to Community Development projects. May I quote the relevant passage to refresh honourable Members memories?

"The greatest importance is attached to Community Development projects. By this means it is intended greatly to extend the Community Development efforts in the construction of roads, water supplies, schools, post offices and hospitals."

My division has a fine network of roads, some of them opened up through communal labour and maintained by the County Council. Here I have the honour to remark that Ikot Ekpene has the honour



to be the division into which Local Government was first introduced, and I, the speaker, have the honour to be its first chairman. (*Hear! Hear!*).

Honourable Members in this House might have thought that all was well with this division, whilst certainly it is not. In the rapidly growing township, forming the Urban District, several problems confront us, but our foremost and greatest and immediate need is water supply. We need pipe borne water supply. With regard to this matter, I have to refer you honourable Members to my speech on page 213 to 215 of Eastern House of Assembly Debates, First Session, Volume II. The immediate need painted therein has become more pressing now, and I have to remind this House that Ikot Ekpene Township is becoming a growing centre of learning. For, apart from four full senior primary and three junior primary schools belonging to several Voluntary Agencies, there is also the Convent School of the Holy Child Jesus, providing education in varying stages to girls and women numbering in several hundreds. There is also the Ibibio State College with a large number of students well over 300. In each case the students have got to go to a distance of a mile, or over, to draw water. In that way they waste time and energy which might have been spent for a more useful purpose.

Many centres of population in the rural areas of Otoro Rural District Council, Eastern Ibibio Ikono Rural District Council and Central Anang Rural District Council are far from any water sources. They need wells. An important tributary of the Qua Ibo River divides the Otoro Clan in my division into two. The Otoro people on the western side near the Ngwa boundary find it difficult to cross over to transact business with the people on the eastern side. In Ikot Abia Local Council area the bridge constructed by the old Native Authority has broken down. The river is fairly wide and its current is very swift. The people have no other way of getting in contact with the other people on the opposite banks. Several times in their attempts to cross over by arrangement of planks on the old piles, many have fallen into the stream and lost their lives. On the road through Nto Edino to Mbawsi there are two points where this state of affairs exist

Further north of Nto Edino there is also another old dilapidated bridge near Alacha on the Ngwa boundary which is rendered almost impassable. The people in this area have suffered terribly from trade obstruction owing to the bad condition of the bridge.

These are the sort of things for which provision ought to have been made under "Special Grants to Local Government bodies" as well as "General Codified Grants."

I am glad that the Leader of the Government himself is the Minister of Local Government, and I confidently hope that he will, in the near future visit my area to see for himself the needs of my constituency and then to consider what can be done for the convenience of tax-payers in those rural areas.

I now refer to an honourable Member's speech. Honourable A. G. Umoh gives me the impression that he is in favour of paying a large



sum of money as much as £30 per month to an honest police constable. I am in perfect agreement with his view, but you will agree with me that this class of police constable is hard to find. I turn my attention to the traffic police who make it their duty to be collecting two shillings from each of the general motor transport driver whenever they meet him driving along the public road. Between Ikot Ekpene and Aba is a distance of 24 miles. If the traffic policemen are posted at three different points along the road between Aba and Ikot Ekpene, then from a certain driver of the general passenger lorry they collect a total sum of 6s in that case. I wonder how much money would remain for the workers in the lorry and its owner. This sort of corruption leads to the inflation of rates of motor transport fare, and is not in the best interests of the Region. (*Hear! Hear!*).

I suggest that the Committee set up to probe bribery and corruption will please note this sort of practice and find a way to stop it.

Lastly, I turn my attention to palm produce Sales Tax. Every member of my constituency opposes the Palm Produce Sales Tax vehemently. (*Hear! Hear!*).

They have also given me a mandate to oppose it with equal force. I have never heard of Sales Tax operating in the United Kingdom, but I have heard of purchase tax. I oppose, therefore, most vehemently, any attempt to impose any form of Sales Tax upon my people. (*Cheers*).

Sir, I beg to oppose. (*Laughter*).

**Mr P. O. Ururuka (Aba Division):**

Mr President, Sir, before supporting this Appropriation Bill I have in the first place to thank the Financial Secretary for his ability in preparing the Estimates and in giving us an outline in his Budget Speech of the financial and economic structure of our Region. I am very much touched, in fact, when I think about the unnecessary warning which we have been getting from the other side with regard to what they may call the bad financial position of the Government. In reality I do not think we have any reason to be afraid or to be apprehensive with regard to our economic and financial structure at the moment, knowing quite well that we have some hands that will do everything in order to see that we stand well as far as these things are concerned. But nevertheless, there is no reason to be very complacent knowing quite well that we have so much work ahead and that our plans are very extensive. We must however take the warning which the Financial Secretary has given, when he says that unless adequate measures are taken it will not be quite possible for us to do all that we require to do in order that we may execute all our commitments. He substantiated his point when he said that in this Region probably about £5 million will be our revenue, and that three quarters or £3 million of this will come from the Centre when the new Constitutional arrangements come into force. This is a warning indeed if we think of how the £3 million which will come from the Centre will accrue. It will be seen that the position is a little bit precarious, because any revenue which depends on Import and Export Duties is depending



upon the international trade, which is not a thing one is quite certain of all the time. Nevertheless, we will not lose heart because we will be able to meet up. Chick's Report states that we are badly in need. As our honourable the Minister of Natural Resources has said some time ago, the data and the criteria on which the Chick's Report was based could not be said to be quite correct. So we cannot really say that our financial position is very bad. What we have now to do instead of grumbling over this is to find ways and means of meeting up anything that we are having in mind to do in future, that is to make plans now to meet our commitments.

In doing this, I think it will be necessary for any of us present to stand up and suggest certain things which will be a help in raising our revenue. It will also be necessary for any person who is supporting the Government to help to suggest whatever plan or whatever project the Government will embark upon for the good structure of our economy.

In the first place, this area is known to be an agricultural country. What does this mean? An agricultural country is a region where the products of the area are mainly raw materials and where the people produce only primary products. We cannot allow ourselves to remain in this state. We cannot be an agricultural country alone, because it has been known in other parts of the world, that the two sections of the people—those who are engaged in agriculture and those who are engaged in industry differ in wealth. If we have found out that those who are industrialised have more wealth, then it is reasonable that we should not remain an agricultural country only. We should try as much as possible to industrialise our country as well.

I admit there is no getting away from the fact that the nature of our country permits agriculture in full. So that in speaking about industry I do not in any case desire to say that we have got to leave out agriculture and turn to industry. What I have in mind is this: that instead of merely exporting raw materials to Europe or America or to other parts and by so doing, getting very little for these because prices are dictated to us, we must do those things that are done by those people to whom we send our goods do in order that we may double our revenue from the raw materials and processed or manufactured products. In this way we can raise the standard of our finance or economic structure of this area. When I am talking about this I have in mind certain products that must be seen into. Let us take palm oil. Hitherto we have been depending upon the exporting of palm products in the form of kernels and oil, and getting the little we can for them. Is there any reason at this moment why we cannot process our palm products? It is possible that we can get such things as soap. We can make such things as lubricating oil, and engine oil. There are many other things that we can make from our palm products.

So if it is possible for us in this country having the means at our disposal, to install certain plants, such as the plant which was opened in Lagos by Lady Abayomi recently, a factory which will manufacture



some margarine from our palm products, we can do something of this kind. Then it is certain that in the very near future we will be able to raise our finances and will be able to make our economy quite good.

Leaving this section that is palm produce, I have in mind again something like cocoa. Up to the present some people who I am sure are ill informed in regard to the structure texture of the soil of this area, have said that the soil of this Region is full of acid, and therefore not suitable for the growing of cocoa. But this is not founded on truth. The very fact that wild or unplanted cocoa grow luxuriously is an indication that this Region is rich and that it is capable of producing cocoa to the amount that can be had in the West, or even to such an extent if well cultivated to rival the cocoa that they have in the Gold Coast. (*Hear! Hear!*).

Then if we can establish enough cocoa plantations we should not only be exporting the seeds which will however fetch a very high price, in the world market, but we can also do something out of the seeds. You all do know how dear chocolate and cocoa and other things we make out of cocoa are to the European countries. If we do not only depend on selling to them the seeds and if we process these seeds here, is there any reason why we cannot get money by selling to them such things as chocolates so that we can get more money from them instead of their sending us chocolates made out of our own cocoa and thereby draining as it were, the money sent to us in return?

Another product which I would like to be expanded both in plantations, and in processing is rubber. We in this country are in a tropical Region and you may remember that the wealth of such places like Malaya and other islands in the Eastern Indies depends on rubber plantations and manufacture. If such countries which are in the same category geographically speaking as Nigeria can boast of its wealth on this line, why is it that we ourselves cannot get good revenue from rubber? At the moment very few places have rubber plantations, but here and there we find wild ones growing well. I have every hope that the Government will do its best to see that the rubber plantations are extended because they can yield us some income.

In other goods we have such things as fruit, in the form of bananas, oranges and other citrus fruits. These fruits lie wasted here. They bring a very little revenue. They could be sent away when they are processed or when they are tinned. Then naturally our revenue can be increased in this way. So you can see that my main point is that we should industrialise as well as increase our agricultural products. I quite appreciate that before plans of this nature could materialise, they will necessarily require capital, liquid or otherwise. The Government will I am sure not feel any reluctance in giving money because it is by investing in such things that we are able to get some yield. The economic survey of any Region will not be complete except it includes in that survey something about man-power or labour. In this place, I think I have got to emphasise very much that it is



absolutely important that care must be taken to see that we maintain efficiency in our labour because without labour as I said, nothing at all can be done. How can this efficiency come? Efficiency in our labour can come when our Government tries to make the labour conditions sufficiently attractive. This does not mean that the Government money will be wasted in paying salaries and wages but rather that all things that will contribute to the comfort of the workers will be seen into. As I talk about labour, my attention is not only directed to people who work in the fields or people who work in the offices or other places, but I have in mind too the people who work in the rural areas. Those people are very important because without their products nothing at all can be done. We depend upon the things they produce and it is important that we must try to see that they maintain efficiency and that they have a good number of people doing the work.

But if conditions are properly examined in all these rural areas, you will really find that certain things have to be done in order that we can get all that we want from the people. Say, for instance, in my own area the Aba Division, the number of people working in the rural areas is getting diminished and so is the efficiency getting diminished. Why? Because they are handicapped by so many things. Sometimes in some areas they may not have enough water supply, sometimes you may have sufficient land, but unfortunately you have not the capital to work the land. So that there is nothing for establishing palm plantations, cocoa plantations or any other plantations you can think about, not to talk about the production of yams and cassava. Other things will be very difficult for them to do, in spite of the fact that they have land. So it is here that we have got to do something in order that we may help the development of these areas, not only for their own benefit but also for our own. I am quite confident that our Government has outlined fully everything that will be done to see that rural areas are developed and that every facility is given to them in order to see that improvement is done.

Apart from the conditions already given or the policy that has been enunciated, we are to try as much as possible to help these people to establish their own co-operative or credit or other societies. In these they can put in a little bit of their savings, and can try certain things by their money, which will help them to do their work. It is only by doing this that we can help to develop the areas.

So much for the economic structure of the country. Let me say a little bit about finance, although all that I have said may include to some extent the finance of the plan. In talking about finance, the economists know quite well that the wealth of any country is gauged not so much by the amount of money circulating in the area but by the amount of savings that the area has. What I mean by this is that by transferring money from this country to America or Europe or any other part of the world, we are draining our funds, and as such we are lowering our financial structure. We really know that there are so many ways by which these things can be done. In the first



place, money is very much used for foreign consumer goods. Nothing that is consumed is a saving, and thus if we can try as much as possible to refrain from excessive luxury goods, and buy things locally made, then I think we can go a long way in saving our money.

It is here that I have got to uphold to some extent the tenets and doctrine of our Boycott King who says that much importance should be attached to locally produced goods. In this case, he means that we should try as much as possible to make our own things and use our own things. There is another inevitable way through which money is sent away to other parts of the world. This is through education. Take for instance so many of our boys and girls who go to universities in America and Europe. You can find that much money is spent on their heads. This money is got from Nigeria and sent to other countries. I believe that it was this condition that our leader had in mind when he said that very soon university colleges would be established in this country, because by so doing we will be able to keep this money which we send abroad for the training of these students. In this way it will be possible for us to save and make our financial state very stable.

About taxing working class girls, I am at the moment silent on the issue. What I hold is the policy enunciated by N.C.N.C. Party which is that taxation must be accompanied by consultation. So, whether it is right to tax such women or not we must first educate the party concerned on the need. I hope it will not be the policy of N.C.N.C. to tax the women as such.

In concluding my speech I have to say that I have perfect confidence in the foresight and integrity of the men that man the Government. In their hands, our financial and economic state will in no distant future be enviable.

Mr President, I support.

**Chief A. N. Onyiuke (Awka Division):**

Mr President, before I support the Appropriation Bill in principle, I would like to express my opinion in certain fundamental issues.

In the past years and previous sessions of this honourable House, honourable Members had assembled here to make parliamentary speeches, giving pertinent suggestions of how certain things would be done but in the long last, it would be found that little or nothing was done with the wise suggestions given, and that in some cases, the speeches are regarded as mere speaking concert whose substance die away and not be considered again as honourable Members turned their back to this honourable House. I hope Sir, that this will not be the case with this new Government, that the views of the honourable Members of this honourable House must be fully respected and that the concensus of opinions must be obeyed. Besides recording the speeches for printing purposes, the Government must devise ways and means of ensuring that the speeches are later given perfect study and that the majority opinion of the Members is an injunction which the Government must endeavour to carry out.



I must not forget to congratulate the honourable the Financial Secretary for his comprehensive and detailed Report on the fiscal position of our Government. Anybody reading the Report through would be convinced that besides understanding the situation properly, the honourable mover of the Bill worked very hard to prepare the Report.

Speaking about agriculture, Sir, I think that too much emphasis have been laid on food production in this Region. As far as food is concerned this Region is very rich and the soil is fertile enough for various kinds of food production. It is only a very lazy man that is hungry and he has himself to blame. Our native parable says "that when laziness makes one sleep, hunger wakes him up." My contention, Sir, is that besides organising a large-scale mechanised farming a system should be evolved by which the Region could be industrialised. If our palm oil could be processed and even ordinary soap manufactured in this Region, our financial position would be greatly improved. Materials are available in this Region for the manufacture of paper and I think that the time has come when paper industry should be given special consideration. This paragraph leads me to general industrialisation of our natural resources. We export coal and yet buy all the coal-tar we use from abroad. I think, Sir, that this Government will be taking a noble step if she would directly or indirectly see to it that our coal is given a full-scale processing in this Region.

It is gratifying to note that Local Government Councils will be established in each division before 1956, and it is hoped that in doing so, District and County Council boundaries will be well defined. When the system of Clan Courts was being introduced, three towns from Awka Division, namely Awkuzu, Nando and Igbariam were grouped into the Umuiguedo Clan in Onitsha Division; with a promise that Umu-nachi and Umudioka in Onitsha Division will be grouped to Umu-dunukofia Clan in Awka Division and Eziowelle in Onitsha Division to Nimo in Awka Division. Up to date the promise has not been fulfilled despite the fact that the three towns promised are not together equal to Awkuzu alone in population. I hope that the honourable the Minister of Local Government will take the necessary steps to expedite matters. The promise should be redeemed or otherwise Awkuzu, Nando and Igbariam should be returned to Awka Division.

Local Government System of Rating: the people of Awka Division do not like property rating as the effect will be inimical to the development of the division. On the other hand, we wish development rating to be introduced in the Local Government Ordinance, so that it may be possible to make indigenous natives of a division residing abroad pay something, say about 5s annually, towards their division's development fund. This will not be creating a precedence because the Europeans in Nigeria pay tax in Nigeria and also pay heavy rates at home.



It is also pleasant to note that efforts will be made to build at least one secondary school and one hospital in every division. I wish, however, to remind the honourable the Minister of Education that the question of raising the present Awka Government School to the secondary school standard has re-echoed for many years. I wish also to add that the present school has proved far too small for the number of boys and girls seeking admission annually. I hope the honourable Minister will also consider the question of making the present school a double-stream school so that it may take more pupils. Last year before the crisis, the then Executive Council declared to this honourable House that they had approved a cottage hospital for Awka Division. So far no mention has been made of it and I wish the honourable the Minister of Health to look it up in the Executive Council Minute Book with a view to bringing it up to the new Executive Council for confirmation and necessary action.

In-concluding, Sir, I wish to thank the Council of Ministers for being able to work out the Budget during the short time at their disposal. The key of Government is now in your hands and I wish you every success and God's guidance. The Ministers of course cannot govern the Region alone: they require the full co-operation and support of every honourable Member of this honourable House and I hope this co-operation and support will be given readily.

With these few remarks, Mr President, I support the Appropriation Bill in principle.

**Mr A. Nwachuku (Afikpo Division):**

Mr President, Sir, I rise to support the Appropriation Bill, and in so doing I will first of all congratulate the Financial Secretary and his staff for the energies they have exerted in getting us these Estimates, more so when it is taken into consideration the shortness of time which has elapsed between the coming into office of the Government and the presentation of the Estimates. Evidently, there is scarcely any budget that can satisfy the whims and caprices of all Members.

The Budget Session, Sir, offers the Members the opportunity of scrutinising Government policies. A section of His Honour's Speech reads as follows—

“It is proposed to encourage livestock and poultry development as a means of improving the food supply of the Region, while every effort will be made to popularise the use of fertilisers. Special attention will be paid to the development of rice growing and other crops in addition to palm produce.”

But, Sir, I wonder the sort of encouragement which will be given in developing poultry and rice growing when already rice growing and poultry fall within the categories of the type of business which is definitely precluded from receiving assistance from the Eastern Regional Development Board. To substantiate my statement, I refer honourable Members to page 3 of the Third Annual Report of the Eastern Regional Development Board, 1951-52, paragraph 13, sub-paragraphs



(i) and (iv). With the permission of the President, I read the relevant paragraphs.

“In December, 1950, however, it had become necessary to define these priorities more closely and it was decided that certain types of business must be definitely precluded from receiving the Board’s assistance. The decisions taken and the reasons for doing so may be summarised as follows:—

(i) To preclude Rice Farming and Small Sawyers Businesses (i.e., Pit-Sawing). Necessary development of these industries should be possible without the Board’s assistance since low initial capital is required for their development while quick and comparatively high profits can be made . . .

(iv) To preclude assistance for Poultry and Pig Keeping.”

Sir, there are many farmers who wish to do rice farming in a very extensive scale and keep poultry, but they have no money to do so and like the famous words of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the spirit will be willing but the flesh is weak. The ardent farmer is willing to produce rice and keep poultry but is weakened by his impecunious position. If His Honour means that the Agricultural Department will produce rice and keep poultry for us, then I will candidly say right from here that we shall have no sufficient rice to eat for the next twenty years, for as far as food production is concerned the Agricultural Department is a failure. This Department, Sir, fritters away time on experimental and demonstration work in Government farm centres at the expense of practical improvement of the lot of the farmers. It is only in the teaching of farmers the use of fertilisers that this Department has measured up to expectations. In Afikpo Division we have an energetic Assistant Agricultural Officer—I am sorry to be personal—in the person of Mr Nwerri. Since his transfer to Afikpo Division he has done all that is physically and humanly possible to get farmers use fertilisers not only on their yam farms but also on nearly all food crops. The people of Afikpo Division, like other divisions in Ogoja Province, are born farmers and because of the use of fertilisers, Afikpo has taken the upper hand in the production of food. This has been proved beyond all reasonable doubts during the Agricultural Show at Abakaliki last year when Afikpo cleared more than half of the prizes given.

Sir, in His Honour’s Speech he said that while improving the efficiency of existing hospitals that emphasis will be on carrying the advantages of modern preventive and curative medicine into rural areas and that to achieve this a Rural Health-Service will be developed. But, Sir, Ogoja Province is always the scapegoat of the Budget. She helps to maintain the Eastern Region but the Eastern Region does not want to help her. I refer honourable Members to Appendix EL, page E 59—Public Works Department—Renewals Fund—Water Supply, £31,550 has been estimated for water supply; all the provinces in the Region except the unfortunate Ogoja are benefited from this colossal sum, and if there is any province in the Eastern Region which



needs water supply, it is Ogoja. In this province water-borne diseases have contributed largely to the high death rate caused by *Ankylostoma* and so forth. With no malice prepense, Sir, but as a matter of expediency, I would appeal to the Eastern Region Government, and I am sure that I am saying the minds of the honourable Members in this House, to see that Ogoja Province benefits from this sum and again when the Health Organisation begins its campaign, it should establish its headquarters in the rural areas in one of the towns or divisions in Ogoja Province, so that it will not only undertake anti-yaws campaign but will also launch an attack on guineaworm which is more agonising and incapacitating than yaws.

Education: I shall not quarrel with the policy of this department, but I refer honourable Members to Head 436 sub-head 1, items 8, 10 and 19 . . .

**The President:**

These matters can be dealt with in Committee stage.

**Mr A. Nwachuku:**

Forestry: The local building materials of durable quality which His Honour said in his Speech will be investigated may probably include Iroko from which scantlings, purlines, wall-plates and so forth, are made. Sir, all the economic trees of Iroko type or grade, have nearly all been felled by unscrupulous sawyers from one of the developed provinces in this Region who feel and maintain that Ogoja Province or Afikpo Division for that matter, is an El Dorado where they can retrieve their fortunes. It is my great desire, Sir, that a law be enacted forbidding the felling of Iroko and other economic trees haphazardly.

Sir, I have said fairly enough about the shortcomings, inefficiencies and failures of some of our Government Departments. When I complain of this and that, it does not mean that Government has not done what is worthy of praise. I have to express my deep appreciation for the many good services done by our Government. The Afikpo Boys' Secondary School commands our respect and appreciation. The use of limes and fertilisers in our farms gives us very good yields, thereby making Eastern Region the greatest producer of rice in the whole country. The bridging of Okpoha River is a great achievement.

Before I conclude Sir, I have a few words to say on what my honourable Friend Mr Nnaji has said. We who are from Oha Ozara in Afikpo Division shall not allow the Eastern Region Government to interfere with the salt lakes at Uburu and Okposi till Ogoja Province is considered along the line of development with her sister provinces in the Eastern Region. And secondly the statement that ugly tricks are played at Asu River in Uburu by canoe paddlers in order to rob an opulent merchant of all he or she is worth is mendacious and unfounded. No such tricks are played, Sir.

With these few remarks, I support the Appropriation Bill.



**Chief S. E. Onukogu (Owerri Division):**

Mr President, I rise to support the Appropriation Bill and in doing so I wish to confine myself on the economic interest of the Eastern Region. In doing this, let me first of all dwell on redundant officers, one of which is Residents.

If District Officers are given more powers in execution of their duties and are allowed to run direct communications with the Civil Secretary's Office, then the office of Resident will be of no use. Residents are only there to endorse recommendations and decisions of District Officers who run direct communications with the divisions. If Residents are removed the present emoluments and expatriate pay of these officers would automatically become part of savings. One should in the first place consider the advisability and necessity of having Residents in provinces who are only there to endorse the recommendations and decisions of the District Officers. Since they are not holding any direct communication with any individual in the Eastern Region except implementing and transmitting communications between two offices, I think their being in the office is absolutely unnecessary. These offices should be scrapped. I do not wish to belabour on the issues already dealt with but yet I have observations which I think if dealt with would clarify the position. It is questionable as to why our palm produce in this part of the country is classified in various grades on different prices and when I mean palm produce I particularly refer to palm oil. When shipped to England they are sold at the same price used and served for the same purposes. In my humble opinion I think the reason to classify these palm oils produced by the farmers here is only to buy our palm oil at less price and perhaps take them for nothing. In order to encourage palm production in the Eastern Region it is time Produce Grading Stations could be granted to various divisions, particularly to Owerri Division where the supply of palm produce is very much in abundance. In considering ways and means by which we shall enrich this Region I would suggest that if the Minister of Health could introduce an office whereby births and deaths could be registered, this will help to yield income and thereby increase the revenue. And if we want more money as I am sure we surely want, we shall not neglect communications. By communications I mean roads and extension of roads to rural areas. We shall also not lose sight of the roads from Port Harcourt-Etche-Mbaise and to Umuahia on which bridges are required. The embankment of the bridge between Etche and Chakocho has been completed by the communities concerned. If the two bridges at Ezinihite in Owerri Division and at Etche in Ahoada Division are constructed, they will help a great deal to facilitate trade and save the heavy expense on transports. This will also help the traders to sell their palm oil quickly before it deteriorates.

I now come to the question of women paying tax. One of my friends in the opposition made erroneous remarks on this particular subject probably due to misapprehension. We, the party in power, do welcome concrete and suggestive criticism. I am sorry to speak



in the absence of the honourable Member. One should not only argue for the sake of arguing. I want us to understand that women own plots. They own lorries—transport lorries. They embark on substantial trades. They are also employed in the Civil Service and by Missionary Societies, so if these working class women are made to pay a little of their income there is no injustice at all done because we are all anxious to increase the Eastern Regional reserve. (*Hear! Hear!*). There is no injustice whatsoever in making the working class women pay some tax; I mean those employed in any aspect of life.

Now let me come to the question of paying taxes. Sir, some Members in the Opposition also made some unfounded remarks against the Government or the leaders of the Government in power. There was never a time when our God-given leader or his lieutenants promised or mentioned to the districts, towns and villages anything about the increase or decrease of taxes. All that was said is that before tax could be raised, the people who are to pay it shall be consulted.

In conclusion, Mr President, now that we have become a Government of our own, it is incumbent upon us to look into and improve our financial resources. In this case and on behalf of myself and my fellow chiefs in the Eastern Region I would say that we strongly support the Leader of the Government. (*Hear! Hear!*) and will do everything in our power to see that we increase our revenue resources.

With these few remarks, Mr President, I support the Appropriation Bill.

**Mr V. A. Nwankwo (Abakaliki Division):**

Mr President, Sir, in supporting the Appropriation Bill I am in duty bound to make some observations. Before proceeding, I am to congratulate the honourable the Financial Secretary for preparing the Draft Estimate despite the difficulties that faced him in serving three masters at the same time. The problem he battled was the problem of tact, art and loyalty. The Estimate was initiated and almost completed since about three to four months ago under the absolute command of the old N.I.P. Government which consisted of the sit-tight Ministers who remained in the Government against the wishes of the overwhelming majority of this Eastern Region and the country as a whole. Every item and clause of this Estimate was prepared to the choice and programme of those Ministers who then had no policy to reflect on this Estimate. Roughly three weeks ago the Government of the N.C.N.C. Party was formed and some sharp and immediate amendments were made. The Financial Secretary not only faced drastic changes in the works he had already done his best to complete but also had to prepare it in such manner and composition to safeguard the interest of his white colleagues. On the whole the Estimate of this year is equivalent to the Estimate of 1952-53 which the old House, of which I was a Member, passed in order not to overthrow its Government but in reality the said Estimate was not the making of the then Government. I come out to say that this Estimate 1954-55



months. The medical units should be more staffed to enable them to make regular inspections in various rural areas and educate the masses on the symptoms and prevention of some of the deadly epidemic diseases.

**Administration:** In the Judiciary, we have a good impression of Nigerianisation, but in the Provincial Administration I cannot understand why we should not have African Cadets when we can afford them with lesser financial commitments than those expatriate school-boys that are rushed to this department. If Africans can be made Judges, Medical Officers and Superintendents of Police, I see no crime in appointing Africans as Cadets, District Officers and Residents. (*Interruption and cries of "No Residents"*). The Land and Rating Office at Abakaliki is a small department of two junior clerks under the Native Administration, Abakaliki, and I see no reason why an expatriate Development Officer should be posted to it in addition to two expatriate Administrative Officers who are adequately fit to cope with the administration of this division. The office of a Development Officer, notwithstanding from what source the salary is derived, is not yet required at Abakaliki.

**Agriculture:** I have found no satisfaction in the working of the Abakaliki Agricultural Department, and I am afraid that if that department is doing well in other divisions, it shall go to lay emphasis upon the need that a committee should be set up to probe as to why farmers of Abakaliki should not be benefitted by this department.

In the Financial Secretary's Speech, it was evident that oil palm produce was making good progress in the Region, but would it not pay more if the farmers were encouraged to plant more oil palm seedlings in order to double our palm products. The fertilisation scheme was not well expanded in the rural areas and, as I said, if the Agricultural Department could not meet with the services of distributing widely fertilisers to the rural areas in the manner required by the Regional Production Development Board, it should off-load this responsibility on to the Board who would make another design for carrying out its policy to the full benefit of the farmers. Swampy land twice ploughed and farmed with rice could not retain its fertility, and if no steps are taken immediately, either with some mechanisation or fertilisation, to restore this land to its normal condition, the Region will lose rice production in most rice-producing areas in ten years to come. The Agricultural Department should only embark on something extraordinary, not merely in making exhibitions and providing pork, mutton, chickens and eggs to expatriates. The Region is a farming country and we do not need to be shown how to plant our staple products, but how to improve them.

**Industry:** The Cement Industry at Nkalagu under Abakaliki is a case in hand where the Government should at once concentrate without delay, because it will not only provide revenue but will also give employment to the unemployed and will serve as a training centre to the brains. Howbeit, we should not count our chickens by the



eggs as we did in 1952 in the case of the Lead and Zinc Mine at Abakaliki, which has since failed. I am applying the same warning to the people who might think to lean safely on the speculation in oil likely to be exploited in the Calabar Province by the Oil Shell Company. Members were speaking of natural resources and industry as the principal factors of extracting revenue, but never stressed in detail how to gear human resources. I am happy that the Leader of the Government has in his open speech at the N.C.N.C. Victory Rally on the 14th February, 1954, said that he believed in taxation, but how are we going to make it possible without working for it. It is true that some time ago we opposed the Cattle Toll Bill and Produce Sales Tax Bill, but the reasons were there. The reasons, amongst other things as I know it as a Member of the old House, was because of the then crisis. The two taxes must be introduced, but before doing this the only figure whose genuineness is indisputable—the National President of the N.C.N.C. Party (who is the Leader of the Government)—will have to make a wide tour of the Region and explain to the masses the implications and financial situation of the Region and its future.

In introducing the Tax Law, special care should be taken to be considerate. If the people are told the truth and well consulted, there will be no danger. Consultation should be on a wide scale and not merely through unions and councils, but right into the smallest village to the knowledge of men and women of the commonest class. In each case, the sum agreed to by each section should be taken to work with as a data. It shall be the duty of every Member of this House to co-operate and keep outside party lines on this revenue-increasing issue. A nation that could not tolerate taxation is not worthy of existence and cannot exist either as a free nation or a colony. We all know that we cannot get finances from heaven to meet all the required amenities of each division, and that being so, let us inspire and incorporate into ourselves and through us to our people the spirit of give and take. These arrangements should be completed to commence in the next financial year budget.

Motor accidents and insurance: When we speak of labour and employment, we usually forget one disastrous factor that gives rise to destitution and wretchedness, and that is the motor accident and the Insurance Company, and their implications. The facts are as follows. The transport owner pays from £20 to £57 premium on each of his vehicles to the Insurance Company in order to extricate and exempt himself from any liability for damages which his vehicle might incur in respect of people or property. The company accepted such responsibility on condition that if no claim be made by a victim or relative within a special period, say twelve months, in all cases that the premium is not recoverable to the insured. We all know that we have motor accidents—almost every day on an average of six—causing death and injury to people, and it was a pity and alarming to note that not one case has ever been compensated by any of the Insurance Companies. Drivers are doubly more reckless and negligent than before and souls destroyed as a result of this recklessness have



dependents left behind, have no other means of condolment as the motor owners have no further obligation towards the destitute. The defence that the affected ought to know their rights should be dismissed on considering the mixed class of people that are usually involved. The Government of this Region, which believes in impartiality, is to find a solution to meet this fraud and misgiving. If the injured victim or the dependents of the lost ones could be compensated accordingly by the due Insurance Company, the Region will surely lessen the burden of destitutes arising from this aspect, which is a danger to the community. The premium paid for a fare-paying motor vehicle is double the licensing fees, and as the insuring of motor vehicles is enforced by law, it is the duty of Government to see that the public is not cheated from getting their dues, and the argument or contention that it is a private business between the owner, the company, and the victims should be dismissed outright.

Press: The Regional Government weekly newspaper—the *Eastern Outlook and Cameroons Star* should be converted to a daily paper for the better services of the Government and its people, but the words “Cameroons Star” should be abrogated in so far as the Cameroons have been granted a separate Region as quasi-Federal Territory outside the Eastern Region.

Mr President, I beg to support the Appropriation Bill.

**Mr F. M. A. Saronwiyo (Ogoni Division):**

I rise to support the Appropriation Bill, but before making any remarks, Mr President, I would like to say something about the agitation in the Rivers Province for a separate region. Recently, as honourable Members of this House are aware, a two-man delegation went to Lagos and claimed to have gone there on behalf of the Rivers people to demand a separate region. I must say straightaway that the Ogoni people—the division I represent, had nothing to do with that demand for a separate region. It has been published in the papers what we had to say about that delegation and the Ahoada and Brass Divisions have said the same thing. I would say that the reason for that demand is not because it would in any way enhance the progress of the people of the Rivers Province. Rather the agitation for a Region for a small province like the Rivers Province—the smallest and youngest in the Region—comes from two or three individuals who think that by making the noise people would recognise their presence in the creeks of the Rivers Province.

(Moment of Interruption 5.45 p.m.)

**The President:**  
Order! Order!

**The Financial Secretary:**

Mr President, Sir, tomorrow being Private Members' Day, I beg to appoint Wednesday the 24th of February as the day for the resumption and conclusion of the Debate on the Second Reading of the Appropriation Bill.



[Adjournment]

22nd February, 1954

[Adjournment]

**Adjournment****The Minister of Local Government:**

Mr President, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn.

**Mr E. P. Okoya (Minister Without Portfolio):**

Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

**The Minister of Public Health:**

Mr President, I wish to raise the question of the Press at this moment. Yesterday we were treated on the pages of the *Daily Times* to a one-sided account on the motion to appoint Mr F. E. Offor to be a member of the Produce Inspection Board. The idea that Mr Offor is a retired detective, an honest and trustworthy man, dealing in produce, trade and production, was deliberately skipped—completely. This is the sort of dishonest reporting which we all hate in this honourable House and must condemn to a man. Members of the Press have a sacred duty to perform, particularly in a young country like this, where the magic of the printed word is often found to blur our analytical thinking.

But I would make it plain to this House that I do not support the idea that our weaker moments should not be reported. Surely, our victories and failures should be reported, but the point is this, that the real Government idea was deliberately skipped and a long diatribe was written on what transpired in this House, and the pages of the *Daily Times* were completely devoted to all that the Opposition had to say.

We, on this side of the House, and the Government, appreciate the good work of any objective section of the Press but, and this is the important point, we shall resist any attempt by any section of the Press to skip important facts so as to embarrass us, and the time shall come when we will make it absolutely impossible, I repeat absolutely impossible, for such Press to operate in this Region.

**Mr E. O. Eyo (Uyo Division):**

Sir, I move that the question be now put.

*Question—that the question be now put—put and agreed to.*

*Original question put accordingly and agreed to.*

*House adjourned accordingly at eleven minutes to six o'clock p.m. until 10 a.m. on Tuesday, 23rd February, 1954.*



## WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Monday, 22nd February, 1954

### ABAKALIKI-OGOJA TRUNK ROAD

*Question—*

**63. Mr N. Nweze:**

To ask the Minister of Works, Eastern Region:—

When is it proposed to tar Abakaliki-Ogoja Trunk Road ?

*Answer—*

**The Minister of Works, Eastern Region:**

It is not possible to forecast when the Abakaliki-Ogoja Road will be tarred.

### ABAKALIKI GENERAL HOSPITAL

*Question—*

**64. Mr N. Nweze:**

To ask the Minister of Works, Eastern Region:—

Is the Minister aware that for lack of quarters the Abakaliki General Hospital is still being managed by one instead of two doctors ? If so, what does the Minister propose to do to remedy the situation ?

*Answer—*

**The Minister of Works, Eastern Region:**

No, Sir, because no request has been received from the Medical Authorities for the construction of quarters for an additional Medical Officer at Abakaliki General Hospital.

### RESIDENCY AT ABAKALIKI

*Question—*

**65. Mr N. Nweze:**

To ask the Minister of Works, Eastern Region:—

Why has the Residency at Abakaliki not been started ?

*Answer—*

**The Minister of Works, Eastern Region:**

Although the proposal was approved in principle by Government, no funds have been released for the work.

### AFRICAN HOUSING SCHEME

*Question—*

**68. Mr R. O. Ukuta:**

To ask the Financial Secretary, Eastern Region:—

Why the African Housing Scheme is not extended to members of the African Senior Service in the Eastern Region as is the case in the Centre, North and West ?

*Answer—*

**The Financial Secretary, Eastern Region:**

The African Staff Housing Scheme is not extended to the members of the African Senior Staff in the Eastern Region owing to the limited funds available for financing the scheme.



# Debates in the Eastern House of Assembly

Tuesday, 23rd February, 1954

The House met at ten o'clock a.m.

Prayers

(Mr President in the Chair)

## QUESTIONS AND ORAL ANSWERS

### PORT HARCOURT WATER SUPPLY

*Question—*

**\*66. Mr J. O. Umolu:**

To ask the Minister of Works, Eastern Region:—

Does the Minister realise that the inhabitants of Port Harcourt are not satisfied with the salty taste of their water supply?

*Answer—*

**The Minister of Works, Eastern Region:**

There is no answer to be given other than that given yesterday to Question No. 88 by the Minister of Public Health. I refer the honourable Member to that Question which was printed in the Votes and Proceedings of 22nd February.

### NATIVE LOCATION, PORT HARCOURT

*Question—*

**\*90. Mr V. K. Onyeri:**

To ask the Minister of Land and Survey, Eastern Region:—

(a) What is the total area of land comprising what is now known as the Native Location, Port Harcourt?

(b) How many Residential, Commercial and Commercial-cum-Residential Buildings are there within this area?

(c) What is the dimension of Residential and Commercial Residential Plots in this area?

*Answer—*

**The Minister of Land and Survey, Eastern Region:**

Sir, there is now no area in Port Harcourt officially designated "the Native Location." The honourable Member's question cannot, therefore, be answered.

### GOVERNMENT RESIDENTIAL AREA, PORT HARCOURT

*Question—*

**\*91. Mr V. K. Onyeri:**

To ask the Minister of Land and Survey, Eastern Region:—

(a) What is the total area of land comprising what is now known as Government Residential Area?

(b) How many Residential, Commercial and Commercial-cum-Residential Buildings are there within this area?



(c) What is the dimension of Residential, Commercial and Commercial-cum-Residential Plots in this area ?

*Answer—*

**The Minister of Land and Survey, Eastern Region:**

Sir, (a) The total area of land comprising the Government Residential Area in Port Harcourt is not known.

(b) and (c). These records are not available in the Land Department, Enugu, but, if the honourable Member is sufficiently interested, the records of the Lands Office, Port Harcourt, can be made open to his inspection.

*Question—*

**\*92. Mr V. K. Onyeri:**

To ask the Minister of Land and Survey, Eastern Region:—

What is the population of people living in (i) Native Location, (ii) Government Residential Area, Port Harcourt ?

*Answer—*

**The Minister of Land and Survey, Eastern Region:**

Sir, population statistics are no concern of my portfolio.

#### AT THE COMMENCEMENT OF PUBLIC BUSINESS

##### Motion

**The Minister of Local Government:**

Sir, I beg to move "That at today's sitting paragraph (3) of Standing Order 21 be suspended in accordance with Standing Order 72, so that Private Members' Notices of Motions on today's Order Paper may be debated without the prescribed period of notice being fulfilled."

Some of the notices of motions filed by honourable Members have not matured and since their business takes precedence over that of the Government today, it is considered advisable to waive the ten-day rule, subject to the consent of the President and the general assent of the House.

Sir, I beg to move.

**The Legal Secretary:**

Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

##### Motions

**Mr N. Nweze (Abakaliki Division):**

Mr President, I beg to move the motion standing in my name "that this House realising that the development of the Region depends largely on an adequate and improved road system calls on the Regional Government for a vigorous policy of road construction and improvement of existing roads."

Mr President, this motion is so timely, so essential and so conducive to the economic progress of this Region that it requires no long debate



to pass it through. There is no doubt, Mr President, that the economic and financial development of this Region depends very largely on adequate and efficient roads. It cannot be disputed that farming and industries are the essence of prosperity in any Region, and it is a plain fact that without adequate numbers of efficient roads, the farming facility and industrialisation would surely be underrated or of no value to the Region.

Mr President, we cannot have access to any source of development whether social or economical, without the use of efficient roads. And as the new system of revenue allocation would allow us a greater measure of fiscal autonomy, it will be our sole responsibility to put in full operation all the economic and financial resources we have in this Region; and that, Mr President, cannot be achieved successfully without having first a concrete foundation for it, and no better concrete foundation than efficient and adequate number of roads.

It is no gainsaying, Mr President, that the constitutional change occasioned by the London and Lagos Conferences on the Nigerian Constitution has inevitably placed the Regions of this country on the competition ladder as regards development and in order to win the top as we strongly anticipate we have to elevate the economic and financial state of this Region by all means, and that definitely requires efficient roads to start with.

And in order to raise the fiscal position of this Region to such a commendable rank, which is our passionate and urgent ambition, we have to ransack every corner of the Region for additional financial resources. In this conjuncture, Mr President, I am moved to say that the wealth of this Region emanates mostly from the efforts of the farmers in the rural areas, who toil day and night in their farm business. But it is a pity that the farm products of these farmers in the rural areas are not lucrative enough due to lack of roads for transport, especially in Abakaliki Division, where I come from.

Therefore, in moving this motion which I know would be passed with a demonstration of joy and deep emotion by this House, I have the strong conviction that the Regional Government of my party with her noble sense of duty would concentrate attention most vigorously on the construction and improvement of roads, especially in less developed rural areas, with such farming facility and economic resources like Abakaliki Division.

Mr President, I feel that I am not doing justice to my conscience if I fail to mention the urgent need of tarring all the important roads of the Region like Abakaliki-Ogoja trunk road for quick, easy and safe transport.

Mr President, with these few remarks I beg to move.

**Mr E. O. Eyo (Uyo Division):**

Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*



**The Minister of Works:**

Mr President, I rise in support of this most fundamental motion. (*Hear! Hear!*)

The motion that calls for vigorous road policy certainly without question receives the full support of the Government. (*Hear! Hear!*). As we speak urging this House for activities to develop the country economically in order to increase our revenue, there is one fundamental factor, and that is the factor of movement. The ability of the workers to move from their place of abode to their place of work; the ability of materials which are to be moved, to be moved; and the possibility on the part of the entrepreneurs, the private individuals, the companies: private and corporate, to move their materials and their workers from one place to another.

What we ought to know is that for about ten years now there has been what was called the Ten-Year Development Plan, which receives a great support financially and technically from the Colonial Office under the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund, and the fund is not without limitations. For instance, if Members were to know that certain roads in the Trunk "A" system under the Central Government cost £6,000 per mile to build and tar. About five years ago, certain roads used to cost £1,000 per mile to tar. That is not the construction in the first place, but after the road had been constructed. To put on a bituminous surfacing, depending on the nature of the soil in the area concerned, used to cost £1,000, £1,500, or £2,000. The highest at present in the rate is the Girei-French frontier road, and in the same category the Bamenda-Jada road costing £6,000 per mile to build and tar.

It however means that one of the fundamental defects in the project is that there is not enough in the fund to carry out the total work planned for the period, but if Members can read, especially those going to the Central House next month, they will see in the proposed estimates for welfare and development, the inscription—what is not very clearly noted, the statement that these proposals are subject to the availability of funds, and so the first Ten-Year Plan has not been completed. There has been a revised Ten-Year Plan and at present all the Governments of the country are engaged in preparing the next Five-Year Plan—1955-60 and the total amount of money likely to be available for all the country, that is Lagos and the three Regions and the quasi-territory of the Cameroons is in the neighbourhood of £16,000,000, and these are not shared on equal basis, they are shared on the basis of the cost for the given area—the land area covered. You will therefore note that the Northern Region receives most of the fund because of the territory of the Northern Region and the type of roads to be built in many of its areas.

I am confident that this Government has under study a plan for development of the roads in the Eastern Region, first by calling to the attention of the Central Government its responsibility as regards the Trunk "A" roads, I think we know that all Trunk "A" roads



are not necessarily the roads that shoulder the heaviest traffic, for if that were the case, I think that the road passing from Okigwi through Okwele, Orlu and Ihiala would have been considered as a Trunk "A" road, but at present it is not.

Trunk "A" roads are really technically defined as roads that span the country, East, West, South and North and the Central Government is responsible for these in all the territories called Nigeria. It has taken about six months at least for the Government to be able to plan a Five-Year Road Scheme and in our Region our responsibility at present is directed towards getting the Central Government to pay more attention by giving more vote to the development and the improvement of the roads that represent Trunk "A" roads in the Eastern Region. For instance, the Enugu-Onitsha Road is Trunk "A." The Onitsha-Owerri-Aba-Port Harcourt is a trunk system, and as you know these are not to the satisfaction of the heavy traffic at present. There is work to be done on all Trunk "A" roads within the Five-Year Scheme, such as widening all the roads already existing, the bituminous surfacing of these roads where they have been washed off, and the culverting and bridging works thereto. There are so many bridges that have fallen down or are out of proper use—I know of a place, the Oron Bridge, that has been set on record as the "lawyer's death." That is where I think it was, one Western lawyer, a Mr Williams, had an accident which gave it that name. The bridge is there all right, but it is really a trap. We wonder how the engineer at that time spanned that bridge like that without protection on both sides, and the bridge is not of course quite a permanent one.

If you go throughout the Eastern Region, especially in the Calabar, Ogoja and Owerri Provinces, you will find very bad roads. By this we mean roads that had been good before, as well as bridges that were good when they were constructed, but because of the maintenance not being taken care of over the years, bridges have gone out of use and roads are bad because at the time they were built traffic was not as heavy as we now have it. I think it was one honourable Member, the Member representing Commercial Interests who spoke the other day giving warning against very ambitious programmes of development of any kind without considering equally heavy cost of maintenance. I think that the cost of maintenance that the Eastern Region is called upon to undertake in maintaining these new roads, is so prohibitive of future progress, that we find it very difficult to say specifically that we are going to tar this or that road.

It is the desire of the people of the Eastern Region and of the Government that as we think of industrialisation we think of the factors, the basic factors that facilitate industrial activities, and the roads are certainly one of them. I therefore think that it will be in order to congratulate the honourable mover of this motion, and it will be in order for all the Members of this House to take into account the problems involved, so that when they make demands they will not think that the Government is oblivious, negligent or ignorant of the existing road problems in any given community. It is that we have



work for which they are employed and the technicians spend more time on the roads than in offices much could be accomplished and less spent.

In conclusion, Mr President, I would like to say that whatever Government can do to build roads, inland roads in our Region, must be done. Roads like the Abakaliki-Ogoja-Northern Nigeria and the Onitsha-Abakaliki-Ikom-Cameroons, must be remembered as very very important roads indeed. The latter connects Nigeria with Central Africa and I do not know whether Government really realised the importance of such a road. If it does, then I suggest that steps should be taken to complete it as soon as possible. In the dry season these roads are corrugated and dusty and in the rainy season very muddy. The work of building the two bridges over the Afi and the Aiya Rivers between Abakaliki and Ikom has been very very slow indeed. I would like to see the new Government take very active steps to see that these roads are tarred and bridges completed, thus facilitating movement by road from Eastern Nigeria to Northern Nigeria and from the great and majestic Niger through the Cameroons to Central Africa.

Mr President, I beg to support the motion.

**Mr O. O. Ita (Eket Division):**

Mr President, Sir, I rise to speak to the motion. In doing so, Sir, I have the backing of the Opposition Bench when I state that we are not like those who advocate one thing and in practice do an entirely different thing. This motion, Sir, is not a new motion in this House. It was brought up in July, 1952, by the honourable Mr Louis N. Mbanefo and at that time, Sir, it was the same party in power, the same party controlling the present Government. (*Interruption*). I say that it was the N.C.N.C., Sir, that obstructed the passage of that motion which is now described as fundamental.

In supporting the motion, Sir, I have at the back of my mind the development of this country which should be what every Member of this House should think about before either jumping up to oppose or tabling for discussion in this place any matter, in other words, Sir, the interests of this Region should be borne in mind, not private interests.

The honourable Member, Sir, the Minister of Works for the Region, spoke at length about the development of this Region and he also made very acceptable estimate of the costs of developing the roads, but I must say this, Sir, that in spite of what he has said, he has not mentioned one particular thing, poor condition of bridges, that to my mind is a crying shame in the construction of roads in this Region. I do not know whether the people who constructed most of the roads in the past did not realise that the Eastern Region would ever develop. If one compares the Carter Bridge at Lagos made in those days or any other bridge in the Western Region made at that time and those which are of recent dates, in fact, most of the bridges in the Western area I have gone across are by far better than the bridges here in the Eastern Region. Some of them are so narrow and shaky that they are in fact really traps, as one honourable Member has described them.



For instance, Sir, the road mentioned by that honourable Gentleman at Oron, was constructed on the instruction of the Governor, Sir Graeme Thompson, and it was envisaged at that time that that road would become a trunk road No. 1, and I cannot see why its bridge at Oron was so narrowly constructed. It might not have been possible to make the bridge as strong as all would wish but it is my suggestion, Sir, that in future when roads are going to be constructed, bridges should be made so permanent that they can stand the test of time. This country is growing, and it is not merely growing fast, but very fast, we have so many changes and if we have no expertly trained men to construct these roads, it is high time we should employ trained men from abroad to construct our roads. It is less costly to employ men to make permanent bridges instead of many temporary bridges that are always destroying cars and lorries every now and then.

I do remember a case of the Aba-Oron Bridge where just a foot-bridge was to be constructed and a diversion for about twenty-five miles was made and that bridge after construction was not as permanent as one would expect. One who has travelled in other parts of the world, Sir, would always like to ask this question, why is it that the bridges constructed by the Germans in the Cameroons before 1914 are still standing just as if they were constructed yesterday and the Public Works Department of this country, cannot either imitate or construct such bridges? The Public Works Department employs so many people, so many labourers, so much material and so on and still the result is poor, even an ordinary labourer could have built better bridges than the present ones. It is with this in mind, Sir, that we actually put much into account of expert knowledge we acquire to do anything in this country in order to develop the country, as honourable Members have already said, we should bear in mind that we have realised that it is fundamental only now that roads should be constructed so that such roads, Sir, should be properly tested by experienced men and bridges constructed across rivers should bear the marks of an expert. People have been employed in this country and much money has been spent in getting them here, who are not qualified for their jobs. Moreover, I have no idea whether the Government is only planning for a very short time or whether the Government is planning for a very long time so that what is being done today may last for long, because I see no reason why Government should spend about five thousand pounds to build a bridge that would only last for fifteen years whereas if the Government had made adequate provision of £10,000 to build that could last for say, fifty years. The difference in structure is great and the time and money saved is much and I am saying, Sir, and in saying this I have the support of the Opposition Bench that we are not in this place to support anything if it is not going to be well done and if we are supporting any move at all that move we support should stand the test of time so that those who come after us may know that we are not here just for fun, we were here to help the Eastern Region rise. In supporting the motion, Sir, I have to say that whatever could be done in order to expand roads, not



merely dotting them all about without any proper method of safeguards for the users, or opening them to be closed in the very near future, but by building permanent concrete roads that will stand the heavy traffic that we can envisage in the near future—it may be the very near future or remote one we shall be developing the Region, opening up mines, opening up industry, all this will require very heavy traffic and in order to have this we should have experts. We want roads that will last not only today and tomorrow but in the future. In doing so it is our desire that the present Government that has now seen its folly to reverse the policy of yesterday as being wrong and is now going over to what we have already envisaged will bear in mind that these roads that will be constructed will be first class roads—I am not going to classify them as A, B, or C classes—I do not see the difference between one type of road in Nigeria and another in that they all suffer from the sickness of bad bridges and what we want is good bridges and good roads, whether they are A or B is immaterial to me.

Mr President, Sir, I beg to support the motion.

**Mr B. O. M. Edoga (Nsukka Division):**

Mr President, Sir, I rise to support the motion and in doing so I want to congratulate the mover of this motion for moving it in this House when the Government of the choice of the people has assumed position.

We have listened with great concern to the opinions advanced by those who have already spoken on the Appropriation Bill. I have no doubt that all the honourable Members will associate their own views with those who spoke on the importance and necessity of making this Region economically sound. By being economically sound I mean providing or helping to provide all that will bring revenue into the country. The Government in a Speech from the Throne has made it abundantly clear that the commercial activity and purchasing power of the people of the Region should be encouraged. This progressive policy of the Government cannot be accomplished without sufficient roads.

It would appear almost an impossibility to carry out any extensive trade between even two close towns, one can still think it more impossible to promote national or world trade without constructing good roads. Roads are not only necessary for commercial activity, they are also necessary for the safety of lives and property.

Where there are no good roads both life and property of the traders are not safe. The people affected, that is the people who have no good roads indulge in evil ways of committing all sorts of crimes like plundering and way-laying people. The lonely traveller in an attempt to save his life and property from the people who attack him with a view to plunder can lose both his life or may be left half dead on the spot. If there had been roads through such villages and towns the fear that someone may soon come that way might in a way discourage the evil-doers in attacking such travellers.

Nobody, Sir, doubts the fact that the road accidents are not only due to careless driving, it is also due to the bad condition of the roads.



Many have spoken on the Appropriation Bill and have laid emphasis on the need of developing the rural areas. I fully associate my views with theirs. No other country or rural area can be developed unless a road is constructed through and to that place. The natural resources of that area where there are no roads cannot properly be exploited. Economy of both the area concerned and the country as a whole continues to suffer. Hence I strongly recommend that the Government of this Region should embark on the improvement of the existing roads and the construction of new ones throughout the Region.

The Government will not only improve the position of its economy but also implement its policy of increasing the commercial activities of its people and also encourage the earning, purchasing capacity. Roads have also a psychological effect on the people. The Government of a country, or section of that country can hardly enjoy the confidence of the people unless they undertake to provide them with things that make life worth living. I believe that roads, good roads of course, are among those amenities that the people want from the Government.

Speaking from experience, Sir, I hardly remember any officer or Minister of State that has visited my own division of Nsukka and has not got an address from the entire people of Nsukka asking the officer or Minister concerned to bring pressure to bear on the Nigerian Government to improve the Nine-Mile-Nsukka road. I feel that this road is one of the oldest roads in the Region, considering that the road was built from Udi to Nsukka in 1910. It is trunk "A" road, I believe, but I also make it plain to this House that it is not only the concern of the area concerned, but the liability of the Region as a whole. We have Members who represent this section of the country in the Central House; I believe that when those who represent us in the Central House go there, there will be what we call team work between them.

It is not necessary that a Member representing Nsukka Division in the House should bring it up, nor the Member representing Udi, it is rather the business of all who represent this House to bring this liability of this Region to bear on the Nigerian Government. In fact, if the present Government would press the request forward and get the Nigerian Government to improve these roads by tarring them, the Government will continue to enjoy indefinitely the confidence of this half million people.

In conclusion, Sir, I appeal to the Government in general and to the Minister of Works in particular to do all that is humanly possible to give this road policy immediate treatment and when that is pursued and fully implemented I have no doubt that the people of this Eastern Region can quite well—whether in the valleys or on the hilltops—support the N.C.N.C. Government and Party.

With these few remarks, Mr President, I support the motion.

**Mr P. A. Onwe (Abakaliki Division):**

Mr President, I rise to support the motion "that this House realising that the development of the Region depends largely on an adequate



and improved road system calls on the Regional Government for a vigorous policy of road construction and improvement of existing roads."

There is no right thinking person in this House, Mr President, that would not support this motion, because this motion goes to prove the power of responsibility that this House is also assuming.

**The President:**

I would like to call the attention of honourable Members to Standing Order 29 (3).

The honourable Member may proceed.

**Mr P. A. Onwe:**

Mr President, I am inclined to believe that communication is an important item in the make-up of a nation and if we are to stand on our feet we must have proper means of communication.

It is believed historically and geographically that Britain has been able to attain its position today among the nations of the world because of its vigorous policy of road construction that she has. When we look round this Region we find our natural resources have not yet been fully discovered and even the use of them has not been fully exploited. How do we set about the exploitation of these natural resources? We want easy means of communication and accessibility to these resources.

The honourable Members here must agree with me that most of our roads have not come up to expectation. In saying so, I must draw the attention of the House to the Abakaliki-Obubra road. The Abakaliki-Obubra road which connects two divisions is only twenty-six miles distant. When one embarks on a journey from Obubra to Abakaliki he must necessarily stop at Mile 22—there he will find the road ends—the rest of the four miles must either be done by trekking or riding on a bicycle. Even, Mr President, it is not safe to ride on bicycle this four miles distance, because you find the road slippery and the bridges made of bambooes, bush sticks interspersed with a few timbers. I think none of those bridges will be there over a year and then the water washes them away.

In this connection, we should note that for a long time now the Government has not thought it wise to put this road in a proper order. I happen to know that in the last Government there was somebody from Obubra who held the office of a Minister. The honourable Minister used to pass from Abakaliki to his home, was a member of the Government and never thought it wise to bring this to the attention of the then Government that the road to his home should be put in proper order. (*Shame! Shame!*). I think it would be a credit to this Government if it would take the Abakaliki-Obubra road into consideration and put it in order to assure those who happened to man the last Government that they were actually doing nothing.

I happen to know, Sir, that if we have a good system of communication, palm wine produced in the remotest part of Obudu in Ogoja Province could be taken at Port Harcourt fresh. I say this because when we have roads, everything seems very possible.



I say this because I believe that we should do everything possible to have roads. Coming here as a representative of my constituency I must draw the attention of the House to Abakaliki Division.

In Abakaliki Division we have a number of roads totalling about thirty-six and making up a total of about 450 miles. The unfortunate thing about these roads is that they are all being maintained by the Native Administration alone. The Abakaliki-Obubra road, as I have said before, is also being maintained by the Abakaliki Native Administration, so also is the Abakaliki-Afikpo road but with grants from the Government. You can see, Mr President, the amount of roads that the Abakaliki Native Administration has to control.

One of these roads is a veritable highway of traffic. People living here in Enugu can bear me out when I say that almost half of the incomes of traders in this township is derived from their commercial activities through this Effium road. Every five days we have about twenty-thirty lorries going there from Enugu to carry foodstuffs, timbers, pepper, cotton, rice, and so on, and, in fact, that is the point in the Eastern Nigeria which is very close to the Northern Provinces. It will not cost the Government very much to construct a road through Effium to the Northern Provinces, and I believe that if such a road is constructed, it will help to increase the revenue of this Region.

There is in this Effium a forest reserve. This forest reserve is considered to be Government property. The Lead-Zinc Mining Company had established a timber business at Effium and their heavy trucks used to tread on this road day in day out with the result that at long last this road has been rendered useless. It is now impassable in the rainy season, and I wonder if it would not be advisable that the Government takes over this road in view of its importance.

We are talking of opening up cement industry in Nkalagu. If we open it up the only means of transporting such product would be through the Enugu railway which is a long way off to Port Harcourt and much longer to Calabar, but there is a river just close to that spot where we have the limestone deposit. This river, Mr President, could be surveyed because it brings us direct to Calabar Province. If this cement could be manufactured and transported direct through this river to Calabar I see no reason to worry about getting it through Enugu railway and through several other places before it gets to Calabar Province.

The honourable Minister of Works has said something about the availability of funds. I think if there is anything that brings money to this Region—and to any country for that matter—it is roads or communication. At the same time the honourable Minister said that distribution is an important factor in the increase of revenue in the country. Mr President, although I admit that at the moment the funds of the Government are limited, yet since distribution is an important factor in the increase of revenue, it should be given encouragement because we want to increase our revenue.

Many Members, especially from the Opposition, had been talking some time ago about the ways of increasing our revenue, or the



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Allowances and  
Perquisites*]

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Perquisites*]

Estimates which are calculated to help them in that way. Personally, I believe it is wrong to expect a Minister of State to purchase a personal car for his state duties. I remember myself and my colleagues in the old Legislative Council feeling that a first class state car should be purchased for His Excellency the Governor and without fear of being criticised at this moment I can say quite frankly that I took a share which I still consider honourable in voting £4,000 for a Nigerian State car for His Excellency. Now, it would have been preposterous, if not bordering on insanity, to expect His Excellency to have purchased that car from his personal resources. On the other hand, you do take a pride, don't you, in seeing the Head of the State drive through in a car worthy of that exalted office?—just dismiss the idea of who is in it for a moment and dismiss the idea of his colour.

Why should a Minister of State take a loan from the Treasury to buy an expensive car, and he must have an expensive car if he is to be about wherever we want him to come to, and why should he secretly wear away under the care and anxiety of refund of this loan? And politics being the game of chance that it is, what guarantee has the Minister that he will be in office long enough to refund the loan by convenient instalments? (*Laughter*).

In my opinion, it is clearly the duty of the state to provide the Minister with a state car, just as it is her duty to provide a car for the Governor or Lieutenant-Governor.

I notice that the Estimates put down £60 per annum as a chauffeur's allowance. In my opinion, speaking quite frankly, a chauffeur's allowance of £60 per annum is inadequate as I am sure that no Minister expects to keep his chauffeur contented at £5 a month. In fact it is no secret to say that there are floor Members of the House who pay their drivers much more.

Entertainment allowance falls within a different category and is extremely difficult to calculate with any degree of fairness as it is subject to so many variables. But he must be very inexperienced in the obligations imposed by high office who imagines that £120 per annum is excessive.

Finally, Mr President, on this item, it must never be lost sight of that the Minister's quarters is a civic building. I believe that civic buildings, like our House of Assembly, should symbolise, in however small a way, the spirit of pride and grandeur in a people. When in a Committee of the old House of Assembly we were debating the plans of this House, we very strongly took the view that the economy axe should not be applied to this House. We should build a house worthy of the East and without trying to embarrass any Westerners in the gallery, I should say that when the Western people came here in 1950 and saw this building, they quickly (I suppose they must have decided it before they recrossed the Niger) scrapped their own House of Assembly which they had put up in a hurry and thought they should have a more dignified building. I am firmly convinced, Sir, that there are certain things you should economise on and certain things



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you should not economise on—there is such a thing as pride and grandeur. I think we should bear in mind that a Minister's house, like the House of Assembly, is a civic building. Ministers come and go but the house remains. The question of Ministers' houses, and this matter generally, which I am trying to invite attention to, is, in my opinion, beyond party politics. I am not advocating Utopian palaces, but I should feel a sense of humiliation if I were taking a foreigner round town and came across an unbecoming quarters for any of our Ministers of State.

That brings me, finally, Sir, to what I consider my humble and tentative salary figures. I hope I have made clear the reasons that actuate me in making the actual arithmetical suggestions which can be inferred from my motions coming in the Committee of Supply. I suggest £750 per annum and £500 per annum for Ministers with and without portfolios respectively. At first sight these figures may look inadequate or even insulting. They may be so if you take them in isolation. But granted the premises to my suggestion, I maintain that they are adequate and leave it to experience to bring home to our Ministers a realisation that my motion has nothing but the purest motive behind it. I have called for a Committee to enter into the question. That sounds to me quite fair and proper for it is contrary to one of the canons of salary fixtures that any set of workmen, however exalted their work and profession, should decide their own wages and proceed to get their own supporters to vote those wages out of public revenue. As I have said before, the figures are purely tentative for the motion calls upon the House to set up a Committee—I would like to emphasise to set up a Committee—to study the problems themselves and report thereon. I contend, Mr President, that the motion aims at the personal good—namely freedom from financial anxiety and embarrassment—of the Ministers themselves and above all the elimination from so high an office of the sordid spirit that seeks to turn everything it touches into gold.

Mr President, I beg to move.

**Mr R. U. Umo-Inyang, M.B.E. (Ikot Ekpene Division):**

Mr President, I rise to second the motion by the honourable A. Ikoku, that a Select Committee be chosen from both sides of this House to go into the question of Ministers' stipends, allowances and perquisites.

In rising to second the motion, I have a few brief remarks to make, the honourable mover having touched on all the points connected therewith. The motion is not made for the fun of making a motion; it is not for spite or slight of persons holding such posts. It is the general considered opinion that the post of a Minister of State is an honorary one and should be treated as such. The monetary privilege attaching to it is to make the holder of the post free from the risk of suffering through being out of pocket.

Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*



**The Financial Secretary:**

Mr President, Sir, in replying to this motion moved by the honourable Mr Ikoku, I should like to make it abundantly clear at the outset that the Government has not the slightest wish to conceal from this House or from the general public details concerning the stipends, allowances, etc., of the Ministers, or to avoid a full discussion on the subject. Indeed, Sir, the Government is at pains so to frame the Estimates that these emoluments can be readily identified, so that all who may be interested in the matter may be able to see clearly, precisely what these emoluments in fact are.

Now, Sir, details of the Estimates, as honourable Members are aware, may be discussed in the Committee of Supply. The Committee of Supply, as I would remind this honourable House, is a Committee of the Whole House, and on that occasion the provisions made in the Estimates for all matters involving public expenditure, including Ministers' salaries, allowances, etc., can be fully discussed. I would also remind the House that six whole days of parliamentary time are reserved for this purpose. It is apparent from the Supplementary Questions on the Order Paper for today that honourable Members are fully aware of the full discussion which takes place in the Committee of Supply and of the right to move amendments to the Estimates as they are at present framed. So, Sir, in these circumstances the Government considers that it is quite unnecessary to appoint a Select Committee for this purpose.

Therefore, Sir, I beg leave to oppose the motion.

**Mr A. J. Ekpe (Opobo Division):**

Mr President, the African has a custom and a tradition in respect of its many and various social institutions, and wherever the African comes into his own to run his own Government, he is bound to operate and perpetuate some of these excellent customs and traditions, and amongst these excellent customs and traditions of the African people is the tradition of selecting and electing their men to hold high offices of state in Government, without regard to the monetary benefits that accrue to such office. I remember, Mr President, that when a Clan Head in my area was installed, he was given the terms of his office according to the ancient tradition of the people, and the people went round and paid him homage. They did not decide to pay him something every month, but there were certain rights and privileges which they gave to him to enjoy as the holder of such office of state. Sometimes we find that in certain areas in Nigeria the Clan Head is allowed a certain percentage or portion of the land to farm, and on certain days of the week or month—according to the custom in various places—people went to work for this man. Now, this is purely a privilege which the man enjoys; in fact, these are the things that make a high office of state a very respectable one in the African sense. What this motion seeks to do is to apply the high office of a Minister of State to the African background and to African tradition. The Minister must not think that the office of state which he holds is a post which



he holds because of the financial benefits that can obtain. That is why there has been competition and rivalry, one man trying to knock out another in order to become a Minister, and this leads to instability of Government. It is hoped that our friends who are in the Government Party will realise that whenever it is possible for an African to come into his own to run his own Government, he must not forget some of the traditions of his forefathers and must try to perpetuate these customs and traditions.

Sir, I beg to support the motion.

**Mr E. O. Eyo (Uyo Division):**

Mr President, I rise to oppose the motion. In doing so, Sir, I want to say that in view of what the Financial Secretary has said, this motion is unnecessary. The honourable mover is aware that he has every opportunity at the Committee stage. He has already filed his amendments to the items of expenditure he proposes to reduce, so why should we waste an hour or so in discussing a motion which could be properly dealt with at the Committee stage?

The mover in moving the motion was not factual. He did not offer any basis for his propositions. He suggested a salary of £750 for a Minister with Portfolio and a salary of £500 to a Minister without Portfolio, but he did not offer any basis. What I inferred from his argument was that the salaries paid to our Ministers were too high, and one would have thought that in trying to press home his argument he would have quoted figures of the salaries that are paid to other Ministers of State, either in this country or throughout the whole world. That, Sir, would have left this House in a position to decide whether the salaries offered here bear any relation to salaries paid to Ministers of State throughout the whole world. In the absence of such factual argument, Sir, we on this side of the House are inclined to treat the motion for what it is worth.

I would like, for the information of the mover of the motion and the honourable Members of this House to deal with this question in relation to what obtains in other countries in the world, giving the area and population and quoting the salaries paid to Ministers. I will begin with Jamaica. Jamaica has an area of 4,706 square miles: population 1,471,602. The Premier, Sir, earns £2,000 a year, and a Minister £1,500. I will now take the Gold Coast. Area 91,843 square miles, population 4,500,000. The Premier earns £3,500 and each Minister earns £3,000. Nigeria has an area of 373,250 square miles and a population of 31,000,000, and a Central Minister earns £2,500 a year; a Central Minister without Portfolio earns £1,800. Northern Nigeria: Population 17 million. A Minister with Portfolio earns £2,000 and a Minister without Portfolio £1,300 a year. Western Region: population 6,500,000. The Premier there earns £2,500, and we have just read in the papers that this sum has been increased by £450 so that he will now earn £2,950. A Minister with Portfolio earns £2,450 and a Minister without Portfolio earns £1,600. Here in the East we are proposing that the Leader of the Government should



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our Ministers any anxiety, and in order to achieve that a Committee should be set up comprising honourable Members of this House whose duty should be to consider what would be adequate stipends, allowances and perquisites that should accrue to the office, the very exalted office of a Minister of State; so that, I submit that any talk about £750 and £500 is irrelevant. That should be the function of the Committee.

I would go further and say that it is also irrelevant to make comparisons with other countries; comparisons in a case like this are odious. The last speaker quoted instances in Jamaica and in other countries of the world to show that our Ministers are not exorbitant in their demands but he did not mention the revenue earned by those countries as compared with this country. Mr President, you have already ruled that all these figures are available in the books of reference, and I do not want to appear repetitive in my arguments. If there is anyone who does not know these facts he can go to the library and make research. There is, however, no point in lifting figures from books of reference relating to salaries of Ministers for purpose of comparisons without correspondingly examining also the revenues and population of the countries concerned in relation to the Eastern Region. In any event, that has no bearing on the motion before the House. If, for instance, a Committee is set up and gets to work and finds that Ministers should earn £5,000 a year, it would be competent for the Committee to say so provided the revenue of the Region can sustain it. That is the work of the Committee but by dealing in figures we seem to be anticipating the work which the proposed Committee is to do. It is wrong to adopt that attitude in debating this motion.

Mr President, it is contrary to natural justice that a man should employ himself and fix his own salary. It is contrary to all human conception of sense of justice that a man should find a job for himself and fix his own salary, particularly when that salary is to come from the pockets of the people, indeed from the pockets of the peasants in the most remote parts of this Region. All that this side of the House is asking for is that quite a simple machinery be set up in accord with equity, commonsense and business sense—a simple machinery to be created by this House—to go into the question of fixing the stipends, allowances and perquisites properly pertaining to the office of a Minister of State. It would be up to that Committee to enquire into the matter and then make recommendations as to what a Minister ought to receive. As I have said, the honourable mover of this motion did say that the figure of £120 for entertainment allowed to a Minister in the Estimates is chicken feed and an insult on a Minister of State, having regard to the fact that a Minister has to entertain his constituents, his supporters and distinguished visitors to the Eastern Region. I think the Ministers themselves appreciate that it is part of their duty, part of their office to entertain personalities and important figures who may from time to time visit the Eastern Region. To say that £10 a month will be adequate, will be ample, that is insulting. (*Cries of "Revenue"*). It might well be that such a Committee may also be asked to find means



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whereby to stimulate revenue increase. It may well be. But Mr President, we should not draw a red herring over this simple motion in an attempt to confuse the issue. The honourable mover could have suggested by way of an amendment on the Estimates that a Minister with Portfolio should earn a salary of £750 per annum and a Minister without Portfolio £500, if it had been his intention to fix the salary of Ministers. He could no doubt have answered any points that would have arisen in the course of the debate. But Sir, the honourable mover was very careful not to do that well knowing that the onus of doing so should be on the Committee when set up.

Now, Sir, the mover also mentioned the question of a car. Well, Sir, in my view that was purely a point to reinforce his argument. It is an insult to any Minister of State that he should go out begging for money with which to buy a car which he must use for the service of the state. Mr President, we have heard so much of what is happening in the Gold Coast regarding the raising of loans by Ministers. We don't want that repeated here. What we want is an equitable system—justice for all. We want an equitable system and we want fair distribution of amenities and privileges. We say that a proper machinery should be set up to do this work so as to save the Ministers from unnecessary anxieties which sometimes haunt Ministers holding public offices. We believe that if you save Ministers of that anxiety they can concentrate more on discharging their public offices more efficiently. We say this Committee should be created. The Committee then should devise means of taking that burden away from Ministers so that they would not have to think about the wherewithall with which to entertain their supporters or important foreigners coming to the Eastern Region. Sir, it may well be that in the course of investigating the matter, the Committee might be of the opinion that £500 is not quite sufficient even for entertaining allowance alone. It may well be! We are not going to tie the hands of the Committee, Sir. It is not our business to do so. Otherwise the proper discharge of their function by the Committee may be deterred by this House. Sir, I say it is absolutely relevant to think that the purpose of this motion is to reduce the stipend of a Minister or his allowance for that matter. That a proper machinery should be created by this House which should investigate and enquire into the expenses likely to be incurred by a Minister in order that this House may make adequate provisions for the Ministers is what the motion seeks to do. That is all this motion means. We do not want our Ministers to be cheated. This motion is not an attempt to amend the Estimates, and I think the Government should be in a position to support it. After all we have repeatedly said that this is a peoples' Government. If we are sincere then the people should decide what their Ministers should earn. It is the peoples' Government! And so it is—the Ministers are messengers of the people—servants of the people and . . . (*I dont' know whom you represent?*) (*Interruption and laughter*).



## Ayes

## Noes

Chief U. Onu-Chima.  
Mr P. N. Okeke.  
Mr E. Chidolue.  
Mr G. E. Okeke.  
Mr K. Kiri.  
Mr N. W. Abengowe.  
Chief N. Essien.  
Mr L. O. Uzoigwe.  
Mr U. U. Eko.  
Mr B. N. I. Edet.  
Mr A. G. Umoh.  
Mallam U. Yushau.  
Mr J. E. Eyo.  
Mr O. Oketa.  
Chief N. N. Anyika.  
Mr V. A. Nwankwo.  
Mr E. A. Agim.  
Mr D. E. Akilo.  
Mr M. Obayi.  
Mr D. O. Aligweke.  
Mr N. O. Onwudiwe.  
Mr R. O. Iwuagwu.  
Mr J. O. Ihekwoaba.  
Rev. M. N. Ibe.  
Mr S. E. K. Iwueke.  
Mr N. L. P. Apreala.  
Mr G. I. Oko.  
Chief G. N. Agbas'ere.  
Mr K. J. N. Okpokam.  
Mr A. Nwachukwu.

## Tellers for the Noes:

Mr V. K. Onyeri.  
Mr S. O. Achara.

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E.:**

Mr President, I beg to move the motion in my name on the Order Paper. This reads—

“That the Opposition be represented on all Committees set up by Standing Orders to wit: Committee on Standing Orders, House Committee, Public Petitions Committee, Standing Committees, Select Committees, Public Accounts Committee and the Standing Committee on Finance.”

I submit, Mr President, that this is a simple and straightforward motion drawing its breath from the perfectly intelligible proposition that a Parliamentary Committee should itself reflect the Parliament that set it up. This proposition in turn derives from an honest acceptance of true democratic principles. Where such principles are in question and either brute force or the tyranny of numbers is allowed unbridled sway it is useless hoping that anything can come out of a motion such as this. Of the seven Committees enumerated in the motion, Standing Orders section 62 subsection (2) lays down that “each of the three Standing Committees A, B, C, shall consist as nearly as may be of one-third of the Members of the House . . . and the Committee of Selection shall have regard to the composition of the House in their nomination of Standing Committees.” The words



underlined, Mr President, portray the spirit and intention of Westminster as of the motion under discussion, namely that in appointing Committees, the Committee of Selection shall have regard to the composition of the House or, as I said earlier, every Committee of the House should reflect the House itself. Talking about the Select Committee, Mr President, I think it is true that in parliamentary practice care is generally taken that an expert or more on the question under discussion is put on the Select Committee almost invariably including the mover of the motion to set up such a Committee. As a matter of fact . . .

**The President:**

The sitting is suspended till 3 o'clock p.m.

*Sitting resumed 3 p.m.*

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E.:**

Mr President, I was discussing the Select Committee this morning and I said that in parliamentary practice the Select Committee always contains an expert or more on the subject under discussion and as a matter of fact the practice has gained currency at Westminster whereby the mover of a motion to appoint a Select Committee is permitted to include in his motion the names of such Members as he would wish to serve on the Committee having, of course, previously obtained their consent. Such a mover always, of course, does his best to make the Committee reflect both sides of the House.

The principle, therefore, behind the setting up of a Select Committee is (1) reflection of all sides of the House, (2) the inclusion of an expert or more on the question under review and finally (3) the making sure that sufficient laymen on the subject are put on the Committee to lend flavour and commonsense to what might possibly degenerate into pedantry and academism.

I should make it clear that the Opposition is already represented on a number of those Committees I have listed in the motion. A study of the Votes and Proceedings of this House for the 15th January last will reveal that this side of the House is already represented (I shall not raise the issue of effective representation) on three of the remaining Committees, i.e., Committee on Standing Orders, House Committee and Public Accounts Committee.

It therefore remains for us to invite the attention of honourable Members to the two Committees on which the Opposition are accorded no representation:—the Public Petitions Committee and the Standing Committee on Finance.

My experience in the old Legislative Council has taught me that a Petition gets the best chance of getting all its merits and demerits thrashed out if parliamentary "friends and foes"—I use the words "friends and foes" in inverted commas—if parliamentary "friends and foes" sit round a table and give it a really searching scrutiny. It is something like a jury, Sir, sitting round a table to advise the judge—in this case the Chairman. This arrangement insulates public affairs



from the vagaries of politics and is best calculated to achieve satisfactory results with the petitioner on the one hand and the body politic on the other. It is, therefore, essential in my opinion that a Public Petitions Committee should, like other Committees, reflect both sides of the House.

We come now, Sir, to the Standing Committee on Finance. It is unthinkable, Mr President, that public finances should be sheltered from scrutiny by the Opposition and that a party in power—immaterial whether now or tomorrow—should select their men and their men alone to advise the Executive over the expenditure of public money. I say, Mr President, it is ludicrous, unthinkable, it is the very travesty of democracy and must, of course, stand condemned in the eyes of all fair-minded men, no matter to which side of the House they belong. Mr President, I should not be surprised if Members came to this motion with their minds already made up. Indeed we are used to that kind of thing, but we have a consolation. People who cried down our motion after another in this House have got up twelve months later and given that idea their attention. If we are to escape what I might call the short-sighted policy of throwing our weight about, if we are to take this opportunity of being great, I am appealing to my friends on the other side of the House to dare to be great and discuss a general principle rather than fix their gaze on what will suit them today. Opportunism has its day; it will not last forever. This is God's world and men can dare to be great by taking advantage of the crest of the billows of opportunities as they offer themselves.

Mr President, I beg to move.

**Mr A. J. Ekpe (Opobo Division):**

Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

**Mr A. J. Ekpe:**

Mr President, Sir, it is my pleasure to speak in support of the motion which has just been ably proposed by the honourable Mr Ikoku. In fact, he has covered so much ground that I have not much to say except to repeat what I have said here a day or two ago that a party in power must govern listening. It is not to say that the party now in Government will be forever in power because, as already stated, no one knows what is going to happen tomorrow; politics is a game of chance. It is very sad indeed in the political history of the Eastern Region to find that certain political parties practise consistent inconsistencies. In fact, what has happened this morning reminds many honourable Members of the type of "politics" that has been going on in the Eastern Region in the past few years. Very little statesmanship has been practised and a great deal of "politics." That is why there is so much difficulty in trying to get the various minority groups in this Region to work together because of certain people believing in one thing and doing another.

The Eastern Region should be careful that lip service is not paid to the course of democracy. I hope, Mr President, that a simple



uncontentious motion as the present motion is will receive the support of all sections of the House because it is a motion which seeks to give the Opposition an opportunity to have a say in whatever the Government is doing. In fact, to borrow the words of the Leader of Government "the Opposition will have its say, but the Government will have its way." We have nothing to quarrel about that at all. We only feel that in order to give the Government Party a clear conscience before the Eastern Region and before Nigeria as a whole, the party in Government should accord the Opposition that privilege of being represented on all the Committees and of being given an opportunity of expressing their views, whatever the decisions and conclusions may be.

Mr President, I beg to support.

**The Minister of Local Government:**

Mr President, the honourable mover has made two misleading statements which should be corrected. Firstly, that he led the House to believe that the Opposition was prevented from scrutinising public accounts. That is not true, Sir. In the Public Accounts Committee, a Member of the Opposition was selected to serve, in the person of the honourable O. Arikpo. Certainly, it is for the Government to decide whether it is good policy to have the Opposition on the Standing Committee on Finance or not. If we had kept out the Opposition from the Public Accounts Committee, where the actual scrutiny takes place, the statement made by my honourable friend would have been in order.

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E.:**

Mr Chairman, I rise on a point of explanation. (*Cries of "What point?"*)

**The President:**

Will the honourable Member give way?

**The Minister of Local Government:**

I am not prepared to give way, Sir.

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E.:**

Yes, but . . .

**The Minister of Local Government:**

You will wind up.

**The President:**

The honourable Member will resume his seat.

**The Minister of Local Government:**

The second misleading statement, was an act of omission, he left the House under the impression that even the Opposition is not represented on the most important Committee of this House, the Committee of Selection. The Committee of Selection is regarded in parliamentary circles as the most important. In that Committee, we have two Members of the Opposition, in the persons of the honourable A. J. Ekpe and honourable M. W. Ubani. These two omissions are very unfair. I will not go to the extent of saying that the act is dishonest, but surely we want an Opposition that is responsible and



fair in its criticisms so that it will be possible for both the Government and Opposition Parties to work harmoniously.

The motion requests the representation of the Opposition on all Committees of the House, for reasons stated by the honourable mover. Government welcomes this opportunity to clarify its conception of the existence and function of the Opposition in this Region.

Excluding the thirteen representatives from the Southern Cameroons the total membership of this honourable House is ninety-two made, up as follows: official Members, five; elected Members, eighty-four; special Members, three. Of the non-official Members, seventy-six are adherents of the Government Party and ten are Members of the two Opposition Parties.

If we analysed the composition of the latter, it will be found that eight of the Opposition membership hail from Calabar Province, one from Ogoja Province, and one from Owerri Province. It so happens that ten Members of the Government Party out of eighteen hail from Calabar Province, thirteen out of fourteen are from Ogoja Province, and twenty-one out of twenty-two come from Owerri Province. It is necessary to mention the provincial origins of the honourable Members because that is the basis of membership allocations on most of the Committees of the House, according to the Standing Orders. (*Hear! Hear!*).

I see nothing shameful in mentioning what is definitely a fact and what is consistent without Standing Orders.

Since the assumption of office, this Government has not hesitated to make it known that not only does it recognise the existence of the Opposition but it goes so far as to humour them by identifying them as a formidable Opposition and I think they believe it too!

In the Estimates which we are debating in this Session of the House, provision was made for the Leader of the Opposition, as an earnest of our intention to co-operate and to implement our policy in this respect. We hope to provide an office in due course, within these precincts, to facilitate the work of the Opposition.

The Government of the Eastern Region is proud to officially recognise the Opposition as a parliamentary institution. Reflecting on the last century when John Cam Hobhouse half-jokingly used the term "Her Majesty's Opposition," to give it a place in constitutional convention, I feel proud to be an instrument through which the Government Party can expostulate its belief in the existence of the Opposition.

Some one has said that no Government can be long secure without a formidable Opposition. In fact, "It is as much the duty of an Opposition to criticise as it is of a Government to govern." So long as the criticism of the Opposition is well informed, responsible, fair and honest, so long will such an Opposition win the respect and esteem of the Members of this House. It is true that day to day arguments of the Opposition and of minorities, not overlooking the back-benchers of the Government Party do modify Government action, on matter how imperceptibly.



Sir Ernest Barker, a student of the British Party System, lucidly sums up what I have been trying to explain, in one of the recent publications of the Hansard Society, to which this House proudly belongs. With the permission of the chair, may I read a pertinent extract:—

“The term Her Majesty’s Opposition is one of the most significant and important in British politics. It signifies that a single nation, one in a common allegiance to a common way of life symbolised by its Queen, is none-the-less also two—two as well as one, and two at the same time that it is one. Her Majesty has her actual advisers, who form the Cabinet: she has also her potential advisers, who form the anti-Cabinet. The existence of such an anti-Cabinet, or organised Opposition to the Acting Cabinet, is the salt of the British system of parliamentary democracy. It supplies the constant criticism which is as necessary as constructive creation. It fans the flame of discussion and keeps it bright and clear. It gives the possibility of an alternative Government—an actual possibility, actually present and visible—to which the nation can look if it feels the need for a new hand at the helm. The general development of Her Majesty’s Opposition, and the general recognition of its function (a recognition which, has gone to the length of the parliamentary provision of a salary for its leader), are the clearest signs of the health of the British system of Government. But this development, and this recognition, are connected with, and are the results of, the growing tendency towards a clear two-party system. An organised and coherent Opposition is only possible under such a system; and an organised and coherent Opposition is a necessary condition of healthy democratic discussion and of a proper balance of all the factors and organs of democracy.”

I have quoted this at length, Sir, in order to assure the Opposition that we on the Government side of the House welcome criticism from them so long as it is for the best interest of the country’s welfare and progress. The words quoted are laudable; they should transform the relationship between the Government and the Opposition into a fraternalism, at least on the parliamentary level. In the light of what we have been experiencing from the Opposition Bench since we assumed office, I am not convinced that the Opposition has been fair in all its criticisms or has put the welfare of the public above the plane of bitterness, recrimination, pettiness and the common temptation to play to the gallery by making political capital in order unduly to embarrass the Government.

I am yet to be persuaded to believe that an Opposition of ten Members in a House of ninety-two (excluding Southern Cameroons Members) deserves the privilege claimed for it in this motion. From the utterances of these honourable gentlemen, I have reason to doubt whether they have successfully graduated from a small-minded dark room into a state where they could be regarded as large-hearted and broad-minded to form an intelligent Opposition. (*Hear! Hear!*). Indeed, an



intelligent Opposition that is responsible and fair-minded will win our co-operation and support, but certainly not an Opposition which remembers its losses at the polls and allows same to becloud its views.

Let me make it quite clear to the Opposition that this Government Party will not allow itself to be bullied by any political mischief-makers. We are strong enough to resist any attempt to introduce into this House the well-known stock-in-trade of holier-than-thou critics who believe that unless they hold the reins themselves the horse will run amok. We shall issue no threats, but this much the Opposition must understand: we shall resist force with force, if they dared to start the old game of confusion in this House. We shall not allow a microscopic minority to plunge the Eastern Region once more into chaos.

I should have viewed the motion before the House as having been animated by a desire to reflect the admirable aspects of British parliamentary life on our own system, even though we are still at an inchoate stage. But from what I heard from the very lips of the honourable mover, when he started speaking to the motion, it is obvious that he prefers a fight, and not a fair one at that. I can assure him of our willingness and preparedness to deal heavy blows on him and his small crew of noise-makers should the necessity arise. I therefore appeal to him and his deputy Fuehrer to be more dignified and restrained and let us bury the hatchet and smoke the pipe of peace. By their utterances in this House and by their demeanour we shall know whether the Opposition Parties in the Eastern House of Assembly can measure up to the highest traditions of parliamentary democracy.

My point is that success can crown our efforts, and the request of the honourable Member can easily be met, if both the Opposition and Government Parties would be mutually forbearing in their dealings with each other. Sir Ivor Jennings in his classic work entitled *Cabinet Government* said: "In fact, Opposition and Government are carried on alike by agreement. The minority agrees that the majority must govern and the majority agrees that the minority should criticise."

Of the four special Committees in the House, namely, Committee of Selection, Standing Orders Committee, House Committee and Public Petitions Committee, the Opposition is represented on the first three which are among the most important Committees in any Parliament. Of the two Select Committees—Public Accounts Committee and the Standing Committee on Finance, the Opposition is represented on the former.

The Government Party would have gladly co-operated to see that Members of the Opposition Party were placed in all the Special and Select Committees mentioned, but for the fact that Standing Orders limit membership on those Committees strictly on provincial basis. Naturally, we cannot overlook the claim of our ten members from Calabar Province, in favour of eight from the Opposition in more than half the number of the Committee available, as it would be unfair and unjust, and it would be impolitic for the Government Party to be unfair to its Members just to please the Opposition. The same



argument holds good for our thirteen Members from Ogoja Province and twenty-one from Owerri Province. Placed in this dilemma, we decided to split the Committees between the Government and Opposition Parties, in the way we had done, which is consistent with parliamentary usage, and our Standing Orders.

The usual practice in parliamentary circles is to distribute membership in Committees "in proportion to the number of their adherents in the House." I am quoting, Sir, from a well-known authority on constitutional law. That is what we have done and we do not propose to make any changes now. It is, however, true that the Government contemplates amending the present Standing Orders to permit increased membership of Committees of the House, after which the request contained in the motion could be reconsidered.

In the circumstances, Government cannot support this motion.

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E.:**

Wisdom always comes late. If I had for one moment thought that this was an opportunity for my friend the Minister of Local Government to speak as though he was speaking to his house boys, I should have given him his desert as he very well knows. I shall not accept any insult in word or intention or any threats whatsoever; I had thought that probably my friend would be called to order, but he had his latitude—I suppose because it is his day. (*Hear! Hear!*).

When I rose to speak to a point of explanation I was going to correct a very misleading accusation that I had said or implied that the Opposition was not represented on the Public Accounts Committee. I expect the stenographers are the best evidence on the point in question. Now reading my comments again, with your permission, Sir, I said that study of the Votes and Proceedings of this House for 15th January last will reveal that the Opposition is already represented on three of the remaining Committees, that is, the Committee on Standing Orders, the House Committee and the Public Accounts Committee, and it therefore remained for us to invite the attention of honourable Members to the two Committees on which they are not represented, these two Committees being the Public Petitions Committee and the Standing Committee on Finance. My friend the Minister of Local Government must have found it convenient to forget what I had said in order to make a point already reached before listening to me. May I respectfully suggest that such political stupidity should not be tolerated in this House. (*Cries of "Shame"*). We are tired of tricks, we are tired of words not backed by deeds. We want to see deeds. This Region has been fed on words for too long. (*Cries of "Shame"*).

**The President:**

Order! Order!

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E.:**

Since I came to this Session I have very studiously refrained from getting on anybody's nerves, but if Members accept that attitude of mind for weakness they are living in fool's paradise. I shall not



tolerate any nonsense from anybody. Mr President, my friend the last speaker tried to fool the House into claiming originality, and magnanimity for that matter, for providing in the estimate, which he will tell you tomorrow if he finds it convenient, was not drawn up by his Government, allowance for the Leader of the Opposition. This very gentleman was Leader of the Opposition in the West, and was so cold-footed as not to mention this matter of allowance there.

With your permission, Mr President, I will read from the minutes of the Finance Committee of the 3rd December, 1952.

**The President:**

The honourable Member must be relevant.

**Mr A. Ikoiku, O.B.E.:**

It is relevant. (*Cries of "Shame"*).

**The President:**

Order! The use of this "shame" business will shortly become unparliamentary. It is practically an unseemly interruption.

**Mr A. Ikoiku, O.B.E.:**

Thank you, Sir.

**The President:**

The honourable Member may proceed.

**Mr A. Ikoiku, O.B.E.:**

If I may quote from my own words, in the last Finance Committee meeting that we held before this very party upset this House, and it was dissolved.

"Ours is a young Parliament and presumably we hope to follow the pattern and tradition of the Parliament at Westminster in major parliamentary matters. It is suggested we should be guided by principle in discussing issues raised in the delicate business of adapting British parliamentary traditions to those of our own and entirely divest our minds of personalities. More so as traditions begun today may last for ages to come.

With particular reference to the value of the official "Opposition" in the preservation of democratic government, it is suggested that the "Opposition" should, as in Britain, not only be nurtured and deliberately encouraged but sustained by payment, again as in Britain, of a salary to its leader. If the Western House of Assembly has not thought of this hitherto one can only express surprise. But the principle should certainly apply there with equal force. The position is somewhat different in the North where there is virtually no "Opposition" and in the House of Representatives where an "Opposition" though in theory quite conceivable has so far not emerged in practice.

With regard to payment of a salary to the Leader of the Government the position in Britain is obscure . . ."

**The Minister of Local Government:**

Point of order. (*Interruption*).



**The President:**

Order! The honourable Member will resume his seat, a point of order has been made in accordance with Standing Orders.

**The Minister of Local Government:**

Point of Order. Standing Order 27 (2). I speak to the Chair not to you. Mr President, a Member must confine his observations to the subject under discussion and may not introduce matter irrelevant thereto. The honourable Gentleman . . .

**The President:**

The honourable Minister may resume his seat and the honourable Member may proceed.

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E.:**

"With regard to payment of a salary to the Leader of the Government the position in Britain is obscure . . ."

**The President:**

I have already asked the honourable Member where the relevancy is.

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E.:**

I have yet to come to it. The next sentence will.

" . . . where the office and that of Prime Minister are not combined in the same person. But where the same person holds both offices, it is the practice to pay a special salary to the holder. The Western House of Assembly has given recognition to this usage by allowing the leader a salary of £2,500 per annum as against £2,000 for his brother Ministers." (*Interruption*).

**The President:**

The honourable Member will resume his seat when the President has risen. May I refer him on the question of raising points of order to the Standing Order concerned, No. 28. When the question of order has been stated, the Member who raises it shall resume his seat and no other Member shall rise, after which the Member who was addressing the Council may continue his speech. The honourable Member may proceed—and please be relevant.

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E.:**

I have gone into all this to impress the House with the simple fact that all this "magnanimity" of the Minister of Local Government providing for the Leader of the Opposition is bunkum. It is all right in the Owerri Hall, but not here. You can't fool everybody here. In any case there is . . .

**The President:**

The honourable Member should be relevant to the motion.

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E.:**

The point I was trying to make, Sir, is sufficiently clear, and I would have loved to see my friend stick to the rules of relevancy that he has been citing, and not to enter into a lengthy rigmarole that is just on the borderline of being unparliamentary. He talks about honesty—



I should have thought that he would have been called to order, but I do not question the Chair—when he talked about honesty and all the rest of it. But I am encouraged, Sir, by the Ibo adage that it is the mad man who is always asking others “are you mad?”

I am quite sure, Mr President, that all that I wanted to say I have said. I repudiate very strongly, very vehemently, the accusation that I was trying to mislead the House in saying what my friend alléges he heard me say, that the Opposition is not represented on the Public Accounts Committee, and I would even go to the length of asking for an apology for that statement. It is amazing that people can jump up in this House and put words into one's mouth and then proceed to argue on false premises of their own fabrication.

**Mr E. O. Eyo (Uyo Division):**

Sir, I rise to move that the question be now put.

*Question—that the question be now put, put and agreed to.*

*Original question put accordingly and negatived.*

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E.:**

Mr President, I beg to move the third motion standing in my name on the Order Paper. It reads as follows:—

“That a small Committee of Enquiry be appointed by this House to take evidence and make recommendations on the administration of the Enugu Catering Rest House with particular reference to the care and comfort of guests.”

I might be allowed the indulgence of a few words on the history of the present Catering Rest House, at least, of the Catering Rest House in its present form.

Originally this was a small Rest House about the size of most others in the country, although I do not preclude the possibility that with the lapse of time and with so many more residents here it could have grown in the natural order of things. But, the fact is that at the beginning it had only eight chalets when this House of Assembly was to be built it was suggested that a number of chalets should be attached to the House to provide catering arrangements for the use of Members whenever they came up here.

In considering the suggestion in one of its Committees, the old House of Assembly felt that it would be a better commercial proposition to attach whatever number of chalets were proposed for Members as an annex to the House of Assembly to the then existing Catering Rest House as an enlargement, and to enlarge consequentially the lounge and dining hall. The idea at the back of the suggestion was to make the entire fabric available for use and for revenue making when the House was not sitting. But we added a proviso that preference should be given every time whether the House was in Session or not in Session, to Members of the House who are always coming and going on Government business. The administration accepted that proposition, and the extensions followed in due course.



Now, Mr President, the Catering Rest House here, as indeed all the big ones like Ibadan and Kaduna and so on, is a very vital point of contact between the two colours and is therefore of tremendous social value and one cannot over-emphasise the absolute necessity of making the administration of our Catering Rest Houses completely colour free. (*Hear! Hear!*).

Now, Catering Rest Houses are places where you can drive in and mix on equal and friendly terms with people of races not your own, and I repeat the social value of such contact cannot be exaggerated, and where that value is in jeopardy it should be our first concern to enquire into the situation. Now, I find what I have to say very difficult indeed personally, because in the period of administration I have in mind, two ladies and a gentleman are concerned and I want to pay at the outset my personal tribute to Mrs Dow. Her success in the administration of the Rest House was signal, and that was due primarily to her own personal qualities. She had a human touch—she was so very friendly and she was very eager and willing to come down from her pontifical chair and ask you “how you do” and have a chat over this and that—gestures that might not mean much taken singly, but gestures that had a cumulative value. Friendly, yes, but she was firm and she was perfectly unostentatious in her impartiality. I watched with keenness and admiration her ability to balance between claims and to bring calm in the face of every embarrassing situation.

In saying this of Mrs Dow, I do not wish to detract in any way from what one who is more familiar with Mrs Leigh-Morgan has said about her in the Visitor's Book. Unfortunately, her period of administration was so brief, and I was only here twice and on each occasion for a very short time.

I have looked through the Visitor's Book and I find that people are full of praise for her. I say nothing at all to detract from that, but I think in making a public statement, wisdom lies on the side of speaking from the heart. I shall try, therefore, not to rush in where angels fear to tread. I invite honourable Members to run through the Visitor's Book, as a simple slack moment exercise, both during the administration of Mrs Leigh-Morgan and up to the present. If you did, a few opposites would strike your attention. Some are full of praise for the boys and some say that they have never seen stewards and cooks of that type throughout Nigeria. As a matter of fact, some American visitors went to the extent of saying that this Rest House compared very favourably with some of the big rest houses in the United States, and they went on to add rather humourously that they in the United States were supposed to have a very high standard. I have sufficient American friends here to evaluate that statement—I am British, and I am everything British, both in admiring their good points and in not sparing the British in the little things they do upside down.

I would draw the attention of this House, if I may, Mr President, to a few isolated instances of remarks in the book, in the hope that they



might give an impression of the administration—the “post-Dow” administration, up to the present.

On the 23rd September last year, a guest wrote—“It would be much appreciated if there were some one to take bookings from time to time. I have waited from 6.10 to 6.30 p.m. without anyone in the office.”

On the 24th the lady supervisor had written—“So sorry about this. I am here from 7.30 a.m. till 9 p.m. with a couple of hours off in the afternoon and Christopher is there all day, but yesterday he had to leave for a few minutes to take a boy to hospital. These things do happen you know, it is unfortunate that you came at that time.” That I would say was an open letter, and coming from a lady it would soften a heart of stone.

On the 14th November a guest wrote—“The service today was disgraceful. I was informed that there was no cold chop. Ten minutes later cold chop was produced. What is the reason for this complete lack of organisation?”

On 24th November another guest wrote—“When is Mrs Dow coming back? I have been coming to this Rest House for years and it has become famous from the time Mrs Dow took over the management. Mrs Dow’s administration was distinguished by its efficiency, its courtesy, and its transparent honesty.”

On the 7th January this year, a guest wrote—“How much longer do we have to be served with rancid butter?” And then a turn in the tone of replies. The supervisor (I mention no names) wrote back—“Until fresh butter comes from Vom.” (*Laughter*).

Under entries for the 7th January, but without a specific date, another guest wrote—“We had a most uncomfortable visit, in the first place we had to chase the steward to change the sheets as they were definitely dirty. We had a job to get a cup of tea at tea-time, on Friday, and on Saturday had to go to the dining-room to get it.”

On 31st January another guest—(sorry to worry honourable Members but how can I give you an impression?) “I am given to understand that there is a supervisor, but supervision is conspicuously lacking. Chalets are nasty, dirty, and unattended. Chalet boys do exactly as they please. They might feel up to producing tea or they might not—usually not. Beds are left unmade. Drinking water is a myth, clean towels a thing of the past.”

Here I would beg leave to mention the name of the author of this. A.D.O., Idah. Under that comment, there is confirmation by another guest. “I certainly agree with the above.” (Signed)—D.O., Idah. The next morning came the reply from another official—“Nonsense.”

Mr President, I hope I have succeeded in giving the House an impression of this steep gradient in which the administration has risen from courtesy to the dreaded English word “Nonsense.”

All the comments I have quoted are with one single exception made by non-Africans,



Mr President, I will pass on to another aspect of the inconveniences guests are subjected to under the new administration—the irritating regulations. A cheque is not accepted at the rest house now, as it was in the old days. It is not accepted unless it is a cheque on an Enugu Bank. I suppose there is a reason behind this, and that some person, I am sorry to say a European, issued a cheque to the rest house and the cheque was subsequently dishonoured and from thenceforth a rule was made that cheques should not be accepted except on an Enugu Bank. I ask, Mr President, how on earth cheques on Enugu Bank are beyond dishonouring? What do you do if I pay a cheque at the counter and then drive away? You will phone Enugu. What next? The cheque stands dishonoured. I admit there is the twin difficulty of time and place, but I think that this ruling is very insulting to Members and Civil Servants resident in this Region.

In these days of partition, I think we might end up with regionalising scrutiny of cheques! Certainly the address of every honourable Member is on record and that of every Civil Servant in the Region and a dishonoured cheque could always be sent back.

We all know that when a cheque is dishonoured, the drawer himself stands, to some degree dishonoured, and nobody would throw about cheques for the fun of throwing them about. Certainly if a stranger, and by stranger I mean a non-resident, comes to dine, he should buy his ticket, as is a time-honoured practice in Britain and everywhere else. There is a check and there is a bureau for that job, and I certainly think that a Member while he is here should be able to say on the spur of the moment to a chum, "Now, let us have a glass of beer and what about lunch?" Particularly between the morning and afternoon Sessions of this House. And, Mr President, one can be out of pocket to the extent of 3s 6d at any one moment and a man should not be expected to pay 3s 6d over the counter just because he has chosen to ask a friend to dine. That the transaction could not be recorded and a bill presented at the end, appears to me to be a little teasing. I do not say that it is not necessary for accounting purposes, but I think honourable Members will agree that it is inconvenient, to say the least.

There is a regulation that twelve hours' notice is required for lunch. Mr President, twelve hours is a day—a working day. If I have to give twelve hours' notice before I have lunch here, coming from Arochuku then it means I have to get up at midnight and tell them I will come in to lunch. Another problem is telecommunications, which is a Central subject. How could you give twelve hours' notice for lunch when coming from Mamfe or Bamenda and other parts of our difficult country, for transport. This is the most teasing of all the regulations. In an ordinary up-to-date rest house it should be a matter of pleasure, both to the supervisor and the guest, that you could walk in and have lunch at no notice at all, because the more that dine the more revenue you make. If I have to give twelve hours'



Board is not performing the duties imposed upon it properly. It is for either the present Board, or a reformed one, to enquire into these matters, and it is Government's view that it would be of little use to have a small committee to make enquiries today, with probably more complaints coming in the following day.

Sir, I beg to oppose.

**Mr E. O. Eyo:**

Mr President, I beg to move that the question be now put.

*Question that the question be now put, put and agreed to.*

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E.:**

I have not replied.

**The President:**

The honourable Member has waited a long time. The Standing Order states that a question is fully put when the Ayes and Noes have been collected. Nevertheless I shall allow the honourable Member to reply.

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E.:**

I regret, Mr President, that the honourable the Civil Secretary did not give us the names of the two ex-officio members and the three appointed members of this Board; that might have thrown some light on the point at issue. I would have liked it better if when the honourable the Civil Secretary said that the Government were prepared to strengthen the present Board, he had not qualified that statement by saying "if it was found necessary." Then I would have gathered a different impression. But if, on the face of all that I have tried to say, Government still reserves the right when looking into these affairs to decide whether it is necessary or not to strengthen the Board, then it only invites us to say with, Sir, great respect to the Civil Secretary's office (and of course he knows, to his person) that the points raised have not indeed been answered.

**Mr E. O. Eyo:**

Mr President, I move that the question be now put.

*Question—that the question be now put, put and agreed to.*

*Original question put accordingly and negatived.*

**Mr V. K. Onyeri (Port Harcourt Division):**

Mr President, Sir, I rise to move the motion which stands in my name which reads as follows:—

"That this House urges the Eastern Government to institute a Commission of Inquiry forthwith into the workings of the present Port Harcourt Town Council."

Mr President, I know that the time limit is going against me and I shall have to be brief in presenting this motion before the House. First of all I must say, Sir, that the President of the Port Harcourt Town Council with some members of the staff have made the Council a den of corruption. I have eight charges to prefer against the Council.

- (1) Organised corruption and bribery.
- (2) Organised graft and racketeering.



- (3) Nepotism.
- (4) Favouritism.
- (5) Administrative incompetency.
- (6) Oppression.
- (7) Official victimisation.
- (8) Misuse of Council Funds.

In dealing with charge No. (1), I would like to deal with stall allocations, but, Sir, Standing Order 27 (3) may be against me and I shall have to leave that section for the moment. However, Sir, it is known in Port Harcourt that the stalls built with a £24,000 loan from the Regional Government Fund were all sold—stalls were purchased by some people who were not traders—at prices ranging from £10, £30, to £50. With the result that over 300 Diobu market men and women who should as of right have these stalls were refused allocation.

*Appointment of Staff:* It is well known in Port Harcourt that people with Cambridge Certificate purchase their new posts with about £50 to £70 in the present Port Harcourt Town Council.

It is equally well known, Sir, in Port Harcourt that even the present holder of the post of Town Clerk is a Class III certificate holder from a local school and therefore we submit, Sir, that a man with such a qualification is not qualified for the post. We maintain that a second class man of the type we have is not fit to hold the post of Town Clerk of the first municipality in the Eastern Region. It is a disgrace not only to Port Harcourt but to the Region. We had a barrister trained for that post, one in the United Kingdom in the person of Mr Anisiobi, who was selected in the United Kingdom through the Nigerian Government; and because this man failed to agree to this organised corruption and bribery these councillors had to kick him out of his job.

The former Town Engineer, Mr Okolo, educated at Ohio University, because he refused to join certain councillors and some members of the staff in this organised corruption and bribery, his appointment had to be terminated.

Dr Ozo, the Council's Medical Officer of Health, educated at Ibadan University, because he refused to stoop to this corruption and bribery his appointment was terminated.

The same thing happened to the headmaster—Mr Agim, because he had a small quarrel with a fellow staff and refused to grease the palm of a councillor his appointment was terminated.

Charge No. (2) Award of Contracts: It is known at Port Harcourt that the councillors distributed the award of the £24,000 contract for market stalls to themselves. It is also known that the councillors with some members of the staff have been carrying away the Council's cement for their own private use.

It is also known, Sir, at Port Harcourt that some councillors and some members of the staff are converting the Township labourers and property to their own private purposes.



Charges Nos. (3) and (4): I have to state that only members and staff supporters of these few councillors are given employment and contracts.

Charge No. (5): Sir, streets and other services in Port Harcourt are no longer being attended to—only the building and allocation of market stalls where these councillors collect illegal money—is the only thing they do—with the result that today our streets have been neglected. The Port Harcourt Motor Park is an eyesore. You all know that Port Harcourt is generally known as a Garden City but unfortunately since the present councillors took over the realm of affairs the Garden City is no longer a Garden City but a city full of weeds.

Charges Nos. (6) and (7): I must say, Sir, that when the women at Diobu Market and the women fish traders at the Creek Road Fish Market demonstrated against the selling of the market stalls the Town Council had to charge their workers to beat up these women. Many of them are married women, but they were brutally openly assaulted in the open market.

Some cases in connection with these crimes are now pending in court and therefore there is no need for me to continue with same. Some councillors from Diobu whose duty it is to protect the interest of the people under them, had to conspire shamelessly to harm one Mr Udozo, the Secretary of market men and women of Diobu, because he refused and exposed these councillors how they collected money from people to allocate the Diobu Market Stalls to them.

**The President:**

The honourable Member is out of order.

**Mr V. K. Onyeri:**

Charge No. (8): I must state that these shameless councillors had to employ the services of a barrister at £600 per annum. The barrister accepted this offer with the understanding that he would appear in court to defend the cases these councillors had pending. Sir, if this Commission of Enquiry is appointed, she will go into the whole allocations in detail. Sir, if a commission is appointed and the charges preferred against the councillors are actually gone into and found to be correct, the people of Port Harcourt demand;

- (a) immediate dissolution of the Council and new councillors be elected.
- (b) Termination of the appointment of the present holder of the post of Town Clerk and appointment of a qualified person.
- (c) The immediate re-engagement of Mr A. C. Okolo, former Town Engineer, to his post.
- (d) The re-allocation of the new market stalls, and any other thing in the opinion of the Minister of Local Government that will bring justice and fairplay in the administration of the Council.

Sir, I beg to move.



**Mr U. Onu-Chima (Afikpo Division):**

Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

**Mr J. O. Umolu (Port Harcourt Division):**

I rise to support the motion of the honourable Mr Onyeri to institute a Commission of Enquiry into the affairs of the Port Harcourt Town Council. In rising to support this motion I have only a few observations to put before this honourable House. First of all, I have to thank the mover of this motion for the timely way he has wrapped up the motion and in another aspect to thank the Government of the Eastern Region for having considered it fit to give the first municipal local government in the Eastern Region to the community of Port Harcourt. We are very happy and at the same time we believe that if anything is worth doing it is worth doing well. It is in this regard that we felt that the affairs of the Port Harcourt Town Council since its institution as far as 1949 have not been very satisfactory for Port Harcourt. When the one considers the old Council before this new Council was set up, there had been agitation about mismanagement of the Port Harcourt Town Council over plot allocations and when this new Council came to life, we hoped they would carry out our wishes, but to our disappointment the reverse has been the case. It seems to me that the new Council is worse than the old Council. I will proceed now to enumerate what I have just said. First of all, when the new Council was set up, we all gave it our blessing with the hope that our drainage, street lighting, housing problems, high rents, motor park, etc., would be solved. What do we see, Sir, since the new Council came into being? The only project which has been embarked upon by this Council is the erection of market stalls. These market stalls involved the colossal sum of £20,000. Market stalls were erected in the old market and the Creek Road Extension and this House will be amazed to hear that those market stalls erected at the Creek Road Extension are not being occupied by any human being at present. They are just lying there in waste with weeds growing in the market.

Mr President, another thing I would like to say is about the awards of the contracts. The sum of £20,000 was earmarked for the erection of market stalls. Now, I think that a Council worthy of its name would advertise the contracts for competent builders to put in tenders but this was not the case. The market stalls were not advertised. I tell you, Sir, that if you come to this market and compare the stalls erected with the stalls erected by the Public Works Department fifteen years ago, you will know exactly why we are agitating. Besides, after the completion of these market stalls one would think that a local government worthy of its name would have a competent engineer to inspect the work done, but the Council has no competent engineer. The Town Clerk is not even qualified to hold that post because the Port Harcourt Standing Orders provide that anybody who holds the post of Town Clerk must be a barrister. The present holder has



not even completed his secondary education. He is also the Town Engineer at the same time so I feel that this is nothing short of nepotism. On the 24th October, 1953, Port Harcourt Community unanimously passed a vote of no confidence on the Council but the councillors refused to resign.

So, Sir, I am supporting this motion and I think, Sir, with these few observations Members here present will see that Port Harcourt is given something better and that a Commission of Enquiry is set up to give its findings and the people responsible for this misconduct brought to book because I believe that any democratic Government must be based on the Government of the people by the people and also with respect to public opinion, and if our Government is not prepared to listen to the cry and the petition of the Port Harcourt community, I think that Government is not worthy of its name.

Mr President, with these few observations I support the motion.

**Mr J. O. Ihekwoaba (Orlu Division):**

Mr President, I rise to support the motion. In doing so I seize this opportunity to clarify some of the points raised by the mover of this motion. For the information of the Chair and of this House I am a member of the Port Harcourt Town Council, and at the same time I am in the Port Harcourt Town Council as the ears and eyes of the Port Harcourt people.

In the first place, some of the charges made by the mover of this motion are correct. The allegation of corruption of the councillors is also quite correct. There is no dispute about it. At the same time, I like this Commission of Enquiry, if this House approves of it, to start their work as far back as 1949 when the Port Harcourt Town Council was first established, because it was the bad impression that the former councillors of the Town Council gave Port Harcourt Community which made some of us to enter into the Port Harcourt Town Council in order to put a stop to all this sort of practice. As the majority of the councillors went into the Council purposely to "have their way," and outweighed the people who went there purposely to stop the evil doings.

Mr President, but for the crisis which existed in the Eastern House of Assembly since 1953 this sort of enquiry is, in my opinion, now overdue, to probe the Port Harcourt Town Council's affairs. I will suggest that the commission should probe not only the affairs of the Port Harcourt Town Councillors but also the Port Harcourt Town Council Executive. I remember the mover of this motion remarked of a certain engineer whose name was mentioned, that was dismissed by the present Town Council. Most of these executives were dismissed not because the councillors had anything in their minds against them but because they themselves brought all sorts of corruption into the Council. Even they themselves "educated" most of the new councillors how to "rumple" the Council's affairs.



In addition to that, Sir, I would like the Commission of Enquiry at the same time to look into the Standing Orders of the Port Harcourt Town Council because some of them are not in order. With the permission of the Chair I will quote the relevant portions of the Standing Orders which most of these councillors use to get their ways through. I quote Standing Order No. 38 if I am permitted by the Chair. This relates to the attitude of the councillors during the months of December and January.

“The several Committees of the Council shall in the months of December and January be empowered to deal with any matters of urgency which in the opinion of the President do not require the calling of a special meeting of the Council, and to cause the Common Seal of the Council to be affixed to documents required to carry out the decisions of any Committee concerned.”

Mr President, most of our councillors have formed themselves into a sort of self-interested gang in the Council, and under this Standing Order they see to it that they defer all important matters up to this period . . . (*Laughter*) . . . and to deal with all these matters without the approval of the Council, and without anybody to question these matters after their decisions have been taken.

Mr President, I refer you to Standing Order 16 of the same Port Harcourt Town Council:—

“No resolution of the Council shall be rescinded or varied except: (i) upon a recommendation or resolution to that effect contained in the report submitted to the Council by a Committee or, (ii) upon a motion made in accordance with the notice given under Standing Order No. 5 and signed by at least two of the members in addition to the proposer.”

Standing Order No. 5 says:—

“Notices of motion shall be given to the Town Clerk at least fourteen clear days before the Council meeting. Every such notice shall be in writing and shall be signed by the proposer. The Town Clerk shall in the summons for any meeting in addition to such matters as may be ordered by the President insert all notices of motions which have been duly given in the order in which they were received unless the member giving such notice has withdrawn it in writing . . .”

Mr President, this Standing Order empowers most of us to rescind any decision that was taken by the Council, but the President himself being interested in this particular party (which he himself organised in order to have his ways through) when anyone puts up a motion to rescind all sorts of bad decisions taken by this Council, the President himself will, under this Standing Order, not allow this motion to appear on Order Paper or in the Council Summons Paper.

Mr President, I refer this House to a case which happened quite recently. It is about the headmaster of the Township School, which the mover of this motion has said here. There was a quarrel—a



mere quarrel—existing among the teachers of the school. This matter was brought to the Council and it was referred back to the Staff Committee to make peace between these teachers. Well, this set of councillors who have formed themselves into a gang re-shuffled the whole Committees of the Council overnight and packed themselves into the three Standing Committees through which they know they can get their way through. In the month of December these people handled the case of these teachers and terminated the appointment of the headmaster immediately without any cause except that a quarrel existed among the teachers. As I saw that this was not in order, I put up a motion in connection with this, and what the President did was to overrule this motion not to appear even in the Order of Business. This motion should have been debated on the 25th of this month, but as far as I know, it does not appear even on the summons for meeting.

Mr President, Sir, I have to add further that the charges which were made by the mover about the present Town Council were quite correct. When the post of Town Clerk was created in the Town Council we gave a ruling that the post must be advertised in all parts of Nigeria so as to get a qualified Town Clerk. But the President, being interested in a particular person he wished to take up the job, refused to advertise the post according to our ruling. We raised this matter in a meeting of the Council but the President overruled this matter and left it like that, and then appointed the man of his choice.

Mr President, if I continue expressing my findings in the Port Harcourt Town Council, I think it will get dark. Therefore, I support the motion.

**Mr P. N. Okeke (Onitsha Division):**

Mr President, I rise to speak in support of this motion. We have all listened to the pathetic story of the administration of the Port Harcourt Town Council. I wish to assure Members that these malpractices which have been catalogued by the previous speaker in this House are not peculiar to the Port Harcourt Town Council. They are common ailments among most of our Local Government Councils and it shows that something is wrong somewhere. The introduction of Local Government Councils in the Region is the foundation of our regional or national self-government. The foundation for these Councils must be very strong, otherwise our voyage to the promised land is bound in shallows and in miseries.

Last year, I happened to be one of those appointed by the Resident to investigate similar complaints in the working of the Onitsha Town Council. After our investigation the Council was dissolved and a Caretaker Committee set up. If you take up your daily newspapers you will find similar complaints from almost every part of the Region—Port Harcourt, Aba, Enugu, Onitsha, Calabar. I think that the main cause of this organised corruption and maladministration . . .

**The President:**

The honourable Member's speech must be relevant to the motion.



**Mr P. N. Okeke:**

I am speaking in support of the motion, and I feel that an impartial and independent Commission of Enquiry should be set up immediately to investigate the workings of the Port Harcourt Town Council.

I am happy that the House has passed without a division a recent motion urging the Government to set up a Committee to devise ways and means of checking corruption and bribery in the Region. I hope, Sir, that the Leader of the Government—the Minister of Local Government in this Region—will watch closely the activities of these Councils, and in that respect, while we discuss the issue of corruption and bribery in the Port Harcourt Town Council, I think that it would be useless for us to wrestle with the effects when we leave out the cause, and the causes of these malpractices in these Local Government Councils can be traced to certain provisions in the Local Government Ordinance. It would appear that too much power has been given to the Local Government Councils when they are not ready to accept it . . .

**The President:**

The honourable Member is going very wide from the motion.

**Mr P. N. Okeke:**

I want to refer to the general causes of these complaints in most of the Councils, particularly with regard to the Port Harcourt Town Council. That was why I have referred to sections in the Local Government Ordinance which make it possible for these malpractices to occur. The last speaker also mentioned that the staff of the Port Harcourt Town Council in complicity with the members of the Council organised these corrupt practices. I think that one of the main checks would be to see that Local Government staff is recruited outside the Councils themselves—to set up a kind of Regional Civil Service Commission to employ the staff. Another thing would be . . .

**Mr J. O. Ihekwoaba:**

On a point of explanation, I said some staff, not all staff.

**Mr P. N. Okeke:**

. . . to provide certain checks and balances especially in the financial powers vested in these Councils. Some of us happen to belong to some of these Local Government Councils, and from the complaints made by the representative of Port Harcourt we realise that it is exactly the same trouble we see going on in many Local Government Councils. In this respect, Sir, I would like to suggest that the Local Government Minister should encourage the employment of Local Government Inspectors to make periodical reports to the Minister of Local Government on the working of these Councils.

Here is one charge that has been preferred against the Port Harcourt Town Council—the charge of racket in the distribution of market stalls. It is very painful to note that tax-payers collect their money for the development of the township and then an organised group of people get into the Council to share this money instead of using it for the development of the township. I support wholeheartedly



the appointment of a Commission of Enquiry to examine all these complaints and then make recommendations.

Then we come to another point—the award of contracts. Generally in these Councils, and in particular the Port Harcourt Town Council, these contracts are given out by the use of the majority in the Council. When a certain number of councillors organise themselves for evil purposes they can always give these contracts to those with whom they have reached private agreements. This state of affairs is deplorable.

I beg to support the motion.

**Dr E. U. Udoma:**

Mr President, I would like to say that we on this side of this House whole-heartedly support this motion. After all, the Council in question is an N.C.N.C. Council. If the N.C.N.C. Government finds that the Council is absolutely corrupt, it is up to them! So that when we get up to support, we support in the full expectation that at last justice and fairplay is being given a chance. Sir, the only thing I would like to say in addition to that is that I hope, I hope, Sir, with the very spirit of humility with which I started my speech, that all the wild allegations against the councillors are well founded because it is unfair that Members of this House well knowing that members of the Council have no access to this House and cannot hear these charges being made against them, and cannot therefore reply back—that Members should come here and hide behind the screen of this House to make all these wild allegations against them—I hope that they are well founded. However, it takes a thief to catch a thief. As I say, my view on this matter is that there ought to be good Councils in every division which should operate in the interest of the whole community at large. We note, Sir, that the mover of the motion alleged that he was speaking from personal experience because he had been at one time a member of the Port Harcourt Town Council. Another member of the Council in the House who spoke next confirmed almost everything which the mover had said; but I think he went further when he said that the Enquiry should begin as far back as 1949. I understand that to mean that the Commission when set up, should enquire into the activities of the Council since its inception. Mr President, subject to what the House thinks about it, we are going to insist that this should be so, because unless you remove the root cause, you cannot stamp out corruption. It is necessary, Mr President, that the Commissioner should set to the root cause of this problem of corruption in the Council. We say, Sir, that when a Commissioner is appointed, he should be given very wide terms of reference so that it may be possible to stamp out any form of corruption wherever it may lurk. The next thing is, Sir, I don't know, Sir, some people seem to put the blame on the Standing Orders of these Councils; some say that wide powers should not be given to the Council—I hope they are not anticipating those municipalities which are going to be granted to these areas because if they are trying to say "narrow



down the authority of the Council, do not give them wide financial power" they are by inference saying "don't create municipalities." Sir, I think that Members should be very careful when making such statements. Either we are competent to run our own Government or we are not. We must face the facts. Either we have honest men and God-fearing people of God-given integrity who could run the Government of this country or we have not; and if we have not, we must confess it! The question is either we go forward or we go back! You can't say "take away powers and don't give them powers to act"—that in effect means "make them mumbo jumbo Councils"—in which case it would be to urge that we revert to Native Authorities. Mr President, we should not think that corruption is congenital to the Nigerian. Corruption is not congenital to the African. I think it is the condition under which people work which makes this possible. It is left with us Members of this honourable House to sweep and to clear these corrupt Councils, and unless we, ourselves, set the example, it is impossible to expect that "manna will fall from heaven."

Mr President, before winding up, I would like to emphasise the point that it is only right and proper that when Members of this House who are public spirited, notice corrupt practices in any of these Local Councils, it is their duty to raise the matter in this House in the proper manner. In that event it is to be hoped that similar prompt action will be taken by Government. And I say, Sir, that it is our duty to see to it that public offices in our country are manned by honest men.

Sir, I beg to support.

**The Minister of Local Government:**

Mr President, I rise to state the views of the Government in respect of this motion. We are very grateful to those who spoke and made suggestions on how this evil in our practice of Local Government can be stamped out. We fully endorse the suggestion of the Opposition that the Commission of Enquiry should be given wide terms of reference. The honourable mover made certain suggestions: demanding dissolution of the Town Council, termination of the appointment of the Town Clerk, re-engagement of the former Town Engineer, and re-allocation of market stalls. With reference to the above suggestions, may I add that if we appoint a Commission of Enquiry, the terms of reference would be wide enough and it would be up to it to decide its findings and recommendations.

For the information of the honourable Members of the House, this motion goes back to the founding of the Port Harcourt Town Council which dates 1st January, 1949, when the Ordinance became law. The Ordinance constituted the Port Harcourt Town Council which consist of two members elected from each of the various wards of the township and such other members appointed by the Governor.

A voters' list was provided for all the wards and it was possible for any person, male or female, subject to that individual satisfying the provisions of electoral law, to enjoy the right of the franchise.

The Council was empowered to become a body corporate and was authorised to exercise the jurisdiction of local self-governing bodies of



its type. All funds, streets, open places, lands, township buildings, and other township property were vested in the new municipality.

Since enjoying autonomous existence, the Port Harcourt Town Council has experienced a chequered career of allegations of bribery and corruption against some of its members, particularly in respect of the allocation of plots, market stalls and other functions which a municipal corporation is expected to perform in order to safeguard the interests of those who live within its jurisdiction.

In this connection, I must state here that this Government will not condone bribery or corruption in any shape or form in our local government. During a visit to Port Harcourt, last year, I had the opportunity of meeting with the members of the Port Harcourt Town Council and some leading members of the community, when I made it quite clear that the party I represented, the N.C.N.C., would not support the practice of bribery and corruption because we had fought hard to enjoy local self-government and it would be a shame for us to prove our incompetence to the outside world by resorting to corruption. I discussed these allegations with them, but it was difficult to ferret facts from fancies and I was demoralised by the apparent lack of appreciation of the advantages of municipal autonomy on the part of its beneficiaries both from within and outside the Town Council.

I had tried to placate some of the leading spirits in this amazing drama of human ambition and to bring home to them the danger of transforming a potential "Garden City" of the Eastern Region into a cesspool of local politics with its attendant clash of interests and conflict of loyalties. I am convinced that one definite way of knowing the true position of affairs is to unravel the tangled skein of Port Harcourt politics by a Commission of Enquiry in the manner suggested both by the honourable mover and by the speaker from the Opposition Bench.

Government is aware that, as we debate this motion, three members of the Port Harcourt Town Council, with another person, are being prosecuted for criminal offences in connection with their alleged activities as members of the Port Harcourt Town Council. I would, therefore, caution the House not to do anything that would impede or pervert the course of justice, since the innocence or guilt of those concerned is yet to be established.

Because of the *sub judice* nature of the subject under debate, Government is prepared to accept the motion, on the understanding that no Commission of Enquiry could be instituted to investigate the affairs of the Port Harcourt Town Council until after the cases against the members of that Council had been decided.

**The Minister of Works:**

Mr President, I rise to move that the question be now put.

*Question—that the question be now put, put and agreed to.*

*Original question put accordingly and agreed to.*

**The Minister of Works:**

Mr President, I rise to move that this House appoint the following persons to be members of the Electricity Advisory Council under



section 10 (2) (b) of the Electricity Corporation of Nigeria Ordinance, 1950:—

Mr D. C. Ugwu, M.H.A. (Nsukka).

Mr A. O. Chikwendu, M.H.A. (Bende).

Mr M. E. Ogon, M.H.A. (Ikom).

Mr P. N. Okeke, M.H.A. (Onitsha).

**Mr I. U. Imeh (Minister Without Portfolio):**

Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

#### Adjournment

**The Minister of Local Government:**

Sir, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn.

**Mr E. P. Okoya (Minister Without Portfolio):**

Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

**Mr S. E. Ncha (Mamfe Division):**

Mr President, Sir, I feel that being the only Cameroonian here, I should be able to say something to let everybody understand why I am here. The boycott of the Eastern House has been called off by the K.N.C. and due to limitation of time many people at Mamfe were not informed. On the understanding that we attended the meeting of the Eastern House of Assembly many people at Mamfe were offended. Our reasons were not satisfactory to most of them and they maintained that the boycott was not to the interest of the people of the Cameroons but to achieve the ends of those who promoted it. I was then told by many at Mamfe and my constituency that I should be ready to go back (*Hear! Hear!*) and that if we called off the boycott and attended the meeting of the Eastern House of Assembly, we ought to be there until the end and fight any issue that arose. "Your return before time is not accepted by us." By that time the other honourable Members from Kumba, Victoria and Bamenda had gone. That was not enough.

After two days' time the Executive of the Congress at Mamfe had a meeting in which they invited us, the Mamfe Assemblymen. I attended alone and gave an account of our stewardship. Many did not see with me on the issue of our walk out from the Eastern House of Assembly and returning home immediately instead of remaining to fight the issue. My constituency, supported by many people at Mamfe said, "You have got to go back"—because during the election you faced tough times with those who promoted the walk out and boycott of the Eastern House of Assembly. (*Order! Order!*)

Because of that, I wrote a letter to honourable S. A. George telling him that the decision of the public that we ought to return to Enugu was supported by my constituency. I also sent telegrams to the honourable Members in various divisions telling them of the decision taken by many at Mamfe and my constituency which I cannot disobey.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*House adjourned accordingly at twenty minutes to six o'clock p.m. until 10 a.m. on Wednesday, 24th February, 1954.*



*Answer—*

**The Minister of Land and Survey, Eastern Region:**

Sir, since the Survey Department was not regionalised until 1st April, 1950, it is not possible to give figures for the Eastern Region from 1946. So far, throughout Nigeria, ten Africans have been promoted to Senior Service posts in the Survey Department, five of them since 1st June, 1948. In addition, four hold acting Senior Service posts. As regards the Eastern Region, three Africans have been promoted to Senior Service posts since the Department was regionalised in 1950.

*Question—*

**\*126. Mr E. A. Chime:**

To ask the Minister of Land and Survey, Eastern Region:—

Why the Survey Department has never used available Surveyors with experience to meet the present increased demand for survey work by opening offices at Abakaliki, Umuahia, Onitsha and other big towns?

*Answer—*

**The Minister of Land and Survey, Eastern Region:**

Sir, the Survey Department has an approved establishment which is already filled as regards Senior Service posts, and nearly so as regards the Junior Service. It would not therefore be possible at present to open new offices.

Offices already exist at Enugu, Aba, Calabar, Bamenda and Buea, and I consider that Abakaliki and Onitsha are adequately served by the Enugu office, and Umuahia by the office at Aba.

*Question—*

**\*127. Mr E. A. Chime:**

To ask the Minister of Land and Survey, Eastern Region:—

Are there any Surveyors in the East with equivalent training and experience to those in the West who are now raised to Senior Surveyor grade?

*Answer—*

**The Minister of Land and Survey, Eastern Region:**

Sir, although the Survey Department is regionalised, the question of promotion to the grade of Senior Surveyor is still dealt with on a Nigeria-wide basis by the Central Minister of Land and Survey.

**Order of the Day**

THE 1954-55 EASTERN REGION APPROPRIATION LAW, 1954

(Fourth and last Alloted Day)

Order read for resuming adjourned Debate on Question (16th February), "That the Bill be now read a second time."

*Question again proposed.*



**Mr F. M. A. Saronwiyo (Ogoni Division):**

Mr President, before I was interrupted at the time of adjournment last Monday, I was making a point about the agitation of a few people to make a separate state in the Rivers Province. I was at that time making it clear that it was not the majority of the people of the Rivers Province who were agitating for a separate state.

I turn to the Appropriation Bill. When I studied the Financial Secretary's speech, it appeared to me that it is the custom of all Financial Secretaries to sound a note of warning. The question is, that we have no money, but the same waste of money in expatriation pay, which the people have been complaining against all these years, is still carried on, despite the warning of no money. The sum of £106,630 under various headings, is voted to expatriation pay. The financial state of the Eastern Region in my opinion, is not as gloomy as our opponents and pessimists in this House and elsewhere, would like us here and the general public to believe. Considering our resources, I do not think this is the poorest Region, and I am sure we shall be able to subsist and that the Eastern Region will be able to pay its way through.

It is unfortunate, Mr President, that the Government of the Eastern Region had been in the wrong hands for the past years. Today, we have the Government of the Eastern Region in the right hands. The people of the Eastern Region as a whole are aware of it and they are prepared to co-operate with the present Government. They are prepared to support any move it may make, even if it be a move to increase taxation. There is no doubt in my mind that the Eastern Region will stand on its feet and carry on successfully. Some people may say that I am an optimist, and I admit that I am. Surely optimism must go with hard work and co-operation. All the Members of this House must co-operate and get down to hard work in their various divisions.

If hard work and co-operation will be forthcoming, I am hopeful, and confident, that the East will surprise the other Regions and will set up a standard that our neighbouring Regions will copy. The people of the Eastern Region as we know them are a very enthusiastic people. Tell them what to do and explain it to them, and if it is for their own benefit they are sure to do it. This spirit has been proved. There is no division where you do not see the people getting down to work, initiating projects and carrying them out by themselves. There is no division in this Region, Mr President, where the people have not developed their own villages and their markets. Unfortunately the right encouragement has never been forthcoming from the Administration, and now that we have our own Government in power we are hopeful that the encouragement will come, and we will be able to carry out more projects. This spirit has been proved also in the educational aspiration of the people of this Region.

The people in the Eastern Region have very high educational aspirations. For the past ten years the people have determined to get



highly trained and qualified men in the Eastern Region, and unions and private individuals have helped by producing doctors themselves without the help of Government. That is the spirit of this Region—a readiness to work for the development of the Region.

It is very hopeful to know that we are beginning this financial year with a general revenue balance of £1,054,502. Over the past two years we were not talking about £1,000,000. In 1952-53 it was only £623,000 and in 1953-54 during the crisis when the Budget was refused because it was a Budget of the N.I.P. sit-tight Government, it was only £811,122. But this year we are beginning with a general revenue balance of over £1 million. So that there is every sign of progress.

I want to turn to the development of the Region. Agricultural development is admittedly the most important aspect of our development which we must face in this Region, and without mechanised agriculture, mechanised farming, I do not think we can do much. The Government should think about the mechanisation of our farming. If we should go into the rural areas and see how the men and women toil day in and day out, we would be able to appreciate how essential it is, that mechanical tools should be introduced into this Region. It is in this way that we can contribute much more to the development of agriculture in this Region. Many people have spoken about subsidies and grants to farmers. This I whole-heartedly support. If the farmers have subsidies and loans given to them, either directly or through Native Authorities and Local Government bodies, it will encourage them and they will do much more work and produce more food and export crops.

Another thing that could be done to help in the development of this country and bring in more revenue, is the establishment of demonstration farms in every division, so that the farmers can go there and see what is being done and copy it in their own farms. We have not as many as three demonstration farms in the whole Region, although I am open to correction on that, by the Minister of Natural Resources. Fertilisers should be distributed freely and not sold. We have not yet reached the stage at which our farmers know sufficiently enough to be willing to pay the heavy price for fertilisers.

Experimental work in this Region is always carried on for too long a time. At the onset the people get ready to hear what is being done, but later on they forget all about it when no results are forthcoming. I am referring particularly to the experimental project in rice planting in the Rivers Province. The Rivers Province has heard nothing about the results of this experiment and it is time we knew what is happening and receive instructions on what to do so that we can produce rice in the swamps of the Rivers Province. I support those who say cocoa should be introduced into this Region. There is no part of Ogoni Division, from which I come, where cocoa would not do well. Wild cocoa plants are found everywhere in the division. I would advocate that we adopt the type of agricultural education



which has been established at Asaba. This should be established in every division, or at least every province, so that Standard Six passers from primary schools would not go back to their homes, to their parents, to look for food and clothing, or run to the townships and help the congestion there to get worse. Such Rural Training Centres can be established by the Native Authorities, and many of them are prepared to start them if they are encouraged; and so would Local Government bodies. The Ogoni Native Authority I know, would start one without delay if financial and moral encouragement would come.

The Agricultural Department has yet to vindicate its existence in this Region. Agricultural Officers should go down to the farms—that is where the work is to be done—and not sit in their offices. This has never been the case yet. They exist and the department exists in the interests of the farmers, but the farmers do not know those Agricultural Officers. They want to see them come on their farms to give the farmers practical instruction and demonstration.

Some people are saying that the party now in power is against increased taxation. My opinion about this is that if the people of this Region get all of the amenities, or some of the amenities, for which they have always asked, and which are never forthcoming, and are asked to pay increased taxes, they would do so willingly. It is when they ask for water, even drinking water, and do not get it, and when they ask for roads, but the only road they see is the one for the District Officer to drive into his house, and no roads to reach their own villages and places of work, it is then that they refuse to pay tax. If the amenities are forthcoming to the people who pay tax and they enjoy the good fruits from the tax they pay, they would be willing to pay increased taxes. I want to say that, nobody who is receiving his due share of the amenities from tax money would complain even if Income Tax is raised from 4½d in the pound to 6d. I support those who say that working girls who earn salary and rich women who own shops, lorries, plots, businesses and professional women, should pay Income Tax. Places of entertainment should be taxed. I would advise strongly against anything like the type of taxes which were introduced into this House last Budget Session. Capitation Tax and Sales Tax should not be introduced into this Region. Rather I suggest that Purchase Tax should be introduced, so that the people who have the money to pay for luxuries, cars and lorries should pay Purchase Tax on them, and let the poor farmer who toils to produce what goes to benefit those rich people have less burden upon his shoulders. With regard to taxation, I would suggest that the method of collecting tax in this Region is not yet satisfactory. The way the assessment is made is wrong. Many people who should pay less are assessed very high, and influential people do not pay as much as they should pay. In some areas the District Officer wastes time to arrange for collection of tax. Such District Officers delay until certain seasons when people are bound to migrate to the areas of their occupation. Then they begin to make arrangements only to find at the end, that



there are very few people left behind to pay tax. In my area we start our occupation—fishing elsewhere—beginning from September. My people go to Fernando Po to fish. They go to Douala to fish. They go to the Gabon to fish. My people fish all along the coast of West Africa, and it is in September that most of them leave home. If taxation is arranged at that time, very few people—only farming people—are left behind. It should be the business of Administrative Officers to know how the people move, and arrange for taxation so that there is maximum response to the payment of tax.

There is need for universal education rate, and education rate should not be left to Native Authorities and local bodies to arrange. I cannot understand how one division should pay 25s education rate whilst in another division the people are allowed to pay only 2s education rate. The rate should be the same thing all over the Region and arrangements should be made that every child of school age in the Region could go to school anywhere free of school fees. The tendency in some places where there is high education rate, is for people to move to places where they pay very low education rate, reside there and get their children trained in schools there.

Speaking of education, I would add that the number of secondary schools for girls in this Region is very small, and even in the existing girls' schools we have no science teaching apparatus. I do not know how we are going to have nursing sisters and doctors of the female sex when their schools have no laboratories for the necessary preparation. They do not compare favourably with the girls from the Western Region when they take the entrance examinations to the University College. Very few girls from this Region can enter the University College to study nursing or medicine because there are few available secondary schools, and there is no secondary school for girls in this Region which has science laboratory.

*(Cries of "Yes there are none").*

Mass education and adult education too are so slow that we do not know when we shall have any results. I would suggest that if we want mass and adult education to be of reality in the near future, we must make arrangements whereby the children in the schools who are reading in the senior primary classes and in the secondary schools can take interest in the education of their illiterate parents, brothers and sisters. At present they are not, and it is the teachers who are called upon to help in mass education classes after finishing their normal tiresome day's work.

I must call the attention of this House, Mr President, to public opinion against the introduction of the new orthography. The people of this Region do not want that orthography and it is wrong to impose it on them. My people of Ogoni do not want it.

Industrial education in our secondary schools and primary schools should be encouraged. When the Leader of the last Government wanted to introduce something like plate-making in his school, West African People's Institute, at Calabar some years ago, I understand



there were signs of good result but Government turned it down. I don't know why this should be so. Our children should learn something useful—things that will help them in their life. Many divisions have been clamouring for Craft Centres in their divisions. My division, Ogoni, for example, has for the past two years been asking the Government to help them establish a Craft Centre, but no attention has been given to it. The people are prepared to provide the necessary buildings. If each division had a Craft Centre it would help. In this connection I would say that the important industry of pottery that is carried out in Okigwi if tried in Ogoni would succeed as much as it has in Okigwi. We have suitable clay in Ogoni and women make clay pots more than three centres in the division. I request that pottery industry in Ogoni Division be examined and improved.

**The President:**

The honourable Member has three minutes to go.

**Mr F. M. A. Saronwiyo:**

The Fisheries Department could help us to swell the revenue of this Region. If they helped the fishermen instead of carrying on all the time with experimental work and bringing out rotten fish which people cannot make use of in the villages to compete with fishermen themselves. In Port Harcourt, what the department does is to carry the rotten fish which Port Harcourt people refuse to buy into Ogoni Division in their motor van, and persuade the people to buy this smelling fish. People do not want rotten fish. They should show the fishermen how to improve their methods of fishing.

Community Development work has not been encouraged. In many divisions the officers are not co-operating at all. When a project is initiated by the people and the people carry on and ask for help from the Development Funds they are refused with the result that they cannot carry out more development work because the promise they received had not been fulfilled. I am against deletion from the Estimates of the £35,000 for the Codified Grant and cutting down of the Special Grant to Native Authorities and Local Government bodies because it is the only direct way any Native Authority gets some help from the Government of this Region.

It is time the Public Works Department allowed private contractors to help to develop our roads. For three years the Ogoni Native Authority have voted £6,000 and we vote the same from year to year for six concrete bridges, and each time we are told "No Engineer."

**The President:**

The honourable Member must wind up his speech.

**Mr F. M. A. Saronwiyo:**

I ask that the Public Works Department allow private contractors to do any work for which the department has not sufficient staff to do. There are many things I would like to point out but time is against me. May God help the Region to succeed.

I beg to support the Appropriation Bill.



Why not save our revenue to build schools to train these girls rather than wasting the money to recruit foreign labour to do the same jobs. If the Members of this House are ready to assure me that the men in this Region will do their best to recognise women as being of equal status with them in every aspect of life, if it is put into practice, and there is good evidence of this, then I'll support any motion about taxation of working girls and furthermore the taxation of wealthy women in this Region. I will do my best to make them co-operate when the time comes, but please remember you cannot rush this matter. I say this because you all might have heard or known what this kind of taxation brought about in 1929 and again in the recent disturbances at Aba market over payment of 6d tollage per woman per day. In my own opinion this trouble or disturbance arose because the women were not given the opportunity or privilege to realise their social position which demands their contribution to the development of their country.

In conclusion, the question of this taxation could be discussed later when the time comes and that will be in the good way with full consultation and agreement with the women of this Region. If this is done, then I will do my best to co-operate, and don't forget, please, you must not be too harsh on we women.

Mr President, I beg to support the Appropriation Bill.

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E.:**

Mr President, I wish to preface what I have got to say with a warm congratulation to the honourable the Financial Secretary on what I consider an able, scholarly and well balanced word picture of our admittedly difficult and well-nigh embarrassing financial situation. He has artfully steered his barge avoiding on the one hand the Scylla of despair and on the other the Charybdis of undue complacency. Whatever the actual results the Financial Secretary has at least not played into the hands of our name-callers, our experts in nomenclature. There is just as much in his presentation to give the lie to his being labelled "a weeping Jeremiah" as there is to disprove the ungracious description of "danger monger."

What are the bare facts with which we are faced as a Region? Rapidly declining produce prices with corresponding fall in export duties, impending withdrawal of educational grants-in-aid by the Centre and the acceptance by our Constitutional Pundits of the principle of derivation with all its attendant headaches. Mr President, it is incredible that men with any brains in their heads were able to bargain away so much of our Regional prosperity for power. They appear to have been bent on power at any cost. Awolowo and the Sardauna had their eyes fixed on a goal while our infallibles of the East pored over textbooks on Political Science searching for the most high-sounding terms to dish out. The fascination of words!! Unfortunately Adam Smith, Marshall Laski, and Stafford Cripps had nothing to say on the Nigerian Constitution and so failed our friends.



Mr President, I regret I cannot support the Appropriation Bill and my objections are fivefold—

- (i) the shifting of emphasis from agrarian to urban development;
- (ii) the virtual stultification of Local Government Development;
- (iii) a timid and halting educational policy with imminent recession in standards;
- (iv) a precarious surplus balance, and finally
- (v) the possibility of the regimentation of the press.

These objections are implied here and there in the Estimates and must be underlined as a warning to the Region.

(i) *Shifting of Emphasis from Agrarian to Urban Development*: I should have thought, Mr President, that the first duty of any Government in this Region should have been the laying of the physical foundations for a civilised life. Civilised life with emphasis on rural communities and certainly not neglecting the towns. Who can deny the mighty transformation we can bring about if we placed power, water, communications and telecommunications within the reach of our more remote and backward areas? If we realised and appreciated the potency of broadcasting in the awakening of rural and simple communities? These, Mr President, are not the monopolies of townships and if we want a well-balanced contented Region we should carry these amenities everywhere.

I cannot, Mr President, but record my sore disappointment at the fact that in the P.W.D. Extraordinary Votes, for instance, only £49,450 (representing a little less than 22 per cent of the Vote) goes to anything approaching rural development, namely the Owerri Government Secondary School and the Brass Division Hospital. The remaining 78 per cent goes to Urban Development, the largest single item being the staggering figure of £100,000 for quarters and offices at Enugu (staggering, that is to say in our present circumstances). I cannot see whither we are bound when we cut off these truly Development Votes as indeed we have done in the case of the Codified Grants.

(ii) *Stultification of Local Government Development*: I cannot reconcile all Government's promises about the complete introduction of local government throughout the Region within a year or two with the reduction of assistance to Local Government bodies. You multiply the number of Local Government bodies and reduce the overall grants to these bodies *pari passu*. It is difficult to appreciate the mechanics of this! In the same breath, Government talks of the creation of municipalities as if there is any magic in the word itself. Personally, I am all in favour of any form of progress for our townships. But let us not allow ourselves to be side-tracked with high-sounding words. I cannot see how the turning of a township into a municipality increases its resources or improves its sense of civic responsibility, not to mention any improvement in its appreciation of social morality. The experience of the Lagos Town Council and the disappointments we are facing with the Port Harcourt Town Council (only yesterday members of that



Council gave us a revolting account of the doings of that body) should be sufficient to warn us off the slippery paths of the fascination of words, (iii) *A Timid and Halting Educational Policy*: My third objection, as I said before, is that the Estimates reveal a timid and halting educational policy. The four corners of the earth are witness to our loud-mouthed professions of universal education and everybody admits that teacher training is the lever on which the expansion of primary education turns. How then, Mr President, do we reconcile the proposal to expend precisely the same sum this financial year as we voted for the current year? The footnote in the Memorandum says quite frankly "economy." Surely the lay-reader is entitled to an explanation! Can this be, I respectfully ask, another case of the long chain of consistent inconsistencies in which our friends on the other side of the House are such experts?

Mr President, I am one of those who do not believe that we can in the immediate future escape the consequences of the short-sighted and selfish bargain we concluded at Lagos earlier this month, when we choose Regional education bankruptcy in spite of all expert advice on the question and allowed Central control of primary, secondary and vocational education to go.

If I may, with your permission, Mr President, refer to Sir Louis Chick's Report (section 65). That distinguished scholar says *inter alia*—

"If the allocation of subjects agreed by the London Conference had permitted and my terms of reference had given more latitude, I should have been disposed to recommend that the national interest in the maintenance of uniform educational standards be recognised by the continuation of the present education grants . . . it would not have been necessary to have recommended the special grants to the Eastern Region."

Mr President, the Central Board of Education on the 26th November last, unanimously passed the following resolution:— I quote—

"We consider it would be desirable that there should be in Nigeria:

- (a) A unified teaching service, with national certificates, national scales of salary and national conditions of service.
- (b) A national schooling system deriving its principles (including Grants-in-Aid) from a common code.
- (c) The sustenance of national standards through a Central Inspectorate, a Central Advisory Board and a Central Department of Education."

These resolutions, Mr President, were whole-heartedly endorsed by the conference of the Nigerian Union of Teachers, which met in Enugu early in January this year and I respectfully submit that this is the highest professional body in matters educational in this country. All this fell on deaf ears, Mr President, and instead we are told of Utopian schemes and high sounding state certification systems, as if words can carry us anywhere in the age-long business of educating and humanising *homo sapiens*. That in brief is the story of the



betrayal of our teachers and school children ! I shall not discuss the betrayal, Mr President, of the Civil Servants.

Connected with the general educational policy is the Scholarship Scheme. We whole-heartedly welcome signs of planning in our scholarship system. The draft rules circulated by the Financial Secretary indicate planning on the financial side. But it was the honourable the Minister of Works who a day or two ago came out with a confession that planning is necessary in our Scholarship Scheme. This was anathema twelve months ago. Oh ! What a House ! The triumph of an idea is known only to martyrs, but it is ample consolation.

We should like to suggest, Mr President, the setting up of a Scholarship Commission and a complete insulation of our Scholarship Scheme from the poisonous shocks of politics. It should be possible for any student, no matter what his political views, to gain an award. Quite frankly, I do not believe the political parties in this Region, be they on my side or on the other side of the House, can be trusted to run the Scholarship Scheme. One has seen enough to raise serious doubts and it would be sheer hypocrisy to gloss over this point.

(iv) *A precarious Budget Balance*: One of my objections, Mr President, was our precarious Budget balance. It is ludicrous, I respectfully submit, to submit the infinitesimal figure of £5,000 as a Budget balance. It is quite clearly a confession that the Budget cannot in fact be balanced. Perhaps honourable Members will realise how ridiculous this so-called surplus is when I remind them that £5,000 is the cost of four American cars or more precisely the salary of three of our Ministers—two of them without portfolio !

It is all very well to talk about previous surplus balances implying thereby that we have some reserve to fall upon in these evil days. There is nothing objectionable in this hope except that one should have expected that honest-minded people should condemn the studied refusal to pay a well-deserved debt to those "incompetent" Legislators and officials who patiently through the years accumulated this reserve.

(v) *Regimentation of the Press*: My fifth point of objection, Mr President, is what I consider the regimentation of the Press. There is nothing wrong on the surface with the increased votes proposed for the Information Services but it is only fair to suspect from the tone of the Government speeches since this Session began—from the now classical "reward the party spy" speech of the Minister of Natural Resources to the nervous effusions of the Minister of Local Government (who to my amazement is afraid that the Opposition should seek to embarrass the Government !)—it is only reasonable to suspect from those utterances, Mr President, that we cannot tamely support the enlargement and up-to-date equipment of these services without some guarantee that the officials will be placed above political pressure. The Information Services should be converted, Mr President, into an independent public corporation charged with the objective and impartial



the Financial Secretary on his lengthy speech covering seventeen pages. He sums up in these words:

"I fear, Sir, that my speech has been a somewhat lengthy one, particularly as it is related to a Budget which was bound to be, in the circumstances, unspectacular."

I agree that the Budget is unspectacular, because it does not reflect anything spectacular. The Budget is intended to reflect Government's policy, Government's Programme, and Government's plan. Now, how can we discuss the economic state of the Eastern Region without having carried out an economic survey of the Eastern Region? I submit that policy, programme and plan must go together. Policy is reflected in the Government's programme and plan. In formulating policy it is the duty of the Government to be guided by the popular needs of the people. That policy must be thoroughly ventilated in this House and then it must find expression in Government action. How can we talk of industrialisation, and how can we talk of a programme and plan if we have not taken the trouble to set up an Economic Planning and Advisory Board? What I have in mind is the type of Economic and Planning Advisory Board composed of experts, both expatriates and Nigerians, and what is more, of our own businessmen in the Eastern Region.

I feel that on such a Board, it will be the duty of the experts to deal only with the academic side of our programme for industrial development. Then our businessmen serving on the Board will deal with the practical side, that is, ways and means of financing the various schemes and projects. I have in mind some one like Mr L. P. Ojukwu. Surely, a man who has been able to run successfully his business in Lagos all these years, should be in a position to render service on such a Board.

I have to deal with a portion of the Financial Secretary's speech. I begin at page 9. He says—

"Now, Sir, the sound attitude to adopt in a situation such as the above, the attitude which a sensible individual would adopt with regard to his personal affairs in similar circumstances, is firstly to consider whether the level of services provided by the Regional Government, and hence the level of expenditure, can be reduced, and if this is rejected, to consider how the revenue can be increased to enable the Region to pay its way and develop its services when the brief two-year period of special financial assistance comes to an end. I do not imagine for a moment that this House would tolerate any sensible diminution in the present level of social services, and it is therefore the intention of the Government to give earnest and early consideration to ways and means of increasing the revenues of the Region."

Now, the Financial Secretary is our financial expert and he has told this House that under the circumstances in which we of the Eastern Region find ourselves, the natural thing to do would be what a sensible individual would do, that is to consider whether the level of services



provided by the Regional Government can be reduced. This is the first proposition, and if this is rejected to consider how revenue can be increased. It is then he says—"I do not imagine for a moment that this House would tolerate any sensible diminution in the present level of social services, and it is therefore the intention of the Government to give earnest and early consideration to ways and means of increasing the revenue of the Region."

I wish to distinguish between social services, and essential services. Surely the Financial Secretary had in mind that this House would not press for the present level of social services to be reduced. But he did not deal with the other side, what this House would consider to be the essential services to be maintained in this Region. We believe that with the coming into operation of the new Constitution in August that we will have an entirely new Government. It will be the duty of that Government to decide what are to be the essential services of the Eastern Region. I do not for one moment imagine that our new Government will simply take over all the existing services. I have always criticised Budgets of this nature. My main criticism has been over the Civil Service structure which I have always maintained is top-heavy. If it is true that the Eastern Region is so poor and unless something is done immediately there will be a collapse, why did not the Financial Secretary budget only for the existing Services? We have been told that 85 per cent of our revenue comes from the Centre and we have been told that with the coming into force of the new Constitution this source of revenue will not be available to this Region. One would imagine that in view of the fact that our 85 per cent revenue from the Centre will no more be available, there would be a proposal to cut down the services.

We all realise that our main source of revenue comes from the oil palm industry. But, Sir, in a situation where this Region has no control in the foreign trade of this country, this source of income based on import and export duties is most vulnerable.

When we have no control over the foreign trade of this country we are left at the mercy of whatever policy the Central Government decides upon. If it decides to lower the customs tariffs, as it may well do, of course, it may mean that the Region will have to suffer.

Isn't it strange, Sir, that we rely upon import duties on cigarettes, tobacco, beer and gin? Well, if we are to benefit from the principle of derivation, all we have to do is to go back to our homes and call upon every man and woman to start right away to smoke. Call upon everybody in the Region to drink!

I mean, Sir, it is really very sad when we come to discuss the finances of this country. The brief of our revenue is derived from import duties on cigarettes, tobacco, beer and gin.

Now, I come to defend the policy of the Nigeria Oil Palm Produce Marketing Board which has been criticised in this House. Members have suggested that the Board should no longer subsidise the producers



on the delegation to London, I discovered that I had to pay as much as £4 for one bottle of Martell brandy and I was called upon to pay £3 5s for one bottle of whisky last year when I was in London. I told them that in Nigeria I always paid 25s for a bottle of whisky. They told me that the purchase price of brandy and whisky which I bought included purchase tax on these commodities.

The honourable Mr Ikoku in his speech suggested of a plebiscite of the farmers to be held before the Regional Marketing Board touches the reserves. I wonder whether there will be a greater plebiscite of the farmers than the result of the last election. There is no need for any plebiscite.

The honourable Mr Ikoku attacked the decisions of the London and Lagos Conferences. I am in sympathy with him, because at the time his own party—the U.N.P. (United National Party)—was so insignificant and microscopic that His Excellency the Governor did not think it fit to accord it even a single place on the delegations. He was very worried at that time and wrote a lot of stuff in the newspapers. It was most unfortunate that Mr Ikoku and his party were left out completely. All the same, we went to London and we sat in Lagos and took decisions which were decisions arrived at by, the majority of the major political parties at the Conferences. The honourable Mr Ikoku, talked about the dissatisfaction of the N.U.T. (Nigeria Union of Teachers) over the regionalisation of Education. It is obvious that under the new arrangement the post of Inspector-General will be scrapped at the Centre, and the question of grants to schools will be rigidly controlled by the new Regional Governments. One can well see the dilemma in which Mr Ikoku finds himself. I can assure the honourable gentleman that our Regional Government will not be partial to any proprietor of a secondary school. (*Laughter*).

Lastly, I want the Government also to think very seriously of the question of imposing Death Duties in order to increase revenue. There are so many rich people in the Eastern Region and some die leaving £10,000 to £20,000.

(*Interruption*).

With these observations, I support the Appropriation Bill in principle.

**Mr O. Arikpo (Obubra Division):**

Mr President, Sir, may I, with your permission, congratulate the honourable Mr Eyo for his very stout defence of the work and policies of the Marketing Board and the Eastern Regional Production Board. Remembering Mr Eyo's speech in 1952 about the Eastern Regional Production Development Board, I think it is a wonderful transformation. This rather confirms me in my belief that the best way to make a man responsible is to give him responsibility.

Mr Eyo has made reference to the Produce Sales Tax and his party's intention to introduce Produce Purchase Tax. I want to say, for all of us on this side of the House, that any form of tax which will give



revenue to this Region would be most welcome and if the Government can tell all the buying firms or buying agents that when a man takes a tin of palm oil to a factory, that he must insist on the buyer paying two shillings or two and sixpence on every tin of oil, or that when the bulk buyers, at the time they buy the oil, are told that they must pay so much extra on the oil as Purchase Tax—if they can succeed in doing that and getting that through, it will be a wonderful thing and we will support it. Mr Eyo has referred to Purchase Tax in Britain and he has very clearly defined what it is—if you go into a store to buy a bottle of whisky unless you pay £3 10s 0d for it, you don't get it. (The actual price is probably £2, but you must pay £1 10s 0d Purchase Tax). Now, if our palm produce sellers can go forth and tell the buyer of the produce that unless they pay so much—and so much extra for it—they won't sell it, that will be excellent.

Mr Eyo has said that he led the opposition to this Produce Sales Tax in the House of Representatives. Now, in fact, ever before the Bill came to the House, it was decided that because no prayer went to the Governor in Council from the Eastern Region (*Much noise and interruption*)—that the Eastern Region could not be included in the Schedule to the Bill and for that reason (*Interruptions*) the Eastern Region was not referred to in the Bill. (*Interruption*). I have no intention of going into any verbal argument with the honourable gentleman.

I only want to go on by saying, Sir, that in many respects this debate has been a great farce, a farce the scene for which was set for us by the speech outlining Government policy—a speech for which no one on the Government Bench has had the courtesy to thank His Honour, the Lieutenant-Governor. That speech, Sir, was an admirable catalogue of the Government's intentions and, as is to be expected, it was absolutely silent about how Government propose to translate these intentions into action. One is, therefore, not surprised that the Financial Secretary should feel obliged to dance to this general tune which was so laboriously set on the 13th of February. The 13th of February, honourable Members will remember, was the "Victory Day" of the Government Party, and, knowing what happened, anybody who dared depart from the general theme of that speech was immediately labelled a "Weeping Jeremiah." I am sure that honourable Members will agree, Sir, that it would not do for our Financial Secretary to be labelled a "Weeping Jeremiah." The Financial Secretary's Speech may be adequately described as a cart without springs on a very heavy road. Contradictions, the attempts to palliate, the tendencies towards self-pity, not to say self-complacency, have added great colour to this make-belief which we have been watching in this House. Sir, it is little wonder that not a few honourable Members have protested very seriously against any suggestion that the Eastern Region is poor. Sir, at the risk of marring this great feast of unrealism to which we have been treated, may I, Sir, repeat that this Region is poor—the Eastern Region is poor! That, of course, does not mean that in this Region we have not got the resources both human and natural



which could make this a prosperous Region. Poverty is a relative term and just as a man who cannot, or who can hardly afford to pay for his needs, not to say his wants, can call himself a rich man, so cannot a Region which can hardly pay for its services without external help, consider itself a rich Region. I say this, Sir, because of the three Regions, the East is at present, I say at present, the only one that will require external assistance to run its services when the amended Constitution comes into force next August. Now, references have been made to the recent *National Income Survey of Nigeria* and I should like to refer the House to a very important statement which is worth study in that Report, and that is the statement dealing with what the Report calls "the gross domestic product" of the three Region. That report gives the gross domestic product of the three Regions as £29 for the West, £19 for the North and £23 for the East. These figures, Sir, are of special significance to us because of the three Regions the East has the most extensive social services and consequently the largest recurrent annual expenditure on social services. For indeed, most of us know, that the East has more schools and more children at school than the North and the West put together; the East has more hospital beds than either the North or the West; the East has more roads, actual roads—I am not speaking about quality but about the number, quantity—than either the North or the West. In short, the East has to pay a much higher social services bill relative to its revenue than either the North or the West and this means that when full regional autonomy comes into effect later this year, the East will be the least, under existing revenue, will be the least able of all the Regions to bear the full burden of the accompanying fiscal autonomy. And this is particularly important when we consider that the world is passing through a contracting market—a point which the honourable Mr Ikoku stressed—and we may be faced with the prospect of a reduced revenue from export duty in a contracting world market. I want to say quite firmly that this is a heritage of which neither the present Government nor the Government immediately preceeding it can be held responsible. It is the result of the social policy which was followed several years ago whereby the East concentrated on the development of its social services, which are revenue consuming services, whereas the North and the West both concentrated more on the revenue-earning services to, in a way, the neglect of their social services, and I say that no one Government at present can be blamed for it. The important thing is that any Government in office has the duty of shifting the emphasis in its investment policy merely from investment in revenue-consuming products to investment in revenue-yielding products. And I want to say, Sir, that, with all respect, there has been no indication either in the Financial Secretary's Speech or in the Speech outlining Government policy of the present Government's intention and I believe that the House, Sir, is entitled to know what the present Government intends to do about it. The previous Government started schemes for large-scale farming to increase production. The Financial Secretary, himself, has rightly pointed out that this is



a problem which we ought to think about right now and think about very seriously too, but he has set a glorious example by exhorting the House to think of the problem whilst he, himself, gives no thought at all to the problem. Instead, having told the House that we must, like the sensible individuals we are, consider how the revenue can be increased to enable the Region to pay its way and develop its services when the brief two-year period of special financial assistance comes to an end," he merely slithers into the comfortable "Micawber attitude" so typical of this Government by saying "Ah well, we don't need to worry, something good is bound to turn up some day. There is a brighter side to all this. After 'all, mineral oil has been discovered in the Region and if only some one can find a large commercial field, well, the problem will be solved. The whole of the proceeds and royalties will accrue to this Region and then we shall be happy ever afterwards."

Ah, yes, but do not forget, Sir, that if a rich oil field was ever discovered, it would take at least five years to develop it into a commercial undertaking and I am sure the Region will not wait that long.

The Financial Secretary cannot escape from the responsibility of giving the House the lead about ways and means of tiding over the difficult economic period ahead. This glaring lack of a sense of realism on the part of the Government is, no doubt, in part responsible for the flamboyant and most extraordinary speeches that have been delivered from the floor of this House by some honourable Members. The Government blissfully announces its intention to industrialise the Region without as much as saying how it proposes to do it—whether by public investment or private investment, whether by internal loan or by foreign capital we do not know. All we know is the Government has the good intention of industrialising this Region. Little wonder an honourable Member suggested in his speech that the Government should start its industrialisation programme with shipbuilding—the most expensive and most specialised industry in the world—a most appropriate suggestion indeed! There has also been some reference to a cement industry and somebody said how the former Minister of Commerce and Industries had raised our hopes about the proposals to build a cement factory in the Eastern Region and urged the Government not to feed us with promises alone.

I happen to have a little knowledge of what happened, Sir, and I want to say that Mr. Nwapa and the Council of Ministers collectively were not feeding the country on promises. Everything practicable was done. The Council of Ministers very happily voted £1.2 million towards this project. It agreed to take 55 per cent of the shares. It made every effort but the whole negotiations failed for reasons which I will not go into now. But the problem was one of equipment and technical "know-how." I want to say that with all the money in the Region, unless we can get the equipment—and it is not easy—and men who will come out to work with the spirit of making the thing successful, not merely work for pay, it is very difficult to bring



any plan, however good, to fruition. I do not think that anybody in this House or Council of Ministers has felt more disappointed about the failure or the long suspense—for it is not failure—negotiations are still in progress—or delays in establishing a cement factory in the Eastern Region than the former Minister of Commerce and Industries himself. But it is very easy for honourable Members to urge the Government to do this, to do that, but until the Government gives the lead, this type of fairy tale talk will continue.

While discussing this special aspect of the Government, I want to refer to a very unfortunate idea which is growing up and seems to be held by more and more Members, particularly Members of the Government Party. They believe that their duty in this House is to carry out constant adulation of the Government and to do everything not only to condemn but to pillory everybody who is not of their political persuasion. This sort of attitude was admirably illustrated by the vicious condemnation of a number of Members, notably among whom was the Member for Awgu, Mr Okwu, when he suggested in a characteristically malicious speech that the previous Government practised “a scorched earth policy.” Now, Sir, if I understand that aright, he meant that they destroyed everything of the Region’s which came into their hands. Now, if this is true, Sir, these men deserve not only to be condemned but to be condemned to death for treason. But in fact there is’nt the slightest foundation in an allegation of this type, and a few figures will convince the House that very often people in their political fervour get up and say the most uncharitable things about people who do not deserve them. For instance, if they look at the Budgets they will find that in 1952-53, the previous Government budgeted for a surplus of £87,000. In 1953-54, that surplus was raised to £243,000. Now, what is the estimated Budget surplus this year?—£5,000. Again, in 1953-54, the previous Government raised the nett increase in revenue from the 1952-53 figure of £837,000 to £960,000, in 1954-55 the nett increase will be only £332,000. This is a drop—this is a drop from £960,000 to £322,000. Now, men who try to build up a reserve in the way that these men have done cannot possibly be “the enemy of the people,” as Mr Okwu uncharitably described them the other day.

We cannot all be of the same political persuasion. By all means let us express in the strongest possible terms our party political differences, but let us not be so uncharitable about other people whose honest efforts we may disagree with—to be uncharitable to the point of being dishonest.

And, Sir, this brings me to the last point I want to make. We, on the Opposition Bench, regard ourselves as Members of a corporate body—the Legislature of the Eastern Region which consists of Members of the Government Party, special Members and Members of the Opposition. We believe that the duty of that corporate body is to make laws for the welfare and good government of the Eastern Region. We believe in spite of, and with apologies to, Mr Nwachukwu



Abengowe, that we are here to give service to this Region according to our lights no matter what our political persuasions are and no matter what party label we tag on to ourselves. This Region more than any other today, Sir, needs sober thinking and hard work. This is no time to indulge in personal recriminations either with the purpose of gaining party favour or gaining public applause. I want to repeat that the duty of providing for the welfare and the good government of this Region lies not only with the Government of the day but with every Member of this House and I want to say, Sir, that for the sake of the people of this Region, we on the Opposition Bench, wish whichever Government is in office to succeed. We don't care which Government is in office, but whichever Government is in office, we want that Government to succeed . . . (*Interruptions*) . . . we never say things unless we mean them. What we want and what we ask and what we will continue to ask, is for the Government to give a lead. The special duty of the Government of this House is to give a lead. We want to be told how the Regional Government intends to make greater areas of this Region available for profitable business enterprise. We want to be told how the more inaccessible areas of this Region, for example the areas between Calabar and Obubra Divisions, which are potentially wealthy areas, will be opened up for economic development . . . (*Interruption*). We want the Government to put before us their proposals for developing these areas and making it possible for these areas to add to the wealth of the Region. We are here and we are always ready to make our contribution to the prosperity of the Region. But the Government of the day must give a lead. My earnest appeal to the Government, Sir, is in the words of a famous contemporary British statesman—Mr Herbert Morrison—there are only three words—and I would like the Government to keep these words before them. They are "Go to it." I would ask the Government, kindly, in the interests of this Region to "Go to it."

**Mr G. E. Okeke (Onitsha Division):**

Mr President, I rise to support this Bill, and in doing so I must say that it is my pleasure to be a Member of this House. But I will be happier, when leaving this House when my time comes, to find the Eastern Region in a more economic and successful position than I met it.

Emphasis has been laid on the poverty of the East. I must draw the attention of the House to this point, and that is that the Eastern House has become the victim of inheriting a Budget that is not of its own making. After the 1951 elections the Eastern House inherited a Budget drawn up by the British Government in Nigeria. Today we are inheriting a Budget drawn by a "Nipper" Government, and I can say that the Eastern Government is a child of circumstances.

I have the following observation to make and that is, that with the present composition of this House and with the present leadership of the Government of the East I am sure the East shall not have cause to regret the past.



Mr President, it is evident that the Region must raise more money, but care must be taken that any new taxes be fair and receive the approval of the public opinion, unlike the Nippers' Cattle Toll and Produce Taxes of 1953. Increasing capitation tax would cripple Local Government as people would have no money again to pay various rates for local development. Local Councils, therefore, could not do their work well. Personally I come from Awgu Division, the home of Community Development in the Region, and from experience, I cannot over-emphasise the urgent need for the Government encouraging this Community Development and increasing the money for it. Mr President, I suggest that a Committee be set up to enquire into the financial losses of the Eastern Region in respect of the now separated Cameroons territory, and further suggest that the allowance payable to the thirteen Cameroons Members be discontinued forthwith. I further suggest that the Eastern Region cuts its coat according to its size. When I say that, I mean that the Provincial Administration set-ups should be abolished.

Coming, now, to Agricultural Development in the Region, I seriously urge the Government to face the cultivation of economic trees, like palms, cocoa, kola, cashew, etc., and the rearing of animals and general agriculture in order to raise the production of more foodstuffs.

Now, coming to Education, Mr President, it is the general opinion that every division should have a secondary school, not only that, but it should have a technical or training college. It is also expected that the terms presently used by the Education Department in the country should be considered. The terms of "assisted," "recognised," "aided" and "approved" are not very well understood and should be checked by the N.C.N.C. Government and the proper terms be substituted. Equal opportunity should be given to all and the schools which measure up to expectation should be approved and assisted at once.

Now, speaking about scholarship awards, I warn against what happened in the distribution of scholarships in the dissolved Government. We were not at all satisfied in my division for we remember that scholarships seemed to go to the divisions which appeared to be more developed to the neglect of others. This sort of thing must be avoided in the future and scholarships distributed on divisional basis.

Mr President, roads in the countryside were neglected—not maintained as in the case in the townships. Public Works Department should exercise equal control on roads in the rural areas where there are fewer and shorter roads—comparatively speaking.

Mr President, each division should have a hospital where a Medical Officer of Health could be available to look after the health of the people. After all, health is wealth!—We are speaking now about the wealth of this Region—we ought to see first to the health of all the people that we represent in this House. Illicit practices of injection and administration of drugs are common in the rural areas because Government has failed to meet up with the needs of the people.



Coming now to the Posts and Telegraphs Department, telephone operators should be advised to give satisfactory service to the public. As public servants they should refrain from merely gossiping and delaying to attend to public calls.

With regard to industries, Mr President, Government should assist the establishment of industries such as pottery, weaving, rice, oil mills, etc.

With regard to water supplies, Mr President, water supply is a most urgent need. No water, no life! Like medical attention, water supply in the country should be considered as equally essential.

Mr President, I associate myself with the views expressed by other honourable Members on the acute problem of water supply especially in the rural areas.

In conclusion, Mr President, I would wish that cap gun licensing should be transferred to Local Government bodies or scrapped entirely. Mr President, the needs of the rural areas should be carefully considered and implemented. The tax-payers whose interests we represent in this House wish to have a full share of amenities, thus showing the principle of democracy in practice.

Mr President, the public has been disturbed often by frequent occurrences of strikes in different departments. It is expected Government should do something to check future occurrences thereof. Works should be given their due rights and the spirit of give and take be exercised. The State Lottery question ought to be looked into and either legalised or illegalised.

With these few remarks, Mr President, I support the Appropriation Bill.

#### **The Minister of Natural Resources:**

Mr President, I rise to support the Appropriation Bill and in doing so I beg to congratulate you on your appointment as the President of this House. You are indeed lucky to preside over this newly formed ideal Parliament which is destined to be a model for the rest of this country to copy. I can assure you of our sincerest co-operation.

We ourselves are luckier still—I include my honourable friends in the Opposition—in that we have now for the first time a Government which is not only really and truly representative of the people of the Eastern Nigeria, but also has as its leader a man in whom the whole peoples of the Region have great confidence; unlike the last Government with little or no leadership and which finally cracked and finished up in crisis. I am sure that like a good general he will lead his army from victory to victory.

My portfolio, Sir, comprises three departments. The Veterinary Department: This department has been very much criticised in the past, but I am glad to say now that people realise the importance of animal husbandry in this country. There has not been much criticism this year. In any case, with the little staff we have and the little money, we have been able to do a lot. The livestock population is scattered



Several honourable Members pointed out the dangers of too much reliance being placed on palm produce as the main cash crop of the Region.

It is Government's policy to stimulate the production of other crops, notably cocoa, rubber, coco-nuts, cashew and coffee among permanent crops and rice, soya beans, benniseed and castor among annual crops. The plea for industrialisation is appreciated, but for many years to come the main wealth of the Region must be derived from the export of agricultural raw materials. There appears to be some misunderstanding among honourable Members regarding the subsidies paid to producers of Special Grade Palm Oil. The stabilisation fund of the Marketing Boards is the producers' money and it is only right and just that it should go back to them in the form of subsidies. For the industry to be able to face outside competition in the future it is essential that every encouragement should be given to the production of high grade oil which will always be required in the world markets—low-grade oil will not be in great demand owing to the increasing use of detergents instead of soap.

**The Welfare of People in Rural Areas:** Agriculture is based on rural areas and the welfare of people in these areas must be the continuing concern of the Ministry of Natural Resources. It will be the policy of the Ministry always to work in the interests of farmers; to endeavour in every possible way to enable them to improve their standard of living by the introduction of modern agricultural methods; by the growing of new crops; by the organisation of good marketing facilities and by providing them with an adequate return for their labours.

Mr President, I want to say two or three words about the Fisheries Department. Honourable Members want to know what has been done in the Fisheries Department and here are a few information to help them.

**Sea Fishing:** Work consists mainly in the introduction of Bonga and Shark nets of which there are now about 1,500 and 500 respectively in use. Demand often exceeds supply. Other help and advice is given to fishermen in respect of supplies of gear and tanning materials.

Three powered fishing boats are now operating from Opobo under a master fisherman—at the moment these are paid for out of Central funds. Trials are being carried out at several river mouths to test the suitability of the boats and various types of gear before recommending them to the local fishermen.

**Inland:** There are about forty small fish ponds spread over the Region—the biggest being at Itu, Ovim, and one under construction near Awka. All these are constantly being visited and advice given on stocking, feeding and cropping problems. New sites are inspected and surveyed and help given on construction problems where necessary. As a result of these activities it is hoped in a very short time more fish



will be reaching the markets and the standard of living among fishermen raised.

Mr President, I beg to support.

**The Minister of Education:**

Mr President, I rise to support the Appropriation Bill. In doing so, I want first of all to extend my sincere thanks to the Financial Secretary who has laboured so hard to present to this House a very comprehensive account of the economic and financial state of the Region. In his Report, the fact that 85 per cent of our total Revenue at present comes from the Centre and we exercise direct control over only 15 per cent of it, has agitated the minds of many Members as to how we shall be able to meet our various financial demands which have become a reality according to the Fiscal Commissioner's Report. It is all good to have this fear—but the fear ought not to make us pessimistic in our outlook. Rather it should stir us up to mobilise all the resources at our command in order to master the seeming frightful situation. I agree with those honourable Members who spoke before and suggested ways and means whereby the revenue of the Eastern Region can be increased. I endorse the idea of industrialisation, of tapping our mineral resources and of increasing the production of such crops that can fetch money to swell the revenue of the Eastern Region. Mr President, if we mean what we say and co-operate with the Government in translating the idea into action, I am sure our ship of state will sail smoothly through the troublous waters.

Mr President, I am glad that in the Estimates before us the unique place occupied by education in our social regeneration has been emphasised.

The total sum allotted to Education in the Estimates is £1,940,210. This includes the Scholarship Scheme, the Ministry of Education newly created and other expenses on education in general. The present figure shows a total increase of £326,000 as compared with 1953-54 Estimates. The above total sum of nearly £2,000,000 as expenditure for one department may appear a very significant figure particularly on the part of a person who has not studied the social demand of our educational process.

I should like the honourable Members to realise that the above sum is merely a token of interest the present Government has towards education, as it cannot in any way meet half way our commitments according to the declared policy of the Government to expand education at primary and secondary level to enable all pupils to compete in state conducted final examinations for school leavers. It is therefore my belief that education of the common man should be given first recognition, since education is essential if a nation hopes to preserve a due sense of liberty. I want to refer to universal primary education. We are now demanding Universal Adult Suffrage, but that cannot work well if universal education fails to go with it. For as Burke said, "Education is cheap defence of nations." The Sessional paper No. 9 of 1953 has given us an idea as to how much it would cost the Regional



Secondary education 1953-54: Sum allocated £106,000; 1954-55: Sum allocated £125,210; an increase of £19,210.

Teacher-Training—Grants-in-aid for 1953-54: Sum allocated £127,000; Grants-in-aid 1954-55: Sum allocated £168,410; an increase of £41,410.

In addition to the increase of £41,410 on Teacher-Training, a further sum of £40,000 has been specially set aside for the extension of teacher-training facilities. It should be remembered that this is a temporary measure, as Supplementary Estimates showing more fully the activities of the Government will be presented after the coming into force of the new Constitution. (*Interruption: "That is good news"*). After all, honourable Ikoku as an educationist, should be more optimistic and constructive in his criticisms. I call, Sir, for co-operation from all honourable Members to find ways and means whereby we can overcome any difficulties, as other Regions are trying to do. We look forward to self-government in 1956, but this also means self-effort. Every privilege has its responsibilities. The sure foundation of any state is laid on knowledge, as it is on the sound education of the people that the security and destiny of every nation rest.

With these remarks, Mr President, I support the Appropriation Bill.

#### **The Minister of Land and Survey:**

Mr President, I am speaking in support of the Appropriation Bill. Previous speakers have made fine speeches and there has been applause when demands for the establishment of new services and improvement of the existing ones were made.

Our Government hopes to do all that lies in its power to improve upon the economic and social standing of the Eastern Region. But much remains for us all to do. As we apportion larger and larger sums of money for the building of new hospitals, post offices, schools and colleges, new industries, it becomes more important that we have in the country sincere and honest men and women to man the services for the good of all concerned. It sounds beautiful to vote £100,000 for a new hospital, but have we the men and women who are able and willing to care for our sick as they are entitled to be cared for?

It is, Mr President, the duty of every honourable Member to go to his constituency and to educate his people as to how best to enjoy the full measure of freedom. It is all to be found in rendering selfless, sincere and honest service to the country. Let our working classes no more while away their time, thinking that the money has come from the white man's country and may be used without care and economy. The Government is ours and we must have a sense of responsibility in disbursing it. All time spent is money spent and every act of dishonesty is one step backward which will delay our onward march.

I fully appreciate the increased financial autonomy which the New Constitution will confer upon the Region. But I realise also the greater risks which the Region will be taking, and the necessity for



seeking new sources of revenue, and developing existing sources, which will be less dependent on fluctuations in Nigeria's foreign trade.

One of such sources is the Land Department, for which I have the honour to hold the Portfolio. The department, with scant encouragement, has been able, in six years, to increase its annual revenue from Crown Lands from £16,000 to over £60,000. This figure could have been considerably greater if Government had been less parsimonious in providing funds for the service of the department and less generous in its dealings with Local Government bodies and Voluntary Agencies.

The department is, even now, losing thousands of pounds of potential revenue each year by its present inability to meet the strong demand for further urban development, and its inability to create adequate machinery for the revision of Crown rents in accordance with the provisions of the Crown Lands Ordinance.

There appears to have been a feeling in the past that it was in some way immoral for Government to make a profit from Crown Lands. It is to be hoped that this feeling no longer exists, and that this House will support a policy of developing existing Crown Lands to the highest degree compatible with good planning and Government's own needs. Further, that this House will support a policy of acquiring land for urban development when the need becomes evident.

It is hoped, therefore, that this House will appreciate the part the Land Department can play in raising revenue for the service of the Region, and will make it possible for the department to play that part. Mr President, I support.

#### **The Minister of Public Health:**

Mr President, in rising to support the Appropriation Bill, I have first to thank the honourable Financial Secretary for his very industrious work.

First of all, I shall deal with the economic state of the Region. It will have to be altered in a very short time because of the London Conference decisions. The Fiscal Commissioner's Report is to my mind open to a lot of question. I am not a professional economist; I am only an amateur. But I am already beginning to question some of these conclusions and it is the duty of every real economist, every educated and trained economist of the Eastern Region, to begin to question some of these conclusions that come from Mount Sinai. In this regard, I agree entirely with the honourable Minister for Natural Resources, Central Government, when he wondered how six million people could smoke more cigarettes and tobacco than eight million people. This is very difficult to believe. Little wonder that the Right Honourable Sir Winston Churchill said once that whenever he asked British leading economists a question they all gave him different answers. When Dr Hicks was appointed to go into this matter of revenue allocation, he came out with one report. Sir Louis Chick, with practically identical terms of reference, produced an entirely different report. I am beginning to wonder why agricultural



produce got from the good earth should be taken into account when calculating revenue, and coal, which also comes from the bowels of the earth left out in such calculation. Sir Louis Chick defended himself by interpreting his terms of reference very narrowly. He says, "My terms of reference, by enjoining me to have regard to the importance of ensuring that the total revenues available to Nigeria are allocated in such a way that the principle of derivation is followed to the fullest degree *compatible* with meeting the reasonable needs of the Centre and each of the Regions." And yet, in spite of that proviso he followed the principle of derivation to such an extent that alarmists are now shouting that this is a poor Region, a fondling, an orphan that cannot stand on its own feet. Now, Sir, the former Commissioner, Dr Hicks, supported this point that I am trying to make. He said on page 74, "So far as the strictly economic part of development is concerned, considerations of fairness ought not to have much to do with its distribution." Now, this is the point, "If, at the time that the coal mine at Enugu or the tin mines of the Plateau were discovered, their development had been held up until something analogous had been discovered in the other Regions, the loss which would have followed this absurd policy would have hampered the whole development of Nigeria." So that it is totally unfair for Members of the Government Party of the Western Region to continue to hammer on this very idea of derivation. It says quite clearly here that the whole country had been developed from the resources of the Eastern Region via the mineral coal. Another point. We all know that when the white man came to this Region he came principally for palm oil, and we also know that the West produced and still produces very little palm oil, so that initially the revenue coming from the Eastern Region was used to develop most of this country, and particularly the Western Region. For the cocoa which now seems to have gone to their heads, was developed primarily by the Agricultural Department which was, of course, mainly financed from the revenue from palm oil. It is a great pity that when Sir Louis Chick was drawing up this Report, he drew it in such a way as to appear as if he was under the influence of the Western Government. I can only give one reason for that: the indolence of the erstwhile Nipper Government. When in London the Action Group Government presented their own programme with all Government files and facts to guide them. When the Nippers reached London, what did this Nipper Government do? They ran away from the Conference. (*Cries of "Shame"*). This, of course, is a very serious charge of Government ineptitude and it is a pity that the Leader of the Opposition is not here. I would have liked an answer to this charge. Although they were a Caretaker Government, it was their duty to present the official point of view of the Eastern Region. What did they do? They left their duty and ran away. They left madly chasing after newspaper headlines. I therefore submit, Sir, that all those trained economists in the Eastern Region should look up these papers and turn them upside down. I am sure that there is a trick somewhere.



But even though the Report would appear to be not entirely to the best interests of the Eastern Region, yet we shall not, because we may lose something because of the new Constitution, we shall not because of that refuse to abide by a majority decision or refuse to stand on our own feet: if the people of the Western Region want to stand on their feet we also can, can't we? (*Cries of "We can"*). That is as far as I would go on this financial policy. But before I come to medicine I will say a few words about taxation. (*Interruption*).

**The President:**

The honourable Member will not interrupt.

**The Minister of Public Health:**

I think, Mr President, taxation is a very big subject, and one that should not be rushed into hastily. Untapped avenues and opportunities are enormous, and it is up to us to examine these opportunities carefully and thoroughly. I would, however, disagree with the honourable Members of the Opposition who are urging us, within barely three weeks of taking up office, to provide a complete financial policy for the Region and announce new measures of taxation. Surely, that is madness. No Government can do a thing like that. Whether it is going to be purchase tax, or income tax covering various groups of the community, all these things are so far Top Secret, and we shall announce our policy when we are ready. You do not want us to tell you that in five months time we are going to tax some particular commodity. This would be an opportunity for some Members to corner the market by that time. No Government announces its taxation policy until it is ready to implement it.

Coming now to Health. Sir, I want to say that this is a department whose services are very much in demand everywhere. I want to re-emphasise that our policy is to make a little bit of a shift from the concentrated communities such as townships to the rural areas. These people have suffered for a long time and we are anxious to provide services for them, but in doing so we shall need their co-operation in every way. I am sure that if we get it, a lot will be done for the rural areas, so that within a very short time, where the people used to die of various diseases, people will be saved. It need not cost a lot of money and I can assure you that this is not an empty promise. It is something we are definitely going to do.

Turning now to a few remarks made by some honourable Members. One honourable Member from Opobo had the idea that dentistry was neglected in this Region. I beg to differ. We are, as a people, blessed with rather good teeth and dental decay in fact is not very common. But even so, dental troubles do exist and the three dentists for the Region at the moment are handling nearly all the troubles that exist and there is no need at the moment for enormous increases in that establishment. But if the position should alter at any time, funds will be made available and increases in establishment considered. Another honourable Member mentioned the problem of civil and



criminal lunatics in Port Harcourt prison. Well, our greatest difficulty here is the question of staff. It is very difficult, almost impossible to recruit psychiatrists to come out to this country and practice. It is difficult for a foreigner practising psychiatry to practise in this country because it would not be easy for him to read the patient's mind in a foreign language. So that we have come to the conclusion that the best thing to do is to send one of our young men overseas to qualify in this speciality, and already a young doctor has sailed and we hope within a short time—not too short—about three or four years, he will be back with the requisite diploma to take up psychiatry.

Another honourable Member was alarmed that newly-qualified doctors should be allowed to perform major operations. Well, I do not know precisely what he means by major operations, but if what he means is what the Medical Department means by a major operation, then I must say that this allegation is quite untrue. Newly-qualified doctors usually serve at least one year's apprenticeship in surgery, and already in the Estimates we are making provision for a new Specialist, so that the Enugu and Port Harcourt General Hospitals will be recognised as suitable places for newly-qualified doctors to do one year as House Physicians and House Surgeons.

This is an entirely different thing from what another honourable Member said later on—that there are illegal practises in the rural areas and quacks were rampant everywhere. It is a fact, and we always prosecute every case that comes to our notice vigorously. The whole matter is being reviewed in point of fact, including the question of illicit traffic in drugs, and we hope that within a short time this racket will be brought seriously under control.

Finally, Mr President, I would like to assure this House that even if it is decided that social services being very expensive, should be curtailed, we would be failing in our duty if we would introduce this most drastic idea into the Medical Service, for it is very difficult indeed to evaluate the benefits we all derive from the Medical and Health Services in this country. They cannot be evaluated in terms of pounds, shillings and pence, because the investment on the Health and Medical Services is truly a gilt-edged investment yielding immediate and continued returns in the form of better physical and mental health for the people, and consequently greater productivity.

Mr President, I beg to support the Appropriation Bill.

#### **The Minister of Works:**

Mr President, in rising to support the Appropriation Bill I should like, before doing anything else, to say that my department is a department that belongs to every other department, and because of this situation honourable Members have nicknamed my department the Public Waste Department instead of Public Works Department. You will thus see, Mr President, the embarrassing situation before I speak.



However, I will proceed to outline, though in a sketchy manner, seven aspects of the policy and problems of this department. One concerns roads. I wish to make it abundantly clear that it is the wish of the Department of Public Works to pursue a vigorous road policy, so that in a short while, certainly with the co-operation of this honourable House, my department will be able to graduate from "Waste" to "Works." It has to construct and maintain regional roads as well as roads which the Central Government want to construct in the Region at first. It has also to tar and widen, as well as improve existing roads which, because of the daily increasing traffic, have become unsuitable. Bridges have to be constructed and repaired, as well as culverts which fall on regional roads or for which the Central Department defrays the cost.

The third aspect of our work is buildings, where they have to be erected and maintained, Regional Offices and quarters for the Regional Staff, Treasuries, Legislative Chambers, Courts, Schools, Hospitals, Health Centres, Medical Field Units and other forms of buildings required by the Regional or Central Government.

It has to provide urban and rural water supply systems in partnership with communities concerned. I would like to make it clear that this Region through the work of the department will increase the number of engineers in order to facilitate the progress of water supply in rural and urban areas. Contrary to the wishes of the Opposition, we are not going to discriminate against urban development policy in favour of rural development. As I go on, I will mention specific towns on which programmes are going on now. But the most important part of water supply, whether it be for urban or rural communities is partnership and I congratulate the honourable the Minister of Health for citing that point of view so that it is easy for us to do more within a given time if the communities concerned take a share. The Leader of this Government has already on more than two occasions here made this public announcement.

To provide furniture, fixtures and other structural and constructional amenities approved for various categories of Government buildings and the sixth is to sell petroleum and engine oils to legislators and civil servants at a uniform rate throughout the Region as directed by the Central Government.

The seventh is to establish and manage garages for servicing official vehicles.

The work which my ministry is programming between now and 1960 will require some £4 million to execute efficiently and the policy is that we wish to provide enough houses for both junior and senior civil servants. In the past it seemed as if the senior civil servants had an advantage over the junior. The policies in tackling these specialised and highly technical jobs satisfactorily are outlined as follows and we intend to put them into operation at once.



All contractors who have registered with the Public Works Department (I nearly said "Public Waste Department") shall be given equal opportunity. We have heard complaints in the past and I want to make it clear that as we begin, we want to begin aright.

1. All construction and tarring of new roads shall be given out on contract to reputable firms registered with the Public Works Department.

2. Bridge and culvert construction must be given out on contract to reputable firms registered with the Public Works Department unless, and only on that occasion, the Public Works Department offered to take up such projects and to complete them within the scheduled time.

3. The Public Works Department shall be in charge of maintenance, inspection of works as to specifications, architectural designs and plans, surveys and engineering consultant services, cost quantity and material analyses.

4. Whenever Government approves for construction, new houses, hospitals, water schemes and other forms of buildings, the Public Works Department should choose which it can undertake within the given time and allocate the residue, through the Regional Tenders Board, to qualified contractors.

5. When a given tender is called, there shall be no discrimination based on race, nationality, politics or religion of the tenderers. In Committee stage details of these policies may be raised, both as regards the 1954-55, details of which are in the Estimates, and the Five-Year Programme for 1955-60.

Mr President, it is my ardent desire that these public pronouncements on the functions and policy of my department will be well received by this honourable House. I hope that the Members will assist me and my executives in giving these pronouncements widest possible publicity. As all concerned strive immediately to practicalise these policies, it may well be that a year from now, when we meet again, the embarrassment caused the department by some acts of its staff, who are lazy and sleep on the job, will have been removed. This, of course, cannot be done by one man. It cannot be done by simply stating these policies publicly. It can be done through the officers, the executives and the staff of the Public Works Department realising the basic importance of this department to the effective functioning of other departments. Whether they be carpenters, or masons, or road overseers, or painters or other African workers, their co-operation together can increase production in the Public Works Department through the maximum use of their skill and labour. This will be their tribute to the nation.

I think it was Henry Ford, that American automobile industrial wizard, who said that "The man who would really benefit mankind must reach them through their work." And, didn't Mr Charles



Schwab confirm it when he said that "The man who does not work for the love of work but only for money is not likely to make money nor to find much fun in life."

The uninspired Opposition, rebels, opportunists, prophets of negativism and half baked economists and iconoclasts will never reap where others have sown. They will be utterly confounded and frustrated in their well known game of confusion and mud slinging. For this is not an era of bread lines and Apple Marys. It is a NEW EAST of honest work for scientific production. Ours is a Government with ample room for all who mean to work. Experts as well as farmers and clerks, stenographers as well as technicians and teachers and petty traders, yes, including the legislators, honest councillors, policemen and police women and teachers, the NEW EAST wants all of them. The criteria are good intentions, pure heart and productive limbs.

We cannot effectively examine the future of our economy without carefully delving into the sources of our present revenue. Professional economists have spotlighted four fundamental principles of revenue allocation in a federal country. These are (1) Independent Revenue, such as local and regional taxes; (2) National Interest, such as one hundred per cent federal grants for education and federal police or 50 per cent federal grants on Native Administration Police; (3) Consumption, such as duty on motor spirit or half the gross proceeds of duty on manufactured and unmanufactured tobacco; (4) the one that has been most spoken of today, derivation, such as duties on beer, cement, soap and any other goods made in the Region. To this last group also belong royalty on mining and mineral oils such as mining of coal. Mr President, it is likely that the Government may very well consider that derivation is not going to be discarded in Federal Nigeria, but is going to stay. I would like derivation, personally, to stay and from what we know of the coal deposit and the output, this will give us sizeable revenue when we decide to tax coal under the principle of derivation. Another one about which so many people, who do not know what is going on with reference to Nigerian geology, have spoken, is mineral oil. Let nobody here be discouraged. Whether mineral oil has been found in Nigeria in commercial quantity or not, mineral oil has been found in Nigeria.

Vehicle and other licences issued in the Region and export duties on produce, all these are sources of derivation. We have no fear of derivation. We shall go and create sources that will give us derivation, and other Members who have spoken on these principles have rightly stressed how we could increase this revenue by going all out for industrialisation. If this includes mechanisation of our farming system, one could not agree with them more, and, under derivation, we can start now to raise our revenue. I will give you an example.

When we buy our cars and lorries in Lagos or in any other Region, let us drive them to the East with a temporary licence, or D.L. (Dealer's Licence). Some one did so last month and that meant



£12 19s 0d additional revenue to the East. Most of our cars, if not all, are bought in the West and if we know that, under the principle of derivation, the money paid for all cars licenced in Lagos goes to Lagos, since Lagos is still under the West up to when the new Constitution comes into force. Well you must buy them and take Dealer's 14-day Licence to come here and licence your vehicles in the Eastern Region and pay that revenue to this Region. That is one single form of derivation against which so many people are talking now.

I know that when the Government implements its policy on insurance transactions much more revenue will remain here, revenue which for years has been allowed to flow away to our detriment now.

Besides these revenue sources, one may suggest revenues from new taxes, increases on existing taxation, introduction of new cash crops such as coffee, cocoa, cashew, soya beans, groundnuts and beniseed. Then there is an indirect revenue derived from, what Members have described as "self-help" on community and divisional levels. This is more so when we talk of the need for roads. There are many more roads to be built than have been built and the Eastern Region has less roads, contrary to what somebody tried to puff up his chest this morning. The East has less mileage of roads than any other Region in Nigeria and about that somebody, the Leader of the Government may come to my rescue when he speaks.

Hard work is revenue whereas laziness and waste are invisible expenditure items.

We must of necessity, attract overseas capital and technology. This will hasten and quicken the tempo of our industrial revolution. That is what the economic history of many an industrial society teaches us.

The food production campaign must now resound from one corner of the Region to another, but we must not eat too much. There is no reason why the Anam yam, the Abakaliki rice, the Bende garri, the Abonema fish, the Mgbidi oranges, the poultry, cattle, maize and vegetables produced in abundance in certain suitable towns of the Region should not, like the white man's cigarette, beer and soap, be rendered purchaseable in our local markets and canteens. Like the people of Saskatchewan, we may well eat what we can, and can what we can't. To advance these programmes, my ministry has adopted a vigorous Road Policy in order to facilitate distribution.

We need not be unduly worried about the apparent meagreness of our regional revenue as represented by the figure of the three quarters of a million pounds in this year's Estimates. We cannot speak about the balance and surplus until the debate on the Estimates is over. We shall continue for the next four, five or six days on the Estimates. It would be unscientific for anybody to publish that this is our Estimate. I think it is well known that this Government took over a month ago and the Estimate was not drafted by this Government. We are neither fools, nor children. There must be



a "stop-gap" Estimate and that is what this is. And that is what my friend, the Financial Secretary has been trying to tell us and yet people continue to talk about bad Estimates. I cannot say how much surplus we are going to have in 1954-55 until this Budget has come through the Committee of Supply. Our regional revenue is bound to rise in geometric progression when in 1956 Nigerians reassemble again to review revenue allocation. We shall then sing a very different tune. And don't forget for a moment that the revenue from the Federal Treasury is your revenue. Because we are all Nigerians. It is not revenue from Russia or Britain. It is revenue from Nigeria. And this is a part of Nigeria, so whatever we put in the Central coffers, whenever we draw it we have no apology about it.

The lesson of this U.N.I.P. Budget is inescapable. They did practically nothing for the past two years to advance our financial dignity. In 1952-53, the honourable Members will note, the regional revenue was £540,665—that is revenue attributable to this Region. In 1953-54 it was £903,030 and now they nipped the trend down to £757,000 in their 1954-55 Estimate. It is their funeral obsequies that we are now singing. It is the tune they have dictated that is what we are now looking at and they have the audacity to come here to insult the Government: The major sources are licences, 23 per cent; reimbursements, 22 per cent; rents, 17 per cent; departmental earnings, 16 per cent; fees, 8 per cent.

Suppose we bestir ourselves anew to licence all our vehicles here, build more hospitals, schools and courts, install efficient pipe borne water systems for Aba, Abakaliki, Calabar, Enugu, Onitsha, Port Harcourt and Umuahia, for which plans are going on now, provide one water point for every 500 people in the rural areas and accomplish our scheme for installing minor pipe borne water for every 7,000 people in concentrated rural areas. Suppose we are able under this principle of partnership and bold venture to accomplish this. I leave it to the honourable the Financial Secretary to work out what all that will mean on the revenue side.

To cut down waste in public administration, we are not going to continue to site one senior civil servant's house on an acre of township land. It is not the case in the United Kingdom. The famous Buckingham Palace is not so extravagantly adorned with so vast an empty acreage for which money must be voted to upkeep. In co-operation with the Ministries of Land and Public Health, it is the desire of my Ministry that not less than two and not more than four senior service quarters may be sited in an acre of land, and not less than six nor more than eight junior service quarters may be erected on an acre.

The obvious savings are in terms of gardeners and leasehold plots. Mr President, I lived eight years in the land of Uncle Sam and can lay a modest claim to not being totally ignorant of some European and British communities. There are no Ikoyi type of quarters in the areas I visited. I therefore think that one Ikoyi is enough. We



intend, therefore, to plan and develop our NEW EAST with fortitude and prudence. Our population increases daily but our land area, unfortunately, does not. The Minister's house provided me here has more than an acre of land around it. I hope that this honourable House will eventually tell me what to do with all that empty space as the poor grass are now beginning to wag their heads at me.

The 1950-51 per capita income of Nigeria is a piece of statistics that gladdens nobody. According to our authorities, Prest and Stewart, the average was £20. No real Easterner would like to hear that the East was second to the West. The West had £26, the East had £23 and the North had £16 per capita. That is, all the national income divided among the people who live there. Of the £600,000,000 total national income in that year, only £150,000,000 was credited to the East while the West had £200,000,000 and the North £246,000,000. It is well known that agriculture contributed nearly half. That means that from agricultural resources we raised about half of the £600,000,000 national income of Nigeria. The next in order of bouquet was the long distance transport business by trains, ships and lorries which accounted for £88,000,000.

Mr President, Agriculture, I intend to say, is the father of industries and human labour is their mother; for it is said that "agriculture not only gives riches to a nation but the only riches she can call her own." The NEW EAST must therefore discard the parrot cries of yesterday and push on with faith and diligence to 1956.

I support the Appropriation Bill.

#### **Dr Udo Udoma (Opobo Division):**

Mr President, I would like to make a few remarks on the budget, and I would like to say, Sir, that although it seems to be the usual practice to congratulate the Financial Secretary on his speech, I think on this occasion I shall break away from that tradition.

I would like to examine the speech most objectively, but before I proceed with what I am going to say I would like to observe that I am rather surprised—I repeat that I am rather surprised indeed—at the language that came from the Ministers' bench this afternoon. I would like to say, Sir, that for many years now this country has been fed on a diet of abuse. I am to say that we are fed up with these abuses. Abuse is no argument. We like to see constructive thinking; and we must cease playing to the gallery. We have come here to do business and to serve our nation. It is quite true that everyone has a right to express his own views on the problems of the day, but I would like to say that *argumentum ad hominem* is no argument at all.

Now, as far as the Budget Speech of the Financial Secretary is concerned, I would say, Sir, that one can only describe it as a lot of platitudes spread throughout the pages. It is remarkable that the Financial Secretary said practically nothing about the Estimates before the House, but merely indulge in building his castles in the air, talking about what is likely to come. He devoted a lot of time dealing with



the Marketing Board, which incidentally is not within the portfolio of any Minister in this Region at present. He said practically nothing as to the policy of the Government for raising revenue in the Region. Now, Sir, I sympathise with the Financial Secretary and agree with him when he said that his job was a very difficult one and that the financial prospect of this Region was very gloomy. But having said that he proceeded to contradict himself by that there was no cause for alarm. Now, Mr President, if the Budget of a Region like the East can only show a surplus of £5,000 and it is said that that is no cause for alarm it is difficult to know what then would be as to what the Government was intending to do with a view to remedying the situation. I think that why three-quarters of the speech of the Financial Secretary was devoted to what was likely to happen in July was that he had nothing to say on the Budget at all as to Government's financial policy.

The question has been discussed fully in this House as to the function of the Marketing Board in subsidising the producer prices. It seems to me, Sir, that people do not know that this money—the £15 million which this Region is going to get from the Central Board—comes out of the proceeds of the money which ought normally to have been paid to the producers at the time their produce was sold, and that the Marketing Board has the policy whereby part of this money, which should have come to the producer, is put on reserve, which is about 70 per cent, then 22 per cent goes to development (and this goes to the Regional Development Board) and 7½ per cent goes into research.

I am very happy to observe that in spite of the fact that the Members of the other party had gone out into the country to give the people to understand that the producer prices they were getting were not adequate some of them have now come here to criticise that the policy of subsidisation of the producer prices is a very bad thing. Of course, as is said, times do change, and perhaps men with them.

Now, Sir, what I would have liked to hear from the Government was something in the nature of a policy saying: "Here we are, we have inherited a bad inheritance. This is what we hope to do to remedy the situation. By the time you come back in July you will find that this Region is bubbling with productivity; you will find that all our roads have been tarred; you will find that in the rural areas new roads will be built; and you will find that water will be supplied to the rural areas of the Region."

On the contrary what do we hear? We hear even a Minister getting up here to talk about Sir Louis Chick, and even giving the impression that Sir Louis Chick was preparing his Report during the London Conference and because the "Nippers" walked out, therefore, he had to adopt the policy of derivation. This is a very shameful and disgraceful confession to make. In other words, the Minister who spoke was implying that the N.C.N.C. Party was not able to convince the Conference that derivation was no use for this Region; and I say that that is a very shameful admission of inability indeed.



I am glad that they now see that if the "Nippers" had been there, perhaps the situation would have been different.

Mr President, Sir Louis Chick wrote his Report in Nigeria. He consulted the N.C.N.C., he consulted the "Nippers," he consulted all the rival parties before he committed something to paper. He did not write it in London. The London Conference had nothing to do except that the N.C.N.C. went to London and betrayed this country by agreeing on the derivation principles to be adopted by Sir Louis Chick when he would be making his Report; they now come here to cry over spilt milk over their own undoing. The only consolation I could have is this: they have paid us that honour of recognising that the presence of the "Nippers" in London would have changed the situation.

Sir, under the old Government, we used to blame the imperialist. Now, I understand that this is a Government of the people by the people for the people; and the party in power starts off by blaming the "Nippers" because there is no imperialist to blame. I hope in July there would be something else to blame. I am sure, Mr President, that when we come back in July the N.C.N.C. will say: "Oh, the "Nippers" and the U.N.P. have amalgamated, therefore, we cannot do anything." That, I say Sir, is a lazy man's excuse, and a bad workman will always complain of his tools. In one breath the N.C.N.C. felt that the present Budget was excellent; even one speaker, the honourable Onyeri, got up here and congratulated the Ministers for having produced an excellent Budget. He went on to say that only N.C.N.C. Government was capable of producing the present Budget. Now another man has just got up to say it was the "Nippers" Budget. Would we know where the N.C.N.C. stands as to policy and principle? I think this House is entitled to it, and, although, Sir, we had loaded our guns, I must say that we are not going to fire them yet. We shall wait until July, and then we will know who the scapegoat will be. Now, Sir, this much I say: As far as my own constituency, the Opobo Division, is concerned, the people know that the N.C.N.C. is in power and they expect full rural development. Everything must be done to improve life in that area. There is a crying need for development.

This brings me to another point which I would like to make. It is this question of Codified Grants and the grants generally given to Local Government bodies. I think, Sir, that for the new Government to have removed those grants from the Estimates which had been provided within the Estimates by the so-called "Nipper" Government, and for the new Government which is supposed to be a Government of the people to have felt that the people of the rural areas were not entitled to be assisted, is a very bad beginning. It is a bad beginning indeed. It shows that with the N.C.N.C. Government the word "people" has a different meaning, perhaps from the general meaning everybody attaches to the word, and "people" with the N.C.N.C.



may mean, "Ministers" who have to earn £2,000 a year. They are the "people," but the people in the rural areas, who pay the tax, who produce palm oil and palm kernel, who stimulate activities in the Region, are the people to be relegated to the background. They must be cheated, and Ministers must grow rich at their expense.

Mr President, I was alarmed when a Minister got up to say that he cannot even tell what the surplus in the Estimates would be—that would be known, according to him, after the Debate. In other words they have adopted no policy on the Estimates. It was this same Minister that was full of abuse thinking perhaps that he was writing on the pages of the *Pilot*. Mr President, the art of Government is quite different from journalism, and I hope Members will appreciate that. (*Interruptions from N.C.N.C. Members*).

Mr President, most Governors and most Administrators have been lawyers, not journalists. (*Continued Interruptions*).

Mr President, it seems that there are not many people here who understand English. I said "most." I did not say "every."

Now, Sir, what I was going to say is this: that we have been told and warned time and again that we are going to end up the current financial year with a Supplementary Budget of about £180,000 deficit, yet people get up here to say that because there are many people in the Eastern Region, therefore, we are very rich. Those who say we are poor are weeping Jeremiahs also. I cannot understand the logic of it. I understand that in the other party it is not even necessary to be logical. You do not have to reason; you have either to take it or leave it.

Mr President, I am saying that we have got to face facts, we have got to be realistic. We do not come here to play up to the gallery. We have come to face a job of work. It is our duty to see to it that this Region is prosperous—that there is evidence of prosperity written at large throughout the Region.

One last point, Sir, before I take my seat. I would like to give a word of warning. I have heard it bandied about the House that women—at least they say working class women—are likely to be taxed. Well, I wish those who are going to tax them well, and it has been said again that whatever is going to be done about taxation is all top secret—the usual N.C.N.C. top secret—and yet we have it here on the speech from the throne that there cannot be any tax without consultation with the people. Surely if it is top secret you cannot consult anybody about it. You have got to do it without consultation; so, Mr President, one cannot understand what exactly the fiscal policy of the Government is. I hope that when the Leader of the Government gets up to reply he will give indications as to Government fiscal policy for the current year. We are entitled to know this and so too the people in our different constituencies.

I oppose the Appropriation Bill.



**The Minister of Local Government:**

Mr President, I must say at the outset that I agree entirely with the views expressed by the honourable and learned gentleman who spoke before me that it is necessary, in order to maintain the tradition of parliamentary practice, that those who speak here should be parliamentary in their language, but I want to warn him as well that it is a two-way traffic. There are certain individuals in this House whom we have learned to regard as elder statesmen. We hope, too, that in their language and demeanour in this House they will set such an example that we will be able to work cordially and respect each others' feelings on a mutual basis. Certainly, it is the desire of Government that we should be parliamentary in our language and dignified in our demeanour. (*Hear! Hear!*).

Since March, 1948, all my Budget speeches either in the Legislative Council or in the Western House of Assembly had been made from the unofficial side of the House. Today, I find myself in the inverse position of doing so from the official bench. Having been through the mill of the past-time of having a crack at officialdom in the preparation of the Budget, it is now my turn to take the same dose of medicine. I can assure the House that it is not a pleasant experience. (*Laughter*). My only consolation is that, like a good old athlete, I can take as much as I have given; beyond that I shall have to throw in the towel. (*Laughter*).

The honourable the Financial Secretary has given us a very fair assessment of the economic and financial position of the Region. To my mind, he was brutally frank in raising our hopes, for one moment, and giving us a rude shock of the realities to be faced, in another. If all Financial Secretaries are as candid and factual as my honourable friend—which is an idiosyncrasy of the best of their profession—then the effect on the population of gloomy legislators, be they from the Opposition side or from ours would have been more pronounced.

The Appropriation Bill seeks the approval of this House to expend £5,226,540 during the forthcoming year. Compared with last year's Budget this represents an increase of £423,400. But the honourable mover allays all fears by giving assurances that the Region would provide a revenue of £5,231,840 which, like the Estimates of Expenditure, represents an increase of £322,620 over last years' figures. When a little arithmetic is done, then the Region is left with a handsome surplus balance of £5,300; which is not bad when we consider all the tears shed inside and outside this House over the alleged insolvency of the Region. What could be more encouraging, to the tax-payer than for him to know that the Budget of the Region is self-balancing. If I were on the other side of the House I know what I would have said had the Estimates shown a deficit of £1, but not being there—and I hope I will not exchange places with the Leader of the Opposition for a long time yet—I think I have said what is appropriate for the occasion.



After all is said and done, we are here, unlike the Opposition, not necessarily to oppose, but to uphold the wishes of the majority even with a surplus of £5,300. Stripped of its rhetoric, the Budget Speech of the honourable the Financial Secretary is a challenge to the East to rise up and walk and to cease from grovelling in the dust of despair and inaction. The message it contains show the great possibilities awaiting the Region if only we would bend down to the task of economic reconstruction with courage and vision.

For a nation of 7,250,000 people to raise a revenue of £5,231,840, which works out at 14s 3d per head, is an advertisement of the need for revolutionary concept of our economy and speed for transforming and organising same, having due regard to our natural resources, human energy, machine technique, capital and scientific planning.

From your criticisms of the Budget, for which we are grateful, it is obvious that most of you are thinking hard and planning quickly the ways and means of salvaging a potentially wealthy Region from an unwarranted servitude of poverty and penury.

Government is convinced that any nation which can produce the agricultural and mineral resources which abound in this Region can be geared to positive action. His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor made this clear in his policy speech when he said:

“It is Government’s policy to develop as rapidly as possible the social and other essential services which are its responsibility and to raise the standard of living of the people of this Region. This can only be done by increasing the resources of the people of this Region and to this end, Government will encourage industrial and commercial activities in an endeavour to increase their earning capacity and purchasing power.”

In other words, His Honour has clarified that the most effective way of raising the standard of living of our people is to expand our economy by encouraging industrial and commercial activities. I am happy to reiterate the fact that the Government of the Eastern Region is irrevocably committed to this policy.

Industrial activity implies the supplementation of our agrarian economy with industrialisation. Some of the honourable Members in course of the Debate have suggested the following industries: cement, soap, chocolate manufacture, salt, glass, paper, textile, vegetable oil refining, coal-tar, etc. Government intends forming an Economic Planning Commission to investigate the possibilities of industrialisation and report how same can materialise. As soon as this issue is decided we shall make a more definite pronouncement.

Commercial activity will necessitate the linking up of our exports and imports, for purposes of trade, with the opening up of the Region for investment of a large scale. Government will bear in mind the various suggestions made for the diversification of our economic crops in order to enable us to make inroads in fields which are at present monopolised by certain Regions or countries.



the "Other Charges" section of the current Education Estimates, where he will notice that there is an increase of £197,040 in the vote for primary education, £19,210 for secondary education, and £41,410 for teacher-training. In fact, there is an overall increase of £259,290 in the education vote over last year's Estimates. I must invite the honourable Member's attention to the fact that while we will receive a grant of £1,538,460 from the Centre, we have budgeted to spend £1,822,300 for education, that is, an increase of £283,840 over and above the grant from the Centre.

The honourable gentleman also opposed what he called the "regionalisation" of education. My honourable friend, the Government Chief Whip, has exposed the hidden cloven hoof, and I do not intend to belabour this point, except to remind Mr Ikoku that the intention to do without an inspectorate-general is to avoid what he says he has always disliked—that is, regimentation. The educational policy of this Region cannot be regimented by an inspectorate-general located in Mars, no matter how well-meaning. My friend, the honourable the Minister of Education, has adequately clarified Government policy in this respect.

Probably in a moment of exuberance, the honourable Okoi Arikpo claimed that this Region has more schools, hospital beds and roads, on a comparative basis with the North and West. I did not recall whether the honourable gentleman inferred that the figures for the West and North should be taken together. He has not remained behind to take his medicine. In any case I want to refresh the memory of honourable Members by referring to the Chick's Report which contains reliable data on the above subjects on the eve of the Constitution whose funeral obsequies had just taken place in London and Lagos.

According to Professor Chicks, the following are the facts, per million of estimated population: Hospital beds—North, 215, West 235, East 590; he is right there; Dispensaries—North 25, West 41, East 49; he is right there; Primary Schools—North 106, West 821, East 654; he is wrong there; Secondary Schools—North 0.4, West 6, East 20; he is right there; Teacher Training Institutions—North 2, West 6, East 9; he is right there; approximate road mileage—North 1,000, West 1,400, East 1,250, he is wrong there; approximate mileage of tarred road, North 16, West 108, East 47, he is also wrong there.

The expenditure figures for 1950-51 were as follows: Education—North £276,000, West £395,000, East £432,000; Medical—North £276,000, West £290,000, East £290,000; Roads—North £397,000, West £192,000, East £153,000. It is fair to conclude that the honourable gentleman did not intend to mislead the House, and it is obvious that the figures I quoted would have altered considerably and adversely for the East in the light of the recent Report of Sir Louis Chick.

Some of the honourable Members who spoke to this Bill have offered advice which is most helpful. Government is prepared to



consider and welcome practicable suggestions. The recommendation of the honourable D. C. Ugwu about granting loans to corporate bodies rather than to individuals, is reasonable, but we shall treat each case strictly on its merit. The same honourable gentleman advises, and he was supported by a great number of speakers, the taxation of working women. The feasibility of this innovation in our fiscal policy will be carefully examined.

The honourable M. T. Mbu suggests the subsidisation of farmers. This commends itself to Government, because it has been Government policy to stabilise prices in the farmer's interest; we will find out how this can be incorporated in our agricultural programme.

The honourable J. U. Nwodo counsels that a special Board to stabilise prices of imported goods be established. Whilst the idea is welcome, Government will investigate how prices of both imported goods and those of indigenous origin can be controlled in the interest of producers, distributors and consumers.

Chief the honourable Nyong Essien proposes a Students' Advisory Committee for the Eastern Region. If the allegation he made in respect of an Eastern student is founded, then a case has been established for this Government to consider whether its interest cannot be best served by the appointment of an agent-general in the United Kingdom to look after its affairs, as is the case with each of the six states of Australia and other territories of the British Commonwealth.

Dr the honourable S. E. Imoke advances the view for an improved method of collecting taxes. It is a splendid idea, and it accords with the thesis of Professors Prest and Stewart that the taxable capacity of Nigerians has been underestimated. Improved machinery for collecting tax should no doubt vindicate this theory particularly in this Region.

The honourable P. O. Ururuka thinks that by improving labour conditions we can maintain efficiency in our production. This is true to an extent. Government will review the whole position of labour relations at no distant date.

In view of our financial problems, Government will study seriously the desirability of imposing mining royalty on coal in order to enable this Region to derive some very desirable fiscal benefit from one of the most important minerals yet discovered in the service of man.

Finally, I would like to extend my thanks to all the honourable Members of this House who have contributed to the full-dress Debate on the Second Reading of the Appropriation Bill, especially to the Opposition who have made their presence felt as a qualitative minority. In spite of disagreement of opinions, both the Government Party and Opposition have played the game like good sports. This is a happy augury. The discussions have also elicited points of great value both to the Government and to you, the representatives of the people. By the time the surgical operation on the Bill is finished in the Committee of Supply, it will be found that the honourable Financial Secretary has



done a grand job which is very commendable indeed, because whilst the Budget of the Western Region stands still, and that of the North quick march, our Budget marks time. (*Laughter and cheers*).

Mr President, I beg to support.

**The Financial Secretary:**

Mr President, Sir, in winding up the Debate on the Second Reading of the Appropriation Bill, I wish to deal with certain matters of financial and economic importance to this Region which have been raised by honourable Members in the course of a very interesting Debate. Before doing so, Sir, I should like to express my thanks to those honourable Members who have been good enough to express their appreciation to myself and to my staff for the manner in which the Estimates have been prepared and presented, and to add my own thanks to my staff at all levels for the hard work which they have put in, in order to get the Estimates before the House in time.

As I have just said, Sir, we have listened to an interesting and illuminating Debate, and I am indeed glad to learn from it that the Bill commends itself in principle to the majority of honourable Members who have taken part in the Debate. It is also, Sir, encouraging to note that the need for raising additional revenue on a substantial scale has been generally recognised in the course of the Debate for that is the crux of our present problem. I can assure the House that the various suggestions that have been made to this end will be carefully examined by the Government. On some sides the Government was criticised for not bringing to the House on this occasion concrete proposals for raising additional revenue, and one honourable Member opposite—I think it was the honourable Mr Ekpe—described the present Budget (as you have already mentioned—I am sorry to repeat the words, but I rather like them!) as “lean” and “groggy.” In another quarter it was suggested that the Financial Secretary should himself have been able to lay definite proposals for taxation before the House at this present Budget Session.

Now, Sir, it should be well known to the House that although the Financial Secretary has a very great deal to do with the preparation of the Budget, and is primarily responsible for advising the Government on the shape of the Budget, the Budget is the responsibility of the Government as a whole and not of any individual Member of the Government. The position, Sir, in this respect, will be precisely the same when, under the revised Constitution, the Budget is presented to this House not by an official but by the Minister of Finance. It would indeed, Sir, be remiss on my part if I had not formulated certain ideas as to how additional revenue might be raised, and as I indicated in my opening speech, it is the intention of the Government to give earnest and early consideration to ways and means of increasing the revenue of the Region.

But, Sir, it is I suggest, quite unreasonable to criticise the Government for not having produced a cut and dried scheme for additional taxation on the present occasion.



The Government has only very recently assumed office, and few things are worse than hurriedly contrived revenue raising measures put into effect without proper consideration and consultation. In the present instance not only has the Government only recently assumed office, but its assumption of office has coincided with a radical change in our whole revenue structure as a result of the Chick Report. I repeat, however, that the problem of raising additional revenue is in the forefront of the minds of the Government, and that attention will be devoted to that problem as soon as the present Budget has been disposed of.

Reference has been made also, Sir, in many speeches, to the subsidising of the producer price for palm oil by the Nigeria Oil Palm Produce Marketing Board, and it is clear that in certain sections of the House there is uneasiness lest the reserves of the Board, and in due course the reserves of the new Regional Board should be rapidly dissipated if the present rate of subsidy be maintained. Coupled with this, there is evidence of a strong feeling that a part of these reserves should be used for the encouragement of other crops, so as to diversify the economy of the Region.

This, Sir, is a very complex subject, and I do not make any pretence to deal with it exhaustively on this occasion, but certain things should be said, for this has very much to do with the economy of the Region.

It should not be forgotten that the primary object of the Board is to prevent violent and frequent fluctuations in the price paid to the producers and that the funds that are now being used to subsidise the producers' price of oil come from the reserves which the Board built up when selling conditions were more favourable than they are today. There is therefore, Sir, nothing wrong in drawing on these reserves for the purpose of cushioning the producers against a fall in world prices. On the contrary, it is entirely right that the reserves should be employed for this purpose. The operative word is "cushioning" and it is precisely because the Board was fully alive to the fact that the 1953 rate of subsidy could not be maintained without a serious drain on the reserves, that the reductions in the prices to be paid to the producers in 1954 were announced in November of last year.

Taking palm kernels into account the drain on the Board's resources during 1953 on account of price subsidies was not, in fact, alarming. Furthermore, it should be remembered that the bulk of the present subsidy is on account of special grade oil and that there are very sound reasons indeed for encouraging the increased production of this superior grade.

The situation, Sir, will clearly need careful and continuous watching by the new Board but by wise and prudent management there is every reason to hope that the new Regional Board will be in a position for many years to come to fulfill the high economic purpose for which the present Board was created, and as the Honourable Minister for



Local Government has pointed out, the reserves of the Board are employed for other purposes as well—research and development. We have recently had laid on the Table the Fourth Annual Report of the Eastern Regional Production Development Board and there we see in paragraph 3 the grants that this Eastern Board received—grants from three Marketing Boards amounting to over 4½ million pounds up to the year ending, 31st March, 1953. That is an example of how these resources are being employed to increase production.

The emphasis, Sir, throughout this Debate has been very much on economic and industrial development and a number of speakers have referred to the need for outside capital in order to foster such development. I cordially endorse these sentiments, Sir, and on the subject of outside capital I do not think I can improve on what I said to the House a year ago—If I may be allowed to quote—

“While each case must be considered on its merits, I can perhaps best state the Regional Government’s policy in these terms—outside capital is wanted and indeed will be welcome, provided that the Region’s and local people’s interests are protected, their economic betterment ensured in so far as commercial risks permit and no shadow of exploitation exists. What is wanted, Sir, is outside capital to go hand in hand with us with the local people as willing and ready partners.”

Finally, Sir, I would like to draw attention to certain misapprehensions which have come to light in the course of the Debate. The honourable gentleman on the Opposition Bench, I think it was the honourable Ubani, would have us believe—if I heard him aright, that under the new fiscal arrangements we would be left only with our own independent revenue of some £750,000 and would have to find the balance of our requirements by new taxation. But that, Sir, is not the case.

If honourable Members will turn to Appendix III of the Chick Report they will see that the Region expects to receive some £4,113,000 as its share of customs and excise duties and a further £85,000 from personal income tax. Another speaker from this side of the House, the honourable Mr Eyo, gave me the impression that he thought that our main hope of salvation lay in consuming enormous quantities of tobacco and alcohol—a somewhat disturbing prospect, Sir, although possibly it has its attractive side. Tobacco and alcohol, Sir, are certainly excellent revenue earners and a reasonable indulgence in these habits is therefore to be encouraged. (*Laughter*).

But, Sir, a very large range of other items are also subject to the customs tariff and referring again to Appendix III of the Chick Report, it is estimated that £2,093,000 is the Region’s share of Import duties other than duties on tobacco and motor spirits.

What we require to do, Sir, is to produce more in order that we may be able to consume more of all classes of goods and services.

I have, Sir, been accused by some speakers of being too optimistic, by others of being too pessimistic, by some of being too complacent,